Anderton, Chris, and Sergio Pisfil. 2022. Researching Live Music – Gigs, Tours, Concerts, and Festivals. London: Routledge.

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Edited by Chris Anderton and Sergio Pisfil, this book appears at a crucial time in music studies: during a global pandemic that shook the music industry and its professionals, as well as its audiences (Gloor 2020). *Researching Live Music: Gigs, Tours, Concerts and Festivals* (Anderton and Pisfil 2022), is divided into four parts, with a total of seventeen thought-provoking chapters, in this emerging research field of live music. It is a book that has a multifaceted approach towards the music industry, covering various axes and current issues within multidimensional sectors, such as production, promotion, consumption, policies, ecologies, audiences, and financial and symbolic economies, among others. This book might well be an obligatory starting point for those who want to focus on live music research.

In the introduction, the authors reveal the long history of the study of live music as an object of interest. However, to this day, there are few researchers that consider live music as a disciplinary field of study of its own. Both from a theoretical and empirical perspective, the book attempts to critique and move away from this assessment, as evidenced in the following excerpt:

In this growing list of publications, we can perhaps recognize the emergence of a new type of scholar—the “live music researcher” (…)— and the development of an interdisciplinary field of study, complete with dedicated research units such as POPLIVE (Netherlands), the Birmingham Live Music Project (UK), and the Live Music Exchange (UK) (each of which is represented in this book).[1] Live music is also increasingly the object of financial support and state intervention from both policymakers and academia, focused initially on local and regional economic development. (Anderton and Pisfil 2022:3–4).

The projects listed in the above excerpt center the two geographical contexts where live music research is emphasized. Presenting and enunciating those contexts is determinant to understand the lack of attention given to live music in other European countries. In Portugal, for example, there is no project of this scale. Nevertheless, we can note the intention of the authors to go beyond the historical association, in which Howard Becker (1951) analyzed live music at the intersectional point of music scenes (Bennett and Peterson 2004) and youth subcultures (Bennett and Guerra 2021). This book is excellent in recognizing the major works that were done in the 1990s and early 2000s on live music and the music scenes that gravitate around live music (Thornton 1996; Bennett 1997). It also resituates the emerging study of live music, which started in the mid-2000s and has strongly contributed to the consolidation of this topic as an area of research and study. This body of work includes that of Gina Arnold (2018), Chris Anderton (2019), Fabian Holt (2020), and others.

Indeed, the concept of “live music researcher” (Cloonan 2020), introduced by the authors, almost appears as an omnipresent entity in the book, to the extent that this “live music researcher” is portrayed as being a point of connection between public policies, policymakers, events, territories, and other academic fields. Besides being a researcher who navigates a disciplinary area that combines several elements — from practical processes of creation to urban intervention, planning, and development (Cohen 2012) — we are facing a type of researcher who works on an ambiguous and transdisciplinary empirical object. Thus, another aspect to highlight in this book relates to the fact that the authors stay away from a romanticized vision of the relevance of studies on live music. On the contrary, Anderton and Pisfil (2022) present the difficulties involved in studies on this issue, namely from the point of view of its definition, empirical circumscription, and theoretical-methodological delineation. Additionally, they still manage to question modes of consumption and other social dynamics that surround live music, such as experiences, meanings (Frith 2007), modes and forms of resistance (Bennett and Guerra 2019), or music as an individual and collective identity expression (Guerra 2020a).

On another level, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a recurrent subject in almost every academic study that has been conducted in the last two years.[2] With regard to live music, perhaps, the main change concerns the central role that new technologies now play (Howard *et al.,* 2021; Guerra *et al.*, 2021). As Anderton and Pisfil (2022) argue, technologies have always imposed a pressure on live music events, on consumption and on the forms of music production and promotion, leading authors such as Auslander (1999) to state that new technologies have emerged to undermine the authenticity of live music. Although we understand Auslander's point of view — and keeping in mind the temporal context in which it was framed — we cannot fail to have some reservations, especially because after all, what does it mean to be authentic? (Anderton and Pisfil 2022:4–5). We should read that:

Nevertheless, what becomes clear in the literature on authenticity is that definitions and understandings vary from genre to genre, and from audience to audience, so notions of liveness need to be contextualized rather than generalized (ibid.).

At the same time, Chris Anderton and Sergio Pisfil (2022) are very incisive in their approach, without ever closing or narrowing it down, stating that the very concept of authenticity is also malleable and adaptable to each musical genre, the audiences, and the forms of consumption. Moreover, when we read the book, we cannot help but question to what extent the new technologies did not exacerbate the authenticity or the "symbolic role" (Anderton and Pisfil 2022:4) of live music during the pandemic. Perhaps this is a question yet to be explored. From a conceptual point of view, this is a very complete book because it deals with concepts that are usually discarded in the social sciences, namely in sociology, such as "musicking," "ecology," "performance," "staging," and "mediation" (Anderton and Pisfil 2022:5–6): concepts that are central to the foundation of the live music researcher, and determinant for the articulation between the four parts and the seventeen chapters that make up this book.

The first part of the book focuses on promotion and is made up of five chapters. Three of them are dedicated to the conceptualization and theoretical-empirical reflection around live music festivals. These include Steve Waksman chapter, "Festivals, Free and Unfree: Alex Cooley and the American Rock Festival"; Danny Hagan's chapter, "As Long as They Go Home Safe: The Voice of the Independent Music Festival Promoter"; and Patryk Galuszka's chapter, "Showcase Festivals as a Gateway to Foreign Markets." There is also a chapter on concerts and live music ecologies by Pat O'Grady, "Under the Cover of Darkness: Situating 'Covers Gigs' within Live Music Ecologies," and a final chapter titled "Disruption and Continuity: COVID-19, Live Music, and Cyclic Sociality" by Chris Anderton.

In the chapters on festivals, two axes seem to be highlighted: profit and economic power, and audiences. Considering this specific case, we can explicitly find in all of them what Cluley (2009) wrote about the centering of the figure of the music producer, because they are seen as enhancing features of live music and as elements of relevance within musical communities. When talking about music festivals, first of all, one tends to think about the audiences, ways of consumption (Guerra 2020b) or even environmental impacts (Luoma 2018), while often excluding modes of organization and productive cooperation between producers and other entities. Then, the status of music producer can be seen as a personal brand, something transversal to mainstream, underground or independent festivals. Furthermore, the economic sustainability of festivals, the impacts of festivals on the mental health of consumers and audiences or their democratization, are in line with what Hesmondhalgh (2008) wrote, regarding the fact that (live) music is a positive resource in the processes of identity construction and self-fabrication of the individual and collective self, themes that are evident in these works. These chapters focusing on live music festivals and their relationship with music promotion processes are — in our understanding — aligned with the factors that were behind the live music boom, emerging as a satellite theme to the economic importance of music at the heart of the creative and artistic industries, an aspect that had a profound impact on the ways in which live music is (and was) experienced. The control of crowds becomes a constant (Ambrose 2001), as did corporate sponsorship (Haring 2005). The last two chapters of the first part of this book both relate to live music ecologies. As van der Hoeven and Hitters (2019) showed, both cover bands and the COVID-19 challenge meet the social and cultural values attributed to music ecologies. From the point of view of social values, both authors establish arguments that intersect with the feelings of belonging between social groups, an aspect that has a direct impact on the creation of networks, as well as on the fostering and dissemination of processes of production/promotion — and subsequent consumption — of music. In parallel, the involvement with the public is another hinge element in this book and in the approaches enunciated, especially because it extends beyond musical programming. In the

case of cultural values, the creative processes carried out as a means of signifying identity are those that deserve greater emphasis, in the sense that they provide us with new forms of resistance and performance within the spectrum of live music (Klamer 2004).

Made up of four chapters, the second part of the book is dedicated to empirical and theoretical contributions about production processes. The first chapter is “Live Sound Matters” by Christopher James Dahlie, Jos Mulder, Sergio Pisfil and Nick Reeder; the second chapter, written by Glyn Davis, is titled “Mobile Spectacle: Es Devlin’s *Pandemonium* Tour Design”; the third chapter, by Gabrielle Kielich, is called “Fulfilling the Hospitality Rider: Working Practices and Issues in a Tour’s Supply Chain”; and the last chapter “Vocaloid Liveness? Hatsune Miku and the Live Production of Japanese Virtual Idol Concerts” is authored by Kimi Kärki. In a transversal way, it became possible to identify the preponderance of live music production, from a technical point of view, through technological advances, and because of the growing importance of live music within the music industry. Therefore, this framing of the importance of live sound is allied to the performance of live music.

In the first chapter on this second part of the book, “Live Sound Matters,” the paradigmatic example of the Beatles and their live performances is provided, demonstrating the importance of the processes of assembling the infrastructures responsible for the transmission of sound that will consequently impact audiences from a symbolic and sentimental point of view. Indeed, this second part can be seen as an extension of the previous one, as it will be the case with the following ones, with a circular logic and interconnection of key points and empirical examples central to the understanding of live music as a disciplinary field.

It is relevant to mention the concept of “performance” and the plurality of approaches based on it throughout the chapters that make up the book, taking as a starting point Fabian Holt’s research (2010). Holt states that although performance is something that has been studied for decades, it has only recently begun to be the center of interest, as with live music, and perhaps this is why both fields are similar and twice as influential. This question of performance defines the focus of the third part of the book, aimed at consumption. Here, the central angle comes from social sciences, as topics such as the sociology of music, new technologies, authenticity, archives, and nostalgia are addressed. For Holt (2010), live music is a product of the broad social and cultural transformations of modernity (Witkowski 2015). We add that live music is also an enabler of transformations and changes in contemporary societies, and this is an idea that is strongly evident in this third part, as well as in the fourth and final part of the book. Thus, this third part has as its first chapter the contribution of Loïc Riom titled “Making Music Public: What Would a Sociology of Live Music Promotion Look Like?” which goes hand in hand with the second chapter, titled “Dead Stars Live: Exploring Holograms, Liveness, and Authenticity” written by Kenny Forbes. Still within the spectrum of issues that question authenticity are the third chapter by Andy Bennett titled “Live ... as You’ve Always Heard it Before: Classic Rock, Technology, and the Re-positioning of Authenticity in Live Music Performance” and the fourth chapter by Stephen Loy, titled “Approaching the Live from a Distance: The Unofficial Led Zeppelin Archive.” For several decades, there have been numerous works that set out to study and understand the contexts in which live music is produced and consumed (Hoeven et al. 2020). All of these have directed us to a unique trajectory: understanding the future of live music. In this sense, the chapters from the third part bring us a little closer to that goal, as they present research works situated between the production and consumption of live music, in its most diverse aspects: vocals, research, archives, memory, technologies, and many others. In short, they give a sense of other typologies of live music ecologies (Hoeven et al. 2020).

Finally, the last part of the book focuses on the field of politics and decision-making. In this last part, we can find calls and reflections around music cities, tensions around live music, the connection between social movements such as feminism, festivals, and the live music video economy. This includes the contributions of Christina Ballico and Dave Carter (“Music Cities, or Cities of Music?”) and Adam Behr (“State of Play: Tensions and Interventions in Live Music Policy)”. In the spectrum of feminist movements, we find the input of Sarah Lahasky with her chapter “Por Más Músicas Mujeres en Vivo!: The Live Music Female Quota Law and its Implications for Argentine Music Festivals.” The section concludes with the contribution of Gérôme Guibert, Michaël Spanu, and Catherine Rudent, “Beyond Live Shows: Regulation and Innovation in the French Live Music Video Economy.” These chapters demonstrate the links between the live music industry and advanced economic systems, focusing on the industry at the heart of popular policy development. What was once considered a political challenge is now seen as a weapon, an asset, and a means of promoting change. In this last section, the power of music as a resource and as a form of discourse becomes clear, as it gives rise to distinct social experiences (Turino 2008). Indeed, this section demonstrates the many connections between the city, social actors, and music, something that materializes in a logic of relationship and mutual influence. Nevertheless, what became possible to ascertain through the reading of the chapters in this section is that live music is a catalyst of connections, and the social transformative role of music in society is even more evident.

In short, we emphasize that this book asserts itself as a decisive contribution to live music studies, as it brings together perspectives and approaches that are also important in contemporary societies. Moreover, it is a book that profoundly encourages a process of self-reflection, something all the more evident when we think of the multitude of countries — and scientific areas — that still fail to acknowledge the pertinence of live music and "live music researchers" from a political, economic, cultural, social, historical, and symbolic point of view.

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[1] POPLIVE is a large-scale research project on live music at the Erasmus University and the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, in collaboration with the VNPF and MOJO Concerts. The project is funded by the NWO as part of the Topsector Creative Industries. Available at: https://www.poplive.nl/ [2]. The result of a collaboration between Aston University, Birmingham City University, and Newcastle University that is exploring the live music industry in Birmingham. The main goal is to inform the public, policymakers, and the different stakeholders involved with live music in the city about the impact of changes that are occurring at national and global levels, while promoting live music. Available at: https://livemusicresearch.org/birmingham-live-music-project/ [3]. The genesis of the Live Music Exchange was a comprehensive three-year study of the live music sector in the UK, undertaken by the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Available at: http://livemusicexchange.org/about/ [4].

[2] The fact that this book addresses other topics is like a breath of fresh air to scientific knowledge.

Links:
[1] https://ethnomusicologyreview.ucla.edu/sites/default/files/er_v24_20guerra.pdf
[2] https://www.poplive.nl/
[3] https://livemusicresearch.org/birmingham-live-music-project/
[4] http://livemusicexchange.org/about/