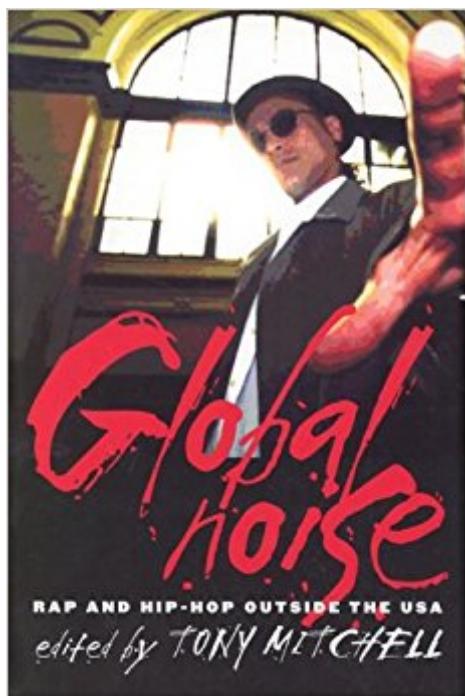


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Global Noise: Rap And Hip Hop Outside The USA (Music/Culture)



Synopsis

The thirteen essays that comprise Global Noise explore the hip hop scenes of Europe, Anglophone and Francophone Canada, Japan and Australia within their social, cultural and ethnic contexts. Countering the prevailing colonialist view that global hip hop is an exotic and derivative outgrowth of an African-American-owned idiom subject to assessment in terms of American norms and standards, Global Noise shows how international hip hop scenes, like those in France and Australia, developed by first adopting then adapting US models and establishing an increasing hybridity of local linguistic and musical features. The essays reveal diasporic manifestations of international hip hop that are rarely acknowledged in the growing commentary on the genre in the US. In the voices of rappers from around the globe with divergent backgrounds of race, nationality, class and gender, the authors find a consistent rhetoric of opposition and resistance to institutional forms of repression and the construction of a cohesive, historically-based subculture capable of accommodating regional and national diversities.

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Customer Reviews

With this groundbreaking collection of 13 essays on current hip-hop music and culture outside the U.S., Mitchell, who teaches writing and cultural studies at Sydney's University of Technology, offers

an intelligent, engaging contribution to pop cultural studies. Upholding the widely held criticism that U.S. hip-hop's "rhetorical conventions and tropes have become increasingly atrophied, cliched, and repetitive," Mitchell and the other contributors, including Jacqueline Urla, Andre J.M. Prevost and Claire Levy, exhibit exemplary research skills in their far-ranging explorations of "the expression of local identities globally through the vernaculars of rap and hip-hop in foreign contexts." Their subjects include Islamic rap in the U.K. and France; German-language rappers' expressions of second-generation immigrant experience; the Sydney group Def Wish Cast's attempt to forge a white, Australian-accented, nationalistic hip-hop culture; the revolutionary rhetoric of Italian "combat" rappers like Onda Rossa Posse and Assalti Frontali; mainland China's Cui Jian, who questioned the 1997 handover of Hong Kong; the Basque group Negu Gorriak's deployment of U.S. hip-hop styles within a radical identity politics; and artists in Aotearoa-New Zealand who combine rap, soul and reggae with traditional Maori music. While Mitchell explored similar ground in his 1996 book *Popular Music and Local Identity*, and while most of the essays are rooted in fashionable critical theories about regional world cultures being dominated by global, and especially U.S., consumer culture, this book explores the new phenomenon of worldwide hip-hop artists "reclaiming... localities as sites for the construction of imaginary local identities." Artists, activists and academics will look to this benchmark collection for a long time. 14 illus. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

This excellent overview of the phenomenon of rap and hip-hop will be well received by hardcore enthusiasts, cultural ethnographers, and musicologists everywhere. Mitchell (writing and cultural studies, Univ. of Technology, Sydney; *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop, and Rap in Europe and Oceania*) presents 12 essays by mostly academics on the impact of the rap and hip-hop idioms on local music scenes in Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia, and Polynesia. Rather than the perhaps expected conclusion that American cultural imperialism has come to dominate local scenes, the essays show how rap outside the United States is not simply an emulation of African American culture but a means of redefining local identity wherever it is embraced. Other sources, including David Toop's "Rap Attack" series and Adam Krims's *Rap Music and the Poetics of Identity* (Cambridge Univ., 2000), afford us a superb examination of the origins and implications of rap music, but this book is the first to focus solely on hip-hop as a global phenomenon. Recommended for all academic and larger public libraries. David Valencia, King Cty. Lib. Syst., Washington Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I waited a long time for this book, and I have to say it's not quite what I expected. First, I was

disappointed to see that the essays focus on Europe (France, Germany, UK, Italy, Bulgaria, Holland, Basque country), the Pacific Rim (Japan, Korea, Australia, New Zealand) and Canada with absolutely nothing about some of the most exciting and vibrant current hip-hop scenes, such as Mexico, Cuba, and especially Brazil (not to mention Africa). Secondly, I was hoping for an accessible exploration of the phenomenon of international rap, but be warned, this is a highly academic collection unlikely to appeal to the average hip-hop fan. Here's just a taste, from the essay "Urban Breakbeat Culture" on the UK: "The productive syncretism of diasporic cultures is further demonstrated by the creative use British-Asian musicians have made of hip-hop as the basis of musical-cultural statements about how they are negotiating new ethnic identities. Here again, hip-hop is only one node in a complex web of postcolonial cultural elements." It's not that the above is incomprehensible, it's just more academic than I wanted to deal with. The research is pretty impressive from an anthropological sense, however the essays are clearly written for academic purposes and lack the clear prose that might make them more engaging to the general reader. Many also suffer from an abundance of detail and minutiae regarding performers, releases, record sales, and so forth. My third major complaint is that the essays seem somewhat dated-in many of them references to releases and groups end at 1997-98, which is perhaps why places like Brazil aren't covered. Several bear the mark of having been hastily updated just prior to publication. All written by different authors, the essays share some common themes. Those that offer broad surveys of a specific country's scene all start out by defining rap/hip-hop as a culture (why not subculture?) comprised of four elements: breakdancing, graffiti, turntablism, and vocal rap. They then go on in most cases to name the early '80s films *Wild Style* and *Beat Street* as catalyzing forces leading to a breakdancing fad, which served as an incubator for the birth of a local hip-hop scene. Many of the essays discuss the local splits between "pop" radio-friendly rap and "real" or "hardcore" rap as well as the problems of airplay and distribution. The more interesting (and unfortunately, dense) of the essays focus on how hip-hop has been used in various countries as part of a cultural identity and/or political struggle. Naturally, this means a lot of muddled talk about globalism, cultural imperialism, but if one is willing to slog through the denser passages, there is some worthwhile material. There's much detailed discussion of how US hip-hop forms are combined with indigenous or other music styles to make something new and more relevant than whatever is coming from the US. Of course, this means some of the artists being discussed are rather far away from what most US hip-hop fans would consider as part of the genre. The Basque nationalist group Negu Gorriak, for example, is more of a punk band, and more commonly associated with Fugazi than hip-hop. The chapter on "Islamic" hip-hop is sort of a misnomer as well, as the artists

discussed (Fun-Da-Mental and the singer from Transglobal Underground) are more part of the Asian beats/dance scene than anything hip-hop. In any event, if you're really really into hip-hop, you might want to check this out to see what was going on around the world five years ago and for a limited view of how hip-hop has evolved beyond US shores. Each chapter has a discography at the end, which is helpful in trying to seek out some of the music, and a few websites are listed as well. Otherwise, I would advise leaving this books for the pop culture academics for whom it's clearly intended.

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