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## Reviews

**Kenneth LaBarre, Director; Hank Neuberger, Producer. *Lady Antebellum: Own the Night World Tour* (DVD). Eagle Rock Entertainment, 2012 (124 minutes, NTSC). [www.eagle-rock.com](http://www.eagle-rock.com).**

Lady Antebellum has risen to become one of the most successful crossover country acts in recent memory. Their breakout 2009 hit single *Need You Now* topped both the *Billboard* Country and Hot 100 charts, opening up a broader market to the pop-leaning trio. This video combines one night's performance on the group's 2011-2012 arena headlining "Own the Night" tour, filmed in Little Rock, Arkansas, with selected backstage and tour-diary segments that provide the viewer with a good behind-the-scenes look at the roles and responsibilities artists and their support team assume when they get to the top levels of the music business.

For an introductory class in music industry studies, these clips are especially helpful in that the artists are speaking candidly about their aspirations and about their reliance on their eighty-person team to put on a successful show night after night. Three of the backstage segments bear note to help students see behind the spotlights, video walls, and three-level production stage that are used on the U.S. concert segments. The first, titled "From the Ground Up," details the production design and thought that goes into building and staging an eight-month-long arena tour. Set designers, riggers, lighting techs, sound, video, and backline crew are all shown in action helping to underscore their crucial offstage roles in preparing and executing each night's concert. The second, "The Road to Here," provides video clips of the band's early career, showing their work ethic and dedication to building an audience. It won't be lost on students that one of these gigs was to play in a rural truck stop/diner to celebrate the opening of deer season! Most of the diner's patrons ignore the band while a local radio personality shoves a mic between the trio serenading the sleepy crowd at 7 a.m. Nonetheless, Lady Antebellum soldiers on, touring in one Jeep Grand Cherokee with their acoustic guitars and merch boxes in the back. So much for overnight success.

The third segment may be the most insightful to what makes this band so successful. It's their 24/7 dedication to writing original songs that connect deeply with their audience. Titled, "Evolution of a Song," this

chapter starts with each member sharing his or her earliest involvement with music and the roles that supportive family played in early musical development. Singer Hillary Scott insightfully states that the trio see themselves as “songwriters, first” and that they are a band that chooses to focus their energy on songwriting every single day they are together. Scenes portray them working at their writer’s craft individually and as a group, before Dave Heywood demonstrates their Pro Tools mini-studio, which they tour with to constantly cut new demos of songs. The efficacy of such an approach can be heard in the concert segments as the group plays their hook-laden crossover pop-country songs to the tumultuous acclaim of the packed arenas both here and overseas.

For a music business educator, *Lady Antebellum: Own the Night 2012 World Tour* offers an excellent first-person account of a phenomenally successful crossover act that retains a sense of wonder and humility about the path they’ve taken to the top, with plenty of the off-stage nuts and bolts on display to remind students of what really underpins their success and rise to international acclaim and multi-platinum success.

**RJ Smith. *The One: The Life and Music of James Brown*. New York: Gotham Books (Penguin Group), 2012. [www.us.penguinroup.com](http://www.us.penguinroup.com).**

There has been no shortage of writing about the seminal singer, bandleader, and self-appointed “Godfather of Soul” James Brown. Brown is a fascinating figure, larger than life, often serving as a lightning rod for controversy throughout his career. Personally, I found myself looking forward to picking *The One* up from my bedside nightly as I journeyed through Smith’s fascinating narrative, drawn along by his recounting of James Brown’s long, productive, yet troubled life. In many ways, Brown looms as large as Louis Armstrong in the pantheon of genre-establishing, original American musical and cultural voices of the twentieth century. However, much of what has been published by and about Brown was filtered through his own prodigious PR, marketing, and hype machine. Refreshingly, RJ Smith’s biography offers an engaging, thoroughly objective, and vivid portrayal of this deeply flawed, but supremely gifted artist,

showman, and entrepreneur. As did Armstrong, Brown grew up on the fringes of society, and learned how to fight to defend himself. That scrappiness and willingness to go head to head with anyone in authority that he perceived as a threat or disagreeing with his frequent and sometimes eccentric edicts is one of the threads that tie *The One* together.

Brown's rise from the depths of abject poverty, his imprisonments, battles with state and federal tax authorities, and his frequent brushes with the American legal system are not romanticized in any way, instead they provide the reader with a solid basis for understanding Brown's lifelong insistence on being wholly self-sufficient and trusting of very few persons. This story is told in a manner that allows the reader to draw one's own conclusions about Brown's business acumen, which seemed to vary throughout his career. Smith explains that Brown built up his extensive financial empire and investments without the help of the well-connected lawyers, accountants, and managers that we take for granted in today's music world. Nearly all of his close advisors lived in or near his home in Georgia. Not long before his 2006 death, Smith reports that Brown had set up two trusts, leaving the substantial receipts that his songs, image, likeness, royalties, and annuities would generate to benefit his grandchildren and impoverished children near the region he called home on the Georgia-South Carolina border. He also continued to draw a salary of \$100,000 per month in his dotage, illustrating that even at the last stage of his career, he had marshaled his resources carefully enough to provide for himself and his extended family.

For a student of the music business, the book is a rich repository of Brown's dealings with all levels of the industry. Brown had an innate sense of where his money was coming from and how he was using it, even if he sometimes used his down-home mannerisms to give the impression that he was just an entertainer, another parallel to Louis Armstrong's public and private personae. Especially interesting is how he dealt with his various band members, most of whom were extremely talented artists in their own right, but subjected themselves to Brown's harsh treatment willingly, not only for the steady paycheck, but because they realized that as a concert performer, Brown was without equal and they were a part of making musical history. Tales of his nearly instantaneous music creation in the studio, using a riff or beat to build an iconic funk song such as *Get on the Good Foot*, while conducting the musicians to produce the music he heard in his head also makes for compelling reading.

This volume would be useful not only as a case study for a self-made artist, but also for any course in popular music, African American studies, or sociology that looks at the cultural or societal impacts of popular music. Brown's legacy includes many outpourings of social activism, lyrics, and interviews that addressed black self-reliance and entrepreneurship, convincing young Americans to stay in school, and a host of anti-drug songs and initiatives. The fact that Brown was a staunch Republican who corresponded regularly with politicians, presidents, and other power brokers provides rich material for discussion with students about music's and musicians' roles in our world. *The One* stands as a notable achievement providing a more balanced and well-researched look at one of the most interesting artist-entrepreneurs in American popular music, for which RJ Smith can be justifiably proud.

Keith Hatschek



**KEITH HATSCHKE** is Professor of Music and Director of the Music Management Program at the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. Prior to joining academia, he worked in the music business for more than twenty-five years. He is the author of two music industry books: *The Golden Moment: Recording Secrets of the Pros* and *How To Get a Job in the Music Industry*, which provides career development tools and strategies for young

music professionals. He contributes monthly music industry commentary for the music blog, *Echoes-Insights for Independent Artists*. Among his research interests are music industry curriculum and pedagogy, student-led music businesses, recording and music technology, and the life and work of jazz pianist, Dave Brubeck. He has presented a number of conference papers and talks about Brubeck's role in Cold War jazz diplomacy, the Civil Rights movement and musicians' collaborative efforts to address segregation in the mid-twentieth-century United States.

**Greg “Freddy” Camalier, Director; Stephen Badger and Greg “Freddy” Camalier, Executive Producers; Raji Mandelkorn, Co-Producer. *Muscle Shoals* (Video). Ear Goggles Productions, 2013. [www.magpictures.com/muscleshoals/](http://www.magpictures.com/muscleshoals/).**

In a digital world where access to so much is easy and affordable, students can quickly drift into their specialized niche or interest area and not see or hear much literature beyond that narrow scope. Many music and entertainment industry programs provide a balance of text-context in the form of a popular music history class and these classes give that exposure and historical context.

That history contains many chapters about some very interesting places, but none more interesting than Muscle Shoals, Alabama. Yes, Alabama. Many chapters originate in urban places like New Orleans, Chicago, Memphis, Detroit, or Philadelphia. However, there are very few chapters where the setting is rural and southern. The documentary film *Muscle Shoals* gives some insight into how for more than fifty years, hit records have been written and produced in this small Alabama town.

With a running time of 102 minutes, Camalier and Badger tell the story of the emergence of Rick Hall as an independent producer, studio owner, and music publisher. The film covers the time period from roughly the early sixties through the mid-seventies and chronicles the Muscle Shoals music scene of that era. It features interviews with Mick Jagger, Bono, Keith Richards, Steve Winwood, Alicia Keys, Aretha Franklin, Gregg Allman, and Jimmy Cliff.

One of several consistent themes throughout the film is the tragedy filled young life of Hall. His mother abandoned the family at a young age, a younger brother fell into a boiling caldron of laundry, and a young wife was killed in an automobile accident. So, when one hears Hall declare about his career, “I wanted to be somebody. I wanted to be special,” it is believable and powerful.

Hall’s early successes were recordings made using a rhythm section that would soon become famous, The Swampers. This rhythm section is the one referred to in a line of the well-known song *Sweet Home Alabama*. It goes, “Now Muscle Shoals has got the Swampers, and they’ve been known to pick a song or two.” The Swampers developed a characteristic sound that kept bringing acts to Hall’s Fame Recording Studio. One of the hallmarks of the Swampers is that they had a “black” sound but were

all white. In fact, record company executives and artists alike came to Alabama to get those funky black players as their rhythm section only to find that they were “mighty pale,” according to Swamper guitarist Jimmy Johnson. However, a conflict came about when Swampers Jimmy Johnson, David Hood, Barry Beckett, and Roger Hawkins broke away on their own and opened Muscle Shoals Sound Studio. Hall said, “This was war.” This is the film’s theme of conflict throughout and is resolved later in the film as Hall and the remaining Swampers gather for a reunion.

The music of Muscle Shoals, Alabama, is described by most as funky, a perfect mix of rhythm and blues, soul, and rock and roll. Jimmy Cliff states there are certain places on the earth where there is a “field of energy,” and he defines Muscle Shoals as being one of those places. Bono says, “You’re going to hear some of the greatest voices that ever were.” The best compliment to the musical heritage of Muscle Shoals is Keith Richards’ declaration, “You’re in rock and roll heaven, man.”

While Alabama Governor George Wallace was advocating segregation in 1960s-era Alabama, the northwest corner of the state found blacks and whites working alongside each other in recording studios. However, during breaks for meals, they were awkwardly not able to sit in the same areas of restaurants. In an interview, Wilson Pickett states his reservation about recording in Muscle Shoals and recalls his arrival at the town’s tiny airport and being picked up “by a tall, skinny redneck” and driving by cotton fields on the way to the studio. However, some of Pickett’s biggest hits, including *Land of 1000 Dances*, were recorded there.

Critics have given the film rave reviews for historical content. However, of note is Anthony Arendt’s cinematography. Arendt captured the lush landscape and greenery of northern Alabama and one can almost feel the humidity of the deep South in several scenes.

The *Muscle Shoals* world premiere was at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2013 and the film has been featured in several other festivals as well. It was picked up for distribution by Mark Cuban’s and Todd Wagner’s Magnolia Pictures at SXSW in March 2013. The PBS program *Independent Lens* secured the film for broadcast in the United States. For serious students of popular music history, the film is a must see.

Robert Garfrerick



**ROBERT GARFRERICK** is Professor and Eminent Scholar in Entertainment Industry at the University of North Alabama. Dr. Garfrerick teaches music business and songwriting classes. In addition to his teaching duties he is the Chair of the Department of Entertainment Industry. He has written songs recorded by Crystal Gayle, T. G. Sheppard, Marie Osmond, Johnny Lee, Gus Hardin, David Slater, and others.

Dr. Garfrerick has a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Alabama, a Master of Arts in Music from Middle Tennessee State University, and a Doctorate in Education from Tennessee State University. His research interest is in the area of creativity, songwriting, and curriculum development. He presents and publishes this research regularly. Additionally, Dr. Garfrerick has been a speaker, pre-



senter, performer, or clinician for groups such as The Songwriter's Guild of America (SGA), The Balsam Mountain Songwriter's Camp, Nashville Songwriters Association International (NSAI), and the Music and Entertainment Industry Educators Association (MEIEA). He is a voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences (NARAS), The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the Muscle Shoals Music Association (MSMA), MEIEA, and NSAI.



**David Flitner, Editor. *Less Noise, More Soul: The Search for Balance in the Art, Technology, and Commerce of Music*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Books, 2013. [www.halleonardbooks.com](http://www.halleonardbooks.com).**

This book makes for an interesting contrast with the Ariel Hyatt book reviewed below. Flitner's work is a collection of articles by fifteen authors representing a variety of functions in the industry. The common thread is a certain skepticism about the current direction of the industry and its impact on artistry as opposed to commerce. These concerns include the ever-present drive to raise the noise level of recordings, concerns about the increasing amount of corporate ownership of radio stations, and the effects of the iPod in decreasing the audience for radio, as well as the sale of albums. The contributors to the book, all with excellent credits, include mastering engineer Bob Ludwig, independent record label pioneer Will Ackerman, and other leading producers, engineers, musicians, and recording artists.

One of the most interesting comments is editor David Flitner's observation that rock music has been transformed from a position of "creative integrity" to a "soundtrack for fashion, promotion, and lifestyle." Not all readers will agree with the various authors' contentions. For example, Susan Rogers' statement that "powerful emotional responses to music have never depended on lyrical content," is one that will certainly not appeal to lyricists! Similarly, Bobby Frasier's statement that "music of the 30s, 40s, and 50s all sound distinctive because of the technology of recording" is a bit mystifying to this reader.

All in all Flitner's collection provides excellent food for classroom thought and study.

**Ariel Hyatt. *Cyber PR For Musicians: Tools, Tricks & Tactics For Building Your Social Media House*. Brooklyn: Ariel Publicity, Artist Relations, and Booking, 2012. [www.cyberprmusic.com](http://www.cyberprmusic.com).**

Ariel Hyatt is a renowned New York publicist who has leaped into the internet as a promotional tool with alacrity and resolve. This book is the most complete book of its kind that I have encountered. The author presents a bewildering collection of promotional tools available for contemporary musicians. She covers blogs, Facebook, Pinterest, Google, Twitter, various mobile applications, and teaches the reader how to take

advantage of these platforms. She also evaluates all of these tools and then shows the artist how to develop a fan base and how to communicate with these fans. There are details about organizing a blog, writing newsletters, surveying fans, and much more.

The author is aware that many aspiring musicians are intimidated by the proliferation of these high tech tools and that they are not clear how best to utilize them. To dispel these fears she gives many net sources for videos that will be helpful in developing and utilizing these tools. She also gives nuts and bolts dollar figures about exactly what some of these platforms cost.

This book is a great tool for musicians and professors, and in fact is used at several colleges. The only thing I see missing from the book is a realistic assessment of the time and dollar commitment it takes to access and utilize all these platforms. After all, there are only so many hours in the day; there has to be a balance between the time it takes to write and develop the music, and the time we devote to self-promotion. Possibly that is the next book project for Ms. Hyatt, whose company has represented over 1,800 artists and bands.

People working in this industry, or teaching about it, need to be aware of this revolution in PR, and whether they wish to use these tools or not, this book provides a foundation for that information.

**Bobby Owsinski. *The Touring Musician's Handbook*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Books, 2011. [www.halleonardbooks.com](http://www.halleonardbooks.com).**

For anyone who wants to go on large-scale tours as a hired-hand musician, singer, road manager, or audio person, this book is an essential guide. Having said that, the reality of the industry is that the sort of large-scale tours that this book covers will employ only a very small percentage of musicians who may want to do the work.

Owsinski defines each player in the tour in some detail. This includes monitor engineers, lighting directors, stage managers, and other personnel. He also provides a history of how tours developed as an industry from, for example, the chitlin' circuit of R&B performers to today's stadium and arena tours. Other sections of the book cover preparation for players of each instrument. This includes many hints for packing back-up cables, accessories, and even instruments for major tours.

An accompanying DVD-ROM has a gear preparation list and two

short movies where a touring musician takes the viewer through what needs to be packed in terms of gear and personal items. There is also a letter for the TSA (Transportation Security Administration), which is part of an agreement with the airlines that covers a musician's right to carry instruments aboard a plane. This is quite useful because I can tell the reader from personal experience that not all gate agents and cabin attendants are aware of this agreement.

Overall this is an excellent guide to large-scale tours. I only wish the author had offered more information about smaller-scale tours because the sad fact is that most of our students, and most musicians, will never be playing stadiums, or even arenas, and the majority of them won't have this high level of technical support.

There are nine interviews in the back of the book with techs, musicians, and even a music director. Unfortunately the author has printed some of the material from the interviews verbatim in the main text (occasionally even twice). Although the author stresses that tour musicians must duplicate the sound of the artist's records, Mike Holmes, a keyboard player interviewed by the author, takes the opposite view.

One of the book's strengths is the detail about the financial and social aspects of the life of the touring musician. The section on auditions reveals different strategies musicians use to get these gigs, including not doing auditions at all!

Dick Weissman

**DICK WEISSMAN** is Associate Professor Emeritus at the University of Colorado Denver and an Adjunct Professor at Portland Community College. He has recorded and performed widely, with placements of his original music on BBC TV, NBC TV, and the Biography Channel. He has written twenty published books about music and the music industry, including his newest, *100 Best Books for Folk Fans*, to be published by Scarecrow Press in February 2014.

