

Owe Ronström & Dan Lundberg (eds.), *Sounds of Migration. Music and migration in the Nordic countries*. (Acta Academiae Regiae Gustavi Adolphi CLXI/Publications from Svenskt Visarkiv 49.) The Royal Gustavus Adolphus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture, Uppsala & Stockholm, 2021. 202 pp.

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This book is an output from a conference held in Stockholm in April 2019 that brought together researchers, primarily ethnomusicologists, from various countries in the Nordic region and beyond that have worked on music and migration in different Nordic settings. The conference was specifically oriented toward revisiting and “taking stock” of previous research and updating it. The resulting book consists of nine chapters by researchers based in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Bosnia and Herzegovina, though the bulk of the chapters present the results of studies conducted in Sweden. Some chapters revisit older research from the 1980s and 1990s, while others report on research conducted more recently by a new generation of scholars working on the topic since around 2000. A few chapters are primarily oriented to theory, but most use ethnographic and/or archival material as a starting point for engaging with theoretical issues related to music and migration.

The opening chapter “Revisiting the sounds of migration in the Nordic region” by the two co-editors serves as a suitable introduction to the book. Here Lundberg and Ronström provide a broad overview of research in the field of music and migration, focusing on various theoretical concepts and approaches that have informed this work such as ethnicity, place, translocality, diversity, and (especially) the role of institutions, while referring when relevant to the chapters that follow. In the following chapter Pekka Suutari revisits his research on music of the Sweden-Finns in Gothenburg in the 1990s. He concentrates largely on dance events arranged by Finnish associations, giving a historical overview and presenting empirical material on dance bands and their repertoires. In his analysis Suutari makes good use

of theory from Stuart Hall on the processes of identification and from Simon Frith on how social groups “get to know themselves” through cultural activity (page 54).

Co-editor Owe Ronström also contributes a chapter with a retrospective view of his research in the 1980s on music and dance among Yugoslavs in Stockholm. Ronström discusses how sound and movement styles are “ascribed status as national or ethnic symbols” (page 77), highlighting the role of non-verbal communication and the body in the creation and maintenance of community. Sarajevo-based Jasmina Talam discusses in her chapter how the musical genre *sevđalinka* (traditional urban love songs that highlight the expression of sorrow, melancholy, and longing) serves as a symbol of cultural and national identity among Bosnian migrants in Sweden. The chapter is rich in descriptive historical information, though rather less ambitious in its engagement with theory than the other contributions to the volume. Johannes Brusila contributes a brief but useful metatheoretical overview of concepts and questions related to music and identity more broadly. Brusila shows how debates over essentialism vs. constructivism in regard to the nature of identity have developed over time and are still relevant today. Brusila’s chapter helps set the other chapters more specifically on music and migration within a larger humanistic and social scientific perspective.

For me, the high point of the book is Tormod Wallem Anundsen’s chapter on immigrant performers’ strategies for negotiating multicultural expectations in Norway. The chapter uses data from ethnography (participant observation at events and interviews with performers) as a starting point for the discussion, employing a grounded theory approach that takes seriously participants’ own experiences and their explanations of them. Anundsen presents a nuanced analysis of how well-meaning policies designed to promote multiculturalism in the Norwegian context can have unintended consequences, as immigrant musicians from different countries in Africa have to learn how to work within the dominant, often essentializing discourse as they maneuver within institutional structures, for example when applying for support from the government-funded Norwegian Arts Council. Anundsen takes a broadly postcolonial approach in analyzing the dilem-

mas and contradictions immigrant musicians negotiate as they work to make a living from their art.

Jill Ann Johnson adopts an explicitly comparative framework in a chapter that draws upon her research among immigrant groups in three different sites in Sweden and the USA. Johnson thus describes how these different groups – Chileans in Stockholm, second-generation immigrants from the Macedonian republic in Yugoslavia living in Gothenburg, and Croatian immigrants in Washington state – each used music and/or dance to “create cultural space” in their adopted homelands.

Co-editor Dan Lundberg’s chapter, “Migration in Archives,” draws on his long association with *Svenskt visarkiv*, a major research archive located in Stockholm. He discusses four different collections containing “immigrant music” in the archive, focusing on the processes and mechanisms behind the collecting, and offering some cogent reflections on the role of music archives in documenting and promoting the musics of migrant groups. Lundberg notes a change in attitudes in cultural heritage institutions in Europe since the 1980s regarding which kinds of cultural expression are considered appropriate to be collected and preserved, as institutions such as *Svenskt visarkiv* have moved from a focus on the “primary cultural heritage of the nation” (i.e., native national traditions) to a recognition of diversity and inclusiveness of cultural expressions brought to the country by immigrants (page 153).

The book’s final chapter by Sverker Hyltén-Cavallius on Swedish *progg* fits in rather awkwardly with the rest of the book. *Progg* (from “progressive”) was a mostly local alternative music movement in Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s that since the 1990s has found new life through the transnational circulation of re-issues. The author explains that he “approach[es] not so much people in migration as music that has migrated, with the aid of both media and people, from a certain time and place to many other times and places” (page 172). He develops his analysis through the closely related concepts of “fragments” and “retrologies.” But the extension of the migration concept to include the travels of *progg* through time and space seems a bit forced and disconnected from rest of the book’s clear focus on the place of music in human migration. A 5 ½-page bibliography on Nordic research

on music and migration rounds out the volume, listing resources published from the late 1980s up to 2020.

This book provides a useful overview of research past and present on music and migration in the Nordic countries, though the term “Nordic” in the title is perhaps a bit of a misnomer, since the emphasis is clearly on the Scandinavian peninsula, especially Sweden. The book does not include any research from Denmark, and while Suutari’s chapter covers Finnish migrants in Sweden, there is no chapter on migrants in Finland itself. Nevertheless, despite the uneven geographical coverage, the book will be useful to researchers, and especially to students, who want a relatively concise introduction to the topic and an overview of different theoretical and methodological approaches that have been used in research on it.

The volume is available both for purchase as a printed book and as a free, open access download from the website of Kungl. Gustav Adolfs Akademien för svensk folkkultur at <<https://kgaa.bokorder.se>>.