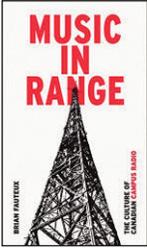


Reviews



Music in Range: The Culture of Canadian Campus Radio. By Brian Fauteux. Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. 2015. 230 pp. ISBN: 9781771121507.

In *Music in Range: The Culture of Canadian Campus Radio*, Brian Fauteux deftly deploys three key concepts to guide his descriptive analyses of Canadian campus radio: “alternative,” “independent,” and “local.” In each of these cases, concepts are not merely ideas; instead, they bind together previous scholarly contributions and arguments to form a new understanding of Fauteux’s central object of study. Simply put, these three concepts together perform a generative role throughout his book: they tightly link theory to practice and explain various relationships as well as historical changes to campus radio. In the process, *Music in Range* utilizes these three concepts to make an indispensable contribution to Canadian radio scholarship. The book repeatedly shines a light upon an under-examined corner of the broadcast landscape (campus radio) by locating “the significant sites where Canadian campus radio emerged” (p. 10) and pointing out “key factors that took these stations from university campuses to wider communities” (p. 10).

Utilizing cultural history, critical political studies, and popular music and sound studies, Fauteux’s ethnographic approach builds upon and extends the existing corpus of research on radio broadcasting in Canada. He touches upon key contributions from radio, music, sound, and cultural studies scholars such as Will Straw, Michele Hilmes, Susan Douglas, Jody Berland, Simon Frith, and Pierre Bourdieu. To sketch out the landscape within which Canadian campus radio was conceived, Fauteux wades through a sea of important policy documents including the 1929 Aird Commission, various iterations of the Broadcasting Act, the Public Notice CRTC 2000-12, and the Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2010-499. Fauteux follows this sketch with three substantial case studies of campus stations from three disparate locations within Canada: CHMA in Sackville, New Brunswick; CKUW in Winnipeg, Manitoba; and CiTR in Vancouver, British Columbia.

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In the context of Canadian campus radio, Fauteux rightly identifies alternative, independent, and local as concepts that imbricate each aspect of his study: broadcasting, media, culture, programming, music scenes, publications, record stores, record labels, and venues can simultaneously be described as alternative, independent, and local. *Music in Range* begins by articulating the ways in which campus radio is predominantly framed as alternative: it is a medium that both practically and conceptually “responds to the structural effects of the contemporary political and economic influences on Canadian broadcasting” (p. 17). For Fauteux, the concept of alternativeness is malleable and he deploys it in a discursive examination of campus radio’s assorted uses; he locates it in policy documents, committee reports, station mandates, newspaper coverage, and interviews with key players in the field, such as station managers, programmers, and volunteers. As a concept, he argues, alternative must “account for why, when, and how certain broadcasting practices and station-listener relationships are decidedly distinct within Canada’s single broadcasting system” (p. 18).

In addition to being discursively represented as alternative, campus radio is also conceptually linked to notions of independence throughout *Music in Range*. Free to circulate music and ideas that are not present in commercial media, campus radio, in Fauteux’s account, exists outside of the proverbial mainstream; campus radio stations express their autonomy through the crafting of internal policies, station mandates, and philosophies. Moreover, campus stations strive not only to assert independence from the commercial broadcasting sector, they also serve the voices and needs of independent musicians, producers, and retailers. It is in this sense that Fauteux sees “the local” as a necessary starting point for an exploration into campus stations. Combining independence and alternativeness, campus radio functions as an auxiliary cultural network that is “attuned to the particularities of the localities it serves” (p. 120). The role of campus radio in local communities is more complex than simply acting as a promoter for local music. Rather, “stations are active institutions that help foster a sense of community between cultural producers, musicians, radio hosts, and listeners” (p. 157); they are a rallying point for “asserting alternativeness” (p. 180). By strategically deploying these concepts, Fauteux usefully expands the reader’s understanding of campus radio, drawing attention to its significant capacity to act as a cultural hub and its historic role as a tastemaker in numerous towns and cities across Canada.

Following Michele Hilmes’ (1997) logic, *Music in Range* urges readers to see the medium not simply as a collection of wires but as a community, a culture, and a social practice rooted in everyday life. Motivated by a desire to decelerate digital utopians’ celebration of the possibilities of web-based radio, Fauteux asserts that campus radio is a necessary institution whose primary objective is to stimulate and perpetuate local culture, an act that is especially pertinent in a country as geographically vast and culturally diverse as Canada. He posits that to move campus radio online would be to lose the very essence of the alternative space it provides. “Through their music-based programming, their operational practices, and the culture under which these structures and processes operate”, (p. 15–16), he writes, campus radio produces “alternative methods and values for circulating local and independent Canadian artists at a time when more ubiquitous media outlets and broadcast forms do exactly the opposite” (p. 16).

Throughout *Music in Range*, Fauteux maintains an enthusiastic outlook on campus radio's capacity to nurture local music culture within an increasingly digital broadcast landscape, but he only hints at a critical assessment. While it is not his intention to use critical political economy as an orienting framework for his study of campus radio, Fauteux's brief engagement with a number of prominent political economists—Edward Herman, Robert McChesney, Herbert Schiller, Jacques Attali, and David Skinner—points to an important opportunity for future research. In the final analysis, these are perhaps small quibbles with what is otherwise a necessary addition to the field of Canadian radio scholarship. *Music in Range* masterfully fills a glaring void in the comprehensive history of Canadian broadcast culture by attentively describing, defining, and depicting the under-investigated cultural site of campus and community radio.

Reference

Hilmes, Michele. (1997). *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Kait Kribs, York University