Part ethnography, part cultural history, *Wake the Town and Tell the People* sets out the story of a central aspect of musical culture in Jamaica: the dancehall. This is not only a physical place, but also a social space and conceptual arena for performance. It is not simply a recent phenomenon, but one that reaches back to the time of slavery. Neither is it a static concept, but rather a field of cultural production that fluctuates with the political, social, and economic environment of Jamaica throughout its history, as both constituent and reflectant element.

So argues Stolzoff over the course of this book, which draws on fifteen years of work he has done on Jamaican popular music. Extensive field trips and archival research led up to his dissertation, which forms the core of *Wake the Town*, and throughout the book Stolzoff exhibits an intimate perspective on the recent and past history of Jamaica. His ethnography is well balanced, with a diachronic look at the strong social and economic divisions that have contributed to the dynamic popular culture of the nation-state. He rests not with merely telling the reader what dancehall culture is like now, but traces it backward in time and shows the reader where it came from. This is especially welcome when discussing such a vibrant cultural sphere as dancehall. In this sense, Stolzoff does a fine job of explaining how dancehall moves beyond being a musical or aesthetic practice, in fact forming a lifestyle for Jamaican youths, past and present.

*Wake the Town* divides neatly into two halves, the first more descriptive and the second more theoretical. Stolzoff’s first four chapters outline the cultural and musical developments in Jamaica that began with the slave trade and plantations and surged on through emancipation, colonial rule, and post-independence. He ends his historical outline with the emergence of dancehall or ragga music, and it is there that his more analytical tale takes up. While not a complete and thorough history, Stolzoff’s outline of
Jamaican popular musics since slavery covers all the bases and sets the reader up for the ethnographic half of the book. This history, then, works in conjunction with the field research Stolzoff conducted, generating a solid and useful scholarly work.

The last four chapters of the book focus on the interviewing and participant observation that Stolzoff conducted during several extended field trips to Kingston, Jamaica. In these chapters, he presents a thorough look at the popular music industry of the capital city, often relying on the voices and viewpoints of artists, producers, promoters, and fans. Stolzoff filters his data through a diverse body of theory: performance studies, political economy, cultural studies, and practice theory. His interdisciplinary approach works well, especially with regard to sorting out the nuances of youth culture and youth experiences in a politically, economically, and socially stratified world. Despite the noticeably drier writing style in the second half of the book, this section does offer the reader a perspective on dancehall culture that situates it within the broader social and cultural matrix of Jamaica.

*Wake the Town* is a much needed book in many ways. It is an ethnography of popular music and a history of contemporary Caribbean popular culture; it is a passionate scholarly work and an informative and descriptive book readable by a nonspecialist. Finally, it is interdisciplinary in a most fruitful way, combining elements of many approaches to shed analytical light on a heretofore underexplored topic.


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Before the Cherokee had much contact with Europeans, their baskets were made chiefly of rivercane and used for practical, everyday activities and various sacred rituals. However, the course of Cherokee basketry was changed by decades of disease and war, by the continual encroachment of logging, mining, and European notions of economics,