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 gospelpyo, 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.

Epilogue

Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in 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 gospelypso 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 Trinidadian believers, 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
Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2012
Publisher: University of California Press
Item type: chapter

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 Trinidadian believers are sharing their present. It also introduces the four principal musical styles circulating in and around the Full Gospel community including gospelypso, North American gospel music, dancehall, and jamoo.

Jehovah's Music
Timothy Rommen

in “Mek Some Noise”: Gospel Music and the Ethics of Style in Trinidad
Published in print: 2007 Published Online: May 2012
Publisher: University of California Press
Item type: chapter

This chapter examines the musical style called jamoo coined by Ras Shorty I. It suggests that this idiosyncratic approach to gospel music offers insights into the possibility of other ways of thinking about music in Trinidadian Full Gospel contexts. It explores the life and music of Ras Shorty I in order to have a better understanding of how the ethics of style might be brought to bear on analyses of the racial imagination and the poetics of conviction in Trinidad.