

»BACKWOODS«: RURAL DISTANCE AND AUTHENTICITY IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FOLK AND ROCK DISCOURSE

Adam Harper

Abstract

The value placed on rural musicians is a consistent characteristic of independent popular music culture, particularly with respect to »lo-fi« aesthetics. Antipathetic to what they saw as excessively industrialised and commercialised popular music, urban folk and rock fans have recurrently sought satisfaction in musics of peripheral areas that were considered archaic or »primitive,« conflating musical and geographical distance. Beginning by tracing the roots of this process in Romanticism and folk revivals, I examine the cases and receptions of artists such as Roscoe Halcomb, Hasil Adkins, Beat Happening and Guided By Voices.