

Call for Papers for an Edited Collection on “New York City in Song”

New York City has one of the richest musical histories in all of the US, and has been the subject of an astonishing number of songs – something that has so far not been comprehensively addressed in academic works.

Thus, the proposed volume under the working title “New York City in Song” wants to analyze songs written about New York City, and engage with the depiction of the city within them, but also use it as a way to deal with several musical genres that the city has been home to, and was instrumental in developing. These include the vaudeville and musical theater scene on Broadway and beyond, but also hip hop, disco, punk, folk, jazz, swing, rock or pop music. It will therefore contribute to both the fields of urban studies and popular music studies, which have become well-developed areas of study over the recent years, but are still lacking specialized literature – especially such that considers their intersections.

We are seeking contributions from those with a cultural studies, media studies, music geography, cultural history or musicology background, making possible a far-ranging treatment of the interconnection of the city space and its musical history. We are looking for authors with an accessible writing style, while still having rigorous research standards. Our final line-up should reflect the varied musical history of New York, placing particular emphasis on marginalized histories.

Each chapter should focus on one song (potentially two if by the same artist or composer or if you can make a convincing argument for thematic or historic connection, such as cover versions) or a whole album (if possible to discuss it properly in one chapter), either from the following list or one of your choosing that you think reflects a specific imagery/myth of the city or a key element of New York’s music scene. It should put the musical pieces into its historical context at the time of writing, its relevance for the musical genre it belongs to, how it and its artist is connected to New York City, and what image of the city it depicts.

Authors can also address the way these songs have been used in other works of popular culture (such as film or television) to perpetuate this image and a connected myth of New York. There are two separate but connected agendas – we both want to discuss an imaginary of New York as well as a lived reality that connects the songs to the unique urban landscape of this city, to reflect how music has shaped the space, but also how the city is reflected in its music and by its artists.

Final examples will be determined by submissions we receive. They can include parlor or vaudeville songs from the 19th century and early 20th century, but will mainly focus on the 20th and 21st centuries:

“The Sidewalks of New York” (1894)– Charles B. Lawlor & James W. Blake

“Give My Regards to Broadway” (1904) – from “Yankee Doodle Dandy”

“Rhapsody in Blue” (1924) – George Gershwin

“Easter Parade” (1933) – Irving Berlin

“Autumn in New York” (1934) – Vernon Duke

“Take the ‘A’ Train” (1939) – Duke Ellington

“Joan Baez” LP (1960) - Joan Baez
 “Talkin New York” (1962) / “The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan” LP (1963) – Bob Dylan
 “The Velvet Underground & Nico” LP (1967) – The Velvet Underground & Nico
 “Some Time in New York City” LP (1972) – John Lennon & Yoko Ono
 “Chelsea Hotel No.2” (1974) – Leonard Cohen
 “Jungleland” (1975) – Bruce Springsteen
 “Horses” LP (1975) – Patti Smith
 “New York State of Mind” (1976) – Billy Joel
 “53rd and 3rd” (1976) – The Ramones
 “New York City” (1976) – Gil Scott Heron & Brian Jackson
 “Theme from New York, New York” (1977) – Liza Minelli / Frank Sinatra
 “Fire Island” (1977) / “Y.M.C.A.” (1978) – Village People
 “Le Freak” (1978) – Chic
 “Nueva York” (1979) – Willie Colón
 “The Message” (1982) – Grandmaster Flash
 “Madonna” (LP) (1983) // “I Love New York” (2005) – Madonna
 “Run-D.M.C.” LP (1984) – Run D.M.C.
 “No Sleep till Brooklyn” (1986) // “Paul’s Boutique” LP (1989) – Beastie Boys
 “Fairytale of New York” (1987) – The Pogues & Kirsty MacColl
 “New York Minute” (1989) – Don Henley
 “Enter the Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)” LP (1993) – Wu-Tang Clan
 “NY State of Mind” (1994) / “Illmatic” (1994) LP – Nas
 “La Vie Bohème A/B” (1996) – from “RENT”
 “New York City Boy” (1999) – The Pet Shop Boys
 “New York, New York” (2001) – Ryan Adams
 “The Blueprint” LP (2001) – Jay Z
 “Is This It?” LP (2001) – The Strokes
 “A New York Christmas” (2002) – Rob Thomas
 “You Won’t Make it On Broadway” (2004) – from “Spamalot”
 “Sound of Silver” LP (2007) – LCD Soundsystem
 “The Fame” LP (2008) – Lady Gaga
 “Empire State of Mind” (2009) – Alicia Keys & Jay-Z
 “Welcome to New York” (2014) – Taylor Swift
 “Cheering for Me Now” (2018) (in connection to “Hamilton”) – Lin Manuel Miranda

Intellect has expressed interest in the project and we (Dr. Veronika Keller, Dr. Sabrina Mittermeier and Maciej Smólka) expect to be contracted based on a convincing final table of contents. Please send us an **abstract of 300 words** plus a **150 word author bio** by **October 31, 2020** to newyorkinsong@gmail.com. Full first drafts of chapters of 3,000-5,000 words will be due by March 31, 2021, aiming for a publication of the book some time in 2022.