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Surfing about Music

Timothy J. Cooley

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This first major examination the interrelationships of music and surfing explores different ways that surfers combine surfing with making and listening to music. Tim Cooley uses his knowledge and experience as a practicing musician and avid surfer to consider the musical practices of surfers in locations around the world, taking into account ideas about surfing as a global affinity group and the real-life stories of surfers and musicians he encounters. In doing so, he expands ethnomusicological thinking about the many ways musical practices are integral to human socializing, creativity, and the condition of being human.

Cooley discusses the origins of surfing in Hawai‘i, its central role in Hawaiian society, and the *mele* (chants) and hula (dance or visual poetry) about surfing. He covers instrumental rock from groups like Dick Dale and the Del Tones and many others, and songs about surfing performed by the Beach Boys. As he traces trends globally, three broad styles emerge: surf music, punk rock, and acoustic singer-songwriter music. Cooley also examines surfing contests and music festivals as well as the music used in a selection surf movies that were particularly influential in shaping the musical practices of significant groups of surfers. Engaging, informative, and enlightening, this book is a fascinating exploration of surfing as a cultural practice with accompanying rituals, habits, and conceptions about who surfs and why, and of how musical ideas and practices are key to the many things that surfing is and aspires to be.

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