

Ari Y. Kelman. *Shout to the Lord: Making Worship Music in Evangelical America*. New York: NYU Press, 2018. \$30.

How does worship become music? In *Shout to the Lord: Making Worship Music in Evangelical America*, Ari Y. Kelman pursues this question by specifically asking how the production and creation of songs for worship in Christian evangelical congregations enables musical participants “to transcend the ritual [of music] itself” (xiv). To put it another way, how does the music of worship become a medium for something much greater than it is? Kelman teaches at Stanford University, and he is also a leader of worship music, and formerly a high school educator of music, in synagogues and a Jewish private school. His self-identification as Jewish distinguishes him from other authors in the study of “contemporary worship” music culture, such as Monique Ingalls’ *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community* (Oxford, 2018), Swee Hong Lim and Lester Ruth’s *Lovin’ On Jesus: A Concise History of Contemporary Worship* (Abingdon, 2017), and Randall J. Stephens’ *The Devil’s Music: How Christians Inspired, Condemned, and Embraced Rock n’ Roll* (Harvard, 2018). Yet his self-admitted focus upon mostly white evangelical praise music places his work well within the aforementioned genre of scholarship.

Kelman organizes his examination in chapters that separately focus upon “discourse,” “songwriting,” “worship leading,” and the “music industry” (14). Summing up the overall approach of his project, Kelman writes, “*Shout to the Lord* denaturalizes both the sensational and practical qualities of the music, and reveals the human concerns that make worship music possible” (14). Perhaps what stands out most about Kelman’s appreciation of Christian worship music and critical investigation of how it facilitates worship that transcends its musicality is his attention to the commercialization and capitalization of worship music as an industry (150-152). He astutely notes how congregational singing reinforced the commercialization of Christian music (143). Yet also fascinating is Kelman’s genealogy of how CCLI (Christian Copyright Leasing International) transformed worship music as a commercially viable product through licensing and copyright related primarily to congregational uses. With its close management of legalities around artist attribution and compensation as well as revenue streams tied to various entities of the Christian worship music industry, CCLI also developed a sense for what music was popular and profitable, thereby having the unforeseen effect of acquiring a position of influence into what kinds of worship music ended up being produced (144-150).

Kelman distinguishes commercial Christian music that makes its way into the regular rotation of songs in local congregations from Christian sacred music that may top the Christian Contemporary Music [CCM] charts, or even have crossover appeal into larger markets, and yet not adapt well to use within services. In that sense, Kelman is curious about the pedagogic power of Christian song, and how customs of worshipping God can be learned through practices such as songs (42-43). His attention to how worshippers become inculcated into particular worship customs through song resonates with findings in sociological work of multiracial congregations, such as the work of Gerardo Marti and his *Worship Across the Racial Divide: Religious Music and the Multiracial Congregation* (Oxford UP, 2012). There, Marti finds that even diverse congregations of varied racial and ethnic identities can adopt common worship and learn liturgical routines in music that is of a homogenous style.

Students of sacred music, contemporary worship music, and Christian popular music will find Kelman informative reading. The title warrants inclusion, for example, in bibliographies for

doctoral students studying in those fields and others related to them. Teachers of worship will find Kelman's text to be a strong complement to the titles chosen for courses exploring the development and practices of Christian contemporary music, the question of what constitutes Christian sacred music, the humanist dimensions of such music making, and the promise and limits of topologizing Christian music more according to genre and style than theological imagination.

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