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In his introduction, Johnson presents himself as a non-Japanese researcher offering interpretation of the koto based on his admiration for, and experiences with, the instrument in the context of Japanese culture. He admits to having adopted some Japanese ways of thinking and acting during the course of his studies (p. 17). I sense this in his book: the spacious layout of text and illustrations, for example, echoes Japanese aesthetics. Johnson's historical exegesis of the koto proceeds in a way that I found too repetitive until I recognized its structure as analogous to a traditional Japanese musical genre in which thematic elements appear in a series of variations called *danmono*. In this light, Johnson's first five chapters could be seen as variations on the Introduction, with chapter six, "Conclusions," providing the quick ending. Henry Johnson is to be congratulated for successfully—and artfully—representing the koto in its historical and present-day cultural contexts.

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André Millard, editor. *The Electric Guitar: A History of an American Icon*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004. x, 226 pp.: 13 color photographs, 35 black-and-white photographs, 2 line drawings. ISBN: 0-8018-7862-4. \$45.00 (paper).

The electric guitar has almost certainly been the most significant development in musical instruments during the last one hundred years. From fairly small-scale beginnings, it has attained iconic status both as a musical instrument and, more broadly, as a shorthand signifier for rock and roll, itself shorthand for the popular culture and, more particularly, the youth culture of the second half of the twentieth century. Because of this, the electric guitar's significance, perhaps uniquely among musical instruments, has been as much social as musical or organological—maybe even more so. These intertwining technical, historical, and sociological aspects of the electric guitar are collectively examined in *The Electric Guitar: A History of an American Icon*, a compilation of essays derived from "Electrified, Amplified and Deified: The Electric Guitar, its Makers and Players," a museum exhibit and symposium held in 1996 at the Lemelson Center for the Study of Invention and Innovation, based at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Editor André Millard's aim is "to gently take the reader into all the territory colonised by the electric guitar and its sound without lingering long enough in one place to spoil the ride" (p. 15), which makes the

scope of the book broad rather than comprehensive. The use of the word “icon” in the book’s title is significant. Rather than being a straightforward history, this book attempts to examine and contextualize the electric guitar from several different perspectives: as a musical instrument, a developing technology, a symbol of social change, and as an object of aspiration and veneration that incorporates elements of all of these. The book is aimed at a general readership, yet the material is thoroughly but unobtrusively referenced through informative endnotes.

The book is divided into nine chapters, with an introduction and a concluding summation. Each essay treats a different facet of the electric guitar, and in some cases different essays examine the same element from different perspectives. The first six chapters deal with the history of the electric guitar as both an instrument and a technology, and the final three explore aspects of playing and players.

The opening chapter, “The Music: The Electric Guitar in the American Century,” by Charles McGovern, gives a multicultural overview of the cross-fertilization between the electric guitar—in both its Hawaiian and Spanish forms—and its players, focusing on its impact on American popular music. The second chapter, by Millard, deals with the invention of the electric guitar, examining the intricate and entwined relationships among many of the early electric guitar manufacturers, relationships comparable in their convolution to those among the Cremonese violin makers of the eighteenth century. The chapter places the development of the electric guitar in both historical and organological contexts, examining the contributions of, and the often surprising connections among, the key players in its development, such as George Beauchamp (inventor of the Frying Pan, the first true electric guitar), Adolph Rickenbacker, Paul Bigsby, and Leo Fender.

James P. Kraft’s chapter on manufacturing explores the part played by Fender and Gibson, the two largest electric guitar makers of the time, in the developing electric guitar market up to the end of the guitar boom of the 1960s. Particularly emphasized is the effect on the instruments and their markets of the acquisition of many important American manufacturers by large conglomerates (Fender, for example, was acquired by CBS in 1965).

Although the title of the fourth chapter (by Millard) is “Solidbody Electric Guitars,” this is slightly misleading, because the chapter’s primary focus is on instruments made by Fender, especially the Stratocaster and its association with Buddy Holly. There is also a brief discussion of the impact made by Fender’s electric Precision Bass model. Chapter five

discusses the often overlooked aspect of recording the electric guitar. Susan Schmidt-Horning traces the electric guitar—in the 1920s, simply a means for increasing volume—and its interrelationship with recording technology, which, through 1970s studio wizardry, became an artistic tool in its own right. In chapter six, “Playing with Power,” Millard discusses the relationship between the post-World War II market and the electric guitar’s then-current technology and design.

Chapters seven, “The Guitar Hero,” and eight, “Heavy Metal: From Guitar Hero to Guitar Gods,” both written by Millard in collaboration with Rebecca McSwain, examine the rise of the “Guitar Hero” during the 1960s and the ever-increasing virtuosity (and outrageousness, both personally and in their instruments) of rock lead guitarists during the last thirty years. The final chapter, by John Strohm, deals with women guitarists and is equal parts critique and sociology-infused memoir.

One of the stated goals of the book is to fashion a cohesive narrative of the electric guitar from diverse perspectives. For the most part, it succeeds in this. The introduction (which is almost an essay in its own right) and the first six chapters are particularly effective in placing the electric guitar in context as both an artifact and instigator of not only the American musical experience during the twentieth century, but American culture in general. The first three chapters, especially, although each by a different author, form a cohesive whole that is probably the most cogent account of the development of the electric guitar so far. Also noteworthy is the consistent inclusion of the contributions of women to the story of the electric guitar, not just in Strohm’s chapter on women guitarists, but in the earlier, more historically oriented sections of the book.

As good as this book is, it is not without faults: the collective essay format means that the diverse sources, which provide wide perspective, also lead to an unevenness of tone among the various chapters. Additionally, due to the book having multiple authors writing on the same general subject, there is inevitably some overlap, which is not always to the benefit of the material. This results in the book’s somewhat fragmented approach to some of its themes, especially consideration of the phenomenon of the “Guitar Hero” and in the sections examining the electric guitar and its market after World War II.

These, however, are mostly minor points. *The Electric Guitar: A History of an American Icon* does not purport to be the last word on the electric guitar, but is intended rather as an overview of the instrument and its impact. For anyone wishing to expand, in an accessible yet scholarly way,

his or her understanding of this uniquely American icon, this is an excellent point of departure.

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Stewart Carter, editor. *Brass Scholarship in Review: Proceedings of the Historic Brass Society Conference, Cité de la Musique, Paris 1999.* Buccina: The Historic Brass Society Series 6. Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2006. x, 306 pp.: 72 illus., 11 tables, 27 musical exx. ISBN: 978-1-57647-105-0. \$48.00 (cloth).

Brass scholarship has been on the upswing in recent years, with the addition of some notable young scholars to the field, and expansion of scope to include a wider variety of topics, such as performance practices, music, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century valved instruments. Another positive sign has been the book series *Buccina*, initiated by the Historic Brass Society under the general leadership of its founding president, Jeffrey Nussbaum.

Books allow authors to bring both range and depth to their analyses, not infrequently also engendering an enhanced readability over traditional journal articles. The hybrid form—the book that gathers together disparate articles, often based on papers read at a meeting—is a somewhat different matter. There the success of the venture depends not only on the quality of the contents, but also on the degree to which common themes can be found to unify the work. Otherwise the book differs little from a journal issue.

The present volume scores high marks on general quality of the articles it contains, but it is so eclectic in range of subject matter that it differs little from a typical issue of the *Historic Brass Society Journal*, apart from the fact that it is handsomely bound in hardcover. (“Brass instruments” is the sole unifying theme, apart from the largely irrelevant fact that the papers were all delivered at a meeting in Paris in 1999.) This eclecticism would not matter so much, perhaps, were it not for the worry that these articles will be overlooked by the scholarly community, as they will not always be indexed in databases of journal articles. They deserve to be noticed by as wide a community of scholars as possible: some of them should be read by organologists and other musicologists not focused on brasswinds.