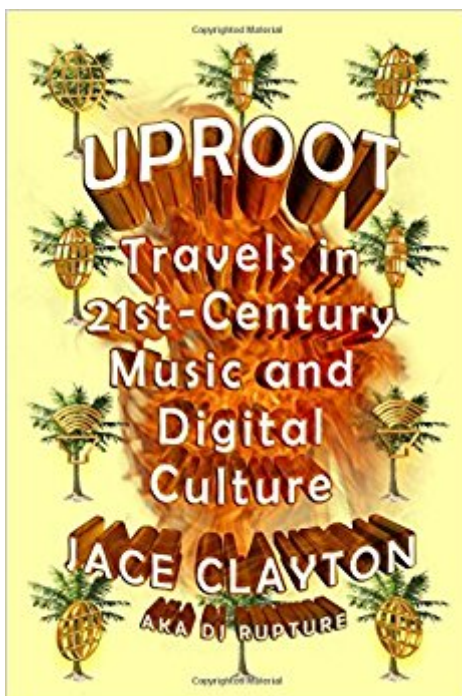


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# Uproot: Travels In 21st-Century Music And Digital Culture



## Synopsis

In 2001 Jace Clayton was an unknown DJ who recorded a three-turntable, sixty-minute mix and put it online to share with friends. Within weeks, Gold Teeth Thief became an international calling card, whisking Clayton away to play a nightclub in Zagreb, a gallery in Osaka, a former brothel in Sao Paolo, and the American Museum of Natural History. Just as the music world made its fitful, uncertain transition from analog to digital, Clayton found himself on the front lines of creative upheavals of art production in the twenty-first century globalized world. *Uproot* is a guided tour of this newly-opened cultural space. With humor, insight, and expertise, Clayton illuminates the connections between a Congolese hotel band and the indie-rock scene, Mexican rodeo teens and Israeli techno, and Whitney Houston and the robotic voices of rural Moroccan song, and offers an unparalleled understanding of music in the digital age.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[Clayton's] frank curiosity and broad musical tastes form the basis for this terrific book about the globalization of ideas in our age of 'digital superabundance' . . . Humor and humility infuse descriptions of a street dance party in Kingston, Jamaica; traffic in Cairo; and a smoke-filled music store in Beirut. Throughout, we feel the moral weight of the personal stories behind the music . . . Guided by empathy and openness to the new, this DJ has his ear to the ground." —Daphne Kalotay, *New York Times Book Review* —"Jace Clayton is a bricoleur like no other whose curiosity leads him fearlessly beyond fixed cultural boundaries to make connections and find

insights that are brilliant and unique. He looks at the world and makes culture from gorgeously odd angles. "Every sentence of this book is a gem." —Elizabeth Alexander "Some people think global music culture is homogenous, but it's not. Everything is mutating at a high speed and even higher bitrate. For any real insight into why and how it's happening, it's essential to be part of it and to document with the eye of a creator. Jace Clayton flows like water around the world, getting to the bottom of it all." —Diplo "I'm so glad to read such an upbeat version of the future of music and the music public. Uproot raises some interesting propositions about how musicians will be making music in the ever-evolving world. I like Jace Clayton's positive spin." —Laurie Anderson "As befits a seasoned DJ, Jace Clayton's eclectic travelogue effortlessly blends technology, ethnomusicology, and economics into a unique, fascinating hybrid. Uproot reminds us that while smartphones put the world at our fingertips, most of us rarely stray from the familiar and formulaic. Take a break from Pitchfork, expand your horizons, and read this book. Uproot is a cosmopolitan clarion call, full of passion and insight as infectious as a pop hook." —Astra Taylor "The revolution will be auto-tuned. Jace Clayton shows how technology disrupts not only the music industry but musicians themselves. Platforms maybe more open than ever, but the trade-offs are complex: music becomes mechanized, and listeners are sold to the highest-bidding social marketer. This book is both accessible and profound." —Douglas Rushkoff "In this exhilarating book, Clayton, aka DJ Rupture, guides readers on an international tour of various forms of music and music-making technologies within many cultures . . . Clayton urges readers to embrace the power of music, recognizing its energetic and enduring capacity to capture and express shared emotions and to become a 'memory palace with room for everybody inside.'" —Publishers Weekly (starred review) "[A] sharply detailed exploration of how technology and globalization have transformed participatory audio culture . . . An engrossing tour of the global cutting edge." —Kirkus Reviews

Jace Clayton's essays have appeared in The Washington Post, Bidoun, Frieze, and FADER, where he is a regular contributor. As DJ /rupture, he has performed widely and released several critically acclaimed albums. He lives and works in New York City.

True confession: I made the website for this book [uprootbook.com](http://uprootbook.com) but didn't get a copy until it was released. And then I couldn't put it down. So stoked about this book: the stories, the writing, and the big picture. It made me google a dozen

musicians and totally resonates with another book I'm reading right now: *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins*. A+

This book was one of the best music books I've read in a long time. I took it with me on a trip and it was the perfect travel book. He talks about music from all over the globe with vivid evocative stories and talks about music in a real way. It didn't feel pretentious, just open, inviting, and true to life. It's hard to read a book about music without being able to listen to what he's talking about, so he helpfully added a listening guide to his website so you can listen while you read. I couldn't, because I was traveling, and it's still a book that I want to gift to everyone that I know that loves music. If you like music, buy this book. Hands down. PS: I brought the much-hyped "Every Song Ever" book on the same trip, and quit reading not even halfway through because I couldn't stand how it was written. This book, on the other hand, will actually give you an insight into how you can (and cannot) listen to every song ever, and goes long on the challenges of technology/software as part of music production. Don't read that, read this. (Or read both!)

On one hand this is wonderful nostalgia, reminding me of the shift from physical to digital. More importantly it's a great look into how the resulting fragmentation could be a great thing, should we embrace it.

Excellent read. Highly recommend

Great book. Inspiring. Never read something quite like it.

This book is dope.

husband loved the book,

This is a marvellous book about how music moves round the world and where Mr MP3 and Ms Internet are going. Clayton says provocative things about the music biz: "The giants - the major labels, the indie labels backed by majors, the RIAA and so on - took up a lot of resources. I don't want to haggle over how many micro-cents I get paid per stream. I want the giants to fall even faster so we can see what weird flowers start blooming in the spaces left vacant." He gives lively descriptions of rhythms and genres jumping borders and crossing oceans. There's a sweet Utopian

optimism about the sounds from these shanty towns as Clayton reports on music scenes in Kinshasa, Monterrey and enthusiastic use of Auto-Tune across the Maghreb. He makes the movement of music sound like the journeys of refugees and migrants: “This is the sound of files that have survived patchy connections and erroneous metadata, straddling pirate servers and shaky Bluetooth transfers and YouTube rips, evading spam filters en route to Russian wares sites, to end up on a desktop or in some web video accompanied by an equally messed-up JPEG.” Clayton suggests that foreign sounds are like a non-physical invasion. He celebrates the dancefloor as a space for both affirming and re-inventing a community. (Clayton has also created a website to help readers listen to the music he discusses and watch interesting film clips.)

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