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Reviews

David Baskerville, Tim Baskerville, and Serona Elton. *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide*, 13th edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2022. [Sagepub.com](https://doi.org/10.25101/22.6)

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The field of music business education is highly dynamic, rapidly growing, and ever changing. It remains a great challenge for any educator to deliver an introductory, comprehensive framework that presents the breadth of music industry history, development, and opportunity for today's learners. It must be maddeningly complex to maintain a textbook for university-level music industry studies when the context of how music is created, promoted, discovered and consumed, shared, amplified, and monetized continues to shape-shift in protean fashion.

Several generations of music business academics and their students have relied on David Baskerville's and Tim Baskerville's iconic *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide* since its first publication in 1979 just as the first postsecondary programs in the field were getting underway. Tim Baskerville was the editor of David's first edition and chief author beginning with the fifth edition, published in 1990. We owe David and Tim a debt of gratitude for organizing, presenting, and frequently revising their work. We can thank Serona Elton now, too, who as coauthor with Tim of the thirteenth edition, will write and edit future editions of this indispensable book.

It is significant that Tim Baskerville chose Professor Elton for this role. Many members of the MEIEA community will know Serona from her work as director of the Music Industry Program at the University of Miami Frost School of Music where she is also the Associate Dean of Administration. She is head of educational partnerships at the Mechanical Licensing Collective (The MLC) and previously worked in the field at EMI and WMG. Professor Elton is a former Governor of the Recording Academy, Florida Chapter. She is an attorney and a past president of MEIEA. Few know the territory as well. And what Serona doesn't know, she knows how to track down from the best sources in the industry.

There are innumerable changes in this thirteenth edition with the addition of learning outcomes at the start of each chapter, an invaluable new

feature. Most of the chapters have been reorganized, which yields many benefits for learners and educators. The chapters are now closer in size to each other, which supports teaching the topics within the same class module. For example, a new chapter, Music in Media, merges the topics of music creation for advertising, film, television, and video games into one chapter; these topics were previously spread across three different chapters.

As expected, the thirteenth edition includes a new chapter on on-demand streaming, covering key milestones in the transition in recorded music from ownership to access and related topics including advances and licensing, breakage and streaming-related controversies, low royalty rates, inflated stream counts, stream ripping, and privacy. Thankfully this edition contains a significantly revised chapter on record label marketing, distribution, and the digital supply chain; tools available to DIY artists; coverage of the Music Modernization Act of 2018; and the formation of The MLC.

A large amount of the text has been refreshed, and while the overall structure of many chapters is intact, much of the wording has been revised and new chapter sections have been added to support student engagement.

There were several places in previous editions where actual contract language was provided. As a textbook for an introductory, undergraduate course, contract language was less helpful than its replacement, a detailed new Contract Concepts section where key contract terms are well explained in chapters covering artist management, music publishing, recording agreements, and concert promotion.

Representation matters, and many of the photos have been updated to bring greater diversity in both race and gender. New photos of artists and executives, more recognizable by today's college students, have been added. All figures and illustrations have been updated through 2020.

Over fifty words and terms have been added to the glossary, like ARPU (average revenue per user, a key metric for understanding and comparing the financial performance of digital services and networks) as just one example.

To be sure, historical topics in the field do not change even as our interpretation of historical events continues to evolve: the historical precedents of copyright in the United States and around the world; the development of music publishing in the United States; and the introduction, evolution, and consolidation of the recorded music business. Treatment of

those topics in the thirteenth edition is largely unchanged from the twelfth edition published in 2018.

When contemplating the future of the relatively new field of music business in higher education, we can be certain that music creation, distribution, and consumption will continue to change—as will music itself. Disruptive startups will emerge and give rise to new uses and licensing models. And for the foreseeable future, the *Music Business Handbook and Career Guide* under the capable direction of Serona Elton will continue to light the path toward professional understanding, clarity of complex issues, and deeper study.

Larry Miller

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and their financial sponsors on music catalog acquisitions, capital formation, digital product and service development, and restructuring. He advises rights holders and music creators on public policy and litigation and has provided expert testimony before the United States Copyright Review Board (CRB) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Miller has commented on CBS, ABC, CNBC, CNN, Fox News, and NPR; in the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Times*, *Time*, *Business Week*, *Financial Times*, *The Economist*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *Billboard*. He is author of the report “Same Heart/New Beat: How Record Labels Amplify

Talent in the Modern Music Marketplace.” His article “Metadata: How to Develop the Foundation for the Music Business of Tomorrow” was published in *The Licensing Journal*, and “Paradigm Shift: Why Radio Must Adapt to the Rise of Digital” was published in *Entertainment and Sports Lawyer*, the ABA Forum on the Entertainment and Sports Industries. Miller is a proud board member of the Louis Armstrong House Museum and the Newport Festivals Foundation. He is also a Clio Award winning voice-over actor.

Keith Hatschek. *The Real Ambassadors: Dave and Iola Brubeck and Louis Armstrong Challenge Segregation*. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2022. www.upress.state.ms.us

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.7>

Keith Hatschek’s new book outlines the efforts surrounding Dave Brubeck and his wife Iola to present a jazz musical. Originally entitled *World Take a Holiday* and renamed as *The Real Ambassadors*, the development of the piece itself from concept to ultimate publication as both a studio album and festival performance represents the focal point of Hatschek’s work. The play itself, and primarily the behind-the-scenes work to bring it to life, not only provide an engaging window to consider the situation of jazz within a broader, mid-century socio-political context, it also allows Hatschek to organize the text in an engaging way. Rather than submitting to a pedantic historical chronology, the author uses the various iterations of a musical under construction to introduce his key and secondary characters, critical issues like segregation and the meaning of jazz, as well as important insight into the operations of the music industry. The moves required to bring the musical to life provide a compelling dynamicity that figures for and speaks to the negotiated aspects of those broader issues. This tension alone makes a strong though implicit argument for the quality of the musical and aligns it with that of Hatschek’s fine book.

The text is in sixteen chapters most of which achieve a high level of engagement while remaining concise. The first three chapters introduce us

to the Brubecks and their work, as well as its particular stance regarding U.S. foreign relations. The following six chapters outline the great number of hurdles, challenges, and precious few gains that work to present both an existential crisis and a clear sense of urgency facing the ultimate fortune of the musical. The final seven chapters show the growing sense of community, resolve, and gradually, the rewards of their creativity and perseverance begin to appear. The ensuing studio record and increased international interest lead to the culminating single performance of an abridged version of the musical staged as a “concert performance” at the 1962 Monterey Jazz festival. The remainder of the book lovingly details the reception of that performance, Brubeck’s legacy, and reveals Hatschek among a cast of supporters who have worked to preserve that legacy over the last decade since Dave Brubeck’s passing.

From Iola Brubeck’s inception of the idea for a jazz musical in 1956 to the scant reenactments of *The Real Ambassadors* during the varied memorials to her husband, Hatschek’s book carefully tends to (and firmly locates itself within) the legacy of the musical’s reception. As he relates, even though the play never realized its intended Broadway debut, there is truly a gem of a story in the effort to get it there. The plight of Iola and Dave Brubeck’s jazz musical is the product of a constellation of diverse cultural, economic, and political forces at work over the last sixty-six years and counting—but the fight for the core issues addressed by the musical and its creators remain just as vital for us in 2022; if not more so. The prominence of race in the national discourse of identity, the place of music within questions of identity that range from the national to the individual; these are some of the issues that provide Hatschek’s book with a very broad reach—not to mention the interest of the story itself.

Upon reading this work, a couple of truths are immediately unescapable. First, the story and the communication of its relevance are in very capable hands. Secondly, and in support of the first point, there is a resonating *esprit de corps* that ties the author’s work with the remarkable efforts of a broad cast of characters who worked to bring the Brubecks’ vision to the stage in a single, powerful performance. Hatschek establishes his book on the bedrock of values at the core of jazz itself, namely the freedom to speak to power and the love required to make that communal statement. In this sense, it succeeds as a surrogate for what several key players of the narrative consider to be the Achilles heel that kept the

musical off Broadway in the first place: namely “a very strong book with conflict and tension.”

While the comparison above refers to the need for a stronger “play book” (dramatic script to drive the play itself), *The Real Ambassadors* succeeds as a book, in my estimation, on these very terms. It packs an unexpected emotional force precisely because of the author’s extremely careful and detailed recollection of obstacles and challenges working against the Brubecks’ project. Hatschek brings into sharp relief the unique power of the artist class under the leadership of true luminaries to come together and overcome those challenges and, in so doing, to show a way forward for the rest of us. At the height of conflict, the author unleashes the beauty of testimony to a singular passing moment seared into the memories of those lucky few—some six thousand attendees of the 1962 Monterey Jazz Festival. Until now.

As a superficial fan of jazz music, I found myself in a much better position after reading this book. Hatschek’s style as a storyteller avoids pitfalls common to historical writing, in turn yielding a very enjoyable read for someone like myself. By that token, this book would have to be a treasure for a true jazz aficionado, or a fan of Brubeck, Louis Armstrong, or a student of the specific place of jazz music in the political context of the United States during the Cold War and Civil Rights eras. For example, Hatschek balances “fly-on-the-wall” minutia against careful and transparent command of narrative arc to effective results. The backstories woven together by intimate details revealed from meticulous research of correspondences, critical reviews, and personal and published interviews reveal deep detail to history as lived experience rather than objective occurrence.

The author’s treatment of Armstrong’s notorious manager Joe Glaser is another strong example of capable authorship. As one of the main proponents working against the fruition of the Brubecks’ musical vision, Glaser’s character is constantly reset relative to the primary function to work on behalf of his client Louis Armstrong’s economic interest. Rather than throwing Glaser under the bus, as I found myself almost wanting to see, there is an even-handed maturity and concision that makes less of the seductive detour into Glaser’s mob ties and soberly recognizes his history of success for Armstrong in tandem with his “lack of genuine support for the project.” This even-handed treatment of Joe Glaser allows for the text to establish confidence as it pieces together an account that is significantly emotionally charged in its own right. Despite his own passion for the proj-

ect, I was not under the impression that the author had a personal agenda that compromised his ability to reveal the compelling story of *The Real Ambassadors*. In fact, the only moment where he steps out to address us in the first person is in the final chapter, “Rediscovering the Real Jazz Ambassadors,” where he shows his own contributions to the recent reception of the Brubecks’ legacy.

In addition, the author’s ability to change discursive registers according to the demands of the situation contributes greatly to the richness of the story. For example, Hatschek’s comfort with the language and technique of lyrical analysis works to show Iola’s skill for addressing racial tension in religious and political rhetoric. His music business acumen regarding licensing and publishing allows him to show how Dave Brubeck initially sacrificed his own royalties to get Armstrong on board with the recording phase of the Real Ambassadors project and then later to show how Dave was able to transition from a lifetime of touring by setting up his own publishing company. Ultimately, the skill to manage these in a way that respects the history belongs to the additional skill of the storyteller who makes visible why this lesser-known chapter in the history of jazz is so valuable.

If not in the years of research required to render this story in such a vivid and compelling way, the love Hatschek contributes is most evident in the attention given to the secondary or “behind-the-scenes” characters and the fly-on-the-wall anecdotes that place them in the storyline and breathe life and feeling into its pages. Dave’s brother Howard Brubeck’s last-minute essential work to provide a bound chart with dialogue and cues for each of the dozen or so musicians; Armstrong’s wife Lucille fretting over the long hours her husband was sinking into memorization; Jazz critic Ralph Gleason’s surprising push of the project despite not always endorsing Brubeck’s work; Dave’s son Darius’ efforts to ensure the global impact envisioned by his parents’ musical; Broadway producers Marshall Jamison and Paul Gregory who were able to comment on the commercial potential of the actual proposed musical; the pivotal support of Jimmy Lyons, the co-founder of the Monterey music festival; London-based agent Harold Davison who explored U.K.-based filming of the project, etc., etc. All of these personalities create a rich tapestry animating the storyline in an engaging way. Importantly, we find the author himself among the cast of characters working to carry the legacy forward.

As I read the final pages of the last chapter, I noticed the author pulling my attention out of what started to feel like a dream surrounding the staging of *The Real Ambassadors* and bringing me back to waking life. The effect was startling as I came to reflect upon the thread of racism across space and time, linking the core of Iola's vision not to some distant reality, but carefully tied to our own current events. I found the official narratives of jazz as part of America's cold war propaganda effort counterbalanced and ironically overturned by those of the musicians themselves forced to cancel performance after performance at home and even abroad (c.f.: South African Apartheid) due to venues unwilling to stage a mixed-race performance. In the book's curtain call, Hatschek shows students and musicians ranging from Lebanon High School in Oregon, Wynton Marsalis and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra in New York, to the Detroit Jazz Festival all working in concert to bring the message of unity and equality over and against racial difference all the while demonstrating its continued relevance.

Paul Linden

Paul Linden has toured North America and Western Europe as a blues and roots-american artist. He has performed on *Austin City Limits*, CBS, NPR, and Mike King's award-winning documentary on Chicago Blues. Festivals and venues Linden has played include the Montreal Jazz Festival, Memphis in May blues festival, Atlanta's Fox Theater, New York's Beacon theater, Portland's Roseland Theater, and the Filmore West. He has worked with Bo Diddley, B.B. King, Jerry McCain, Nick Moss, Susan Tedeschi, and Kim Wilson. His research interests in-



clude interdisciplinary and theoretical approaches to music industry studies. A selection of publications includes “Entrepreneurship: Theory and Application in a University Arts Management Setting,” “Translating Race and Genre in Popular Music,” and “Malcolm Chisholm: An Evaluation of Traditional Audio Engineering.” Linden’s research has been cited in the most recent authoritative history of Fender amplifiers, *The Soul of Tone: 60 Years of Fender Amps* (Hal Leonard 2007) and *Vintage Guitar Magazine*. He is also a regular contributor to magazines like the *Tone Quest Report* and the French-based magazine *Blues & Co*.

Mark V. Campbell. *Afrosonic Life*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022. www.bloomsbury.com

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The origins of turntablism, that is creating musical compositions solely with record turntables, can be traced back to Jamaica in the late 1950s and 1960s. Though the art form is more than sixty years old, there are still few books dedicated to examining the economic forces that necessitated the technique and the Afro-Caribbean influences that incubated the sound. There are lots of books that discuss the creative and technical aspects of the craft. Mark V. Campbell, Assistant Professor of Music and Culture at the University of Toronto Scarborough, Canada, has written a compact testimonial detailing the cultural and social motivations behind the practice.

With *Afrosonic Life*, Campbell offers an illuminating exposé of African ancestral creativities expressed through turntablism, dub, and remixing as resistant responses to the intersectional forces of dehumanization and commodification typically imposed upon Black artists and their works. Campbell has penned a poignant testament to the resilient artistic ingenuity summoned by Black DJs and dub artists as they challenge hierarchical market structures that are created and protected by Western hegemonies of thought and commerce such as individual rights and intellectual property ownership. Campbell masterfully explains the connection between the tra-

ditions of oral storytelling and musical improvisation to the contemporary principles of artistic agency and the reconstitution of Black bodies: artist and audience.

At 123 pages, the book is a brief but dense read. Campbell offers a first-person perspective in an otherwise academically-oriented text. The book is well-researched and would fit well as a historical reflection within Music and Culture, Music and Protest, History of Hip-Hop, or beat making production courses. The advanced vocabulary use and syntax make this a less-than-ideal text for lower division undergraduate courses, however. The bibliography is organized by chapters and a thorough index is included as well.

The text includes an introduction, four substantive chapters, and the conclusion. The introduction summarizes the author's experiences with the art form, explains his motivation for writing the book, and lays out a concise methodology detailing the research and writing processes. Campbell uses the introduction to orient readers to his specific use of terms and conditions that recur throughout the book. He's also careful to caution the reader that the text isn't contained to one culture since it spans African, Jamaican, and African American art forms and musical traditions. Likewise, Campbell provides a disclaimer that the book isn't rooted in one particular genre, since it covers the development and significance of turntablism across reggae, hip-hop, electro mashups, and remixes.

In chapter one, Campbell uses Sylvia Wynter's theory of the European construction of Man to contrast the concept of musical innovation as seen between Western convention and what he terms the Afrosonic diaspora. He explains how music-making techniques such as dubbing, scratching, remixing, and versioning that are commonly found in Afrosonic creations aren't musical considerations taught or valued in Western music. According to Western logic, Campbell asserts that these Afrosonic innovations amount to nothing more than simply entertainment. The author goes on to describe how DJs use turntablism as an active resistance to dominant Western musical thought and how turntablism is used as a subversive protest to consumerism and the commodification of Black bodies that were formerly enslaved. Campbell closes chapter one with a discussion of the cultural impact of traveling Jamaican sound systems and how they influenced Bronx-based DJ Kool Herc, who is often referred to as the father of American hip-hop.

In chapter two, Campbell details the rise of turntablism in American hip-hop through the lens of intentional exploration of new sonic experiments. The author compares experimental works of composer John Cage with typical creations of turntablists while acknowledging the overwhelming desire to work with rhythm demonstrated by the latter. Campbell describes how the rhythms of scratching and cutting created new musical conventions while the use of the wheelback (spinning a record backwards to locate a break point) was an intentional violation of the perceived sanctity of vinyl records. Turntablism was simultaneously form and chaos. The author closes chapter two by connecting techniques found in turntablism to oral traditions of the African diaspora and Rastafari speech patterns.

In chapter three, Campbell explores the riddim method which is a sound system technique that uses recycling, repetition, and voicing in its construction and performance. The author illustrates how the riddim method ignores copyright protections since it borrows and riffs heavily from source materials. Western concepts of copyright and property ownership are contrasted with improvisation and a focus on audience enjoyment that are central to Afrosonic musical cultures. Campbell examines how mix-tape culture developed as a cottage industry within the larger American music business in the 1970s. Although record labels have used mixtapes as promotional vehicles since the 1990s, the author explains their cultural significance as methods of blending various musical genres including reggae, hip-hop, R&B, blues, and dance music into seamless Afrosonic tapestries.

In chapter four, Campbell discusses dubbing and remixing as related precursors to turntablism. Both musical innovations involve reimagining musical compositions sometimes through additive and at other times through subtractive techniques. The author expounds on how mixing consoles, turntables, and drum machines are used to rearrange compositions in ways that make them easier to manipulate and mix by other DJs. Campbell is keen to describe how the discussion of remix culture in academia tends to be anchored in intellectual concepts of American copyright constructs that discount Jamaican cultural legacies in favor of Western property ownership hierarchy.

Overall, Professor Campbell has written a thoughtful treatise on a significant musical innovation. I would not hesitate to recommend this text to anyone who wants an academic deep dive into the historical and cultural development of turntablism that undergirds reggae, hip-hop, dub,

and electronic music. I am suggesting this book as a supplementary reference in our composition course Exploratory Voice: Identity and Protest in Songs of Black America.

Marcus X. Thomas

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Professor Thomas is an educator and entertainment attorney who is also trained as a screenwriter and publicist.

During his twenty-five year career, he has maintained a boutique entertainment law practice and held several in-house positions with entertainment companies including a major record label, a major-affiliated music publisher, and the nation's largest education music print publisher. Thomas coauthored "The Commercial Music Industry in Atlanta and the State of Georgia—An Economic Impact Study." His study served as support for passing the Georgia Entertainment Industry Act of 2005. Thomas holds a Juris Doctor from Georgia State University, a Master of Fine Arts from Full Sail University, and a Master of Mass Communication from the University of Georgia.

Andrew Mall. *God Rock, Inc.: The Business of Niche Music*. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2021. www.ucpress.edu

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.9>

Music scholar Andrew Mall's *God Rock, Inc.* provides a series of in-depth, qualitative vignettes on various aspects of the American Christian music industry. As the book's subtitle, *The Business of Niche Music*, suggests, these many threads are meant to weave into a body of work that can inform our understanding of the ways that niche music markets function in general. Though I was initially skeptical of the ambitiousness of that scope, I was also intrigued by it. My interest was rewarded with a wealth of insight into the market dynamics and cultural capital of Christian music.

As Mall demonstrates in the introduction and throughout the book, the Christian music market has numerous idiosyncrasies and anachronisms that cause it to function differently than its secular counterpart. Indeed, "counterpart" may not even be the correct term as both the ethics and the economics that underlie Christian music are fundamentally different than the mainstream market. Part One of the book explores the historical context of these differences, beginning in the 1960s with the music of the Jesus People and proceeding up to the present day.

An important caveat that readers should be aware of is that the primary intent of this book is *not* to be a history of the Christian music industry. Rather, the historical events covered in Part One are chosen for their importance in the evolution of the industry and for their relevance to the discussions in Part Two. While Mall does utilize historical methodology at times, particularly with his use of oral histories as primary sources, the narrative is much more influenced by qualitative inquiry than by a systematic chronology. Overall, this stylistic choice was the right one for this book. I do think a book that is more explicitly historical, and that utilizes the excellent oral histories that Mall recorded, would be worth doing though. That being said, most of the important events and artists in the past half century of American Christian music make an appearance and figures such as Keith Green, Billy Ray Hearn, Steven Curtis Chapman, and Amy Grant all receive significant attention.

In my view, the most important contribution of this book is its insistence on viewing the Christian music industry through a market lens. That is not to say that the market lens is inherently more important than

other perspectives, but it is arguably the most neglected on this subject. There is an inherent resistance to market analysis that is baked into the culture of Christian music, a phenomenon Mall refers to as the “essential dichotomy between commerce and evangelism” (63). In the case of evangelical Christian culture, numerous factors contribute to a resistance of forcing the industry camel to pass through the eye of the market needle. Matters of money are often seen as taboo and not brought up in a public forum. While the mainstream music press, if they take any interest at all, are likely enough to be critical of Christian music’s political economy, such criticisms are often dismissed as attacks from a hostile enemy rather than carefully considered within the community. Faith-centric media outlets are often loath to tackle a true critical market analysis. There might be some polite calls to strike a better balance between money and ministry, or at most some hard handwringing over whether money is getting in the way of the mission, but the influence of market dynamics on song content, A&R, and other aspects remains a blind spot for Christian music as a whole.

By insisting on the market’s influence, and especially by giving voice to industry insiders to express how they have wrestled with that influence, *God Rock Inc.* opens a window into a world that is rarely seen. Overall, the book’s subject is a lightning rod for controversy. Some readers will not countenance any criticism of Christian music, for others no hedging of criticism will be tolerable. Mall, in my opinion, does an excellent job of maintaining critical distance from his subject, while avoiding the proverbial ditch on the other side of the road. He pulls no punches in insisting that profit has been a primary motivator behind the business decisions of Christian record labels, especially after the waves of acquisition by the major music conglomerates in the late twentieth century. Yet, he never dismisses the lived experience of the professionals, artists, and audiences who collectively create the industry. Again, Mall’s narrative position as a qualitative researcher deeply embedded within the culture he is studying serves this research particularly well.

Apart from oral histories with industry insiders, Mall also conducted extensive fieldwork at Christian music festivals such as Cornerstone and AudioFeed. Mall views these two events as excellent vantage points for resistance within the Christian music industry as they showcase niche acts and genres. In a milieu where a primary effect of “stronger commercial priority [is] the increasing homogenization of mainstream Christian music’s aesthetics” (79) what better place to investigate alternatives than a

mosh pit for a Christian hardcore act? I especially appreciated Mall's engagement with the work of British Cultural Studies scholarship and Dick Hebdige's work on subcultures in this discussion, as well as his succinct, lay-oriented explanation of that work (166-174).

I likewise appreciated Mall's insight into the phenomena of cross-over between fringe and mainstream as multi-layered and multi-directional, rather than as a one-way street. Readers may appreciate other aspects of the book such as its pace, tone, and the curated playlists of music mentioned in the book that allow readers to listen along as they read. The discussion of the band Mutemath (198-201) was particularly well done. The parallels between their career arc and the difficulties that the wider music industry faced at the turn of the twenty-first century were profound. Mutemath are also among the best examples of the complex cultural dynamics at play for a band of Christians who do not wish to be labeled as a Christian band.

This book is of obvious interest to scholars of popular culture and religion, and, due to its accessible writing style, may be of use in an undergraduate course on music business. For music industry programs at faith-based institutions it should be required reading as it will help students to better understand the historical and cultural factors that create the industry subset many of them hope to enter. As to the book's aspirations of informing an understanding of all niche music, the section on David Bazan (186-191) comes the closest to providing something more generalizable beyond the Christian market. Because Christian music is defined less by genre than by content it can be viewed as a microcosm. As such, niche markets *within* that microcosm are ideal units of analysis because they are small enough to be studied in-depth and thoroughly contrasted with their corresponding mainstream. If the book's subtitle was worded to imply that its findings would be relatively universal, I still think that claim is a bit of a stretch. But I also do not think that should take away from what it does contribute. *God Rock, Inc.* deeply contextualizes an important and understudied segment of popular music and helps us to better understand the complex intersections of economics, popular culture, and worldview.

Jason Lee Guthrie

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Jim Ruland. *Corporate Rock Sucks: The Rise and Fall of SST Records.* New York: Hachette Books, 2022. [hachettebooks.com](https://doi.org/10.25101/22.10)

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It's fascinating to learn just how much of the 1980s and '90s American alternative rock landscape could be attributed to one independent record label. Based in sundry offices mainly within the South Bay region of Los Angeles County (and currently in Taylor, Texas), SST Records spawned from necessity by members of hardcore punk pioneers Black Flag, whose 46-year career continues to be headed by inventive guitarist Greg Ginn, and would eventually grow from its modest, local roots to an internationally recognized label that was serendipitously situated in the right place at the right time on numerous occasions.

The fact that SST released titles from such powerhouse ubiquitous examples as New York's Sonic Youth, Massachusetts' Dinosaur Jr. and Buffalo Tom, Washington D.C.'s Bad Brains, the Twin Cities' Hüsker Dü, Arizona's Meat Puppets, and Seattle's Soundgarden and Screaming Trees—all of which would eventually land contracts on major labels after

their SST stays—proves that its national reach was far more impactful than its humble California headquarters would lead one to believe.

The global impact and history of SST's operation has been exhaustively—and interestingly—documented by author Jim Ruland in *Corporate Rock Sucks: The Rise and Fall of SST Records*, a 300-plus-page chronicle on a label that was founded during a time when performing as an independent rock outfit meant not much more than being a cover band, grinding out familiar sets of others' hit singles at the local watering hole.

Launching with the story of SST founder Ginn (who named the label after his amateur radio electronics company, Solid State Transmitters) and introducing the reader to his upbringings in a family that nurtured a do-it-yourself culture, Ruland is quick to stay focused on the development of the label, its initial partners, and the ultimate environment which led to its creation—as a record company serving as an outlet for a variety of underground music scenes, locales, and their respective performers. The book is presented in a largely chronological fashion, as Ruland divided its chapters into periodic eras by which SST had found itself challenged, whether it's the label versus MTV, college radio, the Hollywood scene, hardcore, New York, death, the Northwest, or simply history itself.

Through the chapters, Ruland dives deep into the various relationships between label personnel, bands, distributors, and outside entities that kept SST viable throughout its prime. Stories of how artists connected with the label make for intriguing anecdotes, as do the recollections of several employees who were present—and at times responsible—for the label's many musical milestones.

Ruland considers and presents diverse angles in the SST story, as there is both celebration and critique of the label, demonstrating strengths and slips. One major issue is documented in a chapter devoted to a period in which SST was embroiled in a record distribution legal battle with Unicorn Records (a subsidiary of MCA), which successfully filed an injunction against the release of new material and ultimately found SST heads Ginn and (former Black Flag bassist) Chuck Dukowski serving jail time for related violations. Ruland also reminds the reader that Ginn passed on the opportunity to sign arguably one of the biggest rock bands of the 1990s, Nirvana, who attempted to join the SST roster via the advocacy of Screaming Trees' late frontman Mark Lanegan, to no avail. We can only speculate, as Ruland notes, on what could have been SST's most popular

artist, had Nirvana been afforded the opportunity to release an SST album prior to its 1991 major-label sales smash, *Nevermind*.

Ruland digs into the label's vast catalog of nearly four hundred titles that ultimately broke out of its determinedly punk upbringings to offer a rather eclectic range of genres including blues, jazz, experimental, spoken word, and solo artists (some through SST offshoots such as New Alliance and Cruz Records). The label's abundant release schedule had slowed by the early 2000s and has since released mostly offerings from Ginn-associated projects over the past couple decades.

To be clear, the company is still operational, predominantly retailing its catalog along with apparel and accessories via its website, sstsuperstore.com. In fact, it is one of SST's T-shirt offerings from which the book's title is derived—the shirt, emblazoned via large font with the motto “Corporate Rock Still Sucks” on its front side, is currently available from SST's website.

Ruland is no stranger to penning books on punk rock, having co-authored *My Damage: The Story of a Punk Survivor* with former Black Flag vocalist Keith Morris and *Do What You Want: The Story of Bad Religion*, whose guitarist Brett Gurewitz founded the incredibly successful indie label Epitaph Records, after initially being inspired by SST's model, and called SST “the incubator of American hardcore” (357).

One must wonder if such an indie with the magnitude of influence and excitement of 80s-era SST could even sprout in today's recorded music environment of omnipresent online access. For a music industry class examining the innovators and progenitors of modern indie labels, Ruland's chronology could make for an interesting introductory read and subsequent discussion. However, it is probably best serving the type of reader whose ears were raised on a steady diet of selections from the heyday of SST's tapes, vinyl, and discs.

Waleed Rashidi

WALEED RASHIDI is an associate professor in the Department of Communications at California State University, Fullerton, and also serves as advisor to the Entertainment and Tourism Club. Rashidi has worked as a magazine and newspaper editor and has hosted radio shows at KSPC since 1997. He has contributed to six books, and freelanced for the *Los Ange-*

les Times-Brand X, Modern Drummer, and *E! Online*. Rashidi has a doctorate in education from the University of La Verne, an M.A. in communications from Cal State Fullerton, and a B.S. in communication-journalism from Cal Poly Pomona.



Bobby Borg and Michael Eames. *Introduction to Music Publishing for Musicians: Business and Creative Perspectives for the New Music Industry*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021. rowman.com

<https://doi.org/10.25101/22.11>

While it is not difficult to find books on how to be successful or how to make it in the music business, there are a limited number of books devoted specifically to understanding and navigating the business of music publishing. Authors Bobby Borg and Michael Eames add to the literature on music publishing in their 2021 book entitled *Introduction to Music Publishing for Musicians*. The book applies to the increasing number of independent artists and musicians who are releasing their music in today's digital music landscape. Borg is a former recording and touring artist with over thirty years of experience with major, independent, and "do it yourself" DIY labels. He is the author of three books geared toward musicians: *Music Marketing for the DIY Musician*, *Business Basics for Musicians*, and *The Musician's Handbook*. Borg holds a BA in Professional Music from Berklee College of Music and a master's degree in Communications Management from the University of Southern California. Eames is the

president and cofounder of Los Angeles-based PEN Music Group, Inc. and is the past president (2015-2018) of the Association of Independent Music Publishers. He has coauthored, along with Borg and three others, the book *Five Star Music Makeover: The Independent Artist's Guide for Singers, Songwriters, Bands, Producers, and Self Publishers*. Eames has also co-taught the course Introduction to Music Publishing (with Borg) at the college level.

Introduction to Music Publishing for Musicians is divided into seven sections and forty-nine total chapters. Section One covers copyright basics in chapters 1 through 9. The authors do an excellent job explaining the reasons behind protecting the works of creators. The specific topics include a definition of copyright, the exclusive rights that the U.S. copyright law grants to creators, works for hire, joint works, copyright duration, copyright registration, infringement, and sound recording copyrights. All are discussed in great detail in easy-to-understand language. As a publisher for thirty years myself, I did not fully agree with the statement that most publishers will agree to a reversion clause. This may have been prefaced by explaining that depending on the market, publishers may agree to a reversion. Publishing deals in the Nashville market rarely offer reversions of copyright. Creators do still have the right to terminate after thirty-five years, however, if they exercise the statutory termination right. The Nashville music businesses cluster has some unique aspects that other markets may not mirror, which include a more hands-on approach to working with and developing songwriters.¹ Publishers who are invested personally in their catalogs of songs may desire to reap the rewards of their efforts until the law requires them to assign the copyrights back to the creator. This issue is minor in the overall book, as the authors do explain reversions well. Section One ends with a strong explanation of recent copyright law legislation, which is necessary in the current era of music consumption through streaming.

Section Two delves into the types of income that music publishers receive for their works. The section is separated into eight chapters, 10 through 17, covering mechanical royalties, performance royalties, synchronization royalties, print royalties, electronic transmissions, and sub-publishing income. The authors do a wonderful job of explaining writer's share and publisher's share in a way that the average person could understand. The work also offers good tips for choosing a performing rights

organization (PRO) for new writers. Each of the other income sources is described well and it is clear that the authors are experts in their fields.

The book's third section, chapters 18 through 23, discusses a publisher's functions and the types of deals an artist or musician might encounter. This may be some of the most valuable information that the authors share with the reader. Creators need to know the industry norms in order to make solid decisions in their careers and feel confident that they have not entered into an unfair deal. The music industry can seem like treacherous waters full of sharks especially as a career is starting to blossom. Specific topics include song plugging, exclusive songwriter agreements, copyright reversion, synchronization agreements, and how to start your own publishing company. The authors are clear on what songwriters should realistically expect from their publishers. I particularly enjoyed chapter 20's explanation of advances as an illusion. Writers need to understand that any advance they receive from a publisher is an advance on their future royalties that will be recouped once royalties are earned. With the increase in the number of do-it-yourself (DIY) artists, many find themselves without a publisher and have the need to set up their own publishing entity. Chapter 22 outlines the process of setting up a DIY publishing company in great detail, which is valuable information for the songwriter or artist still searching for that publisher that will be their career champion.

Section Four covers some of the creative aspects of publishing in chapters 24 through 34. Topics such as preparing for the creative process, elements of popular songs, uniqueness, innovation, and how DIY artists can pitch and promote their music are included. While I am not sure that the elements of popular songs are necessary for this book, the DIY elements are extremely useful for new publishers. In the current era where mechanical royalty revenues are falling, many publishers are finding it necessary to seek additional revenue streams than traditional publishing companies enjoyed, which was mainly mechanical, performance, and synchronization income. Ownership of masters and marketing those masters can be an excellent additional revenue stream.

The book also provides high-quality real-life application through Section Five's chapters 35 through 45 in the form of interviews with experienced music industry professionals. The insight shared from creatives who have had successful careers is inspiring. The examples of those who have found their place in the music business despite its challenges help to make starting a career in the music business not such a daunting task. I

understand that the book is geared toward musicians and not towards those on the business side of music publishing, but I do believe that the book could have also included interviews with non-creatives and administrative people from the publishing world. The insight could be valuable for musicians. Many who desire a career in publishing are not musicians or artists. Additionally, including interviews from some Nashville publishers would help give a perspective on the market where songwriters who are not musicians or singers can find success.

Section Six, chapters 46 through 48, discusses the future of music publishing in the midst of technology changes and recent legislation. Of particular interest is the discussion on PROs, consent decrees, and pending legislative developments. The authors do an excellent job of explaining the issues and the possible outcomes. The Mechanical Licensing Collective (MLC) is also described in detail along with the challenges that the new system for streaming royalties is experiencing. As a publisher of past hits and earning songs, I have experienced many of my copyrights having incorrect information after the huge data dump into the new MLC database. Section Seven includes only chapter 49 and concludes the book with a summary of the main topics of the book. It also includes the final thoughts of the authors.

Overall, this book is a solid perspective on the business of music publishing. It is geared towards the creative to give insight into the various aspects of publishing of which musicians should be aware. As a veteran music publisher in the Nashville market, and a current music publishing teacher at the college level, I realize that what I desire in a music publishing text may be different than someone with experience in other markets. I have tried to bracket out that bias, while still pointing out key aspects that aren't necessarily congruent with all markets. I am always looking for a text that explains the publishing industry for the beginner that I could utilize in my courses. The authors do an excellent job of explaining the basics before getting into more complicated topics. I would recommend the book to all aspiring musicians and artists for a solid foundation on how music publishing works in the U.S.; however, I do wish that it included historical elements including the evolution of thought and laws leading to the protections that creators and publishers enjoy today. If used in a college course, the information would provide a solid foundation before discussing how the industry works in the current environment. Additionally, a discussion of the U.S. publishing market should include a section on

the Nashville market, which operates very differently from the other U.S. markets. The cultivation and service to songwriters by publishers and the symbiotic nature of the culture are major components of the local industry.² If future editions are considered, I would recommend the inclusion of these elements, to make a well-rounded text for the college level.

Dan Galen Hodges Jr.

Endnotes

1. Dan Galen Hodges Jr., “Cultural Implications of International Companies Acquiring Nashville Publishers,” *College Music Symposium* 62, no. 1 (2022): 69-81. <https://doi.org/10.18177/sym.2022.62.mbi.11560>.
2. Hodges, “Cultural Implications of International Companies Acquiring Nashville Publishers.”

In his almost thirty-year career in the music business, **DAN HODGES** has worked for BMG Music Publishing, Rick Hall’s FAME Music, and Murrah Music. As a song plugger, Hodges successfully placed songs on albums generating over 10 million units in sales in his career, including the hits “Where Would You Be” by Martina McBride and “I’m A Survivor” by Reba McEntire (TV theme for *Reba*), Billy Currington’s ASCAP 2008 Country Song of the Year “Good Directions,” and songs recorded by many other major label



acts. In addition to being a publisher, Hodges co-produced the XM radio top 5 hit “Mandolin Rain” for Josh Kelley and discovered and signed to their first publishing deals country hitmakers Josh Kear (multi-grammy

winner and 2013 ASCAP Songwriter of the Year) and Chris Tompkins (multi-grammy winner and writer of thirteen #1 country songs), among other successful Nashville writers.

Since 2008, Hodges has operated his own Music Row-based publishing company, Dan Hodges Music, LLC. The company has enjoyed two #1's and had songs recorded by many Nashville country artists including Rascal Flatts, Martina McBride, Keith Urban, Brad Paisley, Chris Young, Reba McEntire, Lee Brice, and Kelsea Ballerini (her #1 "dibs"), to name a few. DHM also opened a virtual branch of the company in Australia in 2015, where it has enjoyed six #1 country songs and over thirty major label cuts in the Aussie country music scene. Hodges has been a regular attendee of the international music publisher conference, MIDEM, which has led to subpublishing relationships all over the world and DHM songs being placed on major label acts in multiple countries including Italy, France, Sweden, Ireland, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Germany.

He earned his Doctor of Business Administration/International Business degree from Liberty University. In the Fall of 2022, he assumed the role of Associate Professor at the University of Colorado Denver. Previously he taught as an adjunct and lecturer at Belmont University from 2016-2022.

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