greater depth of inquiry, and some­what more care. Would I recommend it to its target audiences? Definitely yes. And a wider audience? Yes, but with caution.

No book is perfect.

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The close reading Michael Webb gives of contemporary urban musical expression in Papua New Guinea separates this book from reams of ethno-musicological studies in the Pacific Islands that fixate on “traditional” music cultures (invented or otherwise). Virtual fringe on the fringe, for music scholarship itself has been marginal within Pacific Islands studies—witness, for example, the absence thus far of music articles in this journal. Lokal Musik merits the attention of the more disparate community of Pacific Islands scholars, for it illustrates vividly the power of contemporary popular musical means to resonate broader social concerns.

Webb focuses specifically on songs with lyrics in Tok Pisin, a regional lingua franca. His concerns are threefold: “the particular ways in which T[ok]
P[isin] song both serves as a vehicle for and provides concrete manifestations of political and social identity in Papua New Guinea; with the process and implications of music change in Papua New Guinea; and with the dynamics of the postcontact (particularly commercial) music situation” (15).

Findings are primarily derived from examining commercial recordings and newspaper articles; moreover, Webb considers not only technical musical means, but lyrics, social relationships among musicians, and recording-studio strategies as well. His purview is not strictly synchronic, for he examines various kinds of nonendemic musical influence over time, thus demonstrating “that Western-derived musics (e.g., popular and religious) are assimilated into local repertoires, and ... the development of regional postcontact styles (e.g., Tolai rock) become strong identity markers” (232).

The presentation proceeds by section. Part One, “Music, Social Organization, and Identity,” includes a detailed analysis of levels of identity—national, regional, provincial, international—as expressed in song lyrics (chapter 2), and the makeup of musical ensembles (chapter 3, which includes a thoughtful discussion of band names). Part Two, “Syncretic Elements in Postcontact Musics,” considers innovation in song texts and musical styles (chapter 4), and the impact of Christianity and church music (chapter 5). Part Three (chapters 6 through 8) consists of three case studies: a theme (the portrayal of women in song lyrics), an individual musician, and a studio. A concluding chapter is followed by three appendixes: indexes of the song texts transcribed, arranged by performer and song title, and a list of commercially recorded songs consulted.

In terms of empirical data, this book makes two significant contributions. First, a substantial number of song texts, entire or excerpted, are transcribed in Tok Pisin and interlined with English equivalents, thus being made available for further linguistic analysis. Second, chapter 4 contains a particularly lucid discussion of various song types in the contemporary popular idiom (95–117). The diversity of named categories documented here should dispel any notions that “all pop music sounds alike.”

This book’s genesis is described by the series editor: “Lokal Musik is a revised version of a Master’s thesis submitted to Wesleyan University [1990]. While such theses do not necessarily make valuable original contributions to a field, the present volume is a notable exception” (xvi). Notwithstanding the book’s empirical contribution, it is less successful as a theoretical treatise on popular music or urban culture. Facility in handling theory is generally nascent among MA thesis writers, and this one is no exception. Most obvious is Webb’s limited application of his wide reading, both in Papua New Guinea studies and in ethnomusicology, merely as illustration: for example, “so-and-so says such-and-such, and this music shows that.”

A reader who looks beyond the author’s intellectual rough edges, however, will be amply rewarded by the respectable documentation of a vital component of contemporary Papua
New Guinea cultural expression. Lingua franca song is confronted with multiple challenges: it must be linguistically accessible to diverse audiences; it must be thematically relevant to audiences of different experiential backgrounds (eg, urban versus village); the musical styles, drawn from various sources—tribal, regional, international—must appeal across more narrow tribal, regional, and cultural lines as well. The paramount concern is financial feasibility, which in turn brings into play other sets of strategies for packaging, marketing, and distribution.

Beyond the Papua New Guinea case study, moreover, readers are implicitly invited to contemplate a rich, and virtually unmined, area for future research—contemporary musical idioms, their social and economic networks, and their ramifications for social analysis, in regions where social and linguistic diversity reign supreme.

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Kanak Sculpture and Painters Today: *Ko i Névâ* is a book about contemporary Kanak (Melanesian) artists who participated in the art exhibition by the same name that opened in 1990 at the Noumea Museum, Noumea, New Caledonia and then traveled for three months throughout the island of Grande Terre. The design of the book is striking. Surfaces of the cover are light brown and simulate the grainy texture of wood—the major medium for traditional and contemporary sculpture. The words *Ko i Névâ* are reproduced on the front cover as though carved in low relief. A logo in the lower left-hand corner comprises a circle (the shape of a traditional case ‘house’ in New Caledonia) enclosing a traditional roof spire. Directly opposite, in the lower right-hand corner, are reproduced four brightly colored strokes of paint (painting is not one of the older traditional art forms in New Caledonia). The wood-like surface, logo, and paint strokes indicate visually the variety and contrast of media, tools, and art philosophy of the artists represented in the book.

The book opens with a short preface and remarks about the exhibi-