Melvin L. Butler, *Island Gospel: Pentecostal Music and Identity in Jamaica and the United States*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2019. xix + 198 pp. (Paper US\$ 25.00)

In this groundbreaking and insightful book, Melvin Butler takes his readers on a journey into the sound worlds and ritual practices of Jamaican Pentecostal communities. *Island Gospel*, which is organized in part around the idea of flow—an idea that Butler nimbly deploys across cultural, spiritual, and migratory registers—makes significant contributions to areas historically overlooked by scholars working on music and religion in Jamaica. Although many excellent articles and several important monographs on Rastafari, Convince, Revival, and Kumina have opened onto big questions regarding African-derived cosmologies and Afro-Caribbean sonic and theological practices, very little scholarship has taken the *musical* lives of Pentecostal Christians in Jamaica and its diaspora seriously. Butler's welcome book interrogates musical theologies of piety and pleasure, considers questions of gender, nostalgia, and tradition, and theorizes about the role of African-American Gospel within these Jamaican faith communities. His well-written and carefully researched text offers a counternarrative—or, perhaps better, a complicating narrative—within Jamaican ethnomusicology and religious studies. It looks carefully at the ways that musical style helps to localize belief and practice and assists in the creation and maintenance of identity for Pentecostal believers. For all these reasons, the book stands as a brilliant example of the burgeoning scholarship on the ethnomusicology of Christianity.

An introductory chapter clears the ground for the case studies that follow, delineating what gospel music means in the Jamaican context, where it is best understood as “an umbrella category of Christian expression rendered through a variety of musical and rhetorical strategies” (p. 3). As such, a wide range of devotional and worship music (both live and recorded) and often thought of as separate or distinct genres, are included within this rubric. These include local choruses, African-American gospel, Southern gospel, gospel reggae, praise and worship songs, and more traditional hymns. The introduction also presents the concept of flow, through which Butler navigates across the cultural, spiritual, and migratory domains of Pentecostal experience. He illustrates how flow enables him to discuss shifting cultural ideas and practices and to analyze change over time, to engage effectively with the “movement of divine presence and power” (p. 6) experienced in worship services and devotional spaces, and to attend to the movement of bodies across the globe (for Butler's purposes, especially between Jamaica and New York City).

Butler crafts a narrative arc for the book that first introduces some of the sounds and ideas one might encounter in Pentecostal communities in Jamaica and North America and then proceeds to cover a wide range of theological and musical ground. He begins by developing the concept of “home” and shows convincingly how home can include overlapping repertoires (broadly Christian, that is) but that these repertoires can nevertheless be performed, perceived, and situated quite differently in Jamaica than they would be in New York City. Having introduced the broad outlines of the book and its sound worlds, Butler proceeds to unpack how the concept of holiness is constructed, both socially and through sound. Exploring these dynamics with Mercy Tabernacle in Liliput, Jamaica, he illustrates convincingly how ideas about holiness reinforce distinctions between piety and pleasure that, in turn, shape which musical behaviors are considered appropriate (and which are not). Moving from holiness to ritual flow and anointing, Butler then develops his approach to musical agency (both human and divine) within Jamaican Pentecostal contexts. Along the way, and in conversation with Pastor Hermine Bryan of Riversdale Pentecostal Church, he also offers a meditation on gender dynamics and the powerful presence of women within Jamaican Pentecostal and global Christian contexts. Engaging with nostalgia, narratives of the past, and performances of identity, he next explores the ways music reinforces (and, at times, contests) notions of tradition, change, and spiritual journey, affording individuals and communities of faith a means of navigating changing practices and needs. Sticking to questions of identity, he then turns to a consideration of religious ethnicity in which he illustrates how, through music, Jamaican Pentecostal believers variously perform (or choose not to perform) their Jamaicanness, their Pentecostalness, and their Blackness, both in Jamaica and abroad. Butler concludes the book by exploring discourses of unity and the transnational implications of shared Pentecostal faith, offering the example of Jamaican Pentecostal ritual as a site—a home—within which the global and the local can be reconciled.

This excellent, richly ethnographic book will undoubtedly find its way onto the bookshelves of regional specialists, anthropologists of religion, and ethnomusicologists as well as the reading lists of both undergraduate and graduate classes in short order.

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