Rather than an archaeological or historical document, film is a dazzling and deceptive verisimilitude. Despite its evident artificiality, film is one of the arts for which authenticity is most often mandated.” Despite this assertion on page 1, assessing whether music is authentically medieval is not the primary concern of Music in Films on the Middle Ages: Authenticity vs. Fantasy. Rather, John Haines explores how music in medieval film reflects long-held views of the Middle Ages—whether authentic to history or simply to an imaginary tradition—even as music has played a central role in their initial creation and ongoing reification.

Fitting this focus, in Chapter 1 Haines identifies six musical motifs—the bell, the horn call and trumpet fanfare, court and dance music, the singing minstrel, chant, and the riding warrior—that are integral in creating six moods of the Middle Ages: the chivalrous, the supernatural, the primitive, the pastoral, the oriental, and the satirical. Although these six medieval moods find a structurally important position in the introduction, they ultimately serve as a reference point for the rest of the book. Their early explication illustrates how there are many versions—many imagined and nostalgic iterations—of the Middle Ages. The musical motifs, each one the focus of a single chapter, may be employed to evoke multiple medieval moods or a given mood evoked through multiple musical motifs. For both medieval mood and musical motif, Haines excels in showing the long-standing historical tradition of these conceptualizations of the Middle Ages and the part music has played in creating them. The introduction concludes with a brief history of medieval film, interwoven with the argument that American film gained pre-eminence partially due to what Haines calls its “colonizing” of the European Middle Ages in film, co-opting its nostalgia with an American flavor.

Chapter 2 explores the musical motif of the bell, which transports movie consumers into the Middle Ages—evoking especially the primitive, pastoral, and spiritual medieval moods. As an illustration of Haines’s approach, the bell’s power to evoke the Middle Ages does not come primarily from its authentic medieval sound. Rather, the sound of the bell became an expected signifier for the Middle Ages through the literary tradition of Victor Hugo’s Hunchback of Notre Dame. Haines’s helpfully wide definition of medieval film assesses Metropolis (1927) as an unexpected first example. Haines argues that Metropolis is a film about an industrial, modern nostalgia for simpler, medieval times, which is made clear in a culminating scene in which a cathedral bell saves the day. More properly medieval, The Long Ships (1963) makes the bell central to the plot, while First Knight (1995) represents the power of the off-screen bell.

The horn call and trumpet fanfare, discussed in Chapter 3, align most closely with the pastoral mood and chivalrous mood, respectively. At the outset, Haines succinctly explains the lack of extant evidence for specific instrumental performance in the Middle
Ages. Like other studies of musical medievalism, Haines argues that the horn call and trumpet fanfare, as tools of “medievalism,” find their roots in nineteenth-century opera, musical antiquarianism, and vaudeville. In this chapter, Haines returns to his introduction by linking medieval film to the Western, and thus an American “colonizing” of the Middle Ages, accomplished in large extent through horn calls and trumpet fanfares. The Conqueror (1956) serves as the primary example. Haines further establishes the trumpet fanfare’s iconicity through its parodic treatment in A Knight’s Tale (2001).

Chapter 4 is concerned with court and dance music in medieval film, and its reliance on nostalgia and “the other.” Haines traces the long-standing link that has been presumed to connect medieval music with “folk music” more generally. The presumption that going back in time equals going back to simple, authentic cultural expressions of common people is evident in the types of music chosen for court and dance scenes in medieval films. These range from Georgian music in The Legend of Suram Fortress (1984) to Celtic music in Braveheart (1995), The Fellowship of the Ring (2001), and How to Train Your Dragon (2010). By contrast, as Haines notes in a discussion of Perceval (1978), using actual medieval music or musicians specializing in early music is neither common nor a recipe for success. He also compiles many films that rely on musical orientalism and Black music genres to establish feelings of remoteness. Orientalism as a cue for medieval soundscapes has its root in opera, going back as far as the seventeenth century, Haines argues. Its ubiquity extends even to animated children’s films such as Disney’s hugely successful Hunchback of Notre Dame (1996). Jazz is another genre that does medieval work in film as music of the “other.” Films such as Ye Golden Days (1933), Connecticut Yankee (1949), Going My Way (1944), and The Viking Women and the Sea Serpent (1957) make use of jazz (or jazzy) music for court dance scenes, while Black Knight (2001) calls on the funk of Sly and the Family Stone.

There is a missed opportunity in this chapter to note explicitly the way that these musical stand-ins for the “other” rely on and reinforce another, particularly problematic “mood” of the Middle Ages: a Middle Ages imagined as a time of pure, white hegemony. Folk music is often viewed as that of Europeans uncorrupted by globalism. “Oriental” music is almost always used in voyeuristic moments where a racialized other is the object of spectacle. Black musics are used in medieval film as anachronistic humor. If it is the music of the other that works to evoke the Middle Ages, it works because it imagines the Middle Ages as a space of white dominance. At best, it reinforces an incomplete historical picture of the Middle Ages; at worst, it troublingly encourages nostalgia for such a time.

Having said this, I commend Haines for tackling the similarly troubling history of blackface minstrelsy and its influence on film at the start of his chapter on “the singing minstrel,” although his discussion is brief and ends abruptly. Most notable in this chapter is the section on the “Horseback Song” in Ivanhoe (1952), which elegantly ties together several of the book’s themes to this point. Haines links the riding singer/minstrel/troubadour with the Western and discusses the impossibility of true authenticity in medieval music in film, even when texts from a troubadour song or a medieval hymn are employed.

Perhaps the most easily recognized music of the Middle Ages—chant—is the focus of Chapter 6. Haines provides a helpful summary of chant reception since the sixteenth century, illustrating two important strands of thought: that chant is “primitive and sinister,” and that it is possible to get back to the true, authentic, original chant. His opening discussion is effective in introducing the non-medieval music specialist to the complications of hearing an authentic chant performance and showing that our modern conception of what chant sounds like is, in actuality, an invention of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As an example of equating chant with authenticity, St. Francis’s true catholicity and faith in Brother Sun, Sister Moon (1973) are emblazoned by chant. In other cases, the primitive and potentially corrupted nature of chant serves to signal an evil or dangerous Middle Ages, often that of a Muslim Middle Ages. Haines traces this film music tradition of anti-Muslim character from the more recent Kingdom of Heaven (2005), through Robin Hood, King of Thieves (1991) and King Richard and the Crusaders (1954), back to Crusades (1935). The Christian chant for the dead, “Dies irae,” also slips easily from liturgical associations to connections with darkness and the spirit world. Through such associations, chant is used to establish not only medievalism but evil, as in Faust (1926), or Satanism in The Masque of the Red Death (1964).

In contrast with chant comes perhaps the least medieval of the musical motifs: the music used for the knight or riding warrior. Rather than any medieval music—real or imagined—the medieval knight is usually accompanied by orchestral music. As he does throughout the book, Haines unravels the thread of music for the riding knight back to roots in nineteenth-century opera, especially Wagner, eighteenth- to nineteenth-century orchestral music, and even much earlier music for the stage. The bulk of this chapter centers on *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which, Haines argues, relies on a portrayal of the southern United States as a reincarnation of the chivalric Middle Ages. As another creative example, Haines discusses the medieval film tropes used in *Star Wars*: its opening scroll and futuristic knight accompanied by an orchestral leitmotif. Coming full circle, the medieval knight merges with the cowboy and the Western, reinforcing Haines's argument about the Americanization of the Middle Ages in film, epitomized in *Knives of the Avengers* (1966).

*Music in the Films on the Middle Ages* excels at tuning our ears towards specific ways that the Middle Ages have been evoked through music. Film consumers and scholars are offered a listening guide—a discrete list of medieval moods and musical motifs—to consider and help categorize and evaluate the sound worlds of variously imagined Middle Ages. As Haines has done with an impressively large and broad corpus of films, these listening tools may help scholars to identify how music-based medievalisms might be employed even in films less easily identified as medieval. Beyond inviting readers into deeper and supported listening, the book itself is inviting to a wide audience. Though John Haines is widely published in medieval music and its reception, short forays into music history and technical aspects of medieval music are made welcoming to any reader.

Readers must sometimes be patient, however, and wade through meandering, descriptive passages of films and their production history—occasionally verging into trivia—in order to arrive at many of Haines's insights. This critique aside, readers interested in a given film will be grateful for such detail, and the included filmography and index, including film titles, help readers locate such passages with ease. From musicologists to film scholars to medievalists more broadly, *Music in Films on the Middle Ages* offers a rich foundation and straightforward theorization of music in medieval film from which future studies can certainly draw.

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