



# Music Festivals and the Politics of Participation (Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series)

*Roxy Robinson*

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The spread of UK music festivals has exploded since 2000. In this major contribution to cultural studies, the lid is lifted on the contemporary festival scene. Gone are the days of a handful of formulaic, large events dominating the market place. Across the country, hundreds of 'boutique' gatherings have popped up, drawing hundreds of thousands of festival-goers into the fields. Why has this happened? What has led to this change? In her richly detailed study, industry insider Dr Roxy Robinson uncovers the dynamics that have led to the formation and evolution of the modern festival scene. Tracing the history of the culture as far back as the fifties, this book examines the tensions between authenticity and commerce as festivals grew into a widespread, professionalized industry. Setting the scene as a fragmented, yet highly competitive market, *Music Festivals and the Politics of Participation* examines the emergence of key trends with a focus on surrealist production and popular theatricality. For the first time, the transatlantic relationship between British promoters and the social experiment-come-festival Burning Man is documented, uncovering its role in promoting a politics of participation that has dramatically altered the festival experience. Taking an in-depth approach to examining key events, including the fastest growing independent music festival in recent years (Hampshire's BoomTown Fair) the UK market is shown to have produced a scene that champions co-production and the democratization of festival space. This is a vital text for anyone interested in British culture.

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