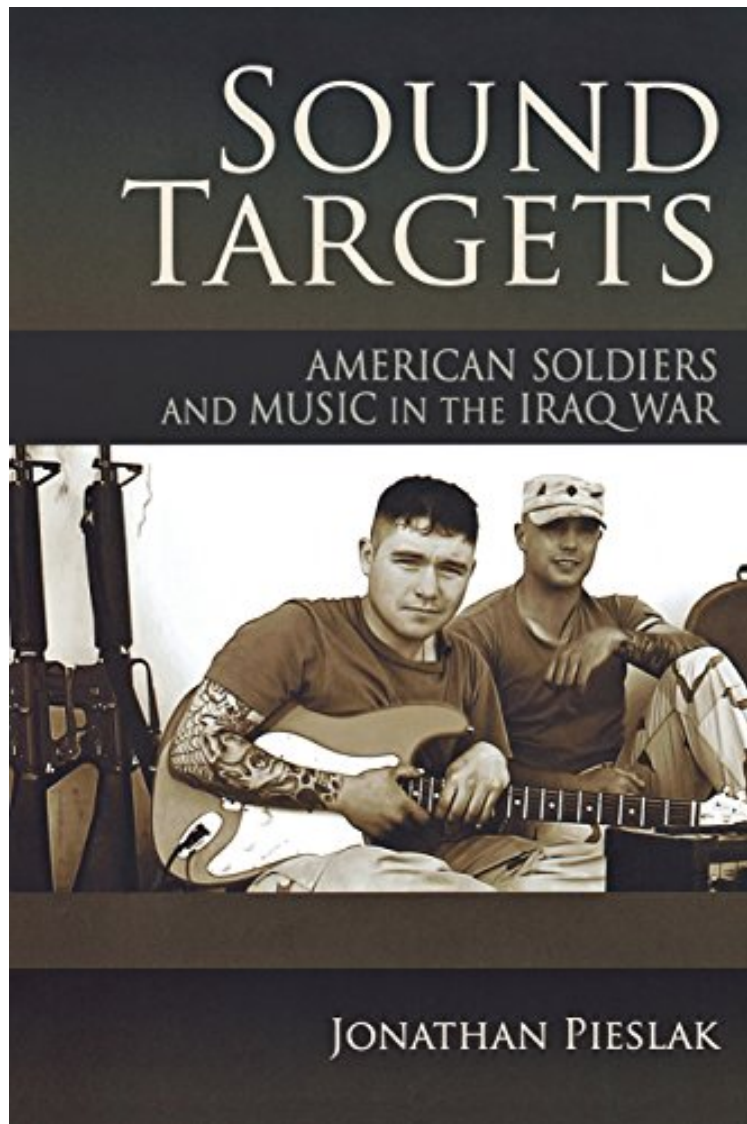


(Mobile pdf) Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War

Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War

Jonathan Pieslak

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Jonathan Pieslak : Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Sound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Music and warfareBy H. A. FriedmanSound Targets: American Soldiers and Music in the Iraq War, Jonathan Pieslak, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, 2009.This 225-page

lightly illustrated book tells the story of American soldiers in Iraq and their use of music to build their own morale, to destroy the willingness of the enemy to continue the fight, and to weaken the resistance of prisoners during interrogation. I was aware of the author since he had written to me earlier requesting permission to quote some text from my article "The Use of Music in Psychological Operations" in his book. Pieslak starts off by mentioning some historical uses of music; the trumpets used by Joshua at the battle of Jericho, General Santa Anna playing El Degello at the Alamo, and of course the hard rock broadcast at General Noriega in Panama hiding in the Vatican Embassy in Panama. He goes on to discuss Iraq but since he admits that he only interviewed 18 soldiers and several of them were hesitant to talk, he doesn't really get into the subject in great depth. He discusses music in recruiting, in combat, as used by the enemy in Iraq, as a psychological tactic, as a form of soldier expression and then attempts to explain "metal" and "rap" ideologies. Pieslak gives the lyrics of some of the songs and explains that often soldiers about to go into battle will steel themselves with music. In my day we didn't have Ipods, but I do recall that when I was training troops in infantry tactics I would sometimes play "The Ballad of the Green Berets" on the car radio as I drove to the student barracks to get myself fired up. And of course, when I had the soldiers march themselves to class or to chow as part of "drill and ceremonies" I demanded that they do loud "Jody" calls all the way there and back. The more militant and blood-thirsty Jody calls definitely motivated the troops. I would have liked a bit more combat operations from the book. More tales of advancing troops playing music and more stories of the music played to captured insurgents to break their will to resist. Unfortunately, most of the soldiers interviewed who admitted taking part in interrogations had been ordered not to discuss such things in order not to give aid to the enemy. We are given some examples, and some of the songs are mentioned, but I must say that I wanted more than just a single chapter on music used in psychological operations. To the author's credit, he does add some interesting data on tunes played by some units about to enter combat in his chapter: "Music as an inspiration for Combat." For those who know little about the use of music by the military, the book is a good starter study. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Book with a different view on the war

By Stephen M. Johnson I have had a good time reading this book. The author has taken the time to not fill his book with politics or tactics. But with the feelings of the soldiers in his book. Focusing more on the music than the war. I recommend for those looking for a book about the lives of soldiers and not just the combat that soldiers deal with on a daily basis.

Though a part of American soldiers' lives since the Revolutionary War, by World War II music could be broadcast to the front. Today it accompanies soldiers from the recruiting office to the battlefield. For this book, Jonathan Pieslak interviewed returning veterans to learn about the place of music in the Iraq War and in contemporary American military culture in general. Pieslak describes how American soldiers hear, share, use, and produce music both on and off duty. He studies the role of music from recruitment campaigns and basic training to its use "in country" before and during missions. Pieslak explores themes of power, chaos, violence, and survival in the metal and hip-hop music so popular among the troops, and offers insight into the daily lives of American soldiers in the Middle East.

Pieslak's *Sound Targets* offers a serious and insightful examination of how music was used by American soldiers in the Iraq War. November 2009 (Times Higher Education) I highly recommend this book for all those interested in relationships between artistic expression and politics, war, militarism, and psychology. Its writing style is both accessible and sophisticated, making it appropriate for use in either undergraduate or graduate courses. October, 2009 (Lisa Gilman University of Oregon) [This] book documents and explains various ways in which music is intertwined throughout the lives of many American soldiers . . . serving in Iraq. The author's purpose for this work is to offer a glimpse into these military lives and add to the literature on music and war. 13 1-2 2010 (Music Reference Services Quarterly) Pieslak's careful consideration of soldier accounts about music and his detailed analyses of specific musical texts, videos, and repertoires make *Sound Targets* an important and timely contribution to the growing discourse around music and war. (MUSICultures) All in all, the author has amassed a profusion of valuable information and data about music and the Iraq War . . . Research into music's role in armed conflict is in its infancy . . . and we are in need of the kinds of histories and contexts he establishes and the accounts he records, especially in such an eminently readable and accessible text. . . . [W]e must recognize Jonathan Pieslak for having bravely opened the door for further exploration through his pioneering study. 29:1, Spring 2011 (American Music) *Sound Targets* reveals just how pervasively popular music has shaped contemporary U.S. military culture. . . . This thoughtful and provocative study will certainly attract a wide audience concerned with music's roles in the time of war. (W. Anthony Sheppard author of *Revealing Masks: Exotic Influences and Ritualized Performance in Modernist Music Theater*) About the Author Jonathan Pieslak is Associate Professor of Music at the City College and Graduate Center, CUNY. He lives in New York City.