

Introduction

Welcome to the second issue of *BOSS: The Biannual Online-Journal of Springsteen Studies*, an open-access journal devoted to the study of the music, writing, and performance of Bruce Springsteen. In August 2014, McGill University published the inaugural edition of *BOSS*. We have been thrilled with the response. Thousands of scholars and fans from all over the world read the first issue, which received coverage in the *New York Times*, the *Boston Globe*, *Harper's*, and numerous online outlets.

As with our first issue, published amidst Springsteen's *High Hopes* tour, we are delighted to release our latest issue at an exciting juncture for Springsteen Studies. Springsteen recently released *The Ties that Bind: The River Collection* (2015), a 25th anniversary re-visitation of his 1980 album, and has embarked on a corresponding world tour. Additionally, in a number of recent interviews, Springsteen has spoken extensively about his career and his legacy, a trend that anticipates his forthcoming autobiography, *Born to Run* (Simon & Schuster, 2016).

This issue presents three articles that examine various dimensions of Springsteen's music and career, with a particular emphasis on his most recent albums. In our lead article, Peter Fields offers a psycho-theological reading of Springsteen's "Outlaw Pete," both as song and as published lyric alongside Frank Caruso's illustrations in the picturebook *Outlaw Pete* (reviewed in this issue). Fields contends that Springsteen "injected something profound about his own psyche into the mythic mystery of the song's narrative." The multi-faceted argument that follows aligns "Outlaw Pete" with what the late country-rock artist Gram Parsons labeled "cosmic American music"—songs that address religious doctrines of sin and redemption and judgment. Invoking Freud's notion of "dream-work," Fields concludes that "Outlaw Pete" is a song about the need to reconcile with the Father—both biological and spiritual.

Michael Neiberg and Rob Citino's article, "A Long Walk Home: The Role of Class and the Military in the Springsteen Catalogue," places Springsteen's music and biography in the context of twentieth and twenty-first century American military policy. They contend that the soldiers who populate Springsteen lyrics "bear unmistakable marks of the essentially working-class military experience of the Vietnam era." Neiberg and Citino demonstrate the classed dynamics of Springsteen's own experience during the Vietnam era and how this experience made an impression on Springsteen's canon in the decades that followed. They argue that a class-based mistreatment of veterans has long sat at the center of the "meanness" Springsteen locates throughout American politics and society.

Finally, in "The Theological Virtues According to Bruce Springsteen," Andrew Gardner analyzes Springsteen's understanding of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. Through a case study of *Wrecking Ball* (2012), Gardner compares Springsteen's view of these virtues with that of Thomas Aquinas, arguing that Springsteen "builds upon" Aquinas's theology "by emphasizing the virtue of hope as a mediator between faith and love." Whereas Aquinas considers God the only proper object for all three virtues, Springsteen takes a more open-minded view, one that Gardner locates within Springsteen's class-conscious response to the Great Recession and its aftermath.

Additionally, this issue offers reviews of three recent works of interest to Springsteen fans and scholars. Jim Cullen reviews Jeff Burger's edited collection, *Springsteen on Springsteen: Interviews, Speeches, and Encounters* (Chicago Review Press, 2013), a compendium of some of Springsteen's public addresses and conversations with members of the media. Roxanne Harde assesses the picturebook *Outlaw Pete* (Simon & Schuster, 2014), a collaboration between Springsteen and illustrator Frank Caruso based on the song of the same name. William M. Foster examines Stewart D. Friedman's *Leading the Life You Want: Skills for Integrating Work and Life* (Harvard Business Review, 2014), focusing particularly on a chapter examining the lessons business leaders and others hoping to improve their

lives can learn from examining Springsteen's life. In addition, we continue our "Special Collections" feature, in which we introduce a resource available to Springsteen scholars. In this issue, we highlight the Bruce Springsteen Special Collection at Monmouth University, the only archive devoted solely to collecting material pertaining to Springsteen.

In readying this issue for publication we accrued debts no honest editors can pay. Thanks go out to McGill University, in particular Amy Buckland, Joel Natanblut, and Jessica Lange of the McGill Library as well as Leonard Moore of the History Department. Our gratitude, too, to Mona Okada and Springsteen's legal team for allowing us to quote liberally from Springsteen's lyrics. For their input on this issue as well as their interest in the future of *BOSS*, we would like to thank the members of our editorial advisory board: Eric Alterman, Jim Cullen, Steven Fein, Bryan Garman, Stephen Hazan Arnoff, Donna Luff, Lorraine Mangione, Lauren Onkey, June Skinner Sawyers, Bryant Simon, and Jerry Zolten.

As Springsteen continues to excite audiences all over the world, he figures as a contemporary musical icon as well as an important literary, philosophical, and historical voice. With this in mind, *BOSS* provides peer-reviewed articles from multiple academic disciplines that will appeal to both scholars and fans. We hope this issue will contribute to conversations about Springsteen's career, his music, and his legacy, and will invite further interest in Springsteen Studies for years to come.

Jonathan Cohen, University of Virginia

Roxanne Harde, University of Alberta, Augustana

Irwin Streight, Royal Military College of Canada