

og som dannede grundlag for et par radio- og TV-udsendelser i DR's regi. I disse time-lange interviews er der gravet oplysninger frem om Webster musikerkarriere, som aldrig tidligere har været dokumenteret i litteraturen. Dette materiale har Büchmann-Møller suppleret med personlige samtaler med op mod et halvt hundrede personer, der har haft tilknytning til Webster.

I sin research har Büchmann-Møller desuden botaniseret flittigt i de 122 interviews med amerikanske jazzmusikere, der fandt sted mellem 1972 og 1984 under *The Jazz Oral History Project*, og som nu befinder sig i arkiverne på Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies i New Jersey. Dette enorme projekt er siden blevet fortsat af universiteter i Californien, Connecticut, New Orleans og endelig fra 1992 af The Smithsonian Institution i Washington, og tilsammen udgør de mange tusinde timers interviews et uvurderligt kildemateriale til studiet af jazzten.

Webster-biografien er velskrevet ud fra et minutøst tilrettelagt research-arbejde og med en historisk fremstilling, der overalt er veldokumenteret med et omfattende noteapparat.

Tore Mortensen



Rune Skyum-Nielsen, *Nr. 1 – dansk hiphopkultur siden 1983*
Informations Forlag: København, 2006
228 pp., illus.
ISBN 87-7514-156-6
DKK 248

Books on rap music and hip hop culture have been growing in number through recent years. However, despite this rise publications still do not match the increasingly dominant position of hip hop in contemporary popular music and culture. Therefore Rune Skyum-Nielsen's enthusiastic and well written account of the history of hip hop in Denmark, *Nr. 1 – dansk hiphopkultur siden 1983* (No. 1 – Danish Hip Hop Culture since 1983), is most welcome.

The book presents its subject in fourteen chapters, each representing a different angle on Danish hip hop culture. It opens with an attempted definition of hip hop as a global, competitive youth culture or lifestyle (p. 12) made up of at least four elements: break-dance, graffiti, rap and DJ'ing. Each of these elements are then explained and historicised with emphasis on major Danish contributors. Then follows a line of thematic discussions – of hip hop quarrels (so-called *beefs*); of hip hop as a resource for marginalized groups (especially immigrant youth); of machismo and gender issues; of (mis)interpretations of hip hop by the Danish media; of rap lyrics as art and their linguistic development; of political rap and the change of hip hop from subculture to mainstream phenomena (what the writer refers to as *hit pop*, p. 184).

Throughout the book the presentation takes the form of a long line of concrete and detailed anecdotes about the people and institutions involved in hip hop culture – a rich material based on more than 60 interviews (with artists, organizers, and researchers), alongside a considerable number of articles, reviews, essays etc. from newspapers, magazines, and scientific journals. Sadly references to the latter, i.e. earlier writings on the subject, are generally left out, being the most obvious indication that this is what may be described as a journalistic (i.e. non-academic) publication.

Writing hip hop history thematically (instead of chronologically) is in my opinion a fruitful way of providing not only a historical overview (patched together across the chapters) but also a collection of approaches to comprehending hip hop culture. The themes are well

chosen, though hardly surprising, and the point, that representing certain aspects and accounts of the story means the exclusions of others, is made from the outset (p. 13) – liberating both author and his readers from any ideas about historiographic encyclopaedism.

The downside of basing the history-telling on chosen informants is of course that it is their stories, that are represented. While this is a basic (and fully legitimate) consequence of the book's methodological set-up, it nevertheless becomes a bit problematic, when the author is as enthusiastic as is the case. Skyum-Nielsen definitely likes hip hop culture, and as a writer he tries to get close to his subject by signalling a certain affinity with it – using a moderate amount of slang (explained in a vocabulary in the back of the book) and stating established 'truths' and value judgements about for instance early Danish hip hop (p. 14) as assumed common knowledge. While these rhetoric means shows off the writer as knowledgeable, a higher degree of critical distance and questioning of the statements given by the informants would nevertheless have suited both the historicising of the four elements and the following thematic discussions. When for instance Danish rapper Per Vers claims that most Danish hip hoppers identify with the struggle fought by marginalized groups in the USA, it goes against the story otherwise told throughout the book, namely that Danish hip hop culture is mainly concerned with competition on skills (instead of politics). Still Vers' statement is not met with a demand for further elaboration (p. 180).

Another problematic consequence resulting from the author's reliance on interviews is the reproduction of some unfortunate memory lapses that could have been corrected by consulting historical sources. This may of course be what Skyum-Nielsen has attempted consulting the aforementioned newspaper articles etc. But still examples remain – as when the visit of Herbie Hancock and his accompanying DJ, Grandmixer D.ST. to Copenhagen is dated January 1985 (a year too late; p. 68), a mistake unfortunately used to explain how DJ'ing was the last of the four elements to be introduced to the Danish crowd. In fact Grandmixer D.ST. arrived just before break-dance (the first of the elements to be introduced according to the book) took off as a fad among Danish youth. But although the author makes reservations about this kind of memory lapses on behalf of his informants, this just leaves the readers with a conscious uncertainty about the correctness of the explanations offered.

Finally and on a more abstract level the uncritical representation of informants, most of whom are prominent Danish hip hop artists, supports a rather narrow idea about hip hop culture as constituted by only its leading and most successful representatives, while the broader, less active part of hip hop fans along with the rest of Danish music culture and society are either left silent, portrayed as an obstacle (e.g. The National Danish Railroad and Danish news-media) or as struggling to understand hip hop (e.g. literary scholars and poets). Skyum-Nielsen makes reservations for not dealing thoroughly with the African-American roots of hip hop culture, but the question of the relationship between Danish hip hop culture (the actual subject of the book) and the society in which it is situated, is nonetheless essential and should have been paid more attention. I.e., *beefs* and sexism exemplify issues with different explanations (and resonance) in a poor, crime- and drug-ridden African-American ghetto-context compared to the conditions under which most Danish hip hoppers live and practise their art.

Nr. 1 is as mentioned what may be referred to as a journalistic publication, and its primary audience is not the academy (p. 13). This of course does not mean that it is of no interest to music scholars, and at the same time it does not excuse the problems, that I have been pointing at. A further area in which the book reveals itself as non-academic is in its rather scarce use of theoretically loaded terms. Examples are descriptions of hip hop as a *tribal community* (p. 10), a *subculture* (p. 29), and of certain hip hoppers as *insiders* (p. 155). And though an argument may be, that theoretical explanations and discussions of the assumptions,

that follow from e.g. referring to hip hop as a tribal community, would have rendered the book less appealing to its intended readers, these features would none the less have enriched the text and perhaps even facilitated a broader use of the book (e.g. in the gymnasium). Like the short 'side-stories' already present along the main text theoretical notes could have been added contributing an obvious extra source of reflection.

However, despite these critical remarks Rune Skyum-Nielsens book on Danish hip hop culture is an important contribution to the shedding of light on this increasingly important aspect of Danish popular music culture.

Mads Krogh



Thomas Vilhelm, *Det visuelle øre – filmmusikkens historie*

Århus: Systeme, 2005

325 pp., illus.

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DKK 325

Danish publications on film music are still too few, given the important role this music plays in music culture and in many people's daily music consumption. Thomas Vilhelm's book, *Det visuelle øre – filmmusikkens historie* (The Visual Ear – The History of Film Music), is therefore a much needed publication. It must be emphasized straight away that this is not an academic work but a descriptive book based on interviews with composers and directors. Vilhelm neither theorizes nor analyses, but on the other hand, the book is a treasure trove of factual knowledge about film music, composers, and directors. For the first time the historical development of film music in Denmark is reviewed, and in addition alongside the developments in other European countries and USA. Due to the chosen structure of the material, the book is most useful as a reference book to have at hand if you have any interest in film music. But *Det visuelle øre* can also be read as a whole giving a perceptive updated overview of the history of film music in western societies.

The book's 325 pages are divided into four main parts, introduced by a short prologue and followed by a few notes, references, and indexes. The book is richly illustrated with black and white photos, though they are quite uniform – all but a few portraying composers and directors.

The first part is a historical review of the development of the film medium and film music primarily in the USA. It begins with the Lumière brothers and what is said to be the world's first public film screening on 28 December 1895 in Paris, and ends with Howard Shore's scores for *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–3). In between we are told about the golden age of the Hollywood symphonic film score in the 40s, how jazz and rock influenced the film music of the 50s and 60s and how electronic music made its entry in the 80s together with a revival of the symphonic score beginning with *Star Wars* in the 70s. As a natural result of the relative closeness of the period, the general contours of the last 20 years are not apparent. Instead the 90s and the first years of this century are reviewed mainly by focusing on specific directors (e.g. Clint Eastwood and Quentin Tarantino) and films (e.g. *Magnolia* and *The Lord of the Rings*). The important perspective of the mutual dependency between the record industry and film music in the last decades is also briefly reviewed in this first part.

The second part has the same historical perspective as part one, now focusing on Denmark (chapter one) and the rest of Europe (chapter two). Again the author carefully ensures a wide