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Patricia Fumerton. *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England: Moving Media, Tactical Publics*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. x + 469 512 pp. + 83 illus. \$89.95. Review by LAURA WILLIAMSON AMBROSE, SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE (NOTRE DAME, IN).

With *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England*, Patricia Fumerton has produced the singular volume on the broadside ballad in the early modern period. Part ballad primer, part exhaustively-researched history of ballad media, collectors, and culture, part theoretically-informed analysis of individual ballads and their publics, *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England* stands as a cornerstone for scholars interested in print history and ephemera, music history, performance studies, popular culture, and more. In focusing on the heyday of broadside ballads (1600–1650 and 1670–90), Fumerton's book spans the seventeenth century. But it also gestures both backward and forward, treating earlier sixteenth-century examples alongside eighteenth- and nineteenth-century collecting practices as a way to contextualize the seventeenth-century cultural milieu, refining our own contemporary understandings of the broadside ballad as a genre, a material object, and, indeed, a maker of early modern “publics.”

The ballad, Fumerton reminds us, was far more than mere cheap print: it was at once a multisensory performance, a printed record, and an art form. In this study, Fumerton sets out to “approximate something of the lived aesthetics and mobile makings of early modern English broadside ballad culture” and does so through an attention to what she calls the “many moving parts” of the ballad sheet: text and tune, woodcut illustration and typographical form, seventeenth-century paper and twenty-first-century digital scan (19). Ballad producers and consumers engaged with these “mobile component blocks, both intentionally and fortuitously” much like “hits” in an online web search (15). The interactions among language, music, and illustration

within and between ballads provided a nearly limitless range of possibilities for meaning-making for early moderns—and a monumental task for a scholar dedicated to their study.

Standing at more than 400 pages, the sheer heft of *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England* speaks to its ambition and its innovation. Like the ballads themselves, the book works as a multimedia (and even multisensory) technology, with eighty-three figures and illustrations as well as references to forty-eight audio tracks accessible via an Audio Companion website, which is itself indebted to the online English Broadside Ballad Archive (EBBA) founded by Fumerton in 2003. These audio tracks offer more than a taste of the soundscape of seventeenth-century England. In her first focused examination of a single ballad, for example, Fumerton uses variations on tunes for two editions of “Mock-Beggar Hall” (1633–35, 1639–40) to animate an analysis of the ways in which poetic and musical metrical stresses might work differently (upbeat or downbeat? major or minor scale? sympathy with beggars or landowners?) and, therefore, afford ballad consumers multiple opportunities for meaning-making and interpretation. In combination with the visual dimensions of the ballad—woodcuts as well as the layout of text on the page—these interpretative questions are amplified rather than stabilized. Might the use of distinct woodcuts (from previous publications) be a tactical move for a printer to sell more broadsheets? Or, as Fumerton also asks, might they actually work in tandem with the printed text, providing surprising or even subversive readings of the lines to a would-be consumer or singer? Possibilities for affect and interpretation abound.

Possibilities for reading *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England* are similarly multitudinous. One might progress through the volume “in order,” mapping each theoretical turn Fumerton provides (from tactical hits, to making publics—differently sized, diachronic and synchronic), or one might simply hone in on an individual chapter, section, or case study with relative ease and comprehensibility. Extensive transitions, while not always fresh in their articulation or advancement of the overall argument, offer helpful summaries and linkages for the reader who puts the volume down for a period of time or elects to narrow in on an area of focus. Save the Introduction and the first chapter, which lays the theoretical groundwork for the

study, the volume is divided into four parts, each with two chapters. Part 1, “Assembling by Disassembling: Archives, Databases, and Ballad Bits,” offers an extensive analysis of the broadside ballad’s multimedia components as well as how they might be read, experienced, or accessed, both from an early modern standpoint and a contemporary one. The second part, “Remembering by Disremembering: Black Letter, Calligraphy, and Print History,” invites readers to consider ballad collecting practices, networks and individuals. One of the most famous of these collectors, Samuel Pepys, forms the focus of the third part, “From Networks to Publics: Samuel Pepys,” where Pepys’s own meaning-making tactics in the form of particular publics (gendered and political, interpersonal and public) are explored. Following that, Fumerton moves to the final section, “Diachronic and Synchronic Ballad Publics: Crossing Society, History, and Space,” which considers how ballads might work across time and space, including the space of the Shakespearean stage. Such a four-part structure might allow scholars of music history or popular print, for example, to drill down to Part 1, while those interested in Pepys might focus on Parts 2–3, leaving Shakespeareans and performance studies scholars to hone in on Part 4 and Fumerton’s original take on *A Winter’s Tale*.

What of the individual arguments posited by each chapter, though? Fumerton’s introduction contextualizes her study in light of useful work in textual materialism, historical phenomenology, and cognitive science. It also introduces one of the key theories of the book: Manuel DeLanda’s concept of “assemblage” wherein things—i.e., ballad parts—are “not innately related in a fixed or determined way” but instead relationally determined (12). Fumerton likens these movable pieces and their respective acts of meaning-making to “Lego-block play . . . [with] encountering and making sense of the bits and pieces of ballad media” (14), textual, visual, and oral.

Chapter 1 offers a more extensive critical history and overview of the various theories that animate this study. This theoretical matrix is mirrored by the book’s longer title: “Moving Media, Tactical Publics”. As Fumerton explains, the broadside ballad is “more than any cultural artifact of the early modern period . . . *moving*, in parts and in wholes”: from rearrangeable parts that can separate and be recombined, to the changing aesthetic of the form over time, to a good circulated and

sold across England, to fragments of an individual sheet reframed and positioned at the hands of collectors, and more (33). These moving media are then used—consumed, made, repurposed, or collected—in spontaneous and everyday ways as *tactics* to produce various publics “of varying size and character, who performatively redeploy such making processes to realize their own collective ambitions or desires” (50–51). The challenge that such theoretical signposts (and pathways) present is one Fumerton faces throughout the study: how to access a shared broadside ballad experience which is itself impossibly multiple, indeterminate, always moving, and contradictory.

In Chapter 2, Fumerton presents the challenge of this fragmentation as a kind of opportunity. Current digital humanities resources and computational methodologies, she suggests, approximate something of seventeenth-century broadside ballad experience. Our own scholarly engagements with large databases such as EEBO (Early English Books Online), ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online), and even EBBA, involve partial access through limited facsimile versions and digital scans, discontinuous reading practices, and online searches with incomplete and fragmentary “hits,” much like early moderns and their experiences of assembling and disassembling, partial views and piecemeal repurposing of tune, woodcut, or textual snippet. The “ballad in parts” approach forms the remainder of the chapter, where two versions of a single late 1630s ballad, the aforementioned “Mock-Beggar Hall,” forms the first extensive and multimodal analysis of a broadside ballad and the nearly endless array of “meaning-making relational bits and pieces, like individual notes” (96) that it provides.

Chapter 3 steps back to consider the broader cultural context for the early modern ballad and does so through opening up of possible associations with individual ballads. “Mock-Beggar Hall” becomes less of a singular example of a ballad and, instead, isolated to one of its parts: the woodcut image. Tracing the “hits” of this woodcut in previous ballads or in the hands of different printers leads to an undulating analysis of possible additional tunes and associative ballad text, which themselves lead to a set of anti-feminist (or feminist) debate tracts. Readers searching for a singular argument here will be left unsatisfied. Indeed, Fumerton is clear about her ambition in offering an analytic array rather than a vector: she seeks to “open up

the possibility of making a more whole (if never singular) vision of the past that actually captures something of the early modern experience of broadside ballads” (139). Possibilities unfold in a kind of dizzying spiral.

The “rhizomatic” pathways of individual ballads also give shape to the networked dynamic of ballad collectors themselves, which form the subject of Chapters 4 and 5. Seventeenth-century collectors such as John Selden, George Thomason, Elias Ashmole, Anthony Wood, and Samuel Pepys, were not simply antiquarians: they were part of a network of production and dissemination. These relationships help to foreground a shared commitment to the visual dimension of broadside ballads and to blackletter typography and woodcuts in particular. Where later eighteenth-century collecting practices, priorities, and even mythologies prioritized the notion of a unified “whole”—even cutting pieces from other ballads to produce a kind of Frankenstein-esque unit—these seventeenth-century collections and collectors highlight the tactical, on-the-fly approaches that characterized much of early modern broadside ballad culture where ballads might be gathered, valued, and preserved for any number of different purposes. Chapter 5 offers a fascinating deep-dive into one visually-driven assemblage, none other than Samuel Pepys’s, “My Calligraphical Collection.” Fumerton’s rich treatment of this chronicle of handwriting contributes in important ways to work on typography and print history, suggesting that black letter signified more than “common” folk or nostalgia but rather an awareness of what she calls the “passing present” where print began to replace handwriting (185). Notably, Pepys used a ballad, awash with visual appeal in its woodcut image and black letter print, as the frontispiece to his conclusion of the calligraphical collection, highlighting the connection between handwriting and typeface as visual art forms and vestiges of a lived history. Pepys’s diary forms the focus of the following two chapters in the book, which serve as a kind of case study for how ballads were used in everyday ways to formulate opinions and tactical positions with regard to gender and politics.

Chapter 8 pivots in a new direction: rather than tracing a single broadside ballad or ballad “Lego block” in a particular moment (i.e., “Mock-Beggar Hall”) or a particular ballad collector (i.e., Pepys),

this chapter tracks a single ballad, “The Lady and the Blackamoor” across multiple editions and time periods (269). The chapter’s crucial recontextualization of a late-eighteenth-century “news” story on “African Humanity” as a retelling of the mid-sixteenth century ballad, “The Lady and the Blackamoor,” reminds us of both the long lifeline of broadside ballads and the importance of pan-historical research. Much like Fumerton’s analysis of “Mock-Beggar Hall,” this detailed treatment of the textual, musical, and visual dimensions of the “The Lady and the Blackamoor” highlights the ways in which both individual words (i.e., “blackamoor”) and notions of violence carry different meanings and resonances depending on emphasis (282). Where the analysis stands less convincing, though, is in the suggestion that representations of or engagements with racialized blackness were largely the stuff of later historical periods. Such omissions also afford opportunities, as the solid methodological and historical foundation that Fumerton provides here might open up additional future work and arguments for scholars invested in historical race studies, transatlantic studies and more.

It is in the concluding chapter where *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England* makes one of its most compelling claims: that broadside ballads “create a multimedia cross class and fully experiential moment more extensively and intensively than . . . drama” (320). As evidence for this claim, Fumerton turns to William Shakespeare’s *A Winter’s Tale* and to the many ways the play invokes ballads, either directly or indirectly through references to black letter and woodcuts, tunes and jigs, or through the character of Autolycus, who disguises himself as a balladmonger. The broadside ballad, she suggests, with its performative, multimedia nature is a natural fit for one of Shakespeare’s most experimental works (326). While the generic experiment itself might have been a failure, as many scholars have noted, Fumerton’s fresh take on the embeddedness of broadside ballads is not. Broadside ballads—their music, words, woodcuts, economics, collectors, and performance—resonated or, rather, registered “hits” across all facets, strata, and art forms of early modern English culture.

This keenly interdisciplinary study offers immense value, not simply for its expansive investigation into a key understudied genre, art form, and experience of the early modern period but also for its

ability to balance tightly woven theoretical frameworks with a refreshing spirit of curiosity akin to the very “felt liveliness” the book seeks to explore (11). Invitations to “join [her] in not in wrapping up an argument but in opening one up” ensure the lasting impact of *The Broadside Ballad in Early Modern England* (98).

Linda Phyllis Austern. *Both From the Ears & Mind: Thinking about Music in Early Modern England*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020. vi + 380 pp. + 5 color plates, 25 halftones, 19 line drawings. \$55.00. Review by ANNA LEWTON-BRAIN, MCGILL UNIVERSITY AND DAWSON COLLEGE.

Linda Phyllis Austern’s latest contribution to early modern studies is wide-ranging, extremely learned, and illuminating to those interested in the history of ideas in general and the history of ideas about music in particular. Austern shows how music permeated nearly every aspect of early modern English culture and intellectual life: from academic debates in the elite colleges, to medical treatises touching on the mechanics of the ear and sensory perception, to magic, alchemy, astrology, architecture, arithmetic, emblematics, moral philosophy, theology, poetics, travel, and even zoology. Music and musical ideas provided a framework by which to understand the world. Music’s liminal characteristics, of inhabiting “spaces between literal and metaphorical, mental and physical, and manifest and mysterious categories” (2), made it particularly useful for thinking through various salient questions from the period such as the relationship between visible and invisible truths. Thus, Austern argues that music “stood at the centre, not the periphery of the early modern English intellectual enterprise” (2).

In “Chapter One: Praise, Blame, and Persuasion” Austern lays out the relationship between speculative and practical music in the period, showing how the “ancient liberal-arts tradition of [speculative] music [was] an intellectual preparative to performance and aural judgement” (10). Thus, as a preparative to her discussion, Austern begins where Renaissance thinkers began, not by examining any particular musical works, but by thinking philosophically about music in general.