This ethnographic study of Trinidadian gospel music engages the multiple musical styles circulating in the nation's Full Gospel community and illustrates the carefully negotiated and contested spaces that they occupy in relationship to questions of identity. By exploring gospelypso, jamoo ("Jehovah's music"), gospel dancehall, and North American gospel music, along with the discourses that surround performances in these styles, the book illustrates the extent to which value, meaning, and appropriateness are continually circumscribed and reinterpreted in the process of coming to terms with what it looks and sounds like to be a Full Gospel believer in Trinidad. The local, regional, and transnational implications of these musical styles, moreover, are read in relationship to their impact on belief (and vice versa), revealing the particularly nuanced poetics of conviction that drive both apologists and detractors of these styles. The book sets the investigation against a historical narrative and introduces a theoretical approach that the book calls the “ethics of style”—a model that privileges the convictions embedded in this context and which emphasizes their role in shaping the terms upon which identity is continually being constructed in Trinidad. The result is an extended meditation on the convictions that lie behind the creation and reception of style in Full Gospel Trinidad.
This chapter sums up the key findings of this study about gospel music and the ethics of style in Trinidad. It highlights the nationalism of gospelynpsy artists, the determination of gospel dancehall artists, the studied ambivalence of jamoo performers, and the global vision of musicians pursuing North America gospel. It suggests that each style offers a very different approach to the evangelical concerns of Trinidadians, and each promotes a unique sense of what can or should constitute worship.

Music, Memory, and Identity in Full Gospel Trinidad
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad

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This chapter traces the religious histories that have shaped the current context within which Full Gospel Trinidadians are negotiating their identity. It parallels the function of an opening invocation, which serves not only to define the present but also the past(s) with which contemporary Trinidadians are sharing their present. It also introduces the four principal musical styles circulating in and around the Full Gospel community including gospelynpsy, North American gospel music, dancehall, and jamoo.

Nationalism and the Soul
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad

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This chapter examines the emergence of gospelynpsy and its reception history in Trinidad. It aims to illustrate the themes of post-independence identity that lie close to the heart of this musical style. It explains that gospelynpsy is too closely related to the perceived evils of carnival and bacchanal and the Full Gospel community refused to identify with gospelynpsy or accept it as a valid, representative expression of Full Gospel identity.
This chapter analyzes the rise of North American gospel music in Trinidad, investigating some of its connections to transnational and neo-colonial processes and cosmopolitan dreams along the way. It suggests that the historical trajectory of North American gospel music was essentially contemporaneous with the emergence of gospelpso. It discusses the ways that transnational and neo-colonial issues are often discussed with and through the ethics of style in order to demonstrate the powerful counterprocesses that Trinidadian Full Gospel believers put into play, both in discourse and through musical practice.