



Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques, and Ways of Knowing

Julian Henriques



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The reggae sound system has exerted a major influence on music and popular culture. Out on the streets of inner city Kingston, Jamaica, every night, sound systems stage dancehall sessions for the crowd to share the immediate, intensive and immersive visceral pleasures of sonic dominance. Sonic Bodies concentrates on the skilled performance of the crewmembers responsible for this signature sound of Jamaican music: the audio engineers designing, building and fine-tuning the hugely powerful "sets" of equipment; the selectors choosing the music tracks to play; and MCs(DJs) on the mic hyping up the crowd.

Julian Henriques proposes that these dancehall "vibes" are taken literally as the periodic motion of vibrations. He offers an analysis of how a sound system operates - at auditory, corporeal and sociocultural frequencies. Sonic Bodies formulates a fascinating critique of visual dominance and the dualities inherent in ideas of image, text or discourse. This innovative book questions the assumptions that reason resides only in a disembodied mind, that communication is an exchange of information, and that meaning is only ever representation.



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