

Music from the Margins

The Cultural Crime Scene of Mass Media

Ian Brennan

Music from the Margins is a passionate defense of listening itself, and a celebration of how denied and devalued voices are often the ones most worth hearing.

Mass media is a crime scene. It steals marginalized voices, drowns imagination beneath commercial noise, turns art into spectacle, and weakens the direct human connections that give culture meaning.

In this provocative and deeply personal new work, acclaimed producer and field recordist Ian Brennan charts a radically different path. Part manifesto, part travelogue, part creative handbook, the book gathers decades of hard-earned insights from a life spent listening to people the world too often ignores.

Brennan offers a series of concise, evocative reflections on creativity, perception, and artistic practice, meditations designed not merely to be read but returned to again and again. Throughout are also compilations of extraordinary stories from his ongoing field-recording journeys, accompanied by striking photographs from Marilena Umhuza Delli.

Travel from the mountains of Lesotho, where rival Famo music gangs have left trails of bloodshed, to Appalachian snake-handling churches preserving echoes of proto-rockabilly. Encounter ancient hymns sung in Ethiopia's nearly vanished Ge'ez language, endangered musical traditions among minority communities in northern Laos, songs of survival from the Tigray people, voices from Kiribati as rising seas threaten their entire nation, and the haunting sounds of Mississippi's infamous Parchman Prison.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ian Brennan is a Grammy-winning music producer who has produced three other Grammy-nominated albums. He is the author of ten books and has worked with the likes of filmmaker John Waters, Merle Haggard, and Green Day, among others. His work with international artists such as the Zomba Prison Project, Tanzania Albinism Collective, and Khmer Rouge Survivors, has been featured on the front page of the *New York Times* and on an Emmy-winning *60 Minutes* segment with Anderson Cooper reporting. Since 1993 he has taught violence prevention and conflict resolution around the world for such prestigious organizations as the Smithsonian, New York's New School, Berklee College of Music, the University of London, the University of California-Berkeley, and the Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze in Rome. He lives in San Francisco, CA.

ACCOLADES

"Most music books are ivory tower musings or fanboy indulgences. Ian Brennan's books are among the few that are brave, challenging and important."

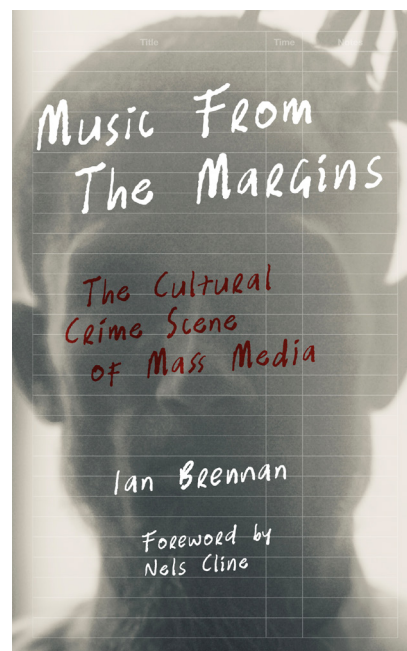
—Michel Faber, author of *LISTEN: On Music, Sound & Us* and the novel *Under the Skin*

"Music is one of the best doors into a culture and Ian Brennan has opened them in more far-off corners than anyone. He writes of the people he meets and their music with vivid directness and great generosity of spirit."

—Grammy-nominated producer, Joe Boyd (Nick Drake, Richard & Linda Thompson, Pink Floyd) and author of *And the Roots of Rhythm Remain* and *White Bicycles*

"An activist and ambassador for the overlooked and underappreciated musicians of the world. Brennan is an important counterculture figure of our time. His writing, like his productions, deserve a spotlight."

—Ted Hughes, award winning poet



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