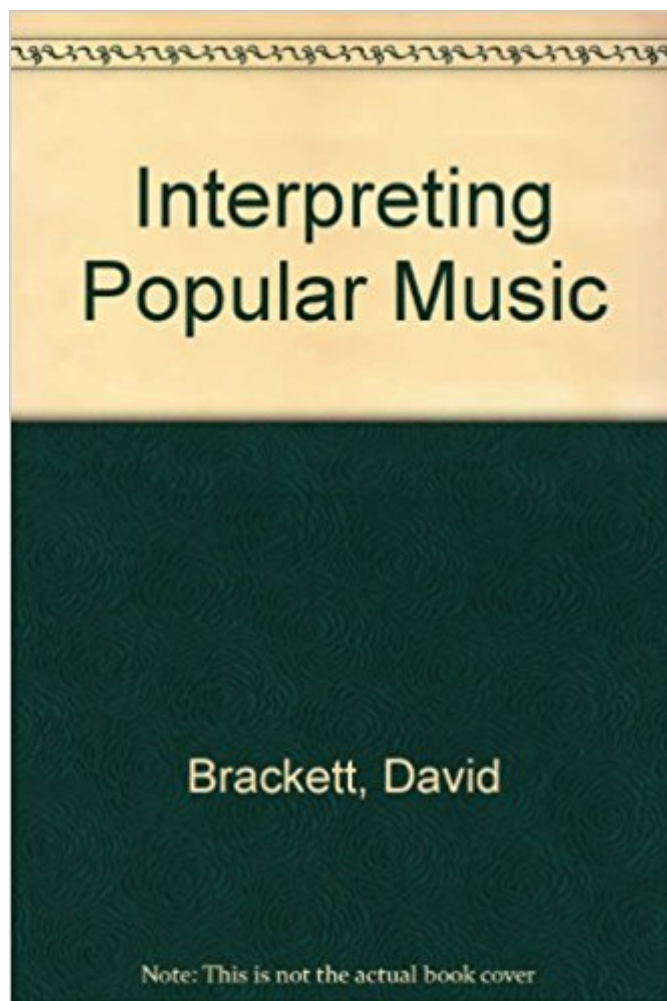


The book was found

Interpreting Popular Music



Synopsis

David Brackett demonstrates that there is no one way of interpreting popular music but that different types of popular music use different types of rhetoric, refer to different arguments about musical complexity and familiarity, and draw upon different senses of history and tradition. He crosses the disciplines of cultural studies and music theory to consider how listeners evaluate popular songs and how they come to attribute a rich variety of meanings to them. Issues such as authorship, reception, musical codes, and different modes of representing and describing music are explored in the context of recordings made by Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Hank Williams, James Brown, and Elvis Costello. In analysing their music and lyrics, David Brackett shows how interpretations of songs develop in specific cultural and historical contexts.

Book Information

Hardcover: 274 pages

Publisher: Cambridge University Press (January 26, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0521473373

ISBN-13: 978-0521473378

Product Dimensions: 6 x 1 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #6,603,514 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #37 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Ethnic & International > World Beat #980 in Books >

Arts & Photography > Music > Songbooks > Popular #4659 in Books > Arts & Photography >

Music > Songbooks > Vocal

Customer Reviews

"With this book, David Brackett takes his place among the handful of musicologists who are leading the development of a critical musicology for popular music. In clear prose, through a thoughtful, engaging authorial voice, Brackett offers six essays that are unified by his desire to create and refine ways of talking about how popular music works. . . . [Brackett's book] is not only much more illuminating and theoretically sophisticated than nearly all of its predecessors, but also more so than most of what has appeared subsequently."--Robert Walser, "Notes" --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

David Brackett demonstrates that there is no one way of interpreting popular music and he crosses the disciplines of cultural studies and music theory to consider how listeners evaluate popular songs and how they come to attribute a rich variety of meanings to them. Issues such as authorship, reception, musical codes, and different modes of representing and describing music are explored in the context of recordings made by Billie Holiday, Bing Crosby, Hank Williams, James Brown, and Elvis Costello.

The analyses are interesting but I found myself skipping over parts that would have read better if Mr. Brackett had used simpler style that was not so over-worked with academic pedantry (*Superbad*) "Other utterances that might be considered marginal from and Eurocentric viewpoint, including a variety of grunts and groans, also occur on the latter part of beat four . . . ". The overflowing of original terminology reminds me more of the Saturday Night Live skits that referred to the obtuse and obscure phraseology of self-made Black intellectuals who were prisoners in jail.

Ouch. Attempting to work in a reference to the "golden section" in "*Superbad*" is not legitimate, IMHO. Such proportions do not hold up during a live performance where changes would naturally occur.

David Brackett's "*Interpreting Popular Music*" is a very valuable addition to the field of popular music scholarship. It self-consciously avoids a general theory of popular music scholarship, but rather makes the case that a wide variety of individual approaches, best tailored to 1) the music involved, and 2) the relative, changing stance of the interpreter to the kind of music at hand, provide the most honest and productive hermeneutic. Add this to a forceful defense of paying attention to popular music (take note, musicologists and ethnomusicologists!) and you have a brilliant, rigorous, but open-ended approach to an area of music until recently mostly ignored by musicology. Having said that, Brackett takes several subjects for analysis: Hank Williams "*You're Cheating Heart*," Billie Holiday and Bing Crosby's "*I'll Be Seeing You*," James Brown's "*Superbad*," and Elvis Costello's "*Pills and Soap*." At each point he critiques and complicates some commonly-held notions, such as biographical relationships between artists and their music (Holiday), notions of immediate 'authenticity' (Williams), and the notions that one can't really write about music, or that musical difference and marketability are at odds (Costello). Drawing on the work of Richard Middleton, Simon Frith and other music scholars, Brackett builds his case at each turn with the help of speech-act theory, African-American literary theory, and "spectrum graphs"-- pitch vs time graphs that help the reader analyze and compare inflection, timbre, style and scope in a more tangible way

that simple adjectives. But for the more casual reader, the writing itself is easy and unencumbered. This is a good introduction (without intending to be so) for the beginning scholar of cultural music studies, as the reader really gets a good look at the wide variety of tools available to examine music--not just formal analysis.

David Brackett's work is a major contribution to the field of popular music scholarship, as well as to the growing debates about the future of music studies. It's wonderfully readable, thoughtful and wide-ranging, and he challenges some sacred cows in both musicology and popular music studies. There's something for everyone here: chapter topics range from Hank Williams to James Brown to Elvis Costello. And Brackett smoothly uses a stunning array of approaches tailored to each of these widely varied musics. If you're interested in popular culture, popular music, or music studies, DON'T MISS THIS BOOK! --Anahid Kassabia

[Download to continue reading...](#)

CLEP Analyzing & Interpreting Literature with CD-ROM (REA): The Best Test Prep for the CLEP Analyzing and Interpreting Literature Exam with REA's TESTware (Test Preps) Interpreting American Military History at Museums and Historic Sites (Interpreting History) Interpreting Naval History at Museums and Historic Sites (Interpreting History) Interpreting Popular Music Popular 8 Note Hymns: Music Patterns for Xylophone, Glockenspiel, Recorder, Bells and Piano (Popular 8 Note Songs) (Volume 2) Blank Sheet Music - 12 Staves: Blank Sheet Music Paper / Music Sheet Music / Sheet Music Notebook (Volume 59) Blank Piano Sheet Music : (8.5 by 11) Large Print - Music Manuscript Notebook - (Composition Books - Music Manuscript Paper - Piano Sheet Music) Blank ... For Piano 104 Pages Vol.9: Blank Sheet Music Blank Sheet Music - 12 Staves: Blank Sheet Music Paper / Music Sheet Music / Sheet Music Notebook - Vintage / Aged Cover (Volume 6) The Power of Black Music: Interpreting Its History from Africa to the United States The Accompaniment in "Unaccompanied" Bach: Interpreting the Sonatas and Partitas for Violin (Publications of the Early Music Institute) Onstage with Grieg: Interpreting His Piano Music A Matter of Choice: Interpreting Choral Music Law and Popular Culture: A Course Book, 2nd Edition (Politics, Media, and Popular Culture) Arguing Comics: Literary Masters on a Popular Medium (Studies in Popular Culture (Paperback)) Double Agent! Piano Duets: Hal Leonard Student Piano Library Popular Songs Series Intermediate 1 Piano, 4 Hands (Popular Songs, Hal Leonard Student Piano Library) Adult Piano Adventures Popular Book 1: Timeless Hits and Popular Favorites The Complete Portrait Manual (Popular Photography): 200+ Tips and Techniques for Shooting Perfect Photos of People (Popular Photography Books) Popular Performer -- Rodgers and Hart: The Songs

of Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart (Popular Performer Series) 100 Most Popular Genre Fiction
Authors: Biographical Sketches and Bibliographies (Popular Authors (Hardcover)) Genreflecting: A
Guide to Popular Reading Interests, 7th Edition: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests
(Genreflecting Advisory Series)

[Contact Us](#)

[DMCA](#)

[Privacy](#)

[FAQ & Help](#)