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Music and Cyberliberties

By Patrick Burkart

An activist's guide for musicians and fans opposed to the major label lockdown of online music

Musicians and music fans are at the forefront of cyberliberties activism, a movement that has tried to correct the imbalances that imperil the communal and ritualistic sharing and distribution of music. In *Music and Cyberliberties*, Patrick Burkart tracks the migration of music advocacy and anti-major-label activism since the court defeat of Napster and the ascendancy of the so-called Celestial Jukebox model of music e-commerce, which sells licensed access to music.

Music and Cyberliberties identifies the groups—alternative and radical media activists, culture jammers, hackers, netlabels, and critical legal scholars—who are pushing back against the “copyright grab” by major labels for the rights and privileges that were once enjoyed by artists and fans. Burkart reflects on the emergence of peer-to-peer networking as a cause célèbre that helped spark the movement, and also lays out the next stages of development for the Celestial Jukebox that would quash it. By placing the musical activist groups into the larger context of technology and new social movement theory, *Music and Cyberliberties* offers an exciting new way of understanding the technological and social changes we confront daily.

Patrick Burkart is an associate professor in the Department of Communication at Texas A&M University. He is the coauthor of *Digital Music Wars: Ownership and Control of the Celestial Jukebox* (2006).

“In this smart, readable book Patrick Burkart theorizes the ways that ubiquitous and powerful technologies have penetrated every aspect of our lives and vividly illustrates what is at stake in the battles over digital music. This is essential reading for those who want to learn more about our changing online world.”

—Kembrew McLeod, author of *Freedom of Expression*

“This essential book provides a thorough overview of recent transformations in the music industry. But it also relates these changes to fundamental questions concerning freedom and political activism.”

—David Hesmondhalgh, professor of media and music industries, University of Leeds

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