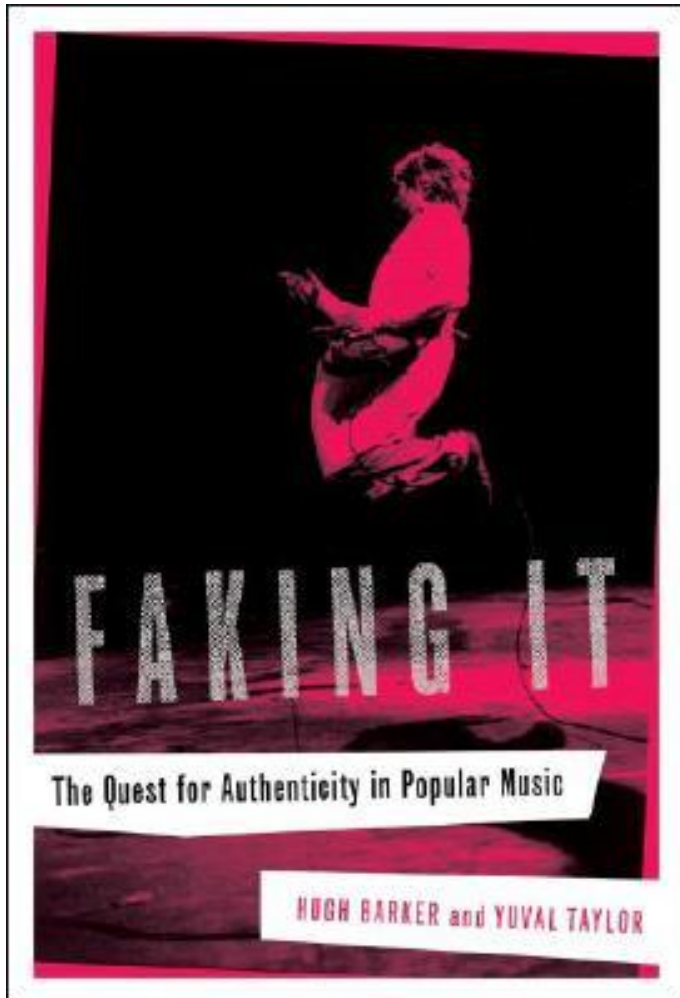

Hugh Barker

Faking It: The Quest for Authenticity in Popular Music



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Description

Did Elvis sing from the heart, or was he just acting? Were the Sex Pistols more real than disco? Why do so many musicians base their approach on being *authentic*, and why do music buffs fall for it every time? By investigating this obsession in the last century through the stories of John Lennon, Kurt Cobain, Jimmie Rodgers, Donna Summer, Leadbelly, Neil Young, Moby, and others, *Faking It* rethinks what makes popular music work. Along the way, the authors discuss the segregation of music in the South, investigate the predominance of self-absorption in modern pop, reassess the rebellious ridiculousness of rockabilly and disco, and delineate how the quest for authenticity has not only made some music great and some music terrible but also shaped in a fundamental way the development of popular music in our time.

Insightful reviews

Linda: murky premise. unstimulating. too much other good stuff i could be reading.

Andrea Harrow: Interesting exploration of how our culture judges music and artists. Gives insights into opinion.

Josh Neas: A really fascinating look at the idea of what 'authenticity' means in popular music, why people seem to prize it so extensively and how we use it to judge the legitimacy of 'art.' While there are one or two chapters that don't quite capitalize on their conceit (each chapter focuses on a specific moment/song/artist and then expands to make the examination more universal), the best ones - chapters on 'Mississippi' John Hurt, Jimmie Rodgers, Donna Summer and disco, among others - really open up some interesting examinations about why we seem to value 'authenticity' in a commercial art form that is on so many levels inherently fake. A really great read for people who enjoy the analysis of pop culture and what it says about us.

Individualfrog: As within the post-Nirvana 90s, i used to be an eye-witness to the strangling authenticity-above-all ethos of "alternative" music. "We gown this fashion simply because it truly is how we feel," acknowledged no matter what amazing-looking, grunge-chic band member or skater child on TV, "don't be what people wish you to be, be yourself!" This used to be the "positive" message regularly rammed down our throats in these days: be yourself, until "yourself" beloved to put on the inaccurate thing, hearken to the inaccurate music, or, especially, if "yourself" did not accept as true with the "be yourself" message. "Poseur" was once a favourite insult in the course of my high-school days--God forbid will need to test anything new. I occasionally consider like i have spent my existence attempting to get out of the very unlikely labyrinth of this ethos. This book, concerning the "quest for authenticity" in its so much ordinary habitat, the track scene, opens with the loss of life of Kurt Cobain, a tireless promoter of the very catchphrases that have been tearing him up inside. The material is interesting/infuriating, however the authors' use of it truly is complicated and unusually banal. they arrive as much as the purpose of demolishing the whole suggestion of "authenticity" altogether, yet can not seem to convey themselves to seal the deal, simply because they nonetheless are looking to say that Neil Young's 70s albums are extra "real" than Trans. They convey how tune has constantly been syncretic, and black and white musicians (before the

segregation imposed via checklist companies) performed a similar repertoire, yet they nonetheless indicate that Moby and Paul Simon are cultural imperialists. They hint the genesis and eventual ubiquity of the autobiographical song--mostly unknown sooner than the 20th Century--but positioned this examine to exploit simply to mock Tori Amos and different "confessional" songwriters that they dislike. They lay out a case (without really popping out and announcing it) that "world music" notions of authenticity are basically racist, yet nonetheless name advertisement American releases like Buena Vista Social membership "watered down". They like to indicate that what white, rock-ish audiences examine authentic-sounding are in truth unpopular with the groups that birthed them--a unusual "gotcha" that easily substitutes one arbitrary authenticity criterion for another. it is unusual to learn those authors build up all this facts to undermine the total edifice of song feedback today--as they aspect out, authenticity continues to be anything wherein track of any type is judged--but refuse to stick to via with it, to allow them to nonetheless criticize the artists they dislike (Europop, Yes, Fatboy Slim) with it. In any booklet on renowned music, I prove feeling that a few band I care approximately has been neglected--I feel just like the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion belongs in here, for example. i guess i will settle for their begging off the subject of hip-hop as being too advanced to slot into this book--it most likely does deserve its personal volume. yet i actually do imagine that the bankruptcy which contrasts the "real" Neil younger to the "fake" Billy Joel may were even more attention-grabbing in the event that they had substituted David Bowie for the latter. the truth that Joel is comparatively significantly un-acclaimed stacks the deck; Bowie, either loved and generally thought of "fake", complicates their entire thesis. definitely in a booklet approximately authenticity in rock'n'roll, Bowie merits a place, if in simple terms to collapse why in the world we name him, yet now not Joey Ramone, inauthentic. In the main interesting moments of the book, by means of breaking down the idea that of authenticity, the authors prove chipping away on the very thought of the continual self. The principal to "keep it real" and "be yourself" has consistently been impossible. How can one be real if one is consistently changing, second to moment? All of us, not only the miserably pigeonholed stars they spotlight (Cobain, Donna Summer, John Lydon, etc.) are to some extent trapped inside our personal identities. The insistence on authenticity is basically an insistence on an illusory balance in a global of flux. To their credit, the authors realize this. They quote Kafka: "I don't have anything in universal with myself." With the early dialogue of acoustic blues liked of white checklist collectors, i used to be reminded of Steve Buscemi's 78"-collecting character's lament in Ghost World: "I hate my interests!" i might have beloved this ebook to move additional alongside this path, yet probably it finally ends up too deep into philosophy, and strays too faraway from the pop-music subject that they begun from. yet possibly sometime we are going to be able to allow ourselves, and every other, swap our minds, undertake new mindsets, test diverse styles, as unhesitatingly and easily as we modify our moods.

Danielle: I learn this ebook it slow ago, yet additional it simply because i'd learn it back after studying "The factor itself." "Faking It," is a really persuasive research and old exploration of the tendency of make a fetish of "authenticity" in well known music. The irony is that authenticity is frequently faked. the simplest instance of this is often Ledbelly, a blues musician came across making a song in criminal by means of Lomax (I disregard which one). He turned extremely popular between folks and blues lovers of the early 60s. As he loved his new popularity, Ledbelly desired to put on fashionable suits, yet Lomax insisted he put on a jail uniform (!). the explanation used to be that the attraction of his tune used to be its rawness and primitive sound.

The viewers desired to listen rustic criminal songs from a precise prisoner. by no means brain that Ledbelly desired to gown just like the profitable performer he now particularly was. lots for authenticity. as well as drawing awareness to the hypocrisy of these who overvalue the uncooked and rustic within the arts, Faking it's a rather well written and informative heritage of renowned song within the united states

Peter Kay: Pairs really well with Leroi Jones' Blues People.

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