

witness, for example, nearby Shrewsbury), and, if that is so, it is because the suburbs were burned to the ground to give the beleaguered defenders clear fields of fire and much of the area within the walls devastated by prolonged bombardments designed to work upon the morale of the civilian population and induce it to put pressure on the governor to surrender. Mercifully, such deliberate attempts at terror tactics were few and far between, but, even so, as Gaunt shows, the human costs were enormous (though one might wish that he had been a little more cautious in citing the figures generated some twenty years ago by Charles Carlton: these are, indeed, both the most detailed and the most recent estimates that we have, but it is difficult not to regard them with more than a modicum of suspicion). Soldiers died in battle and civilians in fire and bombardment, but the real killer amongst all and sundry was disease with 'camp fever' (almost certainly typhus or typhoid), especially, laying thousands low.

Of all this Gaunt reminds us in prose that is as lucid as it is eloquent, and it is important that he should do so: with re-enactments of the fighting a common feature of the English summer courtesy of the Sealed Knot and the English Civil War Society, it is too easy to remember the war in terms of spectacle rather than sacrifice. To conclude, then, this is a splendid work and one that all those interested in the epoch of Charles I and Oliver Cromwell should have on their shelves.

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John Mullen, *The Show Must Go On! Popular Song in Britain During the First World War*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 262pp. ISBN 978-1-47-244158-4. Hardback. Price £65.00.

Only a handful of books featuring academic research into music during the war have been published in the last 25 years. J.G.Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies, 1914-1918*, (1990) contained one chapter which highlighted the role of popular music for British soldiers, a theme which was modestly developed by Glen Watkins' *Proof Through the Night: Music and the Great War* (2003). Much of the work completed so far has concentrated on well-known classical composers so often connected with the war, for example Ralph Vaughan-Williams, George Butterworth and Arthur Bliss. However, instead of the elite's musical culture in the form of requiems and symphonies, the really interesting - and so far a relatively neglected area of study is the role of popular music in its detailed wartime context. Dr John Mullen's study of popular song in Britain during 1914-18 is therefore a timely and a much-needed contribution to the field of First World War studies.

REVIEWS

First published in France in 2012, Mullen's research delves into popular forms of music from the perspective of its role in commerce, entertainment and leisure activities. Mullen surveys 1,063 songs from music-hall and revue in the 1914-18 period. The majority of these were found in the British Library's collections of sheet music, and approximately 250 are available in recorded form. Mullen estimates that this number represents around one quarter of the total songs produced. His methodology for deciding which songs can be considered 'popular' in a period when sales figures were not available is largely based on the song having at least a full or half page advert in one of the publications in the trade press for example *The Era*, *The Encore*, *The Performer* and the *Phono Record*. The study does not include non-commercial music, for example hymns, folk songs and soldiers' songs.

Mullen includes analyses of the songs themselves, in addition to locating these texts within the musical practices, values and meanings of wartime Britain. He takes care to underline that songs and musical activities can give us a unique insight into popular attitudes during the Great War, provided they are not used as the unmediated voice of a homogeneous working class, but as texts of which historians can analyse their content, reception and social meaning. In doing this he begins with a detailed overview of the popular music industry, pointing out that every music-hall, cinema or opera house employed a house orchestra and that recruitment to the forces raised demand for this employment. However, in 1914 musician's wages were just above that of an agricultural labourer. It was demanding work; performers were expected to play in up to 4 shows a day plus rehearsals in smoky and damp auditoria, resulting in a 40% death rate from Tuberculosis.

Mullen discusses the songs by theme according to keywords used in their subject or title, listing them in chronological order. This makes the book a fantastic resource for historians working on the subject of music in the First World War period. The work is strongest in the analysis of the songs themselves, and the case study 'Star in Focus' sections at the end of each chapter will appeal to general interest readers for whom the names Harry Lauder, Vesta Tilley and Marie Lloyd may already be familiar. However, Mullen's placing of the music and musicians in their wartime context from a historical point of view is less effective than the musical analysis he provides so well. Some of his statements about the war's history, for example in the sections which focus on gender, do not fully reflect more recent historiographical developments. His discussion of conscientious objection is too concise and his analysis of songs like 'The Lament of the Conscientious Objector' would benefit from a more in-depth discussion to clarify how this song, for example, was understood and received by wartime audiences.

Overall, John Mullen has demonstrated that it is possible to produce high quality research in a subject area which can be intimidating in terms of its plethora of disparate sources. *The Show Must Go On!* will be of interest to the specialist and general reader alike, and Mullen has forged a path which will inspire more work to be done in this fascinating area of First World War history.

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Matthias Strohm (ed.), *The Battle of the Somme*. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2016. Index. 272pp. ISBN 978-1-47-281556-9. Price £25.00.

The surge of publishing timed to coincide with the centenary of the Battle of the Somme threatens to crush readers beneath a tidal wave of writing on the subject. Yet within this flood there remains room for valuable new work. This book is one such example. The editor, Matthias Strohm, deserves great credit for assembling an impressive line-up of international authors including writers from Austria, France, Germany, New Zealand and the United States, as well as the United Kingdom - the book consists of twelve individual and concise essays. The chapters are assembled in a thematic fashion, with early chapters examining the strategic context of the Somme, with particular reference to the German and French perspective, before moving on to operational and tactical considerations of the battle. The book closes with a discussion of the 'Long Shadow' of the Somme. The work is supported by an interesting selection of images and a handful of maps.

The strength of the book lies in its accessibility. Although it is inevitable that within an edited collection there will be a certain unevenness of tone and style, exacerbated by the fact that some contributors are writing in a non-native language, in general the chapters are clear, concise and readable. There is an air of considered detachment from the subject which lends the work gravitas, but which may come as a surprise to a reader who has developed their interest through emotive popular histories. Taken as a whole the chapters combine to reveal the complexity of the battle of the Somme and its place within the wider war. It is especially refreshing to read contributions from international scholars, as the latest research in France and Germany is often slow to reach British military history circles due to language barriers.

There are some mistakes that have crept into the chapters. James Corum, in his chapter 'Air War over the Somme' repeats the common error that 8,000 British airmen died in training accidents alone (p.83). This is simply incorrect. Official figures given in the appendices volume of *War in the Air* list a total of 6,166 deaths from all causes. On a similar theme, Georges-Henri Soutou lists French casualties at the Somme as 350,000