Studies of Women in Electronic Music: The Early Pioneers', is not always obvious or acknowledged, but what this section of the book reveals is how the technology of electronic music could simultaneously liberate music beyond its previous gendered norms, yet also reinforce those norms. This section's chapters shared a hope that as the means to create electronic musics are being increasingly democratised and more widely available, the engagement of women with the technology will increase.

Music Education as a field highlights gender inequities with long-standing ironies. For instance, why is it that music educators, who are overwhelmingly female, resolutely retain the old tropes of heroic male composers? Robert Legg's 'Women and Music Education in Schools' seamlessly integrates the best academic writings on the subject – theorists like Roberta Lamb, Lori-Ann Doloff, Sondra Weiland Howe, Judith Tick and Jane Bowers – with a historical survey of pedagogical debates.

Musicians have lived in the 'gig economy' since time immemorial – female musicians even more so than their male counterparts. Yet with all of global capitalism shifting into the perpetual insecurity of piece work, musicians' experiences – both past and present – are particularly valuable. Critic, producer and musician Steph Power addresses this quite forcefully in her 'Practitioner Contribution' when she correctly notes that a '"portfolio career" is 'but a glitzy euphemism for unpredictable work patterns' (p. 273). She then forthrightly adds that, like most academic writing, her essay in this volume was unremunerated (fn. 6, p. 275). Similarly, Clare K. Duffin's contribution, 'Women in the Music Industries: The Art of Juggling' highlights the astonishingly large gender gap in popular music producers, citing a study of popular songs between 2012–2018 as having a scant 2.1% women producers (p. 256). Analysing the precarious nature of the music business and potential solutions, Duffin argues for conscious correction of the gender imbalances. One of the most powerful illustrations in the book accompanies her article, showing singer Emma Gillespie embracing her toddler Oscar while in the recording studio (p. 263).

This is a well-constructed and, given the disparate subjects, well-unified collection. Hamer wisely did not attempt to produce a volume that would be everything to everyone. Instead she divined the mean between encyclopaedia entries and opaquely specialised scholarly articles, finding the ground where any educated reader could measure the impact of women in music over the last century and a quarter. The index serves as an absolutely necessary addition to a volume of this sort, that provides the reader with a quick overview of the terrain covered. This book deserves a place on the shelves of libraries, scholars and students, as a fine snapshot in time of the many roles of women in music, and the road that still needs to be travelled to full equality.

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***Récital 1961*. By David L. Looseley, New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023. 113 pp. ISBN 978-1-5013-6210-1**
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This short book about the significance of a live Édith Piaf album, *Récital 1961*, is hugely engaging and informative, packing in biographical detail and musicological analysis to

build a convincing argument about Piaf's 'symbolic force' (p. 85). Looseley argues that there are two 'imagined' Piafs in circulation. The first is the tragic, tiny and brilliant live performer. The second is the recording artist, a 'product of the recording industry from the outset' (p. 86). *Récital 61* is where they collide. One of Bloomsbury Academic's 33 1/3 Europe series, it follows a specific format, and provides the biographical contexts of the performance, the run up to the recital itself at Paris' Olympia, and textual analyses of the record. Looseley has written on Piaf before (2015), as have Reader (2003), Holman Jones (2007), Baxter (2015) and Reader (2003), but what Récital 1961 does anew is effectively pull together the artist, the place, the time and the recording, to make arguments about Piaf in relation to art, memory and stardom.

Chapter 1, 'Imagining Piaf', opens with an evocative exhortation for the reader to visualise her standing on the stage at the Paris Olympia, 'tiny, stooped and ashen' (p. 1). Here she was making a comeback performance that was audio-recorded and quickly released on vinyl, becoming the record which, Looseley argues, determined how she continues to be remembered. Looseley gives the reader a pacily written run-through of Piaf's life to that point. Born Édith Gassion, she spent her childhood singing with her father, then on street corners in Belleville, a working-class Paris suburb, to being named 'the sparrow' by one of a series of managers, or 'impresarios' (p. 4) who managed her cabaret singing and music hall gigs. Looseley notes how her USP became 'heartbreak, tragedy, and an uncrushable faith in love' (p. 6), a format which ensured her success in late 1940s America, and which accompanied her throughout the 1950s. He covers the tragedies of her personal life and how they fed her public persona: the tragic death of her lover, the boxer Marcel Cerdan, in 1949, her increasing dependence on 'morphine and alcohol' (p. 7), a series of failed affairs, collapsing on stage in 1959, and depression. Following this, it was, Looseley suggests, 'Non, je ne regrette rien' by new composer Charles Dumont, working alongside regular Piaf lyricist, Michel Vaucaire, which reinvigorated her and became the standard Piaf song, and the climax to her Olympia performance.

Chapter 2 'The Recital' focuses on this triumphant show at the Olympia and its historical, cultural and political context. A French institution, it was the home of music hall and vaudeville, so it had to consider its role in the 1960s, with the popularity of rock stars such as Johnny Hallyday and culture being 'on the brink of change' (p. 27). Looseley uses the current term 'culture war' to account for what was at stake in Piaf's performance, and 'seismic' shifts that were happening in popular and political culture. In 1958 the Fourth Republic was collapsing, de Gaulle's Fifth Republic came into being and Algeria, a French colony, voted for self-determination in 1961. 'Non, je ne regrette rien' was, for a variety of reasons, adopted by the French Foreign Legion, and Piaf's association with the Legion added to her status as a French icon, like de Gaulle, 'invincible' (p. 32). This concert was a benefit for the former First Free French Division and was attended by the great and the good of French cultural, political and military life. Looseley suggests that it was both comeback, swan song and 'the start of the posthumous myth' (p. 15).

Chapters 3 and 4 analyse the tracks on the two sides of the vinyl album, arguing that the record's brilliance lies in its ability to offer a more intimate and authentic listening experience than the Olympia performance. This is attributed to Piaf's ability to embody song and make that embodiment audible on record (p. 28). It records the flaws in her performance and her comments, and this sense of her is underscored by her vocal delivery, particularly of the /R/ in 'rien' and 'regrette'. Looseley argues that the way she does this is to deliver that 'r' sound in an apical fashion, with the tip of

the tongue at or near the front teeth, coming across as theatrical, historical and different from the vernacular, thereby giving the song a 'historical legitimacy' (p. 38).

Chapter 5, 'Authenticity, Art, Memory and Stardom', reflects on the live album's role in cementing Piaf as invincible, an *artiste* who had suffered and survived, and as a saviour. Looseley acknowledges that her style of singing and performance reified a specific kind of white Frenchness, an 'imagined community' (p. 74) from which many non-white French citizens were excluded. The bond she had with her audience, Looseley argues, depended 'on her representing a lost, white Paris of memory and myth' (p. 74). This was the world of the *chanson*, not really a genre of music, more a way of singing Frenchness and one which was being challenged by the Hallydays and Hardys of a different pop cultural France. Looseley spells out how Piaf managed to escape being just a conduit to a partial and nationalist nostalgia, 'not as a nostalgic relic unable to reconcile the two cultures but as a redeeming angel summoned back to reconcile the two cultures' (p. 81). As an ageing, scarred survivor, whose life story mirrors France's recent histories, she offers recognition of shared pasts and hope for shared futures.

We end with reference to the #MeToo movement, Piaf a beacon of hope and an inspiration to women for the control she had over her career and sexuality. There is much to like in the book, and the way Looseley pulls together the various cultural, political, historical and biographical strands makes for a quick, entertaining and informative read. There is some flowery journalese in there, a few melodramatic turns of phrase and tone, but they work with the subject matter, conveying a sense of enjoyment that is infectious.

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***I'll Be Your Plaything*. By Anna Szemere and András Rónai. New York: Bloomsbury Academic. 139 pp. ISBN 978-1-501-35443-4**

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Anna Szemere and András Rónai's book is the first to explore a Hungarian album as part of Bloomsbury's *33 1/3* series. Bea Palya's *I'll Be Your Plaything* (2010) is a collection of covers, and as we learn from the book, it is not even among Palya's most popular releases, making it perhaps a less obvious candidate for the series. Szemere and Rónai's analysis nevertheless demonstrates that it is indeed a very well-chosen case. It enables the authors to simultaneously reflect on contemporary and