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## Change and Continuity in Italian Mainstream Pop: A study on the Sanremo Festival in the 50s & 60s

Roberto Agostini

### 1. Introduction

The Sanremo Italian Song Festival (*Festival della Canzone Italiana di Sanremo*) is the oldest and most important contest still in existence dedicated to the Italian *Canzone* ('song'). Since 1951 it has been held annually in the town of Sanremo, in the North West coast of Italy. From the very first editions it has been one of the great media events of the year, often broadcast even outside of Italy.

Studying such events as Sanremo from a musicological point of view could imply various aims.<sup>(1)</sup> The most obvious would be to define the musical characteristics of the Italian songs presented in such an important contest. But, considering that right from the start Sanremo has been one of the most representative showcases of mainstream Italian popular music, studying Sanremo means, in its broadest sense, studying mainstream Italian pop, and the mainstream as genre.<sup>(2)</sup>

In fact, studying Sanremo is most of all an occasion to study mainstream popular music. Mainstream music is a rather undeveloped field of study in musicology. Without going deeper into this question, I would like to argue that the study of mainstream can help us to

understand contemporary popularity in music, musical communication and the mechanisms of musical change in our globalized mass media permeated society. Finally, the study of mainstream allows us to tackle the question of identifying the peculiarities of the Italian *Canzone*. This is a very substantial issue because, although the existence of a 'tradition of Italian song' is often taken for granted, very seldom has any attempt been made to substantiate such a claim.<sup>(3)</sup>

My research on Sanremo is in progress.<sup>(4)</sup> Here I will focus on the period from 1958 to 1967 (see table 1), which represents a moment of change for the Festival, due to a crisis that involves both compositional and performance models. The period under scrutiny can be split into three stages: 1958 – 1959: the emergence of the performer; 1960 – 1963: the emergence of the modern Italian *Canzone*; 1964 – 1967: the internationalization of the Festival.

Songs analysis is carried out primarily with reference to the versions published on records and on the versions performed on stage during the show, which can be different.<sup>(5)</sup> Tracking all the sources was quite a complex matter and in some cases inconclusive. The corpus of analysis can, all the same, be considered comprehensive

Table One

Songs	140
Italian Performers (Singers and Groups)	144
Foreign Performers (Singers and Groups) (From 1964)	61
Authors (Composers and Lyricists)	223

because almost all the most representative songs were listened to in both versions on record.<sup>(6)</sup> By 'most representative songs' I mean songs which meet at least one of the following three criteria: a good final placing at the Festival; a high position and a long stay in the sales charts of the time; and a privileged place in the collective memory from then to the present day.

In the present paper I will focus on two of the many issues arising from the study of this period. First, I will talk about the emergence of the figure of the performer during the biennium 1958-59. Second, I will carry out an analysis of the winning song of the 1960 edition in order to show how Sanremo was forced to undergo a radical renewal under the pressure of the new ways of making and listening to music coming from United States. This renewal opened up the path towards the developing of the modern Italian *Canzone* in the period 1960-1963 and, subsequently, to its internationalization. Before doing this, though, I will describe the beginning of Sanremo Festival, assuming that to understand what happened at the end of the 50s some sort of historical framework is needed.

## 2. Sanremo in the fifties

### 2.1. Origins of the Sanremo Festival

The first edition of Sanremo was organized by Italian radio in 1951 to encourage the publication of songs for broadcasting in its programmes.<sup>(7)</sup> Broadcast live, the Festival was held in the elegant surroundings of the *Salone delle Feste* (stateroom) of the Casino of the city of Sanremo. The format of the competition was so effective that the event won immediate popularity. This success owed a great deal to the symbiotic relationship that came to be created between the Festival and the radio. The radio needed songs to broadcast and, needless to say, music publishers were happy to fulfil this request. This convergence of interest between the publishers and radio placed Sanremo at the centre of the attention of the entertainment industry. It is no surprise therefore to learn that, in 1955, the newly born Italian TV decided to broadcast the event.<sup>(8)</sup>

At first the competition rewarded the songwriters, who worked for the most part in pairs: composer and lyricist. The publishers shortlisted the songs

for selection: these, once accepted, ended up in the hands of a conductor who was responsible for the arrangement and for getting the songs ready for performance with his own orchestra and with singers from his own team. In short, things followed a logic not too far from that of the relationship between composer and the performer in art music.

In the first two editions (see table 2) there were 20 songs. The format included one sole conductor-arranger, Cinico Angelini (Cinico Angelo, 1901-83), with his orchestra and his singers. The first two evenings were devoted to the performance of the songs, ten per evening. Each evening five songs were selected as finalists. The ten finalists were performed again on the third evening, when the winning song was chosen.

Since then the Festival has changed its format many times. A turning point was in 1953 (see table 3), when a second conductor was appointed to lend variety to the arrangements and a second performer was allocated to each orchestral execution: each song was performed two times, with different orchestra and singers. One performance was closer to 'tradition', the other closer to 'modernity'. With some exceptions, this idea of a double performance lasted until 1971 (see tabs. 4, 5, and 6). But a big change took

place in 1964. The greater attention focused on the subsequent production of the record and, in addition, the presence of foreign guests, made the limited group of conductors who looked after the complete performance increasingly anachronistic. From 1964 the orchestra was in fact conducted by the recording companies' own resident conductors, who were also involved in the production of the record. Moreover, in 1964 and 1965 each Italian performer sang only one song, whereas before they had normally sung several of the songs, and every song was doubled by a prestigious foreign performer, who sang in Italian. Foreign guests could perform more than one song. From 1966 the couples were made up of two Italians too, but each Italian could in any case perform only one song.

## 2.2. The songs of the Fifties

In the Italian *Canzone* of the 50s the vocal melody is undeniably the greatest focus of identification. It is always very singable, pleasant and catchy. It states the main hook.<sup>(9)</sup> And most singers sang with a vocal style derived from the opera tradition. Adopting the terminology of Middleton (*Studying popular music* 267-92, "Form" 145-52), we can say that the songs are dominated by 'discursive repetition': excessively brief or fragmented

**Table Two: Sanremo 1951-1952: One Orchestra and One Performance for Each Song**

Year	Performers	Songs	Orchestra	Conductor
1951	3	20	Angelini Orchestra & Eight Elements	Cinico Angelini
1952	5	20	Angelini Orchestra & Eight Elements	Cinico Angelini

**Table Three: Sanremo 1953-1957: Two Orchestras and Two Performances for Each Song (With Some Exceptions)**

Year	Performers	Songs	Orchestras	Conductors
1953	10	20	Orchestra of 'Canzone'	Armando Trovajoli
			Eclipse Orchestra	
1954*	12	20	Orchestra of 'Canzone'	Cinico Angelini
			/	/
1955	15	16	Songs and Rhythm Orchestra	Francesco Ferrari
			Blue Sextet	Alberto Semprini
1956 ° †	6	20	Rainbow Orchestra	Gian Stellari
			George Melachrino & His Orchestra	George Melchrino
1957 †	17	19	Orchestra of 'Canzone'	Cinico Angelini
			Symphonic Jazz Orchestra	Armando Trovajoli

\* One orchestra, two performances for each song.

° Second performance only instrumental

† Alberto Semprini played the songs on piano solo as a memory aid for the jury.

traits, such as riffs, are absent. Following the methodology for the analysis of musical forms proposed by Fabbri (*Il suono in cui viviamo* 108-42), which defines song-models according to the

position of the main hook, we can say that the songs at Sanremo are chiefly based on three models:

1. strophic songs, where two choruses (with or without a

short refrain) are repeated entirely or in part,

2. chorus/bridge songs, based on an alternation between choruses and a bridge (this model is derived from the AABA Tin Pan Alley popular ballads),

3. verse/chorus songs, based on an alternation between verses and a chorus that contains the main hook.

Introductions, introductory verses, codas and finales are optional. Strophic form was predominant until the beginning of the '60s.

As Marini (186-200) wrote, the songs of the '50s can be described in terms of two streams that at the end of the decade tended to explode under the pressure of the

**Table Four: Sanremo 1958-1959: The Emergence of the Performer**

Year	Performers	Songs	Orchestras	Conductors
1958	15	20	Orchestra of 'Canzone'	Cinico Angelini
			Alberto Semprini & His Soloists	Alberto Semprini
1959	17	20	Gianni Ferrio & His Orchestra	Gianni Ferrio
			William Galassini & His Orchestra	William Galassini

**Table Five: Sanremo 1960-1963: The Emergence of Modern Italian *Canzone***

Year	Performers	Songs	Orchestras	Conductors
1960	23	20	Orchestra of 'Canzone'	Cinico Angelini
			Marcello de Martino & His Orchestra	Marcello de Martino
1961	42	24	Bruno Canfora & His Orchestra	Bruno Canfora
			Gianfranco Intra & His Orchestra	Gianfranco Intra
1962	45	32	Orchestra of 'Canzone'	Cinico Angelini
			Gianni Ferrio & His Orchestra	Gianni Ferrio
1963	22	20	Pino Calvi & His Orchestra	Pino Calvi
			Gigi Ccellero & His Orchestra	Gigi Cicchellero

**Table Six: Sanremo 1964-1967: The Internationalization of the Festival**

Year	Italian Performers	Foreign Performers	Songs	Conductors
1964	24	15	24	22
1965	24	19	24	18
1966	32	15	26	21
1967	40	18	30	25

genres hitherto excluded:

1. Melodramatic songs. Slow songs, with opera-style orchestration, a languid, leisurely tone, and full of melodic surges and diminished seventh chords designed to create pathos and atmosphere. The harmonic progressions are relatively wide. There is no rhythm section. The prototype could be the winner of the first Festival: *Grazie dei fior*, performed by Nilla Pizzi (1919–).(10)

2. Cheerful and carefree songs. Songs with a bright, serene and positive feel, sometimes witty and playful, and sometimes satirical. In these the harmony is reduced to the primary chords and the melody has none of the lyrical elaboration of the melodramatic songs. The rhythm is closer to that of folk dance or popular marches. Examples of this type of song are the cheerful *Aprite le finestre*, performed by Franca Raimondi (1932-1988) and winner of 1956 edition,(11)

or the witty and satirical *Papaveri e papere*, performed by Nilla Pizzi in 1952.(12) In this strand we can hear reference to genres like swing jazz or Latin American dance rhythm, which would have otherwise found access to Sanremo problematic.(13)

There are also traces of the various local traditions of urban popular songs (the so-called ‘dialect’ or ‘regional’ songs). We cannot regard these, however, as a distinct type of song in its own right. Sanremo was a show aimed at the widest and most heterogeneous public possible, so it is hardly surprising that regional songs were reduced to pieces inspired by folk tradition sung in Italian by singers who did not necessarily have anything to do with the local traditions. ‘Folk’ became a mere cliché with rather naive connotations.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that from the very beginnings of the Festival there had been a jazz influence inspired by the songs of the crooners. Teddy Reno (Ferruccio Merck, 1926–) and Flo Sandon’s (Mammola

Sandon, 1924–), both well-known as crooners with a penchant for jazz songs, made their Festival débuts in 1953, while in 1954 it was the turn of Natalino Otto (Natale Codognotto, 1912-69), confirmed performer of Italian swing, followed in 1955 by the youthful Jula de Palma (Iolanda de Palma, 1932–). A few years later, in 1958, another crooner arrived on the scene: Johnny Dorelli (Giorgio Guidi, 1937–).

### 2.3. Sanremo and the 'Italian Canzone'

The people who attended Sanremo Festival were adult and middle-class. For them the songs represented a source of reassurance and consolation, reflecting their own tastes and values. In this regard, Borgna (*La grande evasione* 42), when analysing the song lyrics, emphasised the quality of 'escapism', which was characteristic of the Sanremo songs of this period: in these songs, which were openly moralizing and rich in rhetoric, the traditional values of country, church and family reign supreme.

Similar comments could also be made about the 'conservative' tone of the music-compositional and performance content. The songs from Sanremo in the 50s hark back to the vocal, melodic and orchestral mechanisms of the *bel canto* tradition, with traces of various local urban traditions, with the unquestioned primacy of the Neapolitan school.<sup>(14)</sup> Of 'Italian Swing', which had been quite widespread in the preceding

decade, and of the musical forms from the States that proliferated in local dance halls, there remained only echoes, re-shaped to suit the tastes of the middle-classes. The odd concession to Latin American genres like mambo or tango completed the picture.

The Festival thus went back to the musical past prior to the Second World War and, with this formula, soon established itself as the repository, or rather the fortress of the 'authentic tradition of the Italian melodic song'. Sanremo was transformed into an unwieldy event, always the target of criticism and heated debate, but still feted and followed by the public and the critics, an event with which Italian popular music had and still has to contend. In the '50s and '60s Italian composers and singers did not shy away from the challenge, so much so that we can say that for some years the history of Italian popular music was to gamble on an attempt to strike a balance between what had come to be regarded as the 'tradition', jealously guarded at Sanremo, and the spurts of renewal which were also circulating in Italy. The period of greatest interest in this sense is from 1958 to 1967.

## 3. Towards modern Italian song

### 3.1. The 'Modugno effect' and the emergence of the performer

The last two years of the 50s were crucial. The 1958 Festival saw the appearance of Domenico Modugno (1928-94), who won both as composer and performer with



*Nel blu dipinto di blu*.<sup>(16)</sup> Modugno was basically a singer and songwriter of 'dialect song', as well as a theatre actor and radio presenter. He was hardly typical of the Sanremo environment of the time, not only because he sang in dialect, but also because of the morally questionable persona he represented, given that he had recently been at the centre of some controversy.<sup>(17)</sup> With *Nel blu dipinto di blu*, sung with the young crooner Johnny Dorelli, he made a complete break with the clichés common at the Festival.

First of all, Modugno's vocal style, throaty and nasal and forced, was far removed both from the style of *bel canto* and that of the crooners. He was considered a 'yeller'.<sup>(18)</sup> The lyrics too, were atypical: they exalted a carefree attitude and a search for an undefined freedom, at odds with the widespread morality. Also worthy of mention was the scoring of Alberto Semprini (1908-90), based on a small ensemble, with the unusual inclusion of a Hammond organ and with the bass line and drums to the fore, so as to confer a pronounced, infectious rhythm. Finally, we should also underline Modugno's informal, extrovert performance style, his theatricality: the way he spread out of his arms and subsequently rotated his body until turning his back on the audience at the beginning of the final instrumental chorus (the "volare" tune), for instance, was considered the sort of gesture that ill became a singer (see figure opposite). Modugno's expressiveness was thus to destroy another convention: that the singer

should remain stiff and composed, allowing himself only the occasional decorous gesture.

The introduction of these novel and unconventional features at the Festival produced a phenomenon so different as to create a sensation and a huge success. This musical diversity mirrored the impact of the values communicated: the showy vitality, the non-conformism, the celebration of an undefined liberty, brought to mind everything but the morally acceptable. In fact, *Nel blu dipinto di blu* recognized the important social and economic changes already in progress in pre-economic boom Italy. So it was that through the intricate mechanism that weaves together social changes, the mass media and the music industry, also the Festival decided to turn over a new leaf and to take its lead from the 'Modugno effect'. In 1959 Modugno won again. But 1959 was also the year of additional novelty. We can mention, for example, the 'scandal' that surrounded the song *Tua*, sung by Tonina Torrielli (Antonietta Torrielli, 1934–) and Jula de Palma.<sup>(19)</sup> The controversy concerned not so much the song itself,<sup>(20)</sup> but Jula de Palma's performance of it: the singer was accused of investing the song with such allusive and sensual overtones as to render it explicitly erotic (see figure over spread). The consequences were a barrage of criticism and ostracism from television, which went so far as to cast doubt on the moral integrity of the singer herself.





**Figure One:**

Domenico Modugno's famous gesture.

Shots taken from the documentary *Sanremo anni 60* (see "Musical and Audiovisual References").

At the piano, can be seen Alberto Semprini.



And so it was that in the wake of the expressive and emotionally-loaded performances of artistes like Domenico Modugno and Julia De Palma, the figure of the performer as the protagonist of the Festival emerged. In the space of a few years, the intimate and coherent union between a song and its interpretation became an absolute necessity and, by the beginning of the '60s, the winner of the Festival had come to be identified more with the singer than the writer, who was soon destined to become virtually unknown to the general public.

### Figure Two:

Julia de Palma singing *Tua*.

Shots taken from an unknown TV show, probably broadcast in 1959, published in the documentary *Tutto Sanremo dal 1951 al 1998* (see “Musical and audiovisual references”).

Unfortunately the original performance of Julia de Palma is not available.



### 3.2. Melodic songs, yellers and the *cantautori* (21)

It is no mere chance that protagonists in this transition came from quite different artistic backgrounds to those more typical of the Sanremo singers: Jula De Palma from jazz and Domenico Modugno from the theatre and dialect songs. Both, already established at the end of the '50s, belonged nevertheless to the adult generation. But 1959 is also the year in which we see the first signs of that openness to the youthful public, with the first appearance, for example, of the 'melodic yeller' Betty Curtis (1936–) and of other singers whose vocal style departed from the light-opera norm, such as Miranda Martino (1933–). But the most important and significant opening towards the newly independent youth occurred only in 1960, when a new generation of performers stepped forward. It was certainly not the first time that the Festival had welcomed young performers, but those on stage in 1960 were not debutants preparing to follow in the footsteps of the established singers. The youngsters appearing at the Festival at the start of the '60s were of another stamp entirely. They were the so-called *urlatori* (yellers). And, on the contrary of Modugno, they were inspired mostly by rock and roll.(22)

The 'yelling' phenomenon began with the release of *Come prima* by Tony Dallara (Antonio Ladera, 1936–)

in 1958,(23) and gathered momentum with the release of various musical films and the circulation of the songs in jukeboxes. It will enjoy the favour of the public well into the '60s, when it meshes with dance crazes like the twist, hully-gully, surf and so on. The yellers were for Italy what rock and roll was for the United States: a movement that saw the world of popular music change in relation to social and economic upheavals such as the spread of the mass media, the growth of the record industry, the development of the leisure industry, the economic boom, and the emergence of the social phenomenon of 'teenager'. The Italian economic boom coincided with the adoption of the North-American lifestyle, and in particular the unconditional acceptance of forms of entertainment that the States was busily exporting. Rock and roll was therefore the benchmark for young Italians of the time, with dramatic consequences for Italian popular music and the collective imagination of the young: in place of the rhetoric, the propriety, the priggishness and the moralism of the songs of the '50s, which embodied the values of the older generation, the yellers proposed the search for freedom, the excitement, the brazenness and the anticonformism of rock and roll.

In 1960 two of the most representative yellers were invited to Sanremo: Mina (Anna Mina Mazzini, 1940–) and Tony Dallara. In 1961 the shift will be ratified with the participation of Adriano Celentano (1938–). The

Sanremo of the beginning of the '60s cannot, however, be simply reduced to a conflict between the melody and the yellers. After Modugno, many others appeared at Sanremo in the double guise of composers and performers, as Tony Renis (Elio Cesari, 1938–) and Pino Donaggio (Giuseppe Donaggio, 1941–). To define these people a new term began to gain currency in Italy: the *cantautore* (singer-songwriter).(23) Some singer-songwriters – like Giorgio Gaber (Giorgio Gaberscik 1939-2003), Umberto Bindi (1933-2002) and Gino Paoli (1934–), all making their first appearance at the Festival in 1961 – brought to the Festival an approach that strove to distance itself from the stereotypes of the '50s in a particular way. In fact, they represent the first manifestations at the Festival of that wider phenomenon that in 70s will be called *Canzone d'autore* (author's song). As the artists of *Canzone d'autore*, the *cantautori*, with its artistic ambitions, were in open opposition not only to the consolatory and moralizing tones of classic Sanremo, but also to the trends coming from overseas, which were dismissed as pure consumeristic entertainment.(24)

Without going deeper in these questions, I would like to argue that at the beginning of the 60s and for almost the entire decade, Sanremo, once a bastion of conservatism, now became an arena on which converged the whole world of Italian popular music. In the space of a few years, the songs and the image

of the Festival was to undergo dramatic changes, along with the mainstream of Italian popular music. It should nevertheless be underlined that, despite the various bursts of renewal mentioned here, the songs at Sanremo remain particularly homogeneous in their compositional characteristics, in so far as every effort to change, at the moment of impact with the Festival, came up against the 'melodic tradition' and the need to establish contact with the mainstream public. In some cases this led to the creation of a rift between the songs the artistes would present at the Festival and those performed elsewhere.(25)

### 3.3. Romantica

Among the songs presented at the beginning of the 60s, *Romantica*(26) represents an instance of perfect balance between the Italian melodic tradition and the novelty of the yellers.(27) Renato Rascel (Renato Ranucci, 1912-1991), who composed the music, and Tony Dallara (Antonio Ladera, 1936–) were the two performers. Rascel was an acclaimed actor and showman. He had begun his career in the 30s and in 1960, at the age of 48, was at the height of his career. Naturally, he embodied the longstanding Italian tradition. Tony Dallara, on the other hand, was 24 years old. He was called the 'King of yellers' and he too was at the peak of his fame. It's hard to imagine what the two singers could have in common. But it

## *Romantica* – Form Comparison

### A: Renato Rascel's Version

Modulation Up  
by a Semi-Tone

97"		101"				114"				10"
41"	56"									
Intro (Vocal)	Verse	Ch	Ch	Br	Ch'	Ch (Choir)	Ch	Br	Ch"	Cd

### B: Tony Dallara's Version

48"		85"				60"		
16"	32"							
Intro (Instrumental)	Verse	Ch	Ch	Br	Ch'	Ch (Instrumental)	Br	Ch"

Modulation Up  
by Minor Third

Ch = Chorus

Br = Bridge

Cd = Coda

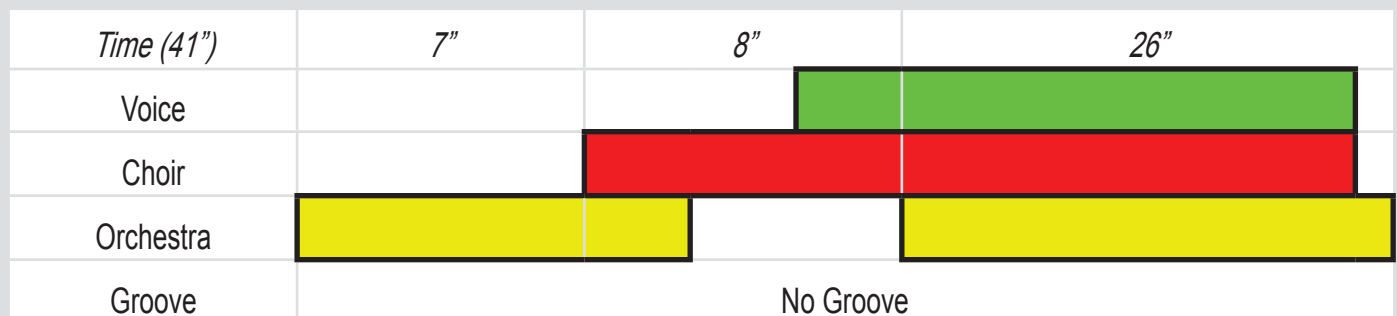
becomes easier to understand if we consider the musical formula that kept them together, a musical formula that in 1960 not only won but also renewed the Festival.

First of all we can observe the form (see fig. 3). *Romantica* is a far cry from the traditional strophic form widespread in the 50s and from the folksy, Allegro feel of the verse/chorus song. It is a chorus/bridge songs, a model derived from the Tin Pan Alley AABA ballads. This model, already present in Sanremo of the 50s, as well as in some songs of the yellers, was soon to establish itself as the principal model for the Sanremo song of the beginning of '60s. After the verse, both versions follow the standard pattern, showing some differences in the reprise of the Chorus-Chorus-Bridge-Chorus progression: Dallara's version shows an instrumental variation of Chorus and then a reprise of the second half of the

first part, while Rascel's version repeats the entire first part. Both versions also present a common hook: a sudden transposition of harmonic-melodic progression to a different and unrelated key:(29) Rascel's version goes up a semi-tone, while Dallara's version rises an unusual minor third. The form was clearly tailored to the singer.

Considering the texture and other compositional aspects, we can note that before the verse Rascel's version shows an atypical introduction that hints, like a sort of promise, at the main hook of the piece (see fig. 4). In this introduction great emphasis is placed on an important traditional feature: a rich orchestral sound without a rhythm section. Then a break occurs, where we can hear an impressive choir conducted by the well established Franco Potenza. Finally the voice of Rascel enters in the foreground.

**Figure Four: *Romantica* – Rascel's Version**



Texture of the Introduction: Presentation of the Main Features: (1) Orchestra, (2) Choir, (3) Voice and Main Hook

*Romantica* – Form and Texture of Rascel's Version.

Figure Five A: Performed Version

\*

Time (5:20)	97"		101"					114"				10"
	41"	56"										
Form	Intro (Voc.)	Verse										
Voice												
Choir												
Orchestra												
Groove (4/4)												

Figure Five B: Recorded Version

\*

Time (4:01)	41"		101"					91"				10"
		Intro (Voc.)										
Form												
Voice												
Choir												
Orchestra												
Groove (4/4)												

### (Legend for Previous Spread)

*Ch* = Chorus

*Br* = Bridge

*Cd* = Coda

|| = Breaks

\* = Modulation up by a semi-tone.

Flute = Imitation of the vocal melody.

Groove [4/4]: 1 = binary soft-jazz groove;  
2 = rhythm and blues groove based  
on triplets.

This sophisticated arrangement characterizes the whole piece (see fig. 5a). We can hear, for example, a flute that imitates the vocal line, impressive orchestral crescendos and diminuendos, and significant interjections from the choir. There are also two kinds of groove that alternate with apparent liberty: the first is a binary soft-jazz groove, while the second is a rhythm and blues groove based on triplets. This arrangement, with its pathos, emphasis, and nuances, can be considered one of the principal acknowledgements to the 'Italian tradition' in a song that is mainly based on North-American styles. Rascel performed this long and magnificent version only at Sanremo. In the published and broadcasted version two parts (the verse and the second chorus of the reprise) were cut (see fig. 5b).

Dallara's version (see fig. 6a), on the other hand, is shorter and faster, without a choir and with less emphasis on orchestral sound, which is reduced to a few ornamentations. The song is performed constantly *forte* with the rhythm section in the fore. The groove is continuous: a regular 12/8. In the chorus we find the rhythm and blues pattern heard also in Rascel's version, which is typical of the yellers' song. The bridge presents a structure based on breaks. As in the case of Rascel, Dallara performed this longer and fast version (120 bpm) only at Sanremo. The published and broadcasted version was remarkably slower (98 bpm) and with the instrumental chorus cut (see fig. 6b).(29)

It's curious to note that the conductor and arranger of Rascel's version was actually Marcello de Martino (1932-83), who at the Festival was the 'modern' conductor. Tony Dallara's performance was instead conducted by Cinico Angelini, who embodied better than any other the concept of 'tradition'. But it must be stressed that in Dallara's recorded single the conductor was Ezio Leoni (1927–), who was also probably the arranger of the song. Leoni had a jazz background and can be considered one of the principal promoters of rhythm and blues in Italy.

Turning now to the melody, it is very singable and pleasant. It has a linear profile, a regular rhythmic flow and a simple tonal regime suspended between A minor and its relative C major (Dallara's version is a tone



### *Romantica*: Form and Texture of Dallara's Version

Figure Six A: Performed Version

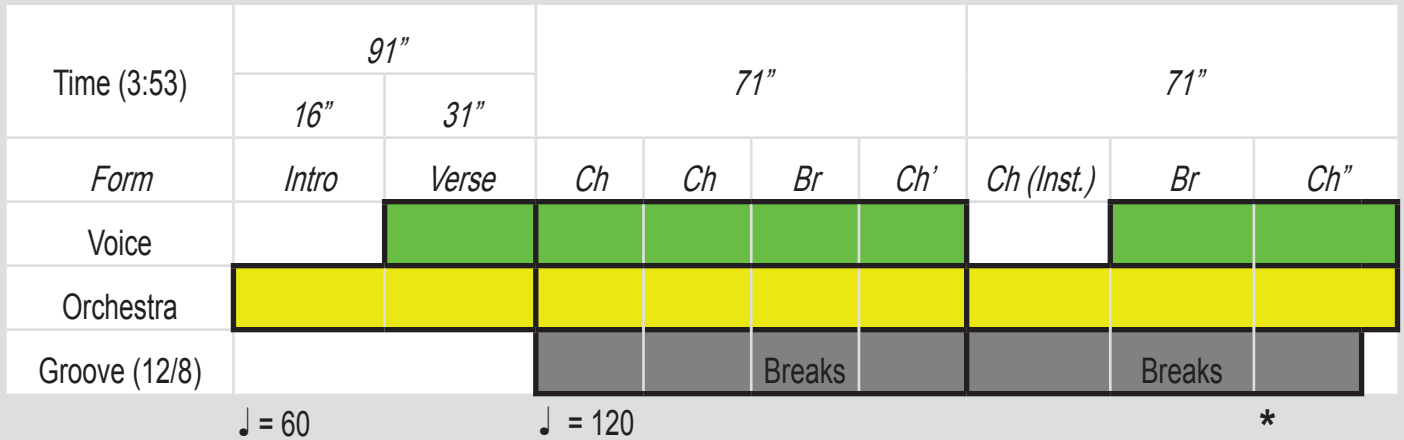
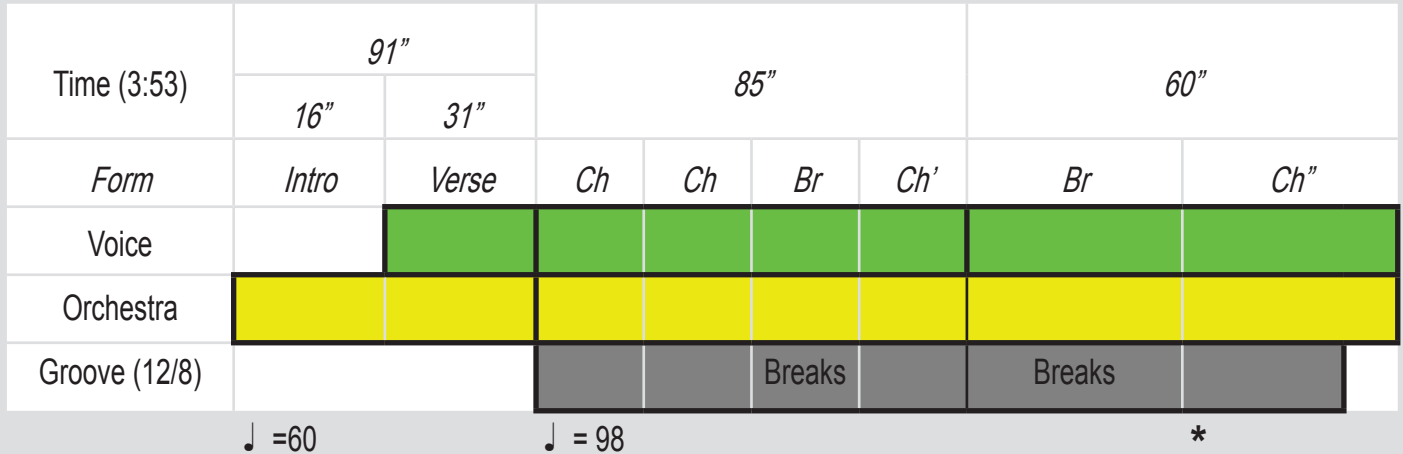


Figure Six B: Recorded Version



Ch = Chorus

Br = Bridge

Cd = Coda

\* = Modulation up by a minor third

Break = Bridge is based on an accompaniment characterized by instrumental breaks.

Note that there is a vocal break at the beginning of every chorus and every bridge.

higher). The melody is entirely consonant. The bridge has a recitative character, while the chorus progresses through scales and arpeggios limiting itself to the few notes of the accompanying chord, avoiding big jumps, and using passing notes and some well-placed leaning notes. Considering the modulation, the Rascel version spans only a 10<sup>th</sup>. Dallara's version, slightly different, spans a 14<sup>th</sup> and presents some sudden jumps to the upper register.

These differences are consistent with the different vocal approaches adopted by the two singers. Both Rascel and Dallara sing with an untrained 'natural' voice, far from the shackles of the melodramatic model. In this sense, even though following two quite different paths, they both confirm the trend in favour of the untrained voice and the search for a personal singing style that is far from the ideal of Italian tradition. Rascel was essentially a crooner, not a real novelty in Sanremo, but neither perfectly in line with the Italian melodic tradition. Dallara's voice is a mix of Doo Wop inflection and Modugno-style yelling, which was the real novelty in terms of the Festival, apart from the notable precedent of Modugno himself.

If we look closer, we can see other important differences between the two versions. Rascel sings in *rubato*, with dynamic and rhythmic inflections, and with embellishments like *vibrato* and *glissandi*. He takes care of the sound of every single note and of every

word. His intimate, confidential style owed much to the crooners, but its abundance of melodic flourishes is a clear link to older Italian traditions and to his Roman origins (see ex. 1).

On the contrary, Dallara tries to keep his distance from traditional models: while still maintaining a light *rubato* and *vibrato*, he sings the words in a regular manner, stressing the beat and with fewer dynamic nuances and embellishments. He yells in *forte* throughout the whole song with his 'dirty' nasal voice, with passages in *sforzando* and using features like stammers and sobs. His style was by no means that of a perfectionist, as the descending *glissato* at the end of the word "romantica" clearly reveals (see ex. 2).

To sum up, each version was clearly tailored to the singer. Dallara sang the song that a yeller was supposed to sing: a concise song, regular and loud, fast and with a danceable rhythm, yelling in the upper register. It was a song suitable for broadcasting. Rascel, instead, performs a sophisticated song, with an imposing orchestral apparatus, uttering the simple and pleasing melody with his warm voice rich in traditional embellishments.

#### 4. Conclusion

For various reasons, both Renato Rascel and Tony Dallara were considered the direct antagonists of Modugno, who had won the previous two editions of

### Example One: *Romantica* - Rascel's Version

#### Melody of the First Eight Bars of the First Chorus

Tu sei ro - man - ti - ca

*Vib.* A - mar - ti\_è\_un po' ri - vi - ve - re

Nel - la sem - pli - ci - tà Nel - l'ir - real

- tà Di\_un' al - tra\_e tà. -

### Example Two: *Romantica* - Dallara's Version

#### Melody of the First Eight Bars of the First Chorus

Tu sei ro - man - ti - ca

*Vib.* A - mar - ti\_è\_un po' ri - vi - ve - re

Nel - la sem - pli - ci - tà Nel - la\_ir - real -

*Vib.* tà D'un al - tra\_e tà.

Sanremo and was seen as the main protagonist in its renewal. Modugno continued to be a highly controversial figure. Rascel, at his height, was the symbol of maturity, calm, and the upholder of traditional values, though with no excess of nostalgia or conservatism. In reality, Johnny Dorelli, who had sung alongside Modugno, was also a crooner, and his only sin was to have succumbed just a little too much to foreign influences. Tony Dallara, with his modesty and sobriety, showed how youthful exuberance and enthusiasm did not necessarily imply the alleged vulgarity and excesses of the most reckless yellers. Tony actually yelled louder than Modugno, but was a 'good boy'.

This unlikely couple, Rascel and Dallara, managed to direct the Festival back towards the traditional rhetoric, virtually repristinating the whole event after the 'Modugno upheaval'. Without doubt, they were able to do this by a strategic use of the image of the two performers. For example, while Rascel had nothing to fear about his artistic and personal integrity, a few hours before leaving for Sanremo the more controversial Dallara actually paid a visit to the Pope! But, as I hope to have shown in my speech, they were able to do this also by achieving a fine musical balance. After 1960 the Festival began to change radically and, at the end of this process, in 1964, no longer had any qualms about adopting an explicitly 'modern' approach and opening itself up to the influx of international trends.

## Endnotes

(1) There are no musicological studies on Sanremo Festival. Publications collect opinions, witnesses, interviews and comments, as well as anecdotes and charts. For a history, see Gianni Borgna, *L'Italia di Sanremo* (Milano: Mondadori, 1998).

(2) I accept the definition of 'musical genre' given by Fabbri (*Il suono in cui viviamo* 47-76) and Frith (chapter 4): a set of 'rules' both musical and cultural.

(3) Studies on *Canzone* are mainly focused on its history. See for example Gino Castaldo, ed., *Il dizionario della canzone italiana* (Roma: Curcio, 1990, 2 vols.), Felice Liperi, *Storia della canzone italiana* (Roma: ERI-RAI, 1999), and Gianni Borgna, *Storia della canzone italiana* (Milano: Mondadori, 1992). Monographic studies are mainly centred on lyrics analysis and on the study of *Canzone d'autore*. On lyrics analysis, see Gianni Borgna and Luca Serianni, eds., *La lingua cantata. L'italiano nella canzone dagli anni 30 ad oggi* (Roma: Garamond, 1994), and Accademia degli Scrausi, *Versi rock* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1996). On *cantautori* and *Canzone d'autore*, see footnote 24.

(4) See my forthcoming article "Italian song and the Sanremo Festival. Change and continuity in Italian

mainstream pop of the Sixties”, to be published in *Popular Music*.

(5) Sanremo revolves around not only on the performance of the songs, but also on the contributions of guests and attractions of various kinds. Studying Sanremo as a media event is however outside the scope of my study, which deals only with songs. My approach is similar to the one adopted by Björnberg (121-3) in his study on Eurovision Song Contest.

(6) Unfortunately, it's very hard to find the audiovisual sources of Sanremo Festival. See 'Musical and audiovisual references' for the sources used in this paper.

(7) 'RAI Radio Televisione Italiana' (RAI Italian Radio and Television) is the body that runs the state radio and TV service in Italy. Founded in 1944 as RAI (Radio Audizioni Italiane) evolving from an earlier organization called EIAR (Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche), in 1954, with the coming of TV, assumed the actual name. In Italy at that time, as in other European countries, the model for management of radio and TV broadcasts was that of one monopolistic company to which was granted the concession for administration and management of a public service. The end of the monopoly was decreed in 1976. See Franco Monteleone, *Storia della radio e della televisione in Italia* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2003, 3rd ed.).

(8) The first TV broadcast in Italy took place on the 1st of January 1954, but it was not until 1956 that TV achieved an acceptable level of coverage nationally, and 1957 when complete coverage was achieved (see Monteleone 275, 311). In 1955 the organization of the Sanremo Festival passed to a private company, a change that was not to impair the strong links between the media and Festival.

(9) For the concept of hook, see Burns (1-20) and Fabbri (*Il suono in cui viviamo* 113-4).

(10) *Grazie dei fior* (Thanks for the Flowers), music by Saverio Seracini, lyrics by Gian Carlo Testoni and Mario Panzeri, performed by Nilla Pizzi with the Angelini Orchestra.

(11) *Aprite le finestre* (Open the windows), music by Pinchi, lyrics by Virgilio Panzuti, performed by Franca Raimondi with the Rainbow Orchestra conducted by Gian Stellari.

(12) *Papaveri e papere* (Poppies and Goslings), music by Vittorio Mascheroni, lyrics by Nino Rastrelli and Mario Panzeri, performed by Nilla Pizzi with the Angelini Orchestra (second at Sanremo II, 1952).

(13) See for example the mambo *Casetta in Canada* (A

small house in Canada), music by Vittorio Mascheroni, lyrics by Mario Panzeri, performed by Carla Boni, Gino Latilla & Duo Fasano with the Orchestra of 'Canzone' conducted by Cinico Angelini, and Gloria Christian & Poker di voci with the Symphonic Jazz Orchestra conducted by Armando Trovajoli (forth at Sanremo VII, 1957).

(14) Models were male opera singers like, for example, the famous tenor Beniamino Gigli. Exceptions to this light-opera singing was the Duo Fasano, who sang jocular songs with a more natural tone, or the above-mentioned crooners.

(15) This is noted also by Salvatore (*passim*).

(16) *Nel blu dipinto di blu* (Into the blue, painted in blue), music by Domenico Modugno, lyrics by Franco Migliacci, performed by Domenico Modugno with Alberto Semprini and His Soloists, and Johnny Dorelli with the Orchestra of 'Canzone' conducted by Cinico Angelini. The song is nowadays well-known as *Volare* (Flying).

(17) In 1957 his *Resta cu'mme* was criticized by RAI, that demanded that the words "Nun me 'mporta d'o passato / Nun me 'mporta 'e chi t'ha avuto" (I don't care about the past / I don't care who has had you) be replaced with "Nun me 'mporta si 'o passato / Sulo lacrime m'ha dato"

(I don't care if the past / has only brought me tears). In the same year, at the Naples Festival, Modugno wrote and performed *Lazzarella*, that stirred up a hornet's nest with the words "Te va sempre cchiù stretta / 'a camicetta a ffioire blu" (It's getting tighter / the blouse with blue flowers) that evoked a coming birth (see Caroli 51). At Sanremo Modugno had participated solely as a composer in 1956, gaining eighth place with *Musetto*, sung by Gianni Marzocchi (1934-90).

(18) See chapter 3.2. "Melodic song, yellers and the *cantautori*".

(19) *Tua* (I'm yours), music by Walter Gualtieri Malgoni, lyrics by Bruno Pallesi, performed by Tonina Torrielli with William Galassini and His Orchestra, and Julia de Palma with Gianni Ferrio and His Orchestra (forth at Sanremo IX, 1959).

(20) Note however that lyrics underwent preventive television censorship (see Caroli 52).

(21) In reconstructing the debate about the relationship between these musical genres and the tenth edition of Sanremo (1960) I also found some helpful articles in the magazine *Sorrisi e Canzoni* (Smiles and Songs), available in pdf format on the magazine's web site (see *Sorrisi e Canzoni* in "Bibliography").

(22) For the yellers phenomenon, see Paolo Prato, "Gli urlatori e la generazione del rumore: note per una sociologia della canzone," *Mina. Una forza incantatrice*. eds. Franco Fabbri and Luigi Pestalozza (Milano, EuresisEdizioni: 1998), 139-50.

(23) Tony Dallara, *Come prima* (Like before), music by Alessandro Taccani and Vincenzo di Paola, lyrics by Mario Panzeri, 1958.

(24) At Sanremo the *cantautori* wrote sometimes only the music, not the lyrics, probably for contractual reasons. In their productions outside the Festival, they often wrote also the lyrics.

(24) Gino Paoli and Umberto Bindi were two exponents of the so-called 'Genoese school', which was of fundamental importance in the origins of the *cantautori* movement. In the fifties Bindi had written songs for Sanremo, though he had not performed them. Giorgio Gaber, based in Milan, was known for his cabaret style delivery and for his links with Adriano Celentano some years later. The *Canzone d'autore* as genre emerged only in the '70s. The most highly regarded artists of this *trend* who participate at the Festival was Luigi Tenco (1938-67), who performed in 1967 along with the Italian-French singer Dalida (Jolanda Gigliotti, 1932-87). Eliminated from the

finals, he was to commit suicide in an extreme bid to get his message across. For a deeper insight into this topic, see Franco Fabbri and Umberto Fiori, "Crisi e prospettive della canzone politica italiana," *Musica/Realtà* 1 (April 1980): 161-76, Franco Fabbri, "The system of canzone in Italy today," *World music, politics and social change*, ed. Simon Frith (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 122-42, Umberto Fiori, *Scrivere con la voce* (Milano: Unicopli, 2003), Paolo Jachia, *La canzone d'autore italiana 1958-1997* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1998), Marco Santoro, "What is a 'cantautore'? Distinction and authorship in Italian (popular) music," *Poetics* 30 (2002): 111-32, and "The Tenco Effect. Suicide, Sanremo and the Rise of canzone d'autore", *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 3 (2006), forthcoming.

(25) On the idea of 'song for the Festival', see also Franco Fabbri, "Sanremo, il Festival," *L'ascolto tabù* (Milano: il Saggiatore, 2005), 170-1.

(26) *Romantica* (A Romantic Girl), music by Renato Rascel, lyrics by Dino Verde, performed by Renato Rascel with Marcello de Martino and His Orchestra, and Tony Dallara with the Orchestra of 'Canzone' conducted by Cinico Angelini.

(27) For the following analyses, I'm referring to



conceptual and methodological tools developed by various authors. For an overview, see Roberto Agostini and Luca Marconi, "Introduzione," *Rivista di Analisi e di Teoria Musicale* 8.2 (2002): v-xxi.

(28) Walter Everett calls this technique "truck-driver modulation" (311).

(29) Parts of the Rascel performance of *Romantica* can be seen in the two documentary: *Sanremo anni 60* and *Tutto Sanremo dal 1951 al 1998*. The entire performance of Tony Dallara can be seen in the film *Sanremo, la grande sfida* (see "Musical and audiovisual references").

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## The Piano – Out of the Living-Room, In to the Cyberspace

Marko Aho

I once read a peculiar thing in a newspaper: after 150 years of developing, Steinway & Sons can't come up with any improvements to their grand-piano design anymore (Heikinheimo 1995). To many, the Steinway grand piano is the reference, the mother of all pianos. It takes one year to build one, and inside it there are 12.000 parts (Vahtokari 2003). The acoustic principles of the piano are quite simple: there is the key, the hammer, the string and the soundboard. Although these acousto-mechanical principles are quite same in all pianos, there are no two which sound quite the same, or react quite the same to the players hands. Even every Steinway is an individual. Despite any effort, materials and work quality will always vary.

Acoustic instruments, such as pianos, have developed under various constraints. Skillful crafters have been able to construct new instruments, idiophones, aerophones, membranophones and chordophones – but only within the limitations set by those very categories. Ultimately there is a limited choice of materials on planet earth – materials which are never totally standard in quality and to all of which no artisan has access. Instruments should also be playable within the limitations human body. Therefore, how acoustic instruments *sound*, is

to some extent coincidental. You have to do your best with what you've got. One can not build an acoustic guitar which would put out 120dB, or a fluegelhorn 100 meters long. There might be other sounds imaginable, which could be more pleasing than those we can actually produce with acoustic instruments. But, we tend to make a virtue out of necessity, liking very much the sounds that our musical instruments make. In a word, they feel *musical*.

So, even if Steinway is the king, we like the sound of lesser pianos too. We appreciate a skill to play piano. Piano, as an instrument to play, and also as a beautiful object, is something many are or would be delighted to own. But they are so troublesome, sensitive to humidity and temperature, a nightmare if you are moving, and you have to hire someone to tune it.

But there is a solution: the digital piano. The digital piano simulates the acoustic by means of sound samples of acoustic pianos, which are saved to an electric memory. These imitate not only sound, but look, touch, price and bourgeois status also. They are *almost* like the real thing, many say (even concert pianists can practice fingerings on them). Overwhelmingly more of them are

being sold now than acoustic ones (in Finland: 7000 units of acoustic pianos in 1988; 700 acoustic pianos and 1500 digital pianos in 2003). It is clear now: the digital piano is becoming the standard. How long the piano as a concept will live, it will do it in a digital form.

The question is then: why does the piano survive at all? What is happening to it in this change to digits? Piano has been central in western music sonorically as well as tacitly and symbolically. This makes it a perfect showcase to approach digital simulation. Two features are important here:

- 1) The replacement of original acoustically produced sounds by their digital counterparts also as *mental referents*.
- 2) The new relationship between the simulated instrument (now potentially hyperreal) and the corporeal musician.

The first pianos in the 18:th century were cembaloes with a hammer-mechanism: they were better than cembalo with more nuances and better than clavicord with more volume. The forte-piano (this original name of the instrument referred to its' wide and stepless dynamics) was an instant hit. Steel-frame was introduced later: this enabled even more volume.

The piano is a mechanical device with lots of small parts: it was a perfect product for the emerging mass production concept. Mass production in general began with standardization of small parts (screws and bolts; ornaments with pianos).

Piano has been a dominating force in western music for 200 years. In the 19:th century piano became a symbol to social elevation for the prospering middle-class. It still is emblem of middle-class life. Piano has been so succesful, that it's sound has become 'arch-sound', 'neutral' or uncoloured: piano suits well almost every musical context. The diatonic keyboard has close links to discrete mathematical relations of western harmony, and this makes it a perfect too for a student of western harmony or a composer for any instrument. Keyboard instruments now dominate the instrument business. This results at least partly from the fact that piano introduced the keyboard interface to masses.

Developement of the forte-piano is an example of two all-time goals for musical instrument developers: 1) greater volume; 2) greater variation of tune-colours (Théberge 1997, 27). Acoustic principles set the limits for acoustic instruments. Acousto-electric instruments seemed a solution for both goals: with it, one could achieve any soundpressure, and it provided great possibilities for colour variation. But purely electronic instruments,

analogue synthesizers which use electronic oscillators, promised variation limited only by imagination.

First synthesizers were made by enthusiasts in the 1960's and 70's. Programming them required effort. Trial and error was the tactic of creating new sounds, although some knowledge on acoustics helped: *Thus, sounds were born out of interaction between the programmer and the machine.* The analogue synthesizers were never able to provide sounds to reach the limits of imagination: they always sounded like analogue synthesizers – but nevertheless, nobody knew exactly what was going to come out of the first instruments that were made. On general level it should be noted that musical instruments, as well as any other instruments, do not become complete during design and production, but only after the users have ended up using them in some particular fashion. Natural and organic to acoustic and electro-acoustic instruments: their *limitations open the doors for their transcendence.*

What do I mean with this? I give an example: a musical instruments provide possibilities for innovation for a musician, who is willing to use it *wrong*. I will illustrate with the case of the electric guitar. The first amplifiers for them were tube amplifiers. An electron tube produces distortion when it is overloaded. The first electric guitarists,

maintaining sound-ideals of the acoustic era, considered this unwanted. The next generation made the feature a part of the instruments vocabulary: they did not try to avoid, but promoted it. The overdriven guitar-sound is now a matter of course. Every unwanted feature resulting from the inherent nature of the instrument, has been unwanted only until someone has broken the convention or cultural code: transcended earsplitting feedback into powerful artistic effect, noticed the attraction in the sound of the out of tune piano, or marvelled how moving a hand in front of the trumpet makes the horn almost as 'speak'. Also artefacts other than musical instruments have been adapted to make music (e.g. a musical saw). The end goals of the original use of the artefacts tend to *sedimentate* to features of the artefact by repetition (the concept was introduced by Edmund Husserl, see Husserl 1989): saw is meant for dividing objects into smaller parts (although you could do countless other things with it also). But sedimentation can be broken, as with the saw.

Breaking sedimentation includes that:

- 1) The interface has to be discovered in a new way.
- 2) The corporeal act of playing has to be discovered in a new way.

With digital instruments breaking sedimentation becomes however problematic. Nothing more than a designed interface is needed for a contact point between the human players and the musical sound, whereas acoustic instruments need a lot of parts and surfaces to function: all not designed as such, but all the same potential contact surface / interface. A digital instrument *needs* an interface, but an acoustic instrument *is* an interface. The flaw of the digital instrument stems from same features as strengths: 'easy', durable, reliable and of uniform quality, but also for all this sedimented for good.

I will still illustrate, now with Jimi Hendrix. He was able to produce a spectacular soundscape with an electric guitar and an amplifier. To Hendrix and his contemporaries it had occurred, that amplifiers are an organic part of the instrument electric guitar. Hendrix was very much responsible of making the english-made Marshall-amplifier a rock-icon. He was the best advert for the amplifiers, although the sound the audience (and potential buyers among) heard, was very much a sound of Jimi Hendrix: he played it 'cranked up' for too long, used feedback as an effect, and even bashed them. Now we have digital simulations of Marshall-sound. These would maybe sound different without Hendrix. And Hendrix would not be able to create his sound with that simulation, because the simulator would not respond to his abuse.

*The potential hazard, which was due to the capricious interaction between the imperfect human player and the imperfect instrument, and which functioned as a catalyst for creation, no longer exists with simulation.*

*With simulation, one can not produce new by destroying old.*

A digital piano will not go out of tune under heavy handling, and one can not prepare its' unexisting strings. Acoustic piano will eventually start naturally sound old and tired, but digital does not go out of tune by chance, it has to be programmed in to it. One can not use the digital piano *wrong*, and it can not get broken *just right*: all deviations to the norm have to be *designed* into it, it is, the deviations have to exist *preconcieved*.

To sum up: There is no unconceptualized dialogue between the musician and the digital instrument, and the instrument does not tell the human anything the human does not know already, because there is nothing the human has not programmed into it. Last: a digital instrument is based purely on cognition. The fact that in can be played, is more an appendix than inherent to it. When the force of the body changes into digits, the direct link between the *body* and the *sound* ceases to exist. The more the physical connection



between the player and the instrument disappears, the more the tactile resources of the player are not used, the more the act of making music becomes a matter of cognition only, the *less* we can talk about musicianship in the traditional sense. As Steven Feld (1984, 76) has noted, musicians rather *feel* a musical style than acknowledge it cognitively. A musical style is not rigid, mechanical and static, but rather a *physical resource*, which enables the creation of endless variation. This resource is distinctly corporeal, not cognitive: it can not ultimately be defined with concepts, only by playing.

Digital piano has relatives: digital devices that emulate old tube amplifiers, tube microphones, Hammond organs and other classic analogue electric musical equipment. Here is a list of different classic guitar amplifiers a *Line6 Flextone III* digital combo-amplifier is able to simulate:

'87 Roland JC-120  
 Budda DR-100  
 '64 Fender Deluxe  
 '53 Fender Deluxe  
 '58 Fender Bassman  
 '65 Marshall JTM-45  
 '68 Marshall Super Bass  
 '63 Fender Vibroverb  
 '65 Blackface Fender Twin

Budda Twinmaster 2x12 Combo

'96 Matchless Chieftain

'02 Cornford mk50h

'63 Vox AC 30 with Top Boost

'61 Vox AC 15

'68 Marshall 'Plexi' Super Lead

'85 Marshall Silver Jubilee

'90 Marshall JCM-800

'00 Marshall TSL100

'01 Mesa Boogie Dual Rectifier

'02 Mesa Boogie Triple Rectifier

Soldano SLO-100 Head

Bogner Extacy

Gibson Explorer

Supro S6616

The length and particularity of the list suggests that these sounds are of great distinction. But who would know? The average consumer does not know what any of these amplifiers sound like live. In Finland many of these amplifiers are obsolete.

As acoustic pianos slowly became scarce, fewer and fewer players have experienced the sensation of the touch and sound of the real thing. Eventually, as the acoustic piano as a point of reference ultimately disappears, the point of reference to digital pianos become – other digital pianos. What an odd situation:

digital pianos evolve supposedly to be more and more faithful to something we are less and less familiar with. But somewhere along the way a certain change is bound to come: eventually there will be people who will think of the digital piano as *the real thing*. There we will have arrived, as Baudrillard coined it, to the moment of *simulacrum*.

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## The “Brincos Project” and the meaning of the Spanish beat

Celsa Alonso González

In the last ten years interesting works about spaces and forms of sociability and leisure, popular arts and press as well as fiction literature have been published in Spain, but most of attention has focussed on the early period of Franco's regime (the 40's and 50's). Also, the majority of the essays on the culture of Franco's regime, published since the 70's, ignored popular music, although the *copla* and the “folkloric” cinema of the 40's have awakened academic interest. As far as sixties music is concerned, works have been published on the *Nova Cançó* and singer-songwriters, but no similar academic studies exist into pop rock, which explains why the meaning of spanish *beat* has not yet been analysed properly. In this sense, I shall put forward a number of ideas to connect what I consider the ambivalent meaning of the Spanish beat with the production of subjectivity and identity in Sixties Spain, focussing my attention to an emblematic band, Los Brincos, created in late 1964, a year in which small cracks were beginning to open up in Franco's dictatorship, the appropriate time to change the course of popular Spanish music.

The significance of Los Brincos music cannot be

understood if we do not take into consideration the situation of Franco's regime in the Sixties, the effects of the so called *desarrollismo*, the strategies of opening-up the system, the need to open up the country to Europe and the role that the popular culture and cultural practices played in these processes. Only thus shall we understand to what extent the music of Los Brincos was involved and caught up in the construction of a youth identity, being above all a commercial, fun and carefree music.

Between 1964 and 1967, Spain experienced a complex political situation, one of conflict and contradiction. The university crisis that led to the dismantling of the University Student Union (SEU), the distancing of the regime from the catholic church, the creation of the Women's Democratic Movement, the (partial) Amnesty Decree, the Press Law (which abolished prior censorship and direct control of the press), the Law of Religious Freedom, acute labour conflicts, the strengthening of the unions, and the manipulated referendum on the Organic Law of the State are symptoms of political evolution that did not conceal other, more sombre situations, such as the firing of several university lecturers, the toughening

of the Penal Code, the declaration of the State of Exception in the Basque Country, self-censorship in the media, the lack of a Union Law and deep-seated social imbalances. The Minister for Information and Tourism, Manuel Fraga, had initiated a campaign of “cultural liberalisation” in 1963. This was part of an strategy for capturing the support of the middle classes, in a period of economic prosperity and increasing average buying power. It was a “seduction campaign” on the part of the government (Malerbe, 1977; 139) in order to construct an image of modernity and to offer a minimum degree of credibility both within and outside the country.

The impact that The Brincos caused in this context is explained by their capacity to articulate concepts such as modernity, consumerism, fun and a certain nationalist nuance, as well as a sense of generational awareness that made a deep impression on Spanish middle-class youth. Via a “noisy”, lively, electric, modern, youthful music, as well as certain visual style associated with it, the so-called “ye-yeismo”, a sector of Spanish youth, with scant or no political awareness, was able to channel its eagerness for leisure, collective fantasy and, above all, freedom. And it achieved this precisely thanks to its frivolous and banal appearance as opposed to the explicit political opposition of the *Nova Cançó*.

### **1964: a melting pot of artistic and musical novel-ties**

1964 was a strategic year in Spain from multiple perspectives. Franco’s regime celebrated its “25 Years of Peace”, the First Economic and Social Development Plan (1964-1967) came into force, a restrictive Law of Associations was passed (that did not contemplate the possibility of political associations), negotiations commenced with the European Economic Community, the Democratic Student Union was created (that was to play a crucial role in the university protests between 1965 and 1968) and the first constitutive assembly of the communist labour union *Comisiones Obreras* was held. An intestine war commenced within the regime, between advocates of a more open, progressive system of government and those resisting such change. The Spanish Publicity Statute was also passed and the Prado del Rey Television Studies were inaugurated in Madrid.

Within the sphere of musical creation, it took place a great optimistic boom. The “cultural liberalisation” had several fronts: on the one hand, a toning down of censure, on the other, a window-dressing operation articulated via a skilful policy of official “support” for avantgarde music, painting, sculpture and cinema, intellectual manifestations with scant public success. Fraga was responsible for breaking the traditional

“deafness” of Franco’s regime by authorising the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial of Contemporary Music held in Madrid, subsidising festivals and conference cycles and organising forceful press campaigns (Medina, 1985; 381). In 1964 the Opera Season came into being in Madrid, Festival Internacional de Juventudes Musicales was created in Barcelona, the 1<sup>st</sup> Festival of American Music in Spain was organised (with several world premieres), Juan Hidalgo and Walter Marchetti arrived in Spain and founded the *Grupo Zaj*, the controversial “Peace Concert” was held with premieres of works by Luis De Pablo, Cristóbal Halffter and Miguel Alonso, alongside *La Atlántida* by Falla, and the year closed with the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial of Contemporary Music (organised by Luis de Pablo, with the presence in Spain of the best composers of the European avantgarde).

But the hermetic nature of avantgarde music was far from the life pulse of the Spanish. Not even the irreverent iconoclastic proposals of the *Grupo Zaj*, with its action musics, its art-life identification and its movement towards pop art, had any important social transcendence. The composers of the so-called Generation of 51 moved in very minority, elitist circles. In Sixties Spain, there was an unbreachable wall between academic musical circles and popular music bands and it is difficult to establish bridges between them, except those of mutual ignorance and disdain. Nonetheless, they shared the search for new values

of modernity, of becoming European and the desire for normality.

Zaj undermined the cohesion of the Spanish musical avantgarde, which from that moment on became intensely polarised: constructivism and objectualism cohabited with concepts such as flexibility of discourse and spatial elements. Likewise, the impact of Los Brincos brought about a polarisation of foreign influences in popular music, breaking away from the monopoly of Italian and French pop and opening up a rift with the solo singers who triumphed at the Song Festivals instigated by Franco’s government to promote tourism along the guidelines of the Italian festivals.

Zaj inaugurated its public activity hardly three weeks before the record launching of Los Brincos, in November 1964 in a hall of residence, with a Concert of Musical Theatre. It is no coincidence that a hall of residence housed this novelty. By then secondary schools, colleges, university residences and faculties also lent their support to the so-called “festivals of modern music”, some even organised by the Spanish University Union (SEU), in which young bands were not required to have the professional musicians’s permit. These festivals received a severe blow with the regime’s suppression of the Price Matinees (a hotbed for rock and roll fans) in February, after a weight campaign of hostility from the official press.

### The “Brincos Project”: the confirmation of a Spanish *beat*

Los Brincos were a group of young kids from Madrid who demonstrated that it was possible to sing in Spanish with a guarantee of success and originality. They were backed by a young Spanish record company, Zafiro: founded in 1957 by Esteban García Morencos and Luis Sagi-Vela, it did not have an abundant supply of foreign artists behind it like Philips or EMI. Both these multinationals had placed their bets on Spanish groups and solo singers and operated in Madrid and Barcelona respectively, with greater investments than those of Columbia, RCA or the modest domestic subsidiaries such as Vergara, Belter or Hispavox. That is why Zafiro tried to propose more daring ideas like creating a sub-record label aimed at the young public, Novola, under the directorship of an ex-member of Los Estudiantes (a pioneering group of Spanish rock), Luis Sartorius.

The aims of Zafiro were to bring about a “sharp shock” by betting on young groups and taking up the standard of the growing musical revolution of the British beat. The result was the launching of a group intended to be the Spanish replica of The Beatles and to conquer the middle-class youth market, creating a top quality band, going beyond the clichés of American rock, with a beat sound, but also “purely Spanish”. This was shared by Fernando Arbex, a Law student and the drummer of

Los Estudiantes, Manuel González (bass player of Los Estudiantes), Antonio Morales “Junior” and Juan Pardo, who came from Los Pekenikes, a band that had a great hit in 1964 with an instrumental adaptation of a folk theme, *Los cuatro muleros*, and who had been pioneers in making cover versions of The Beatles, *She Loves you (Ella te quiere)* published in 1963.

In December 1964, Zafiro staged an intense promotional campaign to launch the new group, Los Brincos, simultaneously publishing 5 records, an unprecedented event in Spain: 2 EP’s, 2 singles and an LP with 12 tracks that combined songs in Spanish and in English. Under the supervision of the artistic producer Marini Callejo, the two-track recordings had taken place in October using the most advanced sound techniques available in Spain and without studio musicians.

The youth music magazine *Discóbolo* (created in 1962) anticipated the launch, highlighting the novelties: the prior experience of the musicians, a very new sound with a certain Spanish flavour (pompously called the *Woodling Sound*), the group’s own songs, a substantial investment in instrumental equipment and a great ambition, to take to Europe “*young, modern Spanish music with its own personality, instead of copying foreigners*”, concluding that “*it might be a decisive step forward along the road that lead us to finding modern Spanish music, which, at the present time, does not exist*” (1).

The possibilities of international success did not go unnoticed, not only owing to their vocal and instrumental quality, but also because their English was almost perfect. The first LP demonstrated the “wealth of ideas”, the EP responded to a format that was familiar to the public and the single was the wager on the immediate future, since Zafiro was one of the first companies that believed in the possibilities of the single (Casas, 1972; 116). It has often been pointed out that the launch was scrupulously planned and coordinated, since the commercial possibilities of the group were evident. However, Marini Callejo states that, rather than a meticulous planning, there was great enthusiasm in Zafiro: they were convinced that Los Brincos supposed an unquestionable, qualitative leap forward. As a businessman, Morencos tried to adjust the budget, though within a spirit of “*a certain degree of lavishness*”, since the cost of the first LP practically doubled what was then normal to invest in a long-playing record. Marini Callejo insists that Zafiro ran risks, although optimism prevailed: above all “*there was a great yearning to do something important*” (2). Marini, “the fifth Brinco” states that they worked with absolute cordiality and responsibility, the rehearsals were exhaustive, the end result of the songs was painstakingly cared for down to the last detail, the sound was compact and there were interesting instrumental details such as the introduction of a Hammond organ on

*Flamenco*. But the fundamental novelty was that the LP was made up of 12 unpublished themes, there was not one single cover version: once more, unprecedented in Spain. *Flamenco* was the visiting card, its aim was to mix the beat with typically Spanish sounds, along with interesting lyrics. The majority of young musicians of the time saw it as a Spanish-style *Twist and Shout*, not very representative, a flagship song to enter the market. No less important than the title and sound of *Flamenco* was the construction of the group’s image, dressed in Spanish capes and with bells on their shoes, which converted into icons for some fans: just like *Flamenco*, it responded to the somewhat artificial idea of creating an initial impact.

What was truly successful was the musical formula: Junior and Juan Pardo sang really well, played with inventiveness and, what’s more, they were composers. Fernando Arbex, according to Marini, was “*an amazing ideas machine*”. He proposed the outline of many songs: then, “*absolutely everyone*” worked on these as a team. In her opinion, they were born musicians: Junior developed magnificent solos, Juan Pardo focused on the lyrics and guitar accompaniments. Their formula caused a sort of “revolution”. They were a compact, autonomous, creative group with two excellent singers, three good composers, four good musicians and a “fifth Brinco” who had an extremely complete academic musical background. Their image (they later abandoned



the capes) was impeccable: they were handsome, radiant and fun, which helped explain what came to be known as “Brincosis”, which was sparked off in 1965.

Los Brincos were fundamental in the formation of the Spanish beat. Some features linked them to the pre-1966 Beatles: they were exciting, autonomous (they were composers and interpreters of their own themes), lively, their songs had real quality and simple images, the lyrics were sometimes shallow, words to sing, good rhythm, they irradiated a lack of concern and fun. Their merit increases if we consider that they did not even have, as the majority of bands at that time did (including The Beatles), a prior stage as a cover band. Musically, there was concomitance, excellent vocal harmonies, instrumental arrangements, similar vocal effects and some people think certain “rehashes”.

Offering an intelligent combination of professionalism, modernity, youth, a “national” accent and a great commercial sense, Los Brincos were fundamental because they managed to capitalise on the migration of minority pop rock that was somewhat fringe at the beginning of the Sixties to the more mass beat, opening up sounds to the public at large: the Spanish beat definitively came into being with them. After the impact they caused, the persecution and repression of youth music on the part of the regime became progressively diluted. Their music offered a clear alternative to both the neo-populism as well as the pop represented by

melodic singers like Raphael. They also marked the displacement of the musical epicentre from Barcelona to Madrid, where the national and international record industries became strengthened.

Los Brincos caused a shock wave that opened the door to dozens of groups. In January 1965, the published records had sold out, and they became the emblems of Spanish pop abroad. In April, *Flamenco* reached N° 1 in the hit parade, where it remained for 3 weeks. The Saar recording studio became interested in them and they travelled to Milan to record. They were the first Spanish group to record abroad. *Borracho* headed an EP that also included *Sola*, *Tu me dijiste adiós* and *Eres tu*. The single *Sola* remained at the top of the hit parade for 3 weeks in August 1965. *Borracho* sold 100.000 singles, and became the summer song during the mythical tour of The Beatles to Spain.

In November, *Discóbolo* reported on the band's success, with almost 50.000 copies of *Flamenco* sold in France (recorded by Dalida, and in the *Salut les copains* list), while in Italy they were a great hit, they recorded new songs in various languages and did a television show in Ascolo together with other Italian stars (3). In October they performed on Swiss television and in December received the Gran Premio del Disco in Barcelona. In one year, the group had published records in 30 countries, appeared on the cover of *Cash Box* and were the most well known Spanish band abroad (4).

In the Critics Awards of 1965, they won the awards for best group and best song of the year for *Sola*. Their success was extraordinary, because they got three songs into the top three, *Sola*, *Flamenco* and *Borracho*, “being unquestionably the best composers as well as the best group” (5).

Italian songs (which were strong competitors for The Beatles in the Spanish hit parade) were no match for the popularity of Los Brincos. In their wake, other Spanish groups travelled to England, the USA, Italy, Paris and Germany, where they revitalized their proposals. The social impact of Los Brincos in 1965 (year of the first Zaj Festival, the founding of the *Grupo Alea* electronic music studio in Madrid and the visit of The Beatles) was exploited by other, more veteran groups, such as Los Sirex or Lone Star, and dozens of new bands were borned -such as Los Salvajes and Los Cheyenes- that channelled the influences of British *R&B* producing several recordings. Meanwhile, Los Mustang (who had been recording with EMI-Odeon since 1962, through their sub-label Regal) specialised in Spanish versions of The Beatles on their company's advice.

1966 was a year that abounded in festivals, hits and creativity in Spanish pop. Los Brincos travelled once again to Milan, where they recorded a second LP, which included the latest hits and songs in English, Italian, as well as *Mejor* (the A side of the single that also included *I try to find*), which reached the top of

the lists in 1966. The second LP confirmed that Los Brincos had managed to adapt the beat to the Spanish market. Lucien Morisse (the mentor of French radio broadcasting) became interested in them and travelled to Madrid to promote them in France. Their popularity was confirmed in a musical survey sponsored by the department store El Corte Inglés, in which more than 18,000 young people participated. The survey demonstrated two things: groups neat soloists and the most voted bands were, in the following order, Los Brincos, Los Sirex, Los Bravos, Los Mustangs and Los Relámpagos, who were programmed to perform in Madrid in The 1<sup>st</sup> Festival of Idols held on 19<sup>th</sup> May, 1966 with a great show of publicity and means: it was free and congregated 15,000 young people. In these first “democratic music elections” Los Brincos were the winners. Faced with such a congregation of young people, the newspapers highlighted how well the public behaved, there being a greater proportion of women, scanty *ye-ye* getups and lots of *op art* fashion (6).

Also in Barcelona, Los Brincos caused great expectation and opinions were categorical: the best group of the moment. Despite their success, the leadership of Los Brincos started to waver. They had a new rival, Los Bravos, a band led by the German singer Mike Kennedy. Although Los Brincos were very successful in Italy, the English-speaking market was not very favourable to them, the contrary to what occurred with Los Bravos,

produced by the French Alain Milhaud. And Los Brincos had internal disputes. Also they were accused of being standoffish and bourgeois, not being responsible and not rehearsing. Marini Callejo has refuted this, stating that young people from different social backgrounds liked Los Brincos, and that the consumption of beat at that time did not necessarily follow a class pattern. Salvador Domínguez also confirms this opinion (Domínguez, 2002; 236)

In June 1966, *Discóbolo* published an exclusive in an attempt to offset their reputation of not being disciplined (7). In the middle of open disputes between the leaders, Pardo and Arbex, they recorded a single and an EP which included *Un sorbito de champagne* nº 1 in the summer of 1966, but the group finally broke up, without having achieved unqualified success abroad, whereas Los Bravos reached Nº 2 in the British hit parade and nº 3 in USA with *Black is Black* (which sold more than 2 million copies worldwide, an unparalleled occurrence) (8). Despite the break-up, Los Brincos won the Best Spanish Group Award in 1966, by popular acclaim, sponsored by the newspaper *Pueblo*, with the collaboration of El Corte Inglés, though they did not participate in the gala held in the Teatro de la Zarzuela, fashion parade included (9).

The explosive success of *Black is Black* by Los Bravos with the collaboration of Phil Solomon, forced the company Zafiro to insist on trying to get an international

hit. And so, Los Nuevos Brincos travelled to London in January 1967 to record their third LP, *Contrabando*, hiring the services of Larry Page (as producer) and Dick Kats (as international manager). They recorded in the studios of EMI, Pye, Decca, with British sound engineers. The music of Los Nuevos Brincos continued to distil the influence of the British beat and *R&B* and the single that included *Lola* and *The Train* got to Nº 1 in the summer of 1967 (10). It sold more copies than any other record in the history of Los Brincos (some 600.000 copies in a country with no more than 50.000 record players), and even got into the *Top Ten* of the British hit parade, although not to Nº 1.

*Contrabando* was published in 1968, but *Sol en Julio* did not become a testimonial song, as *Borracho*, *Un sorbito de champan* or *Lola* had in the past. The LP (with a pop art cover by Ivan Zulueta) responded to a wish to renovate under the influence of psychedelia. *Gracias por tu amor* by Los Brincos was a hit in 1968 (11). But in the 3rd Festival of Idols in 1968, Los Nuevos Brincos were no longer on the bill. Los Brincos complained, from *Fonorama*, that Spanish groups were “prefabricated”, with foreign singers and musicians (the case of the Pop Tops and Los Bravos) (12). Their golden age had passed, although they still recorded another LP at Wessex Sound Studios in London, *Mundo, Demonio y Carne* (1969), a concept album with influences from The Cream, which was food for censure in Franco’s

Spain. The original cover, the work of the hyperrealist painter Claudio Bravo, had to be substituted by a decomposing brain, almost a metaphor of the group's disintegration.

### **The Spanish beat and the construction of an image of rebelliousness and modernity**

The time of Los Brincos was the time of the Spanish beat, 1964 to 1967. To assess its meaning, it is necessary to bear in mind the forms of mediation and the understanding of music not only as text but also as a lived experience, a consumer item and cultural symbol; secondly, to reaffirm the concepts of ambivalence, conflict and dialogue building of texts and cultural practices; and finally, to consider the possibility of distraction as a form of liberation and subversion.

Franco's technocrats focused above all on economic development. But the so-called Spanish "desarrollismo" ended up being more than an economic phenomenon: it was a mental attitude, and it meant, in short, the commencement of the country's "cultural emancipation" (Longhurst, 2000; 20). Moreover, *desarrollismo* and Europeisation went hand in hand. That is why the absorption of the British beat was on the same wavelength as other cultural displacements such as the assimilation of integral serialism, action musics and open music, formal and linguistic renovation in literature, the emergence in the visual arts of protest

pop art and a renovative movement in the cinema that went beyond the neo-realism of Bardem and Berlanga. All of which were symptoms of a general backdrop of change in Spanish culture that pointed to a new aesthetic sensitisation that was more urban, communicative, dialectical and international.

The majority of young Spanish people lived at a distance from both political problems and the artistic creation of the elites; they lacked political culture, solely within the reach of a minority in times of dictatorship. The intellectuals that opposed the regime did not have substantial social influence (except among the student elite). That is why evasion culture was fundamental and the Spanish beat offered the young people a comprehensible option of modernity, popularity and accessibility: it was a commercial music that could be possessed and used, capable of articulating their desire for fun, for rebellion via fun, offering young people a sense of being different; something that Mestres, De Pablo, Barce or Halfetter could not do.

The beat did not aspire to being a platform for the dissemination of political contents. The beat offered the young leisure as well as a visual aesthetic and music that were different, unusual, new, modern and European, which in itself was a symptom of opposition to the hegemonic cultural values of the regime, such as sobriety, religiousness, typical Spanishness, the myths of National Catholicism. In this respect, note should be

taken of the depoliticisation and frivolity attributed to the Spanish beat by left-wing intellectuals such as Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, or journalists such as Fernando González Lucini, who accused it of scant creativity, lack of commitment in its lyrics and sounds, lack of political awareness, a symptom of the immaturity of a “ye-ye” youth who only wanted to dance.

These accusations are debatable. First of all, although the tensions between what is creative and what is commercial cannot be ignored, we coincide with Keith Negus in that this dichotomy has to be qualified, since *“the act of consumption (...) involves a range of ethical, aesthetic and emotional investments (rather than a rational utilitarian choice), there is always something more than just the market exchange value involved in the relationship between the producers and consumers of commercial pop music”* (Negus, 2001; 153). We shall not deny that the beat became a consumer item, that important companies such as El Corte Inglés or Iberia collaborated in its projection, that the advertising discourse surrounding it was significant. And that is precisely why the beat was a symbol of “affluence” and “modernisation”, which, as Iain Chambers points out, *“were the two major themes that dominated public discussion throughout the first half of the 1960’s”* (Chambers, 1985; 54).

The entry of foreign capital and the installation in Spain of multinational companies favoured the stabilisation of

the music industry. The transnational record companies (EMI, Philips, RCA, Columbia) became consolidated and the national companies (Belter, Hispavox, Vergara, Zafiro) were strengthened, acting as transmitters in the construction of the characteristic attitudes, norms and values of consumer society among Spanish youth, the first collective symbol of social transformation (Muñoz, 1997; 182). The beat boom collaborated in this process, since the record companies soon saw its commercial potential. In this sense, The Brincos were capital.

Secondly, before The Brincos, Spanish beat bands were in a situation of great precariousness: pop music was just starting out, access to culture was difficult (even to “street culture”), musicians were not very knowledgeable, there was scant support from the media or even the domestic record companies, in which a solid tradition of professionalism still did not exist. After the impact of The Brincos the beat proposed a message that was apparently lacking in intellectual concerns, which did not mean that it did not have political nuances. In this respect, as John Street states *“the political content is not so much a direct product of the text as such, but rather its interaction with the context”*. Accordingly, the sounds, styles and images of pop culture take on a political sense *“to the extent that they form part of an entity that has a specific world view and a way of living and behaving”* (Street, 2000; 57): in this case, that of a sector of Spanish youth in

the Sixties. Hence the scant importance of the fact that some Spanish beat songs had English lyrics or that many of them spoke of “trivial” themes.

Neither the regime nor the left-wing intellectuals were able to see the power of the beat as an agglutinating element of young people longing for freedom, or its capacity of articulation despite its banal appearance. Although this music was at first regarded with a certain degree of mistrust and hostility, the regime ended up acquiescing to the homemade beat and not paying it much attention. Although the hypothesis that the Spanish beat formed part of the government’s strategy of constructing an image of the country’s modernity and renovation was attractive, all the musicians, journalists, producers and consumers of the beat that we have interviewed coincide in stating that there was no official strategy whatsoever with respect to pop music, that the regime did not know how to exploit this space, it simply let it happen: it neither supported it (in contrast to what occurred with the Song Festivals) nor censured it (in contrast with the first festivals of rock and roll). The only thing the government was worried about were the lyrics. So the music of those bands of young kids who only knew how to shout and jump around did not enter into the plans of Franco’s government.

It is, however, obvious that this music was not lacking in identitary potential among young people as Spanish society became more modern, industrial and

consumer-oriented, and certain life behaviour patterns were modified among the urban middle classes. Moral values such as leisure, pleasure, consumerism, secularism, luxury, sexual tolerance and freedom were present in the songs of Los Brincos. A new “youth ethic” was being formed, not exclusively linked to the working classes, but rather to a general modernisation of society. As regards the meaning of the beat in class terms, the majority of members of Spanish beat groups were the kids of bourgeois families (some were university students) or of the well-to-do middle class; but the beat consumers, thanks to the radio, was not at all uniform and fundamentally middle-high class. Los Brincos and other beat bands could mobilise youth swept along hundreds of fans, consolidating new cultural practices (mass concerts, Festivals of Idols, fan clubs, musical press for the young, and fashion as a generational symbol). Listening to that music was a form of protest, since it was one of the very few things that Spanish youth had for fun, the only thing “of their own”.

Also the new presence of women in public spaces was served by beat music. The concerts enabled girls to conquer a new public space, where they could scream, shout, cry and jump around, which may be interpreted as a form of protest. Los Brincos also spoke to girls in a brazen, forthright way. And this was potentially subversive, especially in dictatorial Spain –not a State of Law– in which women had the same status, in legal



matters, as a minor. Beat music offered Spanish girls the possibility of self-affirmation: Los Brincos were the first discovery in this sense, becoming authentic idols.

A fan of Los Brincos told us:

*“They transmitted novelty, freedom, freshness to us. They were very important and undoubtedly had an agglutinating potential ... we spoke of nothing else, since we had no contact with politics until we got to University, where we came into contact with other kinds of music” (13).*

University students, a politicised minority, moved in a more minority musical scene: they listened to George Brassens, Jacques Brel, to Raimon, Serrat or to singer-songwriters like Paco Ibáñez, musics in which political resistance and denouncement were explicit. That’s why the *Nova Cançó* and the singer-songwriters subtracted “oppositional protagonism” from the beat, which does not mean that the beat was imposed and fomented at a state level.

## Conclusions

I believe that the Spanish beat was not at all a politically conservative product. My opinion is that the meaning of the beat is open to an ambivalent interpretation: more than a passive consumption, fomented by the record companies, it responded to a desire to construct a

differentiated cultural identity. I do not wish to say that one may speak of a “subculture” associated with the beat and ye-ye fashion, because Spanish society was not mature enough to allow the formation of youth subcultures. The street was not occupied by the young, there were no strategic meeting places, consumer society was in the process of being formed and, of course, there were no drugs, not to mention the situation of the lack of civil rights. As Will Straw has pointed out, outside of Anglo-American centres, the meaning of musical consumption is complex and “each subcultural gesture –dressing up in a particular way or choosing this act over another– signalled, more than anything else, a cosmopolitanism, an attentiveness to what was happening somewhere else”, hence the importance of middle-class consumers (Straw, 2001; 70).

We believe that the situation posed by the beat in Spain responds to the framework of analysis proposed by Straw: that of a “political and social awakening”. So the beat was not a depoliticising factor: on the contrary, the adhesion of urban Spanish youth to a music whose reference lay in Labour Britain may be interpreted as a form of pacific opposition, somewhat naïve but effective. Without a doubt Los Brincos was a pioneer band in this historical process.



## Endnotes

(1) “Los Brincos.” *Discóbolo*, nº 66, 15 December 1964: 11-13

(2) Interview with Marini Callejo held on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2005

(3) “Volvieron Los Brincos.” *Discóbolo*, nº 88, 15 November 1965: 3

(4) “Así fue el fenómeno Brincos.” *Discóbolo*, nº 90, 15 December 1965: 5-7

(5) “Premios de la Crítica 1965.” *Fonorama*, nº 20, January 1966: 15

(6) Machado, Pepe. “I Festival de Idolos.” *Fonorama*, nº 28, June 1966: 32-34

(7) “El album de Los Brincos.” *Discóbolo*, nº 101, June 1966: 3-10

(8) Juan Pardo and Antonio Morales founded the duo Juan y Junior. Arbex continued to be the titleholder of the rights of Los Brincos, and in 1967 the guitarists Enrique Morales and Vicente Martínez joined the group. Curiously, Zafiro signed up Juan y Junior, while also keeping Los Nuevos Brincos on their books.

(9) “Primer Festival Discos 66.”, *Fonorama*, nº 34, November 1966: 18.

(10) *The train* gave rise to a lawsuit by The Who for supposed plagiarism of their *Substitute*.

(11) J. María Iñigo. “Discos.” *Mundo Joven*, nº 7, November 1968: 17

(12) “III Festival de Idolos.” *Fonorama*, nº 47, June 1968: 20

(13) Interview held in May, 2005 with María Luisa Sáinz de Santa María (1950)

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## The Carnavalesque and Capitalism: Contested Visions of British Music Festivals

Chris Anderton

### Introduction

In commencing my current research project into British music festivals, I was surprised to find that the available literature was quite partial – often having a distinct bias towards either classical music, the larger and better known pop and rock festivals, or the free festival movement of the 1970/80s (for example, Adams; Bennett; Clarke; Lodge; McKay; Whistler; Worthington). The numerous festivals devoted to other genres, notably folk, blues, and country, had been largely ignored, as had those that were more avowedly commercial in nature. My own case studies – the Cambridge Folk Festival, the Cropredy Festival, and the V Festival – fit the prevailing conceptualisations rather uncomfortably, and after reviewing the websites of the five hundred plus music festivals held annually in Britain, I felt that there was a need to revisit the deeper history of festival life in the country. In particular, I was interested in the apparent elision between carnival and festival that many authors demonstrate (particularly those that have looked in detail at festival events closely linked to the 1960s and 1970s counter-culture) – an elision rooted in their understanding and use of

the idea of the carnivalesque; a term coined by the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin in his analysis of mediaeval carnival festivities in Europe. The paper presented here is at something of a tangent to my main research work, yet the findings and ideas that have emerged from my investigations into the history of British musical festivity and the carnivalesque have greatly impacted the ways in which I have undertaken that work, and have contributed considerably towards my broader discussions regarding the role of music festivals today. Those discussions are still very much a work in progress, with this paper my latest attempt to make sense of it.

Firstly, I'll examine the etymological origins of the terms carnival and festival, before focusing on the English carnival of the Middle Ages and Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque. I'll then show how the carnival – and the carnivalesque – was suppressed during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and how a new cultural form – that of the music festival – took shape during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Implicit to this admittedly rather whirlwind trip through history, are the roles of Puritanical Christianity, industrialisation, capitalism and the rise of the middle classes. In the final section I'll look at how late twentieth century music

festivals have been characterised as carnivalesque events and spaces within academia, especially within my subject area of Geography, and in the wider British media. I'll suggest that such a characterisation is highly partial and increasingly unrepresentative of the contemporary music festival market. Due to time constraints, Bakhtin's writing on the carnivalesque will not be critiqued in detail, although I recognise that there are problems with accepting his concept at face value. For example, many commentators suggest that his treatise was as much a veiled critique of Stalinist authoritarianism (under whose rule the work was originally produced in the 1930s) as it was a literary criticism of Rabelais (see Booker and Juraga; Lindley). In addition, his depiction of the mediaeval carnival is considered to be a gross stereotype extrapolated from later Renaissance writings, and therefore somewhat suspect (Lindley 17).

#### Etymology: Festival and Carnival

The word 'festival' derives from the Latin 'festivus' meaning 'feasting and merrymaking, as of a holiday', and is related to words such as 'festus' – a holiday in honour of a god or a happy event of some kind, 'festum' – a feast day, and 'feria' – a religious festival or holy day; a day of rest and leisure. A festival is therefore a period of time set aside for the purposes of leisure and celebration – an abstinence from work – and can

be both religious and secular. A plethora of European events and terms, such as festive, festival, festivity, feast, fiesta, fete and fair, stem from these Latin roots (see also Falassi).

The word 'carnival' derives from Old Italian – 'carne vale' which literally means 'a farewell to flesh' or a 'removing of meat'. In essence it refers to the fasting time of the Christian Lent – a forty-day religious observance, which in Mediaeval Britain prohibited the consumption of meat, eggs, dairy products and wine. By this time in history it appears to have shifted its meaning by 180 degrees, so that, in Britain at least, it referred to the festival of Shrovetide – the three or four days immediately prior to Lent, which climaxes in Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day, Mardi Gras, or carnival. During this period, all the food soon to be proscribed had to be consumed, and confession made. From the beginning then, carnival was a Christian event, with carnival and Lent as "mutually defining and supporting elements in the calendar of the church year" (Lindley 17).

#### **The English Mediaeval Carnival & Bakhtin's Carnavalesque**

In mediaeval Britain, the Shrovetide carnival was celebrated by excessive eating, drinking and dancing, and through a variety of often violent, mischievous or humorous activities, which are now more typical

of the trick-or-treating of Halloween. For example, there was Lensharding, in which children knocked on doors in search of alms – failure to give was met with household crockery being smashed all over the doorstep; the last person out of bed on Shrove Tuesday would be thrown on the midden – the family rubbish tip; and on a more violent note, cock-fighting and cock-throwing were also popular on that day (Cooper and Sullivan 50-55). Music was very important to these celebrations – and others in the Middle Ages – but not as a spectacle. Instead, the music was performed by the participants of the various dances and processions held at this time, with the dancers themselves providing their own accompaniment as they danced (Mackerness 13). This demonstrates an important element of carnival – that there is no distinction between performers and audiences.

According to Bakhtin, the normal social hierarchy and rules of behaviour were suspended or inverted during the carnival celebrations, creating what he describes as a “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order” – a “world inside out” (10, 11). Within this second world, the monological discourses of the official culture – the feudal lords and the Christian church – were replaced by a profusion of alternatives. As Stallybrass and White say, the participants – drawn from all social levels

– would indulge in “fattening food, intoxicating drink, sexual promiscuity, altered ego-identity, the inverse and the heteroglot” (189). The carnival was a time of conspicuous display, conspicuous consumption, and conspicuous wastage; of grotesque masks and costumes; of bawdy songs and religious irreverence; of sexual ambiguity and excess; a celebration of the grotesque body.

But for Bakhtin, the carnivalesque entails more than this litany of excess, for he also placed humour and laughter at the heart of its experience. This is because the carnivalesque suspension of rank, privilege, norms and prohibitions allowed the peasantry to mock, parody and satire the social distinctions and official culture of the day. Everything was mocked, challenged and overturned through the medium of humour, with carnivalesque celebrations emphasizing living *in* the moment and *for* the moment: fluidity, instability and subjectivity.

Of course, this inverted world of contrasts, excessive behaviour, mockery and critique tended not to last, and so the social structures themselves were never in any danger of disappearance. It was, after all, an officially sanctioned and limited release from the usual conventions, norms and constrictions – which were effectively reaffirmed and supported once the

carnival was over, and the fasting period of Lenten penitence begun. Hence, carnivalesque activities *can* be regarded as oppositional – as a form of resistance against those with institutional power – but also as a rather hazardous form of social control: one which mediated the tensions inherent to a rigidly delineated society, yet left open the possibility of radical change.

It is important to note that Bakhtin does not place a limit upon the carnivalesque – the spirit of carnival rests not in the Shrovetide carnival itself, but in the discourses of humour, ritual and myth that surround it. Hence the carnivalesque can be found in many other social occasions and events, such as mediaeval fairs and markets and in the numerous other holy days, saints' days and so on that were observed in the Middle Ages – many of which were former pagan celebrations, such as the Saturnalia, Lupercalia or Beltane (Turner). Incredible as it may seem today, by the twelfth century the British peasantry were celebrating a total of some eight weeks of what were nominally church holidays. These encompassed, as Laurence Whistler says:

“an immense agglomeration of sacred and secular customs, in origin almost wholly idolatrous, but from an ecclesiastical point of view, in theory if not in practice, largely redeemed” (5).

### **The Suppression of Carnival/Carnavalesque Behaviour**

Following the Reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, an emergent English Puritanism increasingly condemned and criticised these customs. The newly Protestant lords and clergy, fearing the potential of the carnival traditions and observances to upset the social order, began to suppress, even abolish, them. For example, in the early seventeenth century, a number of saints' days were 'expelled' from the church calendar and, to draw on Whistler again, “...in 1644 Parliament prohibited the keeping of Christmas. Three years later it removed 'all festivals or Holy-Dayes (sic), heretofore superstitiously used and observed'”. Theatre and music were also suppressed at this time. Why was this so? Well, there was, as Max Weber puts it in his discussion of Calvinism, a “dread of idolatry, the suspicion of pleasure...contempt for idleness, and the exaltation of hard work and plain living”. For these Puritanical Christians, and for other strict Christian sects emerging at a similar time, such as the Quakers, the indulgences and excesses of the carnivalesque festival were “idle, wasteful, sinful pleasures of the flesh” which denied God (Bauman 97). This led, as Andrew Blake suggests, to the repression of “the material pleasures of the body and the pleasures of role-playing in public” (180), as well the public mockery and criticism of authority that

had previously had a limited sanction. While the carnival and the carnivalesque gained something of a reprieve in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Charles II was restored to the throne after the brief period of Republicanism, it continued to come under attack as the doctrines of Protestantism spread through British society.

Max Weber further suggests that the growth of Protestantism was causally linked to the emergence of capitalist industrialist society during eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain. The causality is rather dubious and much criticised (see, for example, Lessnoff), but what Weber described as the Protestant work ethic, and what he described as the spirit of capitalism, were certainly mutually supportive. For example, they each value frugality, duty to work and abstinence from self-indulgence, and regarded the carnival as wasteful, idolatrous and immoral. In many cases, the industrial entrepreneurs were also strongly Protestant, so there was both an economic and a religious reason for their antagonism to public festivity. For these entrepreneurs, there was a need to 'rationalise' recreation in order to meet the discipline required by the machine-driven logic of the industrial revolution (Russell; Stallybrass and White). Put simply, there were too many religious celebrations going on, and the traditional agrarian festival calendar had to be pruned. For example, the fortnight-long May festivities were reduced to just May

Day itself, and Mayfair in London was built over to prevent the celebrations and traditional fair going ahead there. However, the rural festival holidays, and their associated carnivalesque behaviours, did not disappear completely, but were instead transformed, fragmented and marginalized (Stallybrass and White 178-80). There was a separation of functions, producing events that specialised in particular aspects of festival – such as feasts, processions and musical performance. The more obviously carnivalesque behaviours found new outlets, and in tune with the emergent capitalist and modernist drives of the time, were often commodified: for example, the eighteenth century masquerade, or the nineteenth century music hall and pantomime.

### **Victorian Expansionism**

Thus far, I have examined the fate of the traditional calendar of festivity and carnival in Britain, and also how the carnivalesque activity that Bakhtin associates with that calendar came to be suppressed and fragmented. The traditional safety valve that those festivals offered was severely reduced, and the newly emerged middle classes of the time were becoming increasingly fearful of the large working class communities that were developing in the cities (Boyes; Russell). They felt that these urban working classes were "intemperate, ill-educated and ill-disciplined" (Russell 29), that they had the potential to cause great political unrest. There



was anxiety about their perceived cultural, moral and physical degeneracy, and what that might mean for the future success and greatness of the country. Philanthropists and reformers became concerned with improving the standards of education and health, and of subverting a possible working class revolt, such as had been seen in revolutionary France.

As Dave Russell suggests, one of the greatest achievements of these reformers and philanthropists was to make music both acceptable and respectable as an art form and spectacle for everyone. He argues that “to most middle-class Victorians it was axiomatic that music should be more than a mere artistic experience or a form of amusement” (23) – that it could be a social healer; a utility to cure society’s many evils. From the 1840s through to the early twentieth century, these Victorian and Edwardian middle-class reformers considered music to have an educational value and a moral force. They promoted amateur music-making, particularly choral singing and classical music, among the working classes in “the belief that by bringing together people from different backgrounds music could act as a social cement, a bridgehead between antagonistic social classes” (19). They also invented and formalised a whole host of new traditions and music festivals that would embody and proclaim the new social relations emerging between capital and

labour (Boyes; Mackerness; Russell). In the process they provided a controlled outlet for public expression and energy – a new safety valve. So, what forms did this take? I’ll briefly flag up three, each of which continues in one form or another today: competitive music festivals, classical music festivals, and folk music festivals.

The competitive music festival movement (see Blake; Herbert; Mackerness; Russell) grew out of the numerous amateur choral and musical societies that were set up across Britain from the 1850s onwards. Especially prominent were the brass bands of northern England, which were usually linked to, and even sponsored by, specific workplaces and companies. By the 1870s, a network of competitive festivals had arisen at which the various amateur bands and choirs could come together. Many such groups continue to exist today, despite the loss of the companies and industries to which they were originally tied, and the competitive festival movement itself is also far from dead, with around 300 events currently registered with the British Federation of Festivals (full list available at <http://www.festivals.demon.co.uk/afffest.htm>).

Parallel developments during the nineteenth century stressed the role of spectacle rather more strongly – these were the classical music festivals and People’s Concerts, which were organised by philanthropists,

local municipal authorities and various charities and entrepreneurial businessmen (Russell 32). The very earliest, such as the Three Choirs Festival (1724) and the Norfolk and Norwich Festival (1772), were in aid of charitable causes, such as the establishment of provincial hospitals. But the nineteenth century saw a marked expansion, with new festivals dedicated to particular composers, such as Handel or Bach, or providing a mix of opera, choral and orchestral music. These were originally relatively inexpensive to attend, and regarded by municipal authorities in educational and promotional terms, while entrepreneurs saw them as a good business opportunity (Mackerness; Russell). They were very popular, and often explicitly promoted as tourist events. For example, the 1859 Handel Centenary Festival at London's Crystal Palace was promoted through the distribution of 50,000 prospectuses to European railway offices (Adams 18).

Finally, there was – spearheaded by figures such as Cecil Sharp – an English folk music revival towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which continued to gather pace during the early years of the last century. The writings, organisations, public events and festivals of this essentially middle class revivalist movement, demonstrated strongly its fears of urbanisation, industrialisation and capitalism – all factors deemed responsible for the loss of England's agrarian oral

traditions, folksongs and dances – and its fears for the British Empire as a whole (Boyes). As Mike Brocken notes, “By adopting an older, more authentic form of music...they [the revivalists] expected to experience a musical and spiritual reawakening” for the nation. Through the collection and re-performance of traditional English songs and dances, the revivalists constructed a utopian conception of a pure and authentic rural past – a vision that was largely sanitised, formulated and controlled – and lacking in the carnivalesque. In contemporary Britain, folk music festivals form the largest single market segment by genre, and are important drivers of local culture and tourism (Association of Festival Organisers).

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries then, saw the emergence of new kinds of festival – ones centred upon music in its own right, rather than music simply being an adjunct to some other activity as it had been in the Mediaeval period. Also, certain condoned, sanitised and organised forms of public expression were returned to social and cultural life – aimed in part at mediating and diffusing the relationships and tensions that existed between the working classes and the now fully established middle classes. Like today, many of these music festivals were motivated by commercial, cultural, charitable or local promotional purposes, or were organised as musical spectacles in which the roles of

performer and audience are distinct and separate.

### **Academic and Media Representations in the Contemporary Moment**

In contemporary academic and media representations of music festivals, the carnivalesque is often preferred yet, as I have demonstrated, the origin and history of modern musical festivity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century is far from carnivalesque – in fact, quite the opposite! Indeed, the elision between modern music festivals and the carnivalesque only begins in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the meanings of the mediaeval carnival become associated with the flower-power festivals of the counter-culture (for example, Cox). As Booker and Juraga state in a literary context, “the exuberant, exorbitant, transgressive, emancipatory rhetoric and imagery that most critics have associated with Bakhtin... closely parallel those that informed the oppositional political movements of the 1960s” (1). This can be epitomised by the following quote from Andrew Blake: “Festivals, however genteel and well-behaved, *have* to be seen first and foremost as an aspect of carnival, a time during which normal rules of social hierarchy and acceptable behaviour ... [are] suspended or inverted” (178-9, my emphasis). This essentialist reading is also, to varying degrees, reflected in studies by authors such as Michael Clarke, Kevin Hetherington, George McKay and Andy Worthington. Writing in 1982, Clarke

suggested that pop festivals were inextricably linked to the sixties counterculture, and that they caused moral panics in mainstream media and society mobilised around fears of drug-taking, sexual promiscuity, squalor and disorder – carnivalesque excesses and inversions of societal norms and morality. These fears have been articulated and reiterated by academics and cultural commentators numerous times since then with regard to outdoor festivals and raves of various kinds.

All of these studies tend to describe events which have similar characteristics, exemplified in the following quote from George McKay: “a young or youthful audience, open-air performance, popular music, the development of a lifestyle, camping, local opposition, police distrust, and even the odd rural riot” (McKay, Glastonbury ix). We can add to this: a preference for greenfield sites, for environmental concerns and non-commercial values, for alternative, even utopian, modes and models of living. However, contemporary music festivals can also be regarded as important leisure resources, as commercial opportunities, as venues for promoting new music, and as a route for raising funds for charities, or for bringing communities together. They can have educational purposes, or simply celebrate and promote particular locations, regions or genres. There is no necessity for them to demonstrate the carnivalesque characteristics suggested above.

My argument is that while most contemporary festivals have the *potential* to be carnivalesque in nature, relatively few could comfortably be deemed as such today. It depends largely on the motivations of the organisers, the ways in which it develops over time and on the participants who are drawn to it: in effect, how the event is practised in situ. My analysis of over five hundred festivals held over the past three years shows that less than 10% match McKay's list of characteristics. However, within certain events – particularly outdoor rock and pop festivals – the image and concerns of the carnivalesque live on: in the toleration of excessive behaviours, such as drunkenness and the use of soft drugs; of sanitary conditions that are less than ideal; and in the freedom to critique various issues such as environmental sustainability, third world poverty and the war in Iraq. But the other, arguably more important, elements of the carnivalesque are missing: there *is* a distinction between performer and audience – rather than the flattening of all hierarchy and status; and there is little evidence of the destructive humour of mockery and satire. The implied threat of a world turned inside out – of the inversion of all social norms, laws and restrictions – is rarely present, although a licence to express alternatives can be seen. In contemporary Britain, music festivals are increasingly regulated, commercialised and commodified, with the negative connotations that some events garnered in the 1970s

and 1980s, all but gone. Music festivals are no longer perceived as the threat to society that they may once have appeared, and are instead regarded as an integral part of the leisure landscape of the British summertime. This is perhaps most strongly demonstrated by the expansion of radio and television broadcast coverage by both the BBC and independent media companies, and the ever-increasing role of commercial sponsorship.

### Conclusions

This paper has, however briefly, sought to pull together a broad range of materials in order to show how Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque has come to be used with regard to contemporary music festivals, and how an alternative history of musical festivity can be traced to developments in the nineteenth century. It has suggested that the ideas of carnival and festival have been elided where they should not. Carnival should instead be seen as a specific form of festival, and the carnivalesque as a form of activity that has become separated from the carnival. Carnavalesque behaviour can therefore be found in many other venues, though it may occasionally intersect with the cultural form of the music festival. Excellent studies of such carnivalesque music festivals have been produced in the past, but they cover only a small part of the full range of music festivals in Britain today – evidence of which could easily form the basis of a separate paper. At present

time, I would argue that the spirit of carnival has passed on from music festivals to a variety of other arenas. These range from the relatively large-scale, such as anti-war demonstrations, G8 protests, and the anti-capitalist marches of May Day (also known as Carnivals Against Capitalism of course), to the smaller scale of the drunken nights-out seen in Britain's towns and cities every weekend. We should therefore seek new ways to interpret the roles that music festivals currently play in British society and culture – ways which will continue to explore their unique festival atmospheres as well as illuminate their promotional, commercial and touristic roles – and without fetishizing them as sites of carnivalesque inversion.

## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Keith Halfacree for his helpful comments and advice; and to the conference delegates at IAPSM Rome for their questions and discussion.

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## Squatter Camps and Democracy, Ten Years Later: Rap and Social Change in the New South Africa

Christopher Ballantine

In 2004, as South Africa was preparing itself for official celebrations to mark the end of the first decade of democracy, a number of publications on this theme appeared in bookshops. In one, a hero of the anti-apartheid struggle had written the following lines:

*We have lost our enemies. How can we survive if we don't know who our enemies are? ... We have lost our certainties; the clear over-the-rainbow goals that beckoned us ineluctably are gone. We have lost our imagined future, that glorious space that urged us forward; we are living in it! How confusing! How dismaying! How wonderful!*  
(Sachs viii-ix)

So the struggle was truly over. We had entered our own glorious future. Paradise, he seemed to be saying, had been regained: what better reason for a celebration! Alas, not everyone agreed. In another book, which went to press around the same time, Es'kia Mphahlele, one of the elder statesmen of South African letters, sounded a different and more challenging note. 'We cannot be celebrating forever,' he wrote. Instead, we

must focus on those issues now

*subsumed under our national condition: poverty, disease, crime, laying a foundation for a public morality - corruption in high and lower places, misrule - all across the spectrum of our society.*  
(40)

It was a bold statement to make, especially at *this* time, and especially as he was implicitly addressing a government that had become hostile to criticism. When Archbishop Tutu, another old struggle warrior, made similar points in his Nelson Mandela Foundation Lecture a few months later, he was rewarded with a brutal *ad hominem* public rebuke from President Mbeki.

What Mphahlele, Tutu and others were getting at, was that whatever the achievements of the government during the first decade after apartheid, millions of ordinary men and women across the land remained deeply weighed down by its failures. The figures are stark: since 1994, the poor have become poorer, roughly half the population lives below the basic

poverty line, around one million jobs have been lost, unemployment has reached 40 per cent, crime, rape and domestic violence have all worsened, three million households subsist in squatter camps, 18 million people live without sanitation, 12 per cent of the population are HIV positive, ten per cent of blacks are malnourished, 25 per cent of black children are growth-retarded, and social inequality has widened for the first time since 1975. At the same time, a new elite has been fast-tracked into existence – with the result that the gulf between the black rich and the black poor is now greater than it has ever been (Jacobs 88-89; Alexander 144, 151; Habib 245; Christelle Terreblanche, *Sunday Independent* 7 November 2004).

Manifestly, 'we cannot be celebrating forever'. It's no surprise, then, that while the state was planning the celebrations, on the ground the mood was more sober. Nowhere was this more sharply and consistently evident than in South African rap music, which had dramatically appeared on the scene as the first decade of democracy approached its end. Or rather, rap had dramatically *re*-appeared. Having virtually disappeared for several years, rap was suddenly back – now more vibrantly, and more popularly, than ever before.

Not since the last decade of the apartheid era had South African rappers staked any significant claim to

attention. At that time, in the Western Cape, so-called 'coloured' working-class youth rapped in explicit support of the anti-apartheid struggle. Groups such as Prophets of Da City and Black Noise saw themselves as political activists: they performed at rallies, helped mobilise protesters, involved themselves in voter education. Though they admired American hip-hoppers such as Public Enemy, Afrika Bambaataa and Niggers With Attitude, they forged a distinctly South African idiom, based on local dialects and local musical styles: here rap converged with marabi, mbaqanga, goema, kwela and the Cape jazz style of (say) Abdullah Ibrahim. Police harassed anti-apartheid rappers, sometimes cutting the power during a performance, and searching their homes; local radio gave rap almost no airtime; and as record companies imposed restrictions on content, many groups chose to record and distribute albums at their own expense (Watkins 41-45).

So in South Africa, the inescapable imperatives of the political environment had radicalised rap from the start. As a matter of principle, its performers held the view that their music was not so much to entertain as to conscientise – a view shared of course by Ice Cube, who once sang 'I never / tell you to get down, it's all about comin' up' (Krims 103). One would have thought, then, that South African rap was set to flourish: first it could join in the demolition of apartheid; then it

could assist in rebuilding the country. Besides, rap in South Africa would surely draw inspiration from much older, local cultural sources – which Cheryl Keyes has called ‘African bardic traditions’ (38), but which in the South African context one would name as, for instance, *izibongo*, the Zulu tradition of praise singing. Indeed, the point has been made that ‘it is difficult to distinguish conceptually between the use of a “sample” in a rap song, and the “borrowing” of praises in ... *izibongo*’ (Brown 14).

And yet, rap did *not* flourish after the demolition of apartheid. The new South Africa had other, more celebratory intentions, for which rap – especially given its sharply oppositional history – was poorly suited. Instead, the style of popular music that emerged after 1994, and that spoke for the new mood, was kwaito. Primarily party music and music for dancing, kwaito alluded stylistically to rap, but defined itself explicitly *against* it. It was good-time music: music for celebrating. It unashamedly proclaimed the pleasures of indulgent consumerism – and did so at exactly the moment that the ANC government set about installing and patronising a new, middle-class elite. For kwaito, by and large, protest was out; fun, sex, money and ostentation were in. Apparently the struggle was over; kwaito became freedom’s soundtrack.

But as a hungry, desperate, and increasingly restive working class took to the streets, the partying began to turn sour. Though some kwaito musicians did eventually start singing about the millions who had been left behind, the moment of disaffection was a moment made for rap. A new generation of rappers was quick to take up the challenge. Among the best of these is a group provocatively named Skwatta Kamp; it’s also one of the most popular: the first local rap group to go gold, and the first to sign to a major local label. In a song called ‘Politics’, for example, Skwatta Kamp openly declare a sense of angry disillusionment as they vent their feeling that the ANC government has betrayed the country. ‘Father President’, they say, ‘your people think you gonna bring the promised land/ [but] you make and break almost all your promises.’ Comparing the government to ‘organised crime’ and politicians to ‘escort agencies’, they ask: ‘Have we lost our humanity? ... the people we voted for are stabbing our backs.’ In a perverse mirror image of the old order, the ANC Youth League responded to this song by calling for the album to be banned (*Sunday Times* 25 August 2002).

To take another example, the group Black Noise have a solemn and serious song about the fact that some people ‘chase the gravy train, while in the townships/ ... life remains the same’. ‘What’, they ask, ‘has happened to the caged black fist?’ Invoking the famous anti-

apartheid rallying call, they sing: 'And now remember: "Amandla awethu!" Power to the people! Tell me where the hell that went to!' Another rapper, known as Spex, has signified his sense of betrayal by naming a recent album *Nothing for Mahala*, after one of the stock phrases of the privatising, neo-liberal bureaucracy that has come to dominate the post-apartheid social order. When poor people are denied the free access to basic services envisaged by the constitution – say, when their water is cut off because they have defaulted on payments – what state officials say to them is: 'Nothing for mahala'. *Mahala* is a Zulu word for nothing – so the phrase means 'Nothing is for nothing', 'nothing is for free' (CCS *Research Report*). Hence the album title. In a thoughtful and deeply melancholy song on the album, Spex gives credit to the activists who helped bring down the apartheid state. But then he raps: 'we have to change the society .../ these men and women ... fought a different war from you and me .../ now the time has come for us to set ourselves free/ from these oppressive chains and pains of poverty/ the government is us, the people don't dispute it/ cause we're the ones that pay the president's salary .../ freedom to fight it is the new struggle/ it never ends, just moves to a new hustle.'

This theme – that the struggle continues – is pervasive in South African rap of the last few years. And the theme

is signified not just in the lyrics, but in the music as well, often in extremely innovative ways. On their most recent album, *Washumkhukhu* – a title that translates as 'Shack on fire' – Skwatta Kamp have a song that alludes to the role that the so-called African Christian churches played under apartheid: often these churches functioned as camouflaged or symbolic spaces of political resistance, and their hymnody contributed to a national musical vernacular for virtually the entire body of anti-apartheid political song. The song is a highly original fusion of rap and local gospel, for which Skwatta Kamp have joined forces with the gospel group Barorisi Ba Morena: their powerful song deals with social crises such as unemployment, poverty, disease and the vast numbers of children orphaned by Aids. By evoking some of the generic characteristics of black hymnody, Skwatta Kamp strikingly suggest that the challenges in the new South Africa are continuous with the struggles of the past, are no less important, and are, as they were, 'political'.

Apart from songs that express a generalised sense of betrayal, or that point out that the struggle is not yet over, there are rap songs that address specific aspects of the post-1994 social dispensation. Rampant poverty, for example: 'A combination of desperation and greed / Is making our nation bleed', as one group put it. Another group – one of the best – have named themselves

### **Skwatta Kamp: 'Landela' [We shall follow you].**

[Translated excerpt]

*Chorus*

*We'll be holding on, keeping the faith strong  
ain't no wrong get in our way, oh no  
we put our trust in you, because you've come through for us  
we are moving forward, we will hold on*

Don't lose faith, because all things come to pass  
maybe you live in the shacks, maybe you've taken ill  
life is full of surprises, lost opportunities  
but hold on – faith is free  
in the location we're always crying  
there are no jobs, the number of orphans has increased  
parents are no longer around –  
but everything will be okay at the end of the day  
each one, teach one, come together and pray

This is bold: people everywhere crowned by misery  
whether it's HIV or living in poverty  
or you're just homeless and your stomach is empty  
or at home there's no funds for you to get a degree  
or maybe frustrated by a teenage pregnancy ...  
we pray for you to hold on till infinity  
'cause we need people to build a community

*Chorus*

after poverty: they call themselves Cashless Society. Among other common topics are those that cluster around gender, and that include the Aids pandemic and domestic violence. Skwatta Kamp, for example, have a remarkable song about domestic violence. Ironically entitled 'Sunshine', it tells the story of a young woman who was 'so in love with her man she couldn't let go / She became a slave to the king that she was a queen to.' Appropriately, the song is anchored by a disembodied, dirge-like melody. Given the topic, I think it's extremely significant that the tragic story is narrated by male voices; when we hear the female voice it is precisely the voice of the murdered woman – but we hear it *in chorus*, as the chorus, and hence as the voice not just of one woman, but of many:

In an important sense, rap's critical perspectives are interventions in the discourse of post-apartheid reconstruction. But the rappers do something else too – they contribute, sometimes in remarkably mature ways, to the other great social project of the post-apartheid era: reconciliation. If, as cultural theorist Njabulo Ndebele has suggested, reconciliation has less to do with present realities than with 'who we can become', then rap is playing a valuable role by *imagining* 'who we can become'. For Skwatta Kamp, to take one example, such imaginings are a matter of 'Building Castles', as they have named one of their recent songs. Coming at

**Skwatta Kamp: 'Sunshine.'**

[Excerpt]

She spent her whole life trying to find herself  
 she's got a story to tell, but now she's dead  
 so one's heard it for her: she was a  
 mother's first and last child  
 grew up in poverty, days go by  
 no water, no food, tears painted her eyes  
 'cause she fell in love with a man  
 he lied, he cheated, she cried  
 'cause he beat her  
 he spent 25 of his life in jail  
 she spent 25 of her life in pain  
 now he's back around town  
 but the faggot couldn't keep his hands to himself again  
 pulled out a gun, click, shot  
 the bullet hit the pot  
 not that she felt anything  
 that's what she had been hoping for

*Chorus*

*There's no special without you  
 all I know is that I need you  
 and through the rivers and mountains  
 I will follow, I will follow you*

the end of an album whose songs suggest a great deal of pain, 'Building Castles' reconnects to the optimism of 1994, and reinvokes the 'dream' of the promised future. Grounded in allusions to Western classical music, a gently anthemic style, and a chorus that connotes unity, this richly polyphonic song asserts that together we can build a future, that we need not be condemned to perpetual struggle, and that a society without divisions is achievable – in short, that if we continue everyday to 'hustle/ just to build this castle', then a reconciled future is within reach:

**Skwatta Kamp: 'Building castles.'**

[Excerpt]

*Chorus*

*Everyday we hustle / we build a nation  
 just to build these castles / we build a nation  
 don't wanna live in struggle / we build a nation  
 so we strengthen our muscles  
 believe in what I'm saying / we build a nation  
 the time is now, no playing / we build a nation  
 the future we are changing / we build a nation  
 excuses we're not taking*

We live to achieve, progression is the only option  
 proudly South African self-made leaders are rising

movers and shakers, we created the African dream  
 season the day, so I say, I did it my way  
 ask hate, don't play, homegrown, we make it happen  
 looking forward, progressive to the last second in time  
 this is not just a rhyme, but a wake up call indeed  
 stand on two feet and your family you will feed

Don't wait for no man to help you out  
 help yourself man, this is what life is about  
 made in South Africa, that makes me proud  
 scream out loud for liberation, togetherness  
 progress this far, we walk nice now (shit is in poor!)  
 we're not rap stars but leaders of the struggle  
 life is a puzzle – we put it together  
 for future generations: make poverty extinct  
 with no hesitation

### *Chorus*

In a powerful recent criticism of rap in the United States, Paul Gilroy argues that mere 'revolutionary conservatism' is now rap's 'routine political focus'. Rap has become politically marginal; and its marginality, he says, 'is now as official and routinised as its overblown defiance, even if the music and its matching life-style are still being presented – marketed – as outlaw forms' (180). As I've tried to suggest, rap in South Africa today is wedded to very different goals – which provides

further evidence in support of the argument (the words here are Tony Mitchell's) that 'for a sense of innovation, surprise, and musical substance in hip-hop culture and rap music, it is becoming increasingly necessary to look outside the USA[,] to countries ... where strong local currents of hip-hop indigenisation have taken place' (3). Ten years into post-apartheid democracy, the era when police would cut the power at rap events is long gone. But lest we think this means that the era of struggle has also gone, the incisive, innovative, evocative songs of South African rappers have a very different story to tell.



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## The Sound of a New Ethnic Identity: Mexican American Music of the 1930s

Magdalena L. Barrera

In San Antonio, Texas, on September 9, 1939, legendary borderlands performer Lydia Mendoza recorded a song entitled, “La pollita” (The Little Hen). Playing her 12-string guitar and accompanied by her sister María on the mandolin, she immortalizes the following tale:

*Yo tengo para hacer crías*

*Una pollita en mi casa.*

*Cantando nomás lo pasa*

*Y no pone todavía . . .*

*Un día se me escapó*

*Sin que nadie lo supiera,*

*Y llegó con sus pollitos*

*Siendo una polla soltera.<sup>1</sup>*

The music of “La Pollita” is light-hearted and playful, especially as the mandolin evokes the jerky movements of chickens. Yet given the condition of many Mexican laborers at this time, the topic addressed in “La Pollita” was no laughing matter. In this story, a flighty little hen refuses to be pressed into either physical or reproductive labor, escapes supervision, and returns to her embarrassed family as a single parent. Working hard and maintaining respectability were serious issues in

early-twentieth-century Mexican communities; women in particular had double-duties in the field as well as in the home. They worked all day long, and bore and raised the children who would eventually become fellow laborers. “La Pollita” functions not only as a humorous fable for its audience, but also as a cautionary tale for those women who dare to step out of the boundaries sustaining the family economy.

The kind of families that are represented in songs like “La Pollita” were among the more than 1.5 million immigrants who left Mexico to settle in the US, one of the largest waves of immigration the country has ever witnessed. Because these immigrants were largely poor and illiterate, historians are often frustrated by what appears to be a serious lack of first-hand accounts by which to understand their experiences. As I see it, however, Mexicans of the 1920s and 30s did indeed leave behind a vast and rich archive: the very music they enthusiastically created and consumed.

In this presentation, I draw from musicology, literature and history in order to analyze the lyrics of popular folksongs (mainly corridos, but other types of ballads, as well) about romantic relationships. I argue that these songs—far from being apolitical—show us that the critical intersection of gender and consumption is

where anxieties about ethnic identity get worked out. Social and cultural change is inherently linked to money and commodities in the home, a reality that songwriters of the 1920s and 30s eagerly seize upon. Lyrics that bemoan women who, among other things, argue with their partners about how to spend a paycheck, buy too many clothes, cosmetics and hair products, and kick their lazy, cheating partners out of the house clearly voice the tension fostered by the process of becoming Mexican American.

The politics of economics and gender that lies at the heart of these songs about day-to-day immigrant life remind us that, to quote Stuart Hall, “[i]n a world saturated by money exchange, and everywhere mediated by money, the ‘market’ experience is *the* most immediate, daily and universal experience of the economic system for everyone” (75). The implications of this observation are far-reaching, for as Frederic Jameson has noted, “[c]apitalism systematically dissolves the fabric of all cohesive social groups without exception . . . and thereby problematizes aesthetic production and linguistic invention which have their source in group life” (140). Capitalism and its tensions thus have a pronounced effect on popular music, which voices the trials and tribulations of a newly-emerging ethnic identity.

Though versions of these songs circulated in Mexico and other countries of Latin America, the ones I

study were all recorded in the US—mainly in Los Angeles and San Antonio, but also in Chicago and New York—during the late 1920s through the early 1940s. They could be heard in the form of wandering street performers, traveling variety shows, local dance halls and on the radio. The general subject matter of Mexican American music from this time period runs the spectrum from legendary border heroes to World Wars, from devastating catastrophes to complaints about how many advertisements appear on the radio instead of actual music.

Some scholars complain that these songs fail to draw focus on Mexican community issues because “the words [get] in the way, as . . . lyrics invariably dealt with nonpolitical themes, almost always involving unrequited or betrayed love” (Peña 149-150). Yet I contend that even songs that appear on the surface to be “just” about romantic relationships function in part as a form of “resistance literature,” as it is elucidated by Barbara Harlow. She explains that “the role of poetry in the liberation struggle itself has . . . been a crucial one, both as a force for mobilizing a collective response to occupation and domination and a repository for popular memory and consciousness” (34). While I do not mean to conflate lyrics and poetry, I do want to suggest that lyrics and music result in a pleasurable form of expression that not only inspires people to sing and dance, but also engages all levels of politics.

Every song offers us a potential glimpse into the time period that produced it, because, after all, musical experiences are a process of interplay among performers, audiences and the historical contexts of their creation. For example, “¡Ay! Qué muchachas” (Oh! Those Women), as recorded by the duo Hernández and Sifuentes in the early 1930s, is an excellent example of immigrant concerns addressed through the music of gender and consumption. The entire song complains about the silliness of women. Just when one imagines that Hernández and Sifuentes surely have exhausted their list of complaints, one may flip the record to hear Part II. We learn of wayward girls who go “to distant places,” where they are free to marry the fools who fall in love with them. Alas,

*No vienen durando juntitos un mes  
 Cuando empiezan a pelear . . .  
 Y le dice al marido:  
 Ya no te puedo ni ver,  
 Pues eres un entumido  
 Que no me traes que comer.  
 El pobre marido con grandes fatigas  
 Trabaja sin descansar . . .  
 Pues el día de su decena  
 La raya le va trayendo . . .<sup>2</sup>*

The couple’s arguments bring to the forefront the

importance of the economy and the hardships it incurs upon their union. The wife belittles her mate because he cannot adequately provide what she needs; what is worse, when he does bring home a paycheck, he is longer the owner of it. Yet, in many families—no doubt across cultures and time—one of a wife’s most important duties was to manage the family budget and make every cent count. One Mexican woman remembers that during this era, her mother “took care of the money largely because her father had no time to make decisions. . . . He was either working or looking for work.” (Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez 1995; 40) Yet as it is represented in this song, the husband appears hen-pecked and misunderstood.

Another common lyrical theme of the 1920s and 30s was the difficulty of controlling women in public. Such anxieties are exceedingly clear in a song such as the corrido of “Jesus Cadena,” a tale of a spurned lover. Jesus loves Chavela, a woman hopelessly independent and who clearly rejects the ways in which “good” Mexican women are expected to behave. She dances and flirts with various men, despite the warnings of her closest friends that she act with more discretion:

*Decía Doña Manuelita,  
 ‘Comadre no andes bailando,  
 Por aquí pasó Jesus,*

*Dice que te anda tanteando. '*  
*Y le contestó Chavela*  
*Con una fuerte risada,*  
*'No tengas miedo comadre,*  
*Que al cabo no me hace nada.'*<sup>3</sup>

Infuriated that Chavela would ignore him, Jesus takes out his pistol. Unimpressed, Chavela pulls him over to the bar, where she toasts him with a beer. Feeling even more humiliated, Jesus shoots her. At this point, in some versions of “Jesus Cadena,” Chavela’s father takes her dying body to the churchyard, where she dramatically begs forgiveness and repents her head-strong ways. Yet in a version recorded by Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martínez in 1929, Chavela remains in the bar, where she gasps her last breaths of air and directs her parting words to her comadres:

*Decía la güera Chavela*  
*Quando estaba agonizando,*  
*'Mucho cuidado muchachas*  
*Con andarlos mancornando.'*<sup>4</sup>

Up to this point, the title—with its ironic focus on Jesus, despite Chavela’s overwhelming presence—might compel us to read this song as confirming the status quo: Jesus does successfully punish Chavela for her fearless independence. Yet her last words to her girlfriends are

ambiguous: “Be careful when you two-time them.” Does Chavela use her fate as a warning (“don’t end up like me”)? Or does she advise them just to be more *careful* when they do cheat? Supporting this second option is the fact that in the Rocha and Martínez version, Jesus fires several bullets, two of which miss Chavela entirely. His murderous act only further magnifies his initial failure to subdue Chavela’s will, perhaps a reflecting the fear that eventually even the most extreme methods of control will not work on increasingly Americanized women. Yet even from their beginnings, relationships were understood to be deeply mired in the politics of border crossing and cultural transition. An excellent example of this concern is “Zenaida,” an extremely popular corrido recorded in 1935. In the original version, a young man leaves Mexico and travels by train to look for work in the US. On the journey, meets a young girl, Zenaida. He promises to work hard in the US and to return for her hand. Five months later, he has made enough money to impress her, and returns to Mexico to hand her his savings, but

*'Yo no quiero, ' me dice Zenaida*  
*'el dinero que usted me propone,*  
*Si le dije esto a usted en otro tiempo,*  
*Se lo dije por ver si era hombre.*  
*Ahora miro que usted sí me quiere*  
*Y sí son sus amores formales,*

*Deberá de pasar a mi casa,  
Y pedirle mi mano a mis padres.<sup>5</sup>*

What is important to note here is that the action takes place only in Mexico. On that side of the border, a young man may prove his masculinity through hard work and honoring his promises. At the same time, Zenaida addresses him in the formal “usted” and does not exhibit any inappropriate behavior. She is not actually interested in his money, only that he prove his honor. They know relatively little about each other, but decide to make a life together in the US.

Unfortunately, the couple was not destined to live happily-ever-after, as the first song suggests. Two years later, “Las quejas de Zenaida” (The Complaints of Zenaida), by Antonio Flores and Manuel Valdéz, appeared. The new version is from Zenaida’s point of view, through which we learn that the young man, Zenobio, is not at all the responsible man he promised to be:

*En un tren pasajero salimos . . .  
Veinte días pasaron voladas.  
¡Veinte días que fue buen marido!  
Luego poco a poco resultó borracho,  
Jugador, paseador y perdido.  
‘Yo pensaba que trabajabas*

*Y por eso ganaba los pesos.’  
‘Que trabajen los bueyes,’ me dijo,  
‘porque yo, la verdad, no soy de esos.’<sup>6</sup>*

Innocent Zenaida learns in less than three weeks that she has married a scoundrel, who prefers gambling to making an honest living as a laborer. Though she prays that he will change, her faith brings her little comfort; religion does not seem to hold the same power in the San Antonio as it does in Mexico. Finally, she catches him with another woman, and writes a tearful card to her parents, begging to come back home.

Struggles for the final word in this song continued for over forty years. Through the 1970s, artists recorded numerous versions: “Answer to Zenaida,” “Parody of Zenaida,” “Zenobio Ungrateful,” “The New Zenaida,” “Old Zenaida,” and “The Dress of Zenaida.” These variations on “Zenaida,” and the shifting power relations between the young couple, mark significant changes in what can be expected in romantic relationships over time and location.

The Americanization of Mexican women—often symbolized by the consumption of American-style make-up and clothing—is rich material for songs that strive to elide long hours of low-paying, physically-demanding and often dangerous labor. One song from the 1920s entitled, “Las pelonas” ridicules young flappers in the following way:



*Las muchachas de San Antonio*

*Son flojas pa'l metate.*

*Quieren andar pelonas*

*Con sombreros de petate.*

*Se acabaron las pizzas,*

*Se acabó el algodón*

*Ya andan las pelonas*

*De puro vacilón.<sup>7</sup>*

Though a song like “Las pelonas” ties the new flapper hairstyle to an immature work ethic, for many women it represented a growing self-awareness of their freedom as workers and consumers. Similar is Los Madrugadores’ 1934 hit, “Consejos al maje,” which offers the recent immigrant clear guidelines for what to expect in the US, particularly when it comes to relationships. Half-way through the song, they advise the newcomers not to buy life insurance, because when their wives inherit all the money after they die, they undoubtedly will act shamelessly:]

*Peor si queda tres piedras y está sola,*

*Sin chamacos que tenga que lidiar,*

*Pronto busca y encuentra la canalla*

*Quien te vaya con gusto a revelar.*

*Se pinta el pelo, se hace su permanente . . .*

*Se va a los bailes, a todas las funciones.*

*Aquella vuida que acaba de heredar,*

*Sin importarle quien mire sus acciones*

*Los que hace poco te fuimos a enterrar.<sup>8</sup>*

The fear that widows will spend money irresponsibly on self-indulgences seems unfounded given the fact that women often controlled the budgets in their households. Perhaps the implication is that once released from the duties of marriage, a woman’s true, frivolous nature would emerge. But even sillier, the singer goes on to suggest, are women of the younger generation:

*Hay niñas de cejas rasuradas*

*Que temprano se empiezan a arreglar,*

*Esperando a que caiga la majada*

*Para darle sus caldos a tomar.<sup>9</sup>*

In these examples, the dyes and perms for hair and sculpted, “shaved” eyebrows symbolize the desire to follow mainstream fashions and beauty conventions. These are acts that historian Vicki Ruiz identifies as an assertion of a Mexican American identity and often the focus of much parental consternation (1998). I might add that these acts also can serve to bolster women’s self-esteem. In the Texas cotton industry, to which “Las pelonas” refers, some landlords refused to rent to workers “who did not have at least eight children and a wife who ‘worked like a man.’” The flappers of the song endure back-breaking labor; when the harvesting

is over, they can stop working like men and don the trappings of femininity.

Despite the physical and emotional demands, women enjoyed working in part because they enlarged their circles of friends and were able to spend a few hours of the day beyond the watchful eyes of their parents. But “La jaibera” (The Crab-Seller), recorded in 1936 by Lydia Mendoza, shows us an extreme stereotype of a working, and therefore “loose” woman:

*La jaibera yo soy—  
Quiero que me compre usted  
La jaiba que ahora pesqué,  
Para hacer el quim-bom-bom. . .  
Si te quieres convencer  
En que te voy a enseñar  
Que la jaiba se parece a la mujer.  
Si quieres comer jaibita  
Acabada de pescar,  
Ven conmigo a mi casa  
Que te voy a convidar.<sup>10</sup>*

The play on words in Spanish is heavy and humorous. The reflexive verb “*me compre*” of second line, in particular, can be read in three different ways: “I want you to buy *from* me”; “I want you to buy *for* me”; and/or, given the dramatic pausing between lines as Mendoza sings them, “I want you to buy *me*.” No matter what

version we choose, that verb points us towards her ambiguous intentions. But her willingness to prove to a customer that a crab “seems like a woman” reinforces the caricature of a woman sexually available just because she happens to work for a living. Also up for interpretation is whether we take “quim-bom-bom” literally as a seafood dish or as a playful euphemism for sex. Coupled with the invitation to her house, making “quim-bom-bom” suggests that la jaibera wants to share with her customer more than just the freshest catch of the day.

It is this sort of subtle anxieties around women’s power as consumers and workers that makes studying the structure and lyrics of early Mexican American music such a fascinating endeavor. As musicologist Robert Walser notes, music is “a material, social practice, wherein subject positions are constructed and negotiated, social relations are enacted and transgressed, and ideologies are developed and interrogated. . . . [M]usic can enact relationships and narratives that have not previously been imagined or valued” (33, 34). I add that in addition to such functions, music provides a space in which certain constructions—such as a Mexican woman who crosses the border but who does not get painted as a cultural traitor—can be *rejected* by the community, as well.

Though rigidly-defined cultural roles were becoming increasingly difficult to enforce, songwriters provided

stern comment on ever-changing notions of what it means to be “Mexican” in a sea of changing cultural values. Oftentimes, the humor and rhyme of lyrics draw our attention away from messages that reveal the tension between men and women as they struggle to maintain cultural traditions, on the one hand, and adapt to new social realities, on the other. In linking such cultural production to historical narratives, we gain a better understanding of the ways in which people saw romantic relationships as a primary battleground for ethnic identity. Retrieving and analyzing songs about the Mexican family economy brings us to an important and often-forgotten point: Mexican American communities, in order to survive and flourish, have relied on women’s labor, creativity and perseverance, while simultaneously discrediting and minimizing the work that they do. Recovering the context, meanings and strategies employed in songs that discuss gender and consumption is an important endeavor towards our understanding of how Mexican immigrants wove themselves into the fabric of American cultural life.

## Endnotes

1.

*For raising chicks / I have a hen in my house.  
/ But she spends all her time singing / And has  
yet to lay an egg . . . / One day she escaped  
from me / Without anyone knowing, / And she  
returned with her chicks / Even though she was  
an unmarried hen. [Translation of this song, and  
the ones that follow, are provided by Arhoolie  
Records.]*

2.

*They don’t last together but a month / Before they  
begin to fight . . . / And she tells her husband: /  
I can’t stand to look at you, / You’re a good-for-  
nothing / Who can’t bring me food. / The poor  
huband, with much weariness, / Works without  
rest . . . / And on payday / He brings his pay to  
his wife . . .*

3.

*Doña Manuelita said, / ‘My friend, don’t run  
around dancing, / Jesus is around / And says  
he’s spying on you.’ / Chavela answered / With  
a strong laugh, / ‘Don’t be afraid, my friend, / He  
won’t harm me.*

4.

*Said the fair Chavela / When she was in agony,  
/ 'Be very careful, girls, / When you two-time  
them.*

5.

*'I do not want,' Zenaida says to me, / 'the money  
that you offer me. / If I told you that before, /  
It was to see if you were a man. / Now I see  
that you really love me / And your love is really  
sincere, / You ought to go to my home, / And ask  
my parents for my hand.'*

6.

*We left on the passenger train . . . / Twenty  
days flew by. / That's how long he was a  
good husband! / Then he turned out to be a  
drunkard, / A gambler, a cheat and a no-good  
loafer. / 'I thought you worked / And that's  
how you made money.' / 'Let the fools work,'  
he told me, / 'Because for sure I'm not one of  
those.'*

7.

*The girls of San Antonio / Are lazy at the metate.  
/ They want to walk out bobbed-haired, / With  
straw hats on. / The harvesting is finished, / So  
is the cotton; / The flappers stroll out now / For*

*a good time. Quoted in Vicki Ruiz, From Out of the Shadows 55.*

8.

*Worse if she's good-looking and by herself,  
/ Without any children to take care of, / That  
heartless woman will soon find the jerk / Who  
will gladly take your place. / She'll dye her hair  
and get a perm . . . / She'll be at the dances and  
at all the happenings. / That widow who recently  
has inherited, / She won't care if her actions are  
watched / By those of us who just a while ago  
buried you.*

9.

*There are girls with shaved eyebrows / Who start  
fixing themselves up early in the day, / Waiting  
for the fools to drop in / To tease and flirt with  
them*

10.

*I'm the crab girl— / And I want you to buy / The  
crab I've just caught, / To make quim-bom-bom.  
. . / If you want to be convinced, / I'll show you  
it's true / That the crab seems just like a woman.  
/ If you want to eat a little crab / That's just been  
caught, / Come with me to my house / And I'll  
share some with you.*

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# Focus Shift: An Essay On the Overlooked Musical Influences in Québec Popular *Chanson* of the 1960s

Luc Bellemare

## 0. Introduction

0.1 In the changing Québec of the 1960s, *chanson* entered a golden age as it became more politically and socially engaged than ever before. Indeed, while intelligentsia was especially worried that French language would be assimilated to North America, the genre undoubtedly contributed to reveal a Québec identity - meaning “not Canadian”. This being said, when we look at the literature discussing Québec *chanson* of that period, we notice that the artists and recordings of the era have been clearly divided in two main categories: (1) the *Chansonniers* (Félix Leclerc, Raymond Lévesque, Claude Léveillée, Gilles Vigneault, etc.)<sup>1</sup>, and (2) the *Yé-yé* (Les Classels, Les Mégatones, Les Sultans, but also Michel Louvain, Michèle Richard, etc.)<sup>2</sup>. It seems that history has judged these two distinct Québec *chanson* aesthetics of the 1960s almost exclusively on the basis of a literary-sociological paradigm. Whereas the aesthetic of *Chansonniers* were mainly concerned with “good” patriotic and poetical French lyrics, generally limiting the musical accompaniment to an acoustic guitar or

a piano, *Yé-yé* would rather focus on playing a “bad” dance and entertainment music gathering youth, thus giving very little attention to the lyrics<sup>3</sup>.

0.2 The fact that musicologists’ attention is traditionally focussed on the classical and folklore répertoires is one explanation to the literary-sociological hegemony in francophone *chanson* studies. Because music scholars have been likely uninterested in the study of Québec mainstream *chanson* until the last few years, the musical dimension has been mostly overlooked in all Québec *chanson* répertoire of early 1960s, thus advantaging *Chansonniers* over *Yé-yé*. However, and through IASPM, the growth of Popular Music Studies and scholar study of *chanson* is in progress. Today, most scholars interested in *chanson* have agreed on the interdisciplinary nature of any research that would pretend to some kind of exhaustive results<sup>4</sup>. So to say, a contemporary *chanson* analysis has to consider the written score, the live performance of lyrics and music, the implications brought by the recording process, and the image(s) mediated by the artist (e.g. “look”, videoclip, album sleeves, etc.), all of this in addition to the context and the written lyrics’ perspectives - which

respectively correspond to the “traditional” sociological and literary contributions. Of course, I cannot pretend to dealing in the present article with this whole program for all of Québec *chanson* released in the 1960s. Modestly, (1) I will discuss the ambiguities with the definitions *Chansonniers* – *Yé-yé*, (2) I will point out artists that doesn’t fit the simple dichotomy, (3) I will talk shortly about critiques made against *Yé-yé*, and finally, (4) I will conclude by putting forward hypotheses to the musical influences behind 1960s Québec *chanson*.

### 1. Definitions of *Chansonniers* – *Yé-yé*

1.1 If the separation between *Chansonniers* and *Yé-yé* appears evident in the literature and the media (newspaper clippings, magazines, etc.), the lack of precision with the definitions actually given to these two categories seems flagrant. In this sense, I intend to suggest here that both of these categories are not as monolithic as history has led us to believe.

1.1.1 On the one hand, the *Chansonnier*: the prestigious French language dictionary *Robert* defines it as a “person that composes or improvises satirical *chansons* or monologues”<sup>5</sup>. Strictly speaking, this definition excludes almost all of *Yé-yé*, for this aesthetic rarely includes explicit social or political critiques<sup>6</sup>. However, we have a problem since the very same definition does not fit important parts of the so-called *Chansonniers*

répertoire (e.g. most of the *chansons* by Félix Leclerc, Claude Léveillée, Jean-Pierre Ferland, and a lot of Gilles Vigneault’s, to name a few<sup>7</sup>). And while the limited perspective of such a definition would literally exclude all Québec *chansons* of the 1960s that are not socially or politically engaged, its broad meaning could include as “*Chansonnier*” all the social critiques or engaged “monologues” by non-singing poets, theatre actors and stand-ups of the period (e.g. Yvon Deschamps, Jean-Guy Moreau) □ not even talking of the non-French-speaking ones! One has to remember that the *Chansonnier* movement became only progressively engaged on a political level for the independence of Québec.

1.1.2 Now let’s assume that I leave behind the definition provided by the *Robert* (which is a France reference dictionary) for a French Québec authority – the *Multidictionnaire de la langue française* by Marie-Éva de Villers. The first *Chansonnier* definition proposed is exactly the same, but there is a second one specific to Québec: “Person that performs its own *chansons*”<sup>8</sup>. Unfortunately, if the first definition was too exclusive, this new one is definitely too inclusive, for it could fit the members of quite a few *Yé-yé* bands that compose their own *chansons*<sup>9</sup>.

1.1.3 Oversimplifying the problem by making the



*Chansonnier* a synonym for singer-songwriter (or in French, author-composer-performer [auteur-compositeur-interprète]) adds up new difficulties, for it does not allow us to tell apart the French Québec, the France and the Anglo-Saxon so-called “singer-songwriter”. Moreover, and from an interdisciplinary standpoint, the simplification leaves behind both the mediation of image and the significance of the recording process, the latter being an aspect that musicology currently explores<sup>10</sup>.

1.1.4 The Québec lyric author Stéphane Venne also gives an attempt to define the *Chansonnier*: “The *chansonnier* has to be young. He has not chosen to make *chansons* but he has somehow got a kind of vocation for it. He gives a special-effect-free show in a small and simple room, and with a minimum of musicians. In the best circumstances, he plays alone, accompanying himself only with a guitar or a piano. He is a little clumsy on stage, but the lyrics and the music of the *chansons* he performs are generally its own. Finally, he should talk at the first person”<sup>11</sup>. First, one might notice that all of this is strangely alike the folk singer-songwriters of the US, a style that is easy to tell apart from *chanson* from an aural perspective. In addition, the so-called “*Chansonnier* vocation” sounds like a rhetorical way to elevate those artists as consecrated geniuses, always over *Yé-yé*. And again,

if this definition of the *Chansonnier* gives a better abstract image of the artist, the live-performance-centered character of the definition still underestimates the role of the recording process.

## 1.2 Definitions of *Yé-yé*

1.2.1 If nothing is said about it in the France *Robert* (although the style existed in France as a synonym for variety - a wider meaning than in Québec), there is one definition in the Québec *Multidictionnaire*: *Yé-yé*: “Style of a *chanson* in trend at the beginning of the 1960s”<sup>12</sup>. This general definition surely recovers the *Yé-yé* bands’ aesthetic, but the absence of details could let us include others styles such as folklore, country-western, and crooning - all similar in some way to *Yé-yé* with the lyrics but not with the music. The definition could even touch some *Chansonniers* that were also “in trend” among Québec youth at the beginning of the 1960s, like the Bozos that opened the first “Boîtes à chansons”<sup>13</sup>.

1.2.2 We have then to precise the criteria. Richard Baillargeon, an historian specialized in *Yé-yé*, defines it as an energetic, noisy, and rebel music for youth that is strongly influenced by Rock and Roll, soul, surf, cha-cha, samba, and *chanson française*. He also separates the *Yé-yé* era in three periods: the instrumental period - influenced by west coast surf music (1962-1964);

the commercial period - after the Beatlemania (1964-1965); and the marginal period - close to psychedelic music (1965-1967). Here, Baillargeon is specifically referring to Yé-yé bands that covered in French the Anglo-Saxon music.

### 1.3 First conclusion

After the 1960s, history has not denied the growing importance of the musical dimension in Québec *chanson*. Paradoxically, *Chansonnier* is still a polysemic word: nowadays, it refers author-composer-performer [auteur-compositeur-interprète] as well as to a person that performs the *chansons* of other artists with an acoustic guitar in a bar - no matter if they are francophone or anglophone<sup>14</sup>. This short discussion about definitions is only an indication that there is more research to be done, especially regarding the artists out of the canon in both aesthetics - *Chansonniers* and Yé-yé.

## 2. Off the beaten tracks

2.1 For the purpose of the discussion, let's assume now that the canonical figures of both *Chansonniers* and Yé-yé have been "perfectly" categorized by history<sup>15</sup>. In fact, we still know very little about all the other artists in the era - they are a majority - but also about their social and political impacts in Québec. According to *The*

*Canadian Encyclopedia* (article "Chansonniers"), they were more than 2000 people to audition for a place in the numerous "Boîtes à chansons" of the 1960s. On another hand, Baillargeon said that there were more than 500 Yé-yé bands and that at least 50 of them had a successful career - all of this not including the solo artists playing other musical styles. In a social perspective, we know that *Chansonniers* gathered a few thousands of people - a community mostly composed of intellectuals and university fellows from the "cours classique". On the other side, Yé-yé gathered about a million people out of a 5 M population in *La belle province* at that time - mostly young people aged between 15 and 25.

2.2 Apart from the well known figure in both categories, we find easily other artists that have tended to be classified by history on one side or another mostly according to the content of the lyrics they sang. Nonetheless, and following what I have mentioned in my introduction, some classification problems emerge when enlarging the paradigm from a literary-sociological approach to an interdisciplinary approach - notably including musicology. I have singled out a few obvious examples to illustrate my view.

2.2.1 First, performer singers such as Pauline Julien, Monique Leyrac and Monique Miville-Deschênes have covered iconic *Chansonniers*, and have been closely

associated to the *Chansonnier* movement. However, they seldom composed and performed their own *chansons*, a *sine qua non* condition to be considered *Chansonnier* in the 1960s.

2.2.2 To mention another example, and according to the definition given by the Québec lyrics author Stéphane Venne, a singer and guitarist like Paolo Noël has all the appearing characteristics of a *Chansonnier*: he sings its own songs on stage accompanying himself with an acoustic guitar and expressing the beauty of the nature (the sea in its case). The only missing thing seems to be an engaged poetry for the lyrics content, which makes him more closely associated with the *Yé-yé*.

2.2.3 There are also people situated exactly in between: after having its own rock and roll bands in the 1950s (the Rock and Roll Kids, The Midnighters), Jacques Michel wrote for the *Yé-yé* band Les Lutins (“Monsieur le robot”, “Roquet belles oreilles”) but he became a great *Chansonnier* in the 1970s. In the years 2000s, his *chansons* have been closely associated with *Star Académie*, the Québec equivalent to *American Idol*. Tex Lecor is another example of the in-between, since he opened “Boîtes à chansons” and wrote both serious and light-folklore-orientated *chansons*. He composed “Gogo Trudeau” for the Sinners, an engaged song for a *Yé-yé* band, and “La Bolduc 68” for Marthe Fleurant, an

artist associated to folklore that covered Vigneault and Brassens - *Chansonnier* - as well as Québec country-western idol such as Soldat Lebrun and Paul Brunelle.

2.3 As an open conclusion to this section, here are a few more artists that remain difficult to classify precisely as *Chansonniers* or *Yé-yé* during the 1960s: Jacques Labrecque, Claude Dubois, Les Alexandrins, Les Cailloux, Jacqueline Lemay, Ginette Ravel, Pièrre Sénécal, Guylaine Guy, Marc Gélinas, Lucien Hétu, Jen Roger, Dean Edwards, Roger Miron, André Sylvain, André Lejeune, Ginette Reno, Raoul Roy, Éric, Pierre Perpall, Daniel Guérard, Gilles Brown, Tony Massarelli, Shirley Thérout, Johnny Farago, Denise Brousseau, etc.

### 3. What's the problem?

3.1 In short, what have *Chansonniers* exactly said against *Yé-yé* - meaning all the music that was not *Chansonnier* in their eyes - to be advantaged over them? Is it the fact that their music was all about stupid and repetitive love texts? Or the fact that they were generally limiting themselves to cover songs by Anglo-Saxon artists - without any creativity? Let's look closer to these assumptions.

3.1.1 First of all, *Chansonniers* have not always been the “great emblematic, iconic and respected poets” they

are today in French Québec. As I've pointed out earlier, their popularity was originally limited - a few thousands of people - compared to Yé-yé's - a million. During the 1960's, the *Chansonnier* Félix Leclerc literally remained in the shade of the other *Chansonniers* that he had somehow inspired. The political engagement that characterizes its work came only after October 1970. To take another example, Raymond Lévesque was severely critiqued for its use of "joual", the Québec slang. Because of that, its success in France remained limited after Félix Leclerc's. One also has to remember that in 1960, the beginning *Chansonnier* Gilles Vigneault made a scandal with the abject language of its first *chanson* ("Jos Monferrand")<sup>16</sup>.

3.1.2 In my eyes, there is no discriminative judgment that stands for the treatment of a love subject in repetitive texts and music. From opera airs in Art Music, to *chanson française* and Anglo-Saxon hits, love has inspired thousands of anthology *chansons* and songs. Even some of the greatest hits by Québec *Chansonniers* are repetitive love songs ("Le doux chagrin" by Gilles Vigneault, "Quand les hommes vivront d'amour" by Raymond Lévesque, "Notre sentier" by Félix Leclerc, etc.). Sometimes, repetition even becomes a matter of meaning for *Chansonniers* ("God is an American" by Jean-Pierre Ferland) as well as in Yé-yé ("Québécois" by La révolution française [Les Sinners]).

3.1.3 Covering *chansons* is not either a justification for a discrediting critique. As I said, performers such as Monique Miville-Deschênes, Monique Leyrac and Pauline Julien owe their name to the *Chansonnier* répertoire they covered. Curiously, a few labelled Yé-yé artists (Les Quidams, Les Bel-Canto) have also covered *Chansonniers* without to achieve such a success after several decades. And if *Chansonniers* have not been turned down for covering their pairs' répertoire, Yé-yé artists have never been really recognized for the few original compositions they have realized.

3.1.4 If the form of political engagement sang by *Chansonniers* is unique to Québec, the simple idea to support an ideology with *chanson* is developing in France (Brassens, Ferré), and even maybe more in the US with the Civil Right Movement that folk singer-songwriter have defended - Bob Dylan has been identified as the iconic figure of this movement. The Québec *Chansonniers* Gilles Vigneault acknowledged the influence of Dylan, and he composed "Chanson pour Bob Dylan" on the album *Le temps qu'il fait sur mon pays* (1971).

3.1.5 When we argue that Yé-yé's aesthetic is founded on US music, we forget that it is also the case for *Chansonniers'* aesthetic. Before Révolution tranquille of the 1960s Québec, popular music influences can

be summarized as follow: a) French, Irish and Scottish folklores-chansons-dances (Ovila Légaré, Oscar Thiffault, Madame Bolduc - Joseph Allard, Ti-Jean Carignan); b) chanson française (Henri Cartal, Alfred Fertinel) c) classical music (Éva Gauthier, *La bonne chanson*, the Trio Lyrique with Lionel Daunais); d) jazz, blues, contemporary US Popular Music of Tin Pan Alley - crooning - (Fernand Perron, Robert L'Herbier, Fernand Robidoux); e) country-western (Soldat Lebrun, Willie Lamothe); and f) a little South American music (Alys Robi).

In the 1960s, the rock and roll bands - called *Yé-yé* - followed the influence of rockabilly, which itself came from a mixture of rhythm and blues, Jazz, "electrified" country-western (steel guitar) and South American influences. For the *Chansonniers*, it is plausible to believe that the use of acoustic guitar as accompaniment emerged mostly from the influence of US Blues and country-western music styles<sup>17</sup>. Probably coming from the South American Spanish colonies, acoustic guitar was not important in North America until the 19<sup>th</sup> century - with the rise of peasant blues, country-western and jazz (popular music of the time). From the 1920s to the 1950s, those music massively came to Québec through radio, 78 rpm and concert tours. Of course, *Chansonniers* have also been influenced by classical music and chanson française (although Leclerc influenced Brassens, Brel, and many others

both in France and in Québec), but it remains bizarre - although probably workable - to think of a comparison between Félix Leclerc and Jimmie Rodgers or Woodie Guthrie.

#### 4. Conclusion: What solution?

4.1 In conclusion, I wish to build from the traditional *Chansonniers* – *Yé-yé* separation in 1960s' Québec *chanson* history. An easy way to do so is to establish five musical styles to help out in the process of classifying the musical influences of all the artists mentioned: (1) French folk musicians - the *Chansonniers* singing engaged poetry (Gilles Vigneault, Raymond Lévesque); (2) rock and roll bands - the *Yé-yé* bands (Les Sinners, Les Bel-Canto, Les Lutins); (3) crooning influenced solo artists (Michel Louvain, Michèle Richard); (4) traditional folklore performers (Les Cailloux, Pierre Daigneault); and (5) country-western musicians (Paul Brunelle, Willie Lamothe, Bobby Hachez). We easily observe that if the *Chansonnier* style is clear on the lyrics level, it is far more eclectic on musical and performance levels. Of course, this modest musicological contribution is only constituted of a few hypotheses that could form a solution to the definitions and lack of research problems that I have observed.

4.2 In further research, one would have to know more about the whole répertoire - all the forgotten

artists off the beaten tracks -, the context in which the phenomenon evolved, and fundamentally, to define the kind of engagement more accurately: after all, singing French in North America could stand as a political statement, thus making the *Yé-yé* socially engaged! The Québec *Chansonnier* Gilles Vigneault once said [quotation]: “Things are more what we make them than what they really are”<sup>18</sup>. The sentence brings us back to the dichotomy “created” around *Chansonniers* and *Yé-yé* in 1960s’ Québec *chanson* history - that I mentioned in the introduction of my presentation - but it also appeals to the way my paper questions 1960s’ Québec *chanson* history from the musicologist’s perspective. However, if I only have a partial solution to offer, I do believe that the more perspectives of the same history we will have, the best will be the results of an interdisciplinary work.

## Endnotes

1. The other main *Chansonnier* artists identified in the Québec of that era are Jean-Pierre Ferland, Clémence DesRochers, Claude Gauthier, Georges Dor, Jacques Blanchet, Pierre Létourneau, Pierre Calvé, Jean-Paul Filion and Hervé Brousseau.
2. Other important *Yé-yé* bands identified include Les Baronets, César et les romains, Les Jérolas, Les Sinners, Les Hou-Lops, Les Lutins, Les Excentriques, Les Habits jaunes, Les Miladys, Les Chanceliers, Les Aristocrates and a few more. There are also a good number of solo artists that have been closely associated to *Yé-yé*: Pierre Lalonde (from *Jeunesse d’aujourd’hui*, on TV), Tony Roman, Donald Lautrec, Joël Denis, Patrick Zabé, etc.
3. To mention a few sources that endorse the “superiority” of *Chansonniers* over *Yé-yé* at different levels, see the periodical *Liberté*, July-august 1966; Maillé 1969; L’Herbier 1974; Normand 1981; and Giroux et al., 1984, 1985, 1993, 1996, 1999; Roy, 1977, 1978, 1991. The *Canadian Encyclopedia* online provides articles entitled “Chanson in Quebec”, “Chansonniers”, “Boîtes à chansons” and others dedicated to emblematic *Chansonnier* figures, but barely nothing about *Yé-yé*. However, a few works will insist on studying carefully



Yé-yé: see Baillargeon, Côté, 1991; Line Grenier 1992; Thérien, D'Amours, 1992; Chamberland 2002, De Surmont 2004, and Baillargeon et al. 2005.

4. About contemporary theoretical approaches to *chanson*, see among others Calvet 1974, Hennion 1981, Giroux et al. 1993, Hirschi 1995, Dufays, Maingain 1996, Beaumont-James 1999, and Melançon 1999.

5. *Chansonnier*: "Personne qui compose ou improvise des chansons ou des monologues satiriques". My translation.

6. A few exceptions are Les Sinners (La Révolution française) with "Québécois" and Les Scarabées with "Le Coeur de mon pays". There are also a few Yé-yé bands covering *chansons* of the *Chansonnier* répertoire: Les Quidams, Les Bel-Canto. However, the opposite - *Chansonniers* performing Yé-yé - seems not to be true.

7. The *chanson* "Le grand six pieds" (1961) by Claude Gauthier provides a good example of ambiguities with Québec nationalism across the 1960s: we can see the lyrics go from "nationalité canadienne-française" to "nationalité québécoise-française", and finally to "nationalité québécoise". Later in the decade, we have

to mention "Québec mon pays" (1965) and "Bozo-les-culottes" (1967) by Raymond Lévesque among the first few politically engaged Québec *chansons*. However, nothing seems explicitly engaged on a political level with Félix Leclerc before the events of October 1970. Following this idea, if Gilles Vigneault sings "Mon pays" (1965) and a few other *chansons*, its engagement is much clearer in the 1970s ("Lettre de Ti-Cul Lachance à son premier sous-ministre"). And moreover, nothing seems explicitly engaged on a political level with Claude Léveillée, Clémence DesRochers, or Jacques Blanchet during the 1960s. Finally, Jean-Pierre Ferland gives *Jaune* (1970) only after seeing *l'Osstidcho* by Robert Charlebois, Louise Forestier, Yvon Deschamps and cie.

8. *Chansonnier* (Québec): "Personne qui interprète ses propres chansons. Félix Leclerc était un merveilleux chansonnier". *Multidictionnaire de la langue française*. My translation.

9. Let's just think of Denis Champoux from Les Mégatones: "Voici les mégatones"; Jérôme Lemay from Les Jérolas: "Méo Penché"; François Guy from the Sinners: "Québécois"; Simon Brouillard from Les Lutins: "Laissez-nous vivre"; the duo Bolduc-Letarte from Les Bel-Canto: "Découragé", to mention a few examples.



10. About this issue in musicology, see Lacasse (2005a and 2005b).

11. “Le chansonnier doit être jeune, n’avoir pas choisi de faire de la chanson mais y avoir plutôt une espèce de vocation, il doit donner son spectacle ‘sans artifice’, dans un cadre le plus dépouillé possible, avec le minimum de musiciens, idéalement sans autre accompagnateur que lui-même à la guitare ou au piano, il est un peu lourdaud sur scène et, principalement, il doit avoir composé les paroles et la musique des chansons qu’il interprète, et y parler préférentiellement à la première personne.”, Stéphane Venne, in *Parti Pris* (January 1965). My translation.

12. Yé-yé: “Se dit d’un style de chanson à la mode au début des années soixante. Le yé-yé est-il démodé?”. *Multidictionnaire de la langue française*. My translation.

13. Jean-Pierre Ferland, Claude Léveillé, Raymond Lévesque, Jacques Blanchet, Clémence DesRochers, and Hervé Brousseau. They named themselves “Bozos” after a *chanson* that was composed by Félix Leclerc in 1946.

14. In Québec city, let’s just think of the *chansonniers* bars like “Les yeux bleus” and “Les voûtes de Napoléon”.

At “Chez son père”, an acoustic guitar lies on the wall beside a large picture of the “great *chansonniers*” [“Les plus grands”] (from left to right, Robert Charlebois, Félix Leclerc, Gilles Vigneault et Raymond Lévesque).

15. See notes 1 and 2.

16. The folklorist Jacques Labrecque that performed this *chanson* for the first time was censored of radio and TV because it used the word “ass” (in French, “cul”). This information is reported in Sermonette 1991: 18; Smith 1974: 20, and Vigneault 2000: 26-27.

17. Before Félix Leclerc in 1950, acoustic guitar was only dominant in Québec for Country-western music. Until then, the iconic musical instruments of Québec were fiddle and accordion.

18. “Les choses sont beaucoup plus ce qu’on les construit que ce que la réalité les fait”. Vigneault 1974: 112.

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# Rapanui Music through Chilean Eyes: Mapping the Rise of a Peripheral Music Culture in the Heart of the Mainstream

Dan Bendrups

## Introduction

In January 2003, at the end of a period of field research, I departed Rapanui (Easter Island) for the Chilean capital city of Santiago. The six-hour flight from Rapanui to Santiago crosses 3,000kms of uninterrupted ocean. It takes off in a town of four thousand inhabitants and lands in a city of over six million, crossing a cultural divide from Polynesian island serenity to Latin American cityscape. Despite these actual and metaphoric distances, both take-off and landing occur within the confines of the Chilean nation state.

My research had centred on the growing popularity (in Chile, as well as on the island) of two contemporary Rapanui ensembles who fuse aspects of traditional Rapanui music with rock, reggae, and other popular music styles. Mito Manumatoma, a solo artist and leader of one of these ensembles, had won a Chilean folk music festival the year before, and was beginning to receive dedicated media exposure. I was expecting to meet him in Santiago, but before this meeting, his

music caught up with me in an unanticipated way. On my arrival in Santiago, friends decided to take me to a highly commercialised upmarket nightclub district, called 'Suecia' (Sweden) after the name of the main street running through it. Passing through this urban middle-class environment, I was struck by a dance remix of one of Mito's songs (titled *Rapa Nui*) emanating from the bowels of a local nightclub.

The presence of an indigenous Rapanui performer's song in this commercial, urban context was curious to me, given my recent arrival from Rapanui itself. How did this up-market nightclub obtain a remix of Mito's song? How long had they been playing it? Did anyone query its presence? Most surprisingly, why were so many patrons apparently singing along to lyrics written in a language that was presumably beyond their collective comprehension?

The answer to these questions lies in a long history of cultural exchanges between Rapanui and Chile, which this paper seeks to explore. The following discussion provides a history of Chilean engagement with Rapanui,

beginning with an overview of Chile's role in the Pacific in the nineteenth century. The paper continues with an examination of the key points at which aspects of Rapanui music have entered Chilean culture, focussing on the Chilean adoption of a Rapanui song and dance style called *sau sau*. In conclusion, the music of Mito Manutomatoma is presented as part of a sequence of cultural exchange in which Rapanui-ness has been accepted and accommodated in mainstream Chilean music culture.

### **Chile in the Pacific**

Throughout the nineteenth century, conflict between newly formed South American states on the Pacific coast led to Chile's rise as a naval power in the region. Through naval prowess, the young Republic of Chile (established in 1818) defeated Bolivia and Peru in successive wars, finally consolidating territorial power in the 'War of the Pacific' (1879-1884). This victory was seen as a coming of age for the Chilean nation state. From the 1830s to the 1870s, Chile conducted numerous strategic naval excursions into the Pacific, with training missions voyaging as far as Rapanui from 1834 onwards. While little is known of the interactions between Chilean sailors and the Rapanui people in the early half of the nineteenth century, the social changes caused by such visits are clear. Anthropologist Grant McCall suggests that the Rapanui people became

masters of trade in this period (63), taking full advantage of opportunities to obtain manufactured items in return for fresh produce and island artefacts. Where music is concerned, Chilean folklorist Margot Loyola believes that Chilean sailors probably introduced the first guitars to Rapanui in the mid 1800s, though no physical evidence of their presence remains from this period. In a final empire-building effort, Chile annexed Rapanui in 1888, thereby consolidating political control over a wide stretch of the Pacific Ocean.

Since the earliest days of colonisation, Rapanui's conceptualisation as Chilean territory has gone largely unquestioned in Chilean cultural politics. However, the Rapanui experience of colonialism was fraught with hardship and disappointment. The sovereign protection that Chile had promised to the Rapanui chiefs at the time of the annexation did not eventuate. For Chile, the colonial process proceeded with seemingly little concern for the Rapanui population. The island was initially seen as a potentially important strategic outpost, but proved not to be, and Chilean enthusiasm for the colonial project waned (Porteous 47-51). This is poignantly illustrated in the 1896 lease contract between pastoralist Enrique Merlet and the Chilean Government, where detailed lists of livestock were provided, but where there was no single mention of the island's human population (*Boletín de las Leyes*

531). Merlet became the de facto governor of these unacknowledged citizens, compelling them to work on the sheering ranch that he established.

In 1964, after decades of unacknowledged existence, the Rapanui people gained basic democratic rights, and are now wholly regarded as Chilean citizens. While the Polynesian Rapanui people had no socio-historical role in the *mestizaje* (cultural mix) that underwrote the forging of Chilean national identity, they are now regarded as one of the main 'indigenous' cultures of the nation, alongside the Aymara and Mapuche populations. As the only Pacific island to have been colonised by a South American nation, Rapanui demonstrates a unique hybridity of Polynesian and Latino cultural influences, though the hegemonic flow of mass culture from Chile to Rapanui has come to dominate many aspects of contemporary life on the island.

#### **Chilean interest in Rapanui music in the early twentieth century**

With the increase of Pacific Ocean sea traffic during World War I, Chilean interest in Rapanui was rekindled. The island had presently become the focus of international research campaigns, such as Katherine Routledge's 1914 expedition, and its unique megalithic heritage (the gigantic *moai* statues scattered across the island) attracted the interest of new waves of

archaeologists and ethnographers. The first Chilean publication to seriously examine Rapanui music culture was produced in 1920 by a Capuchin priest, Reverend Father Bienvenido de Estella, who visited Rapanui in 1919. This publication recounts Estella's experiences on Rapanui, making particular mention of the priest's surprise at encountering sophisticated and diverse song traditions there. He was so impressed with the ancient Rapanui songs that he heard as to equate them with Gregorian chant (Estella 75), and he documented a number of musical practices which, in hindsight, have been revealed as central aspects of Rapanui music tradition. Estella attested to the ability of local musicians to respond to social events with improvised melodies and lyrics (a Rapanui tradition known as *haka katikati*) and marvelled at the efficacy with which they were able to learn new songs and instruments. Estella produced five manuscript transcriptions of Rapanui songs, and while the harmonic accompaniments he provides are clearly influenced by his own sense of cadential diatonicism, the melody lines he preserved are demonstrative of the general characteristics of traditional Rapanui song determined in much later research (Campbell; Bendrups).

In the 1930s, individual Chilean authority figures on Rapanui were pivotal in the reification of Rapanui music practices despite a gradual increase in Chilean cultural



Figure 1: Estella's transcription of a Rapanui song, titled "A-ua-ue", from Estella (1920).

**"A - ua - ue"**

The musical score is written on two systems. The first system has a vocal line (Voz.) and a piano line (Piano). The vocal line starts with a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue. The piano line has a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue. The second system continues the vocal line with a half note hei, a quarter note te, a half note ma, and a quarter note nu. The piano line has a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue. The third system continues the vocal line with a half note e, a quarter note hei, a half note te, a quarter note ma, a half note nu, and a quarter note nu. The piano line has a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue. The fourth system continues the vocal line with a half note le, a quarter note ma, a half note nu, and a quarter note mu. The piano line has a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue. The fifth system continues the vocal line with a half note i, a quarter note le, a half note Ka, and a quarter note hi. The piano line has a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue. The sixth system continues the vocal line with a half note e, a quarter note hei, a half note te, a quarter note ma, a half note nu, and a quarter note nu. The piano line has a whole rest, followed by a half note A, a quarter note ua, and a half note ue.

influence. Reverend Father Sebastian Englert, who assumed pastoral responsibility for Rapanui in 1937, encouraged a symbiotic blend of Christian spirituality and traditional Rapanui performance practices. He is regarded by some Rapanui musicians as a champion of precontact performance practices, though others criticise him for his prohibition on the performance of *ei* (traditional songs of insult and ridicule), which he saw as unwholesome. In 1938, naval governor Alvaro Tejeda Lawrence celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of annexation by commissioning a momentous concert and song contest of traditional Rapanui music. This event provided an unprecedented opportunity for elder Rapanui to pass on a variety of songs to

younger participants in a context supported by colonial authorities, and can be regarded as the genesis for the cultural festival Tapati Rapa Nui ('Rapa Nui Week'), which now occurs annually on the island.

In 1945, traditional Rapanui music culture was finally brought to the attention of Chilean music researchers through Eugénio Pereira-Salas' inaugural contribution to the *Revista Musical Chilena* – a monograph entitled *Música de la Isla de Pascua*. This work is largely derivative of musical data from Alfred Métraux's seminal *Ethnology of Easter Island*, published five years previously, but also included references to Estella's transcriptions and observations. Pereira-Salas did not

conduct fieldwork on Rapanui himself, but recognised international efforts, and through his translation, made them accessible to a Chilean readership. His introduction conveys the message that Rapanui music should be embraced by Chilean musicology:

*As this island is an interesting cultural appendix to our nation's history, we believe it to be fitting to offer, in this journal, a modest panorama, a synthesis, based in the resources at our disposal, of the significance of music in the spiritual life of the islander kanakas. (Author's translation, Pereira-Salas 1)*

A second investigation of Rapanui music, based on a short field trip by Chilean musicologist Jorge Urrutia-Blondel, appeared in the *Revista Musical Chilena* in 1958. While Pereira-Salas provided a limited categorical analysis of traditional Rapanui music and song genres, Urrutia-Blondel presented an interpretative assessment of Rapanui music culture, based on his observations as 'a musician'. He concluded that the widespread acculturation of European and Chilean musical influences was not a manifestation of cultural loss but the continuation of an ancient Rapanui tradition of musical 'borrowing' (Urrutia-Blondel 30). Urrutia-Blondel listed numerous sources that the Rapanui musicians had successfully borrowed from, including Chilean folk

songs, church hymns, and European folk songs left behind by marooned sailors during World War I. He noted in particular the presence of *volkslieder* (33), and observed that even 'the most familiar' of Chilean folk songs could be made to sound almost unrecognisable by virtue of the sound of the Rapanui language (Urrutia-Blondel 29).

The guitar was well established in Rapanui music by the time of Urrutia-Blondel's visit. He ascribes an accompanying role to the instrument, stating that it was not used for melodic solos, and that the use of tonic, dominant and subdominant chords was paramount. Furthermore, Urrutia-Blondel lists three names that Rapanui musicians used in regard to guitar tuning systems: Hawaiian tuning, Samoan (or *hia hia*) tuning, and *pascuense* ('Pascuan', derived from the Spanish name for Easter Island) tuning (35). The specificity of tuning terminology associated with other Polynesian Island groups indicates that, by the late 1950s, Rapanui musicians were already engaged in a pan-Polynesian process of musical cross-pollination.

### **The Rapanui presence in Chile**

Shortly after colonisation, evidence of leprosy on Rapanui was manipulated by naval governors as an excuse for preventing off-island travel by the Rapanui themselves. This perpetual quarantine both ensured the

continuity of a labour force for Merlet's sheering ranch and initially inhibited word of the virtual enslavement of the Rapanui population from reaching the Chilean press. From 1914 to 1940 however, as international and national interest in Rapanui ethnography increased, the travel embargo became difficult to enforce. Numerous young Rapanui men perished in escape attempts in the 1940s, though one or two makeshift boats succeeded in reaching French Polynesia. In 1944, a quartet of stowaways caused a sensation when they appeared in Valparaiso, declaring in a radio interview that, as proud subjects, they merely wanted to see Chile with their own eyes. The travel embargo was lifted in the 1950s, and in the wake of the Thor Heyerdahl's high profile archaeological expedition to Rapanui (1955-56), Rapanui islanders became much more frequent visitors to Chile. In the 1950s, a groups of young islanders were offered scholarships to study (at secondary and tertiary level) in Chile, and government funding was provided for infirm elders to travel for medical treatment.

In the urban Chilean environs of Santiago, Valparaiso and Viña del Mar, the presence of Rapanui musicians provided new opportunities for musical exchange, and in the case of the Pakarati brothers, an invitation to produce a commercial recording of Rapanui music. Throughout the 1950s, prominent Chilean folklorist Margot Loyola sought opportunities to engage with visiting Rapanui

musicians, on occasion providing accommodation for recuperating hospital patients. One such occasion brought her into contact with Ricardo Hito, a respected Rapanui music authority who imparted his musical knowledge and song repertoire to her. In 1961, Loyola travelled to Rapanui on a naval supply ship, obtaining numerous field recordings. Many of these reflected the growing local popularity of Polynesian music recorded in Tahiti and Hawaii, which became more accessible to the Rapanui after World War II. Similar songs had also been learned from Polynesian crews passing through Rapanui on private or commercial vessels.

These early examples of what Barbara Smith has termed 'pan-Pacific pop' (158) became the mainstay of Loyola's Rapanui repertoire. As a folklorist, she saw her primary role as collecting the actual popular music of the island, rather than seeking to uncover the oldest or most arcane song forms. These pan-Polynesian pop songs were also predominantly guitar-focussed – a factor that facilitated their entry into Loyola's repertoire, as Chilean folklore is similarly guitar-focussed. Her performances of Rapanui songs in Chile (and elsewhere in South America) privileged these styles, which proved popular with Chilean audiences. A 1960 performance in the Teatro Municipal de Santiago - a venue associated predominantly Western art music - featured Loyola accompanied by a quartet of Rapanui

guitarists and singers.

Loyola produced only one article concerning Rapanui, but her recordings and performances have had a major influence in the dissemination of Rapanui music in Chile. Most significant, however, was her role in developing school *folklore* curricula in the 1960s. As an advisor to the ministry of education, Loyola was responsible for providing the song repertoire for *folklore* classes. From her collection of Rapanui music, a song called *sau sau* proved to be the most popular with the Chilean students. This song is now so well known in Chile that its presence in Chilean *folklore* goes unquestioned.

#### **Understanding *sau sau*:**

To contemporary Chilean audiences, the *sau sau* is an evocative reminder of their minute Pacific island territory. The relaxed guitar strumming, exotic lyrics, coconut-shell bikinis, grass skirts, and energetic *hula* dance moves associated with *sau sau* are all suggestive of a tropical utopia that is unlike any part of continental Chile, and well beyond the financial means of the vast majority of Chileans. As a Chilean website dedicated to 'national' culture put it:

*Sau sau is the most characteristic dance of Pascuan folklore. It shows the grace, sensuality, and strength of the scantily clad women who*

*adorn themselves with coloured feathers)...Its explanation can be found, perhaps, in their forefathers, those who did not consider sex as a taboo, but as something natural...The Pascuan music and dance denotes sentimentality, nature, and the basic nature of relations between man and woman. (Author's translation, "Sau sau")*

Through *sau sau* performances, all Chileans can participate in an imagined world of palm trees and calm seas, of tropical heat and sensual people. The dance evokes a sense of otherness that some Chilean performers convert into stylised (and highly offensive) tribal dancing, complete with pouting lips, bulging eyes, and jungle noises. In certain variety shows on Chilean television, recordings of *sau sau* are sometimes used as source music for moments when the hosts engage in expressions of wilful abandon. The cultural inappropriateness of such behaviour is never questioned, as if Chilean sovereignty over Rapanui permits the possession and reconstruction of *sau sau* performance. Only Jorge Urrutia-Blondel, writing in 1958, has criticised the rendition of *sau sau* in Chile, expressing his disgust at the bizarre exaggerations that performers executed when trying to emulate the dance (21).

Despite the dubious nature of *sau sau* representation



in Chilean culture, Rapanui musicians living in Chile do not contest these images for two main reasons. Firstly, as many of them earn a living as Rapanui dance and music instructors, their livelihood is dependent on the image of exotic entertainment embodied in the song and dance. The tropical stereotypes are deeply entrenched, having been established in the 1960s, and they are easy for any islander to exploit. In 1988, Chilean musicologist Ramon Campbell commented that the ability to dance *sau sau* was effectively a 'passport' with which islanders could enter continental Chile (14). Secondly, the complacency towards cultural misrepresentation in *sau sau* reflects the little-known fact that the song is not of Rapanui origin, and its lyrics are only half intelligible to the Rapanui performers themselves.

To understand the process by which a non-indigenous song can come to be representative of Rapanui culture in Chile requires an examination of the song's initial entry into Chilean culture. The popularity of *sau sau* is primarily due to its inclusion in the national primary school *folklore* syllabus, a result of government policies in the 1960s that sought to promote Chilean nationalism through *folklore*. While Margot Loyola has always acknowledged that the *sau sau* was regarded as an introduced form on Rapanui, the song was nevertheless so popular with Chilean audiences that

it became representative of Rapanui music by default. As Loyola herself comments:

*I never set out to promote the sau sau. It was simply the most well-liked of my Rapanui recordings, just like it was on the island. It was as if it had a life of its own, and when the public [in Chile] adopted it, there was no sense in taking it away. We used it as the basis for many teaching programs about Rapanui culture because it got through to people. (Author's translation).*

The actual origin of the *sau sau* is somewhat vague. Rapanui elders attribute its arrival on Rapanui to two Polynesian crewmen on board a German yacht that visited Rapanui in 1939. The oral testimony of Rapanui elders, recorded in various publications, states that the two men (called Henere and Mape) played *sau sau* on guitar, and implied that they had learned the song, with accompanying dance, in Samoa (Campbell, *La Herencia Musical de Rapanui* 465; Linkels and Linkels 95). The Rapanui rapidly adopted it as their own by adding a second verse in Rapanui language. Evidence of a song, a dance, or a performance genre called *sau sau* existing elsewhere in Polynesia is slim, with only the singular *sau* appearing in extant literature (Donner 847). In Samoan traditional music, the similar term *sao* is defined as an obsolete kind of dance (Moyle 51),

and the less similar *sa'o* as a term meaning 'formally correct', associated with the dance position of the chief in certain performance contexts (Moyle 37). However, Richard Moyle does not view these as linguistically related, and the Samoan origins for Rapanui *sau sau* remain unconfirmed.

Through the medium of *sau sau* dancing, Rapanui performance culture has become enmeshed in Chilean national identity. Like the Hawai'ian example of Aloha o'i, or the New Zealand Maori waiata Pokare ana, *sau sau* presents an exotic otherness familiar enough to be rationalised within the national performance context, despite an over whelming ignorance of it's history or meaning. As Chilean folklorist Alejandro Vargas notes:

*What we know about Rapanui music is based on this: every kid in Chile, at one time or another comes across a particular Rapanui song in an end of year primary school show. The kids are encouraged to dress up and dance in a style which is supposedly drawn from Rapanui culture. No historical or musicological references are made to this performance item, nothing to say 'this is why we do this.'*

*With other folk music styles, such as cueca, the*

*style and context of performance are explained. Much of the northern music is religious, therefore the rituals surrounding its performance are known, but with Rapanui music, we don't even know what the words mean (let alone the performance context) and nothing is explained, so all that we can do is to copy what we have all been taught in our youth.*

*The Easter Island songs are included in the school performances because they are different and interesting. Also, the way they are taught makes them easy to dance (for young children) - all you've got to do is swing your hips. There's no directive in regards to choreography either. You move to the left, you move to the right, and that's about it...Even today, friends in Chile send me pictures of their kids dressed up as if to perform Rapanui songs. Every kid does it at one time or another.*

### **Negotiation the Rapanui pop aesthetic**

The South Seas imagery contained in *sau sau* and other Rapanui performances has had long-term consequences for the reception of Rapanui music in Chile. Musicologist Ramon Campbell embarked on his landmark study of Rapanui music in an attempt to re-emphasise the island's ancient music traditions,

thereby countering an increasingly commercialised view of Rapanui music and dance. His published PhD thesis, *La Herencia Musical de Rapanui*, is an important resource for traditional song transcriptions. The Chilean violinist, pianist, composer and mystic Joakin Bello also developed an interest in ancient Rapanui music, viewing the island and its traditions as one of the world's 'magic centres', and composing a movement of the score for his 1995 CD *Magnetic Centres* around field recordings taken from the island.

Conversely, the saleability of the Rapanui image has been a consistently beneficial factor for Rapanui performance ensembles and individuals seeking fame and fortune in Chile. In the 1970s, the Tararaina ensemble became the centrepiece for national airline LAN Chile's marketing of commercial passenger flights to Rapanui. Throughout the 1980s, Rapanui musicians migrated to Santiago in ever increasing numbers to pursue tertiary studies, supporting themselves economically by working as dance instructors for schools, colleges and dance clubs.

The North American film industry created a feature film from fragments of Rapanui legend in 1993, and Chilean national television (TVN) used Rapanui as the backdrop of a one-season drama, titled *Iorana*, in 1998. A cohort of young Rapanui musicians became

involved in the production of *Iorana*, providing the title music for the series. Both Mito Manumatoma and the newly emerging contemporary ensemble Matato'a took advantage of this opportunity to kick-start their own performance careers in Chile. Mito and Matato'a have since made numerous appearances on Chilean television, participating in variety shows and providing dance workshops in various contexts. Mito was further engaged as a performance coach for the reality television series *Tocando las Estrellas* in early 2003. The scope of this media exposure led some reporters in the Chilean press to declare a Rapanui 'conquest' of the Chilean popular music scene (see Araya; Astuya).

## Conclusion

Returning to that evening in Suecia, the public acceptance of Mito's music can be understood as a consequence of half a century of internal exoticism of Rapanui music, perpetrated by both audiences and performers. There is, however, a hidden layer of commercial initiative behind this. Mito achieved national fame in 2002 by winning the prestigious *Festival del Huaso* at Olmué with his song *Voy navegando, navegando*. This song comprises both Rapanui and Spanish lyrics, and like the stowaways of 1944, expresses a desire to 'get to know' Chile better. Mito subsequently worked on the soundtrack for an animated film with Chilean music legend Joe Vasconcellos, and later formed a band of his



own, *Mito y Fusión Rapanui*, who toured nationally and internationally in 2003. The group signed to Warner, producing a self-titled CD (Manutomatoma, 2003) of Mito's best-known songs, and this is also where the *Rapa Nui* remix appeared.

I met with Mito later that week and told him that I had heard his CD in a Suecia nightclub. He smiled when I asked him if he knew how it happened to be there, and pointed out that it took very little effort to walk through the district with a bag of free CDs for the club DJs. Having proven himself victorious at Olmué, Mito was not surprised that an audience of Chileans might be singing along to his chorus. After all, the *huaso*, or 'cowboy' festival is a forum most central to Chilean folklore identity. That it could be won by a Pacific islander, with a song half-composed in a foreign, unfamiliar language, demonstrates the extent to which Rapanui-ness is accepted within the mainstream conceptualisation of national culture in Chile.

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## A Style of Opera Production Inspired by Interactive Content Data Mining

Alain Bonardi and Francis Rousseaux

### Different approaches for staging a play

With a new play to put on stage, every producer wishes to propose his own interpretation. Even if a lot of indications from the author are present in the preface or in the stage directions, interpretation is not inherently part of the text. A text cannot exist on stage without the interpretation of a producer.

### Dramatic ontologies and instantiation's variations

Actually this interpretation is an effort to create 'patterns'.

The producer begins his work by establishing a short ontology of the dramaturgy. He describes the characters using archetypes (some comedy uses this process to the extreme with the trio wife, husband and casual lover) and he instantiates them by giving them a name, specifying the way they have to start up and how they have to be dressed...The scenario of the play presents variations of instantiations: the spectator realizes that a character is in fact different from the archetype he was supposed to fit. Those variations can sometimes cause a modification of the initial ontology. For example in the

play "El burlador de Sevilla" from the Spanish dramatist Tirso de Molina (1630), it is the metaphysical and dramatic dilemma that unveils the Don Juan myth. The question tackled in this play is to know if the character can save his soul if he acknowledges his faults just before his death. Can the ontology of the character drastically be changed at the end of the play?

### Ontology based similarity: A formal approach

In this traditional analysis of theater, the concept of similarity among different ontologies is a central one. The director "tunes" every scene as an example among the many cases present in the drama literature. Explaining a character to the actor who is going to play amounts to giving this character an ontology and to link it to others, coming from other plays directed by other directors. The aim is to make the actor understand by giving him "similar" examples.

If we generalize this process, it is actually a formal approach representing an example as an instance, that is part of a general structure containing every other case. We look for similarity by carefully "tuning up" the instantiation. This method has the advantage of giving us an explanation: then, one can create a key-concept

in intensio. Ontologies allow us to look for elements similar to an example within the same concept (the search can immediately be done at a more general level, if no “hit” is obtained at the first level).

### Approaching similarity through data mining

In computer science, the question of similarity is dealt with differently, through interactive data mining. In this case examples are represented as specializations of all the cases. With this technique we look for other similar cases but without having an ontology from the start. Users accept to build it from their hands with the interactive help of the computer, in an ad-hoc way. Things are done in extension: building a similarity amounts to listing materials of similar aspects rectifying it repeatedly, using user-computer interaction. Modifications are made both through the user interface provoked by the machine propositions and by the machine itself trying to interpret the user's actions.

Music-ripping activity illustrates this method (Rousseaux & Bonardi). It is the creative handling of numeric-audio-data by copy/paste/suppress actions through the user interfaces of the computer. When somebody's activity is a signed listening (Donin), a listening/composition/production, his/her object becomes the smallest element of listening/composition/production, a sample, which is always modified, re-organised, re-mixed and re-named (Pachet) by the user.

### A dramatic example: the *Traversée de la nuit*

How can the computing approach of *interactive data mining* be used for theater production? It supposes the introduction of the computer in a man-machine dialogue mode. Can a production avoid following a pre-established ontology and escape from a priori specifications of the characters using multi-modal interactions? There are the questions we wanted to ask with the production of the inter-media play *La traversée de la nuit* written by Geneviève De Guaille-Antonioz (de Gaulle), evoking her imprisonment in Ravensbrück jail camp at the end of the Second World War.



### Multi-modal interactions in *La traversée de la nuit*

The production of *La traversée de la nuit* relies on a ‘self-made’ man-machine system: an actress, Valérie Le Louédec, says the whole text, and a dancer, Magali

adapt her moves to the screen movements and to the quality of the picture. The two actresses represent the same character (its conscious and unconscious mind), following the *shite* and *waki* tradition of the Nô theatre. Attracted by the dancer in her moves, the actress adapts her interpretation, which is also influenced by the screen. To loop the interactions, the computer reacts to the emotional states of the actress' voice.

### **Description of the men-computer system**

The software implementation of the system is based on a neural network. It analyses the voice in input and generate pictures in output of the multi-agent system. The real-time multimedia system used is made of a neural network set to recognise emotional states from the voice of the actress. For the output, the multi-agent system generates pictures then projected on the screen. The whole software has been coded with the real time graphic development Max/MSP/Jitter platform.

The neural network has been trained in a supervised mode during several months. The actress was using a restrictive list of emotional states for the whole text. The voice input is analysed sentence after sentence, each of them generating a twelve co-ordinates vector: four of them concerning the pronunciation of vowels, four of them concerning the noise, i.e. the pronunciation of consonants. The four lasts describe the prosody (the amplitude curve of the voice in the sentence). For

Bruneau, performs a great number of moves inspired from Nô theatre. A multimedia computer also plays a part as an artificial actor. The computer acts by projecting lights on a wide screen behind the stage (the actress and the dancer are always able to see a part of the screen without looking behind them) so as to make the two actresses react. The dancer can

each vector at the entrance, the neural network gives a specific emotional state.

The multi agent system allows for real-time picture generation projected on the screen. Agents react as dynamic 'poster stickers' who construct ever-changing pictures together.

- Every agent's own sensitive psychological model (positive or negative) reacts to the text, and to the emotional states of the neural network. Depending on what the network shows and depending on their sensitivity, the agents' moods conditions their will to accomplish their tasks.
- The agents are co-ordinated to optimize the usefulness of the picture (which changes for every sequence of the text).
- Agents act together for the same goal in a mechanism of mood compensation: the ones who is in an excellent mood has to transfer some energy to the ones who are in a very bad mood.
- Agents communicate with each other one to one at fixed times about their respective mood.
- The agents' environment is made of emotional states recognised by the neural network, it is also composed by the events indicating which part of

the play is being said and the values associated with that part of the play. Finally an agent-observer evaluates the quality of the picture produced.

## Conclusion

We showed how interactive data mining can inspire new ways to stage plays associating computers and actors. Escaping from traditional production based on ontologies leads to weaken instantiation and to strengthen numerical data active handling. This handling is often irreversible for data, so mixing a compilation or a musical sequence in an *ad hoc* software is very similar to establishing a dramatic link 'live' when actors and computers provoke each other. In both cases the machine is involved in a heuristic mechanism.

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## Regionality, Class, Political Economy and the Transformation of the Memphis Sound

Rob Bowman

The story of Stax Records is about as improbable and unforeseeable as any tale could possibly be. Started by a white country fiddler named Jim Stewart who, by his own admission, originally knew next to nothing and cared even less about black music, in the 1960s Stax Records developed a readily identifiable sound that defined the very possibilities of southern soul music. While undeniably involved on a day-by-day basis in the crafting and marketing of African-American culture, virtually from the beginning Stax Records was racially integrated in the studio, in the front office and, by the mid-way point of its history, at the level of ownership. All this took place in Memphis, Tennessee, a city that as late as 1971 elected to close its public swimming pools rather than allow black and white kids to swim side by side in the scorching summer heat. By any logic that one can call forth, musicologically and sociologically Stax Records simply shouldn't have been possible.

It is a commonplace within popular music histories that in the 1960s Motown Records developed a unique, readily identifiable sound that is understood as a sub-genre of soul music. I contend that, in a similar fashion, the "Stax sound" of the same decade, for all intents and purposes, served as the basis for the genre known as southern soul. Recordings made in the second half of

the 1960s by non-Stax artists such as Aretha Franklin, Clarence Carter and Wilson Pickett, in effect, were predicated on the sound of Stax filtered through non-Stax affiliated instrumentalists and vocalists. The sound of Stax in this period, referred to by the company and music writers of the time as "the Memphis sound," can largely be understood as resulting from the fact that its creators (the songwriters, session musicians, vocalists, engineers, producers and company owner Jim Stewart) were all products of the fraternal, agrarian personalized south.

Precisely summing up the sound on the several hundred recordings issued on Stax and its subsidiary Volt in the 1960s is a high-on impossible task. One can, though, delimit in general terms the main features of the Stax sound in the 1960s (all of which stand in stark contrast to the musical practices of Detroit's Motown Records, Stax's main rival in this period). The Stax sound consisted of (1) an emphasis on the low end; (2) the prominent use of horns which often took the place of background vocals; (3) pre-arranged horn ensembles often serving as bridges in place of the more typical "improvised" guitar, keyboard or sax solos heard on many popular music recordings (this concept was originated by Otis Redding); (4) a "less is more" aesthetic manifested in sparse textures, the absence of ride cymbals on a lot of

vocal recordings, unison horn lines, and the absence of strings until late 1968; (5) a mix that placed the vocalist in the middle of the recording rather than way out in front; (6) a prominent gospel influence as heard in the juxtaposition of organ and piano, the extensive use of the IV chord and, most importantly, in the deployment by vocalists at Stax of extensive timbral variation, pitch inflection, melismas and highly syncopated phrasing all in the service of emotional catharsis; (7) a limited harmonic vocabulary largely restricted to major chords; and (8) a delayed back beat. The latter was developed in 1965 by Steve Cropper and Al Jackson Jr., in response to a new dance on the scene known as the Jerk and became a component of virtually every Stax recording through the end of the decade. It is also worth noting that in the company's earliest days, a significant number of compositions were blues-based.

**At this point “In the Midnight Hour” by Wilson Pickett (1965) was played.**

Less tangible but just as important with regard to the Stax sound was the process through which these recordings were made. In the 1960s time and money were initially not important considerations at Stax. While Northern musicians were paid by the three hour session, for the longest time in the South musicians were paid by the song. If it took half an hour to get a song recorded, great. If it took a day and a half, well

that was also okay. In the North, where time *was* money, record company owners and producers expected to cut four songs in a typical three hour session. This left little time to collectively work out different grooves and arrangements in the studio and instead necessitated the employment of arrangers to write as many of the parts as possible in advance of the actual session. At Stax, the four members of Booker T. and the MG's plus Isaac Hayes and the Memphis Horns would typically saunter into the studio one at a time in the late morning, slowly getting down to the task at hand--collectively working up a song via “head” arrangements until the groove became as hot as molten lava.

Once the groove had reached the requisite level of intensity, the vocalists, horns and rhythm section all played their parts together, recording “live” in the studio with little or no overdubbing. This, of course, meant that if someone made a mistake, they either had to live with it or everyone would have to perform the song again from the beginning. At Stax, as often as not, if the recording had achieved the desired emotional catharsis, the take would be kept, mistake and all. On Sam and Dave's recordings alone, trumpeter Wayne Jackson misses his first two responses on the repeat of the chorus after the second verse on “Hold On! I'm Comin'” and on “Soul Man” the whole band dramatically shifts the tempo down at the beginning of the first verse. Such vagaries ultimately don't matter a damn. In fact, if anything they

contributed to the magic, giving these recordings a feeling of humanity/realness/authenticity that is often absent from high gloss, studio-produced recordings. Through the mid-sixties, recordings at Stax were also mixed “on the fly” with Jim Stewart simply riding the volume control faders governing the recording level of each instrument as the parts were actually played. While such methods were antiquated by the standards of most studios, at Stax they were part and parcel of the magic. Taken as a whole, these various aspects of the recording practice at Stax tended to make the company’s releases *performance and process-oriented*, in stark contrast to Motown’s more *composition and product-oriented* aesthetic. While both company’s approaches made important, valuable and meaningful recordings, the differences between the two are palpable.

The overt reliance on musical elements that stemmed from and clearly referenced blues and gospel, the emphasis on an aesthetic that favoured performance and process over composition and product (and consequently privileged oral over written culture) to the point that mistakes did not necessarily preclude a recording being released, and an approach to mixing that did not clearly separate the constituent elements into foreground and background to the same degree that most pop recordings of the day did all contributed to a sound that signified and celebrated what was generally understood to be the historic black culture of the rural,

agrarian, personalized, fraternal south. This stood in direct contrast to the Motown sound which in its use of strings, prominent foregrounding of higher register sounds, busy, dense arrangements, and copious deployment of pop conventions such as narrative lyric structures and mixes which placed the lead singer way in front of the accompaniment signified the modern sounds of the industrial, depersonalized northern city.

While Stax was a successful company, releasing numerous hit singles from 1960 onwards, the majority of its sales through the late 1960s were to African-Americans living below the Mason-Dixon line, its musical practices reinforcing what space/place theorists such as Doreen Massey refer to as notions of the local. In contrast, Motown releases tended to sell equally well to both black and white Americans and had national appeal, selling copious numbers in the North-East, the mid-West, the south and the West Coast.

The sound of Stax was to change dramatically in the late 1960s, largely due to the efforts of Al Bell. Born in Little Rock in 1940 to a family that stressed middle class values that foregrounded hard work, achievement and economic advancement, Bell got his start in the music industry as a disc jockey, initially at KOKY in Little Rock in the late 1950s. After stints at Memphis and Washington stations, Bell came to Stax in the fall of 1965, initially as a promotion man. Within three years he would co-own the company, by October 1972 he owned

it outright. A larger-than-life character, Bell transformed Stax from top to bottom. Described by keyboardist Booker T. Jones as the front office equivalent to Otis Redding, Bell took what had been a Mom and Pop, cottage industry enterprise and in a few short years guided it to the level of rhythm and blues powerhouse. In the process Stax tremendously expanded its output, for the first time devoting considerable energies to the release and marketing of LP's in addition to its staple diet of forty-fives. A former disc jockey, Bell's sense of marketing was informed by a sense of region developed through the knowledge and contacts he had acquired in over a decade of radio experience at KOKY Little Rock, WLOK Memphis and WUST Washington.

Prior to Bell's arrival, Stax had been unable to sell substantial quantities of its records in key non-Southern markets such as New York and Los Angeles. Reasoning that Chicago and Memphis were connected by what he termed "Mississippi River Culture," Bell decided to use Chicago as his break out point.

*"My approach to marketing," Bell told me, "was and still is looking from a sociological standpoint. Even though I employ some of the techniques of the industrial scientist in marketing, it is more social science. If you appreciate the cultures and what the rivers represent to the cultures in this country and the kind of music that Stax was*

*coming up with, it would just be logical to look for exposure along the Mississippi River, because it was Mississippi River Culture as far as music is concerned. The people from Mississippi and New Orleans traveled along the waterways from the Gulf up the Mississippi River. That caused us to work the product that was born in Memphis, Tennessee, that was indigenous to the mid-South area, in Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City and even Detroit, Michigan. For most of the people in Detroit were people that had left Mississippi, Alabama, or Georgia and had gone to Detroit for jobs in the automotive industry. So, what you really had in those particular cities was Southerners. Chicago may as well have been in the suburbs of Mississippi. By and large, the majority of the African-American population in Chicago was from Mississippi or you could trace their roots back to Mississippi."*

Once a record began to take hold in Chicago or Detroit, Bell could then piggy back on that success and work the product on both the East and West Coasts. Extending his socio-scientific analysis of the relationship between black cultures in the South and the North into the realm of "product design," Bell's conclusions eventually had a far reaching impact on the "Stax sound" and the political economy of both the company and black music at large.

"The problem we had then was that Stax was viewed as a company that was coming up with that 'Bama music,' stressed Bell in an interview we did in the early 1990s. "We had a problem in getting the product played outside of the South, across the Mason-Dixon line. When you got into the bigger urban centers, they were doing the Motown stuff. Being a jock I knew that and then traveling all over the place, I knew what was happening to us in the record stores and what was happening to us at the radio level and on the street level with our music. I started looking to diversify the company and, at that time, I was talking to everybody in there about broadening the music so we could go into New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, and Baltimore much more formidably.

*"The position that I had been trying to influence production to get into was maintaining the roots music that we had, but broadening and diversifying the sound. [Eddie Floyd's] 'I've Never Found a Girl' was one of the first shots at that. The person that was able to contribute most to that, who thought much broader than the roots music that we had been coming up with, was Booker T. Booker was the learned guy. Booker was the only guy on staff who could write music and he was an arranger."*

(It should be noted here that Booker T. Jones had a

degree in music from Indiana University and was the only member of Booker T. and the MG's who could read and write music; hence Al Bell's comment that "Booker was the learned guy.")

**At this point "I've Never Found a Girl" by Eddie Floyd (1968) was played.**

At the same time that Booker began employing small-scale string arrangements on recordings such as "I've Never Found a Girl," greater changes were in the offing. Bell went to Detroit and brought former Motown and Revilot producer Don Davis to Stax. Davis, in turn, introduced Bell to northern arrangers such as Johnny Allen and Dale Warren and northern producers such as Freddy Briggs and Tom Nixon. All of these individuals played a tremendous role in transforming the original sound that Jim Stewart, Booker T. and the MG's and the Memphis Horns had developed. Bringing Davis in was a brilliant move on Bell's part from a marketing angle as his notion that a cross-fertilization of the Memphis and Detroit sounds would be potent in the marketplace was proven correct. With Davis' productions of Johnnie Taylor and the Dramatics leading the way, Stax ascended to its commercial peak, selling a tonnage of records and grossing several million dollars annually through the early 1970s.

With the arrival of the Detroit contingent, sessions ceased to be recorded "live," overdubbing became standard fare, massed orchestral arrangements became



de rigueur and the original Stax aesthetic and sound became distant memories of days gone by. Over time most of the overdubs and many of the rhythm section tracks weren't even recorded in Memphis.

In her landmark 1981 article in the *Journal of Ethnomusicology*, Margaret Kartomi concludes that the initial and sustaining impulse for musical transformation is normally extramusical. Following that, Andrew Lyshon, David Matless and George Revill suggest in *The Place of Music* that there are commonly economic pressures brought to bear on local musical practices to adapt aspects of repertoire, performance style, and arrangement to meet wider spaces. While Kartomi's article draws its evidence largely from examples of first and third world cultural contact and Lyshon, Matless and Revill are largely talking about the world music phenomenon, Al Bell's decisions at Stax suggest that the different but related conclusions of these scholars may be equally applicable to the motivations and practices on a smaller scale of the Western pop music industry.

Al Bell's desire to diversify the company's sound and thereby eliminate the 'Bama stigma that had plagued his early marketing efforts would eventually have an impact on much more than the sound of Stax and the consequence economic fortunes of the company. His next move would transform the political economy

of the entire black music industry. In 1969, Bell gave songwriter Isaac Hayes (who along with David Porter had penned and produced such classic southern soul records as "Soul Man" and "Hold On! I'm Comin'") free reign to record the solo album of his dreams. (Hayes had long felt frustrated by Jim Stewart's insistence that the company continue to create records that were limited to what had become the stereotypical Stax sound.) The result was *Hot Buttered Soul* an album that included only 4 songs, two of which were 12 and 18 minutes long. The length of the songs, the arrangements that equally fused rock, soul, pop, jazz and classical, the massive and majestic orchestrations, the long spoken rap that preceded Hayes' cover of "By the Time I Get to Phoenix," and Hayes's crooning baritone vocal style were all radically different from what was going on in mainstream R&B at the time.

**At this stage in the presentation "Walk On By" Isaac Hayes (1969) was played.**

*Hot Buttered Soul* quickly sold over one million copies, an unprecedented showing for what was nominally an R&B album. Equally unprecedented was the fact that the album charted in the upper reaches of four different charts--jazz, pop, R&B, and easy listening--simultaneously, a feat few--if any--artists have ever achieved! Hayes virtually owned the jazz charts for the next few years. *Hot Buttered Soul* flitted back and forth

between the #2 and #1 spots on *Billboard's* jazz LP charts for over eight months. A year and a half after it was released, it was still in the jazz Top Ten, joined by Hayes's next two albums, *The Isaac Hayes Movement* and *To Be Continued*. This was the kind of across-the-board success that Al Bell had envisioned for Stax.

Up to this point, virtually everyone in the record industry simply assumed that the black audience was neither economically equipped nor aesthetically interested in purchasing LPs in large numbers. Consequently black artists were not afforded the luxuries enjoyed by their white counterparts in crafting extended songs or album concepts. Instead, most black LPs were hurriedly and cheaply recorded to capitalize on a string of hit singles. Little thought, effort, or expense was put into cover art design or marketing. According to Atlantic Records owner Jerry Wexler, if a black album sold 30,000 copies the market had been saturated. Super stars such as James Brown and Otis Redding were the exception in that they MIGHT over several years sell 200,000 plus copies of a given album. *Hot Buttered Soul* unquestionably proved that black artists could sell Lps in massive numbers, and consequently single-handedly revolutionized the notion of the length and musical palette appropriate for black artists. Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Curtis Mayfield, and Funkadelic would all follow Hayes's lead and, over the next few years, all four would record a series of utterly brilliant albums.

As a footnote, it is worth noting that in 1971, partially through the efforts of Al Bell, Hayes would write the soundtrack for the movie *Shaft*, helping to pioneer the black soundtrack and further extending his approach to orchestration. In the process, he created a number of the seminal elements of disco music (16th note hi-hat ride pattern, wah-wah rhythm lick, mass orchestration), further revolutionizing the sound and consequent political economy of black popular music.

In summation, the different class backgrounds of Al Bell and Jim Stewart, their consequent different attitudes toward success and marketing and Bell's understanding of how migration patterns, regionality and musical preferences intersected led to very different approaches to recording and the consequent sounds and signification of place of Stax releases pre- and post-May 1968. In general, I think we know too little about how the sales patterns of most types of popular music play out on a regional basis and how company A&R personnel, producers and engineers, session musicians and artists try to negotiate these patterns sonically in attempts to both constitute the local and to create communities of listeners over ever wider spaces.



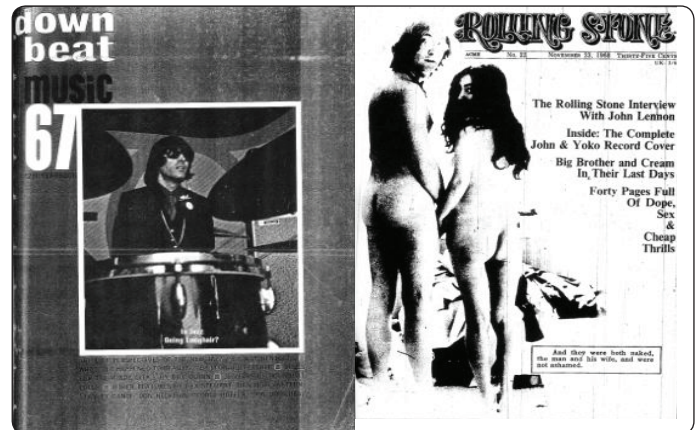
## *Down Beat* vs. *Rolling Stone*: The Battle for Authority in the American Music Press

1967-1970

Matt Brennan

“There are straws in the wind that the future paths of jazz and rock may converge.” So wrote Dan Morgenstern in 1967, as he announced that *Down Beat* magazine would be expanding its editorial perspective to include rock music in its coverage. Morgenstern continued:

*Down Beat, as the world's leading publication dedicated to [jazz], America's only original art form, has watched musical fads come and go, but has never overlooked significant trends or changes in our music. And the fact that many of the most gifted young rock musicians are showing an increasing awareness of jazz ... as well as the growing sophistication of [rock] music itself, are significant trends of great potential ... There is no better medium for creative reportage and commentary on these fascinating happenings than Down Beat, whose staff and contributors are uniquely qualified observers ... [Our rock coverage] will be interesting, we predict, even to those of our readers who have yet to be convinced that this new music has artistic merit and is related to jazz. Of them, we only ask an open mind (Morgenstern 1967: 13).*

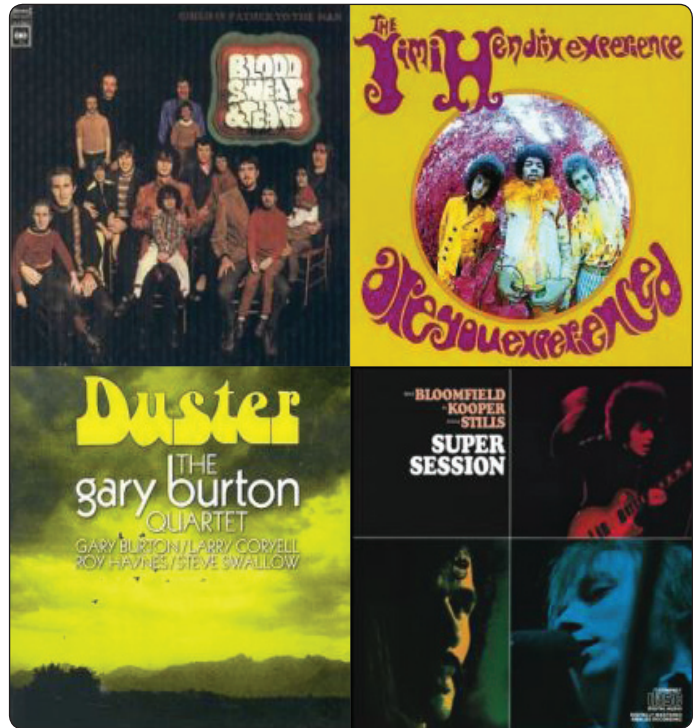


Morgenstern's announcement raises several interesting questions. First, *Down Beat* had occasionally reported on developments in rock 'n' roll and popular music insofar as they were relevant to the jazz community, but had always maintained that jazz was the primary focus: so what prompted this remarkable change in editorial policy? Second, Morgenstern stated that *Down Beat* was "uniquely qualified" to report on these events, and it certainly was: the publisher boasted that "music enthusiasts spend more money to read [*Down Beat*] than the total spent to read all other music publications published in the US", making *Down Beat* by far the biggest audited music magazine in America (1967: 51). A fledgling magazine called *Rolling Stone* had started up that same year and also aimed to report on the rock music scene, but its first issue only sold 6,000 copies;

Down Beat, on the other hand, dwarfed that circulation twelve times over. So what happened that caused Down Beat to lose its dominance in the American music press, and left it trailing behind Rolling Stone in a few short years? This paper attempts to address these questions by exploring the paths of two music magazines, one new and one old, and how they dealt with the developments in the relationship between jazz and rock in the years between 1967 and 1970.

### Jazz-Rock Interactions: 1967-1968

Much as we like to think of jazz and rock as separate musical traditions, it doesn't follow that their listening audiences are mutually exclusive, and this is no less true today than it was in the 1960s. Jazz and pop music have influenced one another for as long as they have existed. However, the jazz community had a strong and largely negative reaction to the birth of rock 'n' roll in the mid-1950s. An article from *Down Beat* during that time sums up the sentiment: "if with regret, we've no choice but to admit rock 'n' roll is part of our national culture, for the present, anyway. To eradicate it, or at least to demote it, seems to be a matter of urgency... rock 'n' roll has got to go" (1956: 39). Since that time, rock 'n' roll was dismissed at various points as simplistic, vulgar, and crassly commercial youth music; in fact, such discourse bore a great resemblance to early critiques of jazz in the 1920s and 30s. But this all changed in the middle of



the sixties, when rock artists began to borrow musical ideas from what many regarded as high art traditions. By 1967, rock musicians were increasingly borrowing ideas from jazz musicians and vice versa.

### *Down Beat's* Decision To Cover Rock

These early interactions between rock and jazz musicians were also representative of similar interactions happening at the level of amateur musicians and audiences, and this becomes important for its impact on *Down Beat* magazine. Contrary to popular belief, the readership of *Down Beat* was not primarily an older generation that had grown up with jazz, but young males in their late teens and twenties - very much the same age and gender demographic that *Rolling Stone* would appeal to in the near future.

Although *Down Beat* had started out in the swing era as a publication read mainly by dance band musicians, it had survived by re-inventing itself as a magazine for serious fans, and crucially, young learning musicians. The rise of the stage band movement in America meant that significant numbers of high school students were being turned onto jazz music, and since *Down Beat*'s main advertising revenue came from instrument manufacturers during its days as a magazine for working musicians, it was a relatively easy transition to turn their marketing efforts towards younger, learning musicians looking to buy instruments.

musicians who were listening to at least as much rock as jazz, and instrument manufacturers were eager to exploit that market. The signs were there as early as 1965, when you could find advertisements in *Down Beat* for Vox guitars and amps that featured pictures of the Beatles and used the slogan "The Sound of the Longhairs". But these ads were totally at odds with the content and editorial direction of the magazine.

The editors and most of the staff at *Down Beat* rarely listened to rock, but the magazine's advertisers urged its owner, John Maher, to put pressure on editors to openly include rock coverage. When Dan Morgenstern announced to readers the new editorial direction of *Down Beat*, he cited the increasing sophistication in rock music and the increasing interactions between jazz and rock as the reasons for the change. This was all true, but the third reason remained unwritten: advertisers believed there was an untapped market of young people buying rock records and musical instruments, and since *Down Beat* appeared to be the most obvious vehicle to market and promote these products, they wanted the content of the magazine to better reflect and attract this new kind of readership.

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a new magazine aimed directly at the rock audience. If it were up to Wenner, the magazine would have been called *The Electric Newspaper*, but Gleason objected and instead suggested the name *Rolling Stone* (Draper 61).

Wenner had no interest in jazz, and the magazine reflected his rock 'n' roll tastes. There are two ways, however, in which the world of jazz criticism influenced *Rolling Stone* during its early stages. First, of course, is the role of Ralph Gleason, who had earned his reputation as one America's most famous jazz critics, writing for a wide range of publications including *Down Beat* and a regular column for the *San Francisco Chronicle* which was syndicated to over sixty other newspapers in the country. Gleason was able to consider contemporary issues in the rock scene, like the problem of musicians being exploited by their recording and publishing contracts, and give them a sense of historical perspective

by relating them to similar events in jazz history. Ben Fong-Torres recalls that for a guy who was rarely in the *Rolling Stone* office, preferring to work at home, Gleason was "a great presence ... we looked to him for guidance ... he was our encyclopedia" (Ibid 98).

Wenner was also influenced by a British music paper called *Melody Maker*. *Melody Maker* was originally a jazz publication that started covering rock music in 1964. In a Scandinavian study on the music press, the authors explain that "the young rock critics hired at *Melody Maker* were influenced by the journalistic standard and musical knowledge of jazz critics at the publication" (Lindberg *et al* 89). Having spent time in London during the summer of 1966, Wenner was impressed by *Melody Maker*, and although its editors rejected his attempt to do freelance work for the magazine while he was there, he maintained contact with the staff. In the early issues of *Rolling Stone*, Wenner actually reproduced articles from *Melody Maker* and initiated an agreement to trade advertisements, where *Melody Maker* would run ads for *Rolling Stone* subscriptions and vice versa. I learned from Dan Morgenstern that Wenner had approached *Down Beat* to do a similar ad exchange; Morgenstern thought this was a great idea, but the owner John Maher was against it, and Morgenstern never heard from Wenner again.

Unlike teen idol magazines like *Hit Parader*, Wenner

aimed to provide professional reportage and intelligent analysis of a music scene, and unlike early rock fanzines like *Crawdaddy!* and *Mojo-Navigator*, he was determined to turn *Rolling Stone* into a commercially viable enterprise. In both of these respects, the successful format of music magazines like *Down Beat* and *Melody Maker* were important models for the early *Rolling Stone*.

### A Diversity of Jazz-Rock Aesthetics

Throughout 1968 and 1969, *Down Beat* and *Rolling Stone* each represented a wide range of opinions as they covered the interplay between jazz and rock culture. Ralph Gleason was declaring that “the rock bands are really jazz bands; the guitar soloists ... are really jazz soloists,” much to the protestation of some of his former *Down Beat* colleagues like Leonard Feather (Feather 16). At *Down Beat*, Alan Heineman was going wild for the increasingly complex work of artists like Zappa, Cream, and Hendrix, while at *Rolling Stone* Jon Landau complained that rock was becoming too cerebral and losing the qualities of physicality and simplicity that had made it such a refreshing departure from jazz in the first place (18-20). Lester Bangs also made his rock criticism debut at *Rolling Stone*, and quickly developed a unique jazz-rock aesthetic that drew connections between the likes of Miles Davis, Captain Beefheart, Tony Williams, and the Velvet Underground (26 July 1969: 37). All of

this is to say that during these years, both *Down Beat* and *Rolling Stone* presented a diversity of jazz-rock aesthetics from different critical personalities, rather than a cohesive “house opinion” on jazz, rock, and their relationship with one another.



May 31, 1969

October 30, 1969

### *Rolling Stone* and Avant-Garde Jazz-Rock

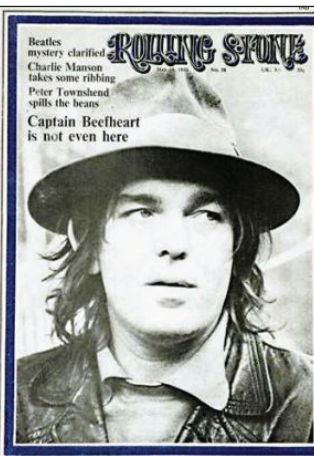
Part of this diversity at *Rolling Stone* came from the presence of John Burks, whom Jann Wenner lured from a position at Newsweek to become the managing editor of *Rolling Stone* in October 1968. Unlike Wenner, Burks was a jazz fan and came at the recommendation of Ralph Gleason. He was hired to increase the standards of *Rolling Stone*'s reporting, but his personal tastes in music also influenced the content of the magazine. At this point Wenner was increasingly spending time away from *San Francisco* where *Rolling Stone* was based. When asked by a staff member why he started the magazine, Wenner

had once responded “so I could meet John Lennon”, and 1969 was the year that Wenner began to reap the rewards of his newfound celebrity status within the rock world, and consequently spent much of his time in New York and London with the stars his magazine covered (Draper 34).

All this time away from *San Francisco* meant that



April 19, 1969



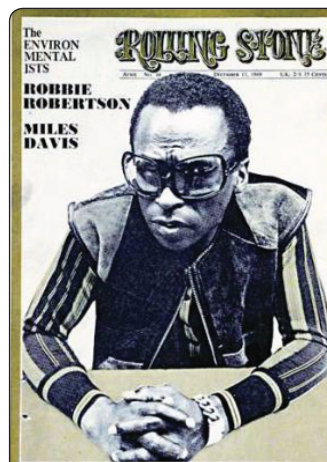
May 14, 1970

Burks was left with a large amount of autonomy in editorial decisions. Unsurprisingly, 1969 marks a high point for the amount of jazz coverage in the magazine; this is partly due of course, to the emerging jazz-rock fusion scene, but Burks's influence is also clear, as he wrote much of the jazz content himself. Burks oversaw cover stories on relatively obscure musicians experimenting with avant garde jazz and rock, including Sun Ra and Captain Beefheart. Burks would also have been working alongside Greil Marcus, who hired freelancers including several well-known writers from *Down Beat*, like

Pete Welding and Michael Zwerin. Such cross-over in writers working for both *Down Beat* and *Rolling Stone* is interesting because it clearly demonstrates that the worlds of jazz and rock criticism, both at the discursive and the professional level, were not as mutually exclusive as we might assume.

### The Miles Davis Cover

The most outstanding example of this kind of overlap is a cover story *Rolling Stone* did on Miles Davis at the end of 1969, just between the release of *In A Silent Way* and *Bitches Brew* (13 December 1969). The feature includes a series of photographs taken of Miles working out at the boxing ring, and an interview conducted by Don DeMichael, the former editor of *Down Beat* before Morgenstern took over. I was especially amazed to discover that in that same week, *Down Beat* also ran a cover story on Miles Davis, also interviewed at the boxing ring by Don DeMichael (11 December 1969). Although the two articles are



December 13, 1969

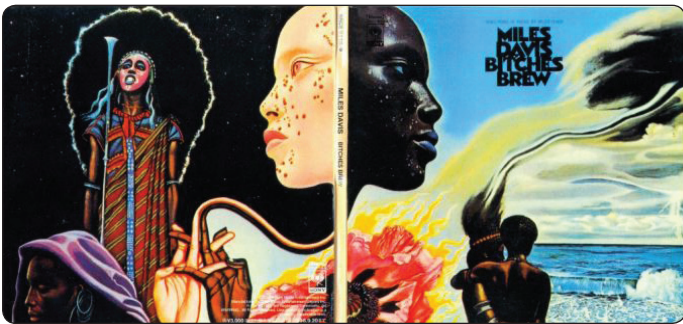


December 11, 1970



different - the *Rolling Stone* version focuses more on Miles' views about race and music, while the *Down Beat* version mainly discusses Miles' passion for boxing - the two stories are clearly based on the same interview.

## Conclusions



John Burks resigned as managing editor in June 1970 after a major fallout with Wenner, whom Burks felt was leading the magazine in an politically and musically conservative direction. The struggle for authority between Wenner and Burks led to a mutiny at the magazine, and Burks ended up taking over half of Wenner's staff with him out the door. Meanwhile, *Down Beat* was forced to give up its title as America's biggest selling music magazine, having been overtaken by *Rolling Stone* by 1970.

*Down Beat* has since become the authoritative magazine for scholars and journalists researching jazz history, just as *Rolling Stone* has done for rock history. We routinely draw from these magazines to get a

sense of how important cultural events were covered as they were unfolding. But in order to understand the history of popular music, we have to understand how these music magazines worked *as magazines*: how commercial considerations affected their aesthetic and editorial directions, and how the peculiarities of personal and professional relationships in the world of music journalists shaped the way musical events were written about.

Such historical particularities get wiped out over time as we try to construct a coherent narrative of music history. Scott DeVeaux puts this another way by paraphrasing Ralph Ellison: "each new [music history] textbook dulls our sensibilities, 'retells the stories as they have been told and written ... made neat and smooth, with all the incomprehensible details vanished along with most of the wonder'" (DeVeaux 553). In exploring the rise and relationship of jazz and rock criticism and examining how the coverage of music as it was unfolding compares to the accepted narrative of music history we are now given, we can hopefully create a more diverse, less monolithic understanding of what these musical cultures can and should mean to us in the present.



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## Planet IndigenUs: Performing Transnational Indigeneity

M. Celia Cain

**M**y new hometown, Toronto, means “gathering place” in Huron (Recruitment 2005), a point that was dramatized by the organizers of Planet IndigenUs last August. This unprecedented two week festival, hosted jointly by Harbourfront Centre in Toronto and the Six Nation’s Woodland Cultural Centre, was the largest gathering of transnational Native artists and performers in North America. One month later, the First Americans Festival broke Planet IndigenUs’ record with the week-long celebration of the opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Both festivals featured artists from North, Central, and South America, the trans-Arctic, and Oceania. While both festivals included disciplines like dance, traditional crafts, and storytelling, the majority of performers were popular or contemporary musicians. For the Native and non-Native organizers of these festivals, indigenous popular music was a means of “celebrating the innovation, adaptability, and evolution of indigenous identity” (chagoosh 2004). This paper addresses some of the intricate and problematic processes in constructing transnational indigeneity through performances at two major indigenous music festivals, Planet IndigenUs and the First Americans Festival. First, I will examine the

discourse of indigeneity through a performance by the band Indigenous. Next, I will turn to issues of place and musical geography through the border-crossing performance of Lila Down. Since both of the festivals were sustained and supported by their respective federal governments, planned by bureaucracies and community activists, funded by indigenous nations, casinos, and grants from foundations and corporations, I will consider the effects of governmental and other institutional funding and organization on performance. Finally, I focus on markers of indigeneity in the music of Lucie Idlout and on the power of performance in the public sphere, where multiple representations and interpretations of First Nations popular music perform into being a supple and transformative indigenous public sphere.

### Origins & Indigeneity

This new sense of transnational indigenous identity is a slippery concept, not just because of multiple identities, but also because of the term indigenous. What do they mean by “indigenous identity”? Who qualifies as indigenous? The *OED* defines indigenous as “born or produced naturally in a land or region; native or belonging

naturally" (*Oxford English Dictionary* 2002). Notice the stress on both naturalness and place, common in tropes of Nativeness, ironic when applied to people forcibly displaced from their land through colonialism. In conscious acknowledgment of this irony and in hopes of bolstering Native sovereignty, since the mid-1990s, Native activists and artists have used indigenous as a choice political term, a term that signals more than Indianness or pan-tribal, which are old anthropological terms for movements or attributes shared among Native people of a broad region. Instead, indigenous now connotes a transnational sense of belonging; it has become a political and artistic construct meant to unite a wide variety of peoples around the world struggling under continuing colonialism and/or postcolonialism. Indigenous has been embraced by First Nations musicians. For instance, in 1997 at the Indigo Girl's Honor the Earth tour, a Nakota band named Indigenous emerged out of Minnesota onto the national stage. They call their band Indigenous because "The Indigenous Peoples have created a truth which should remain in the hearts and minds of everyone" (Indigenous 1998). Notice they do not identify that truth, nor exactly who they mean when they say "Indigenous Peoples." That truth and identity/ies should be obvious to those to whom it applies, creating an emic/etic discourse common in First Nations popular music. Further, the word Indigenous unites the plural peoples, an acknowledgement of a

wide variety of cultures and backgrounds involved in this political construct.

As the most successful Native rock band today, Indigenous was the headliner on the opening night of the First Americans Festival. This 1998 song, "I've Got to Tell You," which cracked the top 25 on the Radio & Records Rock chart, roused the crowd to a screaming frenzy

As you can hear, this is classic guitar-driven blues-rock. In other work, I've discussed the relationship between blues and Native popular music, the insistence by many First Nations musicians that indigenous people invented the blues before 1492 (Cain 2004). "Regardless of the sustainability of a Native claim to the origins of the blues, by staking this claim, First Nations people reincorporate their music into the canon of popular music, repositioning an "ethnic" genre from the periphery to the center" (ibid.). Unlike other artists, Indigenous does not directly claim the blues as originally indigenous music, rather they say "This is the band Indigenous. Their stylistic roots reach back to America's earliest form, the blues; they trace their personal roots back even further" (Indigenous 1998), connecting their status as "original people" to the blues position as "original music."

Blues is the one of the most common genres in First Nations popular music. For Indigenous, as for most Native blues musicians, the blues serves both as

a recognized transnational music form and as an expressive outlet for pain. Of course, pain is expected in the Blues, and yet in First Nations music, pain seems to play a special role – the pain of lost love or the pain of lost land – the pain of colonialism. Sherman Alexie sustained this theme in his novel *Reservation Blues*: and I “Thomas saw the guitar, Robert Johnson’s guitar, lying on the floor of the van. Thomas picked it up, strummed the strings, felt a small pain in the palms of his hands, and heard the first sad note of the reservation blues.” (Alexie 1995) Thomas’ action, his strumming of the strings, the liminal connection of hands to strings to pain to blues, launches the tragic and comic novel, and also situates that blues band in the origins of North American popular music, with Robert Johnson.

Blues played a central role in both Planet IndigenUs and the First Americans Festival. Indigenous headlined at the First Americans Festival & the Pappy Jones Band with Murray Porter performed at Planet IndigenUs and the Smithsonian. Additionally, Planet IndigenUs held two roundtables on “Rez Bluez” (I participated in one), discussing the indigenous claim to the origins of the blues, a claim supported by some with (sketchy) melodic evidence, by others through oral histories, and by everyone through the connection with the shared history and the pain of colonialism.

In Waterman’s work on Juju, he uses the term indigenization, “the product of causing to have indigenous

characteristics”, to describe the transformation of Western popular music technology through indigenous musical aesthetics (Waterman 1990). Certainly the blues and blues-rock has undergone a type of indigenization, if only through the process of reclamation. When I began my work with Native popular music, I searched for a term which incorporated both Nativeness – being Native, but was easier to pronounce than indigeniousness and less offensive than indigeneity (which is too close to indigent) – and also described the material and performative expressive culture produced by indigenous peoples in what I perceived as a conscious effort to promote a transnational sense of indigenous identity over local Native affiliations. I coined the term “indigeneity” – that’s –eity – and am please today to see two sessions titled “Indigeneity.” By embracing indigeneity, indigenous popular music performances can be a powerful means for mapping a new political and musical geography, for creating a transnational sense of identity and place, an indigenous public sphere.

### **Musical Geography**

Indigenous people living under colonialism survive the brute force of what Canadian geographer Cole Harris has termed the “territorial arrangement of power” (Harris 1991). In the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, colonialism in North America was a military strategy of subjugation, meant to break alliances and dismantle societies that

threatened the continued expansion of United States and Canada. This strategy redistributed the land away from the indigenous people to the colonials and government, restricting First Nations peoples to reserves and reservations. The colonialism of the mid-twentieth-century to the present day is usually far more oblique, implemented by governments and by corporations, encompassing economic and social strategies that undermine Native national sovereignty, traditional culture, and pan-indigenous unity while superficially supporting First Nations autonomy.

Paradoxically, non-Native society fetishizes First Nations' relationship to "the Land." Environmental causes, the New Age movement, the Red Power movement, and the tourist industry around Native Nations, to name a few, embrace a romantic and essentialized conception of the "Natives" relationship to the land, to "Mother Earth." This tradition, stretching back to Rousseau's Noble Savage, hinges on the idea that somehow, for indigenous people, there is no separation between place and space, that through their relationship to the earth, they have escaped the "anxiety ridden process of relocation" that infects the modern world (Stokes 1994, 3). Of course, in many ways, due to their colonial history, the First Nations exemplify dislocation, both literally and metaphorically, since as they have endured so many forced migrations. No doubt part of the non-Native fixation on First Nations and the land is imperialist nostalgia, following Rosaldo,

where the "agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed" (Rosaldo 1989). It is important to note that the non-Native perception that First Nations peoples are connected to the land is non-specific, not grounded in geography, but rather some nebulous "Mother Earth" concept. This differs substantially from indigenous concepts of land, which are always grounded in specific locales. Deloria reminds us that, "American Indians hold their lands—places—as having the highest possible meaning, and all their statements are made with this reference point in mind" (Deloria 1989).

First Nations traditional music is grounded in specific geographies, referencing place and local traditions. First Nations powwow music, originating in the emblematically indigenous High Plains, maps its own place through the powwow touring and competition circuit. While sometimes First Nations popular music references specific geographies and places, usually it constructs imaginary geographies, a-colonial spaces without nation-state borders. Music is late to this idea, which was promoted by the Latino group La Raza in the 1970s and by First Nations writers in the 1980s and 90s. For instance, in *Almanac of the Dead* (Silko 1991), Leslie Marmon Silko prophesizes the coming of a new Native world order, brought about by a revolution of the indigenous people of North, Central, and South America, ending colonial and capitalist rule of the Americas. It

is a dark novel, grotesque and disturbing, set in the Southwestern borderlands of the United States.

The borderlands are a common trope in First Nations popular music, a metaphor for uncertainty and shifting alliances and identities. Rosaldo formulates border crossings as creating conceptual space for considering performance, musical aesthetics, and political action (Rosaldo 1989). Metaphorically, the borderland space constructed by First Nations popular music performance is a shifting zone of intense cultural contact and exchange. The ethnic and racial mixing of the borderlands makes it a highly problematic, especially in the United States, and the shifting borders of nation-states, easily penetrated, bring identities and any sense of place under constant scrutiny.

There are many First Nations popular musicians who cross borders, but few play with shifting identities in the borderlands like Lila Downs. Known in the United States as a Latina singer, Lila Downs is half Scottish-American and half Mixtec, born in Mexico and raised in the United States. She is Mexicana and Latina and American, but identifies most strongly with her indigenous heritage. Even Latino reviewers emphasize her indigenous heritage by connecting her with the land, “Now from similar terrain comes the amazing voice and consciousness of Lila Downs—singer, poet, and spirit of the land supreme” (Rodríguez 2005).

Lila Downs was the headliner in the opening night concert at Planet IndigenUs and also performed the first night at the First Americans Festival. She performs in a wide variety of genres, including reggae, corrido, and jazz. This is her mariachi hit “La Llorona,” which was featured in the movie *Frida*.

Llorona is a mythical woman who haunts the river valleys, mourning her children whom she drowned in madness. In Mexico and the American southwest, little children are told not to stray too far away from home because La Llorona might come for them. But in this version, Lila Downs replaces the Virgin with La Llorona in her adoration, upending the Catholic hierarchy to promote indigenous folklore, a folk story deeply connected with the land itself. At the First Americans festivals, her performance of La Llorona transfixed the audience. I expected the predominantly Native audience to be less receptive to what can be seen as “Mexican music” at this festival for Indigenous music, but when I questioned an audience member, she told me, “this is what it’s all about. One world, no borders, remembering that we are one people.” Another woman said “I’m glad the Mexicans are remembering they’re Indians. Sometimes they forget.” For the audience, Down’s border-crossings performed a transnational concept of indigenous music.



### **Sponsorship, Performance, and the Public Sphere**

After decades of promoting border-crossing on the grassroots level, at Planet IndigenUs and the First American Festival First Nations activists succeeded in forcing governmental sponsoring agencies to conceptualize indigeneity as transnational, including artists and performers from around the world. But along with governmental sponsorship comes governmental restrictions. Planet IndigenUs was dominated by CanCon rules (Canadian Content), featuring Canadian artists whose careers are sponsored by government grants. Many of these artists have concurrent repertoires: one “up with Natives” repertoire to play at government sponsored events, and a grittier, more pessimistic repertoire, rarely recorded, to perform at Reserve and nightclub concerts. Although most of the performers were quite professional, some of the acts were new to performing and not ready for the exposure of such a major event. Additionally, the required number of Canadian groups limited the number of more established American and other international artists who would have added musical and ethnic diversity.

It was clear from the moment the performance schedules were published that both festivals were drawing on a limited number of artists. Although it has a larger audience, without government sponsorship and CanCon-like rules, the First Nations music industry in the United

States has not established itself to the same extent as the industry in Canada. Nearly a third of the performers at the First Americans Festival were Canadian, and over half of all the musicians had also performed at Planet IndigenUs. Trans-arctic and Hawaiian performers added to the transnational aesthetic at the First Americans Festival, but there were no performers representing Australia or New Zealand. Although a week shorter, the First Americans Festival had a budget several times the size of Planet IndigenUs’, and therefore booked more famous musicians for its evening concerts. The First Americans Festival has a different impetus from Planet IndigenUs, as it was celebrating the long-awaited opening of the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, and not meant to stand on its own. At both festivals, the governmental organizers stressed educational aspects over artistic, wanting to “reach-out” to non-Natives.

Both festivals featured artists willing to take controversial stands in their lyrics and performances. At the First Americans Festival, Buffy Sainte-Marie performed her classic anti-war protest song “Universal Soldier.”

Two months before the 2004 elections, and in the midst of another unpopular war, this song galvanized the crowd on the National Mall. They sang along, cheered, and waved signs protesting the war. Many of the protestors wore clothing that identified them as veterans.

At Planet IndigenUs, performer Lucie Idlout did not perform on the main stage, but instead late at night on the small indoor stage. Taken collectively, her songs demonstrate more anger against the Canadian government and non-Native society and less “Native People Unite” rhetoric than the other performers at Planet IndigenUs.

For all the anger, of all the songs discussed today, Idlout’s song is the most typically “Indigenous,” featuring certain attributes common to most First Nations popular music, including emphasis on familial relationships, and pastiche and collage of people speaking Native languages and samples of traditional music. In this example, Idlout includes a recording of her mother’s voice speaking in Inuktitut and layers in a rhythm track made from traditional throat singing.

In conclusion, despite the social and political progress of the last century, indigenous people still live under colonial rule, and because of the visible absence of awareness about First Nations and apathy towards First Nations issues in American and Canadian society today, this continuing colonialism takes pernicious forms, requiring complex, subversive modes of engagement. Although organized by government institutions, both Planet IndigenUs and the First Nations Festivals provided a very public forum in which to present new

strategies to combat current colonialism. Some may think that the lack of a singular, coherent strategy by all these different artists weakens their success in combating colonialism. On the contrary, I believe the contradictions and fissures and competing agendas, the different and conflicting means of performing indigeneity, create a vital transnational indigenous public culture, much the stronger for its complexity. In its multiplicity and multivocality, this indigenous public culture can begin to form a new political construct: a transnational indigenous public sphere with revolutionary aims and ambitions.

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## Breakbeat Science: Cyberpunk Discourse in Drum 'n' Bass

Chris Christodoulou

### Introduction

When trying to understand the relationship between a multiplicity of cultural forms – connections you are confident exist, but are initially unable to identify clear or lucid linkages – it is often useful, as suggested by Michel Foucault (1966), to see oneself as part of the relationship. By participating in various activities or consuming different cultural forms, whether musical, artistic, televisual or textual, we become exponents of interdisciplinarity.

So, when I began thinking about a title for this conference, I wanted to look beyond my musical interests, whilst remaining aware that my non-musical or extra-musical interests could be informing and shaping the music I listened and danced to. I wanted to look at how my chosen objects of analysis, one musical, one literary – drum 'n' bass and cyberpunk novels respectively – could be related to the wider socio-economic and cultural transformations from which they emerged, thus enabling me to develop a stable framework in which could be identified the themes and discourses that have modulated and

modified my own interest in those forms.

Although there is no ethnographic evidence to suggest that drum 'n' bass is widely listened to by readers and writers of cyberpunk literature, or vice versa, that drum 'n' bass producers and audiences read cyberpunk, a strikingly similar 'structure of feeling' (to quote Raymond Williams) permeates the discursive fields of both forms. These can be related to the cultural conditions produced by what various thinkers have called 'post-industrial' or 'late-capitalism' (Jameson 1991). This most recent shift in the capitalist economic system, specifically affecting the inner-cities in North America and Western Europe, is having particular consequences for how we understand traditional categories of class, ethnicity, and gender in Western culture, and informs the wider questions framing my discussion. Firstly, has the emergence of new digital technologies of production and consumption – technologies no longer requiring physical strength or esoteric technical knowledge to function – created a crisis in the character of 'masculinity'? Secondly, as a response to this presumed crisis, does masculinity become a simulation to ironically permeate and become prevalent in the new mediations of digital technologies,

such as popular music, video games, film, etc.?

### **Drum 'n Bass**

Before I begin looking at these issues in more detail, I will provide brief definitions of cyberpunk and drum 'n' bass. Drum 'n' bass is a form of electronic dance music which first emerged in the urban and suburban spaces of London and the South-East of England during the early-1990s. It is typically instrumental and characterised by its fast and syncopated rhythms, which are often referred to as 'breakbeats'. Breakbeats (or 'breaks') are incorporated on drum 'n' bass tracks as 'samples' that have been digitally-rendered from pre-existing recordings with dynamic rhythmic qualities, typically African-diasporic musical forms like 1960s and 1970s soul and disco. Once recorded into a sampler or computer running sequencing software, breaks are subsequently accelerated and 'looped' to produce a continuous 'flow'.

### **Cyberpunk**

Whereas drum 'n' bass is a specific musical genre, cyberpunk is a meta-genre that has been loosely-connected to various media forms, such as film and video games. However, it first gained popular currency in the field of literature during the early-1980s. While most of its writers can be considered to produce

science-fiction, cyberpunk typically differs from the sci-fi widely connected to Western anxieties concerning the galvanisation of Soviet economic and military power following the Second World War. Instead, cyberpunk novels typically engage with the growing importance of information technologies in contemporary post-industrial culture, and the consequences of their particular use and exploitation by multinational conglomerates and the capitalist state. An etymology of cyberpunk reveals it to be a portmanteau of 'cybernetics', meaning control and communications systems, and 'punk', connoting the apparently politically and culturally subversive ideas of its young writers.

Most cyberpunk narratives construct deeply pessimistic scenarios of the near-future in which developments relating to virtual reality, cloning, and the technologies of state and corporate surveillance transform human behaviour to such an extent, they effectively facilitate a condition in which 'post-human' identity becomes an everyday mode of being. Consequently, increasingly intimate interactions (or 'interfaces') between human beings and electronic technologies are seen in a dystopian context of the hegemonic dominance of the late-capitalist system, whereby the social, cultural and environmental degradation of the post-industrial metropolis are inevitable consequences. However, critical discussions of the degree to which gender

roles and, specifically, the insecurity of heterosexual masculinities permeate eroticised interactions with technology in cyberpunk has been widely evaded, despite the overwhelming frequency of male central protagonists in cyberpunk novels, such as 'Case' from William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (originally published in 1984 by New York's Zed Books).

### **Techstep: the embodiment of cyberpunk in drum 'n' bass**

In a number of senses, drum 'n' bass producers are real-life manifestations of the computer-literate hackers and cyber-surfers familiar to the cyberpunk genre. They are generally male, based in post-industrial inner-cities, and are often fascinated with video games, science-fiction movies, and the electronic media. However, while electronic instruments and the ability to use and modify them form an important part of its musical practices, electronic technologies also feature as part of the genre's cultural discourse. Central to this is the theme of boundary confusion between human identity, activity, and electronic technologies of production and consumption. In the drum 'n' bass sub-genre of 'techstep', such boundary confusion is signified in the musical use of atonal, mechanical droning; robotic voices; bleeps; metallic rhythmic patterns. The most idiosyncratic feature of techstep, however, is its distorted, abrasive bass-lines, which

often connote 'hard', nihilistic, and stereotypically masculine aggression.

It is my assertion that the musical structures and timbres of techstep can be considered defensive and reactionary responses to the masculine body's loss of power, and masculine identity's loss of status is a post-industrial culture increasingly characterised by service-sector employment, short-term contracts, ICTs (information and communication technologies), and 'soft' technologies (such as computer software) rather than the 'hard', mechanical technologies (and the physical strength necessary to operate them) which were intrinsic to the emergence of the heavy, manufacturing industries, and the development of earlier phases of capitalism.

The prevalence of 'dark', esoteric sounds in techstep conveys a defence of an anti-commercial, anti-populist 'underground', whereby a discourse of authenticity is produced and reserved by those producers and consumers who are considered to confront the realities of post-industrial culture by embodying a post-human discourse of emotional indifference and coldness. As producer Photek has said of his own music, "the absence of feeling kind of becomes the feeling" (Sharp 1997: 29). Furthermore, the use of dispassionate, pseudo-scientific artist pseudonyms like Cybotron, Digital, and Decoder all connote a perspective of drum 'n' bass as



'mutant' music whereby the post-industrial and post-colonial contexts of its emergence have combined to produce a musical form characterised by continual flow and cultural plurality, but which has also contributed to a discourse of abstraction, obliqueness and technical 'un-feeling'. In this vein, the frequency of military imagery and representations of embattled, distinctly-masculine cyborgs in imposing and prohibitive poses on club flyers and record sleeves signifies a discourse of emotional austerity and aesthetic seriousness that permeates much of drum 'n' bass culture.

Techstep's musical characteristics and extra-musical mediations connect drum 'n' bass to a discourse of Darwinian urban realism evident in the work of cyberpunk writers like Bruce Sterling, Pat Cadigan and

Rudy Rucker, whose narratives often involve characters forced to adopt 'post-human' subject positions by assimilating with electronic technologies as conditions of necessity or survival. Moreover, cyberpunk literature has sometimes articulated in a literary context a number of the themes permeating and produced by drum 'n' bass. In particular, 'Zion Dub', the fictional music of the socially and economically marginalised 'Rasta' colony in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, bears a strong resemblance to the formal structures and cultural discourses underpinning drum 'n' bass:

*The music that pulsed through the cluster ... was called Zion dub, a sensuous yet complex mosaic cooked from vast libraries of digitalized pop; it was worship, Molly said, and a sense of community ... Zion smelled of cooked vegetables, humanity, and ganja (1995: 104).*

In *Neuromancer*, Zion Dub is made by urban bricoleurs who cobble together outmoded technological artefacts and transform them into music-making instruments. Although an economic logic of necessity determines its practices of production, they can also be seen as ways in which a coherent sense of identity and community is recuperated through the reproduction and remediation of past musical forms. Similarly, drum 'n' bass is often produced by using a combination



**Figure One:**

Archetypal flyers for the Ascension Drum 'n' Bass event at O'Hagan's club in Rugby, England (March 2004), and the Renegade Hardware record label's monthly club event at London's The End (August 2004).

of existing musical recordings, and other cheaply-acquired sonic material (such as samples taken from films, wildlife documentaries, etc.), in conjunction with newer, and often illegally-procured computer software. In this sense, it can be said that the musical practices of drum 'n' bass can be connected to the wider social and cultural marginalisation of working class young people, who have had their musical sensibilities shaped by living in multicultural yet economically underdeveloped urban and suburban regions, and by growing up with an abundance of electronic devices and media, such as mobile phones and video games. This suggests that drum 'n' bass provides a material context for Gibson's claim in *Neuromancer* that "the street finds its own uses for things" (cited in Dery 1994: 193).

The identification of young male producers and consumers with the obscure functions and processes of electronic technologies signify that the male body has lost its dominant status as the operator of heavy and cumbersome mechanical technologies. These have been replaced by digital technologies and interfaces, consequently obfuscating the traditional conception of machines as 'natural' extensions of male proficiency. However, the overwhelmingly male producership of drum 'n' bass, together with the development of a masculine and industrial machine aesthetic in techstep, can be regarded as a reactionary response to the

androgenization of electronic technologies in a post-industrial era of 'soft', computer-based technologies which require little or no physical strength to be operable. The shifting gender dynamics of technological interaction in an increasingly ICT-oriented Western culture may not have hitherto radically transformed the male dominance of electronic dance music production. Yet, the defensive correlation of masculinity and electronic technologies in the aesthetic mediations and discourses of drum 'n' bass culture, suggest that the traditional conception of the 'masculine' now only resides as a hysterical reaction and fetishisation of a receding industrial condition.

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## Music and Violence: A Provisional Typology

Martin Cloonan

### Introduction

In this paper I want to outline some of the ways in which music is used in the deliberate infliction of pain. This builds on work Bruce and I have already done (Cloonan and Johnson 2002) and which is ongoing. So this paper is very much “work in progress”.

Previously we developed typologies of this which suggested that this could be seen in two ways – music as incidental to the infliction of pain and as integral. We then went on to suggest that two ways of investigating all this further were soundscape studies and music therapy (ibid). In this paper I want to pay particular attention to the uses of music in the deliberate infliction of pain, some media reactions to the issue and the implications for Popular Music Studies. But before all this I want to make a few introductory remarks about the motivations for our work.

### Motivations

As some of you will know, Bruce and I first began discussion these issues after Bruce gave a paper at the Sydney conference in 1999 which examined the

brutalisation of Australian convicts in the early days of the colony. This chimed with some reading I'd been doing on the use of music in the conflict in Yugoslavia. So we began talking.

As we did it became clear that we were both interested in what we later termed ‘the darker side of the use of popular music’ (Cloonan and Johnson 2002: 27). I want to say a few things here about why I think this is necessary.

The first is that perhaps of necessity Popular Music Studies began in somewhat celebratory mode. As part of its battle to become a legitimate area of academic study, early pioneers tended to plat up its positive aspects. Thus for example, Simon Frith ends *The Ideology of Rock*, by saying that rock ‘will remain fun and the source of ... power and joy’ (Frith 1978: 209) and cited *Rolling Stone*’s claim that Rock Music is “the magic that can set you free” (ibid: 144). Similarly, John Street say towards the end *Rebel Rock* that the music can create a socialism ‘built of sensations and images, inspired by pleasure and personal desires’ (Street 1986: 221).

Of course, both of these authors have written copiously about the downsides of popular music as well and it's

important not to take them out of context (c.f Frith 1981). But the optimistic tone of their quotes has carried on down the years. Thus, reflecting on the Sydney 2001 IASPM conference, we argued that: 'Popular music was universally seen as a "good thing" and the conference seemed to be pervaded by a feeling that pop music was wonderful and that our job as academics was to chart, explain and examines its wonderfulness. Few seemed prepared to do the dirty on pop music (Cloonan and Johnson 2000: 1-2). But we were not alone in this as Simon Firth has also noted that:

'For popular music scholars the belief that music is a good thing has meant the celebration of the public use of ghetto blasters, an unswerving critique of any form of censorship, and even, by and large, a positive spin on the impact of rock on local music around the world in the name of hybridity and modernity' (Frith 2004: 65)

In musical terms, perhaps then most the poignant lyric is Bob Marley's "Trenchtown Rock" where he starts by proclaiming that "One good thing about music, when it hits you, you feel no pain". Sorry, but I'm going to show that that's not always the case. I want to suggest that as well as having the potential to be "the magic that can set you free", pop can be the tyranny which imprisons you. It can be a site of *disempowerment* or of the assertion of power over the powerless. In the age of ubiquitous pop we need to reflect as well as to celebrate.

OK, so let's move on to the dark stuff and on to my typology.

### **Music and the deliberate infliction of pain: a typology**

I want to suggest that this can be seen in taking place in four main ways: music used in forms of control, music used to disorientate, music used to humiliate and, finally, music used in torture. I want, however, to make it clear that this point that all these areas overlap and interact. I don't really see them as discrete, more as ways of thinking things through. Lets begin with music being used to control.

#### **Control**

There are at least two examples of this, both relating to retailing. The first of these concerns use of music in consumer outlets. As well as making sure that the right ambience is set (c/f, Negus 1996:34, North and Hargreaves 1996, Petridis 2002) some studies have shown that music can influence consumer behaviour. This might not be deliberately inflicting pain, but it's hardly the magic that set you free either.

Music has also been found to effect behaviour in restaurants where customers seemed to spend more if classical music was playing than they did if muzak was (Burke 2003). In another example an experiment found that if French or German music was played in

a supermarket, then sales of wine from the relevant country increased (Meek 2000).

The second is the use of music to deter certain customers. Across the globe music is used to disperse gangs of youths. Examples include:

- a branch of MacDonalds in Southampton, England, using classical music to 'calm clam yobs who plague its customers. Instead of Eminem, they will hear artists such as Nigel Kennedy playing Vivaldi and Mozart' (Observer, 16 June 2002, p.6).
- Stoke on Trent Council playing Beethoven's 9th Symphony continuously in car parks to deter rough sleepers (Guardian, 30 July 2003, p.5).
- London Underground began playing classical music on parts of its East London line which had been plagued by petty vandalism, verbal and physical abuse. The result of installing CD players in the public announcement system was that incidents fell by 33% (Metronet, 2005; *Guardian*, 13 January 2005, p.6).

According to Metronet, which is responsible for the upkeep of the Underground system: 'The music has reduced the number of youngsters hanging around the stations – probably because it is "uncool" for them to be

around this kind of music. Psychologists who research the link between music and behaviour say "unfamiliarity" is the key to success'. Similar moves had also been taken by Tyne and Wear Metro (Jackson 2005). The press release which accompanied the announcement was of the London Underground initiative was headlined "music to deter yobs by" – which seems to be a compilation album in the making!

Two months after this hit the press it was reported that the St.James' Church in Carlisle, north England, was considering playing classical music on near its steps to deter drinkers who gathered there. The local vicar was quoted as saying that Bach and Handel appeared to be "particularly effective". His action, it was reported, 'follows the more commercial action of the Co-op, which has been playing classical music successfully deter youths as its "problem stores" for a year' (Seenan 2005).

So music can be used to enhance the consumer experience or deter particular consumers. In the latter case this is done by making them feel uncomfortable in some way. It is a small step from this to making them feel disorientated and that's the next thing I want to look at.

### **Disorientation**

There have been several examples of this, especially in war or conflict situations. Perhaps the most famous



is the use of example of this came in December 1989 when US troops played loud music at the Vatican embassy in Panama City in order to disorientate the fugitive General Noriega (Potter 1998: 37-38, *Guardian*, 4 July 1998, Ronson 2004:203) A list of the songs played is available on the US National Security archive website. (See Ronson 2004b: 133-135 and 2004c: 17-18 for the alleged origins of the use of music as disorientation).

Apparently inspired by this the FBI then used music and other noise in order to disorientate members of the Branch Davidian sect in the Waco siege of March 2003. According to one account this included: 'the sounds of Tibetan Buddhist chants, screeching bagpipes, crying seagulls, helicopter motor blades, dentist drills, sirens, dying rabbits, a train and Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Were made For Walking"' (Ronson 2004b: 198). One of the few survivors noted that the music was played in a distorted way (ibid: 199)

Then in May 2003 it was revealed that US forces in Iraq were using music to disorientate prisoners held in shipping containers. Songs played included Metallica's "Enter Sandman" and, most notoriously, Barney The Dinosaur's "I Love You Song" along with songs from Sesame Street (Borger 2003, Ronson 2004b: 130-132, 2004c: 17-18). The story was broken by *Newsweek* and I will deal with the reaction to it later.

*Newsweek* quoted a US Seargeant Mark Hadell as explaining: "These people haven't heard heavy metal before. If you play it for 24 hours, your brain and body start to slide, your train of thought slows down and your will is broken... that's when we come in and talk to them" (Borger 2003).

So one way of disorientating via music is to play strange sounds. Another appears to be messing around with the familiar. It is clear from various accounts that experiments with disorientation are taking place at the US holding camp at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. According to the account of one UK detainee, Jamal al-Harith, who was released, ordinary CDs were played to him. They included 'a girl band doing Fleetwood Mac covers, Kris Kristofferson's Greatest Hits and Matchbox Twenty' (Ronson 2004a: 29, 2004b: 175-188). The latter band was also apparently used in Iraq, prompting questions about whether this was used systematically (Ronson 2004b: 179-180). In Jamal's case this followed use of other noises (ibid: 177).

Two things are worth noting here. The first is that the unfamiliar can be torturous. Thus, back in the 1860s "torturous" was exactly the phrase used by a British critic to describe the music produced by a touring a Japanese music group (Mihara 1998: 134). It was also cited by London Underground in their efforts to disperse

youths as they commented that they will do so because 'the music is unfamiliar to them' (*Guardian*, 13 January 2005, p.6). The second is that the familiar can also be used if it used in an apparently incongruous way. As one former Guantanamo guard consulted over Jamal's case said: 'They were probably just fucking with his head' (Ronson 2004b: 187). Once again we move away from "the magic that sets you free".

### Humiliation

Another way in which detainees can be mistreated with music is in processes of humiliation. Several examples of this can be cited.

In February 2000 it was reported that members of the Ivory Coast football team returning from an unsuccessful Africa Cup trip were detained in a military barracks and forced to sing the national anthem (B. Johnson, posting to IASPM list 8 February 2000). A follow story reported that jaywalkers in the Philipines were given the choice of paying a fine or singing the national anthem (A-V Karja posting to IASPM list 11 February 2000).

These might be seen as relatively trivial, but forced singing can be part of ritual humiliation and there have been several disturbing examples of this: in the wars in the former Yugoslavia, we find the following example of how Serbian forces made Croatian prisoners sing

the Yugoslav national anthem. The last verse which includes the line "Damned the one who betrays his homeland" had to be particularly emphasized (Pettan 1998: 18). In other cases, confirmed by Amnesty International and Human Rights watch, prisoners were forced to sing Chetnik songs and other songs reviling their own leaders (ibid).

In June 2000 it was reported that a young female member of the Movement for Democratic Change in the Midlands province of Zimbabwe was visited by supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF party who punished their support for the MDC by frog-marching her and her husband to a tree, tying them to it, beating them for five hours with machetes, batons and axe handles and forcing them to chant ZANU-PF slogans and to sing its liberation songs ([www.mdczimbabwe.com/free/ai000608txt.htm](http://www.mdczimbabwe.com/free/ai000608txt.htm)). A year later staff at a private school outside Harare were forced by militants to 'sing and dance in praise of the regime' (Carroll 2001).

In May 2005 Heather Bennett, a white Movement for Democratic Change, had been 'abducted while four months pregnant and forced to dance and sing pro-Mugabe songs in the rain while a machete was held to her throat. She had to watch two of their workers being murdered, another raped and her children's cat burnt alive. She miscarried hours later' (Martin 2005).

In Genoa on 21 July 2001, peaceful G8 summit protestors sleeping in a school were violently attacked by the police. Several received serious injuries. Some were taken to a holding centre at Bolzento where, it is alleged, they were made to stand spreadeagled (often despite their injuries), threatened with rape and made to shout slogans in support of the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini. They were also allegedly made to sing a song which went:

*“Un, due, tre. Viva Pinochet.*

*Quattro, cinque, sei. A morte gli ebrei.”*

*One, two, three. Long live Pinochet.*

*Four, five, sic. Death to the Jews” (Shabi and*

*Hooper 2005: 24, see also Harris et al*

*2001: 16, Kelso 2001).*

Victims were beaten if they did not sing (Morris and Carroll 2001).

In July 2004 it was reported that:

*‘While African women in Darfur were being raped by the Janjaweed militiamen, Arab women stood nearby and sang for joy’ (Vasager and MacAskill 2004) and encouraged the atrocities.*

*These singers were also said to have ‘stirred up racial hatred against black civilians and the celebrated the humiliation of their enemies’. They*

*accompanied the attackers and sang songs praising the government and scoring the black villagers (ibid). One victim said: ‘They are happy when they rape. They sing when they rape and they tell that we are just slaves and that they can do with us how they wish” (BBC News 2004).*

In November the same year came reports that Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint had forced a Palestinian violinist Wissam Tayem, to “Play something sad” while soldiers made fun of him. Some Israeli commentators drew parallels between this and the ways in which Jewish musicians were forced to play music in concentration camps (McGreal 2004).

These horrific incidents show that music has been used in appalling ways. It has also been used in acts of torture.

### **Torture**

Most chillingly of all are the accounts of music in Nazi concentration camps, who guards used music in order to humiliate and torture prisoners. In a truly terrible “example, violinist Ota Sattler was forced to play Jot A Jid Weible “A Jew had A Wife as his wife and three sons filed past him to the gas chambers at Birkenau (Jeffries 2004: 5).

In another example linking music and torture, a forest near that Struthof detention centre in France became

know as the “forest of songs” because of the screams of those tortured by the Nazis (Carroll 2002). Classical music over loudspeakers accompanied torture there (ibid). There is evidence of this in music accompanying torture Serbia (Pettan 1996: 18).

In Saudi Arabia, Ron Jones, a British businessman who was tortured until he falsely confessed to a bombing reported on his release that on one occasion ‘they put me blindfolded in a swivel chair and spun me round singing and then whacked me each time the chair went round’ (Kelson 2002). More recently Micheal Moore’s “Farenheight 9.11” showed that US soldiers played music including the Bloodhound Gang’s song “Fire Water Burn”, which includes the line “Burn motherfucker burn”, whilst they were in battle. So music has accompanied extreme forms of violence, as part of torture and of warfare.

### Media Reactions

Some of the cases just cited are so horrific that I feel uneasy in discussing them. However, at the other end of the spectrum it is noticeable how often the use of music to cause pain is seen as humorous. At the lower end of the scale is the use of loud music to cause pain to neighbours. What is notable here is that this is often seen as humorous by perpetrators. For example, a Jane Carruthers who was fined in 1993 for constantly blaring

Jim Reeves songs 18 hours a day in Poole Dorset, posed for photographers with tapes of the musician (Renton 1993, see also Weale 1993). The same year Diane Welfar, who was fined £12,500 at Leicester magistrates for playing records very loud despite a noise abatement order and ten visits, said after being found guilty: “This seems like a joke to me” (*Independent* 3 July 1993). In 1997 after she was given probation for palying Beatles and Rolling Stones records so loud that her neighbours had to move, Lisa Wilson said that her message to her neighbours was “Long live rock and roll” (Wilson 1997).

But media reactions are also indicative of a failure to take the issue of noise and pain seriously. Thus in the Carruthers case the journalist joked that Jim Reeves, being dead, was unavailable but that his songs “Guilty” and “Distant Drums” seemed to be appropriate under the circumstances (Renton 1993). Reflecting on the fact that Billy Ray Cyrus was amongst those whose music was used at Waco, journalist Andrew Mueller opined that this ‘takes this sort of punishment well and truly into the realm of the cruel and unusual’ and commented that ‘Speaking for myself, about 15 minutes of Dido’s dishwater wittering, even at a mild volume, would induce a confession to just about anything’ (Meuller 2004, see also Jam 2005).

I should also note that when I tell colleagues about what I’m working on and especially about music being used to intimidate detainees, their reaction is generally to

tell me what music *they* couldn't stand. And, of course, there is a humorous element to all this. However, that humour should itself be taken seriously.

When the Barney story broke, the *Guardian* headlined an article "Not the barney song". This claimed that 'if Barney had been walking the earth when the Geneva conventions were drawn up, there would be laws against this sort of thing', but claimed that having to play children's songs repeatedly was worse: 'Just imagine how effective this could be on those filthy Ba-athist henchmen'.

It concluded:

*'So pity the poor prisoners, but we parents are made of sterner stuff. I suspect that that coalition of forces have not yet made full use of their potential psy-ops armoury. You had better believe that no one will be able to keep Saddam Hussein's whereabouts secret once the British interrogators employ their secret weapon: a battered audi tape of the theme to Merlin the Magic Puppy' (Hann 2003).*

Moreover, he first broke the Metallica/Barney story, *Newsweek*, journalist Adam Poire was told to write it up in a humorous way (Ronson 2004b: 131). This is how it was reported on NBC (here a video clip was played).

The same video features Christopher Cerf, composer of Sesame Street songs, joking with his lawyer about what royalties he might be due.

As the British journalist Jon Ronson noted: 'Barney had become the funniest joke of the war' (Ronson 2004c: 18) as various media outlets ran it as a funny story and the internet filled with people saying what *their* idea of musical torture was. Meanwhile Human Rights Watch was expressing concern that it was making all stories about interrogations into a joke (ibid) and that those expressing concern were in danger of being accused of not getting the joke (Ronson 2004b: 154). That lasted until photos of mistreated prisoners appeared. Suddenly the abuse of prisoners stopped being funny.

### Concluding Thoughts on Implications

I want to start this bit by admitting to two things. The first is that many of the examples here are drawn from musics not generally considered to be popular and this is one of the things we will have to deal with as we carry on the research. The other is that the demarcation lines in the ways in which music is used need more consideration.

Having done that, I think that there are three initial messages that come from what we're doing – that (popular) music can disempower as well as empower,

that the use of music in violence necessitates some rethinking of the role of identity in popular music and that we need to think of ways of studying all this.

To deal with disempowerment first. To be confronted with another person's music at a great volume and to have no power over this is one of the most *disempowering* activities imaginable. This is related to the fact that we increasingly live in societies where music is almost ubiquitous. One thing that impresses me is that most attempts to control music as noise, other than at venues, have come in housing – and most often in public housing. But the problem of noise comes at a time when the privatisation of public space has been increasing. Music as background noise now accompanies all sorts of activities that it never used to. Has anyone ever tried to change shopping mall policy? (one of the areas where Pipedown works). In most instances I've come across the attempts to control noise in malls and other public places have involved causing some sorts of pain to unwanted (potential) customers. The pain we have to endure simply to buy groceries goes unchecked.

Indeed the whole problem of the misuse of music is part of a much bigger debate about what it is to be a social citizen in the modern world. In terms of identity, popular music has often been cited as a place in which identity is asserted (c/f Frith 1987 and 1996) and this has generally

been held to be a positive thing, partly because of its association with empowerment. However, the use of music to inflict pain involves the almost total assertion of one person or group's identity and the almost total denial of it to another group.

So part of the reason why the (mis)use of music is so painful is because music is so entwined in identity. To be subjected to another's music is to have another's identity foisted on us, to be made to sing another's song is another aspect of this and to have "our" music defiled is a grievous pain. It is exactly because music is wrapped up in identity that it can be used to perform horrors be denying that identity or to show it as inferior to another. Singing my enemy's song is an admission that my identity is less important than their's. Similarly the kids dispersed from underground stations when they hear classical music because it is an affront to their identity, their very sense of being.

In terms of studying all this, more work is needed which links Popular Music Studies and the psychology of music. If we are to understand music and pain, then some thought about the nature of pain is needed. The fact that psychologists have increasingly looked at notions of musical identity (c/f MacDonald *et al* 2002) perhaps gives scope for creative fusion here.

My final point is that all this is highly political because it is about power – its use and the problems resulting



from a lack of it. Music is organised sound and the power to control sound has been, and is increasingly, a key part of political power. As Attali (1977: 6) notes: its appropriation and control is reflection of power, that it is essentially political'. Moreover, he noted, "In its biological reality, noise is a source of pain" (ibid: 27), The inability to control our acoustic environment is one of the battlegrounds of contemporary society. The fact that popular music is present in this battle should provide food for thought for all PM scholars.

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## Cultural Synchronization: Hip Hop with Chinese Characteristics?

Jeroen de Kloet

*"Oppose the dissemination of Capitalism. Resist  
spiritual pollution!"*

*Propaganda Slogan Chinese Communist Party*

### The West is the Best?

**T**hese words of Jim Morrison echo in my mind when reflecting upon popular music practices in China.

The words do not point at an evaluative judgement on my site – on the contrary, for more than ten years, I keep on listening to Chinese rock and pop music. They do point at the position of Chinese musicians who have to face the constant danger of being labelled mere copycats as the perceived origin and authenticator of popular music is located in the West, at least in popular (and, unfortunately so, also academic) discourse. There are sufficient philosophical reasons to mistrust the Western claim to be the origin of rock, as Foucault reminds us, “what is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.” (Foucault 1984, p. 79)

Elsewhere I have shown how Chinese musicians, under

the scrutinizing eyes of both Western and Chinese journalists and academics, must bear the authenticating proof for their music, a burden that is often translated into an eager Sinification, by invoking in sound and image references to either “ancient China” or “Communist China” (De Kloet 2005a). In this paper I aim to show how, under the accelerated forces of globalization, such localizing aspirations become increasingly polluted. In this paper will analyze the rise of Chinese hip hop culture since 2000 - a culture that provides a case in point to analyze the pollution of cultural forms.

It has become by now a truism that globalization involves processes of localization. Different authors have coined different terms, Hannerz (1986) speaks of creolisation, Appadurai (1996) of indiginization, Robertson has invented the rather ugly neologism glocalisation (Robertson 1995), and Bhabha (1994) speaks of hybridity. I will interpret the Chinese appropriation of hip hop as an act of cultural translation, an act that involves a *betrayal* of both the original, as well as of the cultural context in which rock is appropriated. This betrayal turns out to be most conspicuous for Chinese hip hop – polluting, as I will argue, both the adjective “Chinese” as well as the noun “hip hop.” It is in particular this proliferation of sonic dirt that is important, as it

directs me, following Regev (2003), to read Chinese rock in general, and Chinese hip hop in particular, as a showcase of *banal cosmopolitanism* (Beck 2003).

In my attempt to unpack contemporary sonic translations, this paper will thus reflect upon the changes in Chinese rock culture since the late 1990s. After briefly introducing some guiding concepts of this paper, globalization, translation, betrayal and pollution, I will move on to discuss the emergence of Hip Hop in mainland China. Despite their celebrations of Chineseness, I interpret Chinese Hip Hop as a culture that renders any essentialized idea of Chineseness inherently impossible, and can be read as a possible counterforce of (Chinese) nationalisms that are currently very much *en vogue*.<sup>1</sup> Due to a constant synchronization with the West, Chinese hip hop is not only intrinsically cosmopolitan - it can also be read as an act of sonic betrayal of both assumed origin and of the context in which it is appropriated. I will argue that the subsequent proliferation of dirt puts both the adjective Chinese as well as the noun hip hop into an ontological crisis.

### Notes on Translation

Globalization involves a constant dialectics of the global and the local. Global cultural forms are reworked, localized or indigenized (Appadurai 1996). In particular music seems to globalize well, considering the worldwide popularity of acts like Madonna, U2 and genres like Hip

Hop. The flow of sounds is anything but even, instead, global power imbalances make Western sounds travel much easier when compared to non-Western sounds, contemporary non-Western music is often lumped together under the generic label 'world music'. When employing the notion of translation I wish to include both the assumed 'origin' as well as the alleged 'copy' in the analysis. Drawing on Walter Benjamin, cultural theorist Rey Chow warns us against the danger of reifying the origin as the real, most truthful source when analyzing cultural translations. Translation not only refers, etymologically, to "tradition", it also refers to betrayal (Chow 1995, p. 182). To insist on interpreting Chinese rock as translation is to insist on the question of betrayal and, in my interpretation, pollution.

This requires, however, further reflection on the relationship between the "original" and its translation. "It is assumed that the value of translation is derived solely from the 'original', which is the authenticator of itself and of its subsequent versions" (Chow 1995, p. 184). Inspired by Benjamin's essay on translation, Chow argues instead to interpret translation as "primarily a process of *putting together* (...) a real translation is not only that which translates word by word but also that which translates literally, depthlessly, naively" (Chow 1995, pp. 185-186).

Consequently, translations may produce meanings that remain invisible or unspeakable in the 'original'.



"Translation is a process in which the "native" [here: "Western rock music"] should let the foreign affect, or infect, itself, and vice versa" (Chow 1995, p. 189). The native is infected by the foreign, just like the foreign is infected by the native – thereby polluting the 'origin' that has never been pure in itself. A translation consequently transforms and infects, contaminates as it were - rather than copies - an already and necessarily impure original. In the words of Benjamin: "a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux" (Benjamin 1969, p. 81).

This idea of translation involves a betrayal of both the 'origin' and the 'foreign'. It pollutes, in other words, neat and tidy categories that structure reality. This leads me to the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas who, in her book *Purity and Danger*, explains how societies are structured around specific notions of dirt and cleanliness. A proliferation of dirt is unsettling as it is disruptive of the moral order of society (Tavener 2000), or, as Douglas writes, "dirt offends against order" (Douglas 1966, p. 2). This makes an analysis of the dirt that emerges in the act of sonic translation all the more urgent. "We should now force ourselves to focus on dirt. Defined in this way it appears as a residual category, rejected from our normal schemes of classifications. In trying to focus on it we run against our strongest mental habit.

For it seems that whatever we perceive is organised into patterns for which we, the perceivers, are largely responsible. (...) Uncomfortable facts which refuse to be fitted in, we find ourselves ignoring or distorting so that they do not disturb these established assumptions. (...) But it is not always an unpleasant experience to confront ambiguity. There is a whole gradient in which laughter, revulsion, and shock belong at different points and intensities. The experience can be stimulating. (...) Aesthetic pleasure arises from the perceiving of inarticulate forms." (Douglas 1966, pp. 45-46) In using the notion of pollution to grasp the translation of sounds towards different cultural contexts, I wish to circumvent the somehow celebratory connotations attached to the idea of hybridity (Bhabha 1994), and point to the ambiguities and ambivalences occurring in acts of cultural translation.

### **2008 – Welcome to China?**

Chinese Hip Hop marks a significant break with the New Sound Movement that set the scene of Chinese rock in the late 1990s (see De Kloet 2005a and 2005b), a break caused by the intensified pollution of in particular the spatial dimension of rock culture. Hip Hop is a sound that seems to globalize particularly smoothly, for example, South-African youth appropriates it to criticize life in the ghetto, just as Dutch Moroccan youth use it to criticize the governments' ethnic integration policies

(Mitchell 2001). It is surprising that Chinese Hip Hop only emerged, roughly, around 2000 – at least 15 years after the rise of rock in China and more or less twenty years since the perceived birth of Hip Hop in the U.S. Most famous – and still forbidden in the Mainland – is the Hong Kong collective *LazyMuthaFucka*, whose filthy, Cantonese lyrics are full of anger and societal critique (Ma, 2002). Hip Hop has gradually gained more ground in Mainland China. According to a report in Channel V magazine, “If the youth of the 80s were obsessed with heavy metal, the youth of the 90s with punk, then from end 90s up to the present moment, it is hip hop that dominates the aesthetics and even life attitudes of contemporary youth. They wear hip hop clothes, they choose hip hop records, and they spend every weekend at hip hop parties.”<sup>2</sup> [p.100]

In 2004, Scream Records released the first albums of Yin T'sang and Sketch Krim, and New Bees the album by Kungfoo. In April of the same year, a third Hip Hop battle was organised in Shanghai, the final of which staged MC Black Bubble from Shanghai against MC Webber from Beijing – one of Yin T'sang members. Resembling the power imbalance when it comes to non-mainstream music, DJ Webber from Beijing won the battle. The atmosphere during the battle was bewildering, the crowd – mostly dressed in oversized hip hop outfits – sang along during the performance of Kungfoo (*er ling ling ba, welcome to China*) and encouraged the female

rappers from Wuhan that joined the battle. The long hair, black shirts, piercings and tattoos that I come across when attending a rock gig were all strikingly absent here. Hip Hop culture in China operates rather remotely from the rock circle. Although the releases come from ‘indie’ labels that also publish rock albums, there is little interaction between rock and hip hop in China.

Chinese hip hop, even more so than rock, pushes the question of cultural globalization to the limelight. Hip hop has its perceived origin in the Bronx of New York, an origin that is moreover quintessentially ethnic. What happens when such a sound travels to a place like China? Chinese Hip Hop provides an important case in point to unpack the dialectics between localization and, what I would like to call, synchronization of popular cultures. With synchronization I refer to the increased *speed* with which Chinese musicians link up with their most conspicuous constitutive outside: The West. Several characteristics of the Beijing Hip Hop scene attest to the importance of cultural synchronization, and its dialectics with localization. I would like to single out four elements: the involvement of non-Chinese, the lyrics of the bands, the role of the Internet and the intricate link between the Hip Hop subculture and mainstream popular Chinese culture.

First, more so than in rock culture, foreigners play a conspicuous role in Chinese hip hop. Yin T'Sang provides a good example, only one out of its four

members is Chinese: MC Webber is a Beijing resident, two members are white Americans, one is an overseas Chinese from Canada. Sketch Krime, who moved from Yunnan to Beijing, works with four MCs from France, Britain, Japan and the U.S. The mixture of nationalities is negotiated in different ways: whereas in Yin Ts'ang band members seem eager to perform a Chinese identity by using a Chinese name and rapping in Chinese, the guest MCs on Sketch Krime's CD rap in English, French (*Beijing, mon territoire!*) and Japanese.

Second, the lyrics of both bands are focusing on everyday life in Beijing, yet, whereas the Chinese lyrics of Yin Ts'ang obscure whether this concerns a "foreign" view or "inside" views, the language choice on Sketch Krime's CD underscores this is an outside view. The drive to localization is clear in several songs of Yin Ts'ang – that carry titles such as "Welcome to Beijing", Beijing Bad boy", "SARS" and "Yellow Road." In their song S.A.R.S., Yin Ts'ang reflects upon the days that the virus controlled Beijing, they rap:

*"Frequently wash you hands. Wear a mask, stay away from me, wear gloves, stay physically fit, don't use your hands to touch your face, I have come to invade, call me SARS, I was born in Guangzhou, in that climate I developed a vicious demeanor, who would have guessed, that it would go this far, little old me could make everyone so scared."*

The reflection upon everyday life in Beijing localizes the sound of hip hop, along with the language of the lyrics. In Kungfoo's lyrics, mainly teenage problems are being discussed. To some, this is merely a tactic as to ensure airplay on radio and TV, at the same time it shows how hip hop is localized: in China it does not make much sense for Han Chinese to rap about ethnic discrimination (it is remarkable that until now, the ethnic pull of the rock culture as discussed in Baranovich (2003) does not exist for hip hop), nor about the problems of drug use. Gangstarap – with its references to violence in urban ghettos – is strikingly absent in Chinese Hip Hop culture, just as the sexism and materialism of Western Hip Hop is far less conspicuous. Consequently, the choice of topics in Chinese Hip Hop is more mundane, closer linked to the street, rather than street life in the ghettos.

Third, the Internet plays a decisive role in the proliferation of Chinese hip hop culture. Through several websites, Hip Hoppers get in touch with one another and exchange their latest homemade raps. Peer to peer software enables them to download the latest tracks from the West.

Fourth, urban magazines present the latest images in fashion, the new bands from the U.S. along with images of graffiti in Guangzhou. Compared to Japan and South Korea, China's Hip Hop culture is still considered to be minimal, according to Dana Burton, but its size is increasing rapidly. A large part of the culture represents a fashion statement more than a "real" Hip Hop identity. In

the words of editor Himm Wong from urban magazine:

*"It's hard to say now, because most Chinese youth are just seeking the superficial kind of culture, and real people, those who study the spirit of hip hop, are quite few. Also there is a certain relationship between hip hop and politics, like rock and roll, it can exist in Beijing but may not be the mainstream."*

Due to the speed of new technologies and the mobility of people, synchronization plays a constitutive role in Chinese Hip Hop. The result of such synchronization is what I like to call cultural pollution.

### **Banal Cosmopolitans**

The case of Chinese hip hop shows that it becomes increasingly unclear what nationality lies behind a production, what cultural influences have been most decisive and what role the floating signifier "Chineseness" has played – if any. It is my contention that such practices of cultural pollution challenge nationalistic longings. I consider the increased pollution in Chinese rock culture, in particular in Hip Hop, a challenging, creative force. Its influence increased significantly with the rise of *dakou* culture, and continued to do so with even increased (and digitized) speed afterwards. The West is not anymore out there, instead, it has become part and parcel of Chinese

rock culture – a predicament that mirrors contemporary urban Chinese culture, in which China and its Others are synchronized day after day – propelling a dialectics of localization and synchronization.

The translation of Hip Hop from its assumed origin, the West, to China, signifies a moment in which both the assumed origin is polluted as well as the "Chinese" context in which hip hop is appropriated. The origin, as Chinese hip hop dislodges key elements of hip hop culture - ethnicity, rebellion and class - from the musical genre, thereby showing that Hip Hop is anything but a univocal genre. The Chineseness is put into an ontological crisis given, most dominantly, the cosmopolitan aura of Hip Hop, as well as the empirical observations made in this paper: the West is deeply implicated in the making and promotion of Hip Hop in China. Chinese hip hoppers can be considered banal cosmopolitans, an identity position described by Beck as one in which "everyday nationalism is circumvented and undermined and we experience ourselves integrated into global processes and phenomena." (Beck, 2002) When read as an act of translation that necessarily - following Benjamin and Chow - involves an act of betrayal, and thereby a moment in which dirt will proliferate - Chinese Hip Hop challenges both what constitutes Hip Hop culture as well as what constitutes Chineseness. Chinese Hip Hop deserves to be heard by Chinese audiences to challenge their sense of Chineseness, but for the

same token by Western audiences, to challenge their colonial gaze on China when it comes to popular music, in particular rock.

## Endnotes

1 A distinction can be made between official nationalism, as propagated by the Chinese Communist Party to secure national unity, and resulting in policies and propaganda campaigns, and an unofficial nationalism. The latter involves more spontaneous emotional outbursts of Chinese vis-à-vis, for example, Japan or the U.S. often following specific incidents like the NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999 (Rose 2001). The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive; yet, the Party for sure does not welcome strong patriotic outbursts of its citizens as they may disturb the harmony so much cherished by the CCP. For this paper, it suffices to observe that in China, nationalism has very much replaced Communism as the binding ideology of the Chinese nation-state, but it remains a contested ideology, ridden with contradictions and ambiguities.

2 [V] Magazine, number 324, 15 July 2004 article called 'The power of Hip Hop' [p.100-101]

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## Some Reflexions on Song Theory, Signed Song and Traditional Song

Jean N. De Surmont

In this paper I will aim to present results of a research which deals with the word French « chanson » and the song theory. My observations will be conducted within a metalinguistic and a linguistic corpora. My corpora was largely constituted by works published in France in addition to other countries in Europe. The study of European dictionaries has shown me how important has become the French song culture in German dictionaries (in which appears sometimes *chansonnier* and *chanson de geste* and in Italian dictionaries in which appears *chansonnier* as a synonym of *cantaautore*). This presentation contain some diachronical and theoretical observations. The research appears to be the first significant research conducted about the vocabulary of song in French. This will finally lead us to present the theoretical vocabulary that we have created to study song phenomena.

The study of *song phenonema* refers to two aspects of song activity : *cantio speculativa* and *cantio practica*. The first one refers to all theoretical aspects of song : the publication of an essay, an article on song, a lecture or a paper at the IASPM conference, the jury of a contest, etc. The charts of the Billboard magazine and other magazines as *Radio Activité* in Québec, are also concerned with *cantio speculativa*. *Cantio speculativa*

deals with all aspects of song that are not related with performance. On the other hand, *cantio practica* concerns performance in general. Many song phenomenon might be regarded as part of the *cantio practica* : festival, live radio performance like in the 1920's, etc. Studying the epistemology of song phenomenon implies the analysis the relationships between *cantio practica* and *cantio speculative*.

If I have created the word *song phenomena*, it is because it allows my reflection to cover both aspects of performance and theories regarding of song activity. We can observe many meanings in French of the word *chanson* (noise, story, title of book of poetry, etc.). This polysemy also exists in English and the word *chanson* has produced famous expressions such as "It's always the same story" equivalent of "C'est toujours la même chanson" or "C'est toujours le même refrain". The eclectism of meanings involves considering only the prototype meaning of *song*, the one that deals with a vocal performance. The genre song is divided in two main categories : *traditional song* and *signed song*<sup>1</sup>. Traditional song generally falls within the field of social anthropology. While *signed song* may falls within the fields of musicology, sociology or literary studies, according to the point of view chosen by the theoreticians.

*Signed song*, on the other hand is a song that is created in an editorial context and has a known songwriter or a known composer. This distinction between these two song phenomenon concerns the way of transmission of text and music. *Traditional song* is a song which is transmitted from generations to generations. In order to study popular music correctly, it is important to distinguish its object precisely. Perhaps more than ever before, the Anglo-Saxon's theory was influencing on the study of song. The syntagm *popular music* indicates a field of music formed in the 70's whose object of study is the song, pop music, rock, jazz, sound tracks, advertising, etc. The study of *signed song* generally falls within the field of popular music (musicology) in Anglo-Saxon epistemology, but within French culture it is not necessarily included in musicology. I have been interested for a few years already in the theoretical problems raised in the study of song. During that time I have seen the problems raised in the diachronical study of *song object*. I have created the syntagm *song object* to designate the prototypical meaning of song, which means the sung poetry (see glossary). The diachronical study of the song phenomena makes it possible to distinguish hybrid song objects that can be understood starting from certain features which define the generic interbreedings. The first problem is to determine the nature of the song object. Still should it be known that under the Anglo-Saxon influence (in particular Richard

Middleton (1990)) the song object is considered slightly differently in Quebec than in France. France seems less permeable to the Anglo-Saxon's influence. Indeed, in Quebec, the study of the signed song is dominant in faculties of music, sometimes included within the field of popular music, as at McGill University or the University of Montreal. I consider the *song object* within the field of the *popular music* but also within all the field considered in *cantology*. In my doctorate thesis, I have analysed the ambivalence of the polysemic syntagm *popular music* (De Surmont 2001, 371-398). In the faculty of humanities, it is considered much more as a paraliterary phenomenon. In the faculty of music, the inclusion of the *song object* only within the only field of musicology assimilating it to a big set of different aesthetics like jazz, blues as song correspond to an Anglo-Saxon point of view and seems not fitting well for periods when song was not *popular* in the sense it is used i.e. /commercial/. For this reason, Stéphane Hirschi proposed the creation of a "science" named *cantology* (since he builds the word using the suffix *-logy* which induces a scientific practice). This approach gathers the fields of sociology, musicology and literary studies in the study of the song object. This refers to a vision of the study of the song object by regarding it as a whole without locating this study within the branches of human sciences. Moreover, Hirschi has in fact only opened the way to a multidisciplinary study, so that other researchers

can propose theoretical solutions, and can consider *cantology* by comparing it to a multiplicity of fields that stuffy the song like a multisemiotic phenomenon, at the same time including the ideal song, its execution and its recording. In order to solve the problems raised by the study of the song object in diachrony, I propose creating a supradisciplinary lexicon. My approach is not that to include the song object within the restricted field of the musicology that corresponds to the study of the popular music. The reason for this is that in English and Brazilian (MPB), one understands by *popular* the “commercial aspects”, the mediatized song (Zumthor 1987) of the history of the vocal practices. The study of the song-object tends to –‘reactivate’ a semantic feature of /popular/ (traditional), by forgetting that signed songs existed which did not have anything related to traditional or commerciale songs. Mark Slobin (2003:72) writes : “In addressing the long and complex interaction of ethnomusicology and popular music studies, the word ‘popular’ needs careful consideration in approaches to the methodologies and results of research. One perspective that might facilitate an understanding of ethnomusiscological inquiry would distinguish the study of the ‘popular’ understood’ as the creation and reception of the most broadly accepted musical forms from the study of the ‘popular’ viewed as a technologically produced and managed commodity, although the two overlap in many respects”.

It thus appeared significant to me to employ the term *vocal practices* in order to indicate objects of completely different nature and that one could not always reduce to a song, would be this only because the XIXe romantic century “lived a distinction between prose, poetry and song based primarily on the nature of the inspiration” (Jean-Christmas Laurenti 2000, 35), relegating to the second plan the formal opposition. Thus one could invent poetic prose and “prosaic poetry”. In this context, to employ *song* as a generic term, is almost an abuse of language. *Vocal practices* and *song phenomenon* are not more precise, but make it possible to approach a variety of objects without too many compromises.

### **Variation and interbreedings**

It is primarily the variability of the forms and the components of the songs object that define the interbreedings. The variation is observed in the musical or linguistic component of the song object, in the rehandling of this object of origin, and thus in the interbreedings which are woven between song of oral tradition and signed song. By observing the song objects, types of variations were indexed. The treatments (wiring for sound, sound recording, handling), the environment (place where interpretation is carried out) and the play of the differences between sung prose and the lyrics can also effect on the nature of the song objects (*cf* Huguet Calmel 2000, 7-8). I will not develop these various

processing of the song objects because according to the epistemic point of view which I've adopted they do not constitute that subcategories of the processes of diffusion which induce variations.

The pieces can, according to many variables, take different forms. The study of the variation and the interbreedings leads us to observe the transformations which take place and to take account of the various *mediators* that interfere in the modification of the object, whatever the time and aesthetics<sup>2</sup>. From these observations, I have propose, in an article published in the last issue of the *Canadian University Music Review* (2003), syntagms to be used as a basis for designation of these phenomena. These theoretical proposals regarding the vocal practices can have a wide application to the corpus of song phenomena.

In my introduction, I evoked the interest the need to have a metalanguage in order to meet the needs of the researchers wanting to approach song objects of various times and styles. This requires the recourse to the neology. It is by semiotic and lexicographical research of song culture that I have developed a glossary. The internal logic between of the various traditions of the song seemed to correspond. One of the aspect of song culture that have interested me is the process of transmission and thus of transformation of song-object. For example I have named one of those *folklorisation*. Text of traditional song is prone to variations as it is

known. Even if the signed song does not respond to the same process of transmission than traditional song, it allows the songwriter to includes some elements of traditional song making then his object an hybrid object. *Signed song*, generally identifiable, generally (at the XXe century at least) makes only interpretation or the interpreter varying. An analysis of the song phenomena should consider the processes of song's diffusion and the interbreedings of aesthetics (between traditional and signed song). That seems all the more significant to us as it is on the basis of modification of the processes of diffusion that the semantic change of the word *popular song* was established. The mediatization of the song object by the radio, the type of rooms where the performance is held and the support of reproduction involves the marketing of the objects, thus making obsolete the ancient way of transmitting the traditional song. This reconfiguration of practices, including that of traditional song which has entered the commercial field, means that employing the syntagm *popular song* no longer refers to any specific practices. One will rather find it beneficial to be interested in the processes of diffusion by distinguishing *folklorisation*, *oralisation*, the transformation, *parody*, *pastiche* (more subtil than the parody), the dressing-up of a song text in order to evoke the various song phenomena of "modification" or contrary to "fixing" (solidifying) of the song objects. The linguistic and musical transformations are not

the subject of a particular characterization. The types of alternatives include melodic, rhythmic, phonetic, enonciative, phonetico-rhythmo-melodic aspects. We distinguish between the process of *oralisation* and *folklorisation* in order to clarify the phenomena common to the oral tradition and the printed tradition. Thus the *folklorized song* is a signed song that quotes thematic features of the oral tradition (sometimes as a pastiche), whereas the *oralized song* indicates only the results of a process of transmission similar to that of the oral tradition. It means that after so many different interpretation or because the type of execution (a song such as “Happy birthday” would be a typical example), the song loses its reference to the normally known composer and songwriter.

As for the multiple possibilities of intervention on a vocal piece, one seeks to give an account only of the componential transformations of the songs. We will speak in all the cases about *source melody* and *source text* (original song object) and *substrate melody* and *substrate text* (transformed song object). This points out the tropes in the medieval liturgy and the “fragments” in the operas of XVII<sup>e</sup> and XVIII<sup>e</sup> centuries. As for traditional song, two forms of intervention on the text are distinguished. First of all, the *sweetening* (“edulcoration”), which consists in modifying a “fragment” of the original text in order to attenuate the immoral contents. The text which takes place instead

of previous words is called the *contrefactum* in this context. The *contrafacture* consists, says Zumthor, in adapting a new text to the melody and rhythmic shape of another text (2000:131). Then, the *substitution* which consists in replacing a segment of the version of the oral tradition and imposing another version by mechanical or printed reproduction. One also employs in the world of the media the term *adaptation*, rather vague concepts, which return to the fact that an artist takes again a song of another artist in its entirety (cover version<sup>3</sup>), by often using another aesthetics to shape the musical line. This should not be confused with an arrangement which does not imply an unfolding of object.

The degree of intervention of the interpreter on vocal poetry “source” can also vary. The use of *rehandling* (*remaniement*) in Romanists circle is relatively widespread to indicate the modifications which the form of the *chanson de geste* undergoes. Laforte (1981, 2, 43) proposes also *transplantation* (“greffe”), referring to the changes of *laisse* which a song undergoes when two songs are welded to form only one. Let us note also the use of *contaminator* to mark the conversion, quoted by Hans-Erich Keller (1989, 308), of a *chanson de geste* in weaving song of the version of Oxford of the Song of Roland. François Suard (1993, 107) affirms in this respect that the canonical form of the poem (the sequence of versified *laisses*) remains,

but the lyric elements grew blurred with the profit of dominant narrative

By taking account of the bodies involved in the invention of the song object (singer-songwriter, lyricist, arranger, copyst, composer, performer) and on the other hand by making the separation of the components (lyrics and music) of the song object we could develop a theory of song culture and song phenomena. The industry of the song of consumption shows to us that the fame of the lyricist and performers exists often to the detriment of that of the songwriter, which does not testify to the same phenomenon, but rather of the prevalence of the text on the music in the process of setting in spectacle of the song (Chion 1982, 272). Whether or not the public singer or street singers is or is not the author of the song does not count, rather the function that this song can exert in a certain social context, and its model of transmission in its center is important (Dôle 1995, 36). The successive wave of interpreters thus comes to confirm the process of *oralisation* from the text or the music and prove that a signed song or a traditional song can respond to the same process of textual and musical transformations.

Thus, a melody line of a signed song is modified by the people, insofar as it answers the same criteria of circulation of the song object as the song of oral tradition. One could simply name it *oralized melody*. Those phenomenon has to be considered as processed of desappropriation of the song's identity.

## Conclusion

The study of interbreedings between traditional song and signed song has shown reciprocal influences between the two types of song objects. *Folklorisation* enriches a signed song by borrowing from another source song and on the other hand it's possible to observe some effects of the printed tradition on signed song. Gerard le Vot (1998, 113) proposes *registry interference* ('interference registrale') to designate these phenomena. In a longer text already mentioned I've analysed these interbreedings between signed song and traditional song. The study of those phenomenon seems more and more important as mediatised song become more open to world music aesthetics and vocal practices closer to oral tradition also benefit from mediatised song. In an other study it would also be interesting to approach the phenomenon of intergenerical *quotations* where song objects borrows for example elements from dramas or novels and to apply the typology on interbreedings to an internal analysis of musical works.



## Endnotes

1 At the beginning, I was using the syntagm literary song. The term literary, if it functions well to name the literarity of both musical and textual components of the song object composer and poet or/and songwriter), it functions on the other hand badly to indicate only the melody when it is only it which is anonymous or transformed. In fact, the problem, lies at the beginning in the use of literary in order to indicate the fact that one knows the names of the authors as much of authors of which I form part one makes since a score of years. Moreover, the term literary is connoted and gives the impression of a literary value which is not necessarily the case. For this reason, it appeared more relevant to me to employ the syntagm signed song.

2 Sometimes the arranger for instance can become as much important as the composer.

3 « Interpretations of previously written material are frequently described as 'cover versions' (Exceptions to this are songs written in a no-Tin Pan Alley style, such as Lennons' and McCartney's 'Yesterday', or rock interpretations of standards, such as Janis Joplin's 'Summertime' (with Big Brother and the Holding Company).) A cover version differs from an interpretation of a Tin Pan alley tune due to its derivation from a

recording closely identified with the style of a particular performer rather than from notated sheet music." David Brackett, 2003, 208.

## Glossary

*Folklorisation*: Process which consists of the penetration of a topic normally conveyed orally by the oral tradition in another song-object (normally a signed song) in a voluntary way or not.

*Mediators*: Agents (publisher, producer, arranger, sound engineer and distributor) acting and investing themselves significantly in the processes of composition, production, distribution and putting into circulation of the song phenomenon.

*Oralisation*: Song Phenomenon which by successive waves of interpreters or temporary or permanent deterioration by the public of the original text or the original melody of the signed song, ceases being identified to its original lyricist and/or and reaches anonymity, thus behaving the same manner as a song of oral tradition.

*Signed song*: Song-object whose identity of the author and the music composer are known and/or identifiable. In the case of the singer-songwriter a same an unique person participates to all the steps of the creation of

song-object. The song was first published and generally circulated by printing since its creation. The attribution of an author is not inevitably a criterion of the literary dimension of the transmission but it is often the condition.

*Song of oral tradition or traditional song.* Song object whose identity of the author and the composer are unknown and who generally circulated by the oral transmission, from where the multitudes poured songs.

*Song object.* Object prototypically recognized as a song-object, song poetry, vocalized. Constitute a subset of the song phenomena. It is composed of the melody and of the text. Thus the meaning of the song as only poetic forms does not constitute a song object song but a poem.

*Song Phenomenon.* Social and historiographic phenomenon, or considered as such, relating to the song object. The song phenomenon means the whole of the practices, demonstrations or traditions, and supports diffusing and mediatizing the song object, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the whole of research and publications on what is heard like a song or which influences its statute in the fields cultural, economic and symbolic system of the *entour*.

*Sweetening.* Process which consists in removing a

“fragment” of the text of origin in order to attenuate the immoral contents.

*Textual substitution.* Process which consists in replacing a segment of the version of the oral tradition and to impose of it another version by the process of solidifying due to the mechanical or printed reproduction.

*Vocal poetry.* Any type of poetic text, in free or measured versification, calling upon a vocal performance. It names at the same time the poetry of oral tradition and signed poetry, contrary to the concept of *oral poetry* proposed by Zumthor which could not gather at the same time the whole of the printed practices and those of oral tradition. It seems that Zumthor uses the adjective *oral* under the influence of the oral Anglo-Saxon/relating to the mouth/ rather meaning aural/pertaining to, but received by, the ear/([Catherine Schwarz, ed. ], 1993: s.v. oral and aural). Indeed, it is rather the auditive dimension which interests in fact Zumthor because the use of the epithet *oral* in oral poetry compares any vocal performance to the oral tradition, *i.e.* with the repertory transmitted anonymously through generations. We thus prefer the generic use of *vocal poetry* for the whole corpus which is the subject of a vocal interpretation. Lastly, I understand by *vocal poetry* the corpus of songs objects that include *linguistic vocality* (nearer to the poetry known as put in music where the musical quality of the voice is thin) or

to *musical vocality* (where poetry is sung) which makes it possible to establish the distinction between the word and the song, between spoken voice and sung voice (See Catherine Kintzler, 2000).

*Vocal practices*: Together song object, sung spoken or said works whose musical line is always present. The vocal practices are vast and can indicate the *Lied* as well, as the polyphonic songs, the airs of operetta, , the vocal plays of Inuit, etc.

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## Rock Culture in Calcutta: Globalization of Cultural Forms and Local Identity

Stéphane Dorin

### 1. Introduction

My research consists in an ethnographic approach to the notion of culture. I have already dealt with the topic of popular music in a previous research, which was about the relationship between Andy Warhol and the rock band The Velvet Underground and the transfer of symbolic capital from the former to the latter inside the socio-artistic subculture of the Factory (NY). My focus was on the creation of “genius” and “value” inside the realm of popular music. Here, I will deal with the construction of local identity in Calcutta through the re-appropriation of western forms of popular music.

When I arrived in Calcutta for the first time in 1997, I met several music lovers at the Café of the Alliance Française. What struck me first was the fact that I shared with them an interest in British and American popular musics (jazz, blues, rock, pop) and the same desire to listen to these forms of music, both in English and in my mother tongue. In this regard, Bengal and France have more in common than one could expect. So I took the decision to conduct fieldwork in Calcutta, and I started with the Bengali scene, which the press

was talking about, that is the ‘*jibonmukhi*’ music scene and the Bangla Rock bands’ phenomenon.

*Jibonmukhi* literally means ‘oriented to life’, which in fact puts stress on the fact that the new generation of Bengali musicians who have come up in the early 1990s, like Suman Chatterjee, followed by Nachiketa and Anjan Dutt, deal with the daily life and strife in Calcutta in their songs, the problems of poverty, frustration and anger experienced by youth. This is supposedly opposed to the ‘tradition’ of the Modern Bengali Songs (*Adhunik bangla gaan*), dating back to the seminal oeuvre of Rabindranath Tagore, and its romantic themes. This kind of songs is still widely popular, with performers like Hemanta Mukherjee, Shyamal Mitra and many others. But we have to put stress on the improper character of the term ‘*jibonmukhi*’ itself, which was coined by journalists and seen as just a roughly inappropriate “media term” by most of the musicians I interviewed. Instead of a revolution, it means rather an evolution inside the Bengali Modern Songs’ ‘tradition’, from romantic lyrics about love and the beauty of nature in Bengal to the urban daily life in Calcutta. For example, Cactus, a famous Calcutta-based Bangla rock band, or Anjan Dutt, have filed their recordings under the

category “Adhunika Bangla Gaan” by putting this label on the tapes.

Thus, my focus is on the acculturation process which has taken place in Calcutta, with a particular emphasis on popular music (jazz, rock and pop). The major questions revolve around the dimensions of globalization in the music scene and its effects on a particular setting in South Asia. An ethnographic approach can indeed provide some insights into the ways Anglo-American popular music is received as well as produced, among music lovers and both amateur and professional musicians. I would like to explore the sociability around music rather than musical forms themselves, upon which an ethnomusicological survey would tell us more.

As a sociologist, I concentrate on the social forms that arise from musical practices and tastes and which create cultural content in order to express local and personal views about youth, modernity, and life in general. The identification process through musical tastes and music production is also one of the aims of this research. Finally, the practical dimensions of learning music (guitar playing, drums, etc.) and the social network of the show organizers, the western musical instruments makers, the critics, the recording industries in Calcutta (the ‘art worlds’ as Howard S. Becker puts it) are also part of it.

## **2. Western and westernized forms of popular music in Calcutta**

According to M.N. Srinivas, westernization does not only mean modernization or urbanization or secularization. It subsumes all the “radical and lasting changes in Indian society and culture” produced by British rule. Thus, inasmuch as music is concerned, can we incorporate the changes which have occurred since Independence into this notion? Western and westernized forms of popular music in Calcutta are partly or wholly influenced by British and American music, since the recording industries and the media which support them are the most powerful one could imagine.

Here I have tried to represent the different forms of music one can find in Calcutta nowadays, along two axes:

- vertically, legitimacy: roughly speaking, the more the musical form is appraised by the elites and thus socially legitimized, the more you find it in the upper part of the figure; on the contrary, popular forms of music and controversial genres such as western or Hindi pop music are placed on the lower part;
- horizontally, westernization: here I just want to put stress on the influences of western genres (rock,



**Legitimacy +**

Indian classical music (Hindustani and carnatic)

western classical music

Devotional music (Kirtan, Bhajan, Ramprasadi, Bhaktigeeti)

(Art Songs)

RabindraSangeet

(Tagore songs)

'Semi-classical' music (Thumri, Ghazal)

Nazrul Geeti (Patriotic songs)

jazz, blues, country

GanaSangeet (People songs)

Old film songs (Hindi, Bengali)

American musicals

Bengali folk music (Bauls, Bhatiali (boatmen songs)

((Bhawaiya(carter songs))

Modern film songs (Hindi, Bengali)

British and American Rock

jibonmukhi music

IndiPop

Bangla Rock

International pop music

street music (Behala, flute)

Indian rock(w English lyrics)

**Legitimacy -**

jazz, pop, western folk music –cf. Tagore and his use of Irish folk music) on local musical forms.

### **The musics of Bengal**

In this respect, one can easily understand that my focus will be in the lower-right corner of the figure. But we have to encompass the social and cultural relationships in which these musical forms are included.

### **3. Bengali rock music in perspective**

In 1992, Suman Chatterjee cut his first album, released by HMV, also known as The Gramophone Company of India [1]. It is called *Tomake Chai* (I want you). It was a critical and commercial success from the beginning, even though Suman's popularity has since faded. He stands up on stage with an acoustic guitar, and a keyboard, and performs songs which deal with socio-political matters. HMV-RPG promoted other performers like Nachiketa, more working-class oriented and less elitist, or Anjan Dutt, more folk-oriented and influenced by Bruce Springsteen. In 1999, Moushumi Bhowmik released her second album - made at her own expense because she doesn't want to make any compromise – which belongs to the same trend.

This trend is commonly regarded as 'protest-songs'. Indeed, Suman criticizes religious fanaticism, Nachiketa

mocks the corrupted politicians and Moushumi deals with women condition. It is quite obvious that this trend takes its inspiration from Bob Dylan's, Pete Seeger's or Joan Baez' songs. However, this view is a simplistic by-pass (as in 1997, in a French newspaper, *Libération*, a journalist called Suman "the Bengali Bob Dylan"), because there is already a tradition of politically committed songs in Calcutta. On the one hand, we have the nationalist songs of Nazrul Islam for example, and, on the other hand, we have a tradition of communist songs, still alive with Ajit Pandey for example, even if it is not as popular as it used to be.

In this respect, we have to take into account the links between music and politics in Calcutta. The post-Independence years have seen the increasing role of music in the communist movement, with the development of specific Marxist songs, dealing with the social condition of workers, which we could compare with Pete Seeger's music – he was invited in Calcutta twice, and in 1999, a set of two cassettes was released in Calcutta by Chintan under a license from Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, USA, with a booklet dedicated "To All Singers of Hope, Protest and Struggle for Life" and a foreword by the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu, a member of the CPI-M (Communist Party of India-Marxist).

The turning point in the history of the links between songs and political commitment in Calcutta is obviously

the Naxalite movement [2] in the late 1960s. The student unrest in those days and the violent police repression youth endured [3] have transformed the relationship of youth to political songs. The 1970s saw the emergence of an urban educated middle-class and the category of youth, with its own status and subculture, but with a lesser interest in politics. Thus, music was considered as a means of self-expression and entertainment, even if it was too early for a development of popular music genres (besides the realm of film music of course). We have to mention yet a real pioneer in this trend: Gautam Chatterjee, who was involved in the Naxalite movement –he spent 13 months in jail – and tried to develop a new kind of band music in India, singing in Bengali and thus constructing a genuinely Bengali version of rock –to be more precise he called it ‘Baul jazz’ He set up a band in the 1970s called Mohiner Ghoraguli -- from the incipit of a poem by Jibanananda Das. The interesting point is that was the very beginning of the Bangla rock band even if it was not successful.

At the same time, rock music, as well as pop and jazz, were played in Calcutta, but in the foreign residents and upper classes-oriented scene of Park Street restaurants; like Mocambo, Magnolia or the Blue Fox (this was a traditional scene of live music and dance since the late 1950s in Calcutta, and the music was played almost exclusively by Anglo-Indian musicians as we will see

it later). Gautam Chatterjee tried to promote a Bengali popular music genre in those days, but the audience was not yet ready for it.

This paved the way for the late 1980s’ emergence of band music with bands like High with Nondon Bagchi and the late South Indian Dilip Balakrishnan: they sung exclusively in English and are regarded as the founding fathers of the English rock scene. During the 1980s, we can also mention a Bengali band called Nagar Philomel, featuring Indranil Sen, who became popular by singing rabindrasangeet and who now is one of the Hindi Pop performers. They didn’t make a bigger success than Mohiner Ghoraguli. Nevertheless, the success of Suman in 1992 may be considered as the convergence of these trends. In their turn, Suman and his following solo performers paved the way for the success of rock bands.

The rock band phenomenon came to maturity around 1993-1994, for several reasons. Firstly, the constitution of a big middle class and its consumerist way of life; secondly, the formation of a youth culture and, in turn, of a taste culture around rock and pop thanks to the processes mentioned above. Finally, the advent of cable, satellite and globalized cultural industries (MTV, Channel V, Sony Music, etc.) from 1991 on (date of the beginning of economic liberalization policy by PM Rao

after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi). Moreover, on the American rock scene, the emergence of the grunge movement with Seattle's band Nirvana or Soundgarden, Mudhoney and Pearl Jam gave a whiff of fresh air to a fading rock music. At the same time, that is to say 1993, was launched the Delhi-based *Rock Street Journal* already mentioned. In Calcutta, the college rock bands (singing in English) reached a new plateau, and, on the Bengali rock scene, many bands were formed, like Cactus or Krosswindz, the latter helping Gautam Chatterjee to reform Mohiner Ghoraguly, which was seen as the true pioneer of the genre and became popular again, this time on a larger scale (I attended a particularly powerful show at the Jadavpur University festival called Sanskriti in 1999), until the sudden death of its founder in August 1999.

Among the current Bengali rock bands, we can find, besides Cactus, Parash Pathar, Aganthuk (both named after Satyajit Ray's films), Chandrabindoo (influenced by Harry Belafonte and his calypso), Jishusinguptu, and new solo artists like Raghab Chatterjee, Rupam Islam or Moushumi Bhowmik. These artists can find a place on the Gaan Mela (Song Fair), held every spring at Nandan Film Center.

Among the English rock scene, we can find D for Brothers, featuring Amit and Monojit Datta (the former is a blues guitarist, both of them teach music in a sort of

informal western popular music academy, taking up the role played by Anglo-Indian musicians for decades), Hip Pocket, featuring Nondon Bagchi, a veteran of the blues-rock scene in Calcutta and a former member of High, also Cranium, a heavy metal band which has recorded a track on a CD produced in California – maybe heavy metal is the most globalized scene within rock music with successful bands from Brazil like Sepultura – or Haze and Krosswindz.

As a final remark on this brief history of Bengali Rock music, I would put stress on the fact that the question of language is not yet resolved. Indeed, some of the bands I mentioned play both in English and in Bengali: for example, Haze is Jishusinguptu; Krosswindz has cut a Bengali album and plays regularly English rock songs at college fests or in discos; Parash Pathar is also known as Elixir... Thus, as far as language is concerned, we have two different scenes in Calcutta, with different venues, functions and audiences by the way, but very often with the same line-ups in the bands themselves.

On the one hand, an English rock scene is shaped day by day, along the mainstream Hindi pop ('non-filmi' music) scene, with RSJ as its media center, even if times are hard since the late 1990s, because of the Hindi scene's success (the market is big enough to attract big corporations like Sony and its kind), and of the relative

decline of rock music worldwide. On the other hand, a Bengali rock scene is trying to make its way through the music jungle, with more connections to the English rock scene than to the Hindi one, but its only chance to make it is the constitution of a regional market, which is possible with Bangladesh; that would reunify on a popular culture basis what has been artificially divided under the Raj in 1905.

#### **4. the role of the Anglo-Indian musicians**

In the course of my field work, the significance of the Anglo-Indian [4] community appeared more and more relevant in the diffusion of western forms of popular music since World War II –and even before. Indeed, these musical forms (ragtime, jazz, etc.) were played in the hotels and in the clubs –very important institutions in Calcuttan elites' social life. The audiences were the British of course, their European and American counterparts but also the most westernized Indian elites (for instance, the Maharajas). The musicians were British or American, when a foreign band was hired for a season, but also Anglo-Indian. For most of them, music is a cultural form which allows identification with their “imagined” motherland, the United Kingdom, Portugal, Europe or the West in general. Music indeed helps to keep a cultural and emotional bond with a culture; but what is interesting is the fact that the Anglo-Indian community is identified (still nowadays) as a community

of natural-born musicians and partygoers. It is no coincidence that most of the western music teachers were and are Anglo-Indian, in the Calcutta School of Music founded by Philippe Sandre in 1915 (piano, vocal, guitar, and so on) as well as in the private lessons circuit.

Thus, the Anglo-Indian musicians acted as go-betweens, passing down the theoretical knowledge of Western harmony as well as the practice of western instruments (piano and guitar, drums) to the generations of post-Independence youth. Moreover, they were the first Indian musicians to perform jazz and blues standards in Calcutta, around World War II, mainly in the Grand Hotel Oberoi – for example, with African-American jazz pianist Teddy Weatherford who died in Calcutta in 1945. During the 1950s and 1960s, they played live music in the restaurants on Park Street, which made it the place to be for live western music in India.

Most of these musicians left India for the UK or Australia in the 1960s, or, with the fading of the scene and the political agitation of the time, moved to Mumbai in order to make a living in the film music industry, like Braz Gonsalves or Louis Banks. Those who stayed in Calcutta nevertheless maintained a live jazz scene up to nowadays: some of them play regularly at the Taj Bengal and Oberoi hotels, like Carlton Kitto, guitarist,

or Rubin Rebeiro, singer, even if times are hard... They played and still play a major role in the diffusion of jazz and blues music in Calcutta.

### **5. Language, music and identity**

The language of school may be English or Bengali (rarely Hindi) in Calcutta; roughly speaking, the middle and upper classes tend to send their children in English-medium schools, where the teachers are often Anglo-Indian, and the lower classes choose Bengali-medium schools. On the one hand, English stands as the language of business, higher studies and thus western modernity and its dreams of social promotion, by-passing Delhi; on the other hand, Bengali represents the regional heritage and pride, in reaction to the Hindi but not always.

Singing in English, as most of the college bands do at their fests and social functions, means to belong to an attractive community and to express a sense of taking part in modernity. The main characteristic of these bands is the perfect reproduction of the original songs: these bands only play covers indeed, and the most truthful the cover is, the more successful is the band.

Singing in Bengali, on the contrary, has two different meanings : on the one hand, it fosters personal expression and a sense of regional pride; on the other hand, it means 'we don't have to become American or

English to play true rock music', that is through rock influences Bengali youth can find a mean of expression in his own language, dealing with his own concerns. But we have to be careful : the market for English music is very narrow (college audiences mainly) and the American and British bands benefit from an aura of 'authenticity' in these musical forms; moreover, Bengali is sometimes the only language accessible (besides Hindi) for a great part of young Bengalis. Thus, the relationship to language through these musical genres is at most ambivalent. As mentioned above, most of the bands who sing in Bengali make also a living of playing English covers at college fests (and have two different names by the way : for example, Parash Pathar plays also as Elixir).

### **6. Have you said "hybridity"?**

I think it would be useless to identify Bengali Rock music as a 'bricolage' or a mere mixture of western instruments with Bengali melodies. Through the question of language, we can see the will of 'being a part of it', that is to say, playing rock music means we face some of the problems that western kids face and these genres are appropriate for an expression of these problems in a cultural form. In this respect, rock music is only a cultural form that one could fulfill with his own sensitivity. To identify rock music with a national culture is a difficult task : there are major differences between



American and British ones in rock music, as Simon Frith, a British sociologist of music says it. Beside American and British rock scenes, we can also find, to a lesser extent maybe – from an economic point of view at least- Australian(cf. Midnight Oil, Nick Cave,...), German (Scorpions, members of Metallica), and even non-Anglo-Saxon countries like Brazil (Sepultura), Japan (Shonen Knife), Iceland (Björk), even China (Cui Jian) or France (Noir Désir, Rita Mitsouko, Air)... So, why should we take the will of the youth of a particular country to play rock music, in English or in another language, as illegitimate?

I believe that is what we do when we speak of 'bricolage', 'collage' or hybridity of two separate cultural forms. As an instantiation of what has been said, there is a very interesting rock journal in India called *The Rock Street Journal*(RSJ) published since 1993: the motto of this journal is "India is happening" And this journal tries to promote "Indian talent in rock and popular music", that is original music, "rather than letting bands and audiences in India stagnate in the uninspiring safety net of cover versions and cheap imitations" (booklet of RSJ's *Great Indian Rock III* cassette, 1999).

Inasmuch as music is a part of culture, we have to consider the specific cultural forms such as rock or jazz as resources which people can use to express themselves In the age of globalization, this transcultural

process is made easier through the electronic media and the cultural industries. It does not mean that the fact that people may use a 'foreign' cultural 'trait' (such as rock music) for their own purpose and with their own specific meanings is totally new. It rather means that these processes which are normal (in the Durkheimian meaning of the word, that is you find it with a constant regularity in every society and culture) take place in various contexts (politically and socially speaking).

In the case of rock music in Calcutta, it is used as a mean of expression by urban middle class people in the context of the 'happening of India' on the global scene. Thus, we have to see through this phenomenon a Bengali version of the cultural form of rock music, rather than a mere process of Americanization or a mixture of American and Bengali cultural traits.

## Endnotes

1 HMV is no more an Indian branch of EMI since the Indian Group RPG (for R.P. Goenka, a Rajasthani businessman from Calcutta) has bought it in 1985. The British group, which has already set up its own subsidiary, Virgin Music India, with headquarters in Mumbai, has a stake of 10 percent in the equity of HMV and there are agreements between the two corporations.

2 See for a thorough account of the Naxalite uprising: Banerjee, Sumanta, *In the Wake of Naxalbari- a history of the Naxalite movement in India*, Calcutta: Subarnarekha, 1980.

3 See, for a literary account of this agitated period: Devi, Mahasweta, *The Mother of 1084*, translated by Samik Bandyopadhyaya. Calcutta: Seagull, 1997 (original in Bengali, *Hajar churasir ma*. Calcutta: Karuna Prakasari, 1974).

4 According to the Constitution of India, section 366. Definitions, "an *Anglo-Indian*" means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only"

The term includes Anglo-Indians themselves but also Goans.

## In the Turkish Musical Tradition: As a Predicative Metaphor of Voicing Meaning - 'Yanık'

(Scorched)

Ayhan Erol

**B**efore mentioning what must be understood from the concept of *Yanık*, I would like to begin by giving you a brief introduction to the theoretical framework of my paper. As you know, audiences participate in music in ways that are physical, (singing along, tapping, clapping, dancing, sexual arousal, and so on); emotional ('feeling' the music, reminiscing, romanticizing, achieving a spiritual 'high' and the like), and cognitive (processing information, learning, stimulating thought, contributing to memory, framing perceptions and so forth (Lull 19). This paper is a study about the relationship between music and emotion. My discipline, ethnomusicology, in which special emphasis is given to the study of music in its cultural context, investigates music as a 'culture'. Perhaps the most significant difficulty for the scholars who study music as a culture is the approach to a cognitive material which is dismissed as 'emotion'. Nevertheless, emotions are not precultural, but preeminently cultural. In Helga Kotthoff's succinct summary, "feelings are no longer regarded as something innate and inward, but rather as a culturally interwoven and shaped mode of experience". People also learn the discourses through which their emotions

are more, or less, verbalized (Finnegan 183). Thus, discourse could help to explain why listeners perceive music as expressive of emotion. It is a recurrent notion that music is a means of emotional expression. It has been difficult to explain why music is expressive of emotions. In fact, there are many sources of emotion in relation to music including 'musical expectancy' (Meyer 1956) 'arbitrary association' (Davies 1978), and 'iconic signification' –that is, a structural similarity between musical and extramusical features (Langer 1951). But, it is fair to say that previous work has been primarily speculative in nature (Juslin & Laukka 770).

The study of the relationship between music and emotion poses particularly complex questions of what an analysis of the music perception should encapsulate. How do we hear musical sounds? When and why do we hear sounds in one way rather than another? Does the listener attend to the acoustic characteristics of sound or to the sources specified by sounds? How can we offer psychological explanation of why we hear what we hear? Are listening and perceptual experience parts of what constitutes a musical culture? As Nicholas Cook has argued, "To interpret music in terms of an

interest in sound and its perceptual experience does not transcend cultural values, it expresses them (7). Thus, knowing how to listen, and what to hear, are parts of what constitutes musical culture.

Research into the perception and cognition of music has largely focused on the perception of auditory events such as pitch, grouping, tonal and rhythmic structures. However, while some of these theoretical constructs do seem to be heard, others seem to bear little relationship to listeners' experiences. And in the last two decades, "new musicology" has presented interpretations of works in which musical structures are read in terms of social meanings. Thus, there appears to be a sharp divide between conceptions of musical material implicit in studies of music perceptions, and those implied by some branches of music theory and history. Indeed, the way in which the relationship between music perception and music theory has generally been conceived is that whereas music perception and cognition studies what listeners hear, music theory persuades the listener of what they might or could hear (Dibben 194).

### **"Associative structure" in the perception of music**

The hierarchical models of the perception of music are premised upon the idea that listeners' perceptions can be described adequately without taking into account the historical character of musical material, and that

in these models the musical work is viewed as a concrete, self-contained unit specified by the notes of the score. An alternative to hierarchical models of musical structure is the idea of "associative" structure. The theory of associative structure makes possible the interpenetration of immanent analysis with the sociohistorical and extramusical context. (Dibben 200). Little empirical or theoretical research has been conducted into associative structure. Leonard Meyer (1973) provides a discussion of the associative structure of melody, and more recently Jerrold Levinson (1997) has argued that music is heard on a "moment-to-moment" basis rather than in terms of large-scale structural relationships between events separated in time. He called this as *concatenationism*. According to Levinson, knowing that large-scale relationships exist may have some effect on the listening experience, but knowing that is not necessary to the aesthetic experience of music. In effect, his theory rehabilitates the untrained listener, and attempts a more veridical account of the listening experience (Dibben 194). Levinson's approach is important because it is a systematic attempt to clarify what a nonhierarchical experience of musical structure might be like.

In her article "Musical Materials, Perception, and Listening", Nicola Dibben's approach differs from both Meyer's and Levinson's in that it encompasses

associative links in two axes, which are somewhat similar to the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes of Saussurean linguistics. Meyer primarily discusses the syntagmatic axis, analyzing and categorizing the associative links between elements occurring within the same piece of music but displaced in time. It is in this domain that subsequent empirical research has been conducted.

The paradigmatic axis (Saussure himself originally called this the “associative axis”) is concerned with the relationship between any instance of an element and the other elements belonging to the same category with which it could be substituted. This axis captures the manner in which musical materials refer beyond themselves to other instances such as archetypes and prototypes. The difference between this theory of associative structure and hierarchical theories of music perception is that it treats the substance of musical sound as a “material” rather than as raw parameters. This alternative conception of musical material can be thought of as operating in two dimensions: first, intraopus, forging relationships within a particular piece, and giving rise to a sense of coherence; and second, extraopus, by virtue of reference to other specific, or generic, works and styles (Dibben 195).

Following from this approach, I would like to carry out an analysis that investigated the range of meanings sound material which is perceived as *Yanık* has for Turkish

Listeners. First of all, I think that Turkish listeners make associative links between musical elements that are present in any given piece in order to define music as *Yanık*. This approach is based on the premise that musical materials which are perceived as *Yanık* are heard in terms of their historical and cultural usage. Because it does away with a crude distinction between intramusical and extramusical attributes in *Yanık* songs.

**As a predicative metaphor of sweet-bitter feelings: *Yanık* (schorced)**

The term *yanık* is one of the most important aspects of the Turkish response to music in terms of the perception of meaning. *Yanık* is a desired quality of music. As a discourse of sentiment, *Yanık* is an image of the bitter-sweet emotions in music. The value of the *Yanık* sound lies in its ability to communicate the bitter-sweet emotions to listeners. This provides the basis for what I shall tentatively describe as the aesthetic experience of *Yanık*. The bitter-sweet feeling is one of the pleasures of social existence. The bitter-sweet emotion is a feeling, affecting a man as a result of both sorrow and aesthetic pleasure. The bitter-sweet feeling is an ambivalence emotion. Therefore *Yanık* music combines two quite separate representations of the power of music to move emotions. What is considered as *yanık* is generally a vocal quality, representing to feel grieve, sadness, sorrow and passion. The term is mainly considered to

be highlighting two features of musical quality. First, it denotes sorrow or sadness. Second, it defines the vocal style or voice quality what it is belived to be good, right and nice. In fact, both of them are thought to be connected to each other (Erol 197).

What is important is to be *yanık*. What is wanted is a sorrowful sound which can express sad feelings. Being sorrowful, when one is singing is nice. And this feature is part of musical taste. Consequently, *Yanık* is a fact which expresses pleasing and sorrowful emotions together. Then the question is that: What are the musical characteristics of a *Yanık* song which expresses pleasing and sorrowful emotions together.

### **Yanık as voicing meaning**

The hearer learns to recognize meanings in music in a variety of ways. The clearest and probably the most important is through the words or lyrics of a song. In human societies vocal music is more common than solely instrumental music; in fact, some societies have very little instrumental music. Because much music is embodied in a song, the symbolism and meaning of musical sounds themselves are often closely related to and even dependent upon texts. In many cases words and music have a complementary relationship- the text embodies the message of a song, and music intensifies the appropriate feelings (Keammer 115). The lyrics of many songs which are perceived as *Yanık* can be

considered in terms of sad feelings. Because, there are a lot of words reflecting the sad or painful feelings in lyrics of *Yanık* songs. Some of them are resignation to fate, separation, abandon, loneliness, sorrow, melancholy, and pessimism. Although the lyrics of a *Yanık* song is important, impact of its sound must not be overlooked. As a result of an overindulgence in vocal skills, *Yanık* music is based on singers. The techniques of vocalization, coupled with the exaggretated means of expressing emotions, are crucial fact in *Yanık* songs. A yanık song associated with dense emotions is able to create an impression of technical difficulty. But it is not the case. The characterictics of yanık voice are the following: the length and calm clarity of voice, its sparkling quality, its fullness, its correct vibration and its vocalization.

As a term of vocal quality apprasial *Yanık* might also appear to describe the high tessitura. Yet, it is neccessary to say that this is not definitive vocal marker for the burning quality in the human voice. Along with the high tessitura dialect, vocal production, vibration, ornamentation and vocalization can also be accepted by listeners as important properties of *Yanık* voice. In Turkey, of course other terms of appraisal are also used to discribe a singing voice. A number of them are velvet-voiced, soft voice, soft as cotton, deep and manly, tasting of quince, acrid or astringent, sweet, crisp or brittle and so on. As a discourse of emotion, the term '*yanık*' is



an expression which resonates fully in the context of Turkish music tradition. Perhaps more than any other music in Turkey, *Yanık* songs are peculiar to *Uzun Hava*. (long air) *Uzun Hava* is a folk song performed in a slow and free rhythm. Being free and natural, they are thus able to communicate more directly with the listener. *Uzun Hava* provides ample scope for the demonstration of vocal skills of a singer. *The Uzun Havas* (long airs) clearly celebrate the vocal skills and voice quality of a singer. It is therefore accepted that all singers can not perform *uzun hava*.

***Yanık*: except for the burning quality in the human voice**

I have already argued that *yanık* is a metaphorical expression of the bitter-sweet emotion state. The reason for this emotional state is often the voice quality or performance style of the singer. But it can also be used in the other musical contexts in Turkey. For example, *Yanık* is also used in the context of music-making as an active verb (*yakmak* = to burn). The term, however, as a verb which expresses the act of music-making, has a limited meaning. *Yakmak*, in this context, just is to compose a Turkish folk song. *Ağıt yakmak* (to burn dirge), for instance, is to compose *ağıt* which is written generally about a sad event. Alternatively, a song and its melodic tropes which is recognized as *yanık* could be interpreted in terms of *bozlak* which is both a scale

(*ayak*) and a genre or style in Turkish folk music. Most people think that *bozlak* moves sad feelings.

As I have already mentioned, even though the term generally refers to vocal or voice quality, *yanık* can also be used in order to describe the sounds of some specific Turkish traditional wind instruments, such as *ney*, *mey* and *kaval*, which are connected with the heritage of Turkish musical tradition. As Picken has stressed, the term *yanık* is also used to describe a genre of *solo bağlama* pieces from Central Anatolia, a rare *bağlama* tuning, and as well-known *yanık kerem*, a scale formation in Turkish Folk music (Picken 243). *Yanık Kerem* is a variant of *Kerem* scale. This scale can be written in the conventional notation as A, Bflat, Csharp, D, E, F, G and A. What is important in the scale is the first-five tones. An augmented second between the second and third degrees of scale is the most important characteristic. The equivalent of this scale (*ayak*) in traditional Turkish art music is *Hicaz makam* (mode). European scholars have frequently associated this interval with Easternness. Although the augmented second is commonly heard in other modes of traditional Turkish art music and in other scales of Turkish folk music, the use of this interval in *Hicaz makam* and *Yanık kerem* scale is very different. The augmented second in *Hicaz* and *Yanık Kerem* is often used near the tonic tone.

### The perception of Yanık by the listener

In order to specify the sound material as *Yanık*, the listener makes associative links between the musical elements that are present in any given piece. In Ola Stockfelt's provocative overstatement, "the listener, and only the listener, is the composer of the music". Musical experience, in other words, belongs not just to musical work, composer, or accredited "expert" but also, crucially, to the variegated audiences (Finnegan 184). The musical expression of sad feelings in *Yanık* sound may be perceived by listeners in a variety of ways. *Yanık* is an aesthetic experience that an individual can perceive what it means through his or her own experience. That is to say, a song or a singer's voice either 'sets one on fire' or it does not. Thus, it must not be overlooked that preferences which depend on the perception of associative structure in music can be personal and idiosyncratic. In the other words, for listeners who have different perceptual experiences, the associations of a *Yanık* song may differentiate. *Yanık* is perceived as musical features of syntagmatic and paradigmatic as a result of a selective and uniting process. Therefore, what a listener recognizes as *Yanık* can sometimes be the voice quality of a singer such as the length, the calm clarity, and the sparkling of voice, or sometimes be a melodic trope or a mode of song. For example, Many Roms, that is many Turkish Gypsies,

who like to listen to and to perform *hicaz* and live in izmir consider Hicaz mode (makam) to be the most proper makam to make them feel bitter-sweet feelings. Those who recognize *Yanık* as the voice quality of a singer can determine with the voice whether it is *yanık* or not from the opening passage of a song, even the first long syllable of the song. I concluded that some listeners and musicians whom I randomly interviewed for *Yanık* in music were sensitive to the voice quality of a singer as an association of a burning quality in music, whereas others were sensitive to melodic tropes or melismatic passages in a song.

### Conclusion

To get back to the point, as a discourse of emotion, the *Yanık* has been evolved within its traditions, reflecting the properties of Turkish national personality. It cannot be considered simply as the sole cultural property of any social group or class, in Turkey. Thus, sweet-bitter feelings in *Yanık* sounds unsurprisingly appeal to most Turkish people. It should be accepted that music which is perceived as *yanık* can stir up bitter-sweet feelings.

The meaning of *yanık* is shared by many people in the Turkish society. Thus, *yanık*, as a broadly shared musical meaning, serves to relate affect and emotion to the experiences of the Turkish society. As a result, the term *yanık* is a metaphorical expression of sweet-bitterness

in music. In the other words, it may be considered that Yanık is recognized and anticipated to be associated with bitter-sweet feelings. What is considered to be *yanık* is not the subject-matter of a song or its story, but the quality of voice, vocalization or vocal style associated with Turkish folk music and arabesk, and indeed all popular musical styles in Turkey.

As I have argued, Turkish listeners make associative links between musical elements that are present in any given piece in order to define music as *Yanık*. At the same time, when Turkish listeners identify music as *yanık*, they make associations with similar or functionally equivalent elements or gestures in the wider repertoire of music with which they are familiar. It is obvious that the associative links which are associated with *Yanık* songs lead beyond what is commonly regarded as the domain of music into a more general system of cultural reference.

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## What is Italian in Italo Disco?

Kai Fikentscher

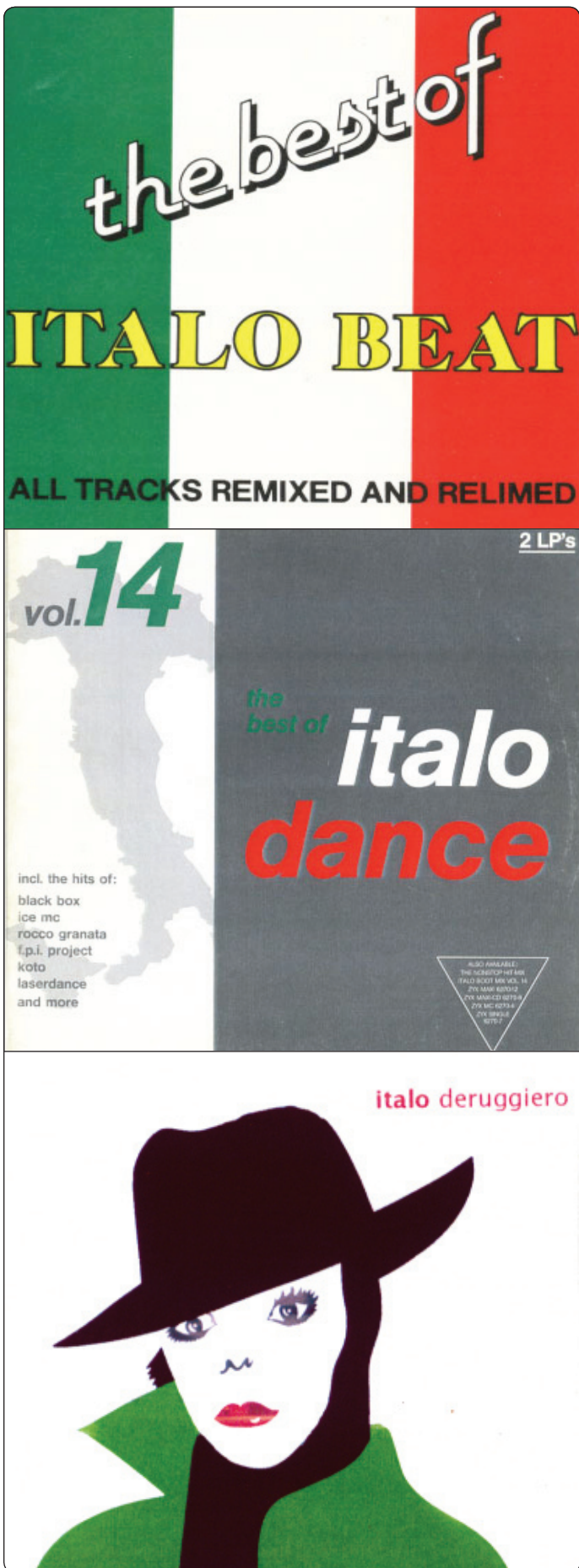
This essay grew out of my ongoing study of DJ culture as a 'glocal' phenomenon and a partial response to recent literature that examines the relationships between music, geography and identity (for example, Whiteley, Bennett & Hawkins 2004; Connell & Gibson 2003). Here I am interested in addressing the question of locality and local identity of music, especially of dance musics that have recently become international and perhaps even transnational, to echo one of the subtitles used by Connell & Gibson. The case of Italo Disco is a rather interesting one, since questions of identity and locality arise here in ways perhaps more complex when compared to broader topics such as techno, house, and hip-hop, all of which have received a decent amount of attention in the discourse on popular music studies. In short, in contrast to a mere decade or so ago, we now have at least a fair notion of the history of disco and post-disco dance music, as enacted in places such as New York, London, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Berlin, or Manchester. However, in spite of a few accounts such as those by Jones & Kantonen's or Lucio Mazzi, we still know remarkably little about Eurodisco and especially its main ingredients that are collectively known as Italo Disco, and later Italodance, Italo beat, Italo house, or simply, Italo. Ultimately, I believe the history and identity of Eurodisco and Italo Disco will

not only be determined by the sum of accounts that are yet to be collected, analyzed and disseminated. They will also be shaped by the fact that this music has barely begun to be given scholarly attention within popular music studies, in stark contrast to the decades devoted so far to the study of rock, punk, and rap. I hope I can make a convincing argument that more work in this area is urgently needed, as I am limited here to a preliminary assessment of the question of the national character of Italo Disco, Italo Beat, Italo Dance, Italo House, or, for abbreviation's sake, Italo.

As Connell & Gibson have cautioned, "deliberate attempts to create or nurture national musics demand essentialism," and "often crudely so" (ibid:142).







However, the range of music accessible in most places provides what Manuel has called a “contested” terrain” where “dialectics of class, gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and other aspects of social identity” - to which I would like to add language - “are symbolically negotiated and dramatized” (Manuel 1993:259). “Nonetheless,” Connell and Gibson continue, “languages and media stimulate national identity, even if contested, while musical traditions cannot easily be brushed aside. Yet just as nations are difficult to construct” (and the nation of Italy is an example thereof), “linking music to physical places . . . can only be a contested enterprise. Boundaries are porous, constantly being broken . . . in the face of transnational flows. National sounds are retrospective and nostalgic, markers of . . . a wider scale of fetishisation of locality” (ibid:143).

This premise is illustrated by the first of four audio examples, a cover version of Toto Cutugno’s song “L’italiano” by fellow Italian cantante Costanzo. The original is from 1982, and contains ample references to Italian politics and culture of that era. The 2000 cover by Costanzo makes no changes to the lyrics, but its musical style is radically different: We hear elements of tarantella and techno engaging in what I, borrowing from Manuel (ibid.), would call ‘symbolic negotiation and drama.’ This version is one of eight, available in a double 12-inch vinyl pack that contains a Goa-trance



mix as well (i.e. not primarily intended for application in Italy, but in Goa. None of these versions qualifies as Italo Disco even though (1) it's obviously music to dance to inside what Italians call a disco, and (2) it's equally obviously from Italy.

Italo Disco, while not represented by Costanzo's techno adaptation of Cutugno's canzone, actually emerged in the early 1980s, alongside the popular music exemplified by the original "L'Italiano. Italo Disco first emerged in the work of several North Italian production teams (Mauro Malavasi & Jaques Fred Petrus, Mauro Farina & Guiliano Crivellente, Giancarlo Meo & Claudio Simonetti, among others) whose collective output was inspired by the success, during the late 1970s, of earlier music production teams such as Jaques Morali & Henri Belolo, known as the architects of the New York City-based disco group Village People, and the La Bionda (brothers Carmelo and Michelangelo La Bionda) who had several hits in the late 1970s, including "One for you, one for me," which was produced in 1978 in Munich, Germany. Munich is also where Swiss-Italian producer Giorgio Moroder met then-not-yet disco queen Donna Summer and produced several hugely successful and influential disco hits that featured both her vocals and his pioneering use of the analog synthesizer. Examples such as "Love to love you baby" (1975) and "I feel love" (1977) laid the foundation for the unabashed exploitation

of analog sound synthesis by Italian producers eager to join the disco market. Finally, let's remember that there was a period in the early 1970s, before disco boiled over into discomania, Disco Fever, or Disco Craze, when the vanguard of disco DJs in New York City had (almost exclusively) Italian surnames: Mancuso, Grasso, D'Aquisto, Capello, Siano, Guttardaro, Savarese, etc. In this context, let's also remember that the first major journalistic effort alerting the readership of Rolling Stone that something new was about to happen in music came from Italian-American Vince Aletti, and that John Travolta's character in 1977's film *Saturday Night Fever*, Tony Manero, lived in an Italian-American neighborhood of New York, and spoke American English with an Italian accent.

The birth of the term Italo Disco, however, occurred only after the American model was embraced by Italian producers working in Italy. In Mazzi's words, "Spaghetti disco was born in 1979 with Macho's 'I'm a man,'" a disco cover of a Steve Winwood song, sung by Marzio Vincenzi a/k/a Macho, produced by Mauro Malavasi (Mazzi 2000:51). Italo Disco, the term that replaced Spaghetti disco (unlike the Westerns made by Italian film directors during the same period), is credited to a German record label owner Bernhard Mikulski. His ZYX Records company issued sixteen volumes of double LP packs entitled "The Best of Italo Disco" beginning

in 1983. Each volume bore this name, printed in the colors of the Italian flag, and so from 1983 on Italo Disco referred to disco music produced in Italy in the 1980s by Italian composers, musicians, and engineers who started domestic record labels by the dozen, among them S.A.I.F.A.M., Disco Media, Time, Fulltime, Baby, Sensation, Crash, and Flying. Through many licensing arrangements throughout the 1980s with some of these, ZYX, alongside Spanish distributor Blanconegro, became the chief distributor of disco music made in Italy outside its borders. The category Italo Disco was thus coined to export the music beyond Italy (ibid.).

In retrospect, it appears that the main inspiration for most Italo Disco was the music that symbolizes the pinnacle of all things disco to this day: American productions from 1977 – 1980, such as Donna Summer's aforementioned "I feel love," or the Bee Gees's hits from the soundtrack of the movie "Saturday Night Fever." Additional influences came from American Hi-NRG (for example, Evelyn Thomas, Divine, Patrick Cowley) and British New Wave and Synth Pop (such as Human League). Both the economic aspects and the cultural prestige of the synthesizer (and its associations with space, robots, modernity, male brain power, and the USA) made this relatively new and increasingly affordable instrument the aural center of the Italo Disco sound. To illustrate how Italo Disco showcases, even celebrates the synthesizer,

Klein & MBO's "Dirty Talk" is a good example. Released in 1982, it became an international cult record in disco centers such as New York City. Another telling example is Ken Laszlo's "Hey Hey Guy," from 1983. Despite the poor command of English on the part of the singer (ill. 5), it became a hit record, selling worldwide in the 100.000s at the time.

Many of the stars of 1980s' Italo Disco did in fact more than hide their national identity behind fictitious and

#### **Introduction to Ken Laszlo's "Hey Hey Guy" (1984)**

Ken: "Hallo?"

French guy: "Hallo??"

Ken: "Oh dear, you have phone."

French guy: "Yeah, hey guy, tell me about your manicure."

Ken: "I love you and feel the groove."

French guy: "Tell me about it, is it the true."

Ken: "It's true, yes, it's true."

French guy: "Don't fool out, it's dangerous."

Ken: "Don't worry, baby gold."

French guy: "Everything is same as all."

Ken: "Everything is the same"

French guy: "Oh, I love you."

Ken: "Me too."

French guy: "I love you."

often funny sounding names (Ken Laszlo = Gianni Coraini; Ryan Paris = Fabio Roscioli; Den Harrow = Stefano Carrie). Often, they did not sing on their own records, or not on all of them. This in turn relates to another aspect of Eurodisco, even disco in the broadest sense. All were producer-driven and, especially in Italy, often used the artist merely as a visual tool to sell the music. The fact that visual representation was more important than “authentic” musical performance can be directly linked to the low regard held by many for the music, then and now. In the words of Lucio Mazzi, Italo disco was reviled by the Italian critics (*ibid.*:14), but not only there. The most infamous episode of this common business practice (i.e. not exclusive to the disco industry) was the Grammy-stripping scandal of 1990 involving the German act Milli Vanilli. But Black Box, the Italian outfit strategically employing a female photo model from Guadeloupe (Catherine Quinol) who routinely lip-synched to the samples of gospel-trained US-American singers such as Loleatta Holloway and Marsha Wash, did not merely follow the Milli Vanilli mode or producing vocals, but also that of other Italian acts, such as Den Harrow and Valerie Dore. In the process, Black Box helped establish Italo house as the bonafide successor of Italo Disco in 1989 with the song “Ride On Time” (a misconceived transcription of “Right On Time,” a vocal phrase taken from Loleatta Holloway’s 1980 hit “Love Sensation”).

As had been the case with Italo Disco’s increasing popularity across Europe, Italo house was partly the result of the increase in travel among Europeans during the summer months when most traveling Europeans travel to other European destinations, with Italy and Spain longstanding favorites. The 1989 summer hit “Sueno Latino” by the eponymous ghostband made up of five Italians is one example of Spain’s attraction to Italian and British summer travelers. The Spanish island of Ibiza became a hotbed of tourism and discotourism in the late 1980s when vacationing DJs from Britain concocted the so-called Balearic sound, an eclectic melange of Italo Disco from Milan, Acid House from Chicago and the UK, and dance-oriented rock music, known in the US as DOR and in Italy as Rosco. Ibiza has since been one of the centers of European dance culture, as parodied in the 2004 film “It’s all gone, Pete Tong.” Together with Italo rap, Italo house, along with its variants that lean toward techno and trance, has also been held responsible for the decline of Italo Disco, to the extent that the analog technology (synthesizers, drum computers, vinyl records) have since the late 1980s been replaced with digital equivalents (samplers, digital synthesizers, compact discs). In the third millennium, Italo, to use the designation preferred by Italian DJ Alec Deruggiero (*ill.* 4), refers to a music that is distinctly out-of-date, yet classic in status, a type of ‘guilty pleasure’ associated primarily with subcultural

fan scenes that are often quite distanced from Italy, both geographically and culturally. All across the internet, web sites from Poland, Germany, Holland, or Japan (the latter home to a sizable Italo fan base), are testimony to this nostalgic revival. As web author 313ctro wrote on the Finnish site [www.phinnweb.org](http://www.phinnweb.org), presumably tongue-in-cheek: "Italo Disco – yes, the horrible 80s' cheese is back with a vengeance," prompting the following anonymous response from Chicago on Saturday, Nov 17, 2001: "You called 80s' Italo music cheese. I would like to know who you think laid the groundwork for house music and electronica? I do believe it would be the "cheesy" Italo artists of the 80s. I live in Chicago where house and acid music was born and in my opinion there would be no house if it was not for Italo Disco....." Victor Simonelli, a prolific DJ/producer of house music who has traveled back and forth between Italy and his Brooklyn home since the 1980s agreed with this perspective during a May 2005 interview with this author inside a Manhattan recording studio. After playing half a dozen Italo Disco singles to illustrate the point, he said: "There would be no Chicago house without Italo Disco, without the Euro records' influence. Chip E. who was working at the Chicago record store Imports Etc. at the time, always stocked Italian records. Don't forget either that US DJs Frankie Knuckles and Larry Levan both remixed Italo records in the 1980s."

The entire chapter of this aspect of dance music history, however, still needs to be written. The indication so far is that Italo Disco indeed occupies a pivotal role in the evolution of electronic dance music that is essential to include in the general discourse. After the decline of disco in the US around 1980 and before the emergence of house and techno in the mid-1980s, Italian musicians kept the almost proverbial disco inferno burning, providing the foundation of several subsequent dance music styles, including house, techno, Eurobeat, even Japanese Para Para. Disco made in Italy, based on non-Italian models, was only initially aimed squarely at the national market, yet found an sizeable international audience after its baptism as Italo Disco. In that sense, to be "L'italiano vero," the true Italian, and going beyond the national focus of Toto Cutugno's verses, has as much to do with spaghetti al dente, a seicento Fiat and a manner of singing to be proud of as it has to do with an awareness of Italianess as a European as well as international, even transnational identity.

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## Crossroads: Intertextual Strategies And Economic Relations In The Age Of Digital Music

Héctor Fouce

The idea of intertextuality have been a common place since postmodernity was establish as a key term in social and cultural studies: it was accepted that one of the principal features of that new sensibility was the breakdown of lineal narratives and the explosion of references from multiple sources in all texts. In music, this was represent by the creation of the sampler and the birth of musical cultures based in the cut and mix processes, as the hip hop or the electronic music. In this paper, I will try to create a map that will allow us to move from the characterization of intertextuality and its different types to the implications that the fit of two texts have in the contemporary culture, in which the debate about intellectual property have become central.

In a different work (Fouce, 2004) I have emphasized the necessity to establish continuities between text and context in order to reach a better understanding of the musical piece. If in that occasion I have used the concept of genre for reach this continuity, I will defend here that using intertextual typologies as the starting point for the discussion on intellectual property issues is a important tool to clarify ideas. Also, I am convinced that this strategy can help popular music studies to insert themselves in the debates of other academic disciplines and also in social debates that are surprisely strong at

this moment. In one way, it will help us to explain clearly to non-scholars, and sometimes to other colleagues in social science and humanities fields, why it is important to study popular music.

### Two Kind of Problems

Two different kind of problems will arose in the study of intertextuality in music: we need to make a reflection on how texts work to move later to the study of what kind of consequences has each kind of relation in the cultural context. In the study of texts, the first step is related with possible typologies of musical intertextuality: we need to define how each text is related with others (covers, loops, genres...), since each kind of relation will present different problems. This work has been done by Serge Lacasse (2003): starting on the categories that Roland Genette has established, Lacasse propose a translation to musical texts and enrich the classification with new typologies.

The second moment of reflection can be illuminated from the work of Bajtin (1989) where he defend that the mixing of text have always an intention, where the meaning come from. From the tribute to the parody, the question now is not the technical procedures that



embrace two texts, but what kind of results the author of the mixed text was looking for.

This is, of course, a task that can not be covered in this paper. But it will be a necessary starting point in order to move to the study of the music's context, to the social and cultural dimension of the intertextual relation that have also implications in the legal, economic and technological fields. I will try to summarize these implications in the next pages, using some case examples.

In 1999 Moby edited *Play*, a very popular and successful record. *Honey*, the first single, becomes a very popular hit all over the world. Some years later, in a compilation of blues recordings, I heard a song that sounded very similar to Moby's one; in the credits, I realized it was an old recording made by Alan Lomax in 1959, credited to Bessie Jones. Moby had sampled the song as the basics of his music. It is clear that my perception of *Honey* could not be the same with the new information: there are a complex set of relations between Jones and Moby's song, related to comprehension, authorship and cultural appropriation, as Hesmondhalgh and Born (2000) has explained. We need to question what different incomes have reaches the original singer, the ethnomusicologist, the pop star. We need to discuss what kind of ethical, economic and cultural problems are in this intertextual relation, if is right or wrongs to loop the past for free.

More recently, most of Spanish newspapers gave some relevance to the prosecution of DJ Syto, a young and

semiprofesional DJ who distributed in the web a cover of Franco Battiato *Voglio vederti danzare*, a song that was very popular in the country some years ago in his Spanish translation. If Battiato song was a celebration of different musics around the globe, from sufi's to Balinese, the new cover was a racist proclamation against Romanian immigrants, with lyrics like "Shit! Those fucking Romanians, Motherfuckers Romanians, I will cut your hands, motherfuckers Romanians". Here we are again in front of an intertextual problem (a change of meaning produced by the change of the lyrics) but it is obvious that DJ Syto is not in jail just because he was doing intertextual games. In this case, the production of a cover, the creation of new meaning, has involved a criminal procedure (and also can generate a civil one, since he probably did not have the permission of the owner of the copyright).

There are thousand of possible examples to illustrate the continuity between intertextual relations and legal, economical and ethic implications. At least in Spain, some of the intertextual operations are allowed by the Intellectual Property Law: commentary, parody and quote are permitted, although there is no clear definition of how much bars, lines, images or pages can be quoted without permission. What is clearly not allowed is the sampler, which needs the permission of the authors of the copyright. Since several musical cultures, as hip hop or electronic music, base their practice in the use

of samplers, it is obvious that creators are limited in their tools for creativity. The case of Danger Mouse, who mixed the Jay Z *Black album* with the Beatles *White album* to create the *Grey Album* is paradigmatic: since he did not receive permission for use the Beatles songs, EMI have asked the destruction of all copies of the record, although more than one millions of downloads have been done from the web. In the light of this legal regulation, musical creators are like modern Dr Frankenstein, with the technological skills and tools to invent a creature but out of law and the moral codes, not allowed to liberate their creatures out of the laboratory, to give them public life.

The examples of Danger Mouse and Moby situate us in the crossroad of two important social realities: in one hand, since we are living in a capitalist society of information, the intellectual property is protected in most of western countries. But, at the same time, an increased number of voices are claiming for the defence of the public domain (Lessig, 2005) or, as others prefer to refer, the collective intelligence (Levy, 2005).

Manuel Castells (1998, 119) have written that “cultural battles are the power battles in the information age... Power, as a capacity to impose conducts, is based on the nets of information exchange and manipulation of symbols that interrelated social actors, institutions and cultural movements”<sup>1</sup>. At the light of this idea, the actual system of intellectual property is confronting the public interest: what Castells have called informational capitalism

is characterized by the concentration of cultural industry and media and also for the intensive use of technologies, sometimes with the aim to control the public use of products. In the digital age, that has started in music with the substitution of vinyl by compact disc in the 1980s, the big business is never more the selling of products, but the market of property rights associated with these. In other words, we are moving from buying a record in a store to buy the permission to download a song from the web. In this package of property rights we must include all possible uses, from the inclusion of a song in a movie soundtrack, the sampler, the cover, etc... At the end, the capacity to manipulate our symbolic world is in the hands of each time less institutions, most of them private agents out of the democratic control. We need to look at this situation in parallel with the corporative concentration and the increased use of technologies, which configures a process of privatization of culture. Something that can be analyzed in the light of the next idea of Castells (1998, 114): “informational capitalism... is a tougher form of capitalism on aims and values, but incomparably more flexible than any other predecessor on its means”.

### Voices and Opinions

This is the structural situation at this moment: every moment a new creation, music, ideas, are emerging, using previous musical material in different ways, but the intellectual property regulation is limiting the

possibilities for creators. But in the last years a strong discussion on the situation has taken place not only in the music field, but also in the software one and, in a less obvious one, in the world of genetic engineering (but, at the end, a genetic patent is no more than a set of codified information). Let move now to examine who are the actors in this debate, what kind of arguments are handling and which voices are absent in the terrain.

Since not all actors are in parallel positions of power and public control, the voices and interest of the corporate musical industries are guiding most of the discussions: we can see that point in the letter that the Minister of Creative Industries and Tourism to an academic who have asked about the terms of copyright law in United Kingdom (Purnell, 2005)

*The music industry is keen to see an extension of the copyright term for sound recordings, which is currently set at 50 years. Many UK recordings dating from the early 1960s - such as those by The Beatles and the Rolling Stones - are still selling well, and companies like EMI are concerned about their income streams once these recordings start to go out of copyright from 2010. Any change in copyright term would be a matter for EU law, so all relevant Government interests, as well as our EU partners, would need to be*

*convinced that change is justified and in the best interests of UK stakeholders generally.*

As we can see, the logic of the relation between intellectual property rights and the public domain is ruled by the interest of the music industry, without any reference to the profit that public culture can receive when the Beatles or Rolling Stones music will enter the public domain.

At least, this document do not show the disdain about all actors out of the industry that another letter shows: in this occasion, it is a letter that many Spanish organizations sent to the Ministry of Industry celebrating the proposal of the LSSI, the law that will regulate both the services on the information society and electronic commerce (ACAM, 2005). These organizations are not the main actors in the Spanish music business, but represent most of the small and medium-sized composers, editors and record companies.

*Digital commerce of cultural contents has been working without control, with high damage for our economies, free commerce and the own Culture.... We can't conceive the idea that some organizations, in theory representatives of... retailers and consumers, that have been developing acts that are out of legality, can ask to*

*intervene in the redaction of future laws.*

In this case, the opinions and interest of the public are explicitly denied. Since the public interest is a diffuse concept, with the involved actors quite undetermined, (there is no organization of music listeners in Spain, at least with some public visibility, as there is in the case of TV spectators), the debate can not take place in term of equity: since these organizations are representing well identified persons and companies, with a clear role in the process of music production, the other part of the debate will always lack capacity of representation. Despite of it, several voices have claimed against this way to understand music and culture, some of them with the legitimation of coming from a national newspaper, as the commentary of José Cervera (2005) in *El Mundo*:

*"We also want to be considered. Culture is about dialogue: without discussion, we only have market and imposition. If they do not give us voice, we will need to shout to be heard. And it's going to be nasty".*

### **Rethinking Music Property**

For many artist, public valuation is based on commercial decisions: as many buyers of the record, most popular the artist is. (Frith, 1978) This is, of course, a very liberal position: democratic choice is seeing as equal to commercial choice,

but I am not going to discuss this idea now. The question is what exactly means to be popular; from my point of view, in popular music this concept implies two elements. The first one is about profit, but the second one is much more interesting for this discussion: to be popular means to be incorporated to the collective intelligence. Why are we more concerned, as academics, with Madonna or Michael Jackson or The Beatles as, for instance, Gov't'mule, the band that is sounding in the background while I'm writing this pages? Popularity is about the music we listen to, the songs we talk about, the artists we write about (as journalists or academics); popularity is about to give cultural value to some music, incorporate it to our world of references, experiences and ideas.

In this way, we are shareholders of the popularity of Madonna or The Beatles, but a very strange kind of shareholders, with nearly no rights on our company, but the one to buy or not the products. The musical industry need the involvement of the listeners in the career of a musician, but, as we have read some lines before, this same industry deny the public the possibility to have any kind of control about music; in the extreme affair we saw before in the letter to the Spanish Minister of Industry, the music business even deny the capacity to defend the people's own interest.

From this point of view, it seems necessary to include more voices in the debate about intellectual property, a discussion in which the industry have a very strong

voice but the voice of listeners, and, more surprisingly, musicians, is quite low. Also, a democratic debate on culture in the digital age must discuss the concentration of power in a few hands and the dynamics that are behind this power. For instance, we need to rethink about the author's control on transformational processes: at least under the Spanish law, the sampling, the cover and most of the operations that musicians need to do in order to produce music, specially in some cultures as hip hop and electronic, are under control of the rights owner. At the same time, there is no regulation at all about what a musician or a producer can do with traditional music, a field in which we have seen how Western musician have used and transform original materials without any reference to the origin and without any ethical reflection on the results of this work, as Feld (2000) have illustrated.

### **Conclusions: Opening a Pathway**

It will be too pretentious to establish conclusions in a work with these characteristics: I have just tried to give a very brief review of the lines that connect different problems, a map that just outline some pathways to walk by from now on.

I have try to establish connections between concepts that came from different fields: my starting point was to show that intertextuality is not just a matter of textual analysis, but have cultural, legal and

economic implications. I think that we need to start from a clear typology of how musical texts are related one with another in order to illuminate a debate that, most of the times, is mixing concepts and realities with no clear relation between them. In doing that, we can afford to show the importance of popular music studies in the society of knowledge and information.

## Endnotes

1. All translations from works referenced in Spanish are mine

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## From Opacity to Transparency: Operación Triunfo and New Trends in Spanish Music Industry

Héctor Fouce & Silvia Martínez

### Introduction

Spain is a country with high consumer television indexes. The television media audience exceeds that of radio by more than 50% and twice as much as that of the written press. To this statistic we can add that some internal sources from the major recording companies, calculate that almost 30% the proportion of record buyers that show choice of what they buy are directly influenced by television. Therefore, the following question is obvious: In which advertising slots do promotions that decide the consumption of recording products appear? There are two possible responses to this question: one that could have been given before the month of November 2001, the other, that which would be given after this date, when the program *Operación Triunfo* achieved renown on the Spanish television screens.

Before the end of 2001, the disencounter between the television programming and music was almost total: the programs dedicated to classical music or folk music were always aired during absolutely marginal fringe time slots, such as early morning hours on holidays and late night on working days. Pop likewise took up a minimum

time slot, generally in programs that played hit lists from sister radio stations. At the end of the eighties there were various attempts on the part of public and private television channels to secure a program dedicated to pop-rock music. The attempts inevitably failed after continually moving them around the programming schedule during impossible time slots, low viewership being blamed for said failure.

Logically, the music existed on television: the music industry was not going to leave 31 million spectators and potential buyers by the wayside. But it was not found looking for it on monographic or specialty programs but in other formats. For example, in the form of live performances by diverse groups that were promoting their latest single (including it's corresponding playback) in "magazines" and daily talk shows. Or in production series themselves that, following the imported model of Ally McBeel, ended the action of each scene in a bar where, in some way covered up, you see and hear the musical group that was the flavor of the month (*Al Salir de clase, Policías...*). Other programs counted on live music played by their own band, but in that case the musicians served to emphasize moments or gags of the program, and did not resort to promotional hits (*El Club de la comedia, Caiga quien caiga...*). The opening and

closing curtains of the programs, the theme songs and program sections, in addition to advertisements, made up the remainder of the music television slots. This last niche, advertisements, had been for years the principal conduit for promoting new hits or for oldies relaunched in the market. From not so subtle marketing ploys such as “tonight’s film is sponsored by the latest disc from X”, to sophisticated promotions in which a mobile telephone, car or shopping center use theme music that will be associated with the product for a long time. It should be mentioned that, in Spain, yearly compilation discs of the songs from advertisements always enjoy success in sales.

However, it was evident that the industry was not taking advantage of a magnificent promotional showcase when they only used brief appearances in commercials. That was the situation when public television TV1 broke with established practices by airing the program *Operación Triunfo*.

#### **OT: What is it and how does it work?**

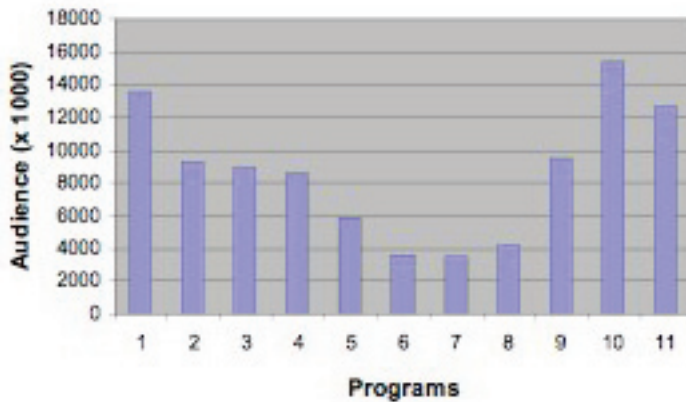
A casting-audition was held in the summer of summer of 2001 in various parts of Spain in order to select 16 young people who would participate in a television music contest. A total of 3,900 candidates presented themselves for inspection but the TV1 concept did not attract any interest, even to the point that they could not convince any important record companies to market the

merchandise that had been foreseen for the program.

The program started at the end of October. The dynamic was simple and to some extent inspired by the format of *Gran Hermano (Big Brother)*: the 16 candidates attended an exclusive academy, built on an immense television set, where they received daily classes of singing, acting, dance, etc. Everyday TV2, the public television channel with the lowest number of viewers, aired a half hour prerecorded broadcast of their training. The weekly activities were focused on preparing a live show in which each contestant had to defend his or her assigned song and show everything they had learned during the week in the Academy. The following Monday, the show was broadcast live (this time in Prime Time and on TV1) and the performances of each were evaluated by a jury of experts (record company representatives, managers, booking agents, etc.) and by their instructors from the Academy in front of a live studio audience. Afterwards they incorporated the votes of home viewers that would end up deciding between the two candidates that were nominated to leave the Academy.

The Premiere was broadcast on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, without much media or social repercussion. However, over a few months, the program audience steadily increased and began to be considered a new media phenomenon. Without showing gratuitous scenes-the Academy cameras only showed the lessons and some group scenes, such as meal times, showing the daily

### Most Viewed Programs in Spain 2001 - 2002



- 1.- Football UEFA Championship  
Final (penalties)..... 68,8
- 2.- Big Brother 2
- 3.- New year's bells
- 4.- Football UEFA Cup Final
- 5.- Cuéntame (soap opera)
- 6.- OT January 10th
- 7.- President Aznar interview
- 8.- Telediario (News) January 21th
- 9.- OT January 28th
- 10.- OT Final February 11th... 74,7
- 11.- Eurovision Contest may 25th

effort in training and promoting a sense of fair play and the solidarity of the participants at all times -, the program's audience swelled quickly and spectacularly. After Christmas, the show had already become a mass media phenomenon, helped along by the critiques – positive and positive – in the written press, the continuous references on other television programs – every channel broadcast fragments of the Monday show or of the daily training – and as a debate topic on numerous radio talk shows.

It is not necessary to give quantitative details. It is enough to say that this progression climaxed on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February, when the live broadcast of the final show, in which the contestant winner would be decided, breaking all Spanish share records, reaching 15 million spectators and claiming 75% of the market.

The impact on television was unmistakable, and the social repercussions could still be measured months later when the second promotion of the contest was announced for the 2002-2003 season and the almost 4,000 candidates of the first year became more than 80,000 aspirants. But what repercussions did the program have on the Spanish music scene and, above all, the live and recording music industry?

#### Changing the Rules of the Game

From the beginning of the program, the songs presented live on the OT shows were recorded during the week and were compiled on a compact disc and put up for sale just one week later. The program reached an agreement with a small record company – Vale Music

### Best Selling Records in Spain 2002\*

Total Year 2002	March 2002
1. David Bisbal: Corazón latino	1. OT Singles Gala 12
2. <i>Álex Ubago: ¿Qué pides tú?</i>	2. OT Singles Gala 11
3. Bustamante: David Bustamante	3. OT Singles Gala 10
4. <i>Café Quijano: La taberna del Buda</i>	5. <i>OT Álbum</i>
5. Manu Tenorio: Manu Tenorio	6. Shakira: Servicio de lavandería
6. OT II: La fuerza de la vida	7. <i>OT Singles Gala 9</i>
7. Rosa: Rosa	8. Amaral: Estrella de mar
8. Chenoa: Chenoa	9. <i>OT Singles Gala 8</i>
9. Shakira: Servicio de lavandería	10. Café Quijano: La taberna del Buda
10. UPA: UPA Dance	11. Estopa: Destrangis

\* Italics on the records related to the program

– which was specialized at the time in compilation and re-editions that had a very small catalogue of artists. None of the big recording companies were interested in the product potential, nor was the record label owned of Televisión Española itself. The discs were sold at a very modest price (one third of the cost of a new release) and the marketing was done almost exclusively on the daily reviews and on various occasions during the Monday show. The sales outlets were not restricted to the routine ones for compact discs but were also distributed in supermarkets, train stations, kiosks, etc. Between the marketing (which was free for the record company since it was done through public television) and the warm reception of the program, the sales rocketed to almost completely dominate the compact disc best selling lists.

In addition to this, in 2002, the Spanish recording industry in general was in serious crisis that they attributed to, among other factors, the tremendous impact of piracy. The illegal sales of compact discs in Spain were estimated at around 25 million copies in comparison to the 70 million that were declared legally by the recording companies. Some of the reasons adduced by assorted individuals involved are the permissiveness of the police, a society that did not consider this fraudulent practice a serious crime, and the high cost of CDs.

The OT phenomenon also affected the industry organized around live concerts. Starting in the 80s, professional pop singers were deprived of their main source of income in the form of live performances: compact disc sales, copy write fees, and television appearances had become

their main income. In 2002, as compact disc sales diminished in favor of the OT factory products, the live concert market was equally affected and the majority of artists saw the number of live performances enormously reduced for that summer, which was the main concert season. It was estimated that the take for the winners of the contest was equal to that of renowned artist with long careers in the Spanish music industry (Joaquín Sabina, Manu Chao, etc.). They arrived on the scene and did not contribute a new repertoire (the contest was always based on covers), nor did they have experience ... and they were practically cornering the entire music market. The traditional music industry was enduring its worst moment and OT had become a parallel industry: 18.2 million euros in profit for publicity, 4.8 million euros for MSN and SMS for Televisión Española, 36 million euros (just from the collective CDs) for the small recording company Vale Music, who edited the compact discs for the program, more than 220 million visits to the contest web page... reaching finally an estimated total of 65 million euros profit for the endeavor.

### **Keys to success of Operación Triunfo**

A brief review of the keys to success of this musical macro-operation, media and publicity, brings us to two basic areas for analyses: one, the innovative production and distribution strategies and two, the mechanism used for the creation of the new idols.

### **Production and Distribution Strategy**

The industry innovations contributed by the OT work formula and its tremendous effectiveness – we believe in some cases to be the result of chance more than planning – can be summed up in three aspects:

#### **a) The increase in the speed of production.**

Due to the structure of the program and the necessity to cover new contents weekly, the preparation, recording, and postproduction sessions of each disc were accelerated in an unprecedented manner. The discs were produced quickly and with small numbers of copies that ran out almost every week (the recording company doing the editing dedicating practically all of its activity to OT products). The recorded songs were classics or popular themes, already known by the public, and did not need much time to be assimilated. All of this, together with the exhaustive propaganda that the program – already with a large audience – did for the next product, enabled the discs to be edited and distributed quickly, and in some cases, ran out in just a few days. The OT products, in reality, functioned as singles, which were part of a unique macro-product that appeared week after week at the top of the charts. The product was composed of various singers and songs but with one image. The disc was not bought for this

or that song, a single from this or that singer, but as the “latest *Operación Triunfo* disc”.

### **b) Reduced Prices.**

The disproportionate price of CDs is one of the main reasons for the consumption of discs illegally copied and sold on the streets and in cafes. Since the explosion of the CD format into the market, replacing the vinyl LP, the consumer knows that the costs of production are much lower with the new format. But far from having the impact of dropping the prices, the cost of CDs has increased, exceeding the psychological barrier of 18€ for a new release. When a successful new release, such as the OT product, is sold for 6€, it causes damage that promotes its sale and causes the rejection of other new releases – at times less wanted – that are displayed beside it for a price three times more than what they are paying for the latest disc from their OT idols. Obviously, the almost nonexistent investment in promotion that Vale Music has to make is also part of the game and constitutes unfair rivalry that the consumer is not always able to value.

### **c) Access to new consumers.**

We still do not have a detailed study of the OT product consumer profile, but it's easy to deduce that this phenomenon has converted a sector of the public,

one that was composed not of habitual buyers, into consistent consumers. The universal and indiscriminate publicity from Prime Time television, the fact that they are products suitable for the public (the OT songs became common even in child day care centers), the variety of styles, personalities, voices and repertoires that were offered on the same disc, and the popularity of the chosen songs, expanded the base of potential buyers. This new shopper was now able to partake because they did not have to go to the shops to buy the discs but could find them in the supermarket, kiosk, or train station.

### **The creation of new idols**

One of the most surprising things about the OT phenomenon was the manner in which the industry approached the construction *ex novo* of a pop idol. This is a fact as old as the music industry, but generally rejected by the public as a sign of lack of artistic authenticity. Here we are attending the creation, live, of new idols: the spectator is present for the daily training, the advice from the professionals how to sing the theme and present it to the public in the most convincing way possible... Summing up, they expose us to the complete process of the creation of an artist, bare and without hiding any facet of the construction: the artist is not anymore that which needs to express him or herself through the medium of music, but that which brings to



us those songs which we like in the most convincing manner. And the fact is, far from causing a public scandal, the public was moved and fascinated.

Listed here are some keys to understand why:

**a) Anyone can become an artist.**

What the public saw was how a completely unknown young boy or girl over the weeks, and in many cases without exceptional talent, becomes a successful singer. The feeling that there is a process, that an artist is not born but created, turned it into something that is hypothetically, within anyone's reach. We could call it "the neighbor next door" effect: it could be any one of us or one of our neighbors. Empathy works.

**b) Honesty in the process.**

Nobody feels defrauded (it is not a new case like Milli Vanilli): here the process of creation is the starting point. The sincerity with which it is shown, along with the extolment effort (relatively short, since we are talking about only a few months of training) and the praise of the personal triumph, served to win over the affection of the public.

**c) Tension resolved well between personalities and adaptation to the market.**

From the very first day at the Academy, the participants

are encouraged to show their personality in the performance, to make theirs the song that they will perform in the next show. This gives them certain license to project a performance differentiated from those of their colleagues. At the same time, the teachers refine their stage personality and the students are asked to adapt their personal style to the taste of the public: they have to learn to adapt themselves to all the styles that could appear in the market. This does not provoke rejection because the creation of singers for the public is the recognized and accepted starting point by everybody.

**d) Range of options.**

The gradual work of refining the individual options and the simultaneous stimulation to progress on one's path and the personal sensitivity, results in each of the candidates define a different performance. From the prototype of Latino singers, such as Ricky Martin or Cheyenne, to the soul-woman to flamenco-like ballad singers, such as Alejandro Sanz, the variety of options covers a wide of range of tastes. It is unlikely that you do not like some of them and there is always a song by your favorite one on each disc. If you like more than one: the CD only costs 6€ and you have all of them together.

**e) Popular songs and suitable for everyone.**

The repertoire assigned weekly to each participant,

and that will later be a part of the compilation disc, is a very popular repertoire and suitable for everyone: pop songs, boleros, ballads and some flamenco-like themes. They are almost always themes easily sung and the majority in Spanish. Everybody understands the lyrics and anybody can hum along with the disc.

#### **f) Complicity in the decisions.**

One of the great decisions of the contest has been to risk the encouragement of competition amongst the participants without causing unhealthy rivalry. The solidarity, the “good times”, and the collaboration in the learning were fed by the creation of different duets and trios for each show. In this “positive atmosphere” the public was made an accomplice because they had the final decision to determine to which of the two candidates nominated for expulsion from the Academy by the “experts” was given a second chance. As opposed to negative mechanisms of programs like *Gran Hermano*, in which the public decides who will be expelled from the house, the public of OT had to cast positive votes: with their votes they support one of the candidates to continue on the program, the one who would become THEIR candidate, THEIR idol.

#### **Some suggestions to reflect on the OT phenomenon**

The data presented up to this point constitutes only

a first approach “in the heat of the moment” about a television program that has abruptly changed the rules of the Spanish music market. Once more editions of the program have been aired and we can measure the real combined impact, we will be able to analyze in more detail its influence and repercussions. In order to do this we propose to consider some theoretical tools like the reflection proposed by Goffman (1974) about the *back region*, the phenomenon of Operación Triunfo offers us an obvious opportunity of artistic “voyeurism”. The day to day of the Academy, the training of its participants, the exhibition of their feelings, insecurities and personal triumphs shown up close, make us participants of the *back stage*. Those parts of the creation of the idol that the industry does not normally give us access to, are shown to us by the Academy without holding back. Without being directly part of this reduced group of candidates for success, we feel participants of their experiences and achievements. In fact, we are part of their success in a similar way as when our soccer team wins: our support, our presence in front of the screen makes them what they are. We have been with them all through the process: we have had access to the *back region*, the sight of which is usually prohibited. Evidently this process has turned the *back region* into a front region, creating a trick of mirrors that we should incorporate into our sociological analysis of the artistic process in the future.

On the other hand, we must not forget that Operación Triunfo is not only a musical phenomenon. It is well known that in our society, news, politics, and wars are no longer only issues to get information about but they constitute mass media events in and of themselves. Being a privileged medium of communication for the masses, the television has created a new format called OT that the viewer and the music consumer accept as *rule of media genres*.

In the same way, in the framework of the studies of popular music and its inquiries into the difficult issue of authenticity, Grossberg (1993) gives us another of the keys that we could consider in a deeper study of the keys of OT. The new affective logic of the “authentic inauthenticity” that affirms with all we know about the music market- and that OT has put in front of the average viewer- “the only possible claim to authenticity is derived from the knowledge and admission of your inauthenticity” (Grossberg, 1993, 206). The creators, the participants and the spectators of Operación Triunfo have reached a tacit agreement about the acceptance of the rules of the game. They have given shape to the maximum inauthenticity of the musical expression –as it is denounced by the Spanish musicians wronged by the success of the program and the new rivalry- and have made it its favorite option: the “most authentic” expression for their taste and choice. But this sensation of “authenticity” has an immediate limit: after the original sensation, loss of the “innocence” of the first edition, the reception by the public for the next promotions

of the Academy was hurt. In the second (2002-2003) and third (in progress) staging of the program, the selected candidates showed a much more professional attitude, conscious of the cameras and of the repercussions of their gestures and expressions. They were neither so believable nor so likeable anymore.

Another issue related to the authenticity is the model that OT is proposing with the return of the figure of the *crooner or melodic singer*: we get further away from the singer-author model, to displace the authenticity of the proposal for the way the singer is able to turn a song into HIS song, as much as he is able to bestow on it his own personality and style. The public – the industry? – is not looking for original authors: they want good performers. And in this progress they encourage the soloist, opposed to the format of the band that has predominated in the two previous decades in the local market.

If the encouragement of the soloist will work again as a main risk for the record company; if the success of the program “Operación Triunfo” will normalize the presence of music programs on Spanish television or how the production techniques of OT will help to reconfigure a music industry in full crisis, are questions that we leave, for the moment, on the table. A comparative study of the different national and regional versions of these types of programs, nowadays present on many European and North American televisions, might orientate us in the future to find an answer.

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## Cultural Connotations of Popular Music in Cinema: The Spanish Case

Teresa Fraile Prieto

### Introduction: Popular Music does have a Meaning

Since the 70s film soundtracks consisting of pop and rock songs have become a common practice. They illustrate how songs and other musical styles can perform the same functions than an incidental score. The film *Easy Rider* specifically contributed to this phenomenon not only by giving soundtrack a new dimension and popularizing this new format, but in addition by benefiting the film industry with a commercial goal for the film soundtrack. We can say that pop in cinema has almost surpassed incidental music in the last 50 years because, thanks to the general democratization of Art, film music has also been demystified and every kind of music can play the role of the classical score.

Pop music soundtracks have been the object of severe criticism by the purists of film music. Nowadays the idea that rock in cinema was always born to commercialize the film or the soundtrack still prevails. There are many cases where the musical choice is affected by the commercial diffusion that the soundtrack will later have, as the compilations of pop songs arising from films are becoming marketing successes. Sometimes it is indeed

difficult to make out which product, film or CD, supports the other. Nevertheless it is necessary to bear in mind that this commercial choice is generally combined with an aesthetic one. Some authors like Scorsesse even demonstrate that these songs share their narrative will. Thereby, pop adds meaning to the film –as for instance social connotations– in a period when the social understanding of music is gradually increasing since the 60s.

In fact, only in rare moments pop music is able to remain neutral. Few uses of pop manage to stay away from cultural association, since this always happens due to our knowledge of the cultural codes associated to music. But sometimes the director obtains certain neutrality by using urban pop music as background (structural function) and without giving it special attention. For instance Tarantino occasionally places music with narrative incoherence, as an ironic commentary or counterpoint, but he also uses music as a score itself, by example inserting music of the 70 as background. Standings are lost in our film sound world, in the same way as in the mass culture, every style –classical or pop– can perform all functions.

Although employed in an impartial way, pop music has always implicit added meaning. Pop music does

not behave in the same manner as incidental music, because not only does it bring expressive connotations in, but it also attaches cultural connotations to the film and touches upon particular registers of our cultural knowledge.

Pop music breaks the principle of the inaudibility enunciated by Claudia Gorbman<sup>1</sup>. One of the most accepted formulas in film music, decisive from the beginning in composition of the classical Hollywood music, is the inaudibility of music. According to this idea, the maxim states that the best film music is that heard but not listened to. For the composers of classic Hollywood the discretion of music was an implicit aesthetic code because it was believed that it could distract from the film action. It corresponds to a common feeling of the audience: when leaving the cinema, the spectator does not remember in which moments there was music and in which there was not, or whether the main character had been assigned a characteristic theme, apart from those moments in which music is specifically heard. The main suggestion of this theory maintains that, in cinema, the dominance of the narration and the vision line makes music unnoticed for the viewer. This phenomenon is connected to the psychological process of perception, because music depends on the narration. Music can also have a signifying task, but the spectator attention is driven to the diegesis and he perceives the music in an unconscious way.

Indeed, by its characteristics of inaudibility and abstraction, music is a perfect mechanism to force the spectator to enter the world of fiction. The main reason is that it can directly gain access to the psychology of the viewer via the subconscious mind. Gorbman maintains that music induces sleep to the spectator, making the subject less critical and less cautious, the meaning of the narrative more efficient and the identification enhanced. Music frees the spectator from the threat of absence of meaning, and ensures a canalized meaning.

The rupture of popular music in cinema with the concept of inaudibility seems to have arisen naturally, because pop music has been introduced in films directly related to pop culture. This proves that music may contribute to the film without bothering the narrative, and that the use of a style other than the post-romantic is not so dangerous.

### Functions

Each film is a result of its social context, in which it is born and from which it absorbs the meaning codes. The director, person in charge of the set of the movie, chooses the form in which music gathers those codes. The extra associations that music has show explicitly or implicitly which type of film it is, at which moment of history it was made, its genre, or the kind of audience the film has been thought for. Music can be the fingerprint of a concrete type of film. Moreover, it can carry out the



same functions than the score, but it goes a step further on the implications. Obviously, it can use the lyrics with a narrative or expressive function relative to the plot.

Music helps the film to locate the action in a certain time and place. This setting is clearer in historical or fantastic stories. It uses the human mechanism of association, for which a previous knowledge of the significant giving rise to a concrete meaning is required. The *cultural subconscious* plays a very important role, that is to say, the information stored in the unconscious and specially the hearing information that can be correlated to a certain meaning. The reaction to the music is thus directly coupled to the neighbouring social system and depends on the cultural codes apprehended by the spectator in that specific context. Film music tries to be unconsciously and automatically understood, it is built in a connotative language and the subjective readings are supposed to be already inserted in the thought of the receivers.

Many films clearly reveal the precise moment when they were developed by the use of pop music. Pop music in cinema is very referential because it defines entirely the time and fulfils perfectly the setting function in time and space. It is timewise more precise and more useful than the neutral score. Of course, it is more useful in present stories or setting in the XX century, since it transports the viewer to his own personal memory, touching in a much more accurate way the connotations of the

spectator. In some way, it forces the viewer to be sent back to the moment and place where he was when that music was lived. This fast association can happen because the audience was really present at the moment of hearing such music, which is much more difficult in the case of classical or incidental music. Although some films are so ephemeral as the music they contain, this is an advantage in order to trigger the phenomenon of nostalgia, and also the recognition and association to a given cultural section.

### **The Evolution of Connotations in Spain**

The complexity of musical allusions in film music is a reflection of the hyper-fragmentation of marketing and pop cultural references. These references have undergone a natural evolution. At the beginning authors like Scorsesse referred to the culture of the rock in general, but now references allude to minorities, they move towards more diversified and concrete connotations, and confirm a cultural opening by the authors. Certainly the enormous possibility of choice shows the premeditation of the use of this type of music.

In this work we are going to explore the particularities of the Spanish case, as an example to clarify the cultural connotations of popular music in cinema. In each example a clear connotation of Spanish characters and the special moment of musical history can be noticed.

Pop-rock was introduced in Spanish cinema in the 60s, later than in other countries due to the political repression and the strong folklore tradition of Spain. We cannot forget that rock'n'roll reaches Spain without the energy that enjoyed in Anglo-Saxon countries, "decaffeinated", without the essence of black music but through the filter of the white singers. Spain at that moment was a closed country, for instance *Rock around the clock* or *The blackboard jungle* never make it through, and even when the first record of Elvis is published, it does not have much success.

The concept of pop music, rock, ye-yé music or modern music was extremely confused at that time. The "Spanish modern song" is mixed up with other styles, *light song* or the so-called *melodic song*. Furthermore, Spain's opening-up to other countries started by the Mediterranean festivals and therefore the first singers made versions of the Italian or French successes, which were themselves adaptations of Anglo-Saxon songs. Consequently, pop in cinema only evoked a rising modernity and a very indefinite conception of youth, following the model of the Anglo-Saxon cinema in the 50s. Rock and ye-yé culture was an influence from abroad, showing the shy initial musical opening-up at the time of Franco's dictatorship.

Like in America, in Spain there were a lot of films made for the phenomenon of fans and promotion of song stars (although in Spain this tradition goes back to the

folkloric singers and the cinema of the *copla*). They had an inoffensive innocence and a youthful repressed vigour caused by Franco's regime, but precisely for that reason the spirit is faithful to the sprouting of pop music in Spanish cinema. This kind of films was made simultaneously to other Spanish folkloric-light musical films, starred by popular characters as Marisol, Manolo Escobar, Rocío Durcal, Raphael. Some of these films are *Un rayo de luz* or *Tómbola* performed by Marisol (L. Lucía, 1960 and 1962), *Canción de juventud* or *Rocío de la Mancha* performed by Rocío Durcal (L. Lucía, 1962), *Digan lo que digan* performed by Raphael (Mario Camus 1967), *Festival de Benidorm* (R. Salvia, 1960), *Melodías de hoy* (José María Elorrieta, 1960), and *Historias de la televisión*, where Conchita Velasco sings the popular song *Chica ye-yé*.

El Dúo Dinámico (the Dynamic Duo) were the first Spanish stars in modern music. Their fans were called "las dinámicas" (the dynamics). They fulfilled the standard of a good Spanish necessary in the regime and shot patriotic films. Their music combined the weight of ballads and American rock, with the influences of the French and Italian mood, but to be politically correct they even introduced the folklore in songs as *Esos ojitos negros*, *María del Pilar*, *Balada gitana*, etc. Of course, there were many movies performed by El Dúo Dinámico, as for instance *Botón de ancla* (Miguel Lluch, 1960).

Other films catch the atmosphere of the Spain of the groups. They include influences of Andalusian folklore and of the Spanish ethnic music. In this category there are films such as *Los gatos negros* performed by Los gatos negros and Soledad Miranda (José Luis Monter, 1963), *Noches del Universo* starring Los Sírex and El Dúo Dinámico (Miguel Iglesias, 1964), *Megatón ye-yé* performed by Micky y los Tonys (Jesús Yagüe, 1964), *El último sábado* starring Los Sírex (José Balaña, 1966), *Los chicos con las chicas* and *¡Dame un poco de amor!* performed by Los Bravos (Javier Aguirre, 1967; José María Forqué, 1968), *Peppermint Frappé* performed by Los Canarios (Carlos Saura, 1967), *Topical Spanish* (Ramon Masats, 1969) starring Los Iberos or *Long- Play* (Javier Setó, 1968), a biopic pop about the group Los Pasos.

In the late 60s there was a large amount of movies directly related the new pop music, such as *Los felices 60* (1966) performed by Raimon, *Escala en Hi-Fi*, a pop musical (Isidoro Martínez Ferry, 1963), *Hamelin* in which Miguel Ríos plays the leading role (Luis María Delgado, 1967), *La viudita ye-yé* starring Mary Santpere and Bruno Lomas (Juan Bosch, 1967), *Chico, chica ¡Boom!* performed by Bruno Lomas (Juan Bosch, 1969), *En un mundo diferente* with Juan y Junior (Pedro Olea, 1968), *Codo con codo* (Víctor Aúz, 1967) about the promotion of three ye-yé stars starring Bruno Lomas, Massiel and Micky.

The 70s gave music a new social nuance. Whereas in the U.S.A. the Vietnam War was correlated to rock

music, in their own way Spain also had more politicized musical years. Concurrently with the song of the summer, flamenco-pop and light song, new tendencies arrived to the Spanish stage, such as singer-songwriters or nationalists demands like the Nova Cançó. Therefore the films with this kind of authors had a special social connotation, as it can be seen in *La larga agonía de los peces* with Joan Manuel Serrat (Rovira-Beleta, 1969), *Mi profesora particular* with Serrat as well (Jaime Camino y J. Marsé, 1972), *El libro del buen amor* starring Patxi Andion (Tomás Aznar, 1975), *Tatuaje* (J. Bigas y Vázquez Montalbán, 1977), *Mi hija Hildegart* with Luis Eduardo Aute (Fernando Fernán Gómez, 1977), and *La ciutat cremada* with music by Serrat (Antoni Ribas, 1975).

Gradually Spain developed a more authentic rock, and cinema paid real attention to the rock of the 70s. Documentary films were shot; some of them constructed the soundtrack with contemporary pop music or performed by the main rock stars. Among these films we can we can quote the documentary *Canet Rock* (Francesc Bellmunt y Ángel Casas, 1977) and *A 45 revoluciones por minuto* (1969, Pedro Lazaga), which promoted Juan Pardo, Ángeles, Fórmula V, José María Íñigo by telling the story of a group.

In the early 80s there is a collection of interesting films connected to popular music: *Nos va la marcha* (Berastegui, Gómez y García, 1979) with the

contemporary groups Mad, Topo, Leño, T. Bautista, etc. is a sign of the Spanish underground called “el rollo”; *Navajeros* performed by Burning (Eloy de la Iglesia, 1980) is a film of juvenile delinquency; *Adolescencia* with Ramoncín and Nacha Pop (1981), *3 por 4* with Carlos Velat, Santi Arisa, Pau Riba, Sisa (Manuel Iborra, 1982); *Sal gorda* with popular groups from the 80s (Fernando Trueba y Óscar Ladoire, 1983); *A tope* (Tito Fernández, 1984), a strange documentary performed by Loquillo, Alaska y Dinarama, Nacha Pop, Vídeo, Objetivo Birmania, Derribos Arias, Aviador Dro, Golpes Bajos, Gabinete Caligari; and finally *Gritos* starring Loquillo, Decibelios, Rebeldes, Tutti (José María Nunes, 1985).

The 80s was a moment where pop music in cinema had a noticeable relationship with marketing, although this effect is not so pronounced in Spain. The film and the record advertise each other and in particular there are many films named as the main song of the soundtrack (*¿Qué hace una chica como tú en un sitio como este?*, directed by Fernando Colomo in 1978 starring the group Burning). The generalized practice of commercializing three different records starts then, the first one with the songs, a second one with the score and a last one with songs inspired by the film.

The most outstanding event in the Spanish 80s is the “Movida”. It was a kind of “Renaissance of the Spanish culture” that occurred after forty years of pro-Franco dictatorship, a cultural transformation in whose

development music played an essential role. The resurgence of a hedonist culture, caused by disillusion and democratic normality provided a collective process characterized by the influence of *punk* (Ramones, Sex Pistols, Clash), the *underground* world and Andy Warhol.

At this moment cinema took its references from the underground cinema, which mixes glam rock with punk and provocation, Super 8 documentary, satirical sense of humour about sex and violence, and where a specialized knowledge of cult references is required. It emphasizes the irony of the star system because in fact everybody could be an actor or a singer.

We cannot talk about popular music in Spanish cinema without mentioning Pedro Almodóvar. In addition to filmmaker, he is also a representative figure of the music in the Movida, in fact he recorded a Long-Play and two Maxi-singles (*How it is the women's toilets* and *SatanaSA and The great gangue*) with Fabio McNamara and Bernardo Bonezzi. Moreover, there are some performances by Almodóvar in his first films, like *Suck it to me* in *Labyrinth of passions* (1982). The cinema of his first times (such as *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón*, 1978) consisted of a mixture of genuinely Spanish elements and American pop, the new sexual freedom and the urban world. Music in his films is also eclectic, but the pre-existing songs act as dramatic and narrative elements. He exploits the *copla*

in a sentimental sense, but also because it is a style that brings forward connotations of the gay world. For example in *Carne trémula* (Almodóvar, 1997), set in the Madrid 1970s, the *copla* is a contrasting musical background, but he employs the lyrics in a metaphoric way, using the music as a counterpoint, but always with an excuse in the plot.

We are coming the present generation in Spain. Filmmakers and musicians have new cultural quality in order to have a good knowledge of the past and the golden years of pop music. They conceive image as a generator of music, and have the conscience of music video culture and of being within the global mass media.

### **The Nostalgia Effect**

Although apparently they are very different styles, the use of pop music shares characteristics with the use of the classical Hollywood music as defined by Caryl Flinn, that is, in connection with the romantic ideology. For this author, the choice of the post-romantic musical style and its continuity in cinema respond to a conception of cinema with a great nostalgic component, and the tendency to “associate film music with the idea of anteriority and idealised past”<sup>2</sup> This idea can be entirely extrapolated to the use of pop music in cinema, which is associated to a near but decisive past in the memory

of the audience. Additionally, according to this author, music is considered a transcendental language and for that reason it activates the nostalgia for a lost and idealized world, outside the structures of Capitalism. In this case we may say that pop music activates nostalgia even being inserted in the capitalist structure, or rather because of being inside it.

Popular music has been the source of a repertoire of classics that seems to be very cinematographic, in particular due to such nostalgic shade. The main indication is the phenomenon of popular music in the re-elaborated musical comedy. Here the inclusion of the pop does not bring us back to a specific moment in the history of our music, but to a real moment in our experiential life. In this way it grants universality, which was previously unknown in the traditional insertion of popular music in cinema.

In the 60-70s, and thanks to the new popular music, the modern musical comedy is born, both concerning choreography and music (*West Side Story*, *Cabaret*). There is a series of musical films purposely made for stars, rather films with songs. In addition, the rock opera is adapted from theatre, and the combination of pop and musical comedy gives rise to a kind of films that are precursory of the music video, like those of the Beatles (*A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*).

In the new musical comedy there exists the awareness of being telling a past story from our present, since all



the songs are a re-interpretation of pop songs. It is “recycled” music, adapted and integrated in the film, but it does not make any historical setting. It is another step in the use of popular music in cinema. In all times, popular culture has talked about the great subjects by telling stories in songs, metaphors of great subjects. Popular music as pop and rock music have become the classical music of our time and that is the reason why we understand it in a universal sense.

Apart from the suitable meaning of the lyrics, there is a subsequent level of song connotations which apply to a generational subconscious mind. The relationship between the popular success of some songs and their presence in cinema is common from the 20s, but here music is associated to personal experiences. Thus, in the first level there is the rational plot line, and in the second the emotional implication of the spectator, touching his affectivity. The best known example is *Moulin Rouge*, but in Spain there are similar examples such *Al otro lado de la cama* (*On the other side of the bed*). It caricatures the musical comedy, but also pop music, and it is sustained in the knowledge of the genre codes. As we have said, it uses the literal sense of the lyrics plus the connotation of pop.

Some of the mental associations to popular music are included in the score itself, when composers and directors wanted to give a new dimension to film music. It started

with the innovative cinematographic movements of the 50s, and above all in the 60s, as the will of portraying the reality and denouncing it demanded an original film music style. These movements shared a social aim of protest, and music contributes to it with irony or existential depth. Italy produced a personal music that included references to Italian folklore and to the new popular styles (mambo, rock, twist, jazz). In England the *Free Cinema* used the new popular music (jazz, Rock & Roll and Rhythm & Blues and the new pop fashionable in England), and introduces the *beat* culture. The most important change was the musical formation of film composers, who already lived in a world where popular music was crucial. Musicians coming from the rock, the pop, and singer-songwriters made an important contribution, since they blend his personal styles and the necessities of the soundtrack, independently from the commercial profit.

These eclectic stiles arising from popular music remit the audience to particular periods of cinema, and sometimes they seem old if we listen to them from the perspective of our present musical moment. In Spain, the scores by Alfonso Santisteban are an understandable case of pop in film music, in films as *Separación matrimonial*, *El asesino está entre los trece*, *Señora Doctor* (1973). In fact, his music has been recovered in *Muertos de risa* (Alex de la Iglesia, 1999) to recreate the music of the 70s.



## Narrative Function

Besides time functions and nostalgia, pop music can play a narrative and meaning role in cinema. Not only does music provide us with an idea about a specific time, but also about concrete images and familiar social identities. Popular music itself links obvious social associations. It means youthful vitality, collective identification, spectacle, action, adolescent audience, freedom, but generational confrontation and disillusion as well. Of course, cinema takes up these connotations every time it uses pop music.

All at once, cinema is a wonderful way to show the pop culture atmosphere. Movies telling about rock stars usually employ the well-known ascending–descending scheme, from the moment when the character is only a promise to his maintenance in success until his fall. In fact, the myth of the musician, the modern hero, with a tragic ending is very cinematographic. The prototype is based on the modern tragedy of Elvis. Somehow, films that tell the story of a pop group are a good thermometer to explore the contemporary society, because each type of music in cinema is related to specific social problems or atmospheres. *Shaky Carmine* (Chema de la Peña, 1999) or *Mensaka* (Salvador García Ruiz, 1998) are two recent Spanish examples.

In the recent years there are a lot of Spanish films that make portraits of particular identities, where music is

an essential descriptor. Music illustrates popular culture from, for example, big cities districts. In this way, the film *Barrio* (Fernando León) has a soundtrack made up with typical songs of this location, which brings to mind the exact social type of a popular suburb. Other similar example is *Historias del Kronen* (Montxo Armendáriz, 1995). This film is a particular Spanish portrait of the X generation, where music appears diegetically in the normal life of the characters. The soundtrack includes several Spanish groups as Australian Blonde, Terrorvision, Santa Fe, Hamlet, El inquilino comunista, Tribu X, Reincidentes, Estragos.

Many musicians have felt the attraction for the big screen. In film industry they are a lure and a guarantee of marketing success, as it is seen in the films made for music fans. Fragments of concerts appear almost always to approximate us to the motion of the artist. However, the transformation of the musicians to actors normally had a bad connotation, mainly because there have been many insolvent attempts. If the film is not qualitatively well accomplished, the musician will lose credibility, since it goes against the principle of authenticity of music. This is what happened with promotional films of the 80s such as *Sufre mamón* and *Suéltate el pelo* (Manuel Summers, 1987) performed by Hombres G, or *Killer Barbys* (Jesús Franco, 1996), a gore parody performed by a rock band.

Using cultural connotations associated to popular

music, many films add a new intention such as the parody. In *El día de la Bestia* (Alex de la Iglesia) and *Isi Disi* there is the figure of the Spanish heavy music fan, a clear, nearby and specific cultural cliché for the Spanish young audience. *Pocholo y Borjamari* is an intense case where the music classifies a kitsch middle-class teenager of the 80s, nowadays ridiculous.

Another interesting example is the presence of the *copla* in new Spanish cinema. From the 20s there was a folklore tradition confirmed in the films, which were a mark of time and aesthetic culture. It was a cinema of stars, and songs were used to narrate by means of the lyrics. (As examples *Rosario la Cortijera*, directed by León Artola in 1923, and performed by Estrellita Castro and Niño de Utrera; or *Embrujo* directed by Carlos Serrano de Osma in 1947). Later on, there is a reconsideration of these films: we have already discussed Almodóvar, where the existence of *copla* is a sign of his own life when a child, together with homosexual connotations and kitsch will. Other films such *Manolito Gafotas* (Miguel Albadalejo, 1999) picks up the memory of the child star Joselito.

This kind of evolution in the connotations in film music depends on the director's cinematographical knowledge (and mainly on the audience's cinematographic heritage). At the beginning, the main function of rock in cinema was to promote, it was an important means of diffusion of the culture of rock. But later, the cultural

basis of the new generation acquired a vital value, because popular music was an important part of their lives. In *El amor perjudica seriamente la salud*. (Manuel Gómez Pereira, 1996) the director sets a part of the plot during the visit of the Beatles to Spain in 1965, because it was a real important even. Thus, this cinema is *self-referential*, it originates from its own musical culture and it drinks in the inheritance of films that previously used pop music. Consequently, the presence of pop in cinema is not any longer fed by popular music itself, but by older films that used popular music<sup>3</sup>. At the same time, the musical understanding of the director makes it possible to construct a personal soundtrack without the presence of a film composer, since the director himself constructs his story with the songs that suggest him special feelings.

In conclusion, making a categorization of cultural connotations of popular music in Spanish cinema would be a difficult task because every film has very different references. But, as we have already mentioned, non-neutrality and temporal implication of pop music benefit cultural connotations of popular music in cinema, since the greater efficiency is obtained when both the cultural knowledge and the personal experiences are touched at the same time, in a direct identification.

## Endnotes

1. Cf. GORBMAN, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies. Narrative Music Film*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987.
2. Cf. FLINN, Caryl. *Strains of Utopia. Gender, nostalgia and Hollywood film music*. Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 3-12.
3. The first self-referential film was *American Graffiti* (1973).

## The Impact Of Compilation And Record Collection On Characterization And Identification

In *High Fidelity*

Kate Galloway

When Nick Hornby's novel, *High Fidelity* was adapted for film, the resemblance between screenplay and novel were remarkably similar and familiar. The musical references, however, were transformed, from the implied to the tangible. Readers could only imagine song references in the novel. Film audiences could hear them. "Hearing" the music gives an additional dimension. Music permeates the film, and takes a more active role in the portrayal of characters, and the accompaniment of the film. In the film, *High Fidelity*, the soundtrack is part of the cast of players, interacting, responding, and contributing to the storyline in such a way as to give it a personified presence. It is the cause and effect of every action and reaction of the characters and the plot.

*High Fidelity's* soundtrack is a compilation score of pre-composed recordings spanning a time continuum from the late 60s to the 90s. The soundtrack contains a mosaic of artists and songs from the rock and pop genres, some popular and recognizable; others obscure and elitist. Some songs are obscure simply because they do not translate well from the novel's original locale of West End London to the screenplay's locale of

Chicago. While a diehard fan would care about singles by The Smiths or Echo and the Bunnymen, the general North American demographic would be less familiar with them. Identification with and recognition of these songs depends on personal timeframes and familiarity. Whether the audience has firsthand associations with these songs is less important than their experience of the characters' relationships to the music. The compilation score arises out of the experiences of the three major characters that inhabit an exclusive world of music fetishism. The compilation score is primarily diegetic, chosen by the characters who work at Championship Vinyl.

Anahid Kassabian explains diegetic music as, "music that is produced within the implied world of the film; we can specify or assume where and by what characters the music is produced."<sup>1</sup> A favourite pastime of the three admitted music "snobs" is to both mentally and physically compile "top five" or "top ten" lists of cryptic compositions. The characters do not physically perform the music (except when Barry mimes a guitar part in the record store and covers Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On" in the closing scene), but they consciously choose songs

with which they can interact. The primary compilation theme as illustrated by the format of the soundtrack diverges into several thematic branches.

The main character, Rob categorizes and compartmentalizes both his record collection and his emotional life. Rob has a control over his collection that he cannot duplicate in his life. His collection can be organized and reorganized, chronologically, alphabetically, or autobiographically. This thorough reorganization is almost religious, a ritual, which takes on importance when significant, changes take place in his life. Rob may not be able to establish intimate relationships with women, but he can communicate with his records. They are dependable, secure and stable. Will Straw, in his article, "Sizing up Record Collections", discusses the significance of record collections and the sense of organization they offer their owners. He states, "It is often in his relationship to his collections that a male's ideas about domestic stability or the organization of a domestic environment find their fullest or most easily decipherable elaboration."<sup>2</sup> Rob's vinyl collection can be manipulated to accord with his fantasy relationship, which is exempt of unpredictable and uncontrollable behavior.

After Rob and Laura's break-up, Rob takes refuge in his vinyl collection, spreading records across his apartment floor and begins his ritual re-cataloguing process. In the midst of reconfiguring his life symbolically through his

collection, Rob is invited to a Marie DeSalle concert by his colleague, friend, and a sympathetic music addict, Dick. Being a sympathetic music addict, he immediately recognizes Rob's behaviour. Rob explains that he is sorting his collection autobiographically so, "I can tell how I got from Deep Purple to Howlin' Wolf in just twenty-five moves. If I want to find the song, 'Landslide' by Fleetwood Mac, I have to remember that I bought it for someone in the fall of 1983 pile but didn't give it to them for personal reasons." Dick says, "That sounds..." and Rob replies, "Comforting." Rob has intentionally made this cleansing act of penance difficult and complex to assuage the associations of a failed relationship, but ironically, the re-organization is based on prior memories and emotions. The re-categorization of his records offers Rob both absolution and comfort. He can compartmentalize his emotions, contain them and control them. His music collection acts as his therapist and confessor.

If Rob can succeed in controlling his record collection by compiling it in an order known only to him, so it should follow that people can be controlled in the same way. In *High Fidelity*, Rob, Dick, and Barry attempt to connect with people through the production and distribution of personally selected and organized compilation tapes. This individual act reflects the movie's soundtrack, which as previously stated, is a compilation of pop songs selected to connect time, place, memory, and perception.

The music on the personal tapes is chosen lovingly, carefully, and thoughtfully because the perception is that a compilation tape exposes one's deepest feelings and invites intimacy. When Rob meets Laura, his first impulse is to create a tape for her – to connect with her. In the final scene, after they have re-established their relationship and Rob has accepted responsibility for his own life and decisions, he sits down to make Laura a tape of atonement. He says to the camera,

*The making of a great compilation tape like, "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do. It takes ages longer than it might seem. You gotta kick it off with a killer to grab attention, then you gotta take it up a notch, but you don't want to blow your wad, so then you gotta cool it off a notch. There are a lot of rules. Anyway, I've started to make a tape in my head for Laura – full of stuff she'd like – stuff that would make her happy – the first time I can sorta see how that is done.*

The compilation tape is the ultimate concession to commitment. It is the men, not the women in *High Fidelity* who make the compilation tapes and the choice of songs used both in their personal and in the movie's soundtrack, indicate that this world of collecting and compilation is a male world. The compiled soundtrack played within Championship Vinyl contains no songs

by female artists. Championship Vinyl is frequented by, "young men, always young men... young men who seem to spend a disproportionate amount of their time looking for deleted Smiths singles and 'ORIGINAL NOT RERELEASED' underlined Frank Zappa albums." Simon Frith and Angela McRobbie comment on the male collective culture, stating that they are, "reminiscent of football matches and other occasions of male camaraderie – the general atmosphere is sexually exclusive, its euphoria depends on the absence of women."<sup>3</sup> They go on further to argue that it is boys who collect, compile, and collate popular music. Girls conversely, draw on feelings and emotions rather than facts and knowledge. Barry and Dick, part-time employees, continue to show up daily at Championship Vinyl daily not because it is their place of work, but also their protective social haven. Here, they take an active role engaging in the male behavior of sharing knowledge and engaging with the music. They can play records that they have decided the public should hear. They can be president of the fraternity by dictating what song is being played and what song the boys should buy. In the store, the control over the music belongs to these three, and this control equals power and authority. Rob floods his store with sounds from the Clash to the Beta Band and while inside this enclave of masculinity, does not have to get in touch with his emotional side. Barry refuses to sell a middle-aged customer the record, "I



Just Called to Say I Love You”, “because it’s sentimental, tacky crap.” There is no room inside Championship Vinyl for vulnerability, yearning or need.

Outside Championship Vinyl, however, emotions are allowed to emerge, although they are subverted. Girl songs are allowed: songs of emotion, feelings, and need. The inclusion of girls’ songs into the soundtrack is what makes it a film that crosses the gender barrier, for as Simon Frith states in “Afterthoughts,” that “the best records (the ones that give most pleasure) are the ones that allow an ambiguity of response, letting us be both subject and object of the singer’s needs, regardless of our or their gender.”<sup>4</sup> Although Rob states that he would like a compilation of “One Love” by Bob Marley; “Many Rivers to Cross” by Jimmy Cliff; “Angel:” by Aretha Franklin, and “You’re the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me” by Gladys Knight played at his funeral, he could, “Never list it to anyone, because they’d die laughing.” The conventional gender distinction between male and female music choices and preferences remains submerged and cannot be admitted publicly – although it is a reality.

Compilation scores, as much as they establish mood and setting, also reference a character’s identity. The characters of Dick and Barry, who are exaggerated examples of “geeky” music fetishists, are so far removed from normalcy that they only know one way to communicate their affection for others – in the “gift”

of a compilation tape. Early in the film, Dick enters the record store, Championship Vinyl and reports his weekend “find” to Rob. He says, “I found the first Licorice Comfits album over at Vintage Vinyl – Never released here – Japanese import. I’ll tape it for you – cause you liked the second one – the one with Cheryl Ladd on the cover. No, you never saw that cover. You just had the tape I made for you.” Like a competitive sibling, Barry turns off, “the sad bastard music” to which Dick and Rob had been listening and replaces it with a tape he has compiled over the weekend. He says, “I made that tape special for today. My special Monday morning tape – for you. Special!” The music on the tapes is important, but it is also the act of giving and sharing the music that illustrates the sacrifice these characters make of allowing someone else into their personal space. The tape is the object through which the characters can project their feelings and through this medium, can communicate.

Characters in *High Fidelity* identify with certain songs and in the same way, their identities are determined by their choice of songs. Dick is a shy, asocial, sensitive geek whose caricature is defined by his musical tastes. He likes Belle and Sebastian, which immediately categorizes him as emasculated, testosterone-challenged, and sensitive. Barry, in contrast, is caught in a garage rock band time warp, the macho, masculine bully. Barry asks Rob what music he wants to play after

Rob insists that Barry turn off his tape of "Walkin' On Sunshine" by Katrina and The Waves. Rob just wants, "something I can ignore." Rob's character is vacillating between adolescence and adulthood and his reluctance to choose a song indicates his reluctance to choose a direction, to be cast in an irreversible role.

The compilation score of *High Fidelity* plays right into the theme of fetishism or music geekiness. The score has, for the novice collector, only a few recognizable songs and perhaps five or more of those are classics in that they form the backbone of a standard beginner's rock collection. The Edge, a local Toronto radio station, aired a program that dictated the top ten recordings necessary for someone compiling a collection of rock music. Several of these were included in *High Fidelity*. A collector is not complete nor is a collection complete without Velvet Underground, or The Clash. For the connoisseur, the soundtrack of *High Fidelity* is a compilation of well-known and loved classics. However, recognizable or not, the soundtrack is so apposite to form and content in the film, that it is a unique experience of itself.

As stated previously, music in the film, *High Fidelity* plays an active role, not only mirroring Rob's narrative, but also speaking in unison with him. Anahid Kassabian states, that "film music serves three broad purposes: *identification, mood, and commentary*."<sup>5</sup> Identification through association with the music must be separated

into that of the characters and that of the audience. Kassabian quotes Leonard B. Meyer who comments that, "even where the original association appears to be relevant and appropriate to the character of the music being played, affective experience may be a result of the private meaning that the image has for the particular listener."<sup>6</sup> Rob's "top five break-ups" are illustrated in flashback vignettes, and are told as much by his narrative as they are by the music associated with the events. The music not only represents the time, place and mood: it represents the girl. She is identified and takes on a persona in relation to her musical tastes. Penny Hardwick, Rob's 60s high school object of romance likes Carly Simon, Cat Stevens, James Taylor, Carol King, and Elton John. Her musical references are not hard, sexual rock, but unthreatening folk-rock. Her musical tastes are as pristine as her sexual inhibitions. Rob therefore remembers their teenager tryst to the Elton John tune, "Crocodile Rock" which remembers, "when rock was young." The music places the event in a certain defined time, but it also identifies the type of girl with which particular songs could be associated.

The musical memories evoked by all of Rob's disappointing romantic debacles achieve the same result. His first pre-pubescent romantic encounter is "I Want Candy", and his last is "I Hate You (But Call Me)" by the Monks. The girl is defined by the song, or in Rob's case, memorialized by the song. The character

and the audience perceive the music very differently. Rob's memories of the songs are intertwined with his memories of the girls. The audience however, has a different relationship with the music. If "I Want Candy" is not consciously a part of their memory or does not form a part of a relationship, at least the song conjures up a "feel" for the times. Associated images and memories are created by Rob's specific memory, and by this means, the audience can identify with Rob and "bring memories, with their associated emotions, from audience members' unconsciousness into consciousness."<sup>7</sup>

Songs are part of the conscious and unconscious memory. Not only Rob, but also all of society can categorize the moments of their lives within the content or context of a song. Memories and moments become distorted and distant with time, however, the song that was being played remains distinct. There is a better possibility of remembering the words to "Our Song" than there is of recalling that person's favorite book. Therefore, it is not surprising that Rob remembers "Mendocino", but does not remember that Charlie, the girl he associates with the song, was not as interesting and complex as he thought. In the process of re-visiting his past, he discovers that the songs don't change, but the people do. In contrast, songs that had no significance because they did not relate to past experiences can be transformed by events in the present. As Rob enters the club where Marie DeSalle is performing a cover of Peter

Frampton, he remarks to Dick and Barry that, "I always hated that song. Now I kinda like it." New associations with a song have created a new reference point.

While the music in *High Fidelity* narrates events and experiences in a combinative diegetic/non-diegetic way, it also complements experiences and reactions. In the opening shot, the grooves of a record are shown blurring together as the record spins to the tune of "You Gonna Miss Me Baby" by the Thirteenth Floor Elevators. This song responds to the exit of Laura from Rob's life. Similarly, Stevie Wonder sings, "I Just Called to Say I Love You", as Rob hangs up the phone after speaking to Laura. Although the songs are non-diegetic in that they are not performed within the narrative, they state directly what the character is thinking or saying. It is *almost* as though the character were speaking for himself through the voice of the song. Another example of this blend of diegetic and non-diegetic use of music follows Laura's admission that she has not yet slept with Ian. Rob leaves the apartment as Queen sings, "We are the Champions", strutting in victory like Rocky Balboa. Not only can the audience hear the music, but Rob also can hear the music inside his head. It is real and audible. The music of Barry White that he imagines he hears upstairs in accompaniment to Laura's and Ian's lovemaking, "I'm Just Gonna Love You Just a Little More Babe" becomes the visual image translated from the song's words.

Songs have been selected precisely because they interact with the thoughts of the character and it is

through them that the character speaks. As Rob says, "You're using someone else's poetry to express how you feel." On the cusp of self-recognition after Laura's father's funeral, Rob sits in silence on a park bench while the song in the background expresses his thoughts; "Most of the time, I can keep both feet on the ground. I can see now I always had one foot out the door." This use of music as dialogue, although not diegetic by definition, being produced "outside" the film, and being quoted, it appears to be speaking from inside the film, more precisely, from inside the mind of the actor.

*High Fidelity* employs traditional diegetic music in two separate and opposite ways. Marie de Salle's appearance on stage, singing an incompetent karaoke version of "Baby, I Love Your Way", and Barry covering Marvin Gaye's "Let's Get It On". There is an additional example of diegetic music in a fantasy performance by Bruce Springsteen, but if it occurs only in Rob's mind, then is it really diegetic? Whether real or imagined, the audience recognizes that this music is created for and at the source of the narrative. However, this source music does not interact with the narrative unlike the diegetic music that the audience absorbs in the bar scenes. These songs color the narrative differently. The pianist plays a torch song while Rob narrates his misery, and on a separate occasion, the "live" music in the background is palpably bluesy. These episodes of diegetic music contribute significantly to the narrative although they

are not part of the narrative. The music connotes a mood, but does not express it. The mood is expressed in voiceover by the character, Rob, underscored by the complimentary, but non-competitive music of the pianist. When dialogue is important, there is a surfeit of accompanying background music.

Moments of conversation, dialogue and narration in *High Fidelity* are accentuated by the sounds of silence, particularly cerebral moments or moments of rationalization. In this respect, "adult" moments are unaccompanied by music. On the other hand, adolescent moments, of high irrationality or reactionary hysterics are supported by loud, aggressive rock. This dramatic scoring is traditionally used to elicit moods such as anger, suspense, and a combination of emotional tone and commentary. However, as illustrated in *Film Music*, "music in its pure and absolute state does not describe anything. By acting directly on the central nervous system, it can, however arouse an intensely emotional response... These responses are daydreams, programmatically triggered by an individual's own range of personal experience."<sup>8</sup> Personal experience, association, and memory are the individual baggage the viewer brings to the movie.

The soundtrack in *High Fidelity* serves the dramatic function of establishing place, setting, characterization, and plot through its compilation score of popular music. However, the score achieves its dramatic aims principally

through the associative and allusory involvement of its audience. It is the memory of and juxtaposition against personal experience that transforms the compilation soundtrack of *High Fidelity* from one of public music to private significance. The music in *High Fidelity* is a character in the story, as much as Rob, Dick, and Barry. It cannot be separated from the context of the film's theme. It speaks with and for the characters, defines their identities and their transitions from adolescence to adulthood. The music plays on the aural memory of the audience and thus establishes a firm connection between the viewer and the movie, the fantasy and the reality.

## Endnotes

1. Anahid Kassabian, Hearing Film (New York: Routledge, 2001): 42.
2. Will Straw, "Sizing Up Record Collections: Gender and Connoisseurship in Rock Music and Culture," in Sexing the Groove: Popular Music and Gender. ed. Sheila Whiteley (New York: Routledge, 1997): 5.
3. Angela McRobbie and Simon Frith, "Rock and Sexuality," in On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word. eds. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990): 376.
4. Simon Frith, "Afterthoughts," in On Record: Rock, Pop, and the Written Word. eds. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (London: Routledge, 1990): 423.
5. Anahid Kassabian, Hearing Film, 56.
6. Kassabian, 56.
7. Kassabian, 73.
8. K.J. Donnelly, Film Music: Critical Approaches (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2001): 74.

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## From Camp to Claws to Radio City Music Hall (Again): Tracking The Travels of *The Boy*

*From Oz*

Liz Giuffre

Peter Allen was in his lifetime, and remains today, an important Australian musician. He began his musical career singing and playing the piano in a small country pub as a young boy, and achieved national fame in Australia as half of singing duo, The Allen Brothers, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During a tour of Asia in 1964, Allen played support to Judy Garland, and would eventually marry her daughter, Liza Minnelli, in 1967. Based in the United States after his marriage, Peter Allen went on to release ten albums and perform regularly as a solo performer. During this time Allen was also recognised as an accomplished songwriter and co-songwriter, with performers such as Bette Midler and Olivia Newton John recording versions of his songs. He also won an Academy Award for Best Song for his contribution to *Arthur's Theme (The Best That You Can Do)* in 1982. The pinnacle of his solo career was a sell-out solo season at New York's Radio City Music Hall in 1981, where Allen arrived on stage on the back of a live camel and danced with the theatre's trademark dancers, The Rockettes.

Peter Allen died in of AIDS in 1992, and was

posthumously inducted into the ARIA hall of fame (Australia Recording Industry Association) in 1993. Following this, Allen's abilities as a performer, singer and songwriter were celebrated through *The Boy From Oz*, a documentary made about Allen's life written and directed by Stephen Maclean 1995. This was then adapted to a written biography in 1996 (also by Maclean). Following the success of these, *The Boy From Oz* was transformed into a musical by Neil Armfield in 1997, and debuted on the Australian stage in 1998, and then on Broadway in 2003. This could be seen as part of a growing trend in musical theatre, with a number of musicals using existing popular music emerging around this time, including *Mamma Mia!* (originally produced in London in 1999, based on music by ABBA), *Shout!* (originally produced in Australia in 2001, based on music performed by Johnny O'Keefe), and *Movin' Out* (originally produced in 2002 in the US, based on the music of Billy Joel). Recently, these types of productions have been called "jukebox musicals" (Weber, 2003: E1) by American theatre critics, a reference to the trend in creating musicals from pre-existing rather than original scores.

This paper focuses on three recordings of one of Allen's most famous songs, *I Still Call Australia Home*. Recorded first by Allen himself in 1980, then by Todd McKenney in 1998 for the Original Australian production of *The Boy From Oz*, and finally by Hugh Jackman in 2003 as part of *The Boy From Oz* on Broadway, the differences between the vocal performances in these recordings indicate particular target audiences for the song. In this way, these recordings operate like cover versions in mainstream western popular music, as through manipulations in performance style a song can be aimed at a new audience. I will show that the covers of *I Still Call Australia Home* produce meaning in two key ways, as Australian identity is expressed both through the delivery of the song's key lyric, and each performer's evocation of Allen's personae. A perfect demonstration of Barthes powerful philosophy of meaning creation in music, "the grain of the voice (as) a dual production of language and music" (1977: 181).

### Case Study: I Still Call Australia Home

Written and recorded by Peter Allen in 1980, *I Still Call Australia Home* is a song that has easily be used as a marker of Australian national identity. *I Still Call Australia Home* is listed by the Australian Government as a "National Symbol" of Australia ([www.australiaday.com.au](http://www.australiaday.com.au)), and the song has also been used as part of an ongoing advertising campaign for Australia's national

airline, Qantas ([www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au))<sup>1</sup>. However, Allen's song, and Peter Allen himself, was somewhat out of step with other musical markers of Australian identity. The expression of Australian identity in the international popular music arena is usually made through lyrical descriptions of geography or botany, or evocations of a perceived Australian ideology<sup>2</sup>. Most markedly, popular songs that are generally considered Australian 'markers' rarely use the word 'Australia' in their lyrics, instead favouring nicknames such as "Down Under" (Men at Work, 1981) or "Great Southern Land" (Icehouse, 1982), or more descriptive constructions of place, "My Island Home" (Murry 1983, Anu 1995) and "Under the Milky Way" (The Church, 1988). However, *I Still Call Australia Home* relies on none of this, only using the lyric, 'the sun and the sea', to locate Australia. (See full lyrics). From this point, the sentiment in the song, about the appeal and comfort of a homeland, could be applied to almost any nation. Arguably, the song would function just as well as "I Still Call America Home", or "I Still Call Italy Home"<sup>3</sup>.

It was through vocal and stage performance then that Peter Allen confirmed Australianess in *I Still Call Australia Home*. Importantly, through his performance style he demonstrated a particular type of Australianess. Peter Allen's personality was a great source of his music's appeal. His energetic performances, which often

involved dancing on top of his piano, were supplemented by self-deprecating and risqué dialogue between songs, a characteristic of the cabaret tradition he is often associated with, and a generally accepted marker of Australian identity (Sessex, 2004: 12)<sup>4</sup>. In America particularly, where Allen based himself in the 1970s and 80s, Allen was considered an outsider in two ways, both as an Australian, and as an openly homosexual man<sup>5</sup>. Allen's strength was his live performance, which famously resulted in his achieving multiple sell-outs of New York's Radio City Music Hall as a solo performer. Often, he combined these aspects of his identity as means of appealing to his American audience, using their relative unusualness to form jokes. Just one example was the following address Peter made to an American television audience:

*Some of you are probably wondering about me, because you know, they don't know a lot about me. (laughs from crowd). And I can image couples sitting at home saying 'Well, do you think, is he? You know, is he?' well, I have to admit, I am Australian (Allen in Maclean, 1995).*

Allen's association of the Australian with a sense of otherness is the basis *I Still Call Australia Home*. In the song's lyrics, Australia is a source of comfort to an ever traveling Allen, a place that is static and comprised

of the natural wonders of "sun and sea" in contrast to the "cities that never close down" in other places in the world. In this way Allen's connection to Australia, and its position as his home, is a constant, something that is only uncompromising through travel, but emphasised by it, "I realise something I've always known/ I Still Call Australia Home". Following is a short excerpt of Allen's recording. Here he delivers the quite simple lyrics of the song slowly and with only mild vibrato. Allen's pronunciation, particularly his flattened vowel sounds such as in the song's opening line, 'I've bin to cities that never close doawn', is particularly familiar to an Australian audience<sup>6</sup>. This style, coupled with an abbreviation of lines in the next verse, 'I'm always trav'ln, I love be'n free' is characteristic of Australian English, indicating a particularly relaxed rhythm and uneven emphasis on vowel sounds. It is a toned down, but recognisable cousin of mass mediated caricatures of Australian accents, Paul Hogan's, "Cawl that a kniiife?" from *Crocodile Dundee*, and Steven Irwin, the *Crocodile Hunter's*, "Criiiiiiiikey!". The maintenance of an Australian accent in popular music performance is rare, with many Australian performers favouring what Turner described as "a particularly globalised form" of vocal performance, a form which is usually dominated by an American or British accent (Turner, 1992: 12)<sup>7</sup>. After Allen's death in 1992, Todd McKenney recorded *I Still Call Australia Home* as part of the original Australian

production of *The Boy From Oz*, the musical based on Allen's life. This recording has been obviously adapted to reference Peter's life as well as an appreciation for Australia, and appreciation that was confirmed when the recording won an ARIA award for Best Original Soundtrack Album in 1998. The recording features an extended instrumental introduction containing a mixture of Australian music including the Australian national anthem, *Advance Australia Fair*, and in iconic Australian folk song, *Waltzing Matilda*. This introduction also features dialogue from the musical, in which McKenney, as Allen, makes the joke that such an introduction would be more worthy of Joan Sutherland, an internationally recognised Australian opera singer, were it not for his own flamboyance.

By introducing *I Still Call Australia Home* with a joke, McKenney as Allen presented a different type of Australian identity. Although his performance is noticeably different from Allen's, delivered with more energy, a tighter vibrato, and at a faster pace, Allen is clearly an important point of reference. His comment, "this shirt goes with this song" indicates a sense of expectation, that such a song is a special occasion, a celebration of something that does not happen often. As well, the comment about the shirt is also a reference to the costume Allen often wore when performing *I Still Call Australia Home*, a sequined vest made of the

Australian flag. Although this is present in the lyric, as the relative still-ness of Australia is emphasised by the fast pace of cities like New York and Rio. McKenney's reference to Allen's performance style also nominates Allen himself as an Australian marker of identity<sup>8</sup>. The evocation of Allen's personae rather than a mere impression of his performance is again emphasised by the grain of the voice used. McKenney's delivery also features characteristic Australian vowel sounds and emphasis, however this is not as prominent as in Allen's original. Rather, McKenney's diction is better than Allen's original, a difference particularly noticeable on his pronunciation of the song's climax, the word "Australia". (nb: the pronunciation of 'Australia' is something of a joke for native speakers. Phonetically, it often sounds like 'Straya', thus to emphasise the syllables in this way is significant. Such an emphasis is made even stronger by Jackman). The main reason for this difference is the different purposes of the recordings, Allen's original part of the relatively lax pop music tradition, while McKenney's performance as part of a musical theatre tradition requiring more defined technique.

This difference in technique is more obvious again in the most recent recording of *I Still Call Australia Home*, recorded by Hugh Jackman for the Broadway production of *The Boy From Oz* in 2003. In this recording, Jackman's vocal is noticeably tighter than Allen and McKenney, and

his delivery smooth and strong. Although an Australian accent is audible in the beginning of the recording, as Jackman delivers the lyrics in a half-sung, half spoken style, as the song climaxes towards finale, the accent is gradually lost, most obviously as Jackman's vowel sounds become elongated. In this way, his performance sounds much more 'Broadway' than Australian, as he uses the lyrics to narrate the song's story rather than express an Australian identity. As the recording is part of the *Boy From Oz* musical rather than a recording released as a single, for example, such a separation is perhaps to be expected. However, unlike McKenney, who references Allen in his recording, here Jackman emphasises Allen's original purpose, the importance of home. This is realised as he places a slightly stronger emphasis on the word home when singing the song's title lyric, as well as the omission of the second verse, the verse that describes Australia as the place of the 'sun and the sea'.

By going straight into this, emphasizing the collective action rather than the individual (from "I'm always traveling" to "All the sons and daughters spinning around the world", the idea of 'home' dominates more than Australia. This emphasis is more obvious as the recording concludes. In the finale of the recording, Jackman's performance is grand to the point of being almost operatic, and any flattened vowels are replaced with bold, almost English

sounding pronunciation. Notice this particularly on his vowel sounds and the all important word, 'Australia'. The performance sounds more like a finale to the entire musical rather than just the song, concluding the story of an adventure from a small town to Broadway rather than the tribute to Australia or a particular reference to Australianness. The emphasis on 'home' rather than Australia is noticable as 'Australia' is omitted in the repeating of the song's final line, an action that demonstrates that the song has been adapted for a Broadway audience. Here, just as McKenney's incorporation of Allen's personality invited Australian audiences to associate Allen with Australianness, Jackman's emphasis on home allows an international, or at least non-Australian audience to engage with the sentiment of homecoming. Australia is an example of home, but only one of many possibilities. In this way, the scope of the song, and the story of *The Boy From Oz*, is opened up to appeal to a wider audience, particularly an audience without direct contact with Australia. *The Boy From Oz* as a production was able to communicate Australianness, as "the first Australian musical to make it on Broadway" (Maclean in Original Cast Recording, 2003). Also, Allen's place as an inspirational Australian, an Australian that was successful overseas as well as at home, it also re-inforced by the vocal performance which is clearly backed with an impressive technique. It is also supplemented by Jackman's profile as a



contemporary Australian artist currently successful in the international market (Maclean, 1996: 196-7). As reported after Jackman's Tony award for his portrayal of Allen, "His (Jackman) win was hugely popular, and the Radio City Music Hall crowd gave him a standing ovation ... Like Allen before him, Jackman owned the fabled stage" (McCarthy, 2004: 1)<sup>9</sup>. I will now play you the conclusions of each recording, the Allen original, McKenney recording and Jackman recording, to demonstrate this progression.

### **Conclusion:**

Through different vocal performances *I Still Call Australia Home* has been targeted at different audiences and demonstrated Australianness in different ways. Allen's recording appealed directly to Australians in Australia, with its somewhat vulnerable delivery and easily recognisable accent of particular appeal to this audience. Following this, in the original Australian production of *The Boy From Oz*, Todd McKenney's recording of *I Still Call Australia Home* used some of the same techniques as Allen, as well as direct and indirect references to Allen himself as a way of demonstrating the Australian character, a sense of playfulness and self-deprecation. Finally, in the Broadway production of *The Boy From Oz*, *I Still Call Australia Home* was delivered without local markers such as accent, as an acknowledgement of the importance of home for

those who have traveled or migrated from other places rather than just Australians. Here then, Allen becomes a symbol of international success also, of an Australian who has been able to succeed thanks to the opportunity afforded him in America. It is significant that Hugh Jackman should play Allen in this role, as he could be easily demonstrated to be an Australian who has gained success in a similar way. By the time *The Boy From Oz* made it to Broadway, Australian identity is constituted through determination, hard work and skill.

## Endnotes

1. Other songs included in this list were *Waltzing Matilda*, *Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport*, *My Island Home* and *True Blue*.

2. This is a very simplified overview of the creation of Australian national identity through popular music, an overview based on popular 'Australian music' collections such as *Unofficial Australian Anthems* (2003). For more detailed discussions of the complex creation of Australian identity through popular music, see for example Hayward's (1992) collection *From Pop To Punk To Postmodernism*.

3. See also Turner (1992) for the importance of context of national identity creation also. This is also true of *I Still Call Australia Home*, as the song has since its release has been used for a number of Australian events including Australia Day as mentioned earlier.

4. This emphasis of pop music is in deliberate contrast to the often-discussed expression of Australian nationalism through the Oz Rock tradition, a tradition characterised by Anglo-Australian, male-oriented music creation and includes bands such as AC/DC and Cold Chisel. As Mitchell noted, often the "Oz rock" lineage absorb(s) 'other' aspects of Australian popular music

such as music by women and Aborigines, punk rock, indie music and dance music" (1996: 166). Although not explicitly argued here, there is little doubt music that often marginalizes female sexuality also likely excludes male homosexuality.

5. Young (2004) has argued that homosexual artists were generally considered in a different way by Australian audiences, "Normative, hegemonic Australian masculinity has historically assumed homosexuality to be a given for male performers" (2004: 176), a situation which fostered either a largely blasé attitude toward homosexuality by the Australian public, or more often, created an expectation that pop music performers especially would display signs of stereotypical homosexual behaviour. This however was not the case in America, where initially there was resistance to Allen as an openly homosexual performer. As Bob Garcia described of A&M described just after Peter's appointment, "In the marketing meeting, there were an awful lot of fag jokes, and we knew what they were about, they were about Peter. So Gerry Moss kind of got word of some of this paranoia, and said Peter Allen is an artist, he's a great singer songwriter and he's going to be on A&M for a long time." (Garcia quoted in Maclean, 1995).

6. Interestingly, Allen's vocal performances did not always display such markers of Australian pronunciation.

Sussex (2004 :16) argued that Allen displayed an altered Australian accent in a deliberate appeal to an American audience. I will dispute this in the case of *I Still Call Australia Home*, suggesting that an Australian pronunciation is still recognizable.

7. In recent times this trend has been less pronounced, with local musicians such as Missy Higgins performing with recognisably Australian accents. However internationally successful performers such as Jet still maintain this pattern of performance.

8. Curiously, Smith and Phillips (2001) found Peter Allen to be a marker of the 'UnAustralian' in a recent study of this evocative local discourse (2001: 328-9). However, little explanation of how such a conclusion is reached is provided, other than to argue "you had to be Australian in order to be unAustralian" (328), a conclusion which leaves me to assume this label is based on Allen's choice to base himself in America rather than Australia.

9. See also [www.radiocity.com](http://www.radiocity.com) for details on the venue, which apart from being a national American icon is also "the largest indoor theatre in the world".

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[www.radiocity.com](http://www.radiocity.com)

## Appendix

*Peter Allen: The Boy From Oz*, written and directed by Stephen Maclean, produced through the Australian Film Commission, 1995. Released on DVD via Umbrella Music Australia.

Please See Over Page.

**I Still Call Australia Home**

P. Allen, 1980

I've been to cities that never close down  
From New York, to Rio, to old London town  
But no matter how far or how wide I roam  
I still call Australia home.

I'm always traveling, I love being free  
And so I keep leaving the sun and the sea  
But my heart lies waiting over the phone  
I still call Australia home.

All the sons and daughters spinning around the world  
Away from their family and friends  
And as the world gets older and colder  
It's good to know where your journey ends

Someday we'll all be together once more  
When all of the ships come back to shore  
I realise something I've always known  
I still call Australia home.

But no matter how far or wide I roam  
I still call Australia home.

## Musical Meaning Making in the Television Commercial

Nicolai J. Graakjaer

### Purpose

The present paper addresses the issue of music in the TV commercial and the way in which music is able to participate in producing meaning herein. More specifically the paper will discuss the use of pre-existing music – that is: Music that *has had* and *has* a ‘life of its own’ outside the commercial, and thereby music which has not originally been composed with the commercial viewers as ‘model listeners’ (to paraphrase Eco’s conception of ‘model reader’).

The background for the paper is an ongoing project on the uses, functions and meanings of music in the TV commercial. Part of that project is an analysis of a sample - referred to as the ‘sample material’ in the following - of 564 commercials shown for the first time in April 2004 on the Danish national TV channel TV2. Some of the results of that analysis will be presented here in the form of identifying relevant categorizations and the prevalence of different kinds of uses of music within these categorizations. One commercial, involving pre-existing music, will be subjected for a closer inspection.

### Why Study Music in TV Commercials?

It seems relevant to commence by highlighting the need for an ongoing investigation of musical meaning making precisely in the TV commercial. In general it can be stated that the TV commercial is an important genre for musical meaning making, and in the context of TV commercials music is ‘portrayed’ alongside different extra-musical phenomenon – e.g. pictures, speak, text, products – which has important implications for the establishing and refinement of musical codes. But still there seems to be a disproportional relationship between A: the prevalence and importance of music in TV commercials and B: the research interest, which has been rather small and rudimentary.

‘A’ can be further substantiated by at least the following four points: 1: Most TV commercials have music, and in the sample referred to 93,3% of all commercials have music. Not many specifications on the prevalence of music in TV commercials have been made, but see Bode for comparison. In the specifications referred to by Bode – involving German and American commercials, prevalence range from 60 to 90 percent, and the present 93,3% is therefore to be regarded as relatively



high. 2: TV commercials is seen and heard by most people on a regular basis. Having a TV which is regularly switched on implies almost inevitably exposure to commercials. Even though TV commercials is often neglected by audiences by either switching channel or doing something else while the commercials run in the background (e.g. Lund), the music is not easily avoided: When switching channels chances are high that you at some point bump into another commercial break and even when doing something else the sound of the commercials is still to be heard. And this last point leads to 3: Music is almost not to be rejected. We, as human beings, of course have no 'earlids', and music therefore is always *heard* even though it might not be *listened* to. 4: Music has impact on human life. This broad statement can be found supported in various studies involving for example physiology, human behavior and meaning making and it seems fair – without having to go into further details – to conclude: music has a potential for influencing human life even when attention paid to the music might be somewhat low. In addition to what is just said about the *human subject* this also highlights certain special features of the *musical object*, namely it being a psychical object (sound waves) that has bodily impact, and it being an object *evolving in time*, thus having a privileged – when compared to for example picture, text and sculpture - correspondence with human experience.

Reasons for the rather small and rudimentary research interest in music in TV commercials might be understood from at least three perspectives. 1: The subject represents an interdisciplinary phenomenon. Music is there *together with* something else, and this can easily lead to an analytical emphasis on the often more traditionally studied *something else* (e.g. pictures and texts). And closely related to this is 2: music represents an ephemeral phenomenon that cannot easily be scrutinized. We of course cannot *freeze* music as we for example can freeze the moving picture. Also it is not easy to transcribe musical gestalts in a way that pays respect for the qualities often to be of great importance for instance in the cases of *sound* and *rhythm*. 3: The music in television represents a low valued artifact. Often music in commercial has been positioned as inferior to the dominant orientation toward 'Western music in the high-art tradition' (to quote Kerman, p. 11), which has developed with reference to the 'autonomous musical work' in certain fields of the 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetics, and this still seems to be a widely held view. See as highly telling the following recent definition of the *jingle*: ... *name now given to those insidious but fortunately brief musical interludes...* (Gammond, p.297).

### Overview of Relevant Research

When identifying research on music in TV commercials as rather small and rudimentary it does not imply that

there has been *no* research at all or that studies on related subjects are irrelevant. As the following short overview will show, works within three branches of scholarship has contributed and they have all more or less inspired the theoretical perspective of the present paper.

Within musicology there has overall been an increasing interest in analyzing and understanding music 'in context' as it is highlighted in relation to the so called 'New musicology' and/or 'Critical musicology' – expressed concisely in the following extract: '*...by removing the bare score from its context in order to examine it as an autonomous organism, the analyst removes that organism from the ecology that sustains it*' (Kerman, p.72). This interest for 'music in context' – being an alternative approach to the aforementioned aesthetics of the 'autonomous work' – can for example be seen in studies involved in analysing music in audiovisual contexts (e.g. Tagg, Tagg & Clarida, Cook, Middleton). On the more specific subject on music in tv-commercials only a few monographs have been published (e.g. Helms, Leo, Steiner-Hall and Bjurström & Lilliestam); these monographs are useful and inspiring but a common problematic feature is that some of the conclusions seems rather outdated when compared to the use of music in the present, Danish commercials, and this points to the need to keep music in TV commercials under continuing surveillance.

Within consumer-, advertising- and marketing research there has been a general and somewhat persistent interest for the use of music. This can be seen in the meta-analysis of Bruner and more recent works as for example Crozier. Within this field the dominant approach has been experimental and behaviouristic and the aim has, broadly stated, been to discover fundamental universal laws of the way in which certain musical stimuli are eliciting certain behavioural responses; this aim shall not be followed here, even though a critique of the perspective cannot here be unfolded in any detail. Suffice it to say that the present study is more inspired by the few research initiatives within this branch of scholarship that have tried to form a hermeneutical and semiotic orientation. Here Scotts seminal article is noteworthy as is Bode's more recent and more fully developed perspective.

Within the broadly defined field of media and film studies a series of relevant studies and discussions have been put forward concerning music in films (e.g. Chion, Prendergast, Langkjær, Kassabian, a.o). Even though these initiatives do not focus on the use of music in TV commercials, it is obvious that a range of questions are similar to the use of music in both films and commercials – but it is also obvious that certain musical formats and functions are specifically associated with certain genres (e.g. *jingles* in commercials, and *full-length songs* in films). In media studies the TV commercial has been

subject of interest from a number of perspectives, e.g. the cultural implications of the commercial (e.g. Dickason) and the commercial's forms and ways of communication (e.g. Stigel). It is characteristic though that in these last mentioned studies, the music has been either neglected or analysed circumferentially with no intention from the authors of being thorough or systematic on the issue of music.

As this short overview of relevant and inspiring research has shown, there is still a need for further investigation on the uses and functions of music in TV commercials. The following categorizations and analysis can only represent be a small contribution to this endeavour, but, as it will turn out, some distinctive features for the present day Danish commercial can be identified. Firstly there will be a presentation of some categories regarding the appearance of music in TV commercials and secondly a specific commercial will be subjected for a closer examination.

### Categories of Music in Commercials

When analysing the sample material certain patterns and different categories of the use of music appears. An important and also elsewhere noted distinction concerns the *origin* of the music heard in the TV commercial. And two categories are relevant to highlight: 1: the 'pre-existing music' and 2: the 'original commercial music'. Pre-existing music is music that has (had) a

history outside the commercial and original commercial music is music that has been composed directly for the commercial.

### Pre-Existing Music

Pre-existing music appears in 24,2% of the sample material. This music appears in the commercial as a *certain piece of music* and is typically well known. This last point is of course debatable, because listeners know about somewhat different kinds of music depending among other things on age and sub-cultural affiliation. Sometimes pre-existing music is also used in TV commercials without being particular familiar to many of the listeners, and examples amount when unfamiliar pre-existing music has *become* known because of its appearance in a commercial – that is: the opposite situation as the typical, just mentioned. A clear example is *Babylon Zoo's* appearance in a commercial for *Levis* in 1995 with their subsequent hit *Spaceman*.

The pre-existing music can be affiliated with the commercial product in the three following ways:

- Coincidence (4,8%): music is the product.
- Coherence (6,4%): music is part of the product.
- Arranged connection (13,1%): music is linked to product via use.

The percentages mentioned in parenthesis expresses

the prevalence of the category out of the entire sample material. For coincidence the majority of products are CD's and for coherence the majority of products are films and concerts and/or events. The category of arranged connection represents a more mixed picture, in that almost all other product categories are represented (e.g. food, beverage, cars, cosmetics and finance). The analysis to come will exemplify the category of arranged connection. On occasions the affiliation between music and product is blurred, as when music used in arranged connection can become a product on its own, as already hinted at above. This kind of *product placement* can be heard both in relation to newly composed, pre-existing music (as the 'spaceman' song is an example of it) or to 'oldies' as different campaigns from Levis shows, when commercials for jeans are accompanied by old blues, punk or rock tunes which can be bought on miscellaneous compilations.

Regarding the reference to the pre-existing piece of music, it is so, that within categories of coincidence and coherence the commercial music quotes the pre-existing music. The music appears as it would do on CD and appears in the commercial without any modification. The vast majority (about 95%) of these commercials are expressed in a 'voice-over' format; that is: the music is presented as a product by a short spoken narrative from a human voice not motivated by - or seen on - screen (cf. Stigel). If the music was not accompanied by

a voice-over the audience might not clearly recognize what was the product – the voice-over is needed to frame the music as product; music without framing could possibly be heard and understood as a case of arranged connection in which music, as mentioned, serves another product. This point is particularly relevant to highlight considering the genre of TV commercials where visual attention is often directed towards other activities than the screen, as mentioned earlier.

In commercials with arranged connection the music in the commercial is also referring to a pre-existing piece of music, but the reference is often not a direct quote but rather either 'quotation' (in quotation marks) - a slightly modified quote - or paraphrase – an obvious rearrangement of the pre-existing music. Concerning commercial formats, typically the voice-over is not represented in arranged connection, and other formats such as drama, presenter, testimonial are used. Within these formats the music usually takes on a central role in establishing sentiments, affects, dramatic sequences, humour etc. (as the following analysis will exemplify).

### **Original Commercial Music**

Original commercial music appears in 69,1% of the sample material. This music has no direct reference to a *particular piece* of music, and meanings emerge from the music being expressed in certain styles and genres. Some times this music will show explicit reference to well

established codes and thereby referring to certain styles and genres via what can be called *stereotypification*. In other cases the reference is more implicit, as when the music is expressed in rather anonymous ways with no particular outstanding feature – not unlike some uses of Muzak in supermarkets – and here the music can be said to refer to styles and genres via *allusion*. The distinction between stereotypifications and allusions is not always easy to make, but clearly examples of each can be pointed out.

The original commercial music is affiliated with the product in other ways than the pre-existing music. And two categories can be identified:

- Constructed connection (20,7%): music is linked to product via composition.
- Indistinct connection (48,4%): music is placed with product via composition.

The indistinct connection refers to the rather large part of original commercial music, which has no consistent or highly profiled relation to the product. This usually because: the music has no distinct features, is heard as background (typically with speak in the foreground), and has no consistent affiliation with the product. The constructed connection comprises *musical brands*, that is: pieces of music that appears in consistent and distinct connection with a certain product. The brands

can take on different forms of which the jingle is the most common:

- Jingle (10,3%): short, rounded motif, typically visualized with logo.
- Tune (7,4%): longer, instrumental melody.
- Song (2,7%): longer sung melody
- Groove (0,4%): rhythmically dominated and repetitious turn of phrase.

In contrast to music with indistinct connection the musical brands appear, as implied, high profiled, and 'Profile' can best be on three related dimensions:

- Structure: sound, rhythm, melody, etc.
- Placement: where and with what relations to picture and other sounds.
- 'Career': former use and functions.

With some basic categories now being presented a case-study of the use of pre-existing music will follow to demonstrate some of the implications for the understanding of musical meaning making. Overall categories of constructed connection and arranged connection seem to be of particular interest when discussing musical meaning making. Although all music has a potential for meaning making in the commercials it is within these categories that the music is contributing

most clearly identifiable. The original commercial music shall not be subject for further discussion in this context, and thereby an example of arranged connection shall be subjected for closer inspection.

### **'If you Leave me Now' and Riberhus Cheese**

In a commercial for the Danish cheese product *Riberhus* the well-known *Chicago* soft-rock ballade *If you leave me now* is heard throughout. Riberhus is a particular brand of chesse from Arla, which is the name for the by far the biggest producer and distributor of dairy products in Denmark. Riberhus represents a brand of cheese made with special care 'out of good traditional principles and with very gentle handling', as it says on Arla's website after old guidelines. The song originally appeared on the album 'Chicago X' from 1976 and has music and text by the lead singer Peter Cetera. The version heard in the commercial represents a 'quotation'. Instruments are added with the effect of, most importantly, a more smooth and even sound compared to the original. With reference to the presented categories, the commercial, as mentioned above, represents a case of pre-existing music ('quotation') and arranged connection between music and product. The commercial is expressed in a drama-format and during 30 seconds – the duration of the commercial - a narrative is constructed involving different characters and a storyline. The commercial consists only of pictures and music and only at the end

there is a short presentation of the Riberhus logo.

The narrative has three small parts (here just briefly described):

1: A presentation of scenario and characters. The scenario represents – expressed via close, buildings, (gender)roles and automobiles - a diary from the fifties. A young dairyman is presented as the main character, and he stands looking at a truck with a sad face, apparently because he is about to see some of his cheeses leave the dairy to be sold. A young dairywoman is standing in close proximity and is looking comforting and understandingly at the man.

2- Stealing of the truck. A couple of men – dressed in prisoner close, supposedly in the midst of escaping prison - are seen running to the truck, and driving it away to the despair of the surrounding people at the dairy, and not least the dairyman.

3- Desperate and longing dairyman and woman in close-up. The dairyman is seen with other people at the dairy's yard, all running after the truck. But they stop their futile endeavour: The truck cannot be stopped and all people stops just to follow the truck disappear. At one point the camera zooms in on the dairyman's face as is exposed out of the crowd. In close-up we can see tears in his eyes, and again the dairywoman is seen in close proximity.



The three parts are arranged in connection with the musical quote in the following way: The first part coincides with the instrumental intro. The second part coincides with first part of the melody: a fluxing, high registered, on-beat line lyrically expressing state of affairs: *If you leave me now, you take away the biggest part of me*. The third part coincides with second part of the melody: a curved, higher registered, melismatic and syncopated line (the 'hook line') lyrically expressing an emotional plea: *Uh, uh, uh, uh, no, baby please don't go*.

In analysing the meaning potentials in the commercial some of the semiotic and interpretive perspectives mentioned above can be of help. Especially Cook's concept *perceptual selection* (Cook, 1998) is enlightening. In this perspective the moving pictures can be said to promote a certain selection of the music's possible meaning potentials and visa versa. From the interplay of music and pictures meanings *emerges* in that prevailing meanings can not be ascribed to neither the music nor the pictures respectively. The term selection might be considered unfortunate though, because it could give the impression of an unambiguous and unidirectional picking out from a well defined range of possibilities, but that is hardly the case as the concept of emergence indicates. Also the term selection might associate to processes of meaning making as always being consciously and deliberately carried out,

but again that is hardly the whole stor. It is more likely that conscious and deliberate processes are at least accompanied – if not dominated – by pre-conscious and habitual processes. These reservations for the concept of selection cannot be unfolded in any detail here, but the premise shall be, that meaning making involves both conscious and pre-conscious processes.

In the TV commercial in question meaning potentials is constituted by two overall intersections between music and pictures, and they might be said to be dominated by different degrees of consciousness, and the first being more dominated by conscious processing than the other: One is the *thematic overlap* of 'love and longing' and the other is *synchronizations* and *similarities of attributes* between musical gestalts and movements in the visuals.

The thematic overlap is constructed by framing the songs personal pronouns in a way so that 'me' (cf. the lyrics) becomes a dairyman and 'you' becomes an anthropomorphic cheese. From this reframing of antagonists a humorous atmosphere *emerges*, in that neither the music nor the pictures can be said to be humorous when experienced on their own. The songs nostalgic implication when listened to today – 'a well known and liked love song from many years ago' - is highlighted by the scenario of a good old, 'authentic' and caring dairy. Even though the commercial involves a somewhat unfeasible situation – in that we hear a song

from the seventies expressing thoughts and feelings of a man in the fifties - the fit between old song and old scenario is likely to be accepted or even go unnoticed by, by the audience. This has much to do with the humorous atmosphere involving an ironic distance – the drama is overly melodramatic and the construction of the dairyman as loving the cheese as ‘the biggest part of me’ – as it is sung - is somewhat over the top. This can also be said about the stereotypical construction of good and evil and the general intensity of emotions involved in relation to the cheese. Most modern producers and viewers of TV commercials seems to have made an implicit contract, that commercials are not necessarily depicting reality – TV commercials that do pretend to be realistic and trustworthy is in high danger of being despised by the audience, and commercials that has a humour and ironic edge is in vogue, at least in Danish television. And with this comes an increased tendency for the commercial to allow - or even demand - an active contribution from the viewer, in that the commercial constructs a situation where blanks needs to be filled out, so to speak. In the Riberhus commercial elements not heard or seen connected before are carefully constructed, and the viewer has to make an active contribution of putting things together. To be able to do this, some level of cultural insight is needed, and it is in this respect that the discovering of thematic overlap can be said to involve conscious processing (cf. the short discussion above).

The *synchronizations* and *similarities of attributes* between musical gestalts and movements in the visuals are expressed in different ways. Synchronization appears as the first part of the songs ‘hook line’ – uh, uh, uh, uh no - is visualized with the bodily movement of the dairyman and the showing of the tearful face in part three. The ascending movement of the melody is carefully synchronized with the forward movement of the dairyman’s body and the camera close-up on his face. The interplay between music and picture here constitutes sadness and mourning, and Cetera’s melismatic outcry is framed and visualized as *weeping*. Shortly thereafter the last two notes of the hook-line (to the words ‘don’t go’) are imitated in the accompaniment in synchronization with a movement of the woman standing close to the dairyman. She turns her head to look at him as we hear the imitation, and when the imitation ends she looks straight forward again. Here the music is framed as *sympathy* – the woman understands and sympathizes with the dairyman. Earlier the melody and lyrics is established as expressing the dairyman’s state of mind, and here it becomes obvious that the instrumental imitation serves the role as expressing the woman’s feelings. In a wider sense the whole scenario and community to which the man belongs can maybe be understood as being depicted in the accompaniment. Concerning similarities of attributes the overall premise is here, that there exist some kind of common

denominators for both visual and auditory expressions (and maybe for other senses as well). These common denominators can be formulated as basic attributes of expressions as for example intensity and movement, and they can be understood as emanating from our bodily involvement and experience with our environment, as both Stern and Johnson have showed it from somewhat different perspectives. In musicology Tagg's discussions and empirical investigations of anaphones can be seen as related to this view.

In the commercial for Riberhus similarities appear in the relation between music and visuals on different dimensions. The music is rather slow, has instrumental soft attacks with long durations (bas, synthesizer) and there is no sudden changes in for example rhythm, tempo or timbre. This matches the visuals, expressed as they are in slow motion throughout and with an arrangement of colours and camera lightening without any eye-catching details or changes. Calmness and smoothness, then, is both an attribute for pictures and sounds and this has implications for the meaning making in the commercial, in that it appears as an important feature in establishing meanings concerning nostalgia and the semi-realistic and ironic aspect. In a more specific sense, the smoothness of pictures and music has a similitude to the product (being of a dairy category), and also it helps to establish an impression of better and simpler times (c.f. the special care and

traditions involved in making this particular product, mentioned above).

To shortly address the question of degree of consciousness involved, it is the intention here – which follows the above mentioned theoretical perspectives - that the meaning potentials established via synchronizations and similarities of attributes for a great part rely on pre-conscious processing during the actual reception of TV commercials.

### Conclusions and Perspectives

The preceding presentation and case analysis has many implications for the understanding of musical meaning making in the TV commercial. As closing remarks a few of these shall be highlighted:

1. Although all music has meaning potentials *pre-existing music* is privileged.

Pre-existing music can be understood as having a 'career' (as Tota has phrased it) with *certain* and *specific* meaning potentials. This can be grasped analytically with concepts like for example the music's '*Verbaler und visueller kontextualisierunghinweise*' as Bode discusses it, or by defining the relevant *levels of codes* as Stefani has done. With reference to Stefani's levels of codes all of these are potentially involved in establishing meanings when pre-existing music is involved - even though the analysis might not have spelt it out.

Synchronizations and similarities of attributes could be considered as examples of Stefani's *general codes* and these levels are also relevant to highlight when considering original commercial music. In general these synchronizations seems to be of great importance when discussing meaning making in the TV commercial and other audiovisual genres: Here the *common ground* for the audiovisual – i.e.: evolvment in time (moving picture, speak, sound, music) – is accentuated. But the privileged level of pre-existing music in particular is of course the level of *opus*. Here the 'career' of the particular piece of music comes into prominence, and it can further fertilize the relationship between picture and music maybe also established by synchronizations and similarities of attributes. Although it is most likely not possible to track down the exact history of uses and appearances of a particular piece of music – not least because of an increase in personalized uses (see for instance Bull and DeNora for studies of the latter) - some uses and receptions of a piece of music might 'solidify' to particular periods in time as to make meanings clearly identifiable. And this has been the argument in the analysis, in which Cetera's song is widely understood as a love song with a flick of nostalgia.

2. The pre-existing music is both *contributing to* and *subjected to* meaning making.

In principle this goes for al kind of music and thereby

also for *original commercial music*. Different styles and genres may be linked to certain types of products (c.f. cases of *constructed connection*). In relation to pre-existing music though, there is the special circumstance, that the particular piece of music is *framed* with possible consequences for also *future receptions* outside the commercial. The analysis shows how the song in question is framed as overly melodramatic and humorous, and future receptions of the song might inevitably prompt associations of cheese. In many cases this would entail irritation, as for those who, until being exposed to the commercial, might have had wonderful memories of dancing cheek to cheek with their beloved partner when accidentally listening to the song in the radio. Surely such a commercial interruption – turning love memories into ideas of cheese - can be irritating (see Englis & Pennell for further evidence).

In a marketing perspective the use of pre-existing music is therefore ambiguous: The advertiser can gain interest, liking and some specific and manageable meaning potential by using particular pieces of music, but on the downside negative consequences arise. Aside from potentially causing irritation is must stressed, that the career of a piece of music is not only hard to track down, it is also uncontrollable. The particular piece of music can have had a history in other (semi)commercial settings like films and series and even commercials: For Danish audience the Chicago song is heard on the soundtrack

of the Danish film 'Humørkortstativsælgerens søn', and it also appears in the series 'Sex and the city' and 'Alley'. British residents might recognize the song also from a commercial for Cesar dog food - in which Cetera's uh's are framed also like a dog howling. These relations is of course a cause of blurring and widening of the potential meanings involved, and the meaning potential of pre-existing music might not be so easy to manage after al. Moreover also future appearances of a song would normally be out of control; the song is not necessarily 'faithful' to one product, and it can have many an 'affair'. Consider for example your associations when listening to Louis Armstrong's 'What a wonderful world'; over time it has appeared in numerous commercials for products of nearby all categories, and most likely different products would come to mind for different people (which, with regard to the particular example, is still to be empirically tested, though). This potential 'unfaithfulness' is a reason why *pre-existing music* rarely is used as *brand* for a *producer*, but rather for a particular, shorter lasting *product*, as it is demonstrated in the commercial for the Riberhus product (producer being Arla, as noted). The commercial for Riberhus is also representative for the seemingly increasing number of commercials that has *pathos*-appeal rather than *logos*-appeal. This has to do with the aforementioned aspects concerning the commercial being constructed in an ironic

and open ended way. With reference to Aristotle's different strategies of persuasion, *pathos* is involved in establishing emotional reactions to the subject in question whereas *logos* is concerned with providing rational information. In the Riberhus commercial there is no explicit information about the product (e.g. nutritional aspects, price and keeping qualities), and instead the emotional implications of the drama is emphasized. Admittedly some information about the product is delivered, in that we learn, that Riberhus is 'very loveable' and 'hard to let go', but this information is not only constructed implicitly but also arranged with a twist of irony. Music, and maybe especially pre-existing music, is obvious, as discussed and illustrated, privileged in constituting the *pathos*-appeal.

As an endnote a few reservations concerning the analysis shall be put forward. Is must be underlined, that the analysis is based on the *imaginable reception* of an 'ordinary' Danish viewer. Further substantiation could be performed by empirical reception studies (e.g. questionnaires, participant observations and experimentations). This would possibly highlight different *reading positions* of people of different age, sub cultural affiliation and the like. Also, concerning the implications of the analysis of the larger sample, it could be interesting to be able to compare the results with foreign (that is: not Danish) specifications to get closer and understanding of the highlighted tendencies

as local, regional or even global phenomena. Hopefully this paper can inspire further research on the subject.

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## Popular Music as Holistic Discipline: The Search for Meaning

Elsa Grassy

In *Pop Goes the Culture*, Craig McGregor writes that culture is first and foremost an activity, and that it is precisely “its scale (...), its widespread diffusion through the community, which counts, because in a democratic society that is the way in which people’s lives are enriched and changed” (68-69). In other words, McGregor locates the value of culture in its quantitative popularity. Seen from that angle, popular *music* matters precisely because it is “popular” – meaning here that it is a democratic commodity accessible to the whole of society.

This presentation is not about terminology proper. I will not go into the different meanings assigned to the word “popular” in the phrase “popular music”. I could have, and actually it was what I intended to do when I sent the abstract last summer – but in January the journal *Popular Music* published a “Virtual Symposium” on the subject – asking “Can We Get Rid of the “Popular” in “Popular Music” - so the embarrassing phrase “popular music” has been dissected enough for 2005.

Since it is not my purpose today to define the “popular”, I will do what everyone else does when not asked on a virtual symposium and I will only refer to that acceptation of the term which interests and interpellates me - what makes popular music such an activity as McGregor describes. Using my linguistic bias, I will suggest that

“popular” in the phrase “Popular Music Studies” does not refer to a musical category but rather to a way of studying and thinking about music that corresponds to a focus on the whole. Ultimately, it is not the search for the meaning of “popular” that matters to me, but the search for meaning through and beyond “popular”.

### **I. The Popular Music Scholar in Limbo: To Define or Not to Define...**

When I set out to write on my subject last July, I was a new disciple of Popular Music Studies. I am currently writing my dissertation at the Sorbonne in the Department of English Studies and in the past I have specialized in Linguistics and American Studies. I have always had an interest in popular music, but it is the very first year I have considered - and thus labeled - myself a Popular Music scholar. Yet I realized that I did not know what it was exactly I had vowed myself to seek. I set out to find what registered as “popular music” in a variety of books and articles published on the subject. Here’s what I found.

### **A. ...Popular Music as Discourse: Not to Define**

What I discovered is that most of the time the word

“popular” is associated with the phrase “for the purpose of this book”. As Peter Wicke points out, this has been going on since the late 18<sup>th</sup>-century – at least in Germany, where “what [popular] meant in musical terms depended on the authors, their views, ideology and aesthetic preferences” (VS, 143). For every book published on popular music, there is a different definition of the term revealing the author’s biases, but more importantly, there is a particular un-definition of the term, accompanied by the claim that defining is not the point, but only a compulsory detour before we get to the heart of the matter. In short, popular is as popular does.

Yet this reluctance to pin down a definite meaning for “popular music” can tell us more about popular music and Popular Music Studies than a simple definition. In that I follow Helmi Järviluoma and Line Grenier, who both voiced an interest in the use of the term rather than in its “absolute meaning” in the “Virtual Symposium”:

*Rather, it is interesting to hear how, when and where [“popular”] is used and needed; how its contents are being produced historically and situationally in the shifting tide waters of ‘high’ and ‘low’. (Järviluoma, VS, 140)*

I find far less intriguing and relevant what the terms ‘popular’ or ‘popular music’ mean as abstract terms, than

how they operate conjuncturally in the public discourses of specific individual, collective or institutional agents. (Grenier, VS, 143)

In this postmodern world, we all know that abstract terms don’t exist – the only reality, if there is one, is located within discourses. *Popular Music’s* “Virtual Symposium” is evidence to the fact that defining our reality as Popular Music Scholars is still a topical matter. Although “popular” can be felt to be a limiting and irritating word, to the point that some contributors to the work edited by Rachel Rubin and Jeffrey Melnick objected to the use of the term in the title *American Popular Music* (1), there is no consensus, and hence, no methodological trap where we could get caught. The “popular” matter is not settled; hence we can’t take it for granted.<sup>1</sup>

I would argue that part of the reason for this is that what we’re referring to is in constant flux, and part of the reason is that we are fundamentally unorthodox.

## **B. Watermark definitions**

When authors do not use the “for the purpose of this book”-trick, and even when they do, they strive to explain that “popular” should be understood in “a very broad way”. Consequently, the sense of the popular that one gets from reading books on popular music corresponds to an inclusive and centripetal object. Four points are of particular interest.

1) Popular music is an umbrella name for *a collection of styles*. The 11 chapters of *American Popular Music*, edited by Rubin and Melnick and published in 2001, cover blues, jazz, country music, rock and roll, rhythm and blues, rap, folk, Mexican ballads and Tin Pan Alley songs, which is nothing compared to the “approximately sixty” popular music genres that Roy Shuker lists in *Key Concepts in Popular Music* (xii). And the list goes on. Actually, not only is it growing by the minute, it is also constantly changing shape and content as musical styles are going in and out of fashion and as folk becomes pop.<sup>2</sup> The most notable and recent addition has been what used to be labeled as *world music* – meaning popular music of the non-English-speaking or non-Western world. Consequently, our understanding of “popular music” encompasses world music more and more automatically, to the point where what we mean by pop now is increasingly “global pop”, to use Timothy Taylor’s 1997 phrase.<sup>3</sup>

2) Not only is popular music a collection of styles: it is recognized as a *hybrid*, born out of the fusion of different styles from West Africa and America, a process Michael Campbell refers to as “cross-pollination” (11). Popular music is also structurally and formally hybrid and depends on different media and environments. Which leads me to my 3<sup>rd</sup> point:

3) It is also *as much a commodity as it is an art*. One of the most common definitions of popular music is “created with commercial success in mind” (Campbell, 12). This point and the previous point echo the definition given by Simon Frith in the *Critical Concepts* volumes he edited for Routledge:

*Music made commercially, in a particular kind of legal (copyright) and economic (market) system; music made using an ever-changing technology of sound storage; music significantly experienced as mass mediated; music primarily made for social and bodily pleasure; music which is formally hybrid. (VS, 134)*

In any case, studying popular music implies that we believe that music can be both an art and a commodity, and yet not lose not its value and meaning: in *Key Concepts*, Shuker skips the opposition right away, writing that popular music is “an economic product which is invested with ideological significance by many of its consumers” (viii). Alf Björnberg goes as far as stating that popular music has come to define “the general conditions of music in contemporary information society” (VS, 134). Dave Hesmondalgh echoes that point of view: to him, Popular Music Studies have been moving towards “viewing the whole musical field”. The next step would be to end the distinction between popular music

and music. Or we could understand “popular” as laying stress on something in the music...Which leads me to my 4<sup>th</sup> and last point:

4) *The everyday* - Popular music is sometimes also defined by its ubiquity, as in the first chapter of *And the Beat Goes On*:

*[Popular music] can surround us from the moment  
we wake up to the moment we drift off to sleep.  
It's present while we eat, travel, work and play.  
(Campbell, 3)*

The definition of popular music has recently expanded thematically, with more and more scholars calling for the study of elevator music or jingles, music that is mostly used and heard, not listened to, and which Anahid Kassabian associates to “ubiquitous listening”. Think also of Philip Tagg's pioneering work on the theme for the TV series *Kojak*. The ubiquity of popular music reflects the diversity of its uses, and exposes the relativity of the term “music” itself, which does not exist in some languages because some cultures do not consider music as separate from other activities.

It should be clear by now that an accurate definition of popular music – if such a thing is ever possible – is one that will always need revising and especially adding. The music

has evolved, and the focus in Popular Music Studies has moved from music as isolated stable object, to a constellation of musical activities located in our every day. Popular music is an outrageous flirt.<sup>4</sup> It feels and sounds more and more like “the whole of musical experiences”. As Phoenix has recently noted, “Everything is everything (...) Everything means everything” – so to add to the general confusion, there has even been talk of studying classical and folk music as popular music, since the basis for the distinction between the three categories has been fading as classical and folk have become marketed products - think of the Three Tenors for example. The boundary between classical, folk and pop has also been blurred by crossover, which means that any definition of popular music based on an opposition to folk and classical is as wobbly as ever.<sup>5</sup> From that I gather that “popular” is not so much a category as an attitude to music. As Marcus Breen notes in the “Virtual Symposium”, there is such a thing as “popularizing” – the voluntary act (“effort”) to “make something popular” and work against the canon:

*Another way of exploring the idea of the popular  
is to make otherwise canon-like art and classical  
music popular, as indeed it increasingly is (see,  
for example, filmic efforts of (...) Australian Baz  
Lurhman). (VS, 137)*

The boundaries between classical and popular and folk and popular are permeable. When all is said and done,



the last thing popular can be opposed to is “the elite”.<sup>6</sup> Turning the music of the few into popular music means making it accessible to the lay, who can invest it with meaning and talk about it without being afraid of getting it wrong.<sup>7</sup> In fact, it seems that Popular Music’s motto could be TINO - “There is No Orthodoxy”.

Hence, defining popular music is paradoxical because popular music is that point of view on musical experience that refutes the very concept of boundary – it is essentially a potential, a starting point, something to explore and to belong to. Popular music lies *beyond* definition. That is where what Richard Middleton refers to as “Our object-cause of desire” is to be found.

## II. Our Object-Cause of Desire? – Beyond Definition

In the “Virtual Symposium”, Richard Middleton mentions Žižek and the anti-structuralist theory of naming on which his opinion is based.

*Names ('the people', 'music', 'popular music'), [Žižek] argues, don't acquire meaning through reference to given properties but through a 'primal baptism' followed up in a 'chain of tradition'. (You can test this: Are there any properties whatsoever that would necessarily rule out a given musical experience from the category 'popular music'? I think the answer is, no.) Thus, 'popular music' is just: that. (VS, 145)*

I have specialized in Linguistics before studying Popular Music, so I feel entitled to expand a bit on that that. That is a deictic pronoun which stands for shared knowledge. Linguists define definiteness as corresponding to unity, uniqueness and acquired reference. For example, when I say “the sun”, I can do so because we all know which sun I am talking about. When I say “the conference”, you know which conference I’m referring to because you assume I am referring to the more relevant conference there is, or else I could have specified, “the conference I attended last year”. That is the pronoun corresponding to agreed-on, assimilated shared knowledge, as opposed to this, which still matters or is rejected, as in “Not this one, that one”. Hence popular music is shared knowledge. It breeds familiarity with musical codes and enables us to share the same references, not because we have chosen them – as in subcultures, but because we live in the same environment. That is what Michael Campbell first mentions in *And The Beat Goes On*:

*The most popular music is important primarily because it is well known. Its familiarity gives it significance: a popular song becomes a shared experience for its audience. (...) The most popular songs are the musical equivalent of celebrities: meaningful because so many recognize them.*

*(Campbell, 8)*

It is therefore no surprise that many works on popular music focus on « the role of music in creating community » and « the sorts of communities that popular music is capable of building » (Campbell, 6). In *Institutional Economics and the Formation of Preferences* Wilfred Dolfsma notes that, in the 1950s, Dutch teenagers thought of pop music as a social activity, even when they listened to the radio on their own. There was always an imaginary other present:

*Although fans preferred to listen by themselves, they knew or felt connected to many people. Meewtem felt related 'to everybody... You had the feeling that so many people were listening. And the next day you heard others say: Did you hear this? Did you hear that? That is really cool.' (102)*

Because it is ubiquitous, popular music can be a living metonymy and evoke simultaneous experiences to people, thus connecting people to people through the production of meaning. In that I agree with Marcus Breen, for whom:

*Popular is a trope, a talisman, a symbol of a particularity of production that signifies a position vis-à-vis known reality. This position is the result of choices that are made to invest particular types of cultural production with meaning (my*

*italics). The implication is that types of music are called popular because of their resonance within a group of users. (VS, 137)*

What I find especially interesting in Breen's comment is that he considers meaning a process: there's meaning in popular music because people invest popular music with meaning – which is different from revealing meaning through interpretation or stabilizing meaning through definition. Investing music with meaning does not confine it within the boundaries of known experience, but it makes it compatible with emotions and thoughts, past and present. This may precisely be what the very term “popular music” has become: a phrase we invest with meaning but which doesn't correspond to any given definition. The IASPM belongs to the list of communities bred by Popular Music, one of the human groups involved in the chain of tradition keeping the term alive.

## Conclusion

Popular music studies is the one of the fields in which the meaning of popular is constantly being re-negotiated; as we decide what Popular Music Studies are, we are making a statement on popular music. Talking about the “popular” in “popular music” is precisely talking about that dimension of music that enables us to make it ours.

Therefore, it could be that the most important thing about the term « popular music » is that it points to the fact that it has a community of users. We – as popular music scholars - need the term popular music to gather around our reality. As stated in the “Virtual Symposium”, « popular music » is a « rallying point », a nexus of sounds and people.

In the words of McGregor, “Our culture, like our politics, should be participatory” (70). Let us be aware that we are, more than ever, citizens of the Democratic Republic of Popular Music.

## Endnotes

1) In « Putting It into Words : Key Terms for Studying Popular Music, » Bruce Horner and Thomas Swiss specify that « rather than providing the « final word » on the meaning of these terms and on popular music, all the chapters are meant to provoke further debate on popular music and its study. » *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, Blackwell Publishers : Malden, 1999, 2.

2) Michael Campbell, *And the Beat Goes On: An Introduction to Popular Music in America 1840 to Today* (New York: Schirmer, 1996), 4.

3) Timothy Taylor, *Global Pop – World Music, World Markets* (Routledge: New York, 1997).

4) Lucy Green opposes « popular music » to « autonomous music » - « Popular music (...) is usually overtly and proudly dependent upon such social factors for its production and in its mode of consumption. » « Ideology », in *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, 7.

5) To Lucy Green, « there would be no sense in having the category « popular music » unless there were also other categories from which it is distinguished, such

as classical music. » *Key Terms in Popular Music and Culture*, 6.

6) This is precisely what Deena Weinstein's opinion – though she makes « folk » synonymous with « popular » and I don't (VS, 137).

7) Sometimes the mass gets it incredibly right – see Philip Tagg's paper on the ability of students with no formal musical training to come up with useful descriptive terms, "Music Analysis for 'Non-Musos': Popular Perception as a Basis for Understanding Musical Structure and Signification." Paper for conference on Popular Music Analysis. University of Cardiff, 17 November 2001. <http://www.tagg.org/articles/cardiff01.html>. July 6th, 2005.

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Phoenix, « Everything Is Everything », *Alphabetical*. EMI, B0001BFITQ, 2004.

## Is the French word « chanson » equivalent to the English term « popular music » ?

Gérôme Guibert

**The conference audience is first played « Week-end à Rome », from Etienne Daho.**

I choose to have you listen to this track because it is at a crossroads, and it can illustrate the French controversy surrounding this word, *chanson*. Etienne Daho released this record in the early eighties, at a time when he was mostly listening to English post-punk and new-wave music. Does this work belong to the French category *chanson* ?

A typical example of what can be said about this word in France was to be found in a debate that took place at the University of Manchester in June 2003, during a symposium dealing with “French popular music”<sup>1</sup>. The choice of the English title didn’t seem to have troubled any conscience whereas its translation suddenly confronted the French contributors with a major problem.

One side, stating they were working on the *chanson* considered that the title of the congress was to be understood as *chanson française* and their contributions were dealing with topics such as “*chanson réaliste*” or “the songs of Jacques Brel”. On the other side, contributors working on music originating from African-American culture (reggae, rock, hip-hop or techno...) did not consider *chanson* as a culture but simply as a

musical form. They understood the English meaning of the term “popular music” in the title “French popular music”.

I will therefore deal with the signifier of the word *chanson* and “popular music” [*musiques populaires*] from the French point of view, insofar as *chanson* expresses notions which are hardly considered by Anglophone research fields of “cultural studies”. For instance, Andy BenNET’s book on “Cultures of popular music”<sup>2</sup>, does not dedicate a chapter to *chanson* when presenting the different musical styles.

My purpose is not to give a definitive or objective definition of the *chanson* object but to examine how the signifier evolved, where its starts and ends and the limits of this denomination in the French perspective.

### I. Chanson category

In France, thanks to its formal elements, people often call *chanson* the whole repertory of compositions that is presented as the union of words and a melody both arranged in a chorus/verses pattern and lasting for about 3 minutes using a modal or tonal scale and a medium range (This kind of piece is called “song” in English which translates to “chanson” in French, but



the aesthetic category “la chanson” to name the whole repertory doesn’t exist in English). In his book *Vocabulary of Aesthetics* [Vocabulaire d’esthétique] published in 1990, Etienne Souriau defines seven characteristics making up songs, and *chanson* as a category. We will use his work as an illustration of the way the French language apprehends *chanson* and its limits. To him :

(1) “A song always contains lyrics meant to be sung, and a tune on which to sing. The lyrics may be considered as a poem by itself and are sometimes even published as such.”

(2) “A song always keeps a very simple pattern and is within the reach of everyone whereas more intellectual musical experiences tend to be the privilege of a few initiates.”

(3) “It is arranged in a regular pattern of verses and chorus.”

(4) “Thanks to this accessible pattern, *chanson* is meant to be played everywhere, to become widespread. This is an essential feature, with the “right” melody as a deciding factor.”

(5) “A song remains open to aesthetic variety. If *chanson* is a proper genre by its features, this genre

can still be divided into a great variety of species, each having its own characteristics: tragic, comical, satirical or tender songs for example.”

(6) “Nevertheless, the aesthetic category is not the only difference between songs. A song can be aimed at many different things such as working, dancing or getting to sleep. There are moralizing or devotional songs. Some others songs are written to create a special atmosphere on some particular occasions such as the drinking songs.”

However, according to Souriau “there is a real danger that the song may lose its specificity, losing itself in its external function. It could become no more than the mere accompaniment of an activity, its lyrics and tune then reduced to their simplest terms.” He says “this phenomenon can be observed in some rock or disco songs in which lyrics only consist of a few incoherent words hammered, indeed even yelled on a basic tune.” From these general statements, which can be found in numerous publications on *chanson* in France (such as Vernillat and Charpentrau’s *La chanson française*, Paris, PUF, 1991 or, Paul Arapon’s “La métamorphose de la chanson française”, in the French peer review *Esprit*, July 1999) we can make some remarks.

First of all, *chanson* is presented on a linear time line,

an historic continuation, from the way it was under the Ancien Regime until now. From *chanson traditionnelle* (routine songs or functional songs – work, holidays – relating to its national heritage and orally transmitted) to today's songs broadcast recordings, without forgetting *chanson réaliste* sung in the *cafés-concerts* at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the history of *chanson*, the aesthetic analyses have often remained determining, taking the songs out of their social context, only to keep what they had in common. But this type of analysis which is shared by a lot of people in France, usually fails to take two cultural variables into account.

- The first one stems from the centralist Republican policy of the French government and the role played by the French language under this policy. Indeed, from this point of view, *chanson* has been one the major axis helping to establish a national language, mainly in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Contrary to the United States I suppose, where the different kinds of popular music developed in a quite uncontrolled manner, in part because of segregation and the strong contrast between cities and countryside, France distinguished itself by its centralized policy as well as by its transmission of common values through "Education populaire"

- schools and federations of popular education

(similar to clubs or community centers in the UK). Thus, the popular songs collected in the 19<sup>th</sup> century have very often been "corrected", that is rephrased, and a number have then been transmitted to the people through the teaching of songs at school. The simple layout of *chanson* made it an easy way to convey messages, and as the Republican state was much concerned with the nation unity, it left little space for regional singularities in popular music.

- Besides, economic, organizational and technological changes which have deeply influenced 20<sup>th</sup> century music have often been minimized in French analyses. Such has been the case for;

- The specialization of tasks, with the creation of SACEM (the official French performing rights society) and the consequential emergence of both serial songwriter and singer songwriter ("auteur-compositeur-interprète").

- The merchandizing of musical shows, notably through "cafés-concerts" and "music-hall".

- The birth of phonographic recording, radio and the whole mass media and their effects.

A music industry was born. The musical sector

professionalized. In France it is called “music hall” from the “*belle époque*” (1910’s, the term will usually be replaced by “show business” in the 60’s). As far as contents is concerned, the musical industry is then organized around two main poles : “classical music” and “*chanson*”. Music and its practices have been deeply transformed by these elements, but all the same the term *chanson* endured. As the centre of gravity of music, switched from music written by the people to music specifically elaborated for the people, the term used to describe it was not called into question. According to the critic reviews of both live and recorded music, and either to normative analyses of theoreticians of humanities, the lyrics still had the same importance in the songs, which has often been considered as a form of poetry. The voice, expressivity and performance of the singers were also crucial to the audience.

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century music-hall, the formal characteristics of *chanson* evolved under the influence of other components of the “*revue à grand spectacle*”. In this new form of live entertainment, *chanson* met different kinds of music and performances such as striptease, trained animals or illusionists. Jazz music emerged in France in this music-hall context, leading to an increase in the number of instruments used, notably adding the drums in popular music. What came out of it is that, gradually, the word *chanson* evolved with two

different meanings:

-A specific sense meaning “*la vraie chanson*” (true *chanson*), that is a song whose role was to highlight the lyrics, and which was generally characterized by a minimal orchestration.

-A general sense, meaning to include all types of popular music, with a symbolic connotation of “poor quality”, low grade art. This connotation can be approached of the French word *variété*, originating from the principles of the music hall, and belong to the field of entertainment whereas “real *chanson*” would belong to the arts. It seems that, at least until the sixties, and sometimes later on, music originating from African-American culture, in which rhythm and music dominated more and more, remained considered as *variété*, or low grade *chanson*. This is all the more true than, with the emergence of rock music in the 50s, French artists would only perform basic French versions of American standards whereas, at the very same time a new movement of singer-songwriters offered *chanson à textes* on a minimal accompaniment, in the tradition of quality lyrics.

From this symbolic point of view, the *variété* producers strategically tried to characterize their production as

*chanson*. So did the local departments of major companies such as RCA or Phonogram in the late seventies when they defined a new generation of artists produced with “charts” arrangements as the *nouvelle chanson française*. If jazz music has gained autonomy as a proper aesthetic genre between classical music and *chanson*, this has proved much more difficult for rock music even its specificity has been increasingly, progressively defended by the new generations. But from the fifties, rock music is often classified in *variété*. When the quality of the lyrics is acknowledged, then it will be described as *chanson rock* (B. Lavilliers, J. Higelin or Renaud). Even if artists like Johnny Hallyday or Noir Désir may have people’s respect in France, this will only be to a certain extent, as they differ too much from real *chanson* as a weberian Ideal-type.

## II. Popular music

Why the expression “popular music” didn’t impose in France as it did in many other countries? As far back as the eighties, arouse the problem of how to name rock music and how to define its relation to *chanson*. Indeed, there are too many differences between rock music and *chanson*, notably in the process of creation and performing: a band is supposed to play rock music whereas a singer is supposed to be alone, playing *chanson*.

Moreover, the use of the electric guitar, then of the keyboards and more generally of a great number of instruments, sounds and tones typical of rock music made the situation even more ambiguous.

Thus, from the early eighties, as the cultural French government policy gets interested in cultural practices, it refers not to *chanson* but to *rock et chanson*.

At that time, the emergence of African American music in French practices is confirmed by an explosion of the musical forms touching length and construction of the tracks (we can think about some psychedelic or progressive rock music pieces lasting up to the whole length of a vinyl side) and their nature, songs and lyrics becoming unnecessary elements (progressive music, techno, post-rock...). Adding further to these particularities is the growing number of people contributing to the rock phenomenon and refusing to swear allegiance to the term *chanson*.

For all these reasons, rock music can now, in many circumstances, call itself a proper genre, with no reference whatsoever to any subspecies of the *chanson*. The incapacity of the term *chanson* to be used as a musical genre including (we could even say engulfing) others, was also confirmed, in the early nineties with the emergence of hip-hop, electronic music and world music. What about “popular music”? It may mean three different things.

*Music by the people*

*Music for the people*

*Music being quite popular*

As the notion of “popularity” is traditionally the one associated with the adjective “popular” by the Anglophones, a “popular music” is a music whose recording, broadcasting and listening is associated with the concepts of mass culture and mass production, not necessarily from a criticizing point of view. This led, in English speaking countries, to dialectical interpretations like the one by P. Tagg<sup>3</sup> or C. Cutler. To Cutler for example<sup>4</sup>, we have to keep in mind the specificities of the “popular music” which bring in a new way to consider dialectically music, halfway between folk and art music: The use of hearing, the oral passing on, and collective practice characterize not folk music, nor art music. So, “popular music” is a new field which began with technological changes.

In France, not only was the role played by technological progress underestimated in analyses, but the importance of the Marxist and Bourdieusian paradigms analysing society as a conflict between dominating and dominated made the term “popular” hard to use in the realm of social sciences analyses.

Indeed, in this perspective, the music the people listen to is a music for the people, which thus perpetuates the ideology conveyed by the dominating classes ; it is alienating ; it is Adorno’s “industrial music”, the one of the culture industry, it is a mere commercial good [produit marchand].

Theses thesis defending a lack of autonomy of the “popular culture” have thus often qualified the users of the expression “popular music” as “populists”. Many pro-workers or pro-peasants intellectuals were indeed labeled as such. One can assume this to be the reason why continuators of the thoughts of Richard Hoggart (Especially D. Hedbige, but also a lot of specialists belonging to the CCCM<sup>5</sup> or near it) did not have a great influence on French research. They were criticized for not taking into account the fact that popular classes were no longer the creators of the music they listened to.

It seems like there was then in France an implicit agreement making of “popular music” a synonym of “variety” [*variété*]. That is to say a music *for* the people coming from higher classes strategies, from the music industry. In Marxist terms, it would be an ideological element of the capitalist superstructure.

The term “popular” being perceived only as relating to a class struggle, the only music from the people (*by* the people) that could be called “popular” in France

was the one dating from before the capitalism and industrialization - what may corresponds to the Anglophone's "folk music". This is the reason why in France, many professionals specialized in traditional music use the expression "popular music" to talk about the patrimonial field.

In the second half of the eighties, the radical use of the paradigms related to the domination in sociology was often denounced, in particular by hip-hop or rock specialists. In response to the "populist" critics, the Bourdieusian deterministic researchers were sometimes called "*misérabilistes*" (from misery) because they left not autonomy enough when they consider popular music.

This calls into question the idea that the term "popular" could be use to qualify "music *for* the people". However, this did not result in the expression "popular music" being more used by French people...

For those who fight against the "*misérabilisme*" indeed, using the word "popular" was recognizing that there was an art, erudite music and thus, in a certain manner, to perpetuate a domination in a performative way.

In addition, whereas researchers and research teams started to work on the "traditional" music and the "song" format, those who were studying rock culture were not taken seriously by the institution and were marginalized. They also claimed their originality of

research field... For those who lived the rock'n'roll, the expression "popular music" appeared outdated, just like "electronic music" fans later found many terms belonging to the rock'n'roll world outdated.

According to A. Hennion<sup>6</sup>, polemics about the word "popular" brought the review of French research *Vibrations* to change its subtitle. Labeled "popular music" from 85 to 86, the review later changed this subtitle to "music – media – society".

### III. How to qualify music in France ?

Gradually, French music has absorbed the musical uses and attitudes originating from African American cultures. Since the French word *chanson* fails to engulf different types of musical genres, and considering that the term popular has such a past, other denominations have come to light in France.

Following a study on the rehearsals practices of musical bands carried out in the early nineties, the sociologist Marc Touché suggested the expression "amplified music" [*musiques amplifiées*] which was inspired by their technical habits. As for Ministry of Culture and the official institutions, they chose the term "current music" [*musiques actuelles*].

As theses terms are not entirely satisfactory, the use of the word *chanson* has remained constant. The French



people have reached a dead end in this issue about how to qualify what the Anglophones call “popular music”.

Some elements can however lead us to think that the use of the term “popular music” could make some progress.

- The first element is the opening to English written works about music

- The second element is the growing knowledge of the roots of rock’n’roll and African American music, which tends to emphasize what the different types of music have in common in their evolutionary process.

- Another element could be the opening of an European French-speaking department within the IASPM.

As far as this “Week end à Rome” is concerned, it’s up to you!

## Endnotes

1. [www.art.man.ac.uk/FRENCH/research/conferences/musicabstr](http://www.art.man.ac.uk/FRENCH/research/conferences/musicabstr)
2. Bennet, Andy. *Cultures of Popular Music*, Buckingham, Open University Press, 2001.
3. Tagg, Philip. *Kojak - 50 Seconds of Television Music*, New York, Mass Media Music Scholars’ Press, 2000.
4. Cutler, Chris. *File Under Popular. Theoretical and Critical Writings on Music*, London/New York, Megacorp/Semiotext(e)-Automedia, 1985.
5. Birmingham’s Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies.
6. Personnel Interview, April 2005.

## The Flute in Rock Music: A Semantic Study

Rebecca Guy

This paper discusses the semantic implications of the appearance of the flute in various musical contexts, particularly rock music, and my development of a framework by which the aural effect of the flute can be codified. This forms part of my PhD research into the use of the flute in the rock genre, an investigation which began as a technical study, exploring the output of various flute players and the techniques they used. It became necessary to relate appearances of the flute to other musical genres in which the instrument is important, from the point of view of the players - their training and influences - but also with regards to the effect for the listener.

The flute's entry into the genre is closely tied with the advent of psychedelic and progressive rock of the mid-to late-1960s, and the expansion of the typical rock and roll sound world that these eclectic styles embodied. One of the means by which progressive musicians could expand their sonic and stylistic palettes beyond the four-piece, guitar/vocals/bass/drum kit rock band and the three-minute single was to use elements borrowed from other musical genres – art music, jazz, folk music, and music from other cultures of the world. What is interesting is that the flute has a role to play

in all of these generic divisions. It is prominent in the symphony orchestra and other forms of art music, and has become an important wind instrument in jazz, in the hands of players such as Roland Kirk, Yusef Lateef and Herbie Mann, to name but a few. “Folk” and “world” are of course highly ideologically loaded terms, as what is “world music” to some is “folk music” to others; I am here using “folk” to refer to Celtic-derived folk music, as this tradition embodies a large repertoire of instrumental dance music in which the flute is often prominent. The flute has evolved in some form or another in just about every culture in the world, and so the world flute family is very large. I haven't (yet) identified any rock flute players that hail directly from folk or world flute-playing backgrounds, but all such traditions offer alternative playing techniques for the flautist, and some players have clearly been influenced by such repertoires.

As I collected and analysed examples of flute-playing in rock music, I discovered recurring paradigms of connotative meaning, and not just suggestions of different musical genres; for example, instances where the sound of the flute seems to lend a military suggestion, or a hint of exoticism, or supported depictions of the feminine, or childhood innocence. It became apparent

### Jethro Tull - 'Play In Time' Opening Flute Riff



[+ indicated closed/harmonic alternative fingering]

Transcription Rebecca Guy 2005

that alongside technical analysis of the flute's role in rock music - how it was used by the players - a semiotic analysis was needed to examine how it was received by listeners.

Above is a musical example that illustrates this very well, by well-known flute-using band Jethro Tull.

It can clearly be heard that the flute sound used is over-driven, forcefully articulated, distorted from the clear, sweet sound usually associated with the flute in classical music – probably by turning the flute inwards and covering more of the embouchure hole than usual, and mis-fingering or using harmonics for some of the notes; such distortion will also be aided by the electronic amplification. The aggressive, rocky feel of the example is promoted by the repeated, riff-driven construction and

the rhythmic unison with that ubiquitous rock instrument, the electric guitar. However, there is also a sense of Celtic folk music, promoted by the dancing rhythms (the alternation of 6/8 with 3/4); the harmony in fourths also adds to the folk music suggestion. Perhaps there is even a slightly marshal, military suggestion, conveyed by the forceful, regular rhythms.

The repeated recurrence of some connotations led me to develop a paradigmatic framework for codifying some of the semantic implications of the flute; this provides another route, alongside the purely technical, into analysing the use and effect of the flute in rock music. Tables 1 and 2 at the end of this paper list the predominant recurring paradigms I have identified. Some of these connotations work alongside, or even require, the concurrence of other musical factors or

codes, to be effective; this is what is identified in the third column of both tables.

Part of my research has involved looking into aspects of the cultural history of the flute in its various forms, to identify the possible historical basis for some of these paradigms – for instance, an obvious example is the historical usage of the fife on the battlefield providing its military connections - and proof of their power using examples from other repertoires, including art music, film soundtracks and television incidental music. I have tried to summarise these in the second and fourth columns of the tables. This list is of course no way conclusive, and in reality the situation is usually far more complicated. The validity of my analysis hinges upon two hypotheses:

- First, that timbre forms a sufficiently pertinent criterion for semiotic segmentation of the musical experience
- Second, that the cultural competence to make the identified other- and extra-musical associations is sufficiently universal.

It requires training to be able to identify different instruments by sound, but differences in timbre can be detected (of course to varying degrees depending

on the aural abilities of the listener), and associations made, even if a name cannot be put to the instrument in question. The pertinence of timbre could be tested by commutation, substituting the element in question with another to see if a change in effect and meaning occurs; imagine a flute tune played on a trombone, an oboe, a violin – it is suggested that the result would be connotatively quite different.<sup>1</sup> Connotative meaning received from any musical event of course depends upon the competence of the individual listener with regards to the codes involved, resting on their prior cultural experiences and memory. Some semantic associations with particular timbres are obviously widely accepted, and bridge different genres; for example the pastoral connotations of the oboe and the French horn (the latter due to its role in hunting), sweeping string sounds suggesting love, romance, sentimentality, nostalgia or similar emotive concepts. In my method of validating the association of the sound of the flute to particular connotations (aided by or reliant upon concurrent musical codes), by making cultural connections and giving examples from various relevant music repertoires, I have aimed to identify potential paradigms that seem sufficiently universal, in Western culture, to allow generalisations to be made. It is not intended to go into detail about each of these paradigms now, as each point can fill a paper in itself; rather, I have tried to include as much information as possible in the table.

At the IASPM UK and Ireland conference in Limerick in July 2004 I gave a paper concerning how the flute is frequently associated with, or used to portray, exoticism, or exotic “otherness”. In January 2005 I gave a paper at Salford University called “The Flute and Sex”, about the flute’s use in some musical portrayals of the sexual act, and its historically changing role in associations with, and connotations of, gender – as illustrated by the fact that both “masculinity” and “femininity” appear on Table 2.

I have divided these paradigms into two groups, “other-musical” and “extra-musical”, which is fairly self-explanatory: the first group summarises the other musics/musical genres, the suggestion of which the flute can help to transplant into a musical context; the second group consists of extra-musical connections that the flute, through its timbral characteristics and historical associations that are embedded in Western culture, can help to add to a musical event. The first group, as I mentioned above, of course has implications for the player as well as the listener. Different players come from different musical backgrounds or have different musical influences, for instance Peter Gabriel of Genesis and van Leer of Dutch group Focus are both classically trained, Ian Anderson of Jethro Tull is self-taught but directly influenced by the jazz-flute playing of Roland Kirk.

In terms of the other-musical associations received by the listener, I believe the primary suggestion the sound – or even just the sight – of the flute provides is that of art music (in “art music” here I am not including *avant garde* music, which can involve the use of extended flute techniques, which I will return to below). Most people in the West learn of the existence of such instruments via school music education, however rudimentary this can sometimes be, and it is a familiar sound from orchestras, television incidental music and film soundtracks. The aural impact of musical suggestions *other* than art music therefore usually require the support of other musical codes, within the surrounding context – such as, perhaps, compound-time rhythms or a Celtic folk-dance feel to suggest “folk” music, or scales obviously differing from diatonic harmony to suggest exoticism.

Another means of conveying non-classical connotations is through manipulation of the flute sound itself, so that it is recognisable as a flute, but clearly, audibly differing from the sound usually heard in art music. In order to analyse playing techniques used in rock music, I have established what I have called the “classical norm” of flute playing – this is of course in no way a value judgement, just a necessary framework against which I can compare various player’s techniques. In classical flute training the emphasis is upon the production of a clear, controlled sound, usually with vibrato, of course

with variety of volume, and of tone colour –flautists are required to be able to vary the harmonic content of the sound, so it can be thin and sweet or rich and dark, but usually remaining within the boundaries of what could be considered a pleasant sound. In the *avant garde* movement (existing since approximately 1945) some players and composers have pushed the flute sound beyond the usually pleasant “classical norm”; the flute’s open embouchure makes extreme manipulation of sound easier in comparison to other wind instruments, making it a very popular instrument with *avant garde* composers. So-called “extended techniques” such as harmonics, singing-whilst-playing and flutter-tonguing are becoming increasingly part of classical training, for the purposes of playing *avant garde* repertoire. All of these sorts of techniques are also found in jazz-flute and rock-flute playing, as well as extremes of tone colour (created by covering much more or much less of the embouchure hole than usual), forceful articulation and distortion created by over-blowing. The use of such forceful distortion is promoted in rock music by the need to compete with an amplified rock band, and the desire to emulate the electric guitar; this is certainly the case with Jethro Tull, as illustrated by the above musical example. The differences between the classical norm and the over-driven flute sound used by some rock-flute players, aided by electronic amplification, mirror the differences between the electric guitar and its acoustic

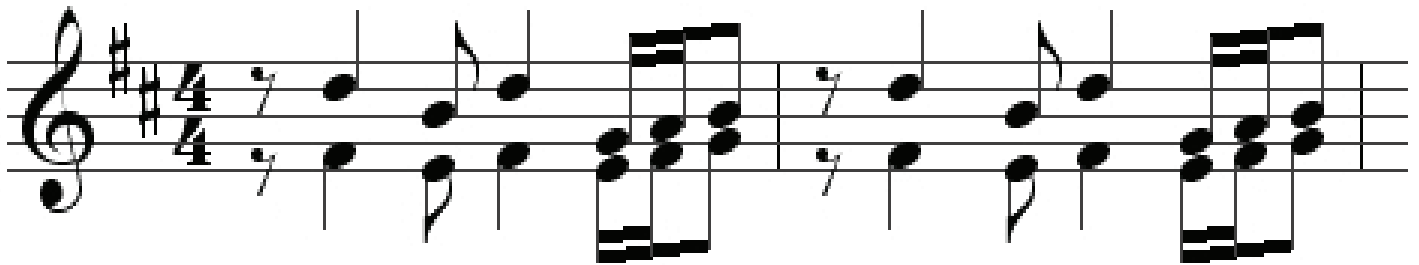
relatives. Such deviations from the classical norm can also affect the listeners’ reception to the sound, as they promote connotations of “otherness” of some sort.

The extra-musical connotations in my list are in some ways more obvious; I have tried to include as much information as possible on the table. I will just expand upon a couple of points;

- Pastoral/rural – the flute is not the strongest timbral vehicle for this, as in classical music it is so often double-reed instruments such as the oboe, and the fore-mentioned hunting horn that are called upon to promote pastoral associations (an obvious example being Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony). The flute can have associations here too though, as in its simpler forms it relates to pipes easily made from reeds and other natural materials; its folk-music connections also link it to rural, pre-industrial scenarios.
- Birdsong is an obvious association, reliant upon the instrument’s timbre, relatively high pitch, and agility for playing rapid, trilling passages. Much use was made of this in art music (again Beethoven’s Pastoral Symphony is an example, but there are many more). Even the flute variation in Benjamin Britten’s *The Young Person’s Guide To*



### Jethro Tull - 'Mother Goose' Opening Recorder Riff



Transcription Rebecca Guy 2005

The Orchestra is full of fragmented, chirpy figures, forcing the stereotype upon the instrument in what is presumably supposed to a piece of absolute music.

- Childhood/innocence – this can be associated with the flute's relatively small size, high pitch and sweet sound, and also its links with its close relative the recorder, and other such fipple flutes. Fipple flutes tend to have fewer harmonics and thus an even simpler sound than the transverse flute, and the recorder (or flutophone as it is known in America) is supposedly a relatively easy instrument to play, as it doesn't require skilled manipulation of an embouchure, and so is prevalent in youth music education in the West – and thus irrevocably associated with childhood. There are some nice examples of this connection in rock music, including Jethro Tull's "Mother Goose" from the 1971 album *Aqualung*, which has a two-

recorder riff accompanying lyrics depicting children and referring to children's-fiction characters such as Mother Goose and Long John Silver.

My last musical example ('Supertwister') is by the band Camel, from their second album *Mirage* (1974). The flute is played by Andy Latimer. In this example it seems that the other-musical connotations of classical, jazz and folk are in conflict: "classical" in the fairly clear tone and some of the trills and sweeps; folk in some of the dancing rhythmic patterns (although a lot of it is in 5/4), and some of the ornamentation; jazzy in some of the glissandi and other ornamentation.

This is a very brief summary of my framework for analysing the flute's semantic contributions to musical events. The fascinating thing with the flute is that it has so many semantic contributions to make – admittedly

sometimes requiring the conjunction of supporting musical codes. Its prominence in jazz, and its close relatives in folk music all over the world, give it more routes into rock music than other orchestral wind instruments, as well as rich possibilities in connotative meaning for the listener. This raises another question though; can the flute ever be totally free of the associations of art, jazz, folk or world music? Can there be such a thing as true rock flute playing? That would be the subject for another conference paper.

## Endnotes

1. My application of commutation techniques to music is derived from the work of Philip Tagg, from his method of 'hypothetical substitution', which is explained and demonstrated in e.g. Philip Tagg. "Analysing popular music: theory, method and practice." *Popular Music* 2 (1982): 37-65.

## Selected Discography

Jethro Tull. Benefit (CD). With Ian Anderson, Martin Barre, Clive Bunker, Glen Cornick, John Evan. Chrysalis, CDP 32 1043 2, 2001 (orig. recording 1970).

Jethro Tull. Aqualung (CD). With Ian Anderson, Martin Barre, Clive Bunker, John Evan, Jeffrey Hammond. Chrysalis, 7243 9 5401 2 5, 1996 (orig. recording 1971).

Camel. Mirage (CD). With Peter Bardens, Doug Ferguson, Andrew Latimer, Andy Ward. Decca, 8829282, 2002 (orig. recording 1974).

## Appendix

Please See Over Page.

**Table 1: Potential ‘other-musical’ associations of the flute**

Paradigm	Background	Associated musical codes	Examples
Art music	The prominence of the (Boehm) flute in orchestral and other art music repertoire; the predominance of this context in western music education	Clear, sweet tone, the “classical norm”, usually with vibrato.	
Folk music	The prominence of the flute in Celtic music performance (usually wooden, pre-Boehm system models)	Melodies reminiscent of Celtic repertoire – including rapid, dance-like tunes, often with compound time signatures. Ornamentation devices recalling folk flute techniques.	Jethro Tull <i>Thick As A Brick</i> (1972) – opening
Jazz	The flute as a relatively familiar instrument in jazz; its appropriateness for rapid, agile, improvisatory playing. Players include Roland Kirk, Herbie Mann, Yusef Lateef	Non-tonal scales such as the blues scale; seemingly-improvisatory passages, perhaps involving rapid scalar patterns or repeated fragments; slight deviations from exact tonal pitches; glissandi	Jethro Tull – Ian Anderson’s playing influenced by Roland Kirk e.g. ‘Serenade To A Cuckoo’ covered on <i>This Was</i> (1968) King Crimson <i>In The Court of The Crimson King</i> (1969) Tracks 2 and 5
Early music	The flute’s aural similarities to its historical versions (in various forms). Also fipple flutes e.g. recorder	Melodies based on pre-tonality Church modes; slight deviations in intonation from equal temperament; simplicity of tone colour (fewer harmonics in sound)	Jethro Tull – <i>Minstrel In The Gallery</i> (1975)
World music	The flute’s prevalence (in various forms) in traditional musics worldwide; sound sufficiently similar to be identified as flutes, but different enough to suggest exoticism/otherness	Use of non-Boehm flutes. Distortion of the typical, clear Boehm flute sound, perhaps to include breathy overtones; use of non-tonal scales; deviations from tonal pitches via microtones and glissandi.	Jethro Tull <i>Roots To Branches</i> (1995)

Table 2: Potential ‘extra-musical’ associations of the flute

Paradigm	Background	Associated musical codes	Examples
Military	Historical usage of the flute/fife on the battlefield, for signalling purposes and in marching bands; acoustic suitability for outdoor playing	March-like, major key melodies; high pitched playing, especially trills; high piccolo melodies on top of brass-dominated textures; march-like percussion accompaniment, especially snare drum	<i>Blackadder</i> Series 4 theme tune <i>Police Academy</i> (1984) soundtrack (Robert Folk)
Pastoral / Rural	In simpler forms is easily made from natural materials e.g. reeds; the flute’s prevalence in various folk musics = connection to pre-industrialisation	Can be associated with Celtic folk music suggestions. Simplicity of tone colour (fewer harmonics).	Jethro Tull <i>Songs From The Wood</i> (1977)
Early Era / Courtly	The flute’s historical relatives; its historical prominence in various European courts e.g. Louis XIV, Frederick The Great of Prussia. Also encompasses use of the recorder	Associated with “early music” suggestions. Music reminiscent of the rhythms and/styles of stately dance music.	Led Zeppelin – recorder opening to <i>Stairway To Heaven</i>
Exoticism	Associated with “world music” suggestions.	Use of non-Boehm flutes, or distortion of flute sound to suggest “otherness”.	Film composer James Horner’s frequent use of Japanese shakuhachi e.g. <i>In Country</i> (1989, set in Vietnam), <i>Bopha!</i> (1993, South Africa), <i>Mask of Zorro</i> (1998, Mexico).  Use of “ethnic flute” in score of <i>Miss Saigon</i> (Claude-Michel Schönberg)
Birdsong	Timbre, relative high pitch and agility in playing rapid, trilling passages	High pitched, fragmented melodic lines reminiscent of birdsong, including trills and other ornaments	Vivaldi flute concerto // <i>Gardellino</i> Saint-Saëns ‘Volière’ from <i>Carnival of the Animals</i> (1886) Ian Anderson <i>The Secret Language of Birds</i> (2000) The Moody Blues <i>In Search of A Lost Chord</i> (1968) ‘Voices in the

Table 2 Continued

Paradigm	Background	Associated musical codes	Examples
Feminine	Mostly dependent upon timbre and relative small size and height of pitch – closer to female vocal range than male	Agile, “seductive” melodic lines	Donizetti <i>Lucia di Lammermoor</i> (1835) ‘mad scene’ Richard Strauss, <i>Salome</i> (1903) ‘Dance of the Seven Veils’ King Crimson <i>Lizard</i> ‘Lady of the Dancing Water’
Masculine	Mostly via phallic suggestions of shape, and historical and mythical associations of pipes e.g. Pan, Dionysus, Krishna	Reliant upon visual associations rather than aural ones	Jethro Tull <i>Songs From The Wood</i> ‘The Whistler’
Childhood/innocence	Mostly dependent upon timbre and relative height of pitch – emphasis upon fipple flutes e.g. recorder, tin whistle. The recorder’s association with primary school		Jethro Tull <i>Aqualung</i> (1971) ‘Mother Goose’ – repeated recorder riff

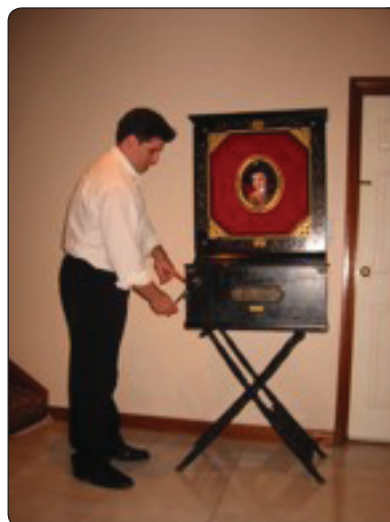
## Play it Again Usta: A Narrative Study of a Lâterna (Barrel-Piano) Belonging to a Member of Melbourne's Greek-Australian Community in Australia

Kipps Horn

This paper traces the story of one lâterna – a mechanical musical instrument also known as a barrel-piano, street piano, cylinder piano (Bryant, 1980:185) and (incorrectly as we shall see) barrel organ. Later I shall discuss mechanical details of the instruments. For now suffice it to note that the lâterna mechanically repeats melodies stored on a system of pinned rotating barrels which activate hammers on strings similar to a piano mechanism. Picture 1 shows the Melbourne lâterna being played by the owner Mr George Kiriakidis. Kiriakidis is a notable performer and facilitator of urban traditional Greek music amongst the Greek-Australian diaspora (and other) communities in Melbourne.

The story of Kiriakidis's lâterna begins in Constantinople circa 1895-1908 and continues in Melbourne, Australia, in 2005. The narrative also takes us to Anatolia, Mytilene and Thessoloniki in Greece, New York, Pennsylvania and Chicago in the USA. Later I shall outline how the journey of the lâterna parallels parts of the journeying of Greek diaspora musicians.

Lâterna is the name given to barrel pianos made in



**Picture 1.**

George Kiriakidis  
plays his lâterna.

Anatolia and Greece from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century until the mid-1930s when the portable (and cheaper) gramophone became increasingly available. Although the etymology of the term lâterna is not known precisely contemporary enthusiasts of the instrument believe that the term came from the Italian term - *lanterna* - which translates as lantern - a term which may have been taken to Anatolia and Greece by Italian immigrants. Indeed, the name of the Constantinople maker of the lâterna shown in picture 1 □ (Giuseppe Turconi) attests to this Italian connection. More of Turconi later. The question remains how or when did the instrument become known as a *lâterna* in Anatolia. My etymological detective work began on the premise that a *lanterna* was associated with an object connected with a lighting function. This assumption



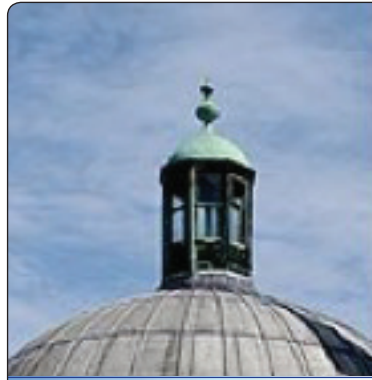
initially led me nowhere.

I am grateful to Dr Nick Nichloas of Melbourne University who referred me to the Triandafyllidis' Concise Modern Greek Grammar (1991) which states that the Turkish term *lâterna* is derived from the Italian term for lantern – [which is] a “lantern, toothed cylindrical wheel,” thus suggesting that the barrel piano and organ were somehow lantern-like. Unfortunately the Triandafyllidis lexicographer does not provide sources.

Spurred on with this information I stumbled eventually on an architectural website (<http://www.ontarioarchitecture.com/lantern.html>, 18.5.2005) which described the term lantern as one [which was] generally used in Italian and Renaissance designs to refer to a small structure placed atop a dome to allow the entry of light and air; thus confirming that *lanternas* do have an illuminating function. Illustrating the term was a series of photographs of ecclesiastical *lanternas* all displaying the octagonal or hexagonal cylindrical shape exemplified in pictures 2, 3 and 4.

The fundamental cylindrical shape of the *lanternas* is shared with the all important *lâterna* barrel which contains tunes: see picture 4.

Kiriakidis is not dismissive of the architectural design theory. Indeed, he added fuel to the theory by referring



**Picture 2.**

Topkapi Palace,  
Istanbul, 1500.



**Picture 3.**

Rome Lantern.



**Picture 4.**

English (?) Hamilton  
Lantern.

me to a photograph of a *lâterna* barrel taken from an eBay sale in 2002 (see picture 6). Picture 6 depicts clearly the octagonal wooden internal structure of the barrel which is surrounded by an outer wooden finish giving it its cylindrical shape.

The *lanterna* on top of the Topkapi Palace in Istanbul dates from 1500. It looks very much in the style of *lanternas* found atop of Renaissance Italian church domes but Topkapi is a 15<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman secular palace. Was it copied from



**Picture 5.**

The Melbourne  
lâterna barrel.



**Picture 6.**

Pinned barrel showing  
wooden internal  
octagonal structure

the Italian architectural tradition at a later date? I shall continue to follow the etymological and architectural trail. At this stage I offer the hypothesis that the term lâterna was derived from the Italian architectural structure known as *lanterna*. The term was taken by Italians to Anatolia and adopted by Greeks and Turks in the form of *lâterna* to refer to the cylindrical hearts of the barrel pianos.

Although lâternas are no longer as familiar a sight as they once were, my own observation and anecdotal evidence suggests there are at least four or five heard on the urban streets of Greece today. The honky-tonk piano sound can still be heard occasionally around Plaka and Pireaus. Indeed, amongst the makers of traditional Greek instruments such as the *bouzouki*, *baglama*, *laouto* and *tzoura* there is one surviving maker of lâternas in Athens. His name is name is Antonis Nassiopoylos (see

picture 7). He was taught by the late Julias Armaos, the last of a family of Greek lâterna builders stretching over three generations. His is father, Nickos Armaos and grandfather Joseph, knew and worked with Giuseppe Turconi in Constantinople. Thus Nassiopoylos has direct links not only to the 19<sup>th</sup> century barrel-piano makers of Anatolia and Greece in general, but to the lâterna at the centre of our story. Nickos Armaos, born in 1889 and dying at the age of 90 in 1979, is considered by Unlu and Berberis (2003) to be “the greatest [Greek] master [lâterna maker] of all time.”

The origin of the proto-type barrel piano is lost in unrecorded history. We do know, however, that the barrel piano was one of a number of mechanical-type musical instruments developed in Europe from the middle to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Ord-Hume argues that the “introduction of the earliest identifiable ‘street piano’ *appears* [my italics] to be attributable to a piano maker named Hicks in Bristol in the first few years of the nineteenth century (Ord-Hume, 1984:51)” or the origin of the barrel piano was



**Picture 7.**

Greek lâtern- maker  
Antonis Nassiopoylos

"often attributed to Joseph Hicks of Bristol in England who produced many of these instruments between 1805 and 1850 (loc.cit) " Of interest to this paper, Ord-Hume suggests Hicks "may have seen an early Italian instrument and copied it with an edition of his own... (loc.cit)" Unlu and Berberis maintain that a barrel piano was "developed by the Swiss Aristide Janivier in 1776." I am not aware of the evidence for this claim except that it fits into the general view that the barrel piano was one of a number of mechanical-type musical instruments developed in Europe as mentioned above.

Italy, Belgium, Germany and England are noted as particular locations for the popularity (and therefore construction) of the barrel piano. Most agree that Italians, either in their home country, or as members of diaspora communities in European towns, particularly England, played a central role in the development of the barrel piano as a form of popular street entertainment. On this theme Orde-Hume records how:

*For the major developments in the barrel piano we have the Italians to thank. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a large number of Italian musicians and artisans came to England to find work. A number of these settled down to producing large barrel pianos for the street musician (Ord-Hume, 1984:57).*

Discussing 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian migration Sponza <sup>1</sup>(1988) notes that "By the 1870s the main regional origins of Italian emigration to Britain were the valleys of Parma in the north and the Liri valley... [and that] The people from Parma were predominately organ grinders... (Sponza, 1988, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ukaifhg/docs/immigration.html>,13/5/05)

Here Sponza refers to the generic name of organ grinders given to itinerant street musicians who played both barrel organs and barrel pianos. However, as I have noted barrel organs and pianos instruments were very different instruments. The barrel organ is a mechanical musical instrument based around sounding a system of pipes. Whereas, as Ord-Hume explains, a street piano is "A large wooden barrel, resplendent with thick pins like headless nails and similar to that found in the pipe organ, was turned by a worm-gear on a handle and, as it went round, the pins engaged in sprung hammers which, when drawn back by the pin, would let loose to fly forward and strike tuned strings mounted in a piano frame (Ord-Hume, 1970:21)"

Nineteenth century Italian migration, as Miller argues, relates to Italy's long-held focus on the Mediterranean region and the country's national unification process which took place between 1861 and 1871. Thus apart from migration to the West, Italians also migrated to the East particularly "between 1880 and 1920 ...[which

saw] Italy plant its flag in Tunisia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Libya, the Dodecanese islands, Albania and parts of Yugoslavia and [of significance to our story] Anatolia” (Miller, 1992).

I have been unable to trace Turconi’s biographical details in relation to Italian migration patterns to Anatolia. However, if (as we shall see) the Melbourne lâterna’s production date is around 1895 we can be confident that Giussepe Turconi was living and working in Constantinople at this time. We have the evidence of other Turconi lâternas and first hand accounts of his instrument-making activity in Constantinople. We also have a recorded interview with Nikos Temizis (born in 1902) in his 98<sup>th</sup> year. Temizis was one of Turconi’s surviving fellow lâterna players. In this interview Unlu and Berberis (op cit) ascertained that lâternas “first appeared in Istanbul at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century... [Turconi] began to sell lâternas which he imported from Italy in his shop on Bankalar Caddesi (Banker’s Street) in Istanbul’s district [sic].” Thus, according to Temizis, Turconi first sold imported Italian lâternas in Constantinople before making and selling his own instruments. Temizis recalled working with Turconi observing that “They call the real lâternas Turconi.” This comment suggests that Turconi’s instruments were valued highly. Further, Temizis stated that “Turconi is the one who taught us this profession (loc. cit)” which indicates that Turconi was held in high regard by his

contemporaries. Referring to the location of Turconi’s shop he observed:

*....Turconi brought in wood from Romania for reinforcement. He needed this. He brought wood by boat. I say this now as we heard this from other ustas [masters]. His actual business was the lâterna. He played the songs with his mandolin and then transferred the song to the cylinder {Temizis in Unlu and Berberis, op cit}*

We know that at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Anatolian Greeks and Turks were familiar with the sight and sound of the lâternas on the urban streets of Anatolia. Lâternas also became popular in the Northern Greek city of Thessaloniki, the island of Syros and the Greek port of Piraeus. Other forms of popular music-making and dance were shared by Greeks and Turks amongst them the instrumental sounds of *ouds*, *kanouns*, *santours* and the *tsiftedeli* and *zebekiko* dances.

This cultural convergence was not to last. The fracturing of Greek and Turkish cultural relationship in Anatolia was broken in the early 1920s after what Holst (1975:25) calls a “futile war Between Turkey and Greece” resulted in the death of thousands of Greeks trapped in the port of Smyrna. An international conference ensued which

decided that there should be a compulsory exchange of populations between the two countries. Orthodox Christians were classified as Greeks and Muslims as Turks. This resulted in about one and a half million refugees arriving in the urban ports of Greece and over half a million Muslims deported to Anatolia.

Among the refugees were musicians and instrument-makers including lâterna-maker Nikos Armaos. Noting the geographical spread of the lâterna Unlu and Berberis note that:

*Many...lâterna players who lived during Turconi's time continued the hey day of the lâterna in other countries such as Albania, Serbia, Romania and Egypt...One of Turconi's apprentices, Fotis Fotun, established a lâterna workshop in the area close to the train station in Thessaloniki, which he developed for mass production with his partner Evimos Polokarpou. Other important lâterna players of Thessaloniki include Tomas Cimuris from Asagi Tumbaluj, Dimitrio Kapis from Izmir (b.1908), Manolis Karacis from Pontus (b. 1907), Yorgos Kasteropoulos from Istanbul (b. 1902). In fact most of these masters were primarily Istanbulites who migrated to Greece after the population exchange.*

*(Unlu and Berberis, op cit).*

Our story thus far relates how the lâterna may have

found its way to Anatolia with Italian migrants, how the instrument became popular amongst Greeks and Turks in Anatolia, how Turconi imported and made lâternas in Constantinople, and how the few remaining lâternas heard on the streets of Athens and Thessaloniki arrived in Greece.

We move on to the next part of the journey of our lâterna. Here we have a gap in the narrative. How did the lâterna of our story find its way to the USA?

The answer to the second question has yet to be asked of the former curators of the Deansboro Museum of Musical Instruments, in New York, from where the instrument was sold. It is tempting to speculate on the idea that Italian or Greek migrants arriving in the USA from Anatolia or Greece brought with them their precious lâterna<sup>2</sup> or perhaps a more recent enthusiast found and transported the instrument across the eastern Mediterranean Sea and Atlantic Ocean to their home in North America. This part of the story has yet to be unearthed.

The story is taken up again in 1998 when the instrument was put up for sale as part of the closing auction of the Deansboro Museum of Musical Instruments in New York. The instrument was spotted via a pre-auction website by Kiriakidis in Melbourne. He was unable to make an electronic bid and the lâterna sold for \$625US. From New York the successful bidder, a



musical instrument dealer, transported the instrument to Pennsylvania and later to Chicago. Continuing his search for a lâterna made by Turconi Kiriakidis made contact, by chance, with the successful bidder of the New York auction. This time Kiriakidis made his successful bid for the instrument and arranged for it to be flown to Melbourne in 2004.

As mentioned above, Kiriakidis has played an important role as a performer of traditional Greek music in Melbourne's Greek-Australian diaspora communities. He is an expert player of traditional Greek percussion instruments and the accordion and has been a member of a number of important Greek-Australian ensembles including Apodimi Compania and Rebetika Compania. He has a passion for both urban and rural traditional and popular Greek music. The former includes his passion for rebetika music – a genre of urban popular music which emerged in Anatolia and Greece at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Stylistic developments in rebetika music in Greece are directly linked with the chosen and forced migration movements of Anatolian Greeks described above. Thus, just as the players and makers of rebetika instruments, such as the *bouzouki*, *bagalama*, and *tzouras*, for example, arrived in Greece, so too did the makers of Anatolian lâternas: including makers trained by Turconi such as Nickos Armaos, the father of Nassiopoylos the contemporary Athens lâterna maker.

Here it will be useful to refer briefly to migration patterns of the Greek diaspora (especially as they relate to Melbourne Greek-Australian communities) since musical instruments, dance music and songs are important aspects of introduced cultural phenomena brought to countries around the world by their migrant communities.

As Greece changed from a rural to urban society in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> approximately 460,000 people migrated to the USA in search of a better economic life. Inevitably Greek migrants to the USA took with them elements of their traditional music-making. By the 1920s there was a lively Greek market for Greek-USA music recorded in USA diaspora communities.

After the ravages of World War Two there was large scale emmigration of Greeks to other European countries, Canada, South Africa and Australia.. Indeed by the 1960s Melbourne, Australia was home to the largest Greek population outside of Greece.

Aspects of rural and urban Greek traditional and popular music have been part of the (albeit initially reluctant) Australian music scene since the 1950s. In my doctoral thesis (Horn, 2002) I refer to the performance of rebetika music in Melbourne by



three generations of Greek-Australians. Kiriakidis is a second-generation Greek-Australian. Thus the journeying of the lâterna of our story – Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Myteline, New York, Pennsylvania, Chicago and Melbourne - relates to the journeying of parts of the Greek diaspora. It is not too fanciful to liken the making of the new instrument, its barrels, its natural deterioration due to wear and tear, its renovation and now extended and potential developed life in Melbourne, as a metaphor for decline and renewal processes in the Greek diaspora.

Kiriakidis plans not only to acquire the skills needed to renovate and repair his lâterna. He intends to learn how to make and pin new cylinders for the instruments. He aims to pin certain types of rebetika tunes on his barrels. Asked about what kind of repertoire he would like to pin on his barrels he commented:

*My passion is about rebetika and traditional music but I think the barrel piano needs beautiful music. Certain songs by rebetika composers such as Toundas, Costas Roukounas and Andonis Dalgas would suit the lâterna. The instrument has a kind of serenade thing to it*  
(Horn, pers. com, 2005)

Here Kiriakidis refers to the role of the barrel piano as an instrument for street entertainment: a portable instrument for popular entertainment. It was not an instrument associated with, as it were, heavy music. In the 1930s the then Metaxas government attempted to ban rebetika music from public performance in Greece. The genre was associated with things Turkish – sounds and texts which sullied senses of ‘Greekeness.’ I speculate that Athenian lâterna players stuck to lighter Italianate barrel tunes at this time. A less controversial form of rebetika found wide acceptance in Greece after World War Two and it is the lighter repertoire of this era that Kiriakidis refers to as being more appropriate for the lâterna. If he realizes his desire to pin new songs on his barrels he will add significantly to existing rebetika music-making practices in Melbourne which have been part of the Greek-Australian music scene for fifty years. In organological studies it is often small details of construction, materials or decoration that offer clues to the nature and history of an instrument. I shall now examine aspects of Kiriakidis’ lâterna and refer to a number of pictures to illustrate further elements of our story.

On arriving in Melbourne the lâterna’s front-piece decoration consisted of a tapestry cloth depicting the journey of the magi (see picture 10). Although the tapestry is of some antiquity Kiriakidis does not believe



**Picture 8.**



**Picture 9.**

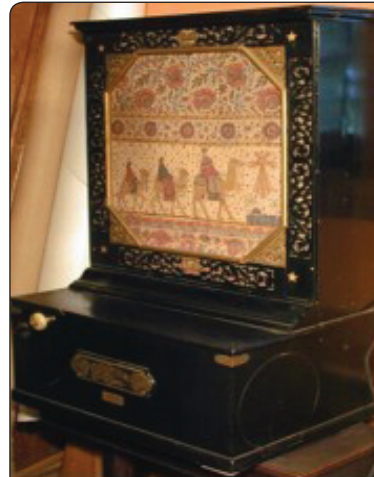
Greek lâterna-maker  
Nick Armaos.

it is the original image since it is more usual for a lâterna front-piece decoration to depict a portrait – often of a beautiful woman as exemplified in the pictures 7 and 8.

Decorative features on the front and inside of the barrel case (see pictures 13, 14 and 15) show the turning handle, Turconi's name-plate and below that, the undated renovation plate of the Deansboro Musical Instruments Museum, New York.

A closer view of the maker's name-plate shows Turconi's location as 'Constantinopli.' It is plausible to assume the instrument was made in Turconi's Constantinople workshop. On either side of his name are what appear to be copies of medallions which are repeated in clearer detail printed on a paper label glued to the inside of the lâterna. See pictures 15 and 16.

The three medals are labelled "Torino , 1884," "Anversa, 1885" and "Milano, 1894." The most obvious speculation to be made from the medallion pictures is that Turconi received recognition of his craftsmanship



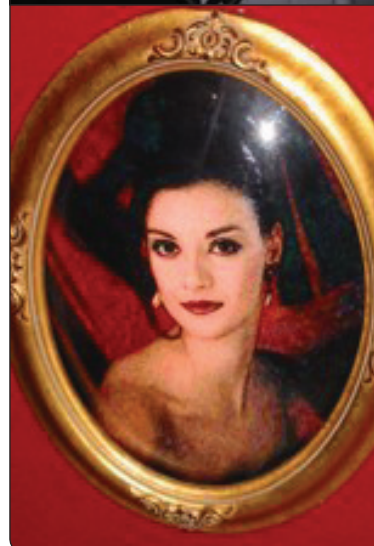
**Picture 10.**

The lâterna resting on a table with the magi front-piece. Typical decorative woodwork can be seen framing the tapestry.



**Pictures 11. & 12.**

As a temporary measure Kiriakidis covered the magi picture with a wooden frame and computer enhanced portrait of his wife.





Picture 13.



Picture 14.

from exhibitions in Turin, Antwerp and Milan. A closer inspection of the text embossed on the rim of the medals records the following:

*1884 ESPOSIZIONI GENERALI ITALIANA*

*1885 ANVERSA LEOPOLDO II ROI DES*

*BELGES PROTECTEUS DEI L'ESPOSITION*

*1894 ESPOSIZIONI. RIVNITE. MILANO.*

The inscriptions match exactly records<sup>3</sup> which contain the dates, places and names of the three exhibitions.

We can surmise that Turconi exhibited at these exhibitions.

Whether the medallions copies were awarded as prizes

is another question although on one side of the Milano medallion appear the words “al merito” which might indicate the medallion was awarded for merit. What it tells us for sure is that Kiriakidis’ laterna must have been made after 1894, the date of the Milano medallion.

Next to the picture of the exhibition medallions is the following inscription

*GIUSEPPE TURCONI*

*FABBRICANTE*

*PIANO FORTI ED A CILANDRO*



Picture 15.



Picture 16.

*Strada a Della Banca, N.2*  
*Perchembé –Bazar, GALATA*  
*CONSTANTINOPOLI*

The Italian inscription tells us that Turconi was a maker of piano fortes with cylinders and that his address was number 2 Della Banca Street, near the Perchembé bazaar area in Galata - an area of Constantinople with a large Greek population. A website article posted 19.11.2003 (<http://studentweb.providence.edu/~acekin/laterna/english/laterna2.html>) (no longer available) by Unlu and Berberis gives in Turkish the address of Turconi's shop as "Bankalar Cadessi (Banker's Street) in Istanbul's district." The document contains a translated version of an interview between Unlu and Berberis and Turconi's contemporary Nikos Temisiz. When asked "Where was Turconi's shop?" Temisiz replied "There was a Greek consulate right beside. He had a large apartment for himself. This means he moved there afterwards [after residing in BankalarCadessi?]. In response to the question "Did Turconi have a shop in the Persembé Pazar [sic] area...?" Temisiz replied "No, I don't remember this. I remember a large apartment by the Greek consulate." The sequence of questions and responses between Unlu, Berberis and Temisiz create some ambiguity. In a personal letter written to Kiriakidis (2003) Ord-Hume noted that his "computerized records show that Joseph Turconi was at work making barrel pianos at Rue Bouyouk Hendek 25, Péra, Constantinople

in 1908.<sup>4</sup> It is quite possible that Turconi lived and worked in a number of locations in Constantinople - the address on Kiriakidis' laterna being one of them.

Further labels attached to two barrels belonging to Kiriakidis' laterna offer more tantalizing information (see pictures 17 and 18). On one the inscription (below in grey) reads:

*Panayiotis Adonas*  
*Cylinder Instruments*  
*Instrument maker*  
*Opposite Metropolis*  
*Myteline*

The second barrel inscription (over page, again in grey) reads:

*Factory*  
*Cylinder instruments*  
*Adoni N. Kalamatiano*

ΠΑΝΑΓΙΩΤΗΣ ΑΝΤΩΝΑΣ

ΚΥΛΙΝΔΡΙΚΩΝ ΟΡΓΑΝΩΝ

ΩΡΓΑΝΟΠΟΙΟΣ

ΩΠΙΣΘΕΝ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΙΟΣ

ΜΥΤΙΑΗΝΗ



*And*  
*Beramou Fari*  
*Aesop Street- (Barthariou)*  
*Thessaloniki*

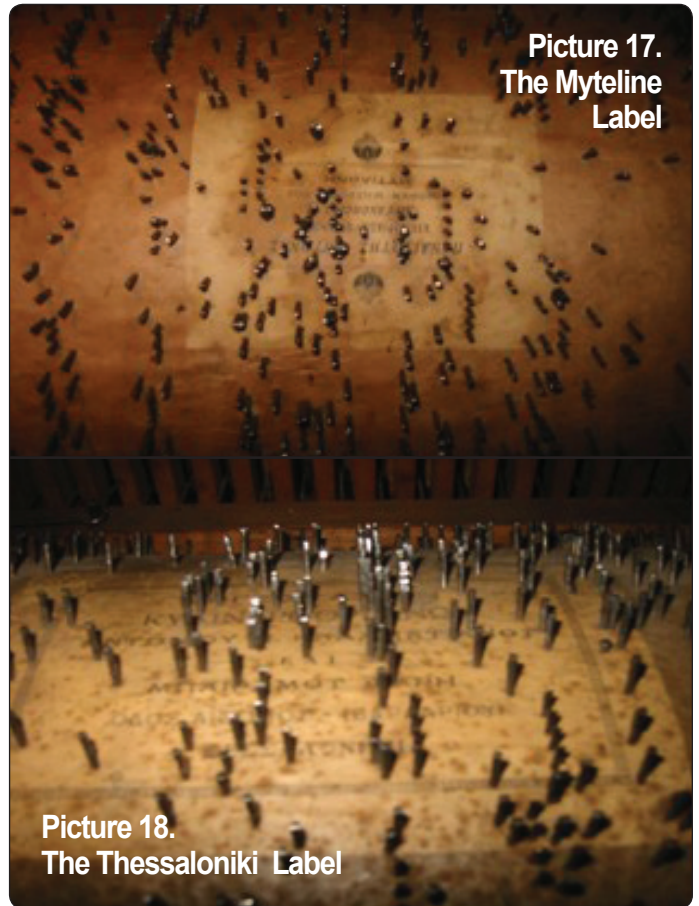
Thus the barrels accompanying Kiriakidis' lâterna appear not to have been made by Turconi. Rather they were acquired from barrel pinners working in Thessaloniki and Mytyeline. We can only speculate as

ΕΡΓΟΣΤΑΣΙΟΝ  
 ΚΥΛΙΝΔΡΟ ΟΡΓΑΝΩΝ  
 ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΥ Ν. ΚΑΛΑΜΑΤΙΑΝΟΥ  
 ΚΑΙ  
 ΜΠΑΪΡΑΜΟΥ ΦΑΡΗ  
 ΟΔΟΣ ΑΪΣΩΠΟΥ - (ΒΑΡΔΑΡΙΟΥ)  
 ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗ

to whether one of the owners of the lâterna traveled to Thessaloniki and Myteline to buy the barrels directly from the pinners or whether the barrels were exported to Constantinople. Either way confirms there was a healthy business in lâterna barrels and that lâterna players were keen to acquire new repertoire for their demanding street audiences.

I have referred to the pinned barrels as the “heart” of the lâternas not only because they lie literally at the centre

**Picture 17.**  
**The Myteline**  
**Label**



**Picture 18.**  
**The Thessaloniki Label**

of the barrel piano containing the stuff of entertainment – the tunes, but also because of the recognition given to the skill of the master pinners –*ustas* (masters) called *stambadori*. There is not space in this paper to describe the detailed process of pinning. For that I refer the reader to Orde-Hume, 1974, 1978, 1984. However, an overview of the skills can be understood from the following pictures 19, 20 and 21.

Picture 18 shows the intricate positioning of pins set to activate labeled hammers. Each hammer is labeled according to its pitch name. That is, over three octaves of the ‘tempered’ chromatic scale. I put ‘tempered’ in parenthesis because the term suggests accurate tuning according to the equal temperament system.

However, the lack of an iron frame,<sup>6</sup> variations on tuning wrought by temperature changes and the portable nature of the instrument could make maintaining the tuning of the *lâterna* a frequent process. I note here that whilst Anatolian melodies were added to the *lâterna* repertoire, they must have been adapted. This is because microtonal elements of the *makam* modal system common to Anatolian music were (as far as I



**Picture 19.**  
Thessaloniki barrel from  
Kiriakidis' *lâterna*

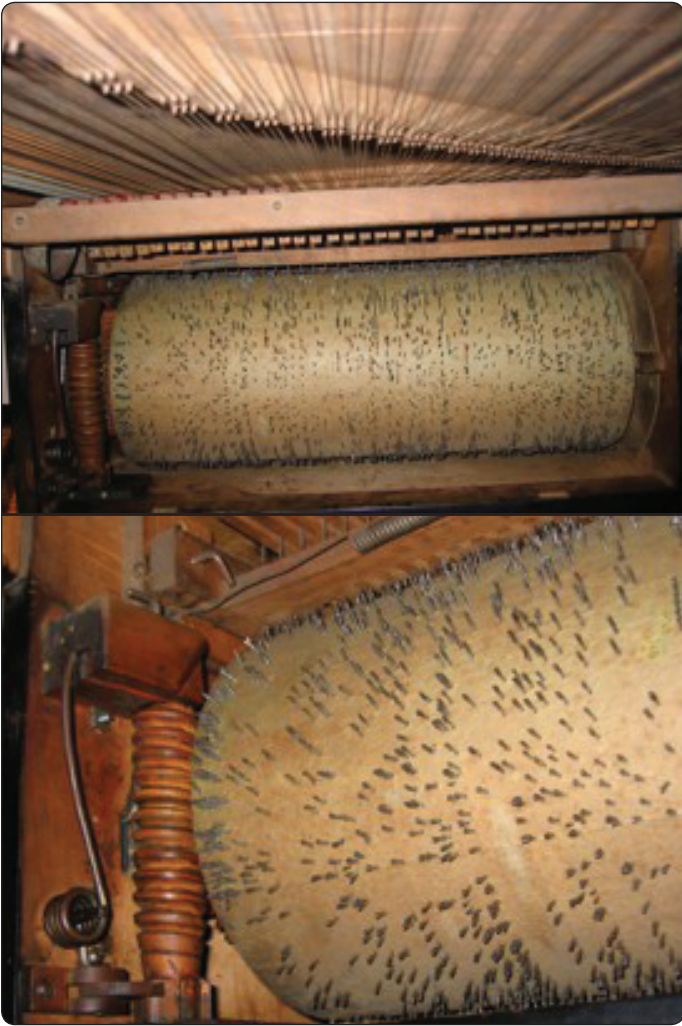
know) not transferred to the *lâterna* barrels. Rather the melodies were adapted to be sounded on the strings tuned around equal temperament. Further, it was common practice amongst café and street musicians at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century to tune their instruments to an estimated pitch. Thus the note A was not necessarily tuned as A-440. Schumacher (1996:21) tells how, after discovering cracks in another wood framed Turconi *lâterna* found in Pennsylvania, USA, he inserted a well seasoned hardwood and finally “settled on a scale of one and a half tones down from

the designated tuning scale.” This may be the reason why Kiriakidis found his *lâterna* to be tuned down a minor third from standard Western pitch measurements. Further research is needed to explore the construction, tuning and repertoire implications surrounding these issues. Pictures 20 and 21 show an overview of the pins. To the left of the barrel is the wooden cog and worm gear attached to the external turning handle.

Immediately above the turning handle a metal bell is positioned at the left-hand of the hammer frame. The hammer which activates the bell appears to have been broken. Kiriakidis thinks, on the one hand, that it may have been done deliberately since, in his opinion, the constant repetitious sounding of the bell during each tune can be irritating. On the other hand some *lâternas* have small hinged hooks which can be put in place to temporarily stop the bell sounding. Kiriakidis is not sure yet whether a likely looking hook seen directly below the bell may be one of these. On viewing picture 23 in Athens Nassyopoulos offered the view that the bell hammer had simply been turned around to stop it sounding temporarily. The bell and hammer can be seen in close-up in picture 23. In picture 24 we can see the external parts of the mechanism used to change the tunes on the barrel (Both pictures over page).

As noted above each barrel usually contains nine tunes. To change the tune the player must first draw upwards a vertical





**Picture 20. (Top)**

Wooden cog and worm gear mechanism.

**Picture 21. (Below)**

Close up of wooden worm gear and barrel pins.

The external turning handle is screwed into the internal worm gear.

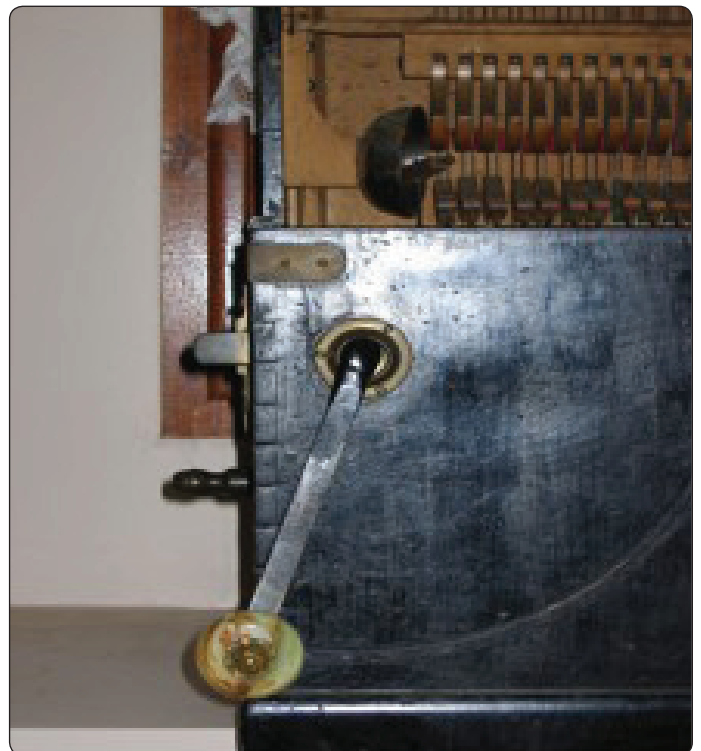
**Picture 22. (Right)**

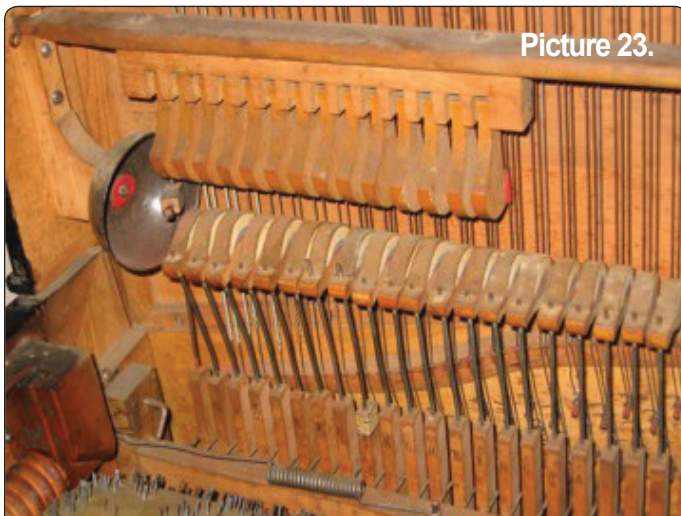
External turning handle.

brass bolt which sits slotted into an external, wooden- ridged extension of the internal barrel. The player must then draw back the horizontal brass bolt which activates a mechanism to push the barrel away from the piano hammers. Once done the barrel pins can be relocated across the hammers by pulling or pushing the ridged handle and locking it into its new position by replacing the vertical brass bolt into the chosen ridge and then reposition the horizontal bolt to lock the barrel into position.

### Summary

In this paper I have noted the general history of piano barrels in Europe and their relation to migratory movements of the Greek and Italian diaspora communities and how the journeying of the lâterna at the centre of our story reflects these migration





Picture 23.



Picture 24.

patterns. I have offered a hypothesis concerning the etymological roots of the term lâterna in Anatolia and Greece and its links to an Italian architectural concept. I have noted the inter-regional locations of the makers of lâternas and pinned cylinders. Finally I have related general descriptions of barrel-piano mechanisms to the particular mechanisms and decorations of the Melbourne lâterna.

This paper has been a preliminary exercise to a more detailed and evidenced piece of research which will further explore the story of Kiriakidis' lâterna and what the story tells us of 1) Turconi's life and work, 2) Anatolian

and Greek repertoire for lâternas, 3) the nature of lâterna craftsmanship and the materials they use, 4) the connections between lâterna construction and narratives associated with Greek diaspora communities and 5) an extended paper which looks at two other lâternas (one of them another Turconi instrument) owned by Greek-Australians in Melbourne.

## Acknowledgements

This paper could not have been written without the collaboration of the lâterna's owner - Mr George Kiriakidis. I thank him for his generous support, access to his knowledge and for his enthusiasm. I also acknowledge the work of Dr Arthur W.J.G. Orde-Hume, Director and Senior Archivist: The Library of Mechanical Music & Horology in Guildford, United Kingdom. He is undoubtedly a leader in the field of mechanical keyboard instrument research and my references to his work in this paper have been indispensable.

## Endnotes

1. For the purposes of this paper I refer to Constantinople and Smyrna to reflect Anatolian place names of the late 19th century and early 20thc, rather than their modern-day names of Istanbul and Izmir.

2. Sponza observes "The reasons for the change from this traditional mode of migration to what Sponza describes as a structural phenomenon starts in the mid- eighteenth century, when Italian rural society went through major changes. These were a growth in rural population outstripping resources, rising food prices and by the turn of the century the impact on the "stagnant rural life" of the occupation forces of Napoleon's revolutionary

armies. These included the confiscation of common and church lands which were distributed to supporters of Napoleon among the aristocracy: the reorganization of the rural economy along capitalist lines leading to the pauperization and dispossession of small farmers; 20 years of occupying armies living off the land; and with the end of the Napoleonic wars recession, then famine, in the rural areas in 1816-1817 as demand plummeted. The result was that many more people were forced to resort to the old tradition of 'seasonal and vagrant migration' with small numbers ending up in Britain who became the founders of the Italian Colony in London, (Sponza, 1988, <http://www.rootsweb.com/~ukaifhg/docs/immigration.html>, 13/5/05)

3. Mass migration to the United States began as early as 1872, but substantial Italian immigration to the United States is noted between 1884 and 1920 when approximately 7 million Italians arrived. Most Italian immigrants departed from Southern Italy and landed in New York City (Scivolette, <http://www.marist.edu/summerscholars/97/italian.htm>, 13/5/05)

4. A website search revealed that an exhibition called Esposizioni Generali Italiano took place in Turin in 1884. (<http://www.answers.com/topic/list-of-world-s-fairs#wp-1890s> 9/5/05) - as recorded on the rim of the reproductions of the 1884 medal on Kiriakidis's

laterna. Anversa is the Italian for the Belgian capital ANTWERP: The Exposition Universelle d'Anvers took place in 1885. The medal records the auspicing Belgian monarch, King Leopold II. Another record tracked down at the National Library of Australia showed that an exhibition meeting with the title shown on the medal was held in Milan in 1894 and that a medal matching exactly the one pictured was issued in association with this exhibition. The catalogue notes that the medal is classified under "Italian – industries – medals."

5. The 2003 letter from Ord-Hume shows that he was working at that time with Dr Antoni Latanza of the Musical Instrument Museum in Rome to write a book on the history of the Italian Street Piano from its birth in Italy through to its manufacture by migrant Italian craftsmen in the rest of the world.

6. Metal frames have greater capacity to hold the tension of strings. Turconi's lâternas did not have metal frames.

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## Local and global in *Creuza de mă* and *Anime Salve* by Fabrizio De André

Leo Izzo and Paolo Somigli

In his songs, the Italian songwriter Fabrizio De André reserves special attention to the so-called “ultimi” (‘lowest’, ‘last ones’): thieves, prostitutes, gypsies, and all the people who have no power but can only suffer and undergo power’s decisions. <sup>(2)</sup>

This happens in his entire production, from *La ballata dell’eroe* (1961) to the last album *Anime Salve* (1996). These people are always concrete persons, with individual stories and feelings; nevertheless, through the years this concreteness seems to be emphasised because of the author’s linguistic and musical choices. In the lyrics we can see the passage from Italian – in many cases a very refined Italian – towards the use of dialects; in the music we see a wider use of instruments linked to specific areas and traditions.

We shall now attempt to discuss and analyse the consequences of this double order of choices in the two albums *Creuza de mă* (1984) and *Anime Salve*, which we find to be two different moments of the same speech. In our opinion, musical and linguistic choices produce in them, in a different way, a game, a relationship between a “local” and a “global” connotation (in this paper, we use the terms “local” and “global” in their most common meanings: “local” is what concerns a regional area; “global” what concerns a much wider area, or the entire

world.<sup>(3)</sup> In other words, in this study “local” concerns characters and habitats of the people we find in the lyrics of the songs by De André; “global” concerns an extension of this habitat, which depends on musical choices).

*Creuza de mă* was recorded in 1984 with the collaboration of Mauro Pagani, a poly-instrumentalist interested in other cultures and a fine connoisseur of the music of the Mediterranean area. They met each other at the time of the album *La buona novella* (1970), in which Pagani played flute.

In the eighties, both De André and Pagani, each coming from different musical experiences, were questioning themselves as to how express their cultural identity in a genre so much influenced by the Anglo-American models.

While in the sixties De André’s first songs were strongly influenced by the French song tradition of Jacques Brel and Georges Brassens, at the end of the seventies he was getting closer to the Anglo-American models. His last two albums of the seventies (Fabrizio De André – PFM, *In concerto Vol. I*, *Vol. II*, Ricordi, respectively 1979 and 1980, recorded from live performances) can be considered a transition point, with old songs played



in a new progressive-rock version and arranged with the contribution of the Italian band Premiata Forneria Marconi (PFM). Pagani had left PFM in 1977 and in his first solo album he made a synthesis, rooted in the Mediterranean musical tradition, between different genres (Mauro Pagani, *Mauro Pagani*, Ascolto, ASC 20093 1978). He was interested in particular in the Mediterranean oral music of Turkish and Middle-Eastern influence, which he also studied travelling in Eastern Europe.

De André himself, interviewed about his collaboration with Pagani for *Creuza de mă*, stressed the relevance of their critical reaction to the musical panorama of those years: “Una comune presa di distanza critica dalla travolgente e routinaria colonna sonora d’importazione nordamericana”.<sup>(4)</sup>

The main aim of the new project, *Creuza de mă*, was clear to the two authors: to give an imaginary description of the cultural exchanges between the Mediterranean populations from the point of view of Genovese travellers (mariners and migrants).

Two elements of the recording give the listener the main frame of this intention: all songs are sung in Genovese dialect (hardly understandable in other parts of Italy) and the music is strongly influenced by the traditional music of the Mediterranean cultures (especially the Greek one).

At first sight the main characteristic of the album is the

relationship between the local culture of Genova and a hypothetical image of the Mediterranean. The first comes mainly from the language used and from the characters of the songs, the second mainly from the musical elements (like the use of traditional instruments, of modal scales and peculiar rhythms). Even with those elements, the relationship between this album and the contemporary bearing World Music trends is not simple. Mauro Pagani used to say that *Creuza de mă* was one of the earliest examples of World Music, maybe the first one; but recently he has said that the album is not World Music at all.<sup>(5)</sup>

Its narrative structure implies a deep insight into a sum of phenomena in which the “global / local” relationship is only a part.

De André chooses to depict this imaginary representation of the Mediterranean mixing of cultures by means of the voices and the tales of the Genovese mariners. The narrative voice is not always explicit, but it is suggested by the general structure of the album. Each song has its own autonomy, but the whole is connected by a cyclical design: it opens with the arrival of the sailors after a long voyage (in the song *Creuza de mă*) and finishes with their departure from Genova (*Dă me riva*). A series of episodes stands in between and they can be read either as the account of the adventures experienced or heard (*Sidan Capudan Pascià*) and the people met (*Jamin-a*), or the description of the peculiar society of Genova

(*Â Duménega* and *Â Pittima*), with its characters and traditions. So, while the “action” always takes place in Genova, sometimes there is a displacement with the stories told by the mariners.

The concept of “otherness” takes on an important role in this album. Here, it has two different implications: on one hand there is the interest of De André for the humblest and outcast people; on the other hand there is his fascination with foreign cultures. The concept of “other” as outcast is typical of De André’s poetics since his first songs, but here his characters are even more concrete, with the strong local identity provided, apparently, by the Genovese dialect. The second meaning, the geographical and cultural “other”, is relatively new for De André, whereas, even if in a different way, it has been used in Italian popular music for a long time (Franco Fabbri has shown how this topic can be found in different styles and genres).<sup>(6)</sup> Nevertheless, the evocation of a Mediterranean area in *Creuza de mă* is not intended simply as the description of an exotic subject but, on the contrary, it is used to depict an imaginary place where the exchanges between cultures are free and neither hierarchic nor oppressive. As we have seen, De André was in search of his own musical identity, a less American style for his songs, but this does not mean that he wanted to provide an “authentic” or a philological representation of the Mediterranean culture. In *Creuza de mă* the Mediterranean Sea is the

symbol of an ideal social relationship between people, epitomized by its music. In other words in *Creuza de mă* the Mediterranean Sea is a utopian space, in the literal meaning of “no-place”, represented through both literary and musical tools.

While the local tradition is described with details (the food in *Creuza de mă*, or the peculiar social habits of Genovese people in *Â Duménega* and *Â Pittima*), the Mediterranean space is obscure, and indefinite. In the song *Creuza de mă* the sailors are described as “ombre di facce” (“shadows of faces”) and the Mediterranean (evoked but never mentioned) is a dangerous and nightly place. It is described in a way that recalls the ancient tradition of folk-poetry about the “upside-down world” (“il mondo alla rovescia”): “a muntă l’ase ghe restou Diu / u Diàu l’è in çë e u se gh’è faetu u nùu” (in a rough translation: “God sits on the back of the donkey and the devil is in the sky”).

Using a traditional narrator (a mariner without name) and ancient beliefs and legends, De André succeeds in describing the Mediterranean as mysterious and evocative without a “colonialist” point of view. The music goes in the same direction: we do not find a faithful representation of a peculiar musical culture (Arab or Turkey or Genovese), but, on the contrary, the musical elements, coming from different regions of the Mediterranean, contribute to creating the *sound* of the album, and they are used differently from time to time,

together with the poetical meaning of each song. For example, in the song *Creuza de mă* the melody is sung over a continuous drone and the choir answers to De André's strophes like in a dialogue between the narrator (a mariner) and the audience. The rhythm of the choir melody is very unusual for De André and it is obtained by adding different tempos in a sequence (6/8; 2/4; 6/8; 3/4; 4/4) that reminds us of the complex rhythms of Eastern Europe.

*Sidun* is a slightly different case: the lyrics bring the listener to another identified, specific "local space". Although different from the Genovese one, the time and place setting is even more concrete. The set is Sidone (the Lebanese city) where a parent is crying for his/her son, who has just died during a military invasion. The recorded voices of presidents Reagan and Sharon introduce the song, suggesting the real context of the story (the conflict between Israel and Palestine). The song is performed by De André with a suffering voice in a touching interpretation.

The strength of this song is enhanced by the contrast between the lyrics and the melody. The scene is described with a series of images, real or metaphorical, without a coherent or a grammatical connection, as the «lips of honey» of the child, the sun, the «eyes of the soldiers, angry dog». While the lack of verbs expresses the intensity and the agitation of the situation from the

parent's point of view, the stillness of the melody gives a more introspective connotation to the entire drama. After a brief instrumental introduction,<sup>(7)</sup> the vocal melody starts over a simple accompaniment figure, alternating short vocal phrases with long rests. A totally different melody (on the same chord structure) introduces an invective against the invading army, increasing the rhythm of the words. The song ends as it began, very intimate and reflexive and closes with a final choir that recalls the polyvocal tradition of Genova (trallallero) and Sardinia (tenores).

In the whole album this is the song that differs the most from the style of De André and from Italian song conventions from many points of view: its hermetic lyrics, the general lack of repetitions, the modal connotation of the melody, the momentary stop of the beat in the accompaniment and the use of vocal melismas. The musical features and the subject of this song clearly show the authors' intentions: a representation of the Mediterranean "vivo e non copiato, etnico e non turistico, poetico ma non mieloso".<sup>(8)</sup> At the same time the story of this tragedy, which took place in a remote location during an invasion, extends the reflection about "self" and "other" outside of any local boundaries.

As we have seen in *Creuza de mă* the relationship between "global" and "local" is only a part of a more complex thought. De André suggests a system of

relationships that is not dogmatic, where the differences between the local culture and the so-called “exotic” ones is smoothed through the local history and the real life of people. In the songs this concept is expressed through the relationships between different layers: the use of dialect, the role of implicit narrators (such as the mariner), the settings and the subjects of the songs, the musical elements inspired by the oral music of the Mediterranean area (instruments, rhythms and scales). The result was an album that was pivotal for De André’s career, an album that courageously showed a new direction for the Italian popular music of the eighties.

*Anime salve* is the last album by Fabrizio De André. It was composed with the Italian songwriter Ivano Fossati starting in 1993, and recorded in 1996 with the arrangements by Piero Milesi. De André had worked with both of them on the album *Le nuvole*, recorded in 1990.

*Anime salve* takes its name from its subject: for De André “anime salve” means “spiriti solitari”, which can be translated in English with “solitary, lonely people” or, perhaps, with “solitary, lonely minds”. In De André’s opinion, the condition of loneliness is produced by a process of marginalization operated by society with the people who refuse the most common uses. The theme of the album is the marginalization of these people, the relationship between them and power (i.e. legal

authorities, moral habits, common uses, etc.); therefore, once again in the “anime salve” we meet the victims of power, the “last ones”. But the condition of these people is a painful condition of freedom, too: “Queste persone, nella difesa dei loro diritti, tentano di somigliare semplicemente, senza fare del male a nessuno, a se stesse e così facendo difendono la loro libertà”, De André says.<sup>(9)</sup> The author sees in the gypsies the best expression of this condition: gypsies – he says – are completely free, they have neither land nor boundaries to defend.<sup>(10)</sup> From this point of view, the theme of the album is the need and the search of freedom, too.

Fossati and De André wrote the songs for the album, but they did not agree on many points, especially the arrangement. So De André finished the work with Milesi. The two artists wanted to produce a work not too strictly linked to the present tendencies of popular music, but that could have a longer life, hopefully be good in every period of time.<sup>(11)</sup> So they worked very hard on the arrangements, on the placement of the songs in the album and on the tonal plans.

The theme of the album is developed song by song, through nine different situations, without a narrative plan and without designing a defined area as in *Creuza de mă* for the Mediterranean sea. The first song, *Princesa*, is about a transsexual: Fernando is a woman in a masculine body; surgery modifies his (her) body, but then he (she) must leave Brazil, where he (she)

was born, and go in Milan, as the hidden girlfriend of a lawyer.<sup>(12)</sup> The second song, *Khorakhané*, regards the gypsies Khorakhané, and their continuous travelling in Europe. The third song, *Anime salve*, concerns the people whose only partner is loneliness. The fourth song, *Dolcenera*, is the most complex: it is the story of two lovers during a flood, but it is difficult to say who they really are and what really happened to them.<sup>(13)</sup> The fifth song, *Le acciughe fanno il pallone*, tells us the dream of a poor Genovese sailor: to fish the golden fish and get married; the sixth, *Disamistade*, concerns a tragic and traditional phenomenon common in Sicily and Sardinia, called “faida” (or “disamistade”). The seventh song, *Â cúmba*, is a dialogue between the father of a girl and the man who wants to marry her; the two men seem both to care for the girl, but at the end we know that her life as a wife will be like slavery. The eighth song, *Ho visto Nina volare*, is a counterpoint to *Â cúmba*: a young farmer dreams his love, contrasted by his father; so he dreams his own freedom away from family. The last song, *Smisurata preghiera*, is a reflection, and a sort of prayer, about the majority and the “anime salve”: the majority is “come una malattia” (like a sickness), the “anime salve” are all the people who do not do what the majority does, are rejected from society and for these reasons deserve – De André says – at least one moment of luck.<sup>(14)</sup>

In six songs situations are clearly defined and localized:

the story of *Prinçesa* is set in Brazil and Italy; *Dolcenera*, *Le acciughe fanno il pallone*, *Â cúmba* refers, in different ways, to Liguria and Genova; *Disamistade* to Sardinia; *Ho visto Nina volare* takes its starting point from a custom of the farmers in the countries near Matera (South Italy). Of course, *Khorakhané* can't be located in a defined geographical area; nevertheless, it has a very clear connotation referring to a specific group of people. Wider is the connotation of *Anime salve* and of *Smisurata preghiera*, which have a more general meaning.

Linguistic choices confirm the richness of suggestions. At first sight, we find the Italian language in all the songs with the exception of *Â cúmba*, which is in Genovese dialect. But we have passages in Brazilian-Portuguese in *Prinçesa*, Romanès language in *Khorakhané*, Genovese dialect in *Dolcenera*. By these means, De André stresses the concreteness of people and situations, and enriches his own work: linguistic choices reinforce the various situations. In *Prinçesa*, the final accumulation of nouns in Portuguese language immediately expresses the feelings and the thoughts of the woman. In *Khorakhané*, the conclusion is in Romanès, and sounds like a traditional poem or song; actually, it is not a Romanès text (it is a translation of a text written by De André), but this does not change the effect for the listener.

Music plays an important role in these situations. In many cases, a sort of dialectic with the lyrics is obtained

by using instruments from many different traditions and by rhythmic and musical choices.<sup>(15)</sup> From this point of view, *Princesa*, *Dolcenera* and *Disamistade* are particularly interesting.

*Princesa* is the first song of the album; it begins with noises and voices in a street: a suggesting sonorial image of the reality in which *Princesa* have been ought – just like many other transsexuals – to live. The most of the story is set in Brazil; before the ending, when *Princesa* is in Milan, the text turns to Portuguese. The percussionist of *Anime salve*, Naco, was specialized in Brazilian rhythms: so, with such a subject and such an instrumentalist, we could expect a clear, famous, Brazilian rhythm from the first moment of the album. Strangely, this does not happen. The first part of the song (the one before the list of Portuguese words) sounds with a tango character, which is stressed by the sound of the bandoneon (in fact, a tango dance was the choreography of this song in a recent concert-tribute to De André in Cagliari). So, another geographical set is added to Brazil and Milan, with an interesting phenomenon of displacement.

In *Dolcenera*, the Genovese context is widely enriched. The opening choir is sung in Genovese dialect; nonetheless, the vocal emission and the rhythmic structure recall an African habitat; this immediately turns to a Latin-American one because of the rhythm and the instruments used.

In *Disamistade*, the repeated rhythmic pattern and the sound environment recalls Sicily, more than Sardinia: the Brazilian berimbau produces here a sound similar to the one of the “scacciapensieri”, the typical instrument of the former island. And in Sicily, as in Sardinia, faida is an actual phenomenon, too.

It does not seem fortuitous that the two more general songs, *Anime salve* and *Smisurata preghiera*, comprehend the instrumental contribution of a famous popular instrument from Sardinia, the *mankosedda*; certainly, this instrumental choice is coherent with the sound of the album; at the same time, it gives a popular concreteness to both songs, and keeps them from turning their meaning from general to abstract..

So, as in *Creuza de mă* and maybe more and more than in it, in *Anime salve* we do not face a simple and exotic fascination with foreign traditions and sounds, but a personal view about people. By musical and textual means, De André and his collaborators seem to suggest a play and a relationship between “local” and “global” realities (and recently, Cesare Romana has properly defined *Anime salve* “l’album di un viaggio”).<sup>(16)</sup> Musical choices project people and situations towards places and spaces different from the ones of the lyrics, without causing them to lose their concreteness. In many cases the game between “local” and “global” is enforced, because the “ethnic” aspects are not strictly true, they



are not necessarily real (one thinks of the fragment in Romanès language, for example); maybe for this reason, they are really evocative. By these means, De André and his collaborators seem to say that the condition of the people of the songs is a concrete condition that many other people, epitomized in instrumental and rhythmic choices, live in many places and regions in the world. In *Creuza de mă* De André looks at the Mediterranean area; in *Anime salve* he turns his attention to a wider area, which touches many other regions of the world (especially Africa, Central and South America; but he does not forget Asia).<sup>(17)</sup>

In *Smisurata preghiera*, De André says that the majority is “come una malattia” (like a sickness). But if the majority is like a sickness, the “anime salve” look like the unique healthy part of the body; maybe, they could be the cure, too. And if in De André’s words the majority is anonymous, stupid and compact following the “legge del branco” (something like ‘the law of the herd, of the mass’), this does not regard the “anime salve”: they walk “in direzione ostinata e contraria” (‘stubbornly and in the opposite direction’) and have their own face. In fact, in this last song the word “volto” (face) is used only once, referring to outcast people: “Ricorda Signore questi servi disobbedienti / alle leggi del branco / non dimenticare il loro volto” (‘Remember, o Lord, these slaves disobedient to the laws of the mass: / don’t forget their face’). Musical choices help us to see these people,

this enormous community of “last ones”, beyond the stories told by the lyrics, all over in the world.

*Anime Salve* was produced nine years ago. It is too early to say that the hope of Piero Milesi has come true. We can’t say now whether this extraordinary work is going to live on in time. At the moment, we can say that its music lives free, beyond the boundaries and the regions: “disobbediente alle leggi del branco [...] come un’anomalia, come una distrazione, come un dovere”.

(18)

## Endnotes

(1) The two authors have developed together this article, its content and its conclusions; then, Leo Izzo wrote the part about *Creuza de mă* (pp. 1-4) and Paolo Somigli the introduction and the part about *Anime salve* (pp. 1 and 4-7). This article is a part of a wider research conducted in the seminar *La musica di consumo in Italia: economia, sociologia, stile*, coordinated by Paolo Somigli at the University of Bologna and realized in collaboration with the Cultural Association “Il Saggiatore musicale”.

(2) About this: Somigli, Paolo. *Laudate hominem. Appunti su Fabrizio De André. Rivista di Studi Italiani* 22 (2004; forthcoming).

(3) About the specific meanings of “local” and “global” in world music studies: Fairley, John. *The ‘local’ and ‘global’ in popular music*. In Frith, Simon, Straw, William, and Street, John, eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

(4) A reaction ‘to the overwhelming and routine-soundtrack imported from North America’: *Passaporto mediterraneo. Fabrizio De André intervistato da Giacomo Pellicciotti*, in *L’Italia del rock*, n. 9, Rome: La Repubblica, 1994: 23.

(5) Romana, Cesare G. *Smisurate preghiere. Sulla cattiva strada con Fabrizio De André*. Roma: Arcana, 2005: 128.

(6) Fabbri, Franco. *Nowhere Land. The Construction of a ‘Mediterranean’ Identity in Italian Popular Music. Music and Antropology. Journal of Musical Antropology of the Mediterranean*, 6 (2001).

[http://www.provincia.venezia.it/levi/ma/index/number6/fabbri/fab\\_0.htm](http://www.provincia.venezia.it/levi/ma/index/number6/fabbri/fab_0.htm)

(7) Reading the booklet notes, the instrument played by Pagani seems to be a Greek bouzouki, though here the sound recorded is extremely low and hardly recognizable. Franco Fabbri writes that Pagani tunes the Greek instrument with unusual open tuning: Fabbri, Franco. *Nowhere Land*. cited.

(8) ‘Alive, not copied, ethnic not touristy, poetic but not saccharine’: Pagani, Maurizio, *[testimonianza]*, in Fasoli, Dorian. *Fabrizio de André. Passaggi di tempo. Da Carlo Martello a Princessa*. Roma: Edizioni Associate, 1999: 10-11

(9) ‘These people defend their rights, they want only to be themselves, and in this desire they defend their own freedom’. Viva, Luigi. *Non per un dio ma nemmeno per gioco. Vita di Fabrizio De André*. Milano: Feltrinelli, 2000: 227.

(10) Ivi, p. 224.

(11) Ivi, p. 223.

(12) The subject is inspired to *Princesa* by Maurizio Jannelli and Fernanda Farias du Albuquerque (Rome: Sensibili alle foglie, 1994)

(13) Two students in the seminar have produced an interesting article about the narrative structure of *Dolcenera*: Biagi, Daria and Anselmi, Roberto. *Arriva con la pioggia. Una proposta d'interpretazione per il testo di "Dolcenera" di Fabrizio De André. Il Cubo. Contenitore d'informazioni universitarie* (U. of Bologna), XVII, nn. 3-4, marzo-aprile 2005.

(14) The idea of *Smisurata preghiera* comes from Á. Mutis, *Summa de Maqroll el Gaviero* (1992), italian translation, *Summa di Maqroll il gabbiero*, Turin: Einaudi, 1993. Romana sees in the fulfilment of the prayer the 'realized utopia'. Romana, Cesare G. *Smisurate preghiere*, cited: 161

(15) It has been pointed out that De André had in mind the recordings of Peter Gabriel (Milesi reports that De André went many times to the studio recording taking with him an album of Peter Gabriel: Fabbri, Franco. *Il suonatore Faber. in Belin, sei sicuro?*, cited: pp. 9-39:

34; Id., *Nowhere Land.*, cited).

(16) Romana, Cesare G. *Smisurate preghiere*, cited: 157.

(17) See also: Podestà, Andrea. *Fabrizio De André. In direzione ostinata e contraria*. Genova: Zona, 2003 (first ed. 2001).

(18) 'Disobedient to the laws of the mass [...] like an anomaly, like an absent-mindedness, like a duty'.

## Whose Grain Is It Anyway? The Politics of Vocal Impersonation

F. Jarmin-Ivens

Just as our idea of Elvis can be reconstructed visually by a few key signifiers – thick waist, thick sideburns, and a sequined white jumpsuit – there is a certain lip-curved “uh-huh” that conjures up his spectre aurally: the Elvis Impersonator has a tool bag of vocal props just as he (or she) has a dressing-up box. The idea that a star’s vocal presence can be recreated by another person also fuels the UK TV show *Stars In Their Eyes* (ITV, 1990-present), on which members of the public ‘become’ a pre-established artist, and insert themselves into a pre-established text. The show explicitly emphasises *vocal* impersonation, and success is measured on this basis: the extent to which a star’s vocalicity – or what Barthes would call ‘grain’ – is usurped. By comparison, the Elvis impersonator’s focus on vocal factors is variable, as the primary impersonation work is very often visually based, with a few caricatured vocal gestures. What such phenomena invite of the culturally aware onlooker is a questioning of how conceptions of Self and Other are sustained, and the ways in which these are induced in the onlooker.

I turn at this point to Freud’s conception of the ego-ideal, an idealised, aggrandised version of what we believe ourselves to be, or to be capable of. I have also transposed this to the idea of the alter-ideal, an

analogous model representing our conception of any given Other. Freud describes the emergence of the ego ideal in the childhood subject:

*He is not willing to forgo the narcissistic perfection of his childhood; and when, as he grows up, he is disturbed by the admonitions of others and by the awakening of his own critical judgement, so that he can no longer retain that perfection, he seeks to recover it in the new form of an ego ideal. What he projects before him as his ideal is the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal.*

(558)

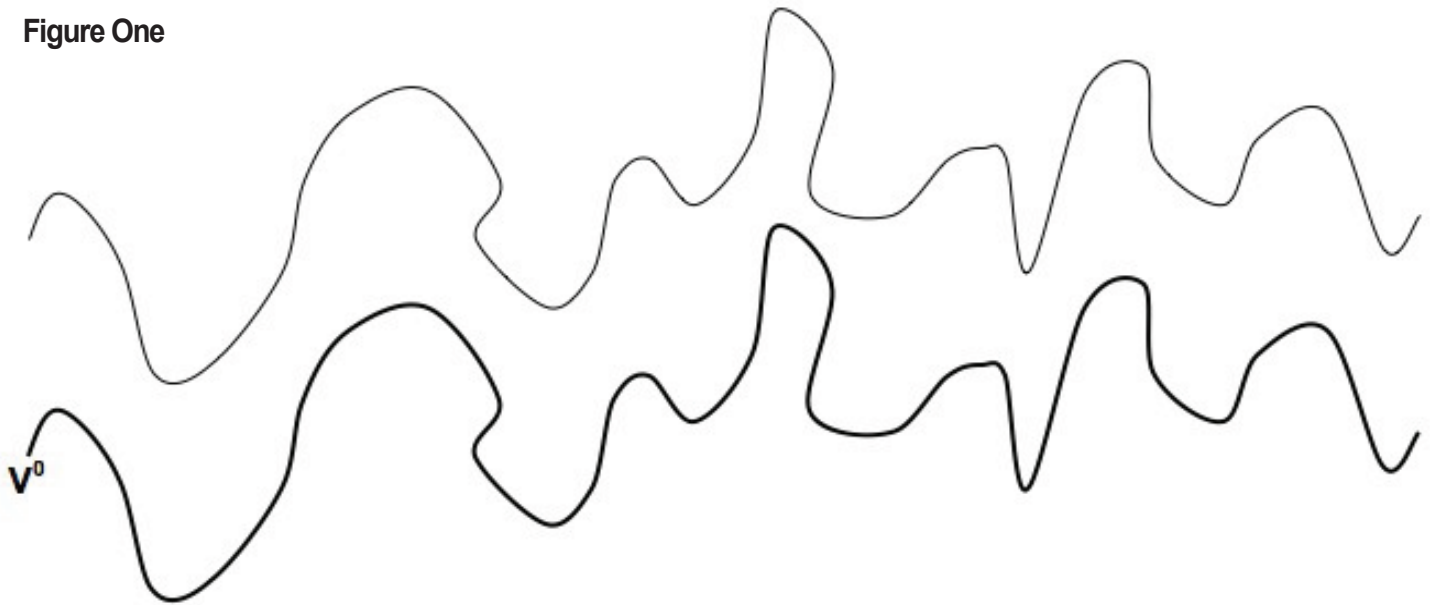
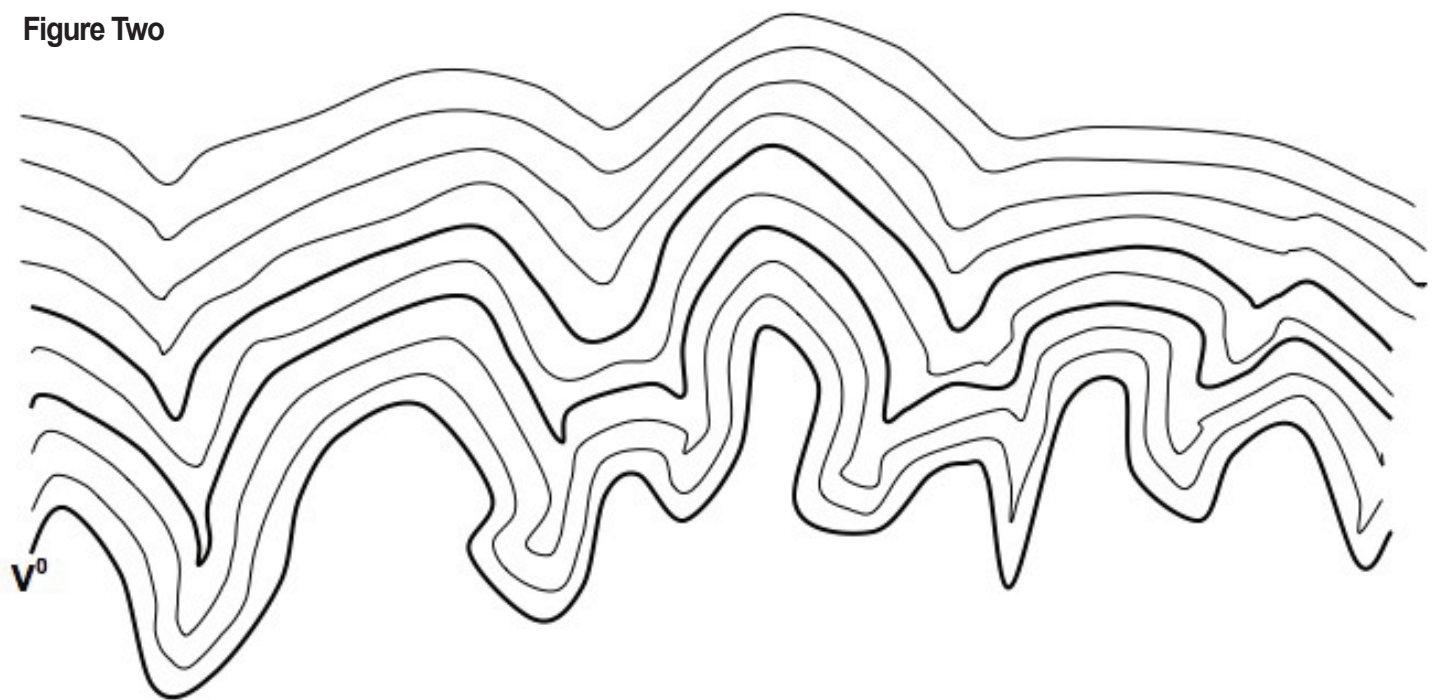
What is central to the deployment of the ego/alter-ideal model in the consideration of any kind of impersonation are the gaps that necessarily exist between the impersonator’s ego ideal, his (or her) alter ideal of the object of impersonation – this is, whatever he perceives of his object of impersonation – and his audience’s perceptions, or alter ideals, of both the impersonator and the impersonated.

It seems obvious enough that what we see in our

mirror images is not the same as what others see as they look at us. There is a certain repulsion generated in any attempt to force those two perceptions together. The photograph forces a confrontation with a version of oneself very different from one's mental image of oneself, and it lacks the physicality of the mirror: it captures but a millisecond, in which we can look more *or less* like we imagine ourselves to look. The video image is, perhaps, even closer to what others see of us, and yet – or therefore – is even more repulsive to the average subject. Whereas I have direct control over my mirror image (it moves when I move), the thing on the screen pretending to be me moves without me, and presents an even greater discomfort in this mismatch between movement and physicality. Vocally, a similar process is at work: what you hear as I speak is, of course, very different from what I am hearing. Hearing our own recorded voices is a common site of discomfort, and this is also connected with the mismatch between familiarity and physicality, something uncanny: as we listen to our own recorded voices, we do not feel our bones vibrate, our tongues moving against our teeth and palates, the air moving in and out of our lungs and larynxes. Our mental image of our speaking or singing voices, which – crucially – may persist in the act of speech or song, is disrupted by the playback of our recorded voices – dismembered, even, as it is cut from the body, lacking in physicality.

Similar processes come into play when considering the alter-ideal. Again, what we see when we look at an Other is different from what the Other sees in the mirror, and may bear little resemblance to the Other's mental image of himself. Similarly, what we hear when he speaks is very different from what he hears. This is not to say it should be desirable that the subject's perception of the Other (and vice versa) meet exactly. Rather, my point is that these are some of the issues at stake when it comes to impersonation: an oscillation is initiated between ego-ideal and alter-ideal(s), in which presumptions are made as to how it feels to make a gesture – vocal or physical – and how one will be perceived when one generates that feeling, whether the result as perceived by one's audience will be equivalent enough to the results of the original gesture. This is further complicated vocally by the continuing dissociation between how one hears one's own voice, and how an outsider hears it. That discrepancy can be mostly overcome with recording technology, but any adjustments to be made are experimental as they happen: if I change something about my voice in an impersonation, I have to take a certain gamble on what the effect of that change will be when it comes to actually hearing the voice I make.

To assist in my exploration of vocal impersonation, I conceived of a voice as a randomly drawn line.

**Figure One****Figure Two**

This line should not be thought of in terms of pitch, amplitude, attack and decay, or any other aspect which it customary to consider when describing the qualities of a voice. Rather, it is everything about a voice – all of the voice's characteristics, translated into a line: let us call this line Voice-Zero ( $V^0$ ). Then, I contemplated how

to represent an impersonation of that voice. It would not be an exact copy of Voice-Zero (Figure One), as the impersonator's own vocal qualities are always at risk of breaking through into the copy. Rather, it would be equivalent to tracing the contours of the line as closely as possible (Figure Two). As the line is traced again



and again, its shape becomes less and less detailed, and less like the original: it retains the basic structure of the original line, with the major peaks and troughs still being perceptible in roughly the right areas, but the finer details are lost very quickly. Eventually, the contours will be lost altogether, a flat line, not representing 'no voice', but a different voice altogether, perhaps only similar in pitch, gender, and/or regional accent (as examples), or may not be similar at all. The diagram is not intended to represent the imitation of an imitation (of an imitation, and so on) – although this is worth considering as an aside, given that in Elvis Impersonation especially, impersonators are as much re-enacting the work of other Elvis Impersonators as they are attempting to impersonate Elvis. The main aim here is to sketch some kind of relationship between an impersonated voice and any given impersonation of it.

A video produced to celebrate ten years of *Stars In Their Eyes* provides a fascinating opportunity to see the processes of vocal impersonation at work: one section

juxtaposes three 'Celine Dion's, two 'Frank Sinatra's, three 'Cher's, and so on. [A video clip was shown at this point which cannot be reproduced here] What this section of video exposes is how any given imitation of the same star may convince the audience at times, in certain ways, but that there remains a constant threat of the impersonator's own vocality breaking through. Returning to the contours diagram, we might consider these few minutes of video as approximate to tracing Voice-Zero at roughly the same proximity several times over (Figure Three), and comparing the results. There are points when each of the three lines resembles most closely (and least closely) the original line – here, Tom Jones – and each of the contestants resemble it closely enough to win the approval of their audience on the night, yet clearly none of the lines *is* Voice-Zero. Moreover, there is no absolute and indisputable 'Voice-Zero'. The act of impersonation relies to a certain extent on the putative existence of a direct and strong line of connection between an original and the impersonated

**Figure Three**



result: yet the enactment of this relationship also triggers a chain of signifiers, starting with the original artist's most well-known performance of the song, but also expanding to include different performances of the same song by the artist, other songs performed by the artist, subsequent and previous performances of the same song by different artists, and so on. In the case of *Stars In Their Eyes*, it is the performance of an attempt to achieve and circumscribe 'Voice-Zero' that fuels the drama. In certain cases of Elvis Impersonation, a great discrepancy exists between the original (or the idea of the original) and the impersonation, and it is up to the listener to pick out the key signifiers of the original and use them to justify (or not) the impersonation. One of the most obvious cases of this is with female Elvis Impersonators. Despite the vocal restrictions of her biological sex, female Elvis Impersonator Janny James still manages to invoke something of 'Elvis' in her performance of '[All Shook Up](#)'. In fact, it seems that is the oscillation between moments of success and failure is exactly what exposes what we as listeners understand Presley's voice to be: it is at the moments when we can say, 'That wasn't Elvis' that we become more aware of what we think Elvis's voice is.

In this particular example, we might usefully turn to the term most favoured by many such acts: Elvis Tribute Artists, or ETAs. To declare oneself a Tribute Artist, rather than an Impersonator has several

connected implications. First, conceiving of Janny James (for instance) as an ETA invites us to allow for the discrepancies we perceive between her voice and Presley's. And from her perspective, it allows her to recognise these discrepancies as part of her act, rather than as points of failure. Finally, perhaps artists who consider themselves tribute acts allow themselves more creative freedom. If cover versions are too often held to be 'poor' popular music, somehow inferior to personal creative efforts, then cover versions which seek to replicate exactly the details of the original song may be seen in even less favourable terms. To bill oneself as a Tribute Act may allow one a certain level of creative input, in the eyes of the audience.

Why do we watch people becoming an Other, and why do people sign up for it time after time? What kind of cultural work is being enacted by vocal impersonation? At a very fundamental and universal level, an interplay of imitation between parent and child is a key part of the progression to mastering communication. Imitation quickly becomes an immensely powerful device: after language has been mastered, the childhood ritual ensues – "Mum, he's copying me" – a tool often wielded by a younger sibling to undermine an older sibling's comparative independence; later, a subconscious (but consciously deployable) imitation of gestures in the pursuit of a sexual mate – mirroring the movements and

turns of phrase of one's prey in order to lure them; and a similar imitation once the mate has been taken – picking up on mannerisms and idiosyncrasies in a process of integration with the chosen one – a tactic also exploited by canny salesmen. Perhaps as an extension of the youthful play of copying, impersonation has a historical alliance with subversion: political satire in particular has made good use of the talents of impressionists.

Perhaps we enjoy it precisely because of the subversion and uncanniness: because although the results may be the sort of populist entertainment that would surely have Adorno turning in his grave, it also affords the possibility of escaping the boundaries of culture, as opposed to uncritically reinscribing them. Being part of what Barthes calls the 'geno-song', everything about the voice which is not concerned directly with communication, those vocal gestures which are culturally unassimilated (or, at least, *under*-assimilated, since they do have *some meaning*), the 'grain' of the voice offers an escape from normal cultural boundaries. It equates roughly to Barthes' text of bliss, which "discomforts, unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions". In vocal impersonation, the focus is very much on the 'grain' – that is precisely what we seek as listeners – and a confrontation with those under-assimilated aspects is therefore inevitable. As entertainment, vocal impersonation may pose as unproductive escapism – and this is indeed what *Stars*

*In Their Eyes* explicitly claims to offer: a bit of fun, an escape from reality – but the potential is also there to step outside of cultural boundaries, as it foregrounds the discrepancies between what we assume we know about subjectivity, and the complex and fragile natures of our intertwining perceptions of both ourselves and Others. As intensely kitsch as they may be, perhaps we only deride phenomena such as Elvis Impersonation and *Stars In Their Eyes* as a defence against their profoundly subversive potential.

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## Gender Dynamics in the Film *Anne B. Real*

Stephanie Jensen-Moulton

### Introduction: Putting her Raps on a New Map

*I flow with the riddle that's golden and little, but  
large in our hearts.*

*I'm provoked but the knowledge entice us, I'm  
broke but this knowledge is priceless,*

*Consider this an amazing youth, that will blaze  
the truth and raise the roof*

*With nothing but power.*

—“*This is Dedicated*” from *Anne B. Real*

*Performed by JNYCE as Cynthia Gimenez*

In the midst of a white, middle-class feminist scholarship that virtually ignored their existence, women of color put themselves on the map by pointing out the trouble with the map itself. In the words of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “feminist struggles are waged on at least two simultaneous, interconnected levels: an ideological, discursive level which addresses questions of representation (womanhood/femininity), and a material, experiential daily-life level which focuses on the micropolitics of work, home, family, sexuality, etc.” (Mohanty [1991] 2003: 21). Mohanty asserts that women who live in the geographical Third World are not

necessarily “Third World women,” and that women who live in First World nations may in reality live in the Third World. As problematic as the term “Third World” may be, women of color who wrote critiques of second wave feminism in the 1980s and 1990s found the term useful for establishing a discursive feminist space in which they could compose cultural critiques.

This chapter will explore how film texts can serve as cultural maps that require us, as viewer-participants, to negotiate multiple levels of feminist struggle, and to locate what we see and hear according to our own ideologies and experiences of daily life. One text that challenges the literal and discursive boundaries of the Third World is the 2002 independent film *Anne B. Real*, directed by Lisa France. In the movie, a young Afro-Latina named Cynthia struggles to build her identity as an MC in the Morningside Heights section of New York City. France’s film focuses exclusively on this young woman’s experience, thereby creating a complex female character, as opposed to the stereotypical objectified, hypersexualized female figures present in many rap movies. Despite Cynthia’s tumultuous and trauma-filled ghetto life, she is able to find a voice through the medium of hip hop, and specifically in the primarily masculine space of an MC battle.

This family-friendly film contains no profanity, no nudity, and only mild violence.<sup>1</sup> France feminizes rap and the ghetto for broad consumption, and the music featured in her film both challenges and reinscribes gendered notions about women in the New York City hip hop scene. The contradictory nature of the film's depiction of a female rapper's struggle is typical of the type of neo-feminism espoused by many women in the late 1990s and in the current historical moment. I contend that the music in *Anne B. Real* weakens Cynthia where the plot would intend to strengthen her. If gender is, in Suzanne Cusick's words, "a system of assigning social roles, power and prestige that is sustained by a vast web of metaphors and cultural practices commonly associated with 'the masculine' or 'the feminine'" (Cusick 1999: 475), Cynthia's raps and her status as composer/performer complicate these societal boundaries by destabilizing preconceptions about race and gender in hip hop. Similarly, the soundtrack functions as a multiple signifier for the visual aspects of the piece, contributing to a breakdown of the aural/visual binary so important in feminist analyses of film. Thus, female rappers' big screen personae, when examined through the lens of feminist theory, create a myth of female hip hop culture in post-9/11 New York City.

### Seeing Aurally

*You need to stop frontin, you sneakin, you caught,  
You don't be rhymin you be speakin my thoughts.*

—"They Call Me Real" from *Anne B. Real*

Performed by JNYCE as Cynthia Gimenez

In *Anne B. Real*, Cynthia's brother Juan represents the sole support for his extended family of women, all living in one small apartment in Morningside Heights. From the start, Cynthia's identity has been formed by the male influences in her life: her father, a teacher, admonished her always to trust her older brother. Cynthia and Juan's father recently died (the film does not tell us how or why), and his voice is often heard as a voiceover in Cynthia's thoughts. In a black-and-white flashback, a technique used throughout the film, Cynthia's dad gives her a copy of *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* (1952). Cynthia spends a good portion of her screen time reading the book, and through a voice-over we hear her silently reading in a kind of embryonic finding of the personal voice. From *Anne Frank* Cynthia takes her rapper name, Annie B. Real. Her choice of MC name carries special significance not only because of her struggle for truth and authenticity in the film, but also because it enables Cynthia to carry a distinctly female persona onto the hip hop stage.



In her essay “Film as Ethnography; or, Translation between Cultures in the Postcolonial World,” Rey Chow utilizes the term “to-be-looked-at-ness” to signify “what constitutes not only the spectacle but the very way vision is organized; the state of being looked at ... is built into the way we look” (Chow 1995: 179). It is possible to speak of a to-be-listened-to-ness that plays an equally important role in film study, yet is often neglected in feminist analyses of film texts. While visual image is crucial in film, it seems inconceivable that modern films with soundtracks could be considered theoretically without analysis of the music chosen to carry the audience member through the spectacle. Just as “observer” and “observed” indicate a structure of power, aural and visual in film always already form a hierarchy. Even the terms “film” and “soundtrack” imply that the latter is simply an additive, while the former is somehow more complete: a subject that is grounded in images. When listening is examined as an essential part of viewing, the approach to visual “otherness” alters, and aural transmission of culture begins. In this way, every film produced—documentary, low-budget feature, or blockbuster hit—can be considered a type of ethnography. “To-be-listened-to-ness” is an act of cross-cultural representation that locates meaning in what is seen *through* what is heard, allowing new, multidimensional cartographies of feminism to take form.

The score composed specifically for *Anne B. Real* by Dean Parker (as opposed to the compiled, pre-existent

popular music utilized in the film<sup>2</sup>) has mostly classical music features, with some jazz influence. Guthrie Ramsey employs the terms “diagetic” and “nondiagetic” to describe two types of film music. While diagetic music, also called source music, evokes the fictional world of the film and seems to emerge from within it, nondiagetic music functions outside of the narrative, yet serves it, as Ramsey states,

*by signaling emotional states, propelling dramatic action, depicting a geographical location or time period, among other factors ... Another kind of musical address in film blends the diagetic and nondiagetic. Earle Hagen calls this type of film music source scoring. In source scoring the musical cue can start out as diagetic but then change over to nondiagetic. (Ramsey 2003: 172)*

In the context of *Anne B. Real*, the use of diagetic and nondiagetic music employs and occasionally reverses Earle Hagen’s definition of source scoring cited above. Two distinctly different film scores play off of one another in *Anne B. Real*, serving as mutual signifiers of both internal and external location. The original raps written for the film play much the same role as the classical score: to illuminate and reveal Cynthia’s inner life and personal voice. Conversely, the raps selected from the vast repertory of hip hop

albums currently in circulation tend to elucidate the external, such as events in Juan's life and the presence of violence in Cynthia's everyday world. Thus, the soundtrack of *Anne B. Real* is as filled with contradictions as Cynthia's character is. Hip hop cannot be separated completely from the Western art music score, and this blending of styles weakens Cynthia's voice as a rapper.

In the opening sequence of the film, a small chamber ensemble (eight string players, flute, oboe, bassoon, and piano) plays the sustained G major triad shown in Example 1 with plenty of vibrato, while the lower strings play a recurrent upward motive. The sequences during which this motive or a related motive appears are the emotional keystones of the film; when we hear quotations from Anne Frank's diary in Cynthia's voiceover, this rising string motive recurs. Victoria Johnson suggests that in a traditional model,

*film music exists to enhance the purported and desired seamlessness of the narrative ... The conventional score is typically characterized by several elements, including a strong orientation to nineteenth-century European Romanticism, which prioritizes melody, lush sound, and full orchestration, and a frequent reliance on leitmotifs, which are variously associated with specific themes or characters. (Johnson 1993-1994:18)*

By this definition, *Anne B. Real's* composed score would certainly fall into the category of "traditional film music." Yet, when juxtaposed with original rap sequences and pre-existent hip hop music, the orchestral moments in *Anne B. Real* might be understood as aural clues to a cross-historical relationship: Cynthia's connection to Anne Frank. Nevertheless, as discussed above, listeners may identify with one, both, or neither of the musical styles employed in the film, and this identification stratifies viewers in spite of the visual text. One viewer might identify with the picture on the screen, but not with the classical music she hears; another might identify with both the rap and classical scores. Thus, film viewers must reexamine their cultural positionality as film listeners.

Perhaps the classical score is also meant to form a counterpoint with the rap music so prevalent in the soundtrack. Just as Annie B. Real's raps and the text of Anne Frank are interwoven but never mixed in the film, so functions the art music score alongside the popular selections. The classical score appears to serve as a bridge connecting Anne Frank's experience to Cynthia's—two manifestations of Third World women's experiences outside of the geographic Third World—and the visual text adds yet another dimension. The film's opening shot focuses on a section of razor wire and a watchtower-like structure above train tracks. This clear allusion to Nazi concentration camps (and thereby to Anne Frank's writings) clarifies musical meaning for the viewer-

listener. The score, grounded in a European, classical aesthetic, evokes early twentieth-century Europe. It is the only moment in the film when classical and rap music overlap, and we hear and see Cynthia rapping unsuccessfully in front of her bathroom mirror to the tune of a mournful cello. Thus, the first sound we hear in this film text about a female rapper is the rising string motive shown in Example 1 and rhymes that die on her lips as she attempts them, shaking her head in discouragement. When contrasted with the first appearance of Eminem in Curtis Hanson's 2002 film *8 Mile* which is underscored by persistent eighth-note beats from Mobb Deep's "Shook Ones Pt. II" on Eminem's discman, Cynthia is immediately heard *and* seen as subordinate in the power structure of hip hop narratives.

#### **"Lose Yourself": Erasing Identity in Hip-Hop Culture**

*He can read my writing but he sho' can't read my  
mind.*

—Zora Neale Hurston in *Mules and Men* (1935)

The starring role in *Anne B. Real* is played by rapper JNYCE, or Janice Richardson. It is curious that she never freestyles or participates in the creation of Cynthia's on-screen raps; rather, JNYCE performs the raps written by Luis Moro and Canadian rapper Verse, which complicates the audience's perception of JNYCE (and Cynthia) as a real MC. The other female artists

on the soundtrack (listed here in Appendix A) are not rappers at all, but are R&B or pop singers. By using a pop song (Paula Cole's "Be Somebody") in the film to underscore one of Cynthia's important soliloquy walks through her neighborhood, and by framing it as the featured music from the movie, Cynthia's raps are subsumed before they are even heard. By contrast, in *8 Mile*, Eminem's rapping skills are heard throughout the film, and in the final credits "Lose Yourself" is heard in full. The *8 Mile* DVD features a music video entitled "Superman" which represents misogynistic gangsta rap, replete with images of barely clothed women all trying to participate in an orgiastic video fantasy with Eminem. In a scene which returns repeatedly in the video, Eminem is center screen while at least thirty women in G strings writhe amongst each other, all trying to access the oversexed Eminem. His persona, though modeled in the film as a defender of gay rights and the ideal older brother, shines through more effectively in the video, perhaps, than in the cinematic depiction of his life.

At this juncture, one must begin to problematize the suspension of disbelief in the film. In reality, none of Cynthia's rhymes was actually composed by a woman, though we see her performing them throughout the film. None of the music composed specifically for *Anne B. Real* had any female authorship, though several raps by women are utilized on the soundtrack. This complicates Cynthia's status as rapper-composer: on one level,

we hear and see Cynthia rapping; on another, we understand that Cynthia is merely a fictional character played by Janice Richardson. How, then, can we as viewers reconcile JNYCE playing Cynthia yet rapping compositions by men, with a character such as Bunny Rabbit in *8 Mile*? Rabbit's rhymes, all composed by Eminem for Eminem, lend authenticity not only to the character we see on screen, but also to Eminem himself. Why could not *Anne B. Real*'s producers entrust the creation of raps for the film to a real female rapper? Is this "a real rapper here" as Cynthia states at the beginning of her MC battle with Deuce? The only rap that is heard in its entirety in *Anne B. Real* is the one Cynthia performs in the ultimate scene of the movie during her MC battle with Deuce. A kind of acquisition of Deuce's voice occurs when Cynthia begins to rhyme in unison with him. Then the rap "They Call Me Real" establishes Cynthia's identity as the true writer of these rhymes. She can freestyle, whereas Deuce cannot. Because Cynthia has uncovered the truth about Deuce's theft and has confronted him publicly, he loses the battle, and is booed off the stage by a notably multiracial audience.

Racial dynamics present in *Anne B. Real* also complicate Cynthia's worldview. Director Lisa France comments on the intentionality of the "Latin Rainbow" represented in her film. She states: "I think America, particularly inner-city America, has become a big melting pot. You really have no idea who is what anymore. In my building there are families

that do not look like each other, but they are blood related, first generation relatives. I wanted to show this shift in race ... We are going to eventually become so mixed up that no one will know what anyone is. I actually think this is part of nature's grand plan."<sup>3</sup> By viewing races as simply melded in the film, France succeeds in the erasure of racial identity for Cynthia. She is not permitted to acknowledge both her Black and her Hispanic roots, but is viewed primarily as Black in the film. She never speaks Spanish, though she lives in a house where Spanish is the first language. Her sister, more intimately involved in this household, speaks both Spanish and English in the film, while her mother speaks only some English and mostly Spanish. Both Cynthia's brother and sister were cast as very light-skinned. Cynthia, the darkest skinned in her family, forms her identity through what much scholarship considers to be a primarily Black, male medium. Additionally, her Blackness is emphasized by the light-skinned actors cast as her close friends. Only Jerome, the boy drug dealer murdered by Juan, is visually and aurally representative of the expected hip hop participant. Jerome lives alone in a tiny room decorated with graffiti and containing only a bed, mirror, chest of drawers and set of turntables, and his sequences as drug dealer are underscored by rap music.

David Eng and Shinhee Han comment that "assimilation into mainstream culture for people of color still means adopting a set of dominant norms and ideals ... often foreclosed to them" (Eng and Han 2003: 344). In a

sense, Cynthia is claiming the identity of her father in assimilating herself into the hip hop scene instead of the private sphere of her mother and sister. Cynthia continually turns to the book given to her by her father. Like Anne Frank, who wrote because she had to write to survive, Cynthia represents the inner-city version of the organic intellectual, and this is reflected in her status as an autodidactic poet of rap.<sup>4</sup>

### **Reflexive Rap: Bathroom Feminism Hits Hip Hop**

*Hey yo I'm broke and I'm trapped, my hunger for  
money provoking my rap.*

—“*The Name is not Biblical*” from *Anne B. Real*  
*Performed by JNYCE as Cynthia Gimenez*

*A woman must have money and a room of her  
own if she is to write ...*

—*Virginia Woolf, in A Room of One's Own*  
(1929)

Cynthia's brother Juan, thoroughly enmeshed in the public (though black market) sphere, is a drug addict in the film and has been selling Cynthia's rhymes to a rapper named Deuce for drug money. Juan has also been working as a hit man, and is responsible for the murder of one of Cynthia's friends, Jerome, early on in the film. Later, Juan is the indirect cause of the death of Cynthia's best friend Kitty, who is gunned down in the

street by Juan's mob bosses. Juan and the other male characters in this film are static. There is no sense of change through the course of the film for Juan; he does not reform, but is arrested later in the film for armed assault. Deuce's character, also static, serves as a foil to Cynthia's bookish, reclusive persona. Deuce is presented as a caricature of the phony MC, and serves as a vehicle for the issue of authenticity in the film. He is all that Cynthia is not: he wears fashionable clothes and flaunts his talent, as well as his girlfriend, the aptly named Fendi. Deuce is seen outside the club Downtime (site of the eventual MC battle) handing his homemade CDs to the line of people waiting to get past the bouncer, while Cynthia is pictured in the private sphere surrounded by her female relatives. An excerpt of A Tribe Called Quest's track “Phony Rappers” comments upon Deuce's character in tandem with the visual text. While Deuce struts his inauthentic stuff in clubs and recording studios, Cynthia spends much of her on-screen time in her bathroom, rapping in front of the mirror and holding a toothbrush as a mic. Her raps are not for public consumption. The thin curtain that serves as a bathroom door is utterly penetrable, and she is constantly interrupted by her sister Janet who accuses her of wasting space by holing up in her bedroom or the bathroom and mumbling. Janet is concerned about Cynthia, but does not take any action to help her. Janet, an unemployed, single mother living on welfare, summarizes



her situation for the benefit of her ex-boyfriend in the film: “OK, you want to catch up? Here’s the brief: I got pregnant, you left for college, my dad died, my sister’s a freak, my brother’s a drug addict, and we’re on welfare. You all caught up now?” Janet mostly remains in the apartment; she is pictured folding laundry, sitting at a kitchen table, and in other clearly domestic poses. Janet never appears with a soundtrack. Her world lacks music, and the silence betrays the bleakness of her inner life.

The space of the bathroom, separate and enclosed, is essential, from a mental as well as a physical standpoint, to Cynthia’s ability to compose. As Kristina Deffenbacher argues:

*In her psychic home, especially if not in her actual house, a woman writer seems to need four walls, a door, and perhaps some other decoys or other defenses outside that door. Such psychic architecture protects against certain contingencies—from family members making consuming demands or white men threatening to penetrate and colonize one’s space.*

*(Deffenbacher 2003: 106)*

Throughout the film, we witness Cynthia’s gradual composition of her rhymes in a plaid notebook (like the one Anne Frank reportedly used) and performance of them in private settings. Her loudmouth best friend Kitty

finds her rapping in the school bathroom and encourages her to rap with some street rappers, but Cynthia is too shy and freezes under pressure. Kitty defends Cynthia at every turn; she is her voice before Cynthia finds hers as a rapper. It is only after Kitty’s brutal murder on the street that Cynthia is able to fully enact her role as MC. All of the entries in Anne Frank’s diary begin with “Dear Kitty.” Because Frank felt as though she could not talk deeply with any friends at school, she invented Kitty as a literary confidante. Anne Frank’s Kitty, though imaginary, functioned similarly to the twenty-first century incarnation of Kitty: a sometimes-exasperating though essential support system for female creativity.

Cynthia’s dialogues with her reflected self often reveal her thoughts about friends’, relatives’, and teachers’ opinions of her. It is in this context that Cynthia forms her identity as a female, a rapper, and a sister. Cynthia deals with the Western standard of beauty through the imagined picture of Jerome telling her she is ugly. She is assaulted by the imagined image of Juan repeating “You can’t rap. Nobody wants to hear a girl on the mic. Why don’t you get yourself a man? I need a nephew or something.” Principal Davis (who in Cynthia’s imagination enters this feminized, domestic space) admonishes that she needs therapy and is “average,” nothing special. Though her raps are never underscored with mixes when she rehearses them in the mirror, we become familiar with the text



and rhythm of her raps. This familiarity enables us to form the truth of Cynthia's identity as the real rapper, and to have explicit knowledge of Deuce's disregard for the unwritten moral codes of hip hop.<sup>5</sup> The mirror in this film text is symbolic not only of truth, but of the imaginary; it disembodies Cynthia, enacting a mind-body split that enables her to create.

In *Gender and the Musical Canon* (1993), Marcia Citron examines gendered differences in creativity. Many of the gender issues addressed by Citron in the context of Western, primarily European, female composers apply directly to Cynthia as she formulates an identity as rapper-composer. Citron argues that a Platonic—and later Cartesian—mind-body opposition exists between women's creativity (of the body) and men's creative impulses (of the mind). As Cynthia composes her rhymes in the quasi-privacy of her bedroom and bathroom, she is also mapping out a kind of feminist space where her writing will not be undervalued. In a sense, she is remapping her environment in order to create a private place reminiscent of that invoked in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*. In the film, after Jerome's murder, Cynthia utilizes Jerome's apartment, rather than her home, to write and think; Jerome's room becomes her own through his illegal action and subsequent murder.<sup>6</sup>

When Cynthia's moral and social "choices" are questioned by her sister, Cynthia refuses to reenact

Janet's struggle as a single mother. Thus, Cynthia's creative work is mental, while her sister's creativity remains in the patriarchally dominated realm of the procreative. As Cynthia's world becomes increasingly complex, her need to compose raps and reconcile these complexities with her inner life increases. Citron comments:

*composing may function for many female composers as a prime means of self-expression: not just a means of expression but as the main way to channel their inner selves into some tangible form. This might be different from the situation of males who compose. As the privileged gender in Western culture, men possess many more outlets for self-expression in addition to that of the art work. For women, composing per se has existed as more of a necessary activity. (1993: 58)*

Cynthia's medium of expression, hip hop, likewise reflects the primary artistic practice of the people in her life and in her neighborhood. Thus, her need to compose naturally manifests itself in the form of rap lyrics and beats. The film's conflation of ideas and lines from *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* also underscores this necessity of composition for women. For Frank, writing served as a survival tool in the midst of the unthinkable genocide of Jews during World War

II. More mentors than muses, Frank and her writing serve as cross-cultural creative guides for Cynthia as she negotiates her identity—and in some sense, her survival—in Morningside Heights. Yet, while Anne Frank wrote her diary entries with no idea that they would be read the world over, Cynthia has a vague notion that her brother is selling her work; her writing, therefore, is public, while she, the composer remains private. She writes without the knowledge that her raps' composition will be attributed to someone else: Deuce.

Whereas Deuce is a rapper, Cynthia is a composer of raps; she is the one who creates, but it is only in the end of the film that she is able to represent fully as performer. Clearly, she must be able to function as a performer in order to empower her status a creator, at least in this medium. Cynthia must actualize her rhymes in a physical performance before they are legitimate. Audience reception is crucial to the re-situation of truth in *Anne B. Real*, relating directly to Citron's discussions of female composers' professionalism. Whereas in Western art music, the composer is deemed a professional when work is published in a printed score, the moment of live hip hop performance becomes an essential site of composition for the MC. Yet, as Deuce produces "his" CDs for distribution among hip hop consumers, the quasi-publication of Cynthia's rhymes occurs under what is essentially a pen name and a privileged persona. Her rhymes are thus appropriated

into a male paradigm of success. This transaction of sorts is facilitated by Cynthia's brother, the "head of household" in Cynthia's domestic world.

Similarly, in a subplot, we view Deuce in the studio recording Cynthia's raps. When asked to freestyle over the producer's new beat, Deuce cannot. He claims that it would be an insult to his artistry: "You wouldn't ask Bob Dylan to freestyle, would you?" That Deuce will not even attempt to create, but simply appropriates, is emblematic of the male appropriation of feminist texts. Citron notes: "Scores and other physical embodiments of music, including recordings, point up the materiality of Western canons and suggest canonic dependence on writing and the visual for preservation" (1993: 9). Deuce preserves Cynthia's rhymes on CD and in the studio, thereby legitimizing them to an audience of supposed hip hop aficionados. Were Deuce to perform the rhymes without physical distribution, his creative act would not have the power to subsume the physical, procreative female composition.

Cynthia cloisters herself in order to release her creative voice. In the bathroom, she confronts her fear that others think her foolish for trying to succeed in a man's world, the world of MCs. As she negotiates her identity as a rapper, Cynthia is also negotiating boundaries of race, class, and gender. She is not only poor, but also a female of color; her choice to remain in her own room and write is spurned by her sister and family. Cynthia's "confinement"

in the film is not a physical, reproductive one, but instead represents her rebellion against, as Citron states, “the restrictive traditions concerning women’s ability to create, especially appropriation”; Cynthia

*attempts to reframe [these traditions] in feminist terms. For those who have composed, the negativity has had psychological consequences. In many cases it has led to ambivalence and doubt—or what has been termed an anxiety of authorship. The female composer may also have to commit a metaphorical murder of her depiction as a woman in previous works by men. This suggests texted works; in instrumental music more subtle codes may be operative. (1993: 9)*

Issues of appropriation take on new meaning when viewed through the lens of hip hop critical writing. Much of the popular writing on rap refers to the necessity of “keeping it real” as opposed to commercializing and producing for the cultural and economic mainstream. Appropriation in Citron’s context may refer to appropriation of women’s creative work; in a hip hop context, Cynthia’s rhymes are appropriated by Deuce for his own personal and monetary gain.

An additional way of understanding appropriation may refer to the appropriation of hip hop by mainstream culture as a symbolic tool: hip hop signifies Blackness

to the mainstream. Even though countless artists from a wide array of cultural backgrounds perform within hip hop media, mainstream America, including academia, continues to view hip hop as a Black art form.<sup>7</sup> By utilizing hip hop as the backdrop for this particular story, Lisa France and the producers of *Anne B. Real* appropriate rap as a gendered, racialized music, but they also flip the script on this trope by examining the world of an Afro-Latina rapper. Principal Davis, however, admonishes Cynthia (through the imaginary window of the bathroom mirror): “And another thing: you are Black,” as if to solidify through racial pigeonholing Cynthia’s perception of her identity and to shut down any potential inspiration she might draw from it in her creative work. His imagined statement reveals still more about Cynthia’s racial self-consciousness when one considers that the principal himself is Black.

The inner landscape that Cynthia enters via the bathroom mirror also alludes to a spiritual presence in the film, signaled by the icon of Mary found next to the bathroom mirror. Though Cynthia never actually goes to church in the film, allusions to religion, God, the Koran, the “man above” and his perfection, as well as a “golden riddle” (possibly alluding to the Golden Rule), all appear in Cynthia’s raps. For example, the text of “This is Dedicated” contains many allusions to faith: “I stress my mistakes, put logic in God” and “I get my answers from the higher Koran, the G.D. with “O” in the middle.”

These lyrics represent “conscious” rap, as opposed to the more explicit verses found in, for example, gangsta rap. On the DVD commentary track, France states that she wanted the film to be accessible to all audiences, from school age to elderly. Though veiled by France’s assertion that the inclusion of profanity, nudity, and violence would narrow the scope of the audience, she clearly chose a screenplay centering on a female rapper as the vehicle for her “clean” aesthetic. Thus, Cynthia and her raps represent as pure, religious, and “feminine.”

Citron’s allusion to the psychological effects of composition and the subsequent anxieties about authorship are also manifested in *Anne B. Real* by Deuce. Because Cynthia grossly undervalued her rhymes, it was easy for her brother to obtain them. Her anxiety about presenting her raps in a public context also denotes her uneasy footing as a female rapper, effectively “murdering” the misogynist raps written by her male counterparts. Despite her construction as “feminine,” she also contradictorily reads as a female rapper who rebels against the dominant norms and behaviors for female rappers, refusing to market herself by wearing sexy attire or performing titillating rhymes. Her “conscious” raps succeed in erasing the stereotypical female personae presented in gangsta raps, especially on the small screen.

### **Anne B. Real: A Post-9/11 Feminist Film Text?**

*Yo we need to do some true building, before we  
lose more than two buildings.*

—“*This is Dedicated*” from *Anne B. Real*,  
performed by JNYCE

*To read or watch the most powerful media, one  
would think that Bush’s second-wave sexism is  
occurring in a post-feminist moment. And there’s  
some truth to that.*

—Laura Flanders in “*Feigning Feminism, Fueling  
Backlash*” (2004: xviii)

Does the way music is used in *Anne B. Real* reinforce or weaken the film’s possible status as a feminist text? Cynthia is encouraged to write, but not necessarily to rap, by the state, represented by a teacher at her high school. She is encouraged to rap by her friend Kitty, who is murdered. She is finally convinced to participate in the MC battle by her friend, Darius, who had revealed the truth about Deuce’s acquisition of her rhymes. Does Cynthia ever exercise agency of her own? Women in poverty must create in unconventional ways—the act of finding a way to create is extraordinary. Though Cynthia’s plight betrays inconsistencies characteristic of neo-feminism, the very existence of her creative work is subversive. The final scene in the film—the MC battle

where Cynthia as Annie B. Real defeats (and debunks) Deuce—illustrates France's intention for Cynthia: to read as a dynamic character who finds strength through composition and finally emerges as a "strong woman" morally, socially, and creatively.

In post-9/11 America, the image of a powerful woman is even less acceptable than before (Goldstein 2003; Flanders 2004). The desire for a type of neo-macho man who may be strong and wrong, but who can certainly do battle, has given rise to a type of neo-feminism which has been brewing since the mid-1990s. J. Ann Tickner writes in her feminist analysis of 9/11 that "the association of women with peace renders both women and peace as idealistic, utopian, and unrealistic; it is profoundly disempowering for both. And as long as peace remains associated with women, this may reinforce militarized masculinity" (2002: 334). Cynthia's emergent persona as a "conscious" rapper, one who encourages peace, prayer, and a reliance on higher spiritual powers for guidance complicates the type of womanhood of which Tickner is writing. The conflation of Anne Frank's diary with a hip hop screenplay also reinforces the gendered binarism of peace and war.

*Anne B. Real's* use of both diatonic and nondiatonic music further complicates the neo-feminist argument. The film needs the art music score in order to create some element of the peace-bearing female, but also functions at a more basic level, to rally masculine support

by the fronted strong-souled woman, one to whom the term "feminist" might sound distasteful. Joan Morgan asks, "Can you be a good feminist and admit out loud that there are things you kind of like about patriarchy?" (1999: 57).

*We need a feminism that possesses the same fundamental understanding held by any true student of hip-hop. Truth can't be found in the voice of any one rapper but in the juxtaposition of many. The keys that unlock the riches of contemporary black female identity lie not in choosing Latifah over Lil' Kim, or even Foxy Brown over Salt-N-Pepa. They lie at the magical intersection where those contrary voices meet—the juncture where "truth" is no longer black and white but subtle, intriguing shades of gray. (Morgan 1999: 62)*

The neo-feminist, or "strong woman," wants feminism without the rough edges, on her own contradictory terms. She wants the man as protector and provider, but she wants her social and financial independence. She has no use for the label "feminist."

A film text such as *Anne B. Real* reinforces the "strong woman" trope in a hip hop context, both challenging (from the perspective of gender) and reinscribing (from the perspective of race) stereotypes about participants in hip hop culture and creating a myth of musical life

in Morningside Heights. Cynthia's incomplete raps and underscoring with pop song negate her status as a "real rapper," leaving viewers with a character who is simultaneously strong and weak. Yet *Anne B. Real* approaches issues of authenticity, gender, race, and power in novel ways, in spite of the myth it creates. In post-9/11 New York City, a neo-feminism wrought in discursive violence and fraught with contradiction is certainly better than no feminism at all.

### Example 1.



Recurrent upward motive of unison cello and basses, with the piano line in the treble. From the original score to *Anne B. Real*, composed by Dean Parker.

### Endnotes

1. Note, however, that no rap is heard completely in the film, and complete versions of pre-existing rap tracks heard in *Anne B. Real* certainly do contain profanity and/or sexually explicit lyrics. The text for "Phony Rappers" is one example, as well as "Feel the Girl" by Ms. Jade, which was released in both explicit and clean versions.

2. See Appendix A.

3. [http://www.mosaec.com/mosaec/film/film\\_lisafrance.htm](http://www.mosaec.com/mosaec/film/film_lisafrance.htm) (accessed 15 April 2004).

4. Eric Porter (2002) relates Antonio Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual to jazz.

5. For a cogent discussion of ethics in hip hop production,



see Schloss 2004, specifically Chapter 5, "Sampling Ethics."

6. A further connection to Woolf's contention that a woman must have not only a room but also money in order to create is the thick roll of cash under Jerome's bed, which Cynthia finds after Jerome's murder. She acknowledges the money, then replaces it under the bed, presumably for future use.

7. In an anecdotal example, a professor from another university assumed that all of the students in Professor Ellie Hisama's History/Theory/Criticism of Hip-Hop course at the CUNY Graduate Center were Black. See also Rose 1994, xiii; Flores 2000, 116; and Mitchell 2002.

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## Appendix A

Pre-existent tracks used in the soundtrack of *Anne B. Real*. Female artists' names are noted with an asterisk.

"Feel The Girl" performed by Ms. Jade\*

"Womanology" written and performed by KRS-One

"Drum Trip" performed by Rusted Root

"The Life" written and performed by Mystic\*

"Be Somebody" performed by Paula Cole\*

"Boy like Dat" performed by MC Lyte\*

"I'm Leavin'" performed by Pigeon John

"Ghetto Birds" written and performed by Mystic\*

"Phony Rappers" performed by A Tribe Called Quest

"Power" performed by End of the Weak

"Fallen Angels" performed by Mystic\*

"Something is Going on Here" performed by Earthman and Shane Conry

## Sound and Power

Bruce Johnson

### Introduction

*Walter Benjamin: 'There is no document of civilisation that is not at the same time a document of barbarism.'*<sup>1</sup>

There were to have been three papers in this panel. They all illustrate aspects of the connections between music and violence. I want to sketch some contextual issues. Martin Cloonan will explore a provisional taxonomy, and Katherine would have delivered a paper exploring a particular ritualized case study in the relationship. She has instead just delivered a baby, the best reason I can imagine for not being able to be present at this conference. With more time, Martin and I will stretch out a little, but more importantly we want to stretch discussion time. This is very much work in progress, and we welcome input. All new information will be acknowledged.

The platform for this panel is work Martin and I have been conducting for some years, and which has now reached the stage of a book proposal that is currently under review. The study is written against a pervasive assumption, that

popular music is almost inevitably personally and socially therapeutic. Music supposedly 'soothes the savage beast' and popular music studies writes that popular music is 'the magic that sets you free'.

Drawing on our own existing work, one of the points to be emphasized is that the power of popular music is 'mercenary'. The term 'floating signifier' which drifted through the session on the Eurovision Song Contest, might equally do here. The energies of music can be appropriated by the most unlikely agendas, and even used against the interests of its own producers. In addition, every time the music is used to demarcate the territory of self or community, it is incipiently being used to invade that of other individuals or groups. The purpose of this study is to investigate the negative side of popular music.

### Part One: Context

#### Sound

In traditional musicology, music is discussed as an 'artform', the bearer of aesthetics. In popular music studies, the emphasis is on music as a 'culture', the bearer of meanings. I wish to begin by situating music

in terms of its sensory materiality: music as sound.

We have five sensory information circuits available to us, each corresponding to the five senses. They are generally harmonized: things sound like, smell like, feel like, taste like what they look like. But very often they are not, and at such times we realize that each of these conduits is a distinctive epistemology. Sound in particular may be distinguished from our other most commonly used information circuit, vision, in ways that help to explain why it is such an intense interface for conflict. I will just skim this, as Carlo Nardi discussed the phenomenological specificities of the acoustic in his paper on Monday which many of you attended, and I have also written about them elsewhere. Briefly:

- Sounds floods the social space
- Likewise, it penetrates the body - the voice in the ear is extraordinarily intense and intimate
- Sound can also instantly modify the nature and the horizon of identity - it is therefore a very powerful tool of social negotiation
- It is a vehicle of propinquity rather than distance (like all senses except for sight, which is distancing and analytical)

## Voice

The sound of a word is often more powerful than its denotation. A non-German speaker can still be chilled by the sound of Hitler's voice, and a baby is lulled to sleep by any words, if they are spoken appropriately. Popular music can be expressive without 'meaning', as in scat in jazz, the non-sense lyrics of Little Richard, and the often banal if even comprehensible lyrics of rap and hip hop. These are all communicators of meaning, power, and they are ones which outflank, circumscribe, critical discourses obsessed with reason, logic, denotation. At the extremes of experience, words fail us, but sound does not: the scream, the howl are immensely powerful, yet in another sense, totally unintelligible, resistant to traditional forms of academic analysis, 'literary criticism'.

## How does Sound Achieve such Power?

The *causal* relationship between music and violence is of course highly contested, and we will be exploring this through a range of case studies including violence at music festivals (Woodstock 1999), violent crime and musical tastes (the recent case of Scottish teenage murderer and Marilyn Manson fan Luke Mitchell), inter-ethnic violence and music (Bosnia/Croatia), music and playstation violence, as well as the obvious

cases of Gangsta-rap and acoustic torture in Iraq and Guantonomo Bay. But what is incontestable is that the two often occur in direct conjunction. Sound – and music – undoubtedly can be used to violent purposes. The reasons for this are both physiological and cultural.

### **Physiology:**

It is widely believed that sound can alter physiological states, and at extreme ranges, sound, certain kinds of music, can cause organic damage. It was recently reported for example that loud music can cause lung collapse.<sup>2</sup>.

Laura Mitchell at Glasgow Caledonian University recently concluded a doctoral study of the relationship between music and pain thresholds.<sup>3</sup> Basically, she tested how long volunteers could tolerate keeping their hands in freezing water while listening to a range of musics. There were three categories of music: randomly chosen, music chosen personally by each volunteer, and what is known as anxiolytic: ie, regarded as and marketed as analgesic or anxiety-reducing musics. I have read her thesis, and extrapolated some hypotheses of my own, relevant to this study. I then discussed these with her to be sure that they were indeed consistent with her clinical findings. I want to list several of those extrapolations:

1. Music listening can have analgesic/therapeutic effects, but most particularly if it is music over which we have control: ie, our preferred music.
2. Music which, because of its formal character, is likely to be regarded as anxiolytic, was rarely the preferred music in the control of pain, even though by some physiological measurements it is more effective.
3. The patient's relationship with the music is more important than its formal characteristics in assessing the use of music as analgesic.
4. The relationship between taste and analgesic benefit is ambiguous. Or: an individual's preferred music is by no means necessarily the most beneficial to her/his own welfare.
5. What matters is the control they have over the music they hear.

There are two basic and rather disconcerting conclusions that may be drawn from this, and they are central to any attempt to evaluate the relationship between music and psycho-somatic well-being:

It appears that the key to inducing psychological pain



through music is: who chooses it? This is consistent with all the work that Martin and I have done on the deliberate use of music as an instrument of state terror: such as the use of Christina Aguilera records to torment Iraqi prisoners, or children's music to torment incarcerated illegals in English detention centres.

Equally interesting is this: that in terms of physical pain, our preferred music is likely to be worse for us than, for example anxiolytic music; or: we just don't know what is good for us. And this too is consistent with the findings of the Australian government funded acoustic laboratory Australian Hearing, which identifies among a youthful demographic a median level of hearing loss that was once associated with senility, because of their preferred music environment. The obvious culprits are loud live bands and piped music in pubs, but the most pernicious cause is unremitting exposure to the personal stereo and iPod.

### **Music and Violence in History**

When I tell people what I am working on, they almost invariably light up with 'the usual suspects' – yeah, Gangsta Rap, US interrogation techniques. But it is very important in my view to establish two points about this nexus. First, while the dynamic has been utterly changed in the modern era, the link between music and violence is as old as history. And second, the relationship is

not safely exotic, confined to aberrant subcultural sites like ghettoized African Americans, or US interrogation practices in remote places. We want to emphasise this: music is an instrument of violence here and now, and as such it is as much implicated in debates on the regulation of conduct as any other weaponry.

I will take up the historical dimension, and Martin will talk a little more the social policy implications.

The connections between music and pathology is a powerful source of mythic and historical narratives. They are central to a number of tales, including:

Ulysses and the Sirens, the Lorelei whose singing provoked men to drown themselves in the Rhine, and Joshua and the walls of Jericho. The Pied Piper of Hamelin took revenge on the townsfolk by luring the children into the earth with music, never to be seen again.

The early Church believed that pagan residues in music could be exploited by the devil to produce confusion and depravity, that witches used music to carry out their evil work. These are early examples of the tradition of pacts with the Devil in which musical prowess was exchanged for the soul - reflected in a range of myths including Tartini's "Devil's Sonata", Paganini's virtuosity, and Robert Johnson's transaction at the crossroads.

War songs and cries are the most explicit exploitation

of the capacity of music and the voice to assist in acts of violence. Livy reported the importance of war cries in the career and final defeat of Hannibal. <sup>4</sup>. God's war against evil is one of the archetypes of musical anger, as in the imagery of Trumpets of Doom and of the Last Judgement. More historically rather than mythically, the connection is also evident in the usual confrontations between the state and its people, and among its people, even in peacetime.

I began by locating music as sound rather than as aesthetics. When we do, we see it as part of a historical pattern in which the battle over the right to make sound or impose silence becomes a way of mapping the history of class relations leading to the modern period. In this model, music is not primarily an aesthetic phenomenon, but a key to political history – the history of changing relations of power, articulated acoustically.

Perennially, communities have proclaimed their victories over internal and external enemies sonically – church bells, parade bands, brass fanfares – and conversely by ensuring that those enemies are literally silenced. Examples of the musical articulation of such power relationships range from the banning of singing by deported convicts in Australia, to the English village skimmington which was a public spectacle designed to comment on some irregularity in the local community,

'often performed to chastise and humiliate community members whose marital behaviour was irregular, especially men who were "beaten" by their wives'. One organised by one Samuel Moggs in Brislington, Somerset, in 1636, who 'went to considerable expense to hire a professional drummer, and one from Bristol at that'. <sup>5</sup>.

I will be arguing that the often violent struggle over who has the right to make public noise, and in particular music, is a way of tracing the history of the emerging dynamic of modernity.

The big historical view is this: the changing politics of sound and silence mediated notions of citizenship and criminality (authorised and unauthorised identity formations). This relationship also defines the shift from the relatively static notion of social structures in the Middle Ages (based on status) to the emergence of the more dynamic model of the late- and post-Renaissance (based on class).

There are several neatly bounded historical case studies through which these negotiations can be traced. I take some time to illustrate with the example of the history of the British prison system, which shows a shift from sound to silence as the approved condition of those incarcerated by the state. These are reflected in changes advocated successfully by such reformers

as John Howard, Jeremy Bentham and Elizabeth Fry through the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Consider the case of Elizabeth Fry (the emphases are mine). When she visited Newgate Prison in 1813, she reported being shocked by the conditions, including: 'the filth, the closeness of the rooms, the ferocious manners and expressions of the women towards each other .... And her ears were offended by the most terrible imprecations.'<sup>6</sup> She later spoke of 'the dreadful proceedings that went forward on the female side of the prison; the begging, swearing, fighting, gaming, singing, dancing, dressing up in men's clothes – the scenes too bad to be described' (Ibid 155). In April 1817 Fry formed The Association for the Improvement of Female Prisoners in Newgate, which passed rules of conduct calling for the women to be engaged in approved employment, and that there should be no 'begging, swearing, gaming, card-playing, quarrelling or immoral conversation', and that at 9am and 6 pm they should be gathered together to listen to readings from the Bible (Ibid 156) These led to changes, described by a male visitor:

*On my approach no loud or dissonant sounds or angry voices indicated that I was about to enter a place, which ... had long had for one of its titles that of 'Hell above ground'. The courtyard into*

*which I was admitted, instead of being peopled with beings scarcely human, blaspheming, fighting, tearing each others' hair, or gaming with a filthy pack of cards for the filthy clothes they wore, ... presented a scene where stillness and propriety reigned ... a lady from the Society of Friends ... was reading aloud to about sixteen women prisoners who were engaged in needle-work. ... They all rose on my entrance, curtsied respectfully and then at a signal resumed their seats and employments. (Ibid 157)*

Silence thus became the sign of deferential decorum. The silent system continued in some prisons well into the 20th C, as in the case of Alcatraz, which was opened in 1934, 'and for the first five years operated the Silent System which had been discarded elsewhere in the nineteenth century'.<sup>7</sup> It also extended over the same period to the industrial workplace.

The cultural politics of sound are also to be found in related cultural records, as in the emergence of silent prayer from the late medieval period, which is connected with the later valorization of silent secular learning, and an increasing marginalization of music in education. The same politicization of sound and music is disclosed in the literary record, including even the concept of literature itself, as well as in specific literary works. In Hamlet, the

violation of music protocols proclaims 'something rotten in the state'.<sup>8</sup>

An increasing association was established between the urban mob and noise, particularly in response to the democratizing revolutionary and subversive movements emerging through the 18th century. At the same time, the music of the emerging lower orders was conceptualized and legislated against as noise, not music.<sup>9</sup>

A neat exemplification of the shift in the class politics of sound is to be found in two separate historical moments. Erasmus' essay 'On the Body', advised against immoderate public laughter, but described it primarily as a visible phenomenon, a distortion of the face.<sup>10</sup> This recalls the sixteenth century advice against gentlemen playing the trumpet, because it distorts the features beyond recognition.<sup>11</sup> In neither case is it the sound that occupies the centre of attention. This is in the 16th C.

Two centuries later, Lord Chesterfield in his 1774 Letters to His son advised against 'Frequent and loud laughter' ... 'it is the manner in which the mob express their silly joy at silly things. In my mind there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter'. He opposes the noisiness of laughter to refinement, true wit, reflection, reason.

By the time we come to Chesterfield, the complaint

against laughter is based on the fact that it is a noise, which again tends to confirm the emergence of spontaneous aural modalities as the site of ill-breeding and class antagonism. This is connected with the appearance of the purpose built concert hall reflecting the evolution of an art music that cannot be contaminated by the everyday music of social life, and the development of the idea of 'taste', which becomes a significant lever in conflicts over musical practices.

Violence at one level or another is implicit or explicit in all these cases, and this narrative will draw us towards the proposition that the rise of modernity can be charted through the struggle over the right to make noise, to legislate on the difference between noise and music, and the right to impose (or elect) silence.

Finally, the early history of the power struggles under discussion come down to the idea embodied in the words 'within earshot', which may be taken as a metaphor both for the function of sound as a weapon, and for the limits of its radius of influence: the distance over which sonic power can be exercised. All these struggles could be conducted only, and literally, within earshot. All this was transformed from the late nineteenth century.

### **Music, Violence and Modernity**

Modernity changed all.

There are two aspects of the connection between music, violence and modernity.

**1. The re-establishment of a connection between sound and information, as a site of class confrontation.**

This argument is foreshadowed in the discussion above about the changing relationship between the political significances of sound and silence. The advent of print created a new way of demarcating class: those privileged who could read and write, and the lower orders who could not. Nigel Wheale opens his study of literacy in England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by citing Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, in which the character Envy adds to the repertoire of his resentments of his medieval morality play forebears, the wish that all books be burned because he cannot read. 13.

As the practice of silent reading and learning became more widespread, first among the emerging and dominant bourgeoisie, so did the idea that the authority of information lay in the fact of its being in written, rather than oral form. In western societies print carries authority, and orality became (and still remains) associated with unauthorized, unreliable, and even subversive sites of knowledge. Noise came to be associated with the lower and unruly class, silence denoted the refinement of those who are concerned with the higher powers of the mind.

Silence signified secular moral and intellectual gravitas, as reflected in treatises on appropriate comportment for reading, and in the increasing acoustic regimentation of congregations and theatre and concert audiences. Even music in its most legitimate forms was both increasingly quarantined from 'noise' (as in the protocols of the public concert hall), and definitively stored in a visual text (the score). The right to impose silence increasingly defined relations of power. The disenfranchised brought into being by the capitalist order included not just being illiterate, but their immersion in the alternative communication circuit: sound. They make noise, and in doing so manifest themselves as a threat to a hegemonic textuality. The ruling orders maintain and extend their power through print; the subordinated are identified in networks of orality.

This distrust of sound as a site of information became inscribed in the English language itself. It is noteworthy how many of the following terms arose, or forfeited their cultural capital, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as recorded in the Oxford English Dictionary:

Hearsay, gossip, tittle-tattle, sounding off, chatter, whingeing or moaning, Chinese whispers, rumour, lip service, scolding, nagging, blab, babble, prate, prattle. This is not so in all cultures. Among New Zealand's Maori (Aoteara CHECK) culture, the authority of information is confirmed by being spoken, but compromised by being

written down. My argument is that the process I am talking about, of attempting to deprive sound of power, is a specific feature of the rise of modern era in the West.

## 2. Sound technologies

Although the junction between modern sound technology and information may be dated from the advent of morse telegraphy from the 1830s, it is the patent taken out on sound recordings, 1877 which marks the moment, unprecedented in human history, at which music and the voice could be stored and circulated without symbolic mediation (such as in the score): that is, that sound could be detached from its source and experienced beyond 'earshot'. Significant developments include Morse telegraphy in the 1830s, sound recordings and the telephone (1870s), public radio and film soundtracks (1920s)

The sound recording is central here, for three reasons

1. Unlike morse it directly rather than symbolically transmitted sounds;
2. Unlike the telephone it was a technology for storage as well as dissemination;
3. It formed the foundation for most if not all subsequent sound media.

Without the means to record and store sound in some form, there would have been no growth in the musical repertoire of radio, no film soundtrack, no television, no Walkman, iPod, or internet music shareware. It was in its recorded form that sound and music thus began to emerge as a potential equivalent site of social power as print. Suddenly, the role of sound in relations of power was globally expanded as an instrument of various forms of 'imperialist' violence.

The case of jazz is the paradigm. Within only three years of its first recordings, by 1920, jazz had been circulated globally, the most rapid diaspora of music in history. The invention of the sound recording thus made music an instrument of global imperialism. Jazz was the first manifestation of the phenomenon, and the frequent violence of its encounter with 'colonised' cultures (including inside the US, and defined by class as well as place), foreshadowed the twentieth century dynamic of mass-mediated music.

In the way they impacted materially on the production, circulation and consumption of music, sound technologies enlarged the range of music as 'weapon' and through, for example, digitization, altered the nature of its capability. These material changes redefined the ways in which sound and music could be deployed in confrontations over place, identity, class, territory, community.



We will consider a range of implications and examples of sound as aggression. These range through: a barely audible, and unintelligible music heard through an apartment wall, the fuzz of a Walkman listened to by a fellow bus passenger, the ringtone of a mobile phone. The more intelligible the sound, the more it becomes implicated in other cultural areas: semiotics, music affect, aesthetics, morality. Irritation caused by a song heard clearly though not at a painful volume, implicates private space with taste, opinion, belief. So: the person next door winds up the speaker. It is no longer a matter of his 'private' sound intruding on my private space, but that the song might also be one that is morally and aesthetically objectionable.

Sound technologies become sites of contemporary confrontation, struggle, and violence, between private and public space: between car radios and ghetto blasters, versus corporate muzaks, piped anti-mall-lout music, and political appropriations of public acoustic/musical space, as in Blair's appropriation of Britpop.

The developments we have observed in sound technology have produced a very different environment for sounding and hearing than that which prevailed prior to the 1870s. Given that music is such a ubiquitous way of defining identity and territory, and exercising violence, and given the radical changes in the 'range' of that weaponry, there are implications for the freedoms

and responsibilities which are associated with the use of music. Much is made by the US gun lobby of the constitutionally enshrined right to bear arms. But the right for the individual to bear arms, granted in a frontier wilderness and where the 'arms' are a knife, sword and single shot firearms, is simply not the same as in a massive modern conurbation dense with personal frictions, and where 'arms' that may be carried include Uzzi machine guns, anti-tank weapons and lightweight missiles capable of downing an aircraft. Likewise the right to make sounds in a modern city, where those personal frictions may be increased by a casual raising of volume to produce music which is literally deafening. When music can be deployed on such a scale as psychological and physical weaponry, perhaps state 'regulation' is needed in the documented absence of self-regulation.

And so we come to the deeply contentious questions which throw up terms like 'censorship', 'nanny state', 'human rights violations', mantras of the, literally, 'self-righteous'. But we live at a time when the slightest, easiest personal gesture has a radius of potential damage infinitely greater than at the time of the Enlightenment which gave birth to what continue to be contemporary notions of 'rights' of free expression. This potential for damage arises both from the acoustic 'weaponry' available, and the density of the

populations in which it is deployed.

Music in contemporary society is to a greater degree than ever before an instrument of power, a potential weapon, and as such is clearly 'too important to be left to the musicologists'.

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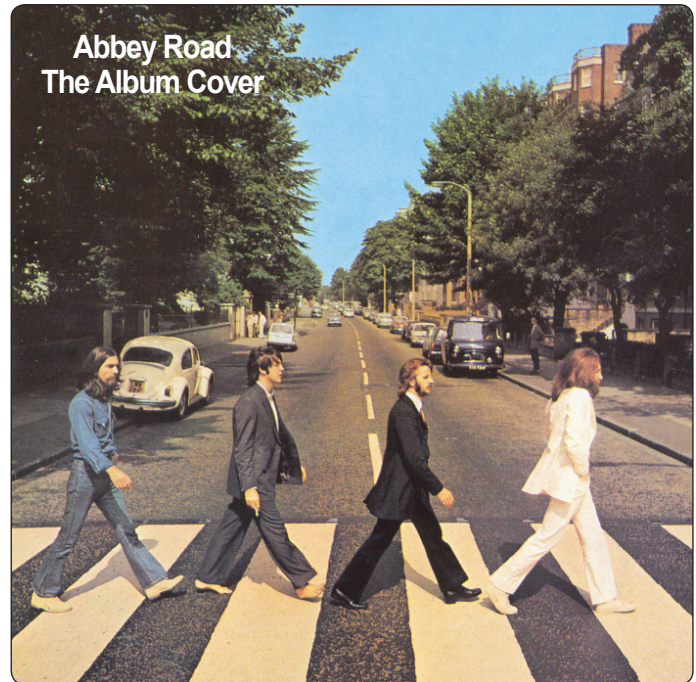
## In Search for the Well Known - Some Aspects of the Use of the Beatles

Lars Kaijser

### Point of Departure

During the last couple of years I have off and on been conducting a study of entrepreneurs working in the field of Beatles tourism in Liverpool. This is a mixed commercial and social setting featuring cultural tourism, heritage and event making. I have addressed questions of how Liverpool and the Beatles are represented at guided tours, in business activities and how the Beatles are displayed at museums or in the wider range of public areas.

The Beatles however is not a local Liverpool matter and there are several places in the world where they in some way or another have become part of the tourism- and leisure sector. The Beatles is a well known and spread story with an iconic cultural heritage used in different ways. This has made it important to reflect on a more general level on how to apprehend the Beatles as a phenomenon when used in a commercial and entrepreneurial setting. Here I will argue that The Beatles must be viewed as a set of fragments. I will do this by using one such fragment, namely the cover shot for the Beatles album Abbey Road. I will



also show how this fragment works as a place-making phenomenon.

When I asked shopkeepers or businessmen in Liverpool to choose what item an imaginary tourist would buy, they'd show me fridge magnets, t-shirts and postcards, and often with the image from the cover of Abbey Road, a record made by The Beatles.

When the Beatles recorded their last album together in 1969 they, out of comfort, decided to take the picture for the album cover outside of the recording studio at Abbey Road, a street in London. They named the album Abbey Road and on the cover you can see the four members of



the pop group crossing the street.

**The Matter of the Beatles: A multitude of fragments, an inherent world of its own and a public reference**

So, how is it possible to understand the phenomenon of Beatles when used in the socio-economic landscape of tourism and cultural industry? Inspired by John Law and his theories of relational materialism I have tended to view the Beatles as a set of fragments (Law 1994). A fragment could be the basic facts and figures of data and events, but also more or less true stories, images, artefacts, songs or lyrics. A fragment can appear as a picture, music, memorabilia, stories in newspapers or a personal recalling. Basically, the fragments are what are left from all activities relating to The Beatles.

This puts emphasis on today, and not on the actual period when the Beatles were playing and existing as a band and it also emphasises the lack of completeness that seem to distinguish any effort of representing or using the Beatles. How to interpret and arrange these fragments' is an open question. The fragments are best viewed as metonyms linking to larger contexts. This could be the greater story of the Beatles. But the fragments are as likely to be symbolically used in telling the story of Liverpool or in the representation of social changes in the late 20th century.



**“BEATLES MYSTERY MAN REVEALED”**

By Anthony Harwood, US Editor In New York

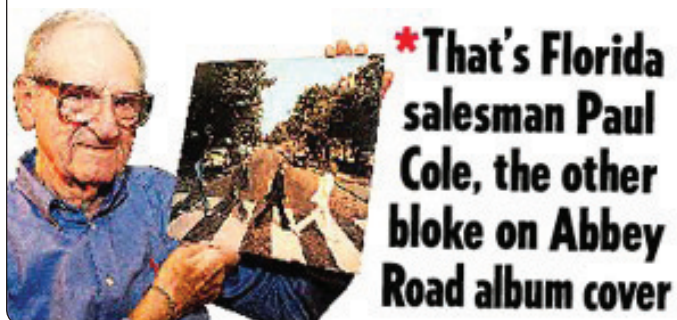
*The Daily Mirror March 15 2004*

The fragments make up both an inherent world of their own and a publicly very well used resource of references. As a world of its' own it constitutes a specialised field of knowledge, a self - referring system, with stories, people, images and songs. This is a specific area with a highly qualified and detailed knowledge on the Beatles phenomenon. Here you will find that the story of the Beatles is far from negotiated and that expertise could be the skill to evaluate and to navigate among all the fragments.

This is also an open area. New fragments are constantly supplied and personal recalls, pictures and photographs, and odd pieces of music can suddenly



turn up. For example a 92 years old retired businessman appeared in a newspaper article last year claiming to be the man in the background lurking in the shade of a tree. In the article he told his story. I quote "I saw this police van and I went over. I must have been talking to the policemen for about half an hour. I then saw these four guys walking across the street like a line of ducks. A bunch of kooks I called them because they all had long hair and one of them was even barefoot". He also tells the paper that he has never really listened to the record but that his children blew up the picture, put it on their bedroom wall and had him sign it.



And here lies the prime reason why I chose to focus on fragments. They work on their own, generating their own history, with their own career. Soon after Abbey Road was released a rumour was spread that Paul McCartney had died in a car crash. And there were a lot of clues in the cover picture that helped to establish this rumour. First it was the line of men. John in white as the minister, Ringo in black as a caretaker, Paul being barefoot (which was called an old symbol of death) and George in blue as the gravedigger. It was also

the licence plate on the white Volkswagen, the model nicknamed Beetle, in the background that said 28IF. Together this was interpreted, as Paul would have been 28 if he were still alive. This was, of course, a scam. But, never the less, the story has become a part of the Beatles mythology, a fragment as essential as any other story. This is important. The fragments order and structure the work of the entrepreneurs. The fragments produce effects, they have consequences. But they don't necessarily need to be true!



Popular culture relies on the possibility to multiply and duplicate. Abbey Road has been the model for t-shirts, mugs, postcards and more. Here, of course, we have the copyright issue, but also concerns of the proper way to use an iconic image. In 2003, for example, a company started to produce a poster showing the cover of Abbey Road, where the cigarette in Paul McCartney's hand was retouched. The reason was that George Harrison had died of lung cancer and that it therefore would be

wrong to show him in the same picture as someone smoking a cigarette. This caused a debate, at least on the web, on the correct way to use the image and it was quickly responded on the Internet, with the above picture. Saying that this is how it actually was.

The fragment that once originated from the Beatles can in a life of its own be rearranged, developed or reorganised, interpreted and reduced. So, the fragment is an ordering device that makes a wide range of activities possible. It is, though, important to remember the limiting aspect of a fragment. The fragment is formatting and all possible use of the fragment has to correspond to the fragment. One way that a fragment could be valued is the possibility to recognise it as an image. Abbey Road is easy to identify with a street, a crossing and someone walking as essential ingredients. The image has also been used in a lot of other settings.

### **A place for pilgrimage and a place for work**

Being a famous and a well-known image and at the same time a place makes a good start to become a tourist attraction. Abbey Road was an import place early on, for Beatles fans who' waited outside the white residence in north west London trying to catch a glimpse of their idols while they where recording. The release of the record Abbey Road gave a new face to the place and added a new dimension of how to relate to the place.



Here are the obvious ones, the cover as an inspiration for other artist. Red Hot Chilli Peppers in London 1988 (below) and in Memphis 1970 Booker T & M.G.'s used the street outside the Stax studio (above). This was a cover album of Abbey Road called McLemore Avenue from the name of the street where Stax was located.





The image is a resource for individual member of the Beatles as well. Paul McCartney used it for a cover of a live album (above left), and at the same time making a claim for his glorious past.

It has also been featured as a cover of magazines in 2002 (left) and as an advertisement poster for a Swedish shopping mall in 2002 (above).

The cover of Abbey Road has had a lasting effect on the surrounding of the actual studio. It has guided people interested in the Beatles not just to a studio but to a crosswalk outside the studio of Abbey Road for almost 36 years.

It has been possible to experience, and to be touched by the story of the Beatles or the Beatles music anytime and anywhere during the last 40 years. In their mediated form the Beatles are as active today as they have ever been. Due to the transcending effects of media the possibility to relate to the Beatles is neither related to place or to time. The members of the Beatles and their associates can be described as media friends,

people to live by and relate to. This has made way for efforts to get personal and in symbolic touch with the Beatles. Listening to the Beatles may be the easiest way to access them but to visit a place to which the Beatles can be related seems to put an extra flavour to the relation to the band.

Abbey Road is a picture that situates the Beatles in an identified and reachable place. There are off course some other well-known places. Like the gate to Strawberry field in Liverpool, mentioned in the song by the Beatles, and Strawberry Fields, a memorial garden in New York City, close to where John Lennon was murdered. All these places' have become destinations for popular





Above: Street sign from Abbey Road.

Below: Anniversary in August 1984, 15 years later, on the day, hour and minute.



pilgrimage. I would say that a lot of those visiting these places do this not because they are particularly interested in the actual place, but in a symbolic way to communicate with the Beatles.

The cover of Abbey Road has spawned a variety of activities relating to the place of the actual crossing. The image has merged with the logistic of tourism, and the practical way of organising through guided tours

and guidebooks. Here Abbey Road is a place for sight seeing, to pick up a souvenir or to stop on a guided tour to Beatles London. And if you follow such a tour, as I have done, you may find that when you reach the actual crossing you will hear not so much of the Beatles, as of the record sleeve. The guide will tell you that this is the actual spot, why the picture was taken, and you will hear the Paul-is-dead story and how the cover has been used on other occasions and in other settings. They may also tell you about The Red Hot Chili Peppers and their cover and that some tourist nowadays will pass the crossing nude.

Being part of the field of tourism also calls for ideals of authenticity. This is not to say that the activities that are organised are understood to be authentic, but that they are staged with authenticity as a guideline and a highly valued principle. Authenticity in popular culture tourism is linked to intimacy and the closer a person or a thing is to the object of obsession, the more authenticity the person or the object carries. The most authentic item in relation to Abbey Road is the actual place, the crossing. Here, you can relate to the Beatles by enacting what they once did. The cover is both locating a place for pilgrimage and a generating pattern for practice. The cover could here be read as an imperative demanding a specific action. You should walk across the street and you should have your picture

taken. Place authorises and so does the walk. But, taking the picture is no less important. To take a picture is as John Urry has shown a part of the tourist practice and the photo may be a souvenir, a memory or an evidence of being there. But to have your picture taken walking across the Abbey Road zebra crossing is also a way of staging oneself in the same frame as the Beatles and thus creating some sort of intimacy with the mythical band.

The building at Abbey Road belongs to EMI, the record company, and the record studio was opened in 1931. The recording studio owns a large part of its fame to the success of the Beatles. The Beatles' achievements give authority to the present activities in the studio. When visiting the Abbey Road web site you will find that the studio uses a logo and an image originating from the famous record sleeve. The amount of visitors outside the studio can be a bit of a problem, so the studio uses the Abbey Road cover; both to recall the heritage of the Beatles and at the same time to guide the visitors away from the studio to the crosswalk. The story of the Beatles is a resource, both as a way of authorising the studio and as a tool pointing out the crosswalk some 50 metres away from where the actual recordings were done.

At the web site there is also a link to a web camera. This camera shows the view of the crossing from the studios' point of view. So, it is possible for anyone,



The crossing and the entrance to the studio in 2003



anywhere and anytime to check in on what is happening at the crossing. I have done that on several occasions and been surprised by the amount of people that have crosses the street trying to get their picture.



Above: The studio web. You can spot the stripes of the crosswalk here and there.

Below: The web camera.



On the same web side you find a computer game to download. Here, the tourist and the fans visiting the crosswalk have been the inspiration. The purpose of the game is to cross the street, stop in the middle and have your' picture taken. This is not an easy task. Busses, motorcars and motorbikes are in your way stopping you from reaching the other side of the street and eventually they will drive you down leaving a red pool of blood in the middle of the street. This might be a more morbid way of playing with the fan effort to put themselves in the same picture as the Beatles, but at the same time it guides the attention away from the studio, to the crosswalk.

## // CROSSING GAME



The computer game.

If you visit the actual studio you will find a sign that also guides you away from it. A café opened close to Abbey Road in the late 90's. A man who used to work as a producer at Abbey Road started the establishment. He had seen the fans coming to Abbey Road since the sixties and he thought that it would be a good business. Being a former employee of the studio also gains some authority, and contacts. This has become the semi-official place where memorabilia from Abbey Road is sold and the crosswalk is the official logo. It is probably not a coincidence that the Beatles have disappeared from this image. It is the crossing, in its current shape that is his business.

The café provides a web service and a world-wide opportunity to buy souvenirs. The café also provides the visitor with the opportunity to send your picture showing when you crossed the crossover. So, under



the headline “Have you crossed over” you will find pictures of people who have crossed over organised by year and month. And there are lots of them. Here the picture is no longer just a personal snapshot, but a way of framing oneself in a web based community of “crossovers”.



### Concluding remarks

Abbey Road is a street, a café, a record studio and a record by the Beatles. It is also an image providing patterns for practice. It is possible to say that the importance of the place lies in the multiple ways in which the crossing has been staged and recognised by entrepreneurs and fans together as a significant landmark relating to the Beatles. This makes Abbey Road one of the most important places where it is possible to reach out and claim affiliation with the intangible world of the Beatles.

One challenge for me as a researcher has been to identify the fragments present in the representation

of the Beatles and focus on how these fragments are used, developed and rearranged. The fragment is the fundament on which the cultural heritage of the Beatles is resting. The picture capturing the Beatles passing a zebra crossing in northwest London some 36 years ago may be history, but it is also a fragment of the Beatles having effects today.

The image of Abbey road is an authoritative fragment. It is the result of Beatles activities; it is an integrated part of their image. But at the same time, the Abbey road icon is an ordering object, a guideline and an entrepreneurial trigger for activities in the field of Beatles tourism.



Someone is crossing the street.

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## “At Times, We May Have Gone a Bit Too Far”: Technologies of Spectacle in Pink Floyd’s P.U.L.S.E. Stage Performance at Earl’s Court, London 1994

Kimi Kärki

### Introduction

Pink Floyd, a band almost synonymous for audiovisual innovations from the mid-1960s and massive rock-spectacles of the 1970s, has become a source of popular nostalgia for several generations. This role is obvious in the band’s later career, especially after the megalomaniac Primus Motor of the group, Roger Waters, left the band in the early 1980s. Perhaps the most ambitioned effort of the post-Waters Pink Floyd was their 1994 *Division Bell Tour*. I never saw any of the shows which my paper deals with. That is why I use a video copy of *P.U.L.S.E.*, which is Pink Floyd *Division Bell Tour* live at Earl’s Court, London 1994.

I’d like to suggest that while Pink Floyd members were not very personal on stage or had not very much typical star-like quality in their performance they could actually benefit from that anonymity. This particular lack of star quality on stage had an effect to their techno-spectacle, and fed the space-age imago they had and which they hated. Thus anonymity become a part of group’s authenticity: essayist Walter Benjamin’s idea on the

“Here and Now” value of the work of art is reversed – Pink Floyd is not “Hier und Jetzt”, it’s “out there behind their wall of spectacle”. They are and are not present at stage. The star of the show is the techno-spectacle itself, not the performer of the music. This technological mask is what the group is being recognised from and which paradoxically, while covering and surrounding them with modern phantasmagoria, gives them their special place in the field of rock performance.

I will discuss this *P.U.L.S.E.* performance from two points of view. First, I will consider the position of the group as a definer of the stadium rock aesthetics, and second, I will examine some dystopic narratives of Pink Floyd’s stage spectacle.

I will argue in this context, that technological innovations are often produced to maintain forms of spectacular entertainment and mass-culture.

### Visualisation of Sounds?

I start by quoting researcher Andrew Goodwin:

Indeed, most stadium concerts are now accompanied

by simultaneous video replay onto large screens. Attending a live performance by a pop megastar these days is often roughly the experience of listening to pre-recorded music (taped or sequenced) while watching a small, noisy TV set in a large, crowded field.(1)

Stadium scale performance is based on the architecture of light and sound, where the space, when needed, disappears, and gives way to new reflected worlds that are easily transformed to meet the demands of each song and the general themes and narratives of the tour.

My argument is, that the usage of light is one of the key elements in modern architecture in general, but especially so in technological spectacles. In rock-spectacles the light comes second, right after the sound. So, are we able to call these spectacles the architecture of sound and light? Or should we just say that designing stages is all about designing the material stage itself plus the lighting, and let the musicians worry about the music itself? I would like to argue that it is as important for the designer to be aware of acoustics as of theatrical structures, when designing a stadium event. The sound itself creates spatial illusion sometimes very central for the intended concert experience. The central point of an arena show is in its portability. I quote Eric Holding, the author of the book

on the probably most influential stage designer, Mark Fisher, who has also designed the *Division Bell* -stage, and other stages for U2 (ZooTV, PopMart), Rolling Stones (Voodoo Lounge, Bridges to Babylon), and so on: "In this respect they are fugitive architectures which, like a circus or a fairground, magically arrive, recontextualise their surroundings and then disappear quite literally into the night."(2)

My example concentrates on the movie clip from the beginning of the last song of the performance, "Run Like Hell", compared to earlier performance of the same song. Division Bell tour can be seen as professional show, in which every single factor has been made to serve the performance. Mark Fisher's stage designs and Marc Brickman's lighting formed a technological basis for the shows. By the way, Brickman used clear references to the psychedelic lighting of 1960s clubs, just to add to the general nostalgia...

The example footage was filmed in Pink Floyd's Concert at Earl's Court, London, 1994. What we see is surroundings for David Gilmour's rather long guitar intro during the beginning of a song "Run Like Hell", originally from *The Wall* album 1979. Walther Benjamin called photographing "quoting with light". I'd like to say that my audiovisual examples really are all about quoting with motion, light and sound.

### “Soundalisation” of Visions?

My aim is to interpret these concerts also from the musical point of view. The question of sound is related to the history of senses and to the way our acoustic surroundings – or Soundscapes if you like – and how our different ways of listening are determined by our cultural background. To be able to distance ourselves from traditional text-based hermeneutics we must face the challenge listening brings to the interpretation process. Interpretation is a dialogue itself, and thus listening is a major part of hermeneutic process. (3) Listening to the audiovisual sources opens up a different kind, a more concrete interpretative field. Listening becomes for a moment the central way to reach for the past *lebenswelt*. This leads us to the history of the senses in the age of mechanical reproduction, to the necessity of understanding the chronological aspects of the sounds.(4)

What mostly happens in a rock concert is a visualisation of sound thorough the screened narratives, or, as we just saw, through the lighting and special effects. But it is also a “soundalisation” of visions. How come this word, “soundalisation”, does not exist in the regular speech? Yes, our culture is dominated by visual metaphors, as stated earlier, but is there any way to try and change that for a minute?

There is certainly sometimes a correspondence between the sound and the visual phenomena on stage, *synaesthesia* if you like, but I agree with Research Professor Nicholas Cook who claimed in his book *Analyzing Musical Multimedia* that “interaction” is much better concept for this analysis. There is an interaction, which is harder to interpret than the self-evident links between the light and sound. That is the interaction between the textual narratives – the lyrics, sometimes whole conceptual stories – of the song and the sonic phenomena – rhythm, characteristic voices, sound effects, and so on. One ease is of course the fact that lyrics are also sung, and thus one does “soundalise” one’s visions by singing the lyrics of the songs. Words don’t just duplicate musical meanings, they add new layers of meaning, AND they ARE music as well. The tone, accents, emotions, and so on, are all important factors here.

Another example, again “Run Like Hell”, somewhat illustrates my points of views. In a CD-example, Pink Floyd starting the same song in 1980-81 *The Wall*–tour. The opening speech and vocal effects definitely add a very different idea on the interpretation. Here listeners are not allowed to enjoy the song, they are actually forced to think their role.

*Aaaaghhh !*

*Are there any paranoids in the audience tonight?*

*Is there anyone who worries about things?*

*Pathetic!*

*This is for all the weak people in the audience.*

*Is there anyone here who's weak?*

*This is for you, it's called Run Like Hell.*

*Let's all have a clap!*

*Come on, we can't hear you*

*get your hands together, have a good time!*

*Enjoy yourselves! That's better! (5)*

The most interesting thing here is the presence of the audience in both examples, the video and the CD. The audience is the faceless corpus responding to every possible act of the artist with a loud cheer. The crowd wants to participate, have a good old ritualistic call-and-response dialogue.

The video screens change the live concert to an even more multi-layered event: it fortifies the sensory experience of the audience. The "star" or "artist" on the stage is not alone, just behind and all around him is a mediated and simultaneous representation of the very same stadium star. Mass-stardom is thus a powerful mix of physical presence and media construction.

### **Staging the audiovisual**

Technological innovations are often produced to maintain forms of spectacular entertainment and mass-culture. The use of gigantic venues changed rock performances

into total or totalitarian mass-art, in which rock stardom was preserved and created by technological means. Aesthetics of the stadium spectacle have grown from this effort to exaggerate and fortify audiovisual gestures through technology. Without this cultural technology there wouldn't be any stadium stardom: by showing the close-ups of the facial expressions of the artists in the video screen it is possible – even if this happens only partly – to restore the intimacy that has been lost because of the huge scale of the events.

According to journalist Paul Stump Pink Floyd was one of the first legends of the 1960s who realised how to exploit their huge masses of fans by the nostalgia created in large arena tours. He feels that the group has in its later years invited their fans to worship their myth in a ritualistic fashion. Nothing more was needed than that the myth was kept alive in a right way. Stump sees irony especially in the fact that this band, which had once been one of the leaders of musical counterculture in England and later the harsh critic of the high culture fortresses, had now become a satire of itself. To quote Stump: "[t]hree-quarters of one of the most imaginative rock outfits in history plodding through yet another evening of Industrial Light and Magic." (6)

Guitar player and singer – in this order – David Gilmour noted this paradox of Pink Floyd scale stadium



spectacles already in 1978, in an interview for Italian *Ciao 2000* magazine. He recognised that the group had become a monstrous machine, and that their technology had suffocated the feelings of the music. Thus he felt they had sometimes lost the control over their own performances. I quote: "If you only rely on the technique alone, there isn't any real purpose to the music. At times, we may have gone a bit too far." (7) Funnily enough, Gilmour was the Primus Motor to strive towards even bigger stadium scale shows in the 1980s and 1990s, with *Delicate Sound of Thunder*, and *Division Bell* tours.

So, we are dealing with the special effects now. One central feature of technical world is spectacle. Cultural theorist Guy Debord has discussed the spectacle-like nature of the western world in his influential and polemic book *La Societe du Spectacle*, *The Society of the Spectacle*. For him the spectacle means social human relation, which is mediated through pictures. However, it has nothing to do with communication, as spectacle is disrupting the world and emphasising the autonomy of the visual. So, spectacle for Debord is definitely something negative in its nature. As we live in the society of spectacle, everything appears as visual surface without any deeper substance. Spectacle demands passive approving: everything that appears is good, and everything good appears. Here we have an obvious tautology, which is no accident.

To me this is the real core of the cultural pessimism and anxiety of earlier Pink Floyd, so well and surprisingly manifested in this later version of the band that had lost the annoying sarcasm, hate and conceptual framework of its earlier mastermind Waters. Spectacle feeds on itself, and the technological dimension of Pink Floyd only brings new levels to the ritualistic visual quality of group's performances. Debord claims that spectacle is a direct continuation of religion, a materialistic reconstruction of a religious illusion. (8) One could compare it also to Walter Benjamin's ideas on phantasmagoria.

## Conclusion

Stadium technology was innovated to provide means for modern *Gesamtkunstwerk*, a complete work of art. The technology connects the performer's theatrical gestures to wider, well beforehand planned thematic structures. This is what large venues and their disposable architecture are all about: connecting sound, light and material surfaces with popular imagery, and in the case of Pink Floyd also with popular nostalgia – of the several fan generations from 60s Hyde Park listeners onward – and the historical references of the audiovisual narratives.

The idea of a unified work of art has received harsh critique from Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Theodor Adorno. Philosopher Reijo Kupiainen

sums this conversation interestingly, when he relates Wagner-critique to some newer forms of unified work of art. Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk* is, by the definition of Heidegger, religious fever or ecstasy of masses, where the music has the central role as the provider of the experience. The great stage-set is where the music becomes the core of the event, and the accelerator of emotions. Unified work of art is for all of these three philosophers conventional idea, the fake art of the masses. Kupiainen summarises this well (my own translation from Finnish):

*Wagnerism is condensed into the bombastic images, where the work and crowds have been subjected to rhythmic decoration. This certainly refers straight to Nazism's way of presenting the politics in aesthetic way. Furthermore, these images have been exploited both in Hollywood entertainment (such as Star Wars series) and modern music videos.(9)*

This description by Kupiainen refers to the Wagnerian and theatrical gestures of Friz Lang's movie *Metropolis*, but it also applies perfectly to rock stadium spectacle in all its exaggeration, don't you think? The fact that Kupiainen mentions the music videos is certainly important. Remember Queen and their use of the images of *Metropolis* in their video "Radio Gaga" in the early

1980s. Even better comparison can be made with the Riefenstahlian aesthetics of Third Reich in the 1930s, *The Triumph of the Will*, etc. Especially Alan Parker's movie *The Wall* seems to be in parts a straight comment on fascism-like conventions on stage. PULSE, then again, is essentially epitomising what could be called techno-spectacle in its most Debordian way.

In my sources the visual and acoustic worlds are intertwined. This combined experience forms the basis of my interpretation. This way one audiovisual source can alter the total "sound-picture" I have, as happened in the case of my example of two versions of *Run Like Hell*, and thus revise my hermeneutic process completely.

## Endnotes

1. Goodwin 1990, 269.
2. Holding 2000.
3. Gadamer 1999, 462.
4. On the history of the senses see Salmi 2001, 339-357.
5. Pink Floyd 2000, "Run Like Hell".
6. Stump 2001, 50.
7. *Ciao 2001* (Italy) 13.8.1978. Fitch 2001, 252.
8. Debord 1995, 12-15, 17-18.
9. Kupiainen 1997, 80-82.

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## Voices, Meanings and Identities: Cultural Reflexivity in the Opening and Closing

### Ceremonies of the XXVIII Olympiad in Athens

Pavlos Kavouras

#### Cultural reflexivity as dialogical othering

People make and express images of themselves as cultural beings usually by relating their life experiences to other people. As relating is intertwined with receiving, the stories people tell about their cultures and, eventually, of themselves, are always addressed to particular, virtual or embodied audiences. Receiving depends on the audience of relating. What is acceptable for an audience in a culture might not be acceptable for other audiences in other cultures. Local audiences differ greatly from global ones and so do local performances of cultural identity as opposed to global ones. [1] This distinction applies also to performances of cultural reflexivity, the subject matter of this paper. My focus is on the production of the self image of a whole culture for local and global consumption. There is more at stake in any process of cultural reflexivity than the denotative meaning of the term implies. [2] Cultural reflexivity is an allegorical modality concerning othering. [3] By “othering” I mean the process in which a familiar Self is transformed to another, unfamiliar Self to comply with the emergent and multiple reality

of relating as both making and receiving. [4] Cultural reflexivity as a form of allegorical othering helps to bring together various voices, meanings and identities as cultural images for local as well as global audiences. Such a reflexive othering is, by definition, dialogical. Its dialogism, however, is not merely discursive. It involves a juxtaposition of multiple logics – the voices, meanings and identities engaged in the process of making and receiving images of cultural reflexivity. [5]

The binary scheme “local versus global” is quite problematic as a theoretical perspective for studying reflexive othering. Even the hybrid form of “glocal,” which denotes a fusion of the local with the global at the predominance of the first, is not conceptually sufficient, as it reduces the aesthetics and politics of fusion to a socioeconomic reality, that of the world market and global consumer society. [6] A better option might be to use instead the term “ecumenical,” which is primarily an ethical concept. “Ecumenical” signifies the spiritual fusion of the individual self with the universal self and implies an achieved form of humanity. Thus, “ecumenical” may modify both “global” and “local,” as well as their hybrid “glocal”. One may talk about local,

global and even glocal practices as being endowed or not with the ecumenical quality.

The Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the XXVIII Olympiad in Athens constitute an ideal case for studying cultural reflexivity as a form of dialogical othering. The Olympic Games is a global phenomenon. [7] Its homecoming in Athens in the summer 2004 led the concept creators of the two ceremonies to portray Greek culture as a diachronic unity, from antiquity to the present. They also identified Hellenism, the essence of this unity, with humanism as an expression of ecumenical rationalism. These ideas are clearly expressed in the official programmes and video-tapes of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, which together with journalistic literature comprise the research material for my discourse analysis. [8] The various discourses are presented and analyzed individually as well as in juxtaposition with one another. The planned and actually performed versions of each discourse are examined, in a perspective that looks closely at the visual and performing arts constituents of its form and structure.

### **Juxtaposing the official discourses of the Opening Ceremony**

The official discourses of the Opening Ceremony deal with humanity in agonistic terms, fusing culture with athletics, Hellenic culture in particular, with the Olympic Games. Such a view of agonistic humanism reflects

the spirit of the Games, since their revival in 1896.

[9] The concept creators of the Opening Ceremony essentialize the idea of agonistic humanism by fusing it with Hellenism. Here is a brief and concise account of their perspective: [10]

*The Olympic Games is the epitome of ancient Hellenic civilization. Its ecumenical ideas and images vividly live today in the hearts of all people around the world. These ideas and images are reflected in the humanistic and democratic spirit of the Games. The Games were born in ancient Greece and they now return to modern Greece. Hence, the idea of the repatriation of the Games: Athens Olympic Homecoming. The main rhetoric of the official discourses of the Opening Ceremony has a diachronic orientation: what happened then is still alive today. Modern Greece is an active part of the modern western world and capable of expressing new forms of ecumenical humanism by transforming the ancient element into a modern one while at the same time honoring the diachronic values of humanity as perceived and managed by ancient Hellenic civilization.*

Apart from rendering the agonistic spirit of the Games as an essentialist fusion of humanism with Hellenism, the designers of the ceremony endow

this spirit with a ritualistic symbolism. The idea of the repatriation of the Games alludes to the idea of the re-incorporation of the initiate to his or her group of reference. [11] Such a ritualistic symbolism is already present in Coubertin's view of Olympism, but here it assumes full rhetorical power. [12] It emerges as an indisputable (qua cultural) legitimization of Hellenism's significance as a hierophant of the agonistic humanism of the Games.

Another main characteristic of the official discourses of the Opening Ceremony is their schematic dualism. Seven pairs of related ideas inform the conceptual framework of this ceremony:

- Hellenic culture - the Olympic Games
- ancient - modern
- local - ecumenical
- history - art
- ideal - actual
- "I" - "Other" relationship
- imaginary - real

Cultural images and ideas are expressed as athletic ideals and values. Ancient Hellenic culture is coupled with modern Hellenic culture. Ancient and modern Hellenic cultures are conceptualized as two distinct yet interrelated phases of a unique diachronic transformation of a culturally local perception of humanity to an

ecumenical one. "History" denotes "what happened in the past," lacking historiographic reflexivity, whereas "art" is considered to be an independent faculty for rendering the ancient spirit in modern form. The aim of the celebration is to yield an actual experience of the imagined ideals of ancient humanity through the symbolic mediation of modern art.

In the portrayal of the Opening Ceremony as an artistic journey to Hellenism, the artist as a journey maker is categorically distinguished from the spectator as another journey maker: where the artist ends, the spectator begins. Art transforms imagination to a commonly perceptible reality. Through artistic mediation, the ecumenical dream of humanity is perceived with eyes open. Ancient Olympia and the Acropolis of Athens serve as diachronic symbols of Hellenism, of the Games in particular, and democratic culture, and are expressed as different manifestations of an essentialist unity that informs the uniqueness of the Hellenic spirit of ecumenical humanism. In this perspective, the "ecumenical" is conceptualized anew as an exclusively Hellenic attribute and rendered artistically as an all-embracing and diachronic perception of humanity.

A rationalist perception of nature and humanity informs the artistic symbolism of the Opening Ceremony. The concept creators fuse such natural elements as water and fire with human rationality to tell a story about the uniqueness and ecumenical character of Hellenism.



They also associate the cosmological ideas of “the sea” and “light” – of the Aegean Sea in particular – with the “whiteness” of marble and, eventually, the “brilliance” of Hellenic culture. Statues and the olive tree complement the symbolic portrayal of Hellenism alluding to its artistic and political anthropocentrism through the glorification of the human body and the democratic polity. Conceptualized as a quintessential quality of Hellenism, anthropocentrism is intertwined with ecumenical rationalism.

It is to the ecumenical anthropocentrism of Hellenism that the president of Athens 2004, Mrs Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki refers by her official message to the Opening Ceremony, as the title of this message clearly evokes: “Of all things, man is the measure”. This is a famous sophist dictum, attributed to Protagoras. In blending ancient Hellenic thought by fusing uncritically pre-Socratic, sophist and Socratic reasoning, the concept creators present Hellenism as a vivid totality contrasting its archetypal image to humanity’s modern image of fragmentation. [13] As a result, the artist in the ceremony emerges as the hero of a cultural performance whereby the fragments of Hellenism are combined to yield a new perspective of humanity: an ecumenical response to the fragmentary ethos of modernity. By fusing the rational relativism of the Sophists with Socratic rationalism the production designers create an artistic hybrid of relativism and rationalism. This hybrid is endowed with a

double quality. It differentiates and integrates rationality, signifying at the same time the uniqueness of humanity as individual Self and ecumenical Other.

### **The Opening Ceremony: the show as a dramaturgy**

The ceremonial show is a dramaturgical expression of Hellenism as ecumenical rationalism. Of major significance to the cultural reflexivity of the show is the diachronic journey of Hellenism in relation to the Games. The journey is marked by three spatial-historical orientations: the ancient site of Olympia and the modern Athenian sites of the *Panathinaiko* and Olympic Stadiums (1896 and 2004 Olympic Games respectively). These orientations are symbolic landmarks in Hellenism’s journey to self-realization through the Games. They represent the birth, the revival and the homecoming, or repatriation of the Hellenic ideal of ecumenical rationalism. Dramaturgy capitalizes on the unification of religion with sports, of rationalist thought with mythology and ritual. Following a naturalistic rationality, “the Games” come to represent Zeus, “water” pre-Socratic philosophy, “fire” divinity in humanity, “marble” the revival of the Games [14] and, finally, the *zeimbekiko* music the repatriation of the Games. Widely known in modern Greece as a male, improvisational dance with a rhythm in nine counts and eight steps, the *zeimbekiko* is associated by the concept

creators of the show with Zeus and Dionysus. Although the association is scientifically ungrounded, [15] it is important to consider here for analytical purposes, as it reflects the main perspective in which the ceremonies were conceived and realized: a dualistic rationality.

The show is a grand narrative that unfolds in two episodes: “Allegory” and “Clepsydra” (Sand-time). While both episodes deal with Hellenism’s diachronic journey to ecumenical rationalism by employing fragmentary historical evidence, they differ radically in the manner of their expression. “Allegory” is based on a symbolic modality of free association whereby fragments are treated as archetypes, whereas “Clepsydra” on a systematic synthesis of the fragmentary in an analytical perspective. Rationalistic dualism is quite strong and very clear in Allegory. In the portrayal of Hellenism as ecumenical rationalism, Apollo, the god of reason and rationality supercedes Dionysus, the god of sublime intoxication. [16] In the actual performance of Hellenism though, the Allegory show depends on festive intoxication both for inspiration and empathy. Allegory begins with a few lines by George Seferis, the 1963 Greek Nobel laureate of literature, poetry mediating past and present to transcend historical fragmentation:

*I woke with this marble head in my hands  
it exhausts my elbows and I  
don't know where to put it down.*

*It was falling into the dream  
as I was coming out of the  
dream so our life became  
one and it will be very difficult  
for it to separate again. [17]*

Mythology succeeds modern poetry as the archetypal discourse of the show. Allegory unfolds as a red centaur, a mythological creature which is half man and half horse, throws his spear into an artificial lake at the center of the stadium. Mythology introduces history, the history of Hellenism; and divinity mediates for the emergence of human rationality. Dualism assumes the form of a struggle between two extreme poles of rationalistic existence: divinity and humanity, spirit and matter, culture and nature, sublimity and instinct. Anthropomorphic and anthropocentric rationality is portrayed as the quintessence of Hellenism. Modern art aided by modern technology – a contemporary form of archetypal discourse – renders the transformation of mythology to history, and divinity to rationality in six steps. Hellenism presents itself in the following allegorical sequence: a Cycladic idol, a kouros, a classical statue, a cube – the Pythagorean symbol for the element of the earth and perfection – and, finally, Cyclades, the island formation in the Aegean Sea at the center of which lies Delos, birthplace of Apollo. The sixth phase of the Allegory features *Eros*, a new

anthropomorphic entity which stands for the unlimited force that brings opposites together and in composition. As the animation of Hellenic anthropocentrism unfolds, coeval achievements in philosophy, mathematics, lyric poetry and drama are presented. In these presentations of Hellenism, the divinity versus humanity dichotomy manifests itself also as a virtual versus real existence. While the first five parts of the Allegory are video productions, the sixth part glorifies the ecumenical aspect of humanity as an embodied reality. The god *Eros* is introduced by a dancer who can actually fly, thanks to modern art technology, thus appearing to exist between and betwixt the virtual and the real, the divine and the human. *Eros* is also portrayed in practical everyday discourse: a couple of lovers appear on stage enjoying their affair, their behavior being familiar worldwide.

The second part of the show is "Clepsydra," Sand-time. As its title reveals, the artistic emphasis is on time and temporality. The evolution of Hellenism is presented sequentially in eleven fragments of temporality, symbolically represented by eleven parading platforms carrying cultural evidence of the respective historical eras. Evolutionary rationalism pervades the conceptualization of Clepsydra which is saturated by the idea of progress. However, the production designers fuse modernist discourse with post-modern rationality concerning "progress." Their view of progress informing Clepsydra is incompatible with Laurie Anderson's and, eventually,

Walter Benjamin's critical reflections. Anderson echoes Benjamin when she writes that progress is "a storm blowing from Paradise, propelling the angel of history backwards into the future." [18] Such a view of progress is, of course, critical of any modernist discourse of evolutionary rationalism. [19] The reference to Anderson, a popular experimental artist of world renown, serves mainly to legitimate rhetorically the hybrid poetics of the dramaturgical notion of progress around which the show is conceived and realized.

The eleven phases of Clepsydra may be divided into two parts. Part I includes the seven first phases and part II the rest four. Part I deals with the ancient Hellenic world in a classical archaeological perspective. Five historical periods that are chronologically demarcated succeed one another in the show: prehistoric (Minoan, Thera, Mycenaean), geometric, archaic, classical and Hellenistic. Part II is rather superficially put together and runs through such huge and great phases of Hellenic history as Byzantine, post-Byzantine (also identified as "traditional") and "modern" which is directly associated with the revival of the Olympic Games (Athens 1896). The second part of the Clepsydra sequence reflects clearly the problematic conceptualization of the grand narrative of the Opening Ceremony as a whole. First, only scarce and superficial evidence of the historical cultures in question is presented. Second, as the evolutionist narrative moves towards

the “modern period” (early-mid nineteenth century to the present), the production designers employ the modernist umbrella term “traditional” to cope with the multiplicity and diversity of modern Greek cultural forms. Their awkwardness is evident as they fail to classify these forms under a culturally unified, albeit evolutionary, rationalist perspective of Hellenism. The second part of the Clepsydra show relies on the conceptualization of culture as folklore and is saturated by orientalist representations of the anonymous folk as “the great bearer of Hellenism’s glorious past.” These representations draw heavily upon the visual imagery of the modern Greek folk that was developed by the painter Yannis Tsarouhis, mentor and admirer of Dimitris Papaioannou, the artistic director of the ceremony. As a result, exoticized representations of the “traditional” and “folk” dominate Hellenism’s portrayal in the show. For example, Angels–Tsarouhis style appear carrying *rembetiko* stages and young men dressed in military uniform (another idiom of Tsarouhis’ imagery) are seen dancing to the rhythms and tunes of the *rembetiko* music.

Clepsydra ends in the same way Allegory ended. The symbolic and virtual become embodied and real. A pregnant woman shows up personifying the material bridge leading, in the words of the concept creators, “from history to the book of life.” Next to the female figure, virtual images of our galaxy and the human DNA

are employed to animate the ecumenical reality of an anthropocentric, yet not anthropomorphic, whole that lies beyond the physical limits of human perception: the common essence of humanity as manifested in the microcosms and macrocosms of its existence.

### **Musical discourse in the Opening Ceremony**

To the exception of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the musicians, music ensembles and choirs are all Greek. Classical western and traditional Greek instruments are used. Special emphasis is placed on the *bouzouki* instrument, widely associated with the *rembetiko* culture, as a key symbol of modern Greek popular music. Besides *bouzouki*, the instruments of the show are identified in the Programme as follows: traditional violin, accordion and clarinet (*klarino*), traditional percussion (*daouli* and *toumperleki*), lute (*laouto*), oud, *lyra* of Crete and *lyra* of Pontos, santour and mandolin. Special emphasis is placed on musical diversity as a significant aspect of Hellenism. Musical differentiation is portrayed as local diversification of culture within the Greek nation-state, and also as diversification associated with refugee and Byzantine church music. The rhetoric of musical diversification underlines the multi-faceted unity of Hellenism qua ecumenical humanism and reflects a politically correct attitude which is in conformity with the hybrid ethics of the show.

The musical discourse of the Opening Ceremony is

informed by four distinct rationalities. Discrimination of rationality depends on the role musical compositions play in the show. The first rationality is associated with three auspicious phases of the ceremony: Welcome, Allegory and Opening of the Games. The music used in this context is all modern Greek art music, both “serious” and “light,” and includes original works as well as arrangements of classical, non-Greek compositions. Yorghos Koumendakis, the music concept creator of the ceremony, and Nikos Kypourgos, both students and admirers of Manos Hatzidakis, one of the leading composers of modern Greek music, express clearly with their music the reflexive rationality of the ceremony. This rationality is based on the premise that Greek modern art music covers the entire spectrum of global modern art music, being equally prolific and significant as “serious” and “light,” classical and popular. The *zeimbekiko* piece composed and directed by Stavros Xarhakos, another leading figure of modern Greek music, [20] serves mainly to bring together several conceptual dichotomies in the production design. Two such dichotomies stand out as artistic distinctions in the celebrations of the Games in Athens. The first dichotomy concerns the contrast between the Apollonian perspective of the Opening Ceremony as opposed to the Dionysian of the Closing Ceremony, whereas the second dichotomy refers to the structural dissociation of ancient Hellenism, metonymically identified with Zeus, from modern

Hellenism, which is symbolically represented by the *zeimbekiko* dance. Perceived as an aspect of Zeus in communion with Bacchus, the *zeimbekiko* serves as a symbolic mediation for bringing together the meanings conveyed by these dichotomies. Hence, the significance of Xarhakos’ opening piece titled *zeimbekiko*. Finally, the performance of Gustav Mahler’s *Langsam* (symphony n. 3, part 6) by Yorghos Koumendakis aims to underline the wide horizons and potential of contemporary Greek music. The first rationality of the Opening Ceremony reflects the music concept creators’ struggle to persuade their global audience that modern Greek art music is as ecumenical and achieved as any other such music around the world.

The second and third rationalities refer to contemporary popular music and its close association with sound technology and the world music market. Two popular disk jockeys, one of Greek origin, Konstantinos Vita, and a foreigner of world renown, the Dutch Tiesto, along with the internationally famous experimental popular singer Bjork, from Iceland, define with their presence and music a complex rationality. This rationality reflects contemporary popular aesthetics and has two distinct orientations. Both orientations point towards a common, ecumenical reality, while constituting different trajectories leading to the ecumenical from the perspective of nationality. In the first aspect of popular rationality the ecumenical is approached from a local

qua national, or Greek, perspective, represented by Konstantinos Vita, whereas in the second one from a non-Greek, international perspective, expressed by Tiesto and Bjork. [21]

The fourth rationality of the musical discourse of the Opening Ceremony alludes to the significance of the Hellenic diaspora – its musicians in particular – in maintaining and reinforcing the ecumenical ethos of Hellenism abroad and, eventually, worldwide. This view is symbolically expressed by the inclusion of the New Zealand–Greek composer John Psathas in the show. Like Koumendakis and Kypourgos, Psathas demonstrates his musical skills both as a composer of original music and arranger of great art music of non-Greek origin (Debussy and Shostakovitch).

### **The Closing Ceremony: concept and music**

The Closing Ceremony merits an individual presentation and analysis that cannot be carried out in this paper. However, a brief account on its conceptual orientation and musical discourse may broaden our perspective concerning the dualistic rationality of the Opening Ceremony. The main philosophy of the Closing Ceremony is, according to its Artistic Director, Dimitris Papaioannou, “the celebration of life.” [22] This view informs a master plan of celebration that defies typical dramaturgy. The celebratory process involves communal singing and dancing not as mere representations of Hellenic festivities

but as symbolic vehicles through which the participating celebrants are invited to experience a sense of Dionysian ecstasy and enthusiasm. The members of the audience of the Closing Ceremony are asked to transcend their state of being spectators in a show that celebrates life and engage themselves actively in the festivities of the show. The aim of this transition, according to the master plan of the ceremony, is to enable the members of the audience to experience the Dionysian spirit and thus come to realize for themselves the ecumenical value of unified humanity as a celebration of life. [23] Hence, celebrating life implies celebrating “union in multiplicity.” This is the mystical epitome of the Dionysian faculty, which expresses humanity not merely as a feasting quality, but as an achieved reality. Dionysus’ juxtaposition with Zeus heightens the allegorical discourse on the dialectic between humanity and divinity. The unifying quality of and for humanity that Dionysus represents is intertwined with a significant aspect of Zeus, specially invoked in the Closing Ceremony: hospitality. *Xenios Dias*, or Hosting Zeus, underlines the archetypal significance of the value of hosting and, eventually, othering. As the supreme host of the Games, Zeus underlines the ecumenical perspective of the world as a unity. In the Closing Ceremony, Zeus’ presence implies humanity’s ethical obligation against itself as a realized condition of being in the world: the hosting Self must show respect for the foreign Other.



In staging the Closing Ceremony as a grand Greek celebration, the concept creators designed the show around the idea of the *ghlendi* –Greek for festivity and celebration. [24] Eating, drinking, singing and dancing in the company of friends are constituent elements of the *ghlendi*. These elements are vividly juxtaposed in the Closing Ceremony helping to stage an artistic representation of the *ghlendi* as a typically Hellenic quality of celebrating. The show qua *ghlendi* ceremony consists of two distinct parts. In the first part, the designers associate the *ghlendi* with the agricultural cycle of life through the symbolic imagery of the “wheat” and the “grape”. They employ music and dance to blend “traditional” with “modern” elements of Greek culture. In so doing, they assign equal significance to traditional folk and modern popular expressions. In the second part, they abandon the idea of staging “Greekness” as a representation and rely on the *ghlendi* itself to stage a non representational expression of “the celebration of life” motto. Popular singers appear performing on stage in the Olympic Stadium. Now, the stage loses its artistic centrality as a virtual space for dramaturgical action and emerges as a simulacrum of the stage in a contemporary night club. The *ghlendi* associated with night club entertainment shares some generic attributes with the peasant *ghlendi* of the agricultural society, but in reality the two forms of the *ghlendi* are radically different. The night club *ghlendi* is the most popular form

of entertainment in contemporary Greece. Its popular aesthetics have a vulgar orientation toward music and culture defying any categorical distinctions between “high” and “low” culture, as well as “art” and “non-art,” or “entertainment” music. Its main thrust concerns blending or fusing diverse forms of music regardless of their conceptual identification. The juxtaposition of the peasant *ghlendi* with the night club *ghlendi* marks off a major transition in the rationality of the Closing Ceremony, from “serious work” to “leisure.” [25]

**The untold story of “Zeus encountering Bacchus.” An allegory of dialogical othering as sublime intoxication**

In the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, cultural reflexivity is intertwined with the artistic expression of the diachronic essence of Hellenism. Hellenism is considered as a unique expression of anthropocentrism and ecumenical rationalism and, eventually, humanism. Hellenism is also taken to inform, precisely as ecumenical humanism, the core of western civilization. In fact, what the concept creators mean by “western civilization” is western modernity and more specifically, bourgeois ecumenical rationalism.

Socratic rationalism is ecumenical and dialogical. Yet, as the modifiers “ecumenical” and “dialogical” drift towards “global” and “monological,” Socratic rationalism is transformed into the totalizing and, eventually, hegemonic modality of pure reasoning. But which “rationality,” and

whose “purity of reason”? To fuse sophist “relativism” with Socratic “absolutism” amounts only to confuse cultural reflexivity as an othering faculty of humanity with ethics as a realized state of achieved humanity. Furthermore, to fuse the philosophical rationalism of the classical Hellenic world with the bourgeois rationalism of western modernity is to imply that Hellenism is the force that motivates modernity’s project of progress as a globalizing idea unifying all humanity.

Political unification as a result of socioeconomic globalization is one thing and symbolic unification as a result of realized humanity quite another. When cultural reflexivity becomes a form of monological poetics it aestheticizes reality and strips actual people of their own humanity. In this process, people end up consuming ideas about humanity, usually in a grand narrative form, and are systematically discouraged to engage themselves in a personal encounter with their own (and other peoples’) humanity. By aestheticizing humanity the artistic modality serves the rhetorical purposes of legitimating monological rationalism. In the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the global rhetoric is crucial for the artistic expression of Hellenism as an ethical prerogative of humanity. In spite of their cultural specificity, the ceremonies re-establish the global qua ecumenical ideal of western progress as a humanistic progress and, eventually, glorify the economic and political culture of western modernity on a global

level. The story of Hellenism is related in such a way so as to satisfy a wide, local and global audience. To this end, the rhetorical strategy of relating complies with two distinct yet interrelated aspects of receiving. The first aspect concerns a globalized culture as a local expression of humanity, whereas the second a globalizing perception of culture as the ethical locus of an ecumenical condition of humanity. This view results to a monological aesthetics which modifies completely the rationality and temporality of the dialogical juxtapositions of reflexive othering. Monological dualism reduces the emergent and transitory expressions of othering to mere objectifications. Yet, the logic of relating is not affected by such an objectification of othering: it remains utterly subjective: the authority of presentation relentlessly asserts itself as an indisputable reality.

The artistic symbolism of the ceremonies is informed by the rhetorical prerogative of monological dualism. The Opening Ceremony is symbolically identified with Apollo, whereas the Closing Ceremony with Dionysus. Zeus, the father of gods and protector of the Olympic Games, plays an equally significant role in the symbolism of the two ceremonies: he marks the beginning of the Opening Ceremony and the end of the Closing one. Zeus is absolute power and also the protector of hospitality. In this last capacity of his, Zeus hosts any expression of foreignness and othering. He combines the powers of absolute self assertion and ultimate othering. Apollo,

by contrast, is the god of light and reason, whereas Dionysus the god of sublime intoxication. An almighty Zeus, the protector of the Games, encounters Apollo in the Opening Ceremony to justify symbolically the power of Hellenic rationalism as an ecumenical possibility for all humanity. Conversely, a hosting Zeus joins with Bacchus in the Closing Ceremony to celebrate humanity as othering.

The symbolic imagery of the ceremonies reflects a bourgeois dualistic rationalism. Reason and emotion, the rational and the irrational are considered as fundamental aspects of humanity – its Apollonian and Dionysian qualities. The presence of Zeus underlines symbolically the structural dissociation between part and whole, difference and totality as historically realized and ethically distinct faculties of humanity cross-culturally. Zeus represents the power of homogenizing difference through othering differentiation itself. In the dualistic discourse of the ceremonies, the symbolic element of Zeus emerges as the epitome of the globalizing dynamic of ecumenical rationalism, powerfully appropriating difference through glorifying it.

Bacchus is the god of sublime intoxication. He is not the god of mere merry making and orgiastic entertainment. But when Bacchian sublimity is suppressed and finally replaced by the Apollonian element of absolute, conceptually abstract reasoning it loses its material quality and assumes a metaphysical authority. The

same applies to “intoxication”. Removed from its divine Bacchian context, the term in its variously acceptable cultural usages comes to signify the irrational; it becomes a rationalist objectification of the Other. The reason versus emotion bifurcation leads designers to aestheticize cultural reflexivity in the ceremonies. Exoticizing Greekness reflects the modernist power of orientalizing difference. Bacchus is exoticized as an artistic form of othering in contrast to an Apollonian Self. Yet, Bacchus as god of sublime intoxication defies any such exoticization. Rationality and emotion are unique faculties of humanity. But when they are fused together as a unity in multiplicity, a new form of consciousness emerges in which divinity dissolves in humanity. In the context of such a realization humanity understands itself as a unique condition in the world. This is a mystical experience. Any rationalistic rendering of such an experience and its symbolism is doomed to fail, for the two conditions of reflexivity are structurally divided by what Blaise Pascal would call a difference of order, not just a difference of degree.

The ecumenical spirit of Hellenism is expressed in the Opening Ceremony as a rationalistic sublimity, whereas in the Closing one as a rationalistic intoxication. The communicative success of the ceremonies lies in that they both tell a story of cultural reflexivity as a rationalistic discourse of ecumenical othering and do so by exoticizing Greekness and aestheticizing othering as

such. Cultural reflexivity through Hellenism re-asserts globalization as an apotheosis of western modernity; and helps also to demonstrate how an uncritical fusion of modernist and postmodernist modalities of reflexivity may end up re-establishing the monological dualism and ecumenical rationalism of modernity.

## Acknowledgments

Besides Franco Fabbri, Jane Sugarman and the other participants in the 2005 XIII Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music, titled 'Making Music, Making Meaning,' I wish to thank Nafsika Litsardopoulou, Lito Floraki and Nikos Poulakis for their valuable criticisms of earlier drafts of this paper.

## Endnotes

1. Taylor (1997: xv-xix); Hall (1991: 33, 38-39).

2. On "cultural reflexivity" from an anthropological perspective of experience, see Bruner (1986: 22-23) and Turner (1982: 11, 76, 100). Barbara Myerhoff (n.d.) argues that "cultural performances are *reflective* in the sense of showing ourselves to ourselves. They are also capable of being *reflexive*, arousing consciousness of ourselves as we see ourselves."

3. On music, allegory and the dialogical in ethnographic writing see Kavouras (n.d.).

4. Using Arnold van Gennep's (1960) concept of liminality, Turner (1982: 27) argues that "(i)n liminality people 'play' with the elements of the familiar and defamiliarize them.

Novelty emerges from unprecedented combinations of familiar elements.”

5. In this paper, I discuss dialogical othering as relating in association with receiving, not receiving itself.

6. From the combination of the words “global” and “local,” it refers to an individual or a group of people who can think globally and act locally. On “glocal” and “glocalization,” see Robertson (1995).

7. MacAloon (1984: 241-42).

8. The internet resources documenting my research material regarding the Opening and Closing Ceremonies are listed separately at the end of the list of print references.

9. On the ideology of Olympism as a form of agonistic humanism associated with Hellenism, see Coubertin (1967); MacAloon (1981); Turner (1982: 120).

10. The text cited is my own compilation of the official messages of the Opening Ceremony, delivered by the president of the Hellenic Republic, the president of Athens 2004 and the artistic director of the Opening Ceremony (Official Programme; henceforth, Programme).

11. This ritualistic symbolism is based on Gennep’s theory of the rites of passage (1960). The international athletics of the Olympic Games may be seen as an expression of what Emile Durkheim (1995) has called “secular substitutes” for both religion and ritual. On the notion of “secular ritual,” see Myerhoff and Moore (1977). Ceremony indicates, ritual transforms (Turner 1982: 80).

12. Coubertin (1967: 242, 251); Turner (1982: 120).

13. Fragmentation is a characteristic aspect of western modernity. MacAloon (1984: 249) writes that Coubertin (1967: 34) saw “the fragmentation of public celebrations not merely as a local problem of the Olympic Games to solve but as something diagnostic of modernity itself.”

14. The other name for *Panathinaiko* Stadium where the first revival of the Olympic Games took place in 1896 is *Kallimarmaro*, which literally means in Greek the “fair one made of marble”.

15. According to the concept creators, the *zeimbekiko* is a composite term referring to Zeus and *bekos*, bread, in Phrygian language, which is another name for Dionysus (Programme). However, no mention is made of the Zeimbeks, an Asia Minor group of people, whose name coincides with the word *zeimbekiko*.

16. In the production design of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Apollo and Dionysus are generally used as aesthetical principles implying contrasting modalities of perception and relating. There is no systematic connection, however, between the aesthetics of the specific ceremonies and Nietzsche's (1993) philosophical perspective of the intellectual dichotomy between the Dionysian and the Apollonian element. The same applies to the Delphic Festival revival administered by Aggelos Sikelianos and his wife Eva Palmer in 1927. Although in her autobiography Eva devotes a whole chapter, on Apollo and Dionysus and another one on Nietzsche's "Birth of Tragedy," she makes no reference to the aesthetic significance of these principles regarding the revival of the Delphic Festival (1993: 163-170, 171-174).

17. From the poem titled *Mythistorema 3*, translated by Edmund Keely and Philip Sherrard (Seferis 1995).

18. Anderson's poem, titled *Progress*, appears in the Programme. The poem is a reflection on one of Walter Benjamin's theses on the philosophy of history (1969: 257-58).

19. On a critical perspective of humanistic, 'modern' progressivism, whereby the term 'modern' is associated with an essentially Renaissance view of human action, see Schchner (1979); cf. also Turner (1982:16).

20. Besides Xarhakos and Hatzidakis, the third major figure of modern Greek popular music is Mikis Theodorakis, whose self-exclusion from the ceremonies became the topic of heated debate in the Press.

21. Ecumenical humanism is a characteristic attribute of Olympism. Coubertin discriminated between "cosmopolitanism" and "true internationalism" as aspects of ecumenical humanism. MacAloon explains why Coubertin was in favor of the latter (1984: 252):

*The former view derides and devalues the significance of nationality and discrete cultural traditions and calls for a world citizenry in which all such differences are overcome and finally abandoned. The latter, "true internationalism," understands cultural differences as an enduring and marvelous feature of the human landscape and argues that world peace depends upon the celebration of human diversity and not the eradication of it.*

22. Olympism – the ideological discourse concerning the revival of the Olympic Games – was perceived by Coubertin to be "a celebration of life." He called the Games "a festival of human unity" (1967: 131); see also MacAloon (1984: 248).



23. This way, the ceremony ceases merely to indicate humanity and becomes a ritual for transforming humanity; a secular ritual of transformation. Turner argues (1982: 86, 80) that with Industrialization modernity comes to mean “the exaltation of the indicative mood,” which is, according to him, the essence of any ceremony.

24. On the *ghlendi* as a cultural performance and reflexive modality of wide symbolic significance in Greece, see Kavouras (n.d., 2000, 1999, 1994 and 1991).

25. The rationality informing the structural distinction between the Opening and the Closing Ceremonies reflects another fundamental division of modernity. Since the Industrial Revolution, leisure is sharply demarcated from work. This division marks the dualistic rationality of the ceremonies. The Opening Ceremony is focused on the idea of “serious work,” concerning the artistic portrayal of Hellenism as ecumenical humanism, whereas the Closing one is designed to function as a “leisure” activity following the successful completion of the Opening Ceremony. Papaioannou himself made this point clearly in an interview for the Greek TV (NET, Pavlos Tsimas, 24 Hours):

*(The Closing Ceremony) will be completely different (from the Opening one). More relaxed:*

*Greek song and Greek music, rather than a statement of ideas and expression of memory, as in the Opening Ceremony. Completely different: Let's relax, undo the top button of our shirts and loosen the knots of our neckties. Let's drink. We did it. Let's relax.*

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## Musical References in Nollywood Style Videos

Andrew L. Kaye

“Nollywood” is the term of momentary ethno-cultural definition for the emerging film scene in contemporary black Africa, especially Nigeria. The term is of recent and uncertain coinage—some credit a New York Times reporter—but according to Nigerian filmmaker Tunde Kelani, it has become “entrenched”. It currently represents a large and lively market of quickly produced, direct-to-video films, distributed largely via videotapes and VCDs (video compact discs), as well as via broadcast and satellite television in a number of African countries.

Nollywood is a fascinating new chapter in the history of African filmmaking. Although Africans had been involved as subjects, consumers, and creative participants since very early in cinema’s history—as early as the 1890s, in fact—for most of this history, the role of Africans as producers and creators has been restricted, subservient to a largely Eurocentric storyline and musical framework. Historians date the emergence of what Ukadike calls “indigenous African cinema” to the mid-1950s and 1960s, coinciding with the process of decolonization. Paulin Vieyra’s *Afrique sur Seine* of 1955 is often credited as the first film independently produced and directed by an African, but it is Ousmane Sembene’s short film from 1963, *Borom Sarret*, that

stands out as a landmark in the emergence of a new Africanist perspective in cinema.

Since *Borom Sarret*, this new African cinema has had numerous successes. Ousmane Sembene remains probably the best-known African director, in an active filmmaking career of more than 40 years (he showed his most recent film *Moolaade* last year at the Cannes and New York film festivals). The new movement of Afrocentric cinema was helped by the creation, in 1969, of FESPACO, a cinema festival held biannually in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso. In the 1990s, annual film festivals devoted to African cinema were started in a number of other Western and African cities, including New York (from 1993) and Milan (from 1991).

“Indigenous African cinema” has also been plagued by contradictions and difficulties. As the production of celluloid film is complex and expensive, most African directors have resorted to sources of financial support, as well as technical and artistic collaboration, coming from the outside, oftentimes from Western European cultural and political organizations (the French have been particularly proactive here), sometimes from diasporan contacts, in the US or Brazil (for example, Kongi’s *Harvest*, 1970; Rui Guerra’s work in



Mozambique), sometimes, in the case of revolutionary cinema in Angola or Mozambique, from Havana or Moscow (Sembene himself studied at Gorky Studios in Moscow in the early 1960s). Because of fractured distribution networks, and perhaps the “high art” style of many of the films, this independent African cinema ironically seems to have found it difficult to effectively reach a large, popular African audience. Many of the films, in fact, seem to rely heavily on the college, art house, and festival circuits. Deteriorating economies and increasing political instability in many African regions during the 1970s and 1980s, as well as the rise of television and, in the 1980s, video, contributed to a marked decline in the movie-going culture in many African cities, and certainly, the movie house and celluloid production. Video, however, gave African audiences a cheap avenue to the kinds of movies that appealed to popular tastes, especially those of young men, the group most likely to be out and about seeking entertainment in Africa’s city nightlife. For this reason, video culture in Africa seems to have been dominated by action films—American shoot-em-ups and Chinese kung fu; Bollywood musical, too, have continued to enjoy a niche market (perhaps biased toward female viewers) in the video market.

It was in these conditions, in the late 1980s and early 1990s that the phenomenon that we are now calling “Nollywood”, emerged. According to French journalist

Olivier Barlet, the impetus for Nollywood came from the success of the pirate video market in West Africa during the 1980s, and the success of *Zinoba*, a direct-to-video film made in Ghana in 1987. After the success of *Living in Bondage*, an Igbo-language production from the early 1990s, video production took off in Nigeria in an explosion of activity, largely motivated by the desire for quick profits, but resulting in the production of a new genre of African cinema that, perhaps for the first time, successfully competed with the existing foreign popular video idioms. The movies were called “home videos” before the term Nollywood came up (around 2002), and we should recall that the beginnings of this industry coincide with the widespread availability of consumer video cameras by the late 1980s. To give you an idea of the extent of this industry over the past five years, high estimates have it that some 150 films are being produced monthly in Nigeria alone. The British newspaper *The Guardian* reported in January 2004 that the industry enjoys a market size approaching 100 million euros. Although this may appear to be an extraordinary sum, we should remember that the population of Nigeria alone is over 120 million, and these films are being exported to many other African countries, as well as to African expatriate communities in Europe and North America. What are these movies like? I’ll first observe that the majority of productions are in English, followed by Yoruba, with a small number films produced in Igbo, Hausa,

and other languages (in Ghana, films are produced in Asante-Twi and in English). In Nigeria, many of the Yoruba films are subtitled, making them accessible to non-Yoruba viewers. To outsiders, Nigerian video films probably appear at first glance as soap operas in style and content. And indeed, the majority of the films could probably be characterized as urban melodramas, in which stereotyped domestic and public characters—the man about town; the greedy businessman; the chief or clan leader; the lecherous fool; the working girl looking for true love; the gold-digger; the jealous wife; the gossip; the pidgin-speaking working man; the drug smuggler; and the corrupt politician—are involved in a series of opportunities and crises that unfold in the living room, the office, the nightclub, and the bedroom, these connected by the Mercedes, the roadways, and the cell phone. The films are typically set in the modern African town/city, but it is not uncommon for urban films to have scenes transpiring in the rural village, where country relatives live. (Comedies often seem to dwell on the contrasting expectations and habits of rural vs. city folks). Some films have a primary village setting, and there is a special genre, sometimes called the “epic,” that can be thought of as a traditional costume drama, comparable to Japanese samurai films, or Western filmic recreations of ancient Rome (which of course were very common in early Italian cinema). Here, common characters include the good chief and his group of elders, the queen and

the female retinue, the deceitful big man, the sorcerer or sorceress, young warriors, slaves, slave-traders, and common farming folk. There are also films that move between African and foreign settings. This is habitually London, but there is at least one Nigerian film set in South Africa (*Coming to South Africa*), and one in which a few scenes are purported to transpire in Milano brothel (Itohan: *Woman Traffik*). As an additional note, apart from the films with foreign settings, white people are extremely scarce in the Nollywood story-world.

What about the music? Since its emergence in the 1960s, indigenous African cinema has followed a diversity of approaches to film scoring. To briefly summarize, as a rule, in African cinema since the 1960s, these films have largely relied on a mixture of: 1) African traditional musical instruments and styles (for example, the sounds of an indigenous flute open Mambety's *Touki Bouki*; Islamic chanting and the xalam lute open and close Borom Sarret; in Kongi's *Harvest*, Yoruba traditional drumming has a large role, associated with the traditional chief). Although I mention this category first, it is not necessarily the dominant category. Probably more common, and increasingly so since the 1980s, are the 2) urban African musical styles, such as highlife, soukous, or mbalax. The Zimbabwe movie *Jit*, takes its title from the name of a popular electric guitar band idiom, and the Belgian-Congolese co-production *La Vie est Belle* featured Papa Wemba, at the time a

leading vedette of Congolese soukous); 3) aspects of international “jazz” or “jazz-fusion” seem to inform the film music scores of several noted African composers who have scored films, including Francis Bebey, Abdullah Ibrahim, Manu Dibango, and Ray Lema; 4) finally, other Western musical instruments and scoring techniques, including the use of the piano and the synthesizer, and mood-underscoring using the resources of Western harmony, is fairly widespread in these films. A number of African filmmakers, including the Senegalese directors Ousmane Sembene and Djibril Diop Mambety, and the Ghanaian director Kwah Ansah, seem to have enjoyed turning some of the Western musical symbolism on its head. In Sembene’s *Borom Sarret*, the sounds of classical Western music are symbolically tied to neo-colonial oppression of the poor; in Mambety’s *Touki-Bouki* (1973), the performance of an operatic soprano singing *Plaisirs d’Amour* is similarly symbolically arranged to suggest the moral and spiritual decadence of Westernized African elites. In films by Kwah Ansah, the performance of music by Handel and of British national airs is used to mock African assimilationism to British values. But Western musical styles are not only used for ironic effect. Kaboré’s *Wend Kuuni* (1982) is underscored with a subtle, Stravinskian score for chamber orchestra, by Burkinabe composer René Guirma.

The musical style of Nollywood both builds on this pre-existing model, but with some important differences.

Nollywood video films are generated to satisfy a local demand on the part of African popular movie-watchers, and a demand on the part of the producers, all of whom appear to be local, to make a very quick profit. Production schedules average two or three weeks, and budgets between 10 and 15,000 Euros. In the production hierarchy of Nollywood—and this has been confirmed by the several sources I’ve interviewed within the industry in Nigeria and in Ghana—music ranks extremely low on the order of importance. Budgets for music are very small, and the music is typically provided in post-postproduction by a friend or associate of the director or producer, generally a musician who runs or has access to a small electronic music studio, with electronic keyboard, synthesizer and drum modules, a computer and CD burner.

As a result, synthesizer sounds provide perhaps between 70 to 80% of actual scoring time for these films. The sound of a Rhodes electric piano is quite common, as are synthesized symphonic strings, bass, organ, and jazz-set percussion. Vocals are not uncommon on the soundtrack, including male and female vocals, in English, Yoruba, or other languages. Occasionally, real African drums are used along with other traditional instruments, such as bells, rattles, flutes, and xylophones. The harmonies are strongly biased toward the Western system, with the major key often used for moods from neutral to positive, minor for sadness, and

atonality and chromaticism for moments of confusion, violence, or supernatural terror. The most common approach to rhythm is to lay down a moderate-tempo 4/4 highlife rhythm, sometimes mixed with a hip-hop or R&B backbeat. Of course, we also encounter a wide range of traditional African rhythmic praxis, especially in scenes where traditional music has a diegetic role on screen. (Azonko Simpi, a Ghanaian who has scored over 40 films, told me that the directors sometimes specify that they want the “Afriko” beat, a term referring to a traditional 12/8 African rhythmic style). In terms of melody, the Nollywood creative team certainly is aware of the importance of bestowing your movie, if possible, with a memorable theme, and many of these films do have “theme songs”, where the melody can be repeated at appropriate intervals in the film. A good example is the theme to the popular 2003 production “Mr. Ibu in London” (“Mr. Ibu in London. You are welcome in London.”).

The musical style used in any particular Nollywood film seems to vary by film genre and setting, but admittedly it is sometimes hard to tell. We would expect, for example, to hear traditional music in epics, and urban styles such as highlife or juju in urban genres or crime films. When one watches many of these films, however, one can get the impression that at times the decision might have been made completely at random, owing to the fact that the producers essentially wanted some

sound slapped on. I personally have observed that the African public is far more interested in story line and dialogue than the music per se, and the producers may also be taking this into account. I believe that this is comparable to audience expectations in the silent and early sound periods. It is worthwhile recalling that it was only in the 1950s that Western producers made serious attempts to improve the sound in movie theatres, and that our modern Dolby surround systems only became standard by the last generation of movie-goers.

Provisionally, I would estimate that the stylistic breakdown of music on Nollywood films is as follows: 40% is a generic pop-synthesizer mix, biased toward the highlife idiom; 20% is generic mood-underscoring, using the synthesizer, but emulating styles of mood-underscoring common in Hollywood films and soap opera; another 20% is a pop musical mix reflective of the local radio playlists in West Africa, from the point of view of urban youth, and this is strongly biased toward North American R&B and hip-hop, and Jamaican reggae and dancehall (or ragga), with some cool jazz and piano bar thrown in for good measure (especially for love scenes). Another 10% should be Christian gospel styles popular in contemporary Nigeria and Ghana. The remaining 10% is variously distributed, and includes traditional-style drum-and-percussion music; traditional African folksongs, used to identify rural and customary settings; familiar Western orchestral or concert music (Handel,

Mozart, Vivaldi, Offenbach, Classical Gas), sometimes used to identify a European setting, or sometimes just as an alternative underscore; and other sundry sound effects, including eerie electronics and wind sounds for the many supernatural incidents that these films support.

As opposed to the “art house”-type productions of African cinema since the 1960s, the methods of soundtrack synchronization and choice and placement of musical motifs, sometimes appear crude and heavy-handed in Nollywood films. Both Tunde Kelani and Tunde Adegbola affirm that the reasons for this are that the producers keep music budgets to a minimum, and do not consider the potential of music as an important cultural and artistic element to the films. This is confirmed by the two Ghanaian film composers Simpi and Anku, both of whom suggested that the amount budgeted for the music barely covers their studio costs.

We would be wrong, however, to overestimate the apparent shortcomings of these films. Far more interesting is the remarkable resonance these films are finding in contemporary African audiences, and also a relatively broad appeal, even extending beyond the confines of Nigeria and West Africa. Only last month, at the Hilton of Los Angeles/Universal City, California, the business, artistic, and academic world of cinema met to consider, for the first time in such a

setting, the theme of “NOLLYWOOD RISING: GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES (June 13-17, 2005). The worldwide success of Nollywood may not be right around the corner. Nonetheless, these films and their musical soundtracks reflect a complexly evolving symbol system within contemporary urban Africa, and I believe that it will be worth our while to follow its development closely.

I have reserved the last part of my presentation for playing some examples that illustrate some of the current Nollywood musical conventions.

Traditional drumming and dancing from *Agogo Eewo* (2002)

Hip-Hop representing modern-day college students in *31st Night* (2000)

Religious music (gospel), from *Broken Chord* (1996)

An example of theme music, from *Asimo* (1999)

Nollywood as a concept is very recent. The term seems to have first appeared in a New York Times article in 2002.

Tunde Kelani, personal communication (by email), June 2005.

In May 2005, an Africanist panel at the Cannes Film Festival had the theme “50th Anniversary of African Cinema.” Dwight Brown, “The Agora Lumière Concept at Cannes,” NNPA (National Newspaper Publishers Assoc News Service: HYPERLINK “<http://www.blackpressusa.com/news/Article.asp?SID=4&Title=Departments&NewsID=4206>” <http://www.blackpressusa.com/news/Article.asp?SID=4&Title=Departments&NewsID=4206> (accessed July 21, 2005).

Is the Nigerian home video model exportable? *Africultures* 57. Published on the web, November 28, 2003. [http://www.africultures.com/index.asp?menu=revue\\_affiche\\_article&no=2764&lang=\\_en](http://www.africultures.com/index.asp?menu=revue_affiche_article&no=2764&lang=_en) (accessed May 2005).

In the summer of 2002, I met a Nigerian couple in Florence, Italy—they were there for a medical conference. I asked them about the Nigerian “home movie” phenomenon, as it was then commonly referred to. They affirmed that “Yes, people only want to see Nigerian films now.” (Of course, locally produced films did not completely displace the pre-existing popular movie genres (which include American action and Chinese kung fu films), as a trip to Ghana in 2005 confirmed).

Cf. scores by: Francis Bebey for *Yaaba* (1989); Abdullah Ibrahim for *Tilai* (1990); Manu Dibango for *Countdown*

at *Kusini* (1976), *Ceddo* (1977), and *Le Silence de la forêt* (2003); Ray Lema for *Afrique, je te plumerai* (1993) and *Moi et mon blanc* (2003).

The soundtrack for *Wend Kuuni* is scored for a chamber ensemble of Western instruments: piano, flute, clarinet, oboe, French horn, trumpets, violin, viola, cello, cymbal, as well as voices. The filmmaker, Gaston Kaboré, has commented on this score: “Les musiques classiques pouvaient faire l’objet de transpositions : c’est ce qu’avait fait un compositeur burkinabé, René Guirma, sur *Wend Kuuni*” (“Afriques 50 : regards singuliers, auteurs singuliers – une recherche esthétique permanente. Rencontre au festival de Cannes 2005,” propos recueillis par Olivier Barlet, publié le 27/05/2005, <http://www.africultures.com/>.)

Tunde Adegbola, Executive Director, African Languages Technology Initiative. Personal communication by email, dated June 16, 2005.

Interviews with Tunde Adegbola; Willie Anku; and Azonko Simpi (all June-July 2005)

They have been exported, I have been told, beyond West Africa, to audiences as far as Kenya and South Africa.



## A Modern Action Cue

Peter D. Kaye

### I) Introduction

There is an old wisdom told around the film music community of Los Angeles: “everybody in Hollywood is an expert at two things, their own job and music”. This saying might be born from a frustration that, although only a few have much of any conscious idea as to what someone like a cinematographer, writer or editor might have contributed to a film, it seems like everybody has strong opinions about music.

I will limit my discussion to the part of film music labeled as underscore, reserve my aesthetic judgment about the music, and deal strictly with the industrial product as a functional quantity. I will try to avoid the common pitfall of discussing the music as music. But by looking at various, active elements, I hope to grasp how this underscore works to the advantage of the film’s creators and the audience (assuming that, with a few exceptions, people buy tickets to the cinema in order to watch a film and not listen to music).

I am limiting my study to underscore because: (i) it represents the largest amount of music written, recorded and heard in film/television; (ii) because there seems to have been less specific discussion about

it, in the past; (iii) because although it may have less signification as itself, it may interact more fully with the visual component, rendering it “silent” or “unheard”. Yet, often, this music/film relationship can be as important as an actor’s performance to the full effect of the film. The examination is of one type of musical/dramatic cue, one that had much influence on many that came after, and was noticed for its dramatic success at the cost of its “pure” musical success.

### II) Background

That something happens when music and motion picture are combined has been remarked upon ever since it was first tried in the late nineteenth century. In 1939 Aaron Copland, the American concert composer (and sometime film composer), says in his notes for a lecture he gave at Columbia University on returning from Hollywood;

... But I came away also with another impression, and that was the very mysterious nature of film music. I mean by that the whole subject of what is proper music to be put to a film seems to be highly problematical. It is a subject open to discussion, a subject that no one has finally solved to the satisfaction either of themselves or of film, itself. There are no cut and dried solutions about film music.... (5)

From Hanns Eisler (1947) and Sergei Eisenstein (1947) to the film sound theorist Michel Chion (1995), the theories on the subject have grown. I find these theories are interesting and sometimes inspiring, but, like Copland's, for me they raise more questions than they answer. Claudia Gorbman (1987) is the first to mark the need to differentiate between film music and "pure" music:

To judge film music as one judges "pure" music is to ignore its status as a part of the collaboration that is the film. Ultimately it is the narrative context, the interrelations between music and the rest of the film's system, that determines the effectiveness of film music. (12)

Gorbman's book (now absurdly out of print) was a great leap forward. Perhaps the fact that she was not from a music department gave her the directness to see things with fewer filters. But a problem that plagues most, including Gorbman and Royal Brown (1994) (both in film studies rather than music), is an attempt to take on all music with film, diegetic, non-diegetic, composed for, or preexisting. This attempt to find a unified theory to such differing phenomena may make for a lack of clear analytical direction.

George Burt (1994) also takes a short but wonderfully instructive look under the covers, with interviews of many composers. But as the scores and composers he analyses are from a period of thirty or more years past (true of most of these books), the direct relevance gets thinner to more modern film music. More recently, David

Neumeyer's (with James Buhler (2000) and Caryl Flinn) introduction to *Music and Cinema* does a great job of restating Gorbman's work with more focus, yet still no answers are floated.

Following the theorists, there has been even more written discussion of the different theories, summing up the arguments of the past: writers such as Kathryn Kalinak (1992), Russell Lack (1997) and Nicholas Cook (1998). They go all the way back to Plato and Aristotle, but go on to leave us with all the same questions, for all practical purposes, unanswered. Then there are books of the "train spotting" and idol worship variety, dealing with the biographies and anecdotes of various film composers. They always stand outside the closed door of the composer's workroom.

There is a growing bibliography of books aimed at the teaching of the craft, the most complete being those by the late Fred Karlin and Rayburn Wright (1990), and Sonny Kompanek (2004). These are focused on technical and practical considerations, and venture little opinion on how the music might work/affect with film.

This reticence, or distaste, could be understandable in the face of possibly valid ethical concerns about consciously manipulating an audience, but more probably it is a reflection of the lack of a conscious knowledge of how music affects with image. The wizard does not disclose how he works his magic (because he doesn't know, shhhh, he just waves the same magic

wand over and over and hopes it still works). This may seem harsh, but the list of film scores that are replaced (often mentioned in trade publications, or listed in *Film Score Monthly*), and the constant triage on the dubbing stages of Hollywood (that I have witnessed as a music editor), are evidence that what is left to a muse may fail to satisfy a percentage of the time. One of the most common mistakes by composers is the assumption that if there is any meaning being added by the music, that it is the right meaning, defined by the intentions of the filmmakers. Would-be film composers would be wise to heed Gorbman's observation:

Whatever music is applied to a film segment will do something, will have an effect—just as whatever two words one puts together will produce a meaning different from that of each word separately, because the reader/spectator automatically imposes meaning on such combinations. (15)

As a music editor, I have spent much time on film dubbing stages, correcting for aleatoric meaning associations, composers so proud of their little children, that they do not notice the glaringly wrong (as defined by the intentions of the film makers) semiotic messages their music is sending. This is often followed by the composer's accusation of the director/producer being a cultural cretin for throwing the cue out.

In spite of the logic of Gorbman's declarations, often the discussion of film music boils down to the discussion

of music itself, describing music, music's qualities and theories as to emotional generation etc., having forgotten about the picture that went with it as if it is a factor that is just added on at the end. Or, conversely, sometimes more verbiage is used discussing the plots and turns of the movie than on what the music's specific part of the experience might be. Some limit their concerns to only films of the right artistic or esoteric credentials, as if the volume of daily music/film pumped out from hundreds of channels of cable television and cinemas are not worthy of their concern.

I can understand the shoulder shrugs and declarations of the great mystery of film music with which most want to leave the question of how does it work? When one confronts the possibilities of understanding human experience, these are questions in the deepest realm of experiment. Not much is known, and each set of new empirical findings often appears to contradict the last. When you ponder what disciplines it might take to measure these phenomena of film music, you might come up with a chart as I have (above right). The chart lists possible academic disciplines alongside a box representing a continuum of perception/cognitive consciousness. Within the box are listed some possible areas of affect that the various disciplines might help to shed light on.

Meanwhile, the great factories and workers of corporate media, evolve constantly to the change of fashion, new

## Film/Music Analysis

### Possible disciplines:

pop music  
studies

semiotics

film studies

musicology

psychology

neurology

evolutionary  
theory

### genre/cultural

genre synecdoche

### emotional/psychological

harmonic morphology  
aural texture (roughness)  
tempo/surface rate

a/v cognition binders  
anaphones  
accent alignment

### temporal/physiological

sense of time/time passing/speed  
continuity base

physiological entrainment  
group mimicry/synchronicity  
environmental manipulation

conscious

semiconscious

unconscious

tools and time, and budgetary constraints. Every week of the year, there may be several professional composers on the planet who have to compose from five to ten minutes of very specific music to picture per day, and hundreds composing less. Is all this discussion about the mystery of film music enlightening their creation of it? What might they have learned from pure experience? What some would deride as a lack of creativity in recent film scores, could just be an unconscious codification of techniques that work.

There are some academics taking this challenge on, trying to raise the veil on the mysteries. Philip Tagg and Bob Clarida's *Ten Little Title Tunes* (2003) is an attempt to start finding out what people are effectively hearing, utilizing Tagg's semiotic techniques. But most of their

research is "pure" music-centric (the respondents listened to music as opposed to watching film), making it a test of synaesthetic response. In that sense, the authors seem to be working their way from music back to picture. The tests were focused on a very particular type of film music, title-themes, which has its own set of requirements, so the results may correlate only partially with underscore. Philip Tagg's ongoing study of gestural interconversion (2005) is a directly involved look at a quality that people since Eisenstein (1942) have mentioned but barely dared to test or look at. It is a widely used technique in underscore.

From the department of music cognition and perception, the ongoing work of musicologist Scott Lipscomb (1994), providing empirical evidence that alignment in accent

points between music and image reinforces a watchers sense of appropriateness, is vital. Psychologist Annabel J. Cohen (1997) has shown empirical evidence that music can change an audience's judgment of characters on a screen, and psychologist Marilyn G. Boltz (2004) has looked at how music in film affects the directivity of attention and memory of filmed events. From a whole issue of *Psychomusicology* (13, 1994) dedicated to film music, to the present day, I can only ponder G.B. Shaw's statement, "... a thing that nobody believes cannot be proved too often".

I have (for effect and amusement) mentioned these various studies to a professional screen composer of several decades, and received the expected "well, duh?". Science must move slowly, carefully and thus incrementally. But all of these studies start suggesting directions of research toward answering many questions that have long been left for better tools.

### III) The Cue

For a few years after 1996, if one worked in film music in Hollywood, the film *The Rock* (1996), was often heard mentioned as a desirable model for music in action genre, television and film productions. The score had been composed in the workshop of Hans Zimmer with Nick Glennie-Smith getting lead "composed by" credit. Hans Zimmer, originally German, had immigrated to Los Angeles from London in the mid-1980s. One of a wave

of new composers with roots in record production and the use of synthesizers and samplers; he was a clear threat to the old guard and the status quo.

By 1996, after a string of hits, he set up a large workshop called Media Ventures and enlisted many others, including composers, orchestrators and synthesizer programmers, as resident specialists. In a business where "ghost" writing is a dirty little secret, Zimmer gave credit to those who did the work and many of today's top composers learned their craft and garnered experience under his guidance. It is a team format not generally found in ego-ridden Hollywood. On *The Rock*, he is credited with "two themes" (though it doesn't indicate which ones) and there are several other composers credited with "additional music" along with Nick Glennie-Smith.

The cue most talked about, from *The Rock*, in the film music community of the time (from my experience) and the one I look at here, is a chase scene relatively early on in the movie (40:37 into the film). On the Criterion NTSC DVD (2001) of the movie, it starts in chapter 10 *It's All In The Wrist* and runs through chapter 11 *An E-Ticket Ride*. The audio CD of the score (Hollywood Records 1996) has an edited remixed version titled *The Chase*.

If one compares the sound of the music on the audio CD with the music mixed with dialogue and effects on the DVD, one of the more novel aspects of this production becomes very clear. At the final dub/mix stage, instead of a mixed music track, balanced as the composer deemed

appropriate, the sound mixers had all the individual music tracks available. This allowed the final mix down (dubbing) engineers to change the instrumental balances as the director (and other interested parties) thought most appropriate for the drama on screen (another example of the ego-less industrial product, aspect of modern film music). Because of this freedom, the film mixers used much more of the music, over the created sound effects, than is normal. The audio CD mix is a timid, traditional, listenable version. On the DVD, all sorts of musical elements are used in unexpected proportion that would sound eccentric in purely listening circumstance.

The disregard for the musical aspect in this film, marked a point in film music history, where the directors and producers of films (especially of the action/adventure genre) started demanding music that purely advances the film's overall effect. At the same time, the small group of film score "listeners" became appalled by this change. Christian Clemmensen (2000) wrote in his online article *The 10 Most Overrated Scores of the 1990s*;

The wailing guitars that you heard ruin the chase sequences of that film began a whole series of similar, unlistenable scores (*Con Air*, *Enemy of the State*, etc...). I put the blame on *The Rock* for all those subsequent, substandard Media Ventures action scores. ... It is the score for *The Rock*, therefore, that began all this nonsense, and I think less and less of it every time I listen to its contents after the first three minutes.

This cue consists only of musical elements that are required to advance the filmic experience. In that sense, it is more ego-less, and like an industrial process. There is an extremely high level of craftsmanship involved in the timing and emotional manipulation, yet the large list of names that worked on it makes it hard for anyone to stand out. The necessary functions that the music covered are:

- 1) Time: Meaning the continuity, the sense of velocity of time, urgency, a kinetic velocity of objects.
- 2) Sectionalization: Helping to delineate sections from each other through use of texture and accent. This focuses the diegetic throughline making the film more understandable.
- 3) Gesture: To emotionally accentuate points through sonic, kinetic and textural anaphones, genre synecdoche and interconversion.
- 4) To conduct/direct emotional response through such devices as harmonic change, instrumental color change and volume/dynamic change.

Perhaps the single most important function of film music involves time. Although there is research into the experience of time and music, and much theory about time and motion picture from the film studies



side, I believe the system of music and motion picture is a different creature again. Examining this cue, there is little correlation of the picture to linear time. Things are too fast having had moments removed, too slow from having other things interspersed within. Images are under-cranked or over-cranked for effect (a term from cinema's early days, the hand cranked camera would be cranked faster (over) then the 24/25 frame base making the resulting image play slow at normal speed and vice-versa. Nowadays this is mostly effected digitally.). This state of affairs is what has come to be known as cinematic time, and has been studied and argued by very great minds of the late nineteenth century onward (a fascinating read on this topic is, *The Emergence Of Cinematic Time* (Doane 2002)). Yet little of this thought and discussion has leaked from the film studies department over to music, and curiously, very little about music seems to have leaked back.

The desire to follow the story sees to it one can still garner information through this distortion from linearity, but it is hard work. As soon as music is added, this difficulty disappears almost entirely. Sections of films with highly disjointed cinematic time are almost always scored with music, and picture editors will often cut these scenes to previously existing music to facilitate their editing. In this cue we are looking at, there is a constant pulse, always being adjusted indiscernibly, to maintain alignment with visual accents. This constant pulse acts

as the master diegetic clock, driving the motion forward to its conclusions. Some scenes can lack visual activity, such as when an FBI agent is being pulled back onto a balcony, but the pulse reminds us that elsewhere the action is still advancing, creating urgency. The fact that when we visually return to the action and what has happened in the interim could not have happened in the same time frame, it doesn't register for we trust the "master" pulse/clock.

The musical palette uses everything but the kitchen sink, the kitchen sink being woodwinds. This lack of woodwinds is quite common in sampler-based orchestral scores. This is to facilitate time and budget (and in days long past to conserve on computer/sampler RAM requirements) and results from a three-element equation: what would be missed the least, by the most, that takes the most time and work. As sampled woodwinds require much programming to sound realistic, they are often the first to go, especially in up-tempo, high energy cues where the subtlety might be lost under the sound effects. This efficiency trend is apparent here, even though this film has the advantage of a real orchestra.

But there must be strings. This is because the vast majority, of today's audience, has only heard western orchestral music in association with film and television. One can easily deduce this by comparing the sales of classical/orchestral recordings, the listening base of

classical/orchestral radio and ticket sales to classical concerts to the combined multimedia exposure of today's average citizen. To most people, the sound of a western traditional orchestra means "once upon a time" or "where's the popcorn". When people hear the opening octave and following two notes from Max Steiner's score to *Gone With The Wind*, they don't hear the old south or a story about Scarlett and Rhett, they hear a movie about the same. Hollywood has really latched on to this effect ever since *Star Wars* traditional score brought orchestral scores back in style. There are films made that are wonderful exceptions, but they are exceptions.

Hans Zimmer was an early adopter of combined synthesizer and orchestral tracks. This brings along the before mentioned orchestral/movie message, but combines it with a sequencer controlled consistent pulse which works at a much more subliminal level. This cue may have strings and brass in the conscious foreground, but almost invisibly, just below conscious level and yet at the front of the sound stage, are several layers of spitting synths pulsing eighth and sixteenth notes very kinetically when strong forward time motion is required. The ability for synthesized sound to consistently have such sharp, repeatable attack envelopes is beyond a natural orchestra's reach. The still unexamined psycho/physiological implications of such repeated sounds have made them a standard element of action films for the

last twenty years. Is there bio/neurological sympathy or entrainment? To what effect?

There are also many layers of percussion. On the bottom, is a pop, kick drum, playing quarter notes in the duple time sections. There is also an orchestral bass drum that is barely heard in a conscious way, but its compression of air, in a theater with modern sound components, creates an instinctual fear reaction in the pit of the stomach on the accents it plays. It is used much more for this psychological effect than for any traditional musical function.

There are several tracks of accent percussion. In action cues, a composer will often "hit" every on screen accent with some musical comment/anaphone. One might put a percussionist in a studio with a large monitor showing the film in proper synchronization. The percussionist will then improvise fills and hits to what he sees on the screen. These will be on a separate fader in the final mixing stage (dub) giving the director and sound mixers somewhere to go if they think something needs to be accented. This cue has several layers of these, most of which sound like sequenced samples. A timpani track, a tom track and a cymbals track are featured over several other layers of metallic scrapes and clanks. These are mixed up and down depending on the texture or affect required.

Although in most movies they are often used only as a last resort in lieu of a sound effect that is deemed wrong

(emergency anaphones), in this cue they are used beyond musical taste. This becomes apparent when one listens to the tame “musical” CD audio version and then watch the “percussion happy” screen version. With the picture, there are cymbal crashes on everything. In a section that takes place in a hotel kitchen, the cymbals act as sonic anaphones of the expected crashing of pots and pans. The toms, pounding sixteenth note patterns, serve as both sonic and kinetic anaphones of the automobile engines, power and velocity. All of which raises some unexamined questions, why do we humans take to anaphones so quickly? Are anaphones, sometimes, more emotionally accurate than reality?

Then there are electric guitars: one plays a single note, bent up like a human cry. It is used in two ways. When first heard, it is buried in reverb. An anaphone, it is perhaps for a far- away car (the visual is on a balcony in San Francisco), or for the far away look in the eyes sitting in front of that view. A few minutes later (with less reverb) it is visually accompanied with a surprise moment of fluttering pigeons in a great example of Philip Tagg’s gestural interconversion (2005), the scream-like essence making the surprising moment more shocking than the visual might suggest. A fast repetition of three times: in this case the image of the birds lends back an impression of a seagulls cry to the sound. In its later appearances, when a car is crashing through other cars, its single call seems more of a straightforward human

cry that the guitar supplies to the image of tortured steel. It also doubles string lines at end of sections to give them more edge or bite and volume, setting up a dynamic delineation.

Another guitar is a power chord, crunch, distorted sounding guitar tracked at least twice, one panned left and the other right in the stereo image. In general, this sound has become a genre synecdoche of rock bands, power, stacks of amplifiers and big hair. As it rhythmically doubles bass and string lines with basic, low guitar fifths, it adds some masculine edge, a roughness of surface to the proceedings. It is the mixers who occasionally bring it forward in the mix, beyond normal musical expectation. During a several part section in the hotel kitchen, the featuring of the guitar chord in a later section makes things feel they might be new and different, diverting us from the awareness that this dramatic question has run on a bit. This is a particular problem of chase films, as Mary Ann Doane quips, describing the genre as “... repetition masquerading as difference.” (191). The crunch guitar performs this function several times, and is also used to sonically bulk up important accents.

Besides the stomach rumbling of the bass drum and the nerve and heartbeat entraining by the percussion and synthesizer pulse, there are other, more specific, emotional flags. Over the last several decades, audiences have become suspicious of the nineteenth-century emotionalism that was so much a part of film

music since the beginning. So much so that modern productions that wish to prevail upon their audience to believe the reality that is being depicted, will do without music outside of the diegetic (although often this will be carefully worked in to function as non-diegetic). In the action/adventure genre, any emotional additions to the already viewable question of life or death must be carefully doled out.

Various harmonic techniques have been developed to create a controllable state of neutral emotionality. Much of modern popular music provides useful tools this way, as the reliance on the low fifths and octaves banged out by even the most rudimentary guitarist rarely allows much of a discernible third. This lack of major/minor commitment, tied to a pentatonic/modal root motion, consisting mostly of minor thirds and major seconds, creates a harmonic palette of simple emotional connection. The chord moves up a major second, one feels lifted, up a minor third, one feels really lifted. Going down a major second is a resolution; going down a minor third is a greater resolution. The third is only enhanced for momentary commitment to happy/bright, or sad. Sometimes a root motion of a fourth or fifth is used, but without a third, it can be hard to discern the harmonic functioning center. One can easily modulate by simply stopping on a chord.

This is the harmonic vocabulary of this cue. What must have been a stumbling block for the composer(s) is that

at this point of the film, the audience is still not quite sure who the hero is. And indeed, both of the main characters will evolve into heroes through the course of the film. So as the one chases the other through the San Francisco streets, at several places one hears a heroic charge motif. This consists of a series of the aforementioned harmonic steps, each phrase resolving to a new center. It works very well, except that the modal aspect has the side effect of taking on some kind of cultural implication (almost Russian folk music?).

I will mention two points of interest because they may raise questions. At the climax of the sequence, a San Franciscan cable car gets rocketed into the sky. On the way up we can barely hear a high string note and tom and timpani rolls holding the tension through the sound effects. Once the cable car lands and starts sliding down the hill towards the hero, all the music is pulled out in favour of the effects. When one listens to the audio as used on the CD soundtrack version, one can hear a large choral section chanting a religiously serious chant at that time, in a style reminiscent of Orff's *Carmina Burana* which is so favoured in Hollywood. One can understand the director's reluctance to use this, as (on editing the music back into the picture, and watching I discovered) I believe the impression would have been that the cable car was possessed by demons and the end of the world would arrive on the cable car's arrival. This emotional state being more appropriate for some other movie.

The other point is why I label the source/diegetic cue, that interrupts in two places, “semi-source”. This music covers a plot point question, “where are all the other FBI agents?” Musically it is right into the pick up notes of the 1970 recording of Frank Sinatra singing Leaving on a Jet Plane (written by John Denver, arranged by Don Costa). One wants to think this is diegetic, the agents are eating and drinking, laughing and having a good time, why not diegetic music? But the mixers have not placed the music in the room. It is dry and its stereo perspective doesn’t change as we move around the room. There are no loud speakers in sight (although one might imagine there could be a stereo). It picks up too neatly for reality. This is a straight message from the filmmaker to the audience, a genre synecdoche. Clearly, swinging FBI agents love 1970s era Swinging Frank. What does this mean about agents? The most important message, I believe, is that when agents have free food and drink, they will have far too good a time (as Frank demonstrates just how good) to pay any attention to the balcony where something is about to happen. The writer/director was so worried about this question that it is spoken and answered in dialogue as well.

#### **IV) Conclusion**

This eight and a half minutes of dramatic ballet moves relentlessly on, despite often very pedestrian film shots and the thinnest of plots (a series of will he crash/will he

not crash type situations). This weaving of elements, picture, music and sound effects marks the skill of the large teams assembled for each. In this film, we see music join the other crafts/skills, in successfully utilizing the strengths of many, other than relying on the “genius” of one.

I believe much can be learned from studying this score, that the information may provide some conscious understanding of the processes of contemporary film/music/audience interaction. Not only might this help improve film/television scores and make the work of film composers more efficient, but it may also provide some valuable insights into general human cognition as well.

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## Negotiating Hip Hop: On the Discursive Articulation of a Genre Culture

Mads Krogh

### Preliminary Remarks

This presentation is concerned with the negotiation of the concept of hip hop in Danish popular music criticism. And I should note that, what I am about to say, is part of an ongoing research project dealing with the constitution of genre in popular music culture, and with a special interest in the constitution of genre as a discursive phenomena and the role of popular music criticism in respect to this. I will start the presentation by making a few theoretical suggestions concerning the negotiation of the concept of hip hop and then go on to illustrate these suggestions analysing a few examples.

### Naturalisation: Introduction and Negotiation

I consider Danish hip hop criticism (that is, reviews, feature articles and columns on hip hop in newspapers and popular music magazines) as both reflecting, conceptualising or articulating the overall social, cultural, economical and of course musical development of hip hop. A development from what was (at least in Denmark) initially considered as a break-dance fad and a rather limited subculture to the situation of today, where hip hop is treated as a mass phenomena and a 'super genre'

with a growing number of generic subdivisions, such as gangstarap, new jack swing, eastcoast/westcoast, horrorcore, grime, dirty south etc.

Hip hop criticism reflects and conceptualizes this development, which can be read as a process of discursive naturalisation. That is, a change in the discourse on hip hop from a description of the genre as something new and rather exotic (and something that needed explanation) to a description of hip hop as a natural part of popular music culture (and something that doesn't need explanation).

And looking at the 20 years of Danish hip hop criticism it seems clear, that this process of naturalisation is driven by at least two underlying processes:

First, a continual introduction of new words as means of describing the ever changing music and culture. Initially from the US, but later from Danish hip hop culture as well. And this introduction is to a large extent intertextual, depending on articles bought from American newspapers and magazines or written by Danish reporters visiting the US. Secondly, following this introduction, a process of negotiation – of the value and (in a further perspective) the understanding of hip hop as music and culture (and this is of course the process with which I am concerned today).

It is a negotiation rising out of different interests in hip hop and in hip hop criticism, and there is at least two oppositions structuring what may be termed the field of Danish hip hop criticism: Firstly, a distinction between so-called 'serious' and 'popular' criticism – that is, (roughly speaking) newspapers vs. teenage music-magazines, or intellectuals and journalists vs. fans. This is a distinction which hip hop criticism 'inherits' from the dominant tradition of Danish rock criticism. Secondly, there seems to be a distinction between insiders and outsiders – that is, critics with a more or less personal engagement in hip hop (as music and culture). And since the distinction between serious and popular criticism is dominant in the tradition of Danish rock criticism prior to the advent of hip hop, it is to a large extent the relation between insiders and outsiders, that sets the coverage of hip hop apart from the coverage of other genres – invoking the process of naturalisation. With a bit of a simplification the relation between insiders and outsiders may be described as a relation between critics writing in the tradition of Danish (rock)criticism and critics representing Danish hip hop culture in the popular music press.

On a level of discourse analysis the negotiation takes place as a continuing specification and demarcation of 'what is' and 'what is not' hip hop with respect to (at least) four themes or parameters.

First, there seems to be a specification the means of

expression setting hip hop apart from other genres. And at the most basic level the critics point to the so called 'four elements', that is, break-dance, graffiti, rap and DJing, as the characteristic expressions of the genre.

Secondly, hip hop is specified 'in time'. That is, the history of the genre is told – with a slow establishing of certain generations, schools, golden ages etc. And of course a canon of both American and Danish rap-music.

Thirdly, hip hop is specified 'in space' (so to speak) – both geographically (with reference to locations such as New York, Bronx, Compton etc.) and metaphorically (with recurrent topoi, such as the big city, the ghetto, the street etc.)

Fourthly, hip hop is specified in relation to aesthetic values, that is, criteria for good and bad hip hop relating to general ideas of hip hop as art, culture, politics etc.

It is the negotiation of values which will be my primary concern in the rest of the presentation, though this negotiation can of course not be separated from certain conceptions of the aesthetic means, history and locations of hip hop – that is, from the negotiation of the other parameters.

### **Negotiations ...**

I turn now to the examples reproduced in the handout. Four quotes from reviews of American gangster rap. And knowing the obvious problems in translating primary sources, I have nevertheless made an English

translation for the sake of those not familiar with Danish. I shall be paraphrasing, and I have bolded the passages to which I will be referring.

The reaction to gangster-rap among Danish critics was initially a rather liberal welcoming of this new branch of hip hop. And as had been the case with the music of earlier rap groups and artists (such as Grand Master Flash or Public Enemy), gangsterrap was described as a desperate reaction to desperate social conditions in the American big-cities – with an emphasizing of the aggression resulting from this desperation, and with a frequent homology in the simultaneous description of hip hop as ghetto-music and of the ghetto as a brutal social environment.

The new thing about gangster-rap was however the radicalism with which its artists (like N.W.A., Ice-T, Ghetto Boys etc.) seemed to express their views – on public authorities, race, sex, homosexuals, weapons, violence, drugs etc. And as the rappers seemed to grow still more radical through the early 1990s, the reaction among Danish critics started to divide. Some dismissed gangsterrap, while others were fascinated. And I have given you two examples (examples 1 and 2) illustrating this tendency. Both are from reviews of a concert with Ice-Cube in Copenhagen, March 1993, and both are from major (and I should add, 'serious') Danish newspapers. But their reactions to Ice-Cube are rather different:

In the first example Ice Cube's aggression is celebrated. This is clear from the (overall positive) description of the 'evil growling rhythms', the audience, who was 'taunted, provoked and flattered to scream', and most of all from the assertion that 'Cube is riding at the top of his own potent, fruitful aggression at the moment'. And even though the author, Henrik List is emphasizing the social relation of Ice-Cube's music as a 'glimpse of a merciless gangster-lifestyle in the ghettos of L.A.' (illustrating the homology between tough life and tough music), he is at the same time downplaying the potential messages of the music, asserting that Ice-Cube made a 'few, precise and not too long statements about identity, race relations etc.' In stead of messages List celebrates Ice-Cube's ability to channel his aggressions into 'the controlled short-circuits of the music' – that is, (in other words) the rapper's skills in turning his aggressions into an aesthetic form.

In opposition to this description, the review cited in example two has as its primary focus exactly the messages in Ice-Cube's music and performance. This is clear from the reproof of the Danish audience with the assertion that, 'while everybody is on the watch for signs of racism from other Danes, everyone claps their hands when it is a black American Muslim (that, is Ice-Cube) showing his undisguised race hatred, his love of violence and weapons, and his fascination for death and destruction.' And prior to this the author ridicules

Ice-Cube's refrains, calling the statement 'gorillas ain't gangstas' a 'ground breaking truth', while at the same time deconstructing the artist's honesty, describing Ice-Cube's performance as role-playing, and a construction demanded by 'a rap-industry, who knows how to sell the bad guy'. So even though the author does focus on Ice-Cube's musical and performative skills (as was the case in the first example), this focus is to a large extent overshadowed by a concern with the messages concealed in the rapper's music and performance – as Ice-Cube is dismissed as not only too radical in his viewpoints but even dishonest in his claim of social legitimacy.

By passing this verdict (emphasizing messages and honesty) the author, Lars Villemoes articulates a set of criteria dominant in the tradition of Danish (rock) criticism; while it is my claim, that Henrik List (the author of the first example) articulates a set of criteria derived from (Danish) hip hop-culture.

As such the two critics illustrate, what I described earlier as the opposition between insiders and outsiders in Danish hip hop criticism – as it is actually indicated directly in the critics' positioning of themselves in the two quotes: In the first example the audience is described as we (or us) – positioning the author among the Danish hip hoppers; in the second example the audience is described as 'obviously enjoying being harassed by Ice-Cube', while the author (not sharing

this joy) is positioned outside the crowd, as a distant observer, not an actual partaker in the event.

I mentioned the opposition between insiders and outsiders as a distinguishing factor, setting the coverage of hip hop apart from the coverage of other genres. And I am going to expand a little on the values articulated by the insiders and their relation to Danish hip hop culture. I turn now to example 3 and 4 – two quotes from a Danish teenage music magazine, written by a dedicated (and declared) hip hopper, Jeppe Bisgaard – writing under the name of Jay-B and known (apart from his writing) as a toastmaster at hip hop jams and as a manager and promoter of Danish hip hop-acts. What you may refer to as an entrepreneur in Danish hip hop culture – who happens to be a personal friend of Henrik List (the author of example 1) as well.

Looking at example 3 we see the positioning of the author as insider – directly in the assertion, that 'hip hop is everything'; and indirectly in the use of slang and unexplained references to items, people, places, events etc. important to the Danish hip hop community. Examples are the initial references to blunts, 40s and Øagers burgers – that is, joints, an American malt liquor unknown to most Danes, and a local fast food-restaurant in Copenhagen. And later a reference is given to the old school hip hop-movie *Style Wars* and 'shout out's are made to five graffiti writers, referred to by their pseudonyms. A final feature articulating the author as



insider is the use of expressions in American-English and anglicisms. The effect of this is of course hard to grasp from my translation, but I have marked the passages in question with italics, and to a reader of the Danish text this is a rather characteristic feature. American-English (and perhaps especially African-American-English) may be considered the 'mother tongue' of hip hop from a Danish point of view, and by adopting this way of speaking the author is showing his affiliation with hip hop as a culture originating in the US.

Three artists are mentioned in example 3: Method Man, Ol Dirty Bastard and Keith Murray. And while Method Man's debut album is simply described as 'the bomb', the last-mentioned are characterised by their ability to 'drop golden rhymes, so that the rewind button breaks'. What's depicted here is the critic constantly rewinding his cassette player to check out the artists' ability to rhyme and rap – that is, their skills.

And this focus on skills is, as already indicated, frequent among the insiders, for whom it may be considered a basic interest in how to practise hip hop – in accordance with (and as a specification of) the competitive mentality of the culture.

Thus we find the same focus in example 4, though this time implicit – in the review of *Niggers With Attitudes* Straight Outta Compton by description of the production and composition of the album, with comments on its

beats, lyrics, use of samples etc. What is interesting here is however, the way in which the author combines a focus on skills with a focus on the radical attitudes of N.W.A. Starting from the top, the main conclusion of the quote is, that Straight Outta Compton is 'truly hardcore hip-hop – raw, dirty, cold, noisy and most of all totally wild' – and this is primarily the case because the production, lyrics etc. are wild. And what you may notice is, how wild is pointing at (on the one hand) the hardcore expression of the music and the extreme content of the lyrics (encouraging to among other things police-violence); and (on the other hand) the skills shown by Dr. Dre, Ice-Cube etc. having made, what Bisgaard terms a masterpiece.

In this way the radical attitudes of NWA are described in connection to and (to a certain extent) as a side of the artists' skills – with skills articulated as a prerequisite for showing off or 'posing' an attitude. Which takes me back to example 3, where the author is himself in a certain way 'posing' an attitude – for instance in the assertion, that he 'lights up the pen for the Real Rap symphony!' and later in the statement that 'he can't hardly be bothered spelling F-U-C-K- Y-O-U. Action and words speak louder than a be-yatch!'

Writing this way the author is in the first assertion emphasizing his own ability to write ('to light up the pen' so to speak); while in the second assertion he is addressing a section of his readers in a rather

disrespectful way – while (once again) emphasizing his own skills (or his action and words, to paraphrase the quote). And in this way the use of radical expressions, and the showing of an attitude, is in my view articulated as a specification of the author's ability to express himself in a hip hop manor – showing off his skills as an insider.

Considering attitudes as showing off – or a showing of skills – does in a way mean moving focus from content (or message) to performance, that is, from what is said to how its said; and this approach is (on behalf of the critics) a way of dealing enthusiastically with the radical attitudes of (for instance) gangster rap with out having to deal explicitly with the artists' views on sex, race, politics etc. As stated earlier I find this valuing of skills over message in accordance with (at least) some dominant trends in hip hop culture (for instance its' competitive mentality); while it is definitely not in accordance with the dominant tradition of Danish (rock) criticism – as illustrated by example 2. It may thus seem rather obvious, to point out the celebration of skills over message by a declared hip hopper writing for a teenage music magazine – as a matter of identifying with and writing for the culture. While is surprising to see, the articulation of the same values by Henrik List (the author of the first example) in a major Danish newspaper, to a majority of readers who are definitely not identifying as hip hoppers.

### **Popular music criticism, naturalisation and the articulation of genre cultures**

Summing up my discussion so far, I think the differences among the critics discussed here illustrate the process of negotiation in the naturalisation of hip hop in Danish hip hop criticism – especially with regard to the negotiation of values in the opposition between insiders and outsiders in the field.

I have tried to illustrate, how hip hop is specified differently by different critics in the demarcation of good and bad hip hop – as ghetto music and social realism or as a commercial construct, as a matter of skills or messages, honesty or posing. And the different specifications of hip hop illustrate at the same time the negotiation as part of the process of naturalisation, with the articulation and legitimization of insiders' view on hip hop in high status media such as the Danish newspapers.

At the same time I hope it's clear, that the concept of hip hop (or in a broader sense the discourse on hip hop) developing in Danish hip hop criticism is the product of a rather complex situation, and the process of naturalisation should not be considered as the 'victory' of insiders over outsiders; but rather as the result of different parties' different interests – contributing to a gradual expansion of the possible meanings and values attached to the concept of hip hop.

## Presentation Handout

1. List, Henrik. "Kontrollerede kortslutninger." [Controlled Short-circuits] Berlingske Tidende 18. Marts 1993: 4.

"Bassen sank endnu længere ned i ghettomørket, den metalliske støj skar sine riffs på tværs af de ondt knurrende rytmer og energien pumpede som adrenalin igennem kroppene, da Ice Cube selv overtog scenen ... Das EFX var desværre ikke med på »Check Yo Self« som på det seneste Ice Cube-album »The Predator«, men en veloplagt aggressiv Cube trak os med alligevel. Publikum blev skiftevis hånet, provokeret og smigret til at skrigе, som havde Danmark banket den ind til en landskamp i Parken. Efter en af de få, præcise og ikke for lange statements (som andre hard core-rappere har det med et overdrive) om identitet, raceforhold, politivold, politik og sammenhold, oplevede man ... hvordan Cube rider på bølgetoppen af sin egen potente, frugtbare vrede lige nu. Et sugende hard core-inferno, et indblik i en nådesløs gangster-livsstil i L.A.'s ghettoer og en sammenbidt anstrengelse for at kanalisere aggressionerne ud i denne musiks kontrollerede kortslutninger."

"The bass sank even deeper into the ghetto darkness, the metallic noise cut its riffs across the evil growling rhythms and the energy pumped like adrenalin through the bodies, as Ice Cube himself entered the stage ...

Sadly Das EFX did not participate on »Check Yo Self« as on the latest Ice-Cube album »The Predator«, but an eager aggressive Ice-Cube got us up anyway. The audience was taunted, provoked and flattered to scream, as if Denmark had scored in an international. Following one of the few, precise and not too long statements (which other hard-core rappers tend to overdo) about identity, race relations, police violence, politics and solidarity, we all experience ... about how Cube is riding at the top of his own potent, fruitful aggression at the moment. A swirling hard-core inferno, a glimpse of a merciless gangster-lifestyle in the ghettos of L.A. and a dogged effort to channel the aggressions into the controlled short-circuits of this music."

2. Villemoes, Lars. "En kæft som et baseballbræt." [A Mouth Like a Baseball Bat] Weekendavisen 19. Marts 1993: 18.

ICE Cube lever her i et glimt op til den rolle som lærer med blod under neglene, der kræves af hans fans og af en rap-industri, der ved hvordan den skal sælge the bad guy. Men selv om han er en hårdtarbejdende showmand med mange knytnæveslag i luften og et større løbepensum fra den ene side af scenen til anden, kniber det med at give musikalsk valuta for pengene. (...) Men tilbedelsen af Ice Cube og hans verbale tæskehold var ubrydelig. Publikum nød tydeligvis at blive herset

rundt med af den studse over-rapper i da Lench Mob, som med et vink af lillefingeren og en kæft med en slagstyrke som et baseballbat kunne få den fulde sal til at vifte energisk og taktfast fra side til side med armene og skråle med på stort set melodiløse glatnakke-omkvæd som »eat'em up / beat'em up«, »fucking with my shotgun / boom boom boom« og ikke mindst den banebrydende sandhed »gorillas ain't gangstas«. (...) Hvor man er meget på vagt overfor tegn på racisme hos andre danskere klapper man i hænderne, når det er en sort amerikansk muslim, der viser sit utilslørede racehad, sin volds- og våbenglæde og sin fascination af død og ødelæggelse.

"HERE in a glimpse Ice Cube is living up to the role as teacher with blood on his hands, that is demanded by his fans and a rap-industry, who knows how to sell the bad guy. But even if he is a hardworking showman with a lot of fist-waving in the air and lot of running from one side of the stage to the other, it does not pay off musically. (...) But the adoration of Ice-Cube and his verbal bruise-squad was unbreakable. The audience obviously enjoyed being harassed by the brusque chief-rapper in da Lench Mob, who by the wave of his pinkie and a mouth with the striking power of a baseball bat, had the entire room waving energetic and regular from one side to another, chanting more or less shallow-brained refrains like »eat'em up / beat'em up«, »fucking with my shotgun / boom boom boom« and not least the

ground breaking truth »gorillas ain't gangstas«. (...) While everybody is on the watch for signs of racism from other Danes, everyone claps their hands when it is a black American Muslim showing his undisguised race hatred, his love of violence and weapons, and his fascination for death and destruction."

3. Bisgaard, Jeppe. "Real Rap." MIX 2 (1995): 48.

"Light my peoples! Ild, vand, jord, blålyn, 40s, Øagers burgere og det i den grad og på den breddegrad, hvor Jay-B lights up the pen for the Real Rap symphony! Er hiphop en kultur, religion eller noget helt tredje ...? Kan vi ikke bare blive enige om, at hiphop er alt!!! Kom træt hjem efter en fucked up dag. Sæt BDP's 'Criminal Minded' på og det føles, som om man har nakket fem koffein tabletter og har vundet i Lotto. Føler man et øjeblik, at tilværelsen er for grå og indholdsløs ... Prop 'Style Wars' i videoen og lad farverne, stemningerne og bevægelserne løfte dig op på et højere niveau. Et kæmpe shout out til Sabe, Sek, Rens, Fae, Bates, Paks og alle de andre graf skrivere, der forsøder tilværelsen for DSB og hele den danske befolkning. Let it be known that my ego's only partially grown ... Der bliver solgt billetter til det årlige 'Jay-B is a sell-out' seminar, der i år bliver afholdt i telefonboksen på åndsbollestræde. Normalt plejer jeg altid at være klar med endnu en udsyret, humoristisk kommentar til den slags PMS agtige 'earth

to your brain, is anyone home?’ kommentarer, men nu gider jeg næsten ikke engang stave til F-U-C-K- Y-O-U. Action and words speak lauder than a be-yatch! (...) Method Mans debut album er bomben, men guderne skal vide, at jeg også glæder mig som et lille barn til Ol’ Dity Bastards solo debut. .. Ol’ Dirty er klar igen og parat til at droppe gyldne rim. En anden rimets mester, der høster masser af props nu er Keith Murray fra Def Squad, der forstår at sige abstrakte rim, så rewind knappen går i stykker. [...]

”Light my peoples! Fire, water, earth, blunts, 40’s, Øagers burgers, and to such a degree and on that degree of longitude where Jay-B lights up the pen for the Real Rap symphony! Is hip hop a culture, religion or something third ...? Can’t we just agree, that hip hop is everything!!! Come home tired after a fucked up day. Put BDP’s ‘Criminal Minded’ on and it feels like you’ve just snatched five caffeine tablets and won the Lottery. If one, just for a moment, feels that life is too grey and empty ... Cram ‘Style Wars’ in the VCR and let the colours, feelings and movements raise you to a higher level. A huge shout out to Sabe, Sek, Rens, Fae, Bates, Paks and all other graff[iti] writers, who are sweetening the life of DSB [Danish State Railways] and the entire Danish population. Let it be known that my ego’s only partially grown ... Tickets are sold for the annual ‘Jay-B is a Sell-out’ seminar, this year held in the phone booth on Idiot street. Usually I’d always be ready with another

freaked out, funny comment to that kind of PMS-like ‘earth to your brain, is anyone home?’-comments, but right now I can hardly be bothered spelling F-U-C-K-Y-O-U. Action and words speak lauder than a be-yatch! (...) Method Man’s debut album is the bomb, but God knows, I’m looking forward like a little child to Ol’ Dirty Bastards solo debut. [...] Ol’ Dirty is ready once again and ready to drop his golden rhymes. Another champion of rhymes, cashing in a lot of props right now, is Keith Murray from Def Squad, who’s capable of doing abstract rhymes so that the rewind button breaks. [...]

4. Bisgaard, Jeppe. ”Månedens pladeanbefaling: N.W.A. – Straight Outta Compton.” [Recommendation of the Month ...] Mix 6 (1989): 4.

”Det her er rigtig hardcore hip-hop. Råt, beskidt, koldt, støjende og frem for alt overhamrende vildt. Easy-E, MC Ren, IceCube og DR. Dre har begået et mesterstykke med denne LP. Musikken er bygget op om nogle hurtige rå rytmer, hvor til der er tilsat nogle minimalistiske riffs, lidt politisirener, lidt skrig, lidt skud og andre samples. Teksterne handler om stoffer, vold, sex, raceproblemer ... og om, hvor fedt det må være at tage sin maskinpistol frem og meje politifolk ned, bygget op om udtrykkene: fuck, shit, motherfuckin’ og bullshit. Pladen er produceret af DR. Dre og Yella, som har lavet en rigtig vild og sjusket streetproduktion. De vildeste

numre er 'Fuck Tha Police' og 'Express yourself', og på nær numrene 'Parental Discretion Iz Advices' og 'I Ain't Tha One', er hele pladen for vild. (...) KØB DEN!!!"

"This is truly hardcore hip-hop. Raw, dirty, cold, noisy and most of all totally wild. Easy-E, MC Ren, IceCube and DR. Dre has done a masterpiece with this LP. The music is built around some fast raw rhythms, some minimalistic riffs added, a few police sirens, a bit of screaming, some gunshots and other samples. The lyrics are mostly about drugs, violence, sex, racial issues ... and about how cool it must be mowing down cops, built on the expressions fuck, shit, motherfuckin' and bullshit. The album is produced by DR., Dre and Yella, who've made a really wild and sloppy street-production. The wildest tracks are 'Fuck Tha Police' and 'Express yourself', and except 'Parental Discretion Iz Advices' and 'I Ain't Tha One' the entire album is just too wild. (...) BUY IT!!!"



## Screaming Sopranos and Other Awful Noise: Irritating Voices in Early Radio

### Broadcasting in Finland

Vesa Kurkela

This paper analyses the audience feedback on radio broadcasting in Finland in the late 1920s and the 1930s. The point of departure is the new radioscape that brought public sounds to private life, foreign culture to the living rooms of ordinary citizens. The new radioscape was very different from the traditional home soundscape and domestic sounds. Radio brought a lot of new voices to everyday private life. Many of these sounds were considered unpleasant and irritating.

We could also ask how radio changed people's attitude to different sounds. Probably radio made the listeners more conscious of foreign voices. The new situation interestingly mirrors two cultural relationships: the relation of the mass media to traditional folk culture and the change of women's status and role in modern life.

#### Music in Early Radio

The Finnish Broadcasting Company, YLE, was founded in 1926. This occurred a few years later than regular radio broadcasting in Western countries usually began. From the very beginning YLE followed two main principles in programme planning:

1. The most important mission was to offer serious and uplifting popular education and information to all Finns.
2. In addition, YLE broadcast "suitable entertainment", in order to fulfil the listeners' need for amusement.

In the radio's program policy, suitability referred more to high society than folksy style. Even light music had to be sophisticated and in no way vulgar or crude. The whole radio policy was based on a solidly paternalistic attitude. The broadcasting authorities really thought they knew what was good for the Finnish people and what was not.

From the very beginning, music played an important role in Finnish radio broadcasting. During the first years the share of music was nearly 70 percent of all broadcast time. Later on, the percentage went down, but stayed at around 50. Almost all music was aired live, recordings were used very seldom. Accordingly, YLE contributed considerably to its own music production. The Finnish Radio Orchestra was founded in 1927 as a small salon music ensemble. Three

years later the Orchestra consisted of 24 musicians – at the same time, the rest of the radio staff from the chief manager to delivery boys amounted to 12 employees.<sup>1</sup>

Gradually the Radio Orchestra also changed its repertoire towards symphonic music and played salon music and other lighter genres less frequently. This also led to some debate and critical feedback from listeners to the radio headquarters.

### Listeners' Opinions

During the first years the Finnish radio authorities were very interested in the listeners' opinions of radio programmes. In 1928 and 1929 special surveys were organized, in which the radio license owners were asked about their preferences in radio music and other programmes. The following review of pleasant and irritating radio voices is mainly based on the 1929 survey (based on 42.122 responses). Additional data has been collected on various angry letters to the editors in Finnish newspapers and even more ill-tempered letters directed to the radio headquarters.

The feedback uncovers an obvious contradiction between popular taste and highbrow culture, between listeners' wishes and the paternalistic attitude of the radio authorities. It may be significant that YLE did not repeat the surveys after 1929. The data on listeners' uncivilised tastes was probably not useful in the radio policy that followed a

paternalistic and morally uplifting line.

In the following two tables we shall first see what the most popular radio sounds and programmes were, and then the most irritating ones.

**Table 1. Pleasant Sounds on Finnish radio**

- accordion music
- topical songs and old dance music (polkas, waltzes)
- male speakers, "Uncle Markus" and Alexis af Enehjelm
- church service and children's hour
- popular lectures on science, travel, fitness, economic and political issues
- brass bands and choral singing (male voice choirs)
- folk song arrangements

The five-row accordion was a real innovation on the popular music scene of the 1920s. It was a very popular instrument for dance music. New folksy dance bands or "jazz bands" might contain even four accordions. The best-known of these, the Dallapé orchestra, became popular with the aid of recordings of fast foxtrots tunes sung in Finnish.

Initially the Finnish Broadcasting Company hired two male speakers, who also became the main figures for organizing and planning radio programs: Alexis Enehjelm and Markus Rautio. The latter was known “Uncle Markus”, due to his children’s hours. These programs were immensely popular and made Uncle Markus’ voice really well-known among all radio listeners, especially children.<sup>3</sup>

However, what is most striking in the pleasant sound list is its close connection to traditional folk culture. In the 1920s, folk culture consisted not only of traditional peasant culture, but also of so-called organization culture of various associations and clubs that were founded in the late 19th century as a part of Finnish national movement. At regular festivals in assembly houses and youth clubs the Finns were already used to listening to brass bands and choral music as well as popular lectures on various beneficial topics. In its early program planning YLE successfully followed this old trend.

### Unpleasant Radio Voices

The list of unpleasant radio voices consists of different topics and sound sources. However, the reasons for their unpopularity are quite easy to explain.

In the early radio years, the quality of radio sound was very poor due to serious technical problems in transmission. The lo-fi standard of radio sound made even smooth orchestral

**Table 2. Irritating sounds on Finnish radio**

- technical problems and poor quality in radio transmission
- foreign languages in songs
- Swedish-speaking broadcasting
- lectures on philosophy, art and music
- antipathetic female announcers
- irritating music
- (modern American dance music)
- symphonic and chamber music
- opera, operetta, cabaret
- female choirs
- female opera singers

music quite noisy and restless, thus disturbing everyday radio listening.

There were many voices on the radio waves that were felt to be irritating by the majority of radio listeners, the Finnish-speaking mainstream Finns: Broadcasting in foreign languages, modern concert music and lectures on art and philosophy sounded inconceivable, strange, and disturbing. The message of the radio could not reach the ordinary listener.

The most striking feature on the list, however, is the disturbing female voices. The irritation came out very

clearly in many angry letters from the radio listeners to the radio headquarters. Both female announcers and singers were blamed for their shrill voices that made radio listening painful.

In order to understand this dislike, we have to go back to my point of departure, the idea of a totally new radioscope that was born in the wake of radio broadcasting. The radioscope was felt among the listeners to be public. In the first half of the 20th century, a typical and acceptable public voice was, of course, a male voice. Radio belonged to the public sphere, and at the beginning of the radio era, female voices were easily omitted from the radioscope.

The other reason for the irritation was more occasional. The first female speaker in YLE, Ms. Ebba Jacobsson-Lilius just happened to have quite a cold and stiff voice quality. She sounded really upper-class, but the same can be said about the voice of Alexis af Enehjelm, an aristocrat and opera singer. However, he was a man and thus, he was allowed to sound official.

Quite soon, at least during the years of World War II, female radio voices were accepted by the Finnish listeners. However, an optimal radio voice tended to develop quite soft and relatively low, and the female speakers usually tried to follow this ideal. This has a connection to female voices in the public sphere even today. If you listen to women in

high positions – business managers or politicians – their public voice is lower than a private one. A piping soprano is not considered as credible.

However, it was not only the question of credibility that specifically coloratura sopranos were considered aggravating during the early radio years. Of course, the singing style of operatic sopranos was very different from folk or the popular way of singing, and this is why the listening experience was easily too peculiar for ordinary listeners. One reason was no doubt the poor technical quality of radio transmission that made soprano voices very tiny, weak, distant, and at least occasionally, full of distortion.

The other reason was the song lyrics. Most of the operatic repertoire was performed in foreign languages. However, singing in Finnish did not make the reception much easier. The habit of opera singers to pronounce the lyrics “musically” often resulted in such a performance that you could not understand a single word even if sung in your mother tongue.

Interestingly, the first big hit singer in Finland, Georg Malmstén, had also an operatic background and training. However, he could to get rid of his operatic manners and to adapt his voice to popular singing style.<sup>4</sup> The same seems to have been impossible for Finnish female opera

and operetta singers, and the disgust of operatic sopranos caused also the low popularity of female popular singers. It was not until in the mid-1950s that the first generation of female hit soloists appeared. The most successful of them were contraltos and altos, the so-called crooning altos like Annikki Tähti, and even sopranos lowered the pitch when striving for popularity.<sup>5</sup>

### Why So Serious?

One can ask why the Finnish audiences took the early radio sound so seriously. Why did they get so angry at disturbing voices? First, we have to remember that radio broadcasting in the 1920s was a real novelty, a sign of modernity and national prosperity. Hardly anybody could be indifferent, since radio was much more than mere entertainment. It was highly political, a totally new mass medium. Secondly, for several decades, Finnish radio was based on one-channel broadcasting. There was no alternative but to switch the receiver off if you happened to dislike radio sound.

Furthermore, irritating sounds were more disturbing at home than in public places like in the street, where you could quite easily escape irritating foreign language or unpleasant music. Finally, a strange and disturbing radioscope – upper-class speech, noisy modern music or foreign language – was quite easily experienced as a threat to harmonious family life. The radio set was no longer a cosy fireplace, “a radio hearth” – as a typical radio

advertisement of the time called it – but a dangerous device that caused irritation.<sup>6</sup>

### Radio and Cultural Conflicts

In conclusion, the early broadcasting in Finland brought up the seven cultural conflicts or contradictions that were very typical of European cultural history in the last century.

- popular culture vs. upper-class culture
- popular education vs. high art and academia
- rural & local vs. urban & national
- traditional life vs. modernity
- liberal attitude vs. paternalistic attitude
- female voice vs. masculine publicity
- private life vs. public sphere

In its early years, YLE stuck firmly to the topics mentioned on the right side of the list above, promoting high-brow culture, nationalist values, semi-urban modernity, masculine publicity and paternalist attitude. Gradually, however, the left got more space in radio broadcasting, first popular education and folk tradition, then rural and regional values, and popular culture. Finally a liberal attitude, private life and female voices became a part of radio language, when an official radio speech and “reading the paper” gave way to a more informal radio speech. In Finland this only occurred in the late 1980s and, accordingly, it is totally beyond the scope of this paper.

## Endnotes

1. Lyytinen 1996: 54-55; Jalkanen & Kurkela 2003: 306.
2. The YLE collection, ELKA (The Central Archives of Finnish Industry and Commerce), Mikkeli. The results were published in the periodical Yleisradio 16/1929: 241; see also Ala-Fossi 2005: 144-145.
3. Lyytinen *ibid*: 55-56.
4. Warsell 2003: 136-192.
5. Gronow 1996: 64-67.
6. Frith 1988: 31-32.

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## Cliff Richard's Self-Presentation as a Jesus-Figure

Anja Löbert

### Introductory Notes

**A**lthough the British singer Cliff Richard is an unprecedented phenomenon in popular music, the discipline of Popular Music Studies has by and large disregarded him in its research to date.<sup>1</sup>

Cliff Richard has been successfully releasing records since 1958, his singles and albums regularly reach a chart position in the Top 10, his contributions to pop music were confirmed by his knighthood in 1996, and his popularity is such that he is frequently referred to as a “cultural institution”<sup>2</sup> of Great Britain. On the more statistical side, we have to acknowledge that Cliff Richard has spent more weeks in the British charts than any other singer or band, except for Elvis Presley. According to the *Guinness Book of British Hit Singles* he comes second in the Top 100 artists of all time.<sup>3</sup>

It is surprising then, that, despite these objective accomplishments which should confirm the singer's social significance, the parameters of this meaningfulness have not yet been deemed worthy of investigation by Popular Music Studies.

The way Popular Music Studies organise the inclusion of genres and styles, acts and musicians that get researched upon itself is a subject worth investigating. Functionally equivalent perhaps to the Kantian distinction between the pure taste and the barbarian taste, Popular Music Studies, although rejecting traditional elitist notions of art, develop their own aesthetics. The dividing line here appears to be that of cool/uncool.<sup>4</sup> With Pierre Bourdieu we could say that the cool in the academic field of popular music studies is, after all, defined by an intellectual elite, that has, on its way to its social position, acquired a certain habitus, that is systematically distinct from that of the less intellectually wealthy strata of society. This might explain the systematic neglect of someone like Cliff Richard, who is known to appeal predominantly to the taste of a more conservative, working class audience.

Yet my academic interest in Cliff Richard as a cultural phenomenon is not concerned with why Popular Music Studies have, so far, virtually ignored the singer.

My research has been devoted to the star's self-presentation on the production end and the star's significance for the fan on the receiving end, as well as the interrelation of the two. For this purpose, I have

analysed song lyrics, official picture releases and official video footage, with the outcome that one major thrust of his self-presentation appears to be his portrayal as a redeemer figure. Parallel to that, I have conducted an ethnographic survey among Cliff Richard fanclub members in Liverpool, with the aim of understanding a) the personal circumstances that provided the context of their initial attraction to the star, b) the meaning the star has in their lives and c) the particular aspects of Cliff Richard they relate to in their enthusiastic fandom.

The working hypothesis of my research is that the relationship between Cliff Richard and his fans seems to reproduce itself to a considerable degree by means of the myth of the redeemer, which the singer offers and the fan seeks.

In the paper at hand, however, I will restrict my focus to illustrating that part of my argument which claims that Cliff Richard portrays himself as a saviour figure.

#### **Cliff Richard's self-presentation as a redeemer-figure**

*"Come to me, all who are weary  
and find life burdensome, and I  
will refresh you. Take my yoke  
upon your shoulders and learn  
from me, for I am gentle and humble*

*of heart. Your souls will find  
rest, for my yoke is easy and my  
burden light."*

*Jesus to Matthew, Matthew 11: 28-30*

#### **The song lyrics**

A recurring motif in the lyrics of the singer is the promise of redemption. To illustrate that, we will take a look at the diverse offers and invitations of the singer-persona in Cliff Richard's songs.

In this following first example, the singer-persona presents itself as a guardian angel who will turn darkness to light, ease fear and danger, and who will never let the listener fall. He does so by offering the addressee a place to turn to in their disorientation:

*Lately all you can feel is the rain falling*

*Maybe you feel this world is to blame*

*You've been crying*

*(...) you wonder sometimes*

*Where can, where can you go (can you go)*

*(Remember me) oh when you feel this way*

*And you need someone to lean on*

*(...)*

*(Remember me) I am your guardian angel*

*And I'll never let you fall*

*And if you're ever in fear or danger*

*(Remember me) I am the one  
 Who will turn all your darkness to light  
 In the morning  
 You'll learn when you're too hard on yourself  
 You can call me  
 (Remember me) oh when you feel this way  
 And you need someone to lean on  
  
 (Remember me) I am your guardian angel  
 And I'll never let you fall  
 And if you're ever in fear or danger  
 (Remember me)<sup>5</sup>*

Comparable mildness and vowed salvation from human misery is being promised throughout the lyrics of a more recent song:

*When the darkness surrounds you,  
 And you cannot see your way.  
 When the loneliness finds you,  
 And there is no hiding place.  
 Never give up believing,  
 Love will save the day.  
  
 Open up the gates,  
 You closed around your heart.  
 Someone is waiting to come in.  
 Let Me be the One,*

*That you hold on to.  
 I will bring the sun to shine on you.  
 Your lonely days are gone.  
 The best is yet to come,  
 If you let Me be the One.*

*When the weight on your shoulders  
 Is too much to bear.  
 There's no burden too heavy,  
 That cannot be shared.  
 You can run into My heart,  
 Lay your troubles there.*

*They say surrender brings freedom for the soul.  
 Well, don't you think it's time,  
 That you let Me know.  
 And let Me be the One,  
 That you hold on to.  
 Cos I will bring the sun to shine on you.  
 Your lonely days are gone.  
 The best is yet to come,  
 If you let Me be the One.<sup>6</sup>*

It is particularly the release from loneliness that is being promised here, if only we surrender to the singer-persona. Remarkable in its recurrence is the light/darkness metaphor, which I will get back to in a later section of my analysis.

In the following excerpt it is again the cushioning or comforting after a hurt that must be of interest for us:

*Well if anyone should harm you  
 Anyone should get in your way  
 And you need someone to talk to  
 Please call me right away  
 So don't believe everything they say  
 They're only jealous of you  
 How people talk when they don't know the truth  
 Don't ever let them get to you*

Here, a dividing line is drawn between an outside ("they", "people") that is described as unpleasant and hurtful, and the addressed person. The singer-persona clearly allies himself with the listener: *"If anyone should harm you, please call me right away"*

Later in the chorus, the listener is reassured, that, undoubtedly ...

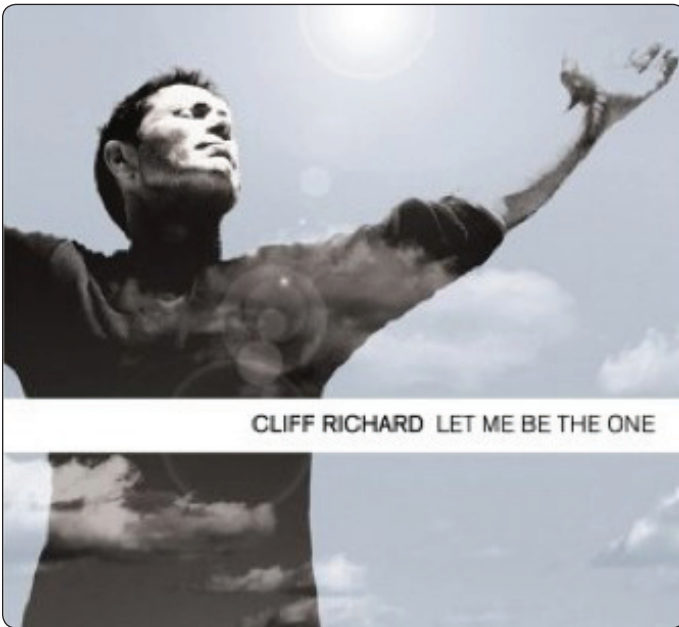
*My love is stronger than that  
 My love is poetry in motion  
 My love is deeper than that  
 My love is deeper than the ocean <sup>7</sup>*

As an observation it seems interesting, that the same motif had been expressed by Richard some 20 years before the song just discussed. Already in 1967 he

sings: *"When the world in which you're living gets a bit too much to bear, and the people on the sidewalk seem to form a solid wall, you're gonna find me, way out in the country".* <sup>8</sup> It is again the other "people" and the difficulty of coping with the inhabited world from which the singer-persona offers asylum. It also should not be overlooked that, instead of the economically satisfactory designation "out in the country", the phrase "way out" is chosen. This seems to inspire associations of escape.<sup>9</sup> The same motif of the redeeming friend in the first person singular can be found in Richard's cover version of the Carole King song "You've got a friend".<sup>10</sup>

*When you're down and troubled  
 And you need a helping hand  
 And nothing, whoa nothing is going right.  
 Close your eyes and think of me  
 And soon I will be there  
 To brighten up even your darkest nights.*

*You just call out my name,  
 And you know wherever I am  
 I'll come running, oh yeah baby  
 To see you again.  
 Winter, spring, summer, or fall,  
 All you have to do is call  
 And I'll be there, yeah, yeah, yeah.  
 You've got a friend.*



Without difficulties we could proceed in this fashion; it does not take much to trace down the semantic of redemption in Cliff Richard's songs.<sup>11</sup> Yet, we shall do with the given examples and devote our attention to the visual representation of the singer.

### The pictorial representation

The symbolism of redemption can not only be found on the lyrical plane, but continues on the visual plane. Let us have an analytical look at the official release above. Both arms are spread out in an angle of 110 degrees from the body and reach out towards the sun. The palms of his hands are opened, the face entirely bathed in sunlight. The figure is photographed from a low angle camera perspective through a transparent sky.

I would like to proceed by selecting individual semantic components of the image to contextualise them, and to

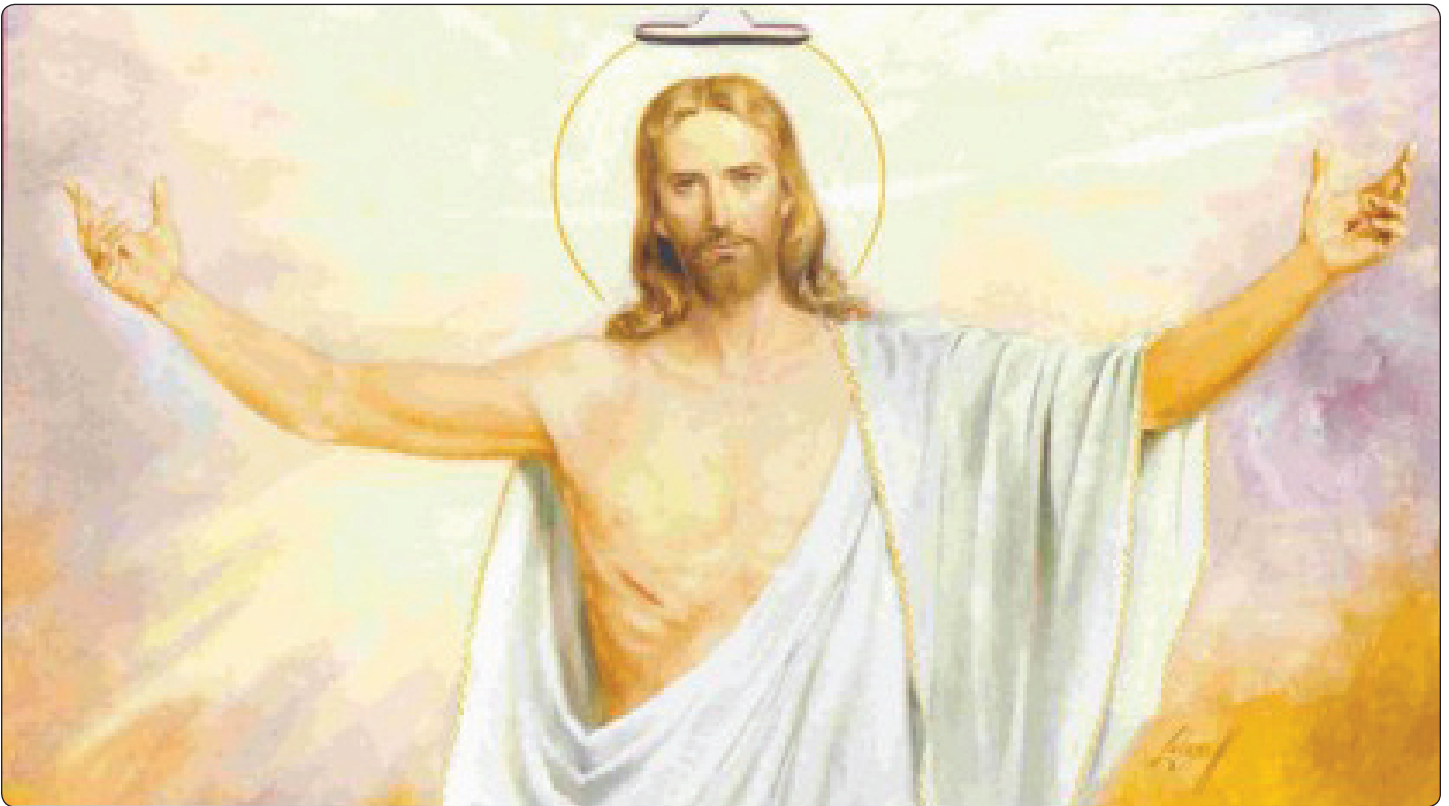
analyse how far they allude to the pictorial and symbolic representation of Jesus Christ. The components of interest here will be: the posture, the light and the superhuman dimension of the shown figure.

### The posture

A variation of this open-armed posture can be found in a multitude of picture and motion picture releases of Cliff Richard. In the video clip for the song *Millennium Prayer*, for instance, we can see a few second's worth of a camera shot in which the singer stretches out his arms like the crucified Jesus.

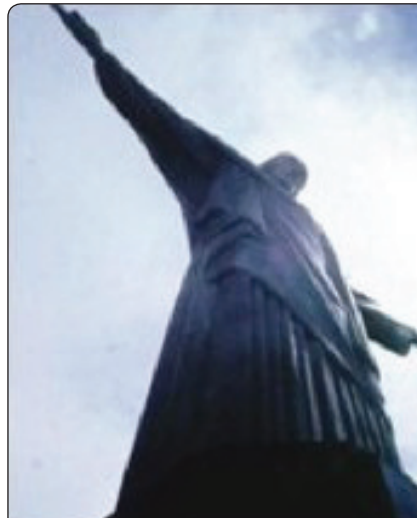
This religious interpretation suggests itself for at least three reasons. Firstly, this pose is expressed in a clearly religious semantic field, since the singer recites *Our Father*, like Jesus once did to his listeners. Secondly, the intertextual comparison with other examples from the pop music genre gives us reason to interpret Richard's gesture in a religious way. In the visuals of Michael Jackson, for instance, we can discover a video montage in which Jackson in a pose just like our object of analysis transforms into a luminescent crucifix.<sup>12</sup> Two further examples are to be mentioned in this context: in a television appearance, Robbie Williams, in a similar stance, sings the words: "*I sit and talk to god*"; also, the boyband *Take That* can be seen throwing their bodies towards the sky with outstretched arms in the visual to their song entitled *Pray*.





All of these examples exhibit a structural similarity. Not only is the gesture of the outstretched arms recurrently uttered in a Christian-religious context (a crucifix in Jackson's case, God in Williams' case, praying in both Take That's and Cliff Richard's case), but also are these recurring associations expressed in the same socio-cultural sphere, namely the genre of western popular music.

The third reason that might bring us to read Richard's posture as an allusion to Jesus Christ becomes apparent when we take a look at Jesus' medial representation itself. For this purpose two examples will be shown that illustrate the resemblance to Cliff Richard's self-presentation. This first illustration exemplifies the resurrected Jesus with nimbus, aureole, and outstretched arms.



Above: The well-known Rio de Janeiro monument Christ, the Redeemer

Below: Like a synecdoche that points to the original redeemer, this Jesus posture is to be encountered in Cliff Richard's self-presentation<sup>13</sup>

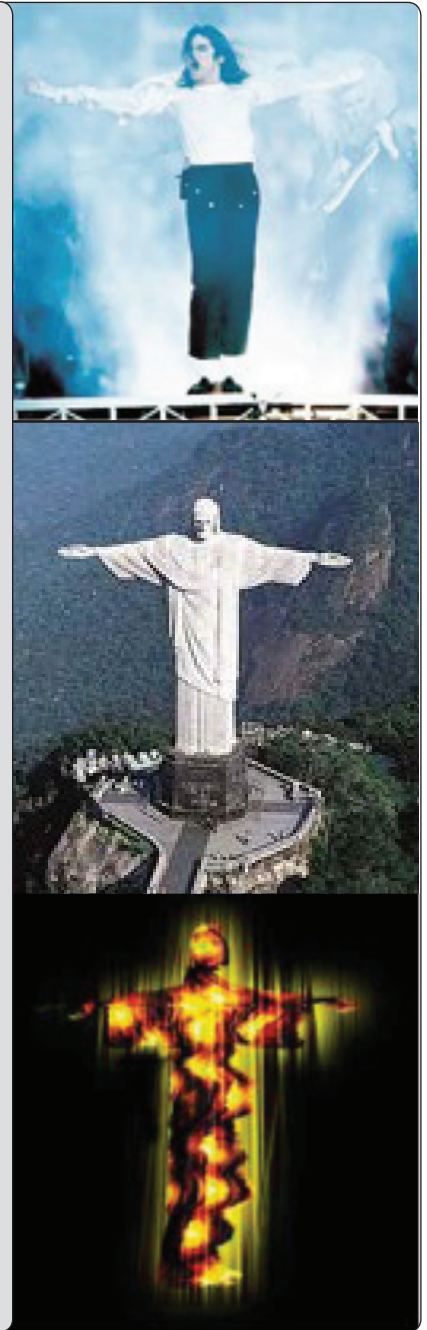




These images of Cliff Richard can also be seen in a more general semantic field of mutual cross-referencing between popular music iconography and Christian iconography. The collage above right is only the beginning of what could easily become a larger collection of illustrations of this hypothesis.

This section of my paper has been to elaborate the

Above: Cross-referencing between popular music iconography and Christian iconography



argument that the posture of the open arms, which is one aspect of Cliff Richard's gesture on videos, single-covers and concert shows, is to be interpreted as an allusion to Jesus Christ. This thesis remains, regardless of Richard's actual intention. We cannot know, or begin to explore, the intended meaning of his behaviour, for it is concealed even to himself, as Sigmund Freud has taught us. We have to

suffice with the objectified output material at our disposal, and analyse it in relation to other material that appears to be of the same kind and of similar structural components.

The second meaningful aspect of the first illustration, whose elaboration promises to be fruitful, is the light.

### The light

First of all, in the illumination we can find a visual continuation of the light-semantic already encountered in several of Richard's song lyrics, such as:

*"when the darkness surrounds you (...) I will bring  
the sun to shine on you"*

*"I am the one (...) who will turn all your darkness  
to light"*

*"I will be there to brighten up even your darkest  
night"*

We also encounter the appearance of a meaningful light in pictorial contexts. So, for instance, in the top right illustration which welcomed the visitor of the singer's official homepage in 2001. A similar picture (below right) was chosen again when the official webpage was renewed in 2003. We can see rays originating from a central point behind the singer.



Above: Pictorial examples of the  
meaningful light

We also find this illumination in the promotion video for the song Healing Love. In this, the singer initially throws back body and face towards a light shining down on him before he reaches his hand out to it entirely in the final camera-shot. Lyrically the song is concerned with the healing power of love.

In the interpretation of the light we will again see how far Christian iconography takes us. The literature on Christian symbolism teaches us:

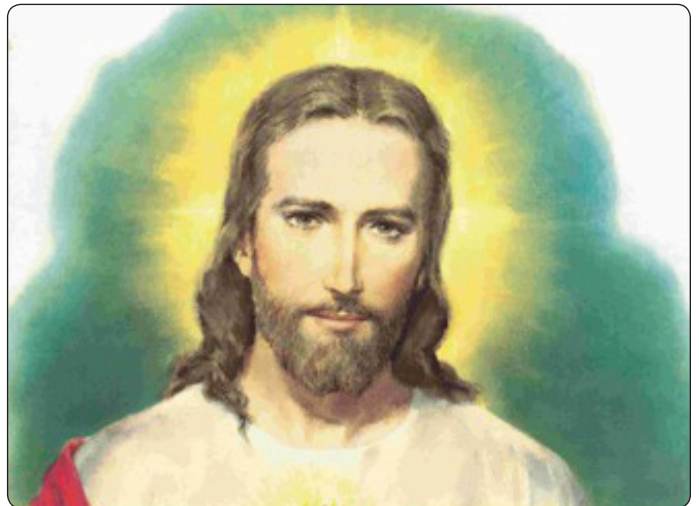
*"Light is symbolic of Christ, in reference to His words in John 8:12, 'Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he*

*that followth me shall not walk in darkness, but  
shall have the light of life.”<sup>14</sup>*

The origin of the light appearing in the cited images, as well as in the promotion video, is unknown to us, yet, our main visual representation of Cliff Richard in the first example image shows him in the sunlight. With reference to the meaning of the sun we can learn:

*“The sun is symbolic for Christ, this interpretation being based on the prophecy of Malachi 4:2, But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings”<sup>15</sup>*

Here, the light and the sun are directly linked with healing.



In Christian art we frequently encounter divine figures, who are marked as such by an aura of light, called ‘aureole’, or halo. The latter originates as a zone of light from behind the head of a divine or sacred person,<sup>16</sup> as to be seen both below left and above.

Commonly the aureole frames the body of Jesus Christ.<sup>17</sup> In some cases, according to George Ferguson, “it is removed from the body and is composed of many luminous rays issuing from a central point”.<sup>18</sup> This should show illustration 8 in an interesting light, since there the rays originate slightly beside and behind the body of the singer.

It need not weaken the thesis held in this paper that we fail to find the symbolic presentation of the Christian art reproduced in faithful detail in Cliff Richard’s self-presentation. On the long cultural way from the Christian art of the renaissance to the genre of popular music of the 20th century, the symbol undergoes transforming appropriations. With respect to our case this might

## Aureole





mean that the luminous atmosphere, as well as the light-generating zones surrounding Cliff Richard, may indeed allude to a Jesus-role he is taking on.

Also, one might argue against the interpretation of the light held in this section, that there is no inevitability to see it as a signifier pointing to Jesus Christ, that it is merely the sort of glamour spotlight we are well familiar with through Hollywood's star-photography. Yet, this view would neglect to take into account the multitude of signifiers in play simultaneously which create the context for reading of the light in this way. Looked at in isolation, it has no meaning. Though in conjunction with other signs of his self-presentation and his image as a whole, indeed, the singer establishes a semantic field, in which light refers to Christ, healing and redemption, and Cliff Richard himself inevitably comes across as the personification of these ideas.

### **The super-human dimension**

As the final component of the reference image (Illustration 1.) we should like to consider Richard's physical height as well as camera angle. The visual effect of superimposition makes the singer appear to be a figure located in the sky - a heavenly figure, one might say. Furthermore, the low position of the camera demands our attention, since it is a cinematic-photographic convention which we know emphasises the supremacy and power of the illustrated figure.<sup>19</sup>



This narrative device of actual and symbolic body-enlargement is to be found on numerous occasions in Cliff Richard's self-presentation.

For instance on an album-cover dating from 1998 (above), we can see him colossus-like, sitting on a rooftop in urban surroundings.

This notion of the colossus alluded to in this image is reminiscent of the Colossus of Rhodes, known to be the Greek sun-god.

In addition to that, the singer's physical elevation above the heads of the audience was chosen as a special effect at his *Cliff Richard - The Event* concert at the Wembley Stadium in 1991. During the performance of the song *Remember me* (a song whose redemption-promising lyrics we have already examined) the singer, all dressed in white, is standing on a small platform that gradually arises heavenwards as he promises to the upturned faces: *"Remember me, I am your guardian angel, and I'll never let you fall. And if you're ever in fear or danger, remember me!"*

Later on at the same concert this is followed by another ascent, when he sings the last song from a pedestal surrounded by three dozen dancers, backing vocalists and musicians. The parallel with Jesus's ascent into heaven is obvious.

I would like to consult another item of interobjective comparison material,<sup>20</sup> which condenses all the aforementioned components, and combines them in one single performance. Michael Jackson's appearance at the Brit Awards in 1996 leaves no doubt about its biblical references and the singer's self-portrayal as Jesus Christ. First, Jackson introduces himself in a symbolic act of audience-directed descendance. This is reminiscent of Jesus, who also descended mercifully from heaven to the people, taking on human form. Jackson then disappears in light that pervades him,



whose source he seems to be. Shortly after this, impoverished, suffering people dressed in rags gather around him, before he impatiently jumps at a mini-tribune that elevates him over the heads of the people and the audience. Back on earth like the mortal ones, he touches their longing hands, and soon pulls the worldly clothing from off his body, reinventing himself in pure, all-white silk. With a benevolent expression he stretches out his arms in a 90 degree angle from his chest. Again light begins to pervade him, which appears to issue from behind his back, and into which he vanishes entirely at times. The poor and longing begin to nestle to Jackson, in order to be blessed by his healing touch.

After addressing a few preaching words to the audience, he slowly steps towards the glaring light along with numerous followers. Then the slit in which they disappear closes.<sup>21</sup>

This textbook-like stage show of a popular music act who portrays himself as Jesus Christ so unequivocally is to be encountered very rarely. In this Brit Awards performance we can find it in a remarkably pure and dense fashion.



With regard to the less concentrated, somewhat tamed self-presentation of our object of analysis, Cliff Richard, one can say that there are components in his self-portrayal that make semantic allusion to redemption in a wider sense and Jesus Christ, the original redeemer, in a narrower one. A significant number of his songs makes this promise of deliverance linguistically explicit. In addition to that, it is also possible to find symbolic allusions to the pictorial representation of Jesus Christ,

the personification of redemption and salvation, in Cliff Richard's pictorial self-presentation and concert shows. These examples seem to make evident that Cliff Richard can be seen as a star-figure in popular music who, among other things, portrays himself as a saviour.

I would like to add further evidence that supports this hypothesis. Both refer to components of his image: the myth of the incorruptable body and Richard's apparent asexuality. The image is significant, since it provides a context in which every other signifier put forward by Cliff Richard is to be read.

#### **Cliff Richard's image: The myth of the incorruptable body**

If we take a look at the drawing below, dating from the 11th century, we see how Jesus Christ chains and overpowers death.

In comparable fashion, Cliff Richard appears to overcome the natural process of aging. Assuming that Ernest Becker was right when he pointed out that Western society is repressing and denying death,<sup>22</sup> Cliff Richard can be seen as a cultural phenomenon that lends itself to this denial. Where the glaring light of unruly transitoriness shines through every crack of life, Richard caters for his admirers' starving need for immortality.





**Fig. 77.—JESUS CHRIST CHAINS AND OVER-  
POWERS DEATH.**  
**German Miniature of the XI cent.**

He does so, on the one hand, on a diachronic level: Persistently performing in front of a widely praising audience for 46 years, he has become a consistent parameter in the public eye in general, and the life of the fan in particular. On the other hand, we can find obvious tendencies of intransience in the intentional presentation of his body. He appears to embody the myth of the everlasting youth.<sup>23</sup> The illustration at right may serve as an example.

We witness here a perfectly unlined 61-year-old Cliff Richard. The lack of wrinkles though is not in accordance with reality, as video footage from the same era proves, but they are a creation of skilful digital image-editing.



The denial of death which Cliff Richard seems to embody is another factor in the whole of the semantic field that suggests his reading as a Jesus-figure.

### **Asexuality and moral purity**

Another component of Richard's image that appears to be relevant for my thesis is that of his sexual inoffensiveness. Not only is he an unmarried fundamentalist Christian with a decisively celibate lifestyle,<sup>24</sup> but in contrast to singers like Mick Jagger, Tom Jones and Elvis Presley he is normally not associated with *sexiness*. This is just a matter of taste, one might object, since his fans will certainly defend his sexual appeal with ardour. And

indeed, there are sexual allusions to be found to some extent in Cliff Richard's self-presentation: although I am familiar with most of his output, I have, for the first time, discovered several abandoned moans in his most recent live version of *Girl, you'll be a woman soon*<sup>25</sup>; also, he has worked into his stage routine a series of permissive pelvis and bottom movements.

Yet, these sexual allusions in Richard's performance are too rare and thin to be considered an aspect of his overall image, especially since the sexualised gestures just mentioned are very frequently marked as self-deprecating jokes. As we have seen in an earlier section of the paper the love he is singing about in his song lyrics is the *redeeming* love, the *healing* love and the *comforting* love. It is certainly not *sexual*, *passionate* and *seductive* love.

The same characteristic of sexual inoffensiveness we could discover, were we to analyse the features of his singing voice: controlled, with an absolutely professional check on it, soft (in the case of the song *Let me be the one* even filtered through a softener in the sound studio), gentle and in every sense conveying comforting warmth rather than unsettling anxiety, cleansed purity rather than guilt-laden sensual indulgence.

The image of the morally good and clean-cut guy has taken on a dynamic of its own, to the point that we have had to find Cliff Richard struggling against it in recent years.<sup>26</sup> However, he indisputably epitomizes purity,

stainlessness, order, asceticism and moral perfection.

The semantic closeness to Jesus is evident: He, too, remained unmarried. He, too, is not perceived as a sexually desiring and desirable being. He, too, is the epitome of an ethical being.

I believe these signifiers operating in his public image cannot be ignored. They, in combination with the lyrics, the posture, the light and the elevation, lead us toward an interpretation of Richard as a redeemer figure. Every sign uttered by him receives its compelling meaning because it is knitted into a semantic pattern of performance and self-presentation, that, as I endeavoured to show, suggests Jesus Christ and deliverance in a way that is difficult to ignore.

## Endnotes

1. One article has been published in the *Journal of Popular Film and Television* by K.J. Donnelly, who analyses the first five musical films of Richard as a reflection of the recuperation of Rock'n'Roll into the established structures of mainstream show business.

2. Donnelly 1998, 1.

3. Guinness British Hit Singles, <http://www.britishhitsingles.com>.

4. This distinction, as well as the exclusion of certain kinds of indisputably popular music from popular music studies, has also been pointed out by Philip Tagg in *"High and Low, Cool and Uncool, Music and Knowledge"*. <http://www.tagg.org/articles/iaspmuk2000.html>.

5. Remember me, 1987.

6. Let me be the one, 2001.

7. Stronger than that, 1989.

8. Out in the country, 1967.

9. Although invitations and resorts of refuge are to be discovered in an earlier phase of his oeuvre, it is usually not a person that promises deliverance, but a saving situation or environment that is described, often in relation to nature and countryside; so for instance *Summer Holiday* (1963), in which it says with reference to summer vacation *"no more worries for me or you, it's a dream come true"*. Equally the song *On the beach* (1964) says *"your troubles will be out of reach, on the beach"*.

10. 2001.

11. In Richard's cover version of the song *Somewhere over the rainbow* (2001) he sings *"where troubles melt like lemondrops, high above the chimney tops, that's where you'll find me."* The well-known 1986 hit *Some People* contains the words: *"Some people they hurt one another [...] but I'm not like that at all"*. Furthermore, it says in *Healing Love*: *"When it all comes down to the push and shove, we can make it through, we can rise above, cos you know that we've got the power of healing love."* (It is equivocal though, who we is referring to. In accordance with my thesis it might well be the relationship between singer persona and listener which is said to have a healing effect. At the same time, on a more abstract level, what could be referred to here might be the human being in general. In this case *we*

might translate we as *one*.)

12. Jackson, Michael: *Brace Yourself, on: History* (VHS), 1999

13. Because this section of the article focuses on the physical posture alone, it need not upset the consistency of the argument that these images, unlike every other picture used in this paper, are not official photo releases by the representatives of the singer.

14. Ferguson 1955, 56.

15. *ibid*, 60.

16. Didron 1851, 268.

17. *ibid*, 108.

18. Ferguson 1955, 267.

19. Dick 2002, 57.

20. This term (short IOCM) was coined by *Philip Tagg*, and originally referred to “pieces of music other than the analysis object which bear demonstrable sonic resemblance to (part or parts of) the analysis object”. (<http://tagg.org/articles/ptgloss.html#IOCM>)

I have been using the same method of interobjective comparison with regard to pictorial resemblances.

21. The setting of the final scene also bears resemblance to the spaceship in the film “The day the earth stood still”. The latter also unfolds a thematically comparable motif: Klaatu, the protagonist, acts as the Jesus-figure. Via spaceship he comes to earth, assuming the name Carpenter when he mingles with the crowd (Jesus was a carpenter). Shortly after he is shot, he is resurrected. He delivers his message and leaves the earth, vanishing into his spaceship. This is the scene Jacko’s finale is reminiscent of.

22. See for elaboration of this subject: Becker 1997

23. He is known to be labelled the “*Peter Pan of Pop*” by the British press: See *The Sun*: 26.11.1999, p.46; 14.10.2000, p. 9; *TV Magazine*: 17.11.2001, p. 21.

24. Except for a relationship with Sue Barker in the early eighties he has not been known to have had another affair.

25. Interestingly this goes along with the words “*I’ve been misunderstood for all of my life*”.

26. Again interestingly, this development can be observed since his mother fell into dementia. Since then

Richard has seemed to express his discomfort with his image as the “goodie-two-shoes”. Yet again, as in the case of his on-stage sexual allusions, these counter-movements never take on the form of unmistakably marked personal revolution, such as a dirty affair, the release of a rock-song or a distinctly immoral, offensive statement. There are hints of resistance against his image in Richard’s act, but we have to speak his language to register them.

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Richard, Cliff: Real as I wanna be, EMI Records Ltd, 1998.

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Richard, Cliff: The Album, EMI Records Ltd, 1993.

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### Selected Videography

Richard, Cliff: Millennium Prayer, promotion video, archive of a fan.

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Richard, Cliff: Unforgettable, Balladeer Ltd, 2002.

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Jackson, Michael: Earth Song, Brit Awards, 1996.

Take That: Everything Changes, BMG Records Ltd., 1994.

Williams, Robbie: Feel. Top of the Pops. BBC. 8 November 2002.

## Selected Pictography

In order of appearance.

VERZEICHNIS \n \c "Illustration" Illustration 1: Richard, Cliff: Let me be the one. EMI Records Ltd. 2001.

Illustration 2. Church Art Calendar 2003, CBC, Reproducta Co.Inc, 2002, april-page.

Illustration 3. <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/401341.stm>> 10.1.2004.

Illustration 4. <<http://www.37celsius.nl/images2/phil/>

[cliff3.jpg](#)> 10.1.2004.

Illustration 5. Löbert, Anja: Concert, Frankfurt, 4 December 2002.

Illustration 6. <<http://www.thephotoagency.co.uk/CR1x.html>> 10.1.2004.

Illustration 7.

1) <<http://www.michaeljackson.com>>

2) <<http://www.rio.rj.gov.br/riotur/rioingle/40pontos/Christ%20the%20Redeemer%20Statue.htm>>

3) <<http://pwp.netcabo.pt/0226303801/Saviour.jpg>>

Illustration 8. <<http://www.cliffrichard.org>> 19.1.2003.

Illustration 9. <<http://www.cliffrichard.org>> 19.11.2003.

Illustration 10. Ferguson, 267.

Illustration 11. Church Art Calendar 2003, CBC, Reproducta Co.Inc, 2002.

Illustration 12. Richard, Cliff: Real as I wanna be. EMI Records Ltd. 1998.

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product\\_preview.asp](http://www.mirror100.com/mirrorpix/product_preview.asp)> 10.1.2004.

Illustration 16. Didron, 300.

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# Timba and its Meanings. The Semiotic Scaffoldings of One Aggressive Cuban Music

Genre

Ruben López Cano

In this paper I will talk about the meanings of Timba, however, I will specially focus on cynicism. This work is complementing other articles that are at your disposal on the internet. (Note 1) While reading them you can find definitions, concepts and relevant examples about which I will talk later on in this paper. I encourage the reader to consult them throughout the reading of this article. (Note 2)

## 1. What is Timba?

Timba is one of the most interesting genres developed in Cuba in recent years. Timba is just like Salsa, but with very strong accents from Afro-Cuban music traditions as well as Afro-North American Pop music. Indeed, timba mixes elements of Classical Son, Rumba, Yoruba and other African religious airs, and also Afro-Cuban elements, never introduced in dance music before, along with melodies, rhythms, brass solos and bass lines taken from Funk (like James Brown, Earth, Wind and Fire or the Temptations) and R&B or other dance music. It is also possible to listen to Hip-hop or Reggae in timba, as well as to reminiscences of Rock, Reggaeton, and so on. (Note 3)

The outcome of this hybridisation is an extremely aggressive dance music, full of sexual movements who break the traditional sensuality of salsa. The lyrics are developed in the traditional way of other Caribbean types of music (a narrative section followed by several refrains in responsorial style), but at the same time they introduce vulgar expressions taken from the street jargon and black people expressions. Timba's songs deal with the daily problems of Cuban youth, derived by the strong crisis suffered in the island since the fall of the Berlin wall. Timba is the "sound of the Cuban's crisis" (Perna, Timba). It tells stories closely linked with tourism industry and introduces all the problems provoked by this one, such as: prostitution, crazy pursuit of dollars, emergence of new economical classes and reorganization of relationship rules among Cubans. This last is due to the increasing need to establish interested love relationships with foreigners in order to leave the island and its misery.

In my understanding, Timba is a kind of semiotic machinery devoted to organize, in a symbolic way, the aggressiveness rising from young Cuban people. It is a way to face their "total crisis". (note 4)

## 2. Main meanings associated with Timba

Timba has several meaning areas. Among them it is crucial to mention the followings: (1) Cubanism: the renewal of Cuban identity marks and Cuban pride specially in lowest classes; (2) Racial: timba carries out a strong defense of Black people and Black culture. It claims for a restoration of Black Pride with a bit of arrogance, emphasising on black people attributes such as their sexual power; (3) Religiosity: timba has integrated elements from afro Cuban syncretic religious practices, as Santeria which in other times was considered dangerous by the Cuban regime; (4) Modernity: timba introduces a vanguard approach in look, clothing, music and way of dance; (5) Cuban Male Chauvinism: timba makes references to male hypersexuality and promiscuity, male narcissism and affective mistreat to women, and (6) The main problems of Cuban economic, social and moral crisis, as dollar pursuit, promiscuity, sexual tourism, arranged love relationships with foreigners and "jineterismo" (rangerism: several ways of prostitution).

One of the most interesting signification processes in timba deals with the creation of one kind of cultural archetype that I call "the Tough Boy from Havana". This archetype often appears in the lyrics, as well as in the band members and singers movements on stage. (note 5) The tough boy from Havana unfolds all those

aforementioned attributes, in order for him to face his hard reality: he is feared and he wants to be feared, he claims "he is the best", his sexuality is extremely hyperbolic and when a girl breaks up with him for a rich tourist, he doesn't suffer, his attitude doesn't change at all. Moreover he mocks the situation because, despite everything, he continues and will continue being the best. He has got "stony" feelings. The tough boy of Havana is deeply cynical. This cynical character also plays a main role in Pedro Juan Guitierrez writings. (note 6)

This kind of archetype created by Timba is nothing more than one of the different semiotic scaffoldings, offering its fans a path to reorganize their aggressiveness in a symbolic way. (note 7) The aim of my research in Cuban Timba is to depict how this Semiotic machinery works and to detect what kind of affordances Timba offers to Cubans regarding their crisis. The concept of affordances comes from ecological approaches to perception theories (Gibson The ecological approach) and refers to the collection of possible actions that we are able to do with objects and that guide and determine some of the cognitive processes we generate from/with them. Musical affordances constitute the things we can do with music objects, through which we develop specific ways of understanding them.(note 8) Music offers affordances to its listeners, dancers or performers as well as its theoreticians, who try to understand music and interpret it according to their social and cultural contexts.

How does timba build cynicism? Or in other words, how does it unfold the affordances who allow their fans to construct their personal semiotic scaffoldings in order to develop cynical attitudes toward their reality?

### 3. Timba cynicism

Let's see an example. In the song known as El Temba of Charanga Habanera, which is included in Pa' que se entere la habana CD (1996), a boy tells his girl that she is extremely beautiful, but in the meantime he also says he cannot commit himself to her: he doesn't want to marry because he doesn't have enough money to cover all her material needs. Without feeling bad, he decides to tell her (Note 9): "Look up for a temba (A mature guy of 30-50 years old, with money, usually a rich foreigner), who supports you, so you will be able to enjoy and have everything you want... look up for a Papi-riki (sweet daddy, rich daddy!!!), with a lot of güaniquiqui"... (Money. More likely U\$ dollars...)

However, cynicism is not only detected in the words. In Timba, music itself is capable of supporting situations of cynicism. Timba is a mix of several kinds of music, an amalgam of different music genres. Each one of them works as a musical topic in every Timba song. It is important to remember that a musical topic is the fragment inserted in a song that offers a style far different from the one that actually characterizes the song itself.

(note 10) Special combinations of musical topics are associated with songs which express cynicism.

To see how it works, let us now examine the song Le mentí, also by Charanga Habanera. (Note 11) The first part of the song is built on the music topic of Twee ballad (like a Mexican or Venezuelan soap opera theme). In this genre the song voice sings: "I feel like a slave of a love that's finished/ I know she's lost, mad about me/ I'm sorry but I feel the love's moving away/ and I try to hold it but it goes with the wind. I know I don't love her and that I hurt her a lot,/ there's no other way than a sweet farewell/... Then the music topic changes to Romantic salsa. And the voice sings: "...the sad thing is that I know there is no other feeling, I know I don't love her simply 'cause time's over". The refrain of the song insists in these words: "I lied, I said I loved her, and I didn't want her; I saw her lost and I lied. I'll prove that she's not controlling me anymore, that there's no beginning without ending, that I've found my freedom...". All these sections express feelings of sorrow and pity: the boy doesn't have anymore love for his girlfriend and he is unable to tell her the truth. Nevertheless, from the minute 2'39" the singer introduces new elements in a refrain developed in responsorial style:

*Chorus: I lied, I said I loved her, and I didn't want  
her*

*Solo: I was never happy with her; I saw her lost*

*and I lied... Chorus: I lied...*

*Solo: I got tired of pretending, I couldn't bear that  
lifestyle... Chorus: I lied...*

*Solo: It was rather insincere and yet truth always  
wins, for sure!... Chorus: I lied...*

*Solo: It's been a long time since I felt something  
when we do it, I can only be your friend.*

This last sentence is a quote taken from a Mexican wounding ballad popularized at the end of the seventies. It has been usually sung by women (and transsexual) singers characterized by their bad-temperament. Indeed, in the minute 3'20" a disturbing element of extreme aggressiveness is introduced. Something has changed the main affect of the song. Suddenly after, the music topic changes to a happy Reggae by the minute 3'36". As it is usual in this genre, the singer sings words such as "come on here!!!, voilá!!!, joy joy joy". In the minute 3'48" the music topic changes again, this time to a Heavy Timba Soul style. In this section voice and chorus sing as follows:

*Solo: yes but no, this thing here hasn't ended  
yet, she wanted him and I know she worshipped  
him but she lost what she loved most and that is  
why...*

*Chorus: I know I am not the boy of your dreams,  
that I am not the one, that it isn't me...*

*Solo: but look girl, you say yes but no... Chorus:  
I know ...*

*Solo: Look and see what you find out or what you  
can make up... Chorus...*

*Solo: And if I lied I had my reasons... Chorus:  
I know I am not the boy of your dreams, that I  
am not the one, that it isn't me...Love is finished,  
finished.*

*Chorus: That I am not, that I am not, I don't  
know!*

The voice is no longer sad. There is no more sorrow or pity. He shows us his real feelings about this situation. He mocks about the girl's pain: he is cynical. (note 12)

The sequence of topics supporting the expressive process of cynicism in this song is: Tweek ballad (soap opera theme)---Romantic salsa--- Reggae and Heavy Timba-Soul style. This sequence works as a cognitive scheme who guides musical understanding. Schemes are not codes, but a cognitive guide for ONE possible way of understanding and interpreting music. (Note 13) This kind of schemata is closely related with similar processes such as irony. Let us remember that music irony is a "higher-order trope inaugurated by the contradiction between what is claimed (or observed or done) and a context that cannot support its reality (or appropriateness)" (Hatten 172). Cynicism is a kind of

irony which appears in two ways: 1) as the result of the frustration of an expected topic or element required to condemn one situation. In this case music discourse falls into apology or into what is “morally inadequate” or 2) when the shift of a music topic doesn’t change the content but the perspective of its enunciation. For instance, it introduces a new voice or approach mocking situations previously presented in a sad context. (note 14)

However, not all ironic or cynical songs are built on schemata of this type. In the same way, similar articulations of topics may appear in songs with different meanings. We will return to this point in section 6. Right now let us make the following question: where does this strange amalgam of music topics come from?

#### **4. From Son and Rumba to timba: the semiotisation of traditional forms**

Timba’s narrative schemata are rooted on traditional forms. Vincenzo Perna has pointed out that the general model of timba’s songs comes from the classical form of son or rumba: it presents “firstly a narrative part ([called] largo in son, canto in rumba), followed by a longer and animate section called montuno or estribillo... [this part represents] the emotional climax of the song, which is loved by listeners and dancers”. Songs mainly focus on the second part, the montuno, usually longer. This section is characterized by several responsorial choirs,

where the main singer (guia) improvises sentences while the choir sings the refrain. Mambo is the brass solo introduced between one refrain and the other. Perna depicts the general structure of timba: introduction/ theme \ bridge \ choir I / mambo I / choir II / mambo II/ choir III/ mambo III/ choir IV... and so on (Perna 86). Some themes start in media res: a false beginning made by one of the mambos or refrains precedes the introduction.

Each section is introduced in a specific music topic. The first section prefers topics from soft music such as ballads, traditional son, bolero, etc., while the montunos look for Afro-Northamerican pop music topics (called “moñas” by musicians). These are combined with Afro-Cuban rhythms. In 1994 Isaac Delgado popularized a song called *Dos mujeres*. (note 15) In this song he’s showing off his adultery: “I’ve reached my own balance with two women”. The refrain plays the topic of son-timba which stresses the piano’s tumbao of Iván “Melón” González. At the core of the refrain, the song suddenly switches into the cumbia-bomba colombiana topic (2’33” y 3’58”). Using this clingy music, Delgado sings “Bom Bom Bom Bom” while the female dancers move their hips rhythmically, turning around with bended knees, stretching one arm and moving their hand in circles: it seems that everybody is eager to celebrate their adulteries. (note 16) This is one of the first cases that I know in timba, in which certain specific developments



of different topics are used in order to back cynical messages.

However, the one who started using topic combinations more solidly in order to maintain ironic-cynical plots was Manolín “the doctor of salsa”. His two first CDs, *Una aventura loca* and *Para mi gente* were recorded and published in 1994 and 1995 respectively, two quite difficult years for the Cuban crisis. Manolín was not a good singer; this has been the reason why some other bands became his enemies momentarily as they considered him an opportunist. However, his compositions captured, as anything else, the critical life of Cubans with clever and clingy refrains. Along with all this, the sound was strong and aggressive, full of references to Funk and Soul music. All this gave him an unprecedented success. How do those songs work?

The crisis brought the girls to practice jineterismo (rangerism) and carry out set-up love relations with foreigners as their only way out. After some confusing moments, the rules of love would get finally transformed. Men had to put up with those practices and sometimes they also received benefit from them. Rangerism brought along the power increase and the financial independency of women, changing in a really serious way the traditional patriarchal system of Cuban social hierarchy (Perna 113 and 140-175). Resentment started growing within men every time more. Therefore, the songs of “the doctor of salsa” not only reflected

this situation, but also gave the chance to express and rebuild all this male frustration in a symbolic way.

For example, in the song *A pagar allá* (note 17) an offended man asks his ex-partner why she abandoned him, decided to marry a foreign man for money and now lives in Rome. The first narrative section of the song is very brief and it's based on an orchestral bolero similar to the ones sung by Olga Guillot, a “singer with character”. In this section, the boy expresses all his bitter resentment. However, in the montuno (the second section) the main music topic changes into a sensual and animate timba-soul. At this point, the guy changes his harsh and solemn tone into an ironic one. Now the threat: “I’m going to make you a collect call” (who’s going to pay it? You or your husband?). He offers her to go back to “the doctor of salsa that is very hot” in case she is missing money (real reason of her wedding) and getting bored with her husband. The tough boy of Havana doesn’t suffer if he’s left for a “yuma” (foreigner), but he claims what is his.

The first part of the song *Lejanía* (note 18) is a bolero son that recalls harmonic tracks of romantic songs from Pablo Milanés. In this one the singing voice complains about the absence of his girlfriend (where is she?... maybe she is dancing with a tourist...).

Involving himself in an incredible cynical game, he uses this pain to justify his unfaithfulness: “forgive me for desiring you so strongly and so making love with

another woman, without really wanting her, thinking of you". However, in the second section, when it comes to the jazzy timba he recognizes that "to make love with another woman has its 'swing' and its 'good side'...it's a thing that provokes me". The tough boy of the Habana loves but cannot give up his promiscuity. In *Si Te Vas Conmigo* (note 19) on the ballad topic he sings to his love: "I'd like to have you with me". But he also warns: "if you want me you have to fight for my love". The topic change to a timba-soul while the voice demands: "please tell me if you're going with me"; afterwards, during the pseudo-improvised section, in which percussion plays the main role, he fires: "tell me if you're coming or not!". Then he meditates singing with a choir in a soul style: "if the girl doesn't want to come [...], then 'take her with you my friend'". This friend can be a tourist. The tough boy of Habana doesn't suffer for being scorned, he adjusts himself and takes advantages of every single situation. In *Te Conozco Mascarita* (note 20) the bolero (similar to *A pagar allá*) accompanies a narration full of resentment, where the man talks to the woman that before left him and then came back to him (for being disappointed by the other love-story) looking for his love again. In the second section, during the timba-soul topic, he goes from a rejection full of grief to a mockery and direct insult. A mambo (a brass solo) makes fun of her imitating a laugh. The tough boy of Havana laughs at whom despised him.

We find similar series in some songs of Charanga Habanera. In these last ones a boy takes revenge against one girl that prefers dating tourists for their money. In *Que Te Lleve Otro* (Note 21), the voice talks about a gorgeous girl who used to go to the Palacio de la Salsa, The Tropicana or Galeón (places for tourists), but surprisingly he meets her in Tropical (dancing place for cubans that are well-known for being aggressive and dangerous). The boy takes advantages of the situation to avenge previous contempts: "now I cannot take you with me anymore, adventurous girl..., look for somebody else...stay there alone". In the song *Super-turística* (Note 22) a boy complains because he cannot pay the expensive pleasures of a girl that goes to turistic places: "I don't have what you need...". One of the choirs intervenes with a rap style of *Hagamos un Chen* (Note 23) and says: "and when we'll do a chen, chen, chen?, how do you want baby to pay you?, by check or in cash? If you want I can make you a receipt". In all these songs, it's easy to find similar music processes: the first narrative section goes along with a moderate music topic that gets close to romantic salsa, ballad or sometimes bolero. In the second part, the main theme changes and plays genres closer to funk, soul, Afro-cuban rhythms, jazz, rumba, rock, hip hop, and so on. The party spirit grows and the contrasting themes cooperate to maintain the irony and cynicism processes.

The ironic-cynical songs don't deal with promiscuity,

rangerism or interest only. In the following table (beginning over page) I'm going to show some of the main timba songs that in certain way express ironic and/or cynical contents. This table is only a preliminary proposal. There are many classes that need to be polished and styles that should be redefined. However, this table could be useful as a first approach, a first map on ironic-cynical uses of timba.

### 5. Why cynicism?

There are three ways to express the extremely hard situation in which Cuban youth is living on: (1) Complain: lament for the situation; (2) Hypocrisy: neglect of the situation; (3) Cynicism: acceptance of the situation (living with it and trying to normalize their lives within it). The Timba chooses the last option. Timba offers semiotical scaffoldings in order for Cuban young people to develop cynical attitudes regarding their hard situation. In timba, Cuban crisis is sublimated into the song's narratives and the dance: the body "has its own reasons". Timba dance connects to early ritual practices, in which we can find moments of trance (a different level of consciousness to perceive the reality), celebration of sexuality (just like the old fecundation rituals, in favour of the survival and future of the group), and also sacrifices (ritual sacrifice). The music chaos of certain Timba sections (the *masacote* section) tests the competence of dancers in moving their bodies in a coherent way, when the music is a complete

disorder. To be able to move in that madness is a real challenge, a way to train their abilities to get out of the chaos: a metaphor for the survival strategies of Cuban daily life. In a society full of privations, Timba provides excess: excess in music which introduces a lot of genres into each song; excess in sex: sexual activity is regulated by the people themselves (not by the government). There are no limits for sexual activity: Sex is not in the ration book.

### 6. How much music is cynical?: the nature of this research

As it is possible to see on the table, irony and cynicism occur within several kinds of topics' articulation or even in songs developed within only one topic. In the same way, sequences of characteristic topics of cynicism can appear in songs with a complete different meaning. This occurs because irony or cynicism do not constitute a music structure. The classic Rumba and Son have evolved for different reasons and at the end they reached formal combinations that allowed these semiotic games. Indeed, irony is an affordance of timba that emerges when a music topics sequence (working as a music narrative schema) works together with the lyrics. Occasionally, words and music are not enough to really understand the irony or cynicism of a song. (Note 24) How can we get to the meaning of the song? How can we reason the ironic or cynical interpretation of a song?

Type of Song	Song	Music-Topic Process	Affect-Expressive Process
Indifference before the woman contempt	Si Te Vas Conmigo. Una Aventura Loca. El Médico de la Salsa. 1994	Rhythmic Ballad -Timba soul	Love words - apparent indifference against the girl rejects. (Possible interpellation to a foreign tourist to take the girl with him).
	La Hiciste Buena. Jaque mate. El Médico de la Salsa, 1998 (2001)	Ballad (bolero)-timba.	Love words - apparent indifference against the girl rejects. (Possible mocking against rival bands).
	De la puerta pa' fuera. La cuqui quiere fiesta, Charanga forever 2004.	Twee ballad (soap opera theme) - romantic salsa-hard timba soul-timba funk	Lament –revenge
General mistreatment against the woman in love	Te la Voy a Liquidar Me Sube La Fiebre. La Charanga Habanera. 1992	No process. Always Guaracha-batanga	No process. Always Cynicism.
	Para el Llanto, Me Sube La Fiebre. La Charanga Habanera. 1992	No process. Always Guaracha-timba.	No process. Always Cynicism.
	Ella No Vale Nada. Para mi gente. El Médico de la Salsa. 1995	No process. Always jazz latino with con timba.	No process. Always Aggression.
A sad break up converted into a mockery against the woman or an attempt to take advantages of her	Lo siento por ti. Tremendo delirio. Charanga habanera, 1997	Ballad -salsa timba	Sadness- cheek
	Señora. El charanguero Mayor; Charanga Habanera, 2000	Romantic Ballad- timba	Pity and solidarity- mockery
	Le mentí. El charanguero Mayor; Charanga Habanera, 2000	Twee ballad (soap opera theme)- romantic salsa-reggae-hard timba-soul	Sadness and pity – mocking
	Pelo suelto y carretera. De buena fe. El Médico de la Salsa, 1997	Twee ballad—timba	Sadness –cheek
Mockery against the rise of feminine power	Mujeres. Soy cubano soy popular. Charanga Habanera, 2003.	Romantic Ballad -Salsa timba-Timba Soul-Reggae	Respect-mockery
Mockery or aggression against a rival orchestra disguised as a woman (sometimes these disputes cover up one another)	Voy a Mi. Para mi gente. El Médico de la Salsa. 1995	Jazzy Ballad-timba soul	No process. Only mockery and aggression
	Somos Lo Que Hay. De buena fe. El Médico de la Salsa, 1997	Ballad -timba funk	Fraternity- scorn/self-affirmation

Type of Song	Song	Music-Topic Process	After-Expressive Process
Mockery or aggression against a rival orchestra disguised as a woman (sometimes these disputes cover up one another) <i>cont.</i>	Eso Ya No Esta en Mis Manos (la abuela). Jaque mate. El Médico de la Salsa, 1998 (2001)	Ballad –Jazzy son	No process. Only self-affirmation
	La Charanga Soy Yo. La Charanga soy yo. La Charanga Forever 1999.	Ballad –timba	Self-affirmation –aggression
	Charanguero Mayor. El charanguero Mayor; Charanga Habanera, 2000.	Twee ballad-timba soul- reggae	No process. Always self-affirmation
	Cómo pasan las cosas. La Cuqui quiere fiesta. La Charanga Forever, 2004.	Soul song- Twee ballad (soap opera theme)-- salsa-tumba funk	Self-affirmation-challenge
Revenge against the woman that is indifferent to love	Mi Vida Sin Tu Amor, Chan...Chan..Charanga; Charanga Habanera, 2001.	Twee ballad (soap opera theme-romantic salsa-timba	Lament –indifference-revenge
	Timba Con Moña. Soy cubano soy popular. Charanga Habanera, 2003.	Timba-rap-timba soul-funk	Beseech- revenge
	Abusadora. Soy cubano soy popular. Charanga Habanera, 2003.	Ballad cumbia soul- Caribbean rhythm with steel drum	Lament –reproach
	Otra Mujer. Soy cubano soy popular. Charanga Habanera, 2003.	Ballad -romantic salsa-timba	Lament –indifference
Revenge against a woman who left with somebody else (without identifying the origins of this last). She left with somebody else, disdained his love and now she wants to go back with him.	Te Conozco Mascarita. Para mi gente. El Médico de la Salsa. 1994	Orquestal Bolero - timba	Spite - mockery
	Romeo y Julieta. De buena fe. El Médico de la Salsa, 1997	Son Ballad -timba	No process. Always mockery
	Pa' Que Te Salves. Exclusivo para Cuba, Isaac Delgado, 1997.	Jazzy song-Ballad timba-son timba-hard timba	Irony- aggressive revenge
Revenge against a woman that went with a foreigner.	A pagar allá. Una Aventura Loca. El Médico de la Salsa. 1994.	Orquestal Bolero -timba soul	Spited Bolero- revenge
	Pila Cerrá. Chan...Chan... Charanga; Charanga Habanera, 2001.	Twee ballad (soap opera theme)-romantic salsa-reggae-hard timba-soul	Sadness – revenge-indifference
Celebration of promiscuity, deception, infidelity, adultery.	Dos Mujeres. Con Ganas, Isaac Delgado, 1993.	Son Ballad -son timba-cumbia bomba	Cynicism
	Lejanía. Una Aventura Loca. El Médico de la Salsa. 1994	Bolero son-timba	Guilty and regret-cheek and Cynicism.

Type of Song	Song	Music-Topic Process	Affect-Expressive Process
Celebration of promiscuity, deception, infidelity, adultery. <i>cont.</i>	Me Pasé de Copas. Para mi gente. El Médico de la Salsa. 1996	No process. Always timba-early jazz	No process. Cynical apology
	A mi me Gustan Todas. P'a que se entere la Habana. La Charanga Habanera, 1996.	Salsa-cumbia bomba-pop- cumbia bomba	Love declaration-celebration of his promiscuity
	Zorreando. Juego de Manos, Klimax, 1997	Jazzy Song-Ballad salsa-timba jazz	Apology for his infidelity- Cynicism.
Critic against "rangerists".  Sometimes it doesn't mention the rangerism, but it does mention the material interest within relationships.	Hagamos un Chen. Tremendo delirio. La Charanga Habanera, 1997.	Ballad soul- timba rap	No process. Celebration of prostitution.
	Que Te Lleve Otro. P'a que se entere la Habana. La Charanga Habanera, 1996.	Ballad charanga- timba	Tale-Revenge against a "rangerist".
	El temba. P'a que se entere la Habana. La Charanga Habanera, 1996.	Ballad - timba	Worry - Cynicism (celebration of interested love relationships or "rangerism")
	Super-turística. P'a que se entere la Habana. La Charanga Habanera, 1996.	Ballad charanga- son (in timba style)	Disappointment – critics to "rangerism" –self affirmation
	La Cuqui quiere fiesta, La cuqui quiere fiesta, Charanga forever 2004.	Ballad -timba-rap	Critics to woman's materialism – celebration to the sexy mulatto.
	Sueño equivocado. La cuqui quiere fiesta, Charanga forever 2004.	Twee ballad-timba/Ballad -hard timba-timba funk	Critics to woman's materialism –revenge (trying to mask the love pain)
	No te creas tanto. La cuqui quiere fiesta, Charanga forever 2004.	Twee ballad- hard timba (with quotes to Ballads y rumba )-timba funk with rumba	Painful critics to woman's materialism- revenge and mockery against the woman who rejects him.
Tolerance to promiscuity	El que esté que tumbe. De buena fe. El Médico de la Salsa, 1997	Ballad -son-timba	Tolerance- macho/ self-affirmation
	Perfume No Usado. Exclusivo para Cuba, Isaac Delgado, 1997 (voz solista Daría).	Ballad - romantic salsa-timba jazz-hard timba soul	A girl Complaint to a male infidelity (made by a girl voice) – tolerance and resignation towards adultery.



As we can see, the Cuban crisis generated a lot of strategies to survive. All of them, especially the men tolerance to rangerism and other ways of set-up love relations with foreigners, the suffering produced by these and the increasing financial power of women (note 25), originated thousands of stories that go round the Havana. Those stories are shown in Pedro Juan Gutiérrez' novels or in movies like *Suite Habana* (2003) from Francisco Pérez. Behind the story fiction and the anecdotes, they also create a narrative level (Note 26). Names and details of each anecdote are not relevant, in fact, what is really important is to show how similar the roles, relations among characters and difficult situations are. Lyrics can be strongly ambiguous, for this reason it is difficult to interpret them at different levels (Perna Timba). However, when a song is introduced to this kind of frame, then meaning starts appearing. Now we can understand where the resentment of these ironic and cynical timba songs comes from.

The interpretation I propose doesn't want to explain alone the origin of these music structures but it unveils their semiotic use, without trying to state that music represents the social reality where it comes from in a passive way. Music cooperates to shape social realities in which we live. The cognitive semiotic approach I propose here for studying music tries to include this premise. (note 27) The cynicism I'm talking about is a possible explanation based on hermeneutics principles such as economy

and consistency, strictly connected to the theoretician possibilities of interpretation, more than based on the existence of strict and objective codes socially accepted. The musical topics associated with cynical songs could also appear to create aggressiveness or strengthening. Cynicism is just a possible interpretation offered to the investigator: it is an affordance that appears when the theoretician relates this music with the social context. So, it is not an essence, not even a strict and closed code. This is a way to arise meaning from the complex relation between music and human life.

## Endnotes

1. See López Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism", "The Tough Boy from Havana", "Del barrio a la academia", "The Havana's Bad boy".
2. I would like to thank to Marcel, el Chino (†), Oncha, el Morito (†), Patri, Leamsi, Liván, and all people of Cayo Hueso (Centro Habana), for all the life, for all the love, for all the timba.
3. See Lopez Cano "Dancing with the enemy".
4. See López Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism".
5. See López Cano "The Tough Boy from Havana".
6. See Gutiérrez El insaciable hombre araña; Animal tropical and Trilogía sucia de la Habana.
7. See López Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism".
8. See Windsor A Perceptual Approach, Clarke Ways of listening, and López Cano "Favor de no tocar el género", "From Rhetoric Musical Figures to Cognitive Types", De la Retórica a las Ciencias Cognitivas and "Timba and

the Rhetorics of Cynicism" section 2.

9. For further analysis of this song see Perna (184-188).
10. I have defined this concept in relation to timba's cynicism in López Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism" section 2. For a complete analysis of the developing of this concept in musical semiotics see Lopez Cano "The Expressive Zone".
11. From the CD El charanguero Mayor, 2000.
12. For a complete analysis of this and other cynical songs see Lopez Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism".
13. For the notion of cognitive schema see López Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism" section 2, "Entre el giro lingüístico" and 2004f).
14. For the notion of musical irony and cynicism related with timba see López Cano "Timba and the Rhetorics of Cynicism" section 3. See also López Cano "Más allá de la intertextualidad".
15. From the CD. Con Ganas, 1993.
16. It is important to keep in mind that Delgado's music

is considered as light timba. His music is soft and their lyrics are much more poetic.

17. From the CD *Una Aventura Loca*. El Médico de la Salsa, 1994.

18. From the CD *Una Aventura Loca*. El Médico de la Salsa, 1994.

19. From the CD *Una Aventura Loca*. El Médico de la Salsa, 1994.

20. From the CD *Para mi gente*. El Médico de la Salsa. 1995.

21. From the CD *P'a que se entere la Habana*. La Charanga Habanera, 1995.

22. From the CD *P'a que se entere la Habana*. La Charanga Habanera, 1995.

23. From the CD *Tremendo delirio*. La Charanga Habanera, 1997.

24. Lyrics could be really ambiguous (Perna).

25. It is possible to appreciate the irony towards the rising economical and political female power in the

song *Mujeres* from the CD *Soy cubano soy popular* by the Charanga Habanera (2003). The main choir says: “we are the hell slaves because the women have the command, they are the government. It is possible to hear it in 2’05” within the musical Topic of hard timba. In the 4’21” a voice ask “But what’s happen with women?”, then music changes suddenly to reggae while the band still sing this choir. One more time the reggae topic is used for mocking women.

26. For the narrative schemas see López Cano “Entre el giro lingüístico” and “Elementos para el estudio semiótico”. For a vocal music based on cognitive concepts such as shema and Topic see López Cano “From Rhetoric Musical Figures to Cognitive Types” and *De la Retórica a las Ciencias Cognitivas*.

27. See López Cano “From Pragmatics to Enactive Cognition”.

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## Disco, House and Techno: rethinking the local and the global in Italian Electronic Music

Paolo Magaudo

### 1. Introduction: electronic music, globalization, and the Italian periphery

The relation between globalization and local music is a spicy question in today's popular music studies, as well as in wider contemporary cultural theory. Arjun Appadurai, for example, discussing the "modernity at large", brings to light the example of the ability of Filipinos to reproduce American melodic songs in a better way than Americans do (Appadurai, 1996, p. 48). From a more musical point of view, the ethnomusicologist Steven Feld pointed out how the effects of globalization on *world music* have been viewed by scholars with a contradictory opposition between anxiety about the commodification of original cultures and celebration of the positive hybridization of the same cultures (Feld, 2000).

If we consider *world music* or older popular genres such as Motown, Appadurai recalls, it is relatively clear which is the "original" culture. From this point of view, the question appears to concern how the effects of globalization influence original musical cultures. I feel, however, that the local-global debate should take a step forward and that the case of electronic music is particularly apt for this purpose.

The question at this point is how to conceive the relationship between local and global in a musical field - electronic music - in which this relationship is much less clear than it is in original and locally-rooted music. And, more specifically, how to rethink the local-global relationship in analyzing musical forms which do not present an explicit characterization of their locality through direct aesthetic features, as happens with traditional or ethnic instrumentations or with the use of a specific language. More generally, it is necessary to examine the global-local dialectic of these musical forms, probably the first product of the accelerated processes in transnational flows of technology, media and popular culture - as far as musical instruments, musical styles, and ways of listening are concerned - and particularly of what is happening in popular electronic music.

Although Italy can boast about its original contributions to "highbrow" electronic music history with artists such as Russolo, Berio Maderna and Nono<sup>1</sup>, it does not appear to have made the same contribution to popular electronic music<sup>2</sup>. The apparently poor presence of Italian popular electronic music in today's global music flow is partly due to the weakness of the Italian music industry, but it clearly needs to be rethought with further historical reconstruction and a deeper consideration of

the production and circulation of new musical styles.

From an Italian point of view, we will now take into consideration various aspects of the production, consumption and representation of Italian popular electronic music through both a historical reconstruction of Italian roots in electronic music and the results of ethnographic research into electronic music produced in Bologna<sup>3</sup>, which is an important city in the total national musical production, as has recently been shown by a team of researchers (Santoro, 2002).

More specifically, we will focus on the relationship between the different electronic music styles that arrived in the local musical culture, the local artists who have reproduced them, and the local Italian identity, represented with explicit or implicit strategies of representation. In fact, electronic music, with its mixture of highbrow traditions, new technological development and new popular culture styles, is probably the musical field that more than any other genre has challenged questions of authenticity, authorship and localness. Its preference for sounds and rhythms rather than words and speech, as well as the centrality of its phonographic circulation compared to its live dimension, are all complex aspects in rearranging the dialectic between the local dimension of electronic music and its globalization.

Let us begin by considering 80s Italo-Disco and Italo-House, important contributions to popular electronic dance music, with a historical reconstruction and the

example of the label Irma Records. Then we will consider the rave-based hardcore techno “scene” at the end of the 90s in Bologna, the musical output of the techno tribe Teknomobilsquad, and the sampling practice of the experimental techno label Sonic Belligeranza.

We will show that the dialectic between local and global in electronic music is of particular interest in understanding how a musical periphery can not only rearticulate global genres in a local context, but also – more profoundly – how this periphery is able to rearticulate the different practices of musical thought in meeting global flows of culture and music. Specifically, we will show how “dissimulation” of their local origins and practices of both “exoticism” and “citationism” are used in response to niche global music markets. Finally, we will consider these practices in the light of the concepts of “deterritorialization” and “reterritorialization” introduced by James Lull (1995) and others<sup>4</sup> in order to explain the relationship between culture, media and globalization.

## **2. “Dissimulated” Italo-Disco, House music and the “exoticism” of local identity**

Italian Disco and House represent the most important Italian contribution to popular electronic music. In fact, during the 80s, various specific definitions were coined to define this kind of music, such as “Spaghetti Disco”, “Italo-House” and “Riviera Beat” (Pacoda, 1999)<sup>5</sup>.

Disco music seems to have landed in Italy at the end of the 70s, when a singer of the *balera* – a typical dancing place in the *Riviera Romagnola* – asked the Bolognese producer Mauro Malavasi to remix an old song from the 60s, following “those new rhythms which were trendy in the USA” (Mazzi, 2002)<sup>6</sup>. In fact, the history of Italian Disco and House is connected to the experience of a few disco producers of the 70s. In those years, some Italian producers gained global success with disco tracks based on funk arrangements and on early attempts at producing sample-based music. Some producers, such as Mauro Malavasi and Celso Valli, were creating disco music under many pseudonyms, such as *Change*, *Macho* or *B.B. and Q band* for the international market. These people had mostly had traditional training in music and had often studied at music conservatories. In the mid-70s, they went to New York, where they learnt the “new groove” in the temples of disco music, such as the *Paradise Garage* and *Studio 54*. Then, they came back in Bologna where they produced basic song patterns, played by local musicians. At the end of the process, they went to New York once more, looking for black American singers and modern studios in which to do the final mix.

In a 1993 article, Ross Harley noted how the work of these Italian disco bands, such as *Change* and *Black Box*, reflected the coming of what Foucault defined as

a “culture where discourse would circulate without any need for an author” (Harley, 1993, p. 217). Indeed, these producers were not the authors in conventional music terms. Their names did not appear on the covers, and their musical projects were always under pseudonyms, which they continuously changed. These albums did not have references to these artists and producers, excluding minor references inside the album. Normally, on the covers there was only the name and the photo of the singer, who was certainly not the main contributor to a track. Sometimes, for example in the case of *Change*’s albums, the cubist-style covers of the LPs were abstract, showing only geometrical figures on a white background with no images<sup>7</sup>.

Their productive routine was also challenging the classic ways of producing popular music. These producers were making the music in Italy, and then going to New York to add the voice and do the final mix. They used mainly black American vocalists such as Luther Vandross (who was launched by Malavasi and later became a superstar in black music<sup>8</sup>), Diva Gray and Fonzi Thornton. This music was an Italian product, but it was also a global product in which titles, speech, distribution and sales were international. As Mauro Malavasi, one of the protagonists of these productions, says about their musical practice, the production was a mixture of Italian and global resources.

*"We recorded at home in Bologna at Fonoprint, then went to New York and played the stuff to the label. We released the records first in America, a couple of months earlier, when the song went to the top of the Billboard charts and everyone wanted it: Italy, Germany, France. There were no artists, we invented the names record by record. When the track was a hit, a couple of singers were hired just for television appearances". (Interview with Mauro Malavasi, in Antonelli and De Luca, 1995, p. 51)*

Harley also notes that these Italian producers were very good at catching the right grooves and reproducing them. Malavasi's *Change* "carefully mimicked the sound of the hyper disco band *Chic* with expert precision" (Harley, 1993, p. 215). In any case, *Change* represents a piece of dance music history, as shown by the fact that the single "Paradise" became one of the top 50 hits played at the *Warehouse* club in Chicago, the place where house music was born at the beginning of the '80s (Brewster and Broughton, 1999, p. 453)<sup>9</sup>.

Therefore, their production was a mixture of many factors: the traditional Italian training at music schools; the opportunity offered by the presence in Bologna of good local musicians and of a recording studio for Italian popular music; the connection of these Italian producers with the New York producer Jacques Fred

Petrus<sup>10</sup> and their experience of new clubs such as the *Paradise Garage* in NY; the ability to mix the Italian sense of melody and the soul attitude of black American singers. Indeed, the success of these productions has been explained as the result of combining Italian melody with American musicality, a formula as well suited to listening as to dancing. Concerning the musical form, Italo-disco brought Italian melody again to the fore in combination with the soul feeling of the black singers (Montana, 1990).

Another generation of Italian producers was at the centre of other popular international successes in house music at the end of the 90s. The band *Black Box*, founded by the DJ Daniele Davoli, the computer whiz Mirko Simoni and the classical clarinetist Valerio Semplici achieved global success in 1988 with the track "Ride on time". This track, based on a sample of the voice of the American singer Loletta Holloway<sup>11</sup> reached number one in the UK singles hit parade<sup>12</sup>. Black Box's "Ride on time" was also more melodic than other contemporary productions. The journalist Simon Reynolds narrates the success of this track thus:

*"At the end of the summer of '89, big raves were dominated by an absurd sound defined "Italo-house" – voices of disco divas and oscillating piano vibrations – born on the beaches of Rimini and Riccione" (Reynolds 1998, it. trans. 2000, p. 92)*

Many of these Italian productions were based on the implicit strategy of “dissimulation” of local identity. The names of the projects were always Anglophone, as were the titles of the tracks. The singers were mostly black Americans, which was essential in giving the track – as Malavasi pointed out – “that soul attitude, that anger, that spirituality”.

But what was going on in Italy in the 70s in the dance music world? The main place for dance culture in Italy was the *Riviera Adriatica*, the coast 100 kilometres from Bologna. This was also where, in 1974, House took on a specific form in Italy, with the disco club *Baia degli Angeli*, three years before the *Paradise Garage* opened in New York. There also developed a specific sub-genre of House music, represented by the Italian djs Daniele Baldelli and Mozart under the name of *Cosmic Afro*, an old style which has been rediscovered in the last few years by the British musical press as well (Oldfield, 2002).

In that period on the Riviera, small distributors of dance mixes started their own activity in order to furnish local djs. It was from one of these distributors that the most popular Italian electronic music label of today was born in 1989, Irma Records. Irma was founded in Bologna by Umberto Damiani and Massimo Benini as a small label, producing dance mixes for the djs of the Riviera. They followed the popularity of the disco clubs which were exploding in those years, best represented by famous

disco clubs such as the *Cocoricò* in Riccione and the *Echos* in Misano Adriatico. Irma Records annually produces more than half a million copies of its releases and now works mainly with foreign music markets<sup>13</sup>.

For Irma, the strategy of “exoticism” seems to be a winning choice, especially in countries where Italian style represents a general cultural attraction, such as in Japan. Irma also has a web site especially for the Japanese market) and many of their compilations use an Italian or Mediterranean identity to characterize the product. Explaining this connection to Japanese distribution, an Irma executive jokingly says:

*“Recently the Japanese market has also become relevant ...in fact, we jokingly say that the real artistic director of Irma is no longer Umberto, but the head of Japanese distribution, that when he tells us what to do, we do it... it's a joke, obviously, but the Japanese market has become so important for us that now when we make records, we think: will the Japanese like it? (Interview with Pierfrancesco Pacoda)*

For example, Irma's compilations *Future Sound of Italy* (1999) and *Italian Dance Classics* (1997) are titles that refer to their Italian identity<sup>14</sup>. The language of presentation of the CDs appears to be that of an international product, as one can understand from the

CDs' covers and booklets, which are all in English. It could be argued that in these cases, Italian identity is not used as a naturalistic reference to the music and to the production, but rather as a conscious tool to stimulate exoticism and curiosity in foreign markets.

### **3. Hardcore Techno, nomad tribes and high culture sampling**

Hardcore techno is probably the fastest and most abrasive form of dance music. It started in Britain's *Second Summer of Love* in 1988 and became successful during the 90s in the illegal rave scene, first in the UK and then in continental Europe.

As Simon Reynolds also narrates in *Ecstasy Generation*, the city of Bologna was a centre for the hardcore techno style during the mid-90s. Indeed, at the beginning of the decade, many UK techno tribes had to move away from Britain due to police repression of the illegal rave scene. But, as James Lull notes, "culture never dies, even in conditions of orchestrated repression" (Lull, 1995, p. 152). Therefore, it was a process of forced deterritorialization which marked the coming of the hardcore techno rave style to Bologna and it can be seen as what we can define as the "rave diaspora" from the UK. So, British tribes established their base in a small town near Bologna, Santarcangelo, where for example, one famous tribe, the *Mutoid Waste Company* has existed since 1990 (Reynolds, 1998, p. 196). These

tribes found a good cultural environment in Bologna, represented by the tradition of squats and the anarchist political tendencies of that period<sup>15</sup>.

Indeed, when Spiral Tribe moved away from the UK, they in some way exported a subculture and sowed the seeds of rave culture in the region. As a result, in 1996 a hardcore techno scene began to develop in Bologna, with indigenous tribes such as Teknomobilsquad and Olstad (originally from Turin). In that period, Bologna also held some *Technivals*, European events which involve many European techno tribes. The local tribes organised illegal parties on the outskirts of Bologna in the period 1996-1999, until here too police repression became stronger and these tribes had to move or definitively stop organizing fully illegal raves.

But the process of development of the local rave scene did not stop. In 1998, a rave parade was organized in the city for the first time, following similar experiences in Berlin and Zurich. The latest (9<sup>th</sup>) edition in 2005 brought together nearly 100,000 young people. While today fully illegal rave parties are no longer possible, raves in a similar style are organized weekly in the *centri sociali*, and especially at *Livello 57*.

Belonging to a "strong" subculture, the hardcore techno production of the Bologna Tribe Teknomobilquad does not need to make its local identity explicit. They do not need to dissimulate their own Italian identity, nor do they use their Italian identity to give their production a dimension



of exoticism and curiosity. In this sense, it can be argued that in the hardcore techno scene characterised by a strong *subcultural capital* (Thornton, 1995), exoticism is not a useful strategy, because of the high cultural competence required to join the techno scene. For the same reason, dissimulation also appears to be of little use because it is a field of *restricted cultural production* (Bourdieu, 1993, p. 53), in which the audience often coincides with the producers, since they know each other directly. This aspect is reflected in the fact that this kind of music is made by people - and for people - who are part of a European network in which local identity represents only an element of a wider belonging to a nomadic youth movement.

While the dj mixes produced by Teknomobilquad (TMS) are aesthetically identical to other European productions, it can also be observed that the form of their music is different from that of other European tribes, such as French and Dutch ones. In particular, Italian hard-core music has more melody, because, having a different attitude to its European cousins, it also samples melodic punk patterns of chords. Moreover, the music at the parties is different, more Mediterranean, as the musician Lou Chano of TMS tells us:

*"The Italian style was contaminated by the punk experience and the vibra from southern Italy, since the Teknomobilquad musicians came from*

*there. The Dutch said that it wasn't a heavy style like theirs, it was happier, there was melody, punk riffs, not just bass rhythms. Also a bit funky and disco" (Interview with Lou Chano).*

The dominance of a melodic attitude in hardcore techno is very interesting because it indicates a clear continuity with the Italian Disco and House tradition. It seems that in electronic music as well, Italian musical identity is characterized by the national melodic tradition also represented by popular artists such as Domenico Modugno or Lucio Battisti.

Another tribe from Bologna, Sonic Belligeranza, makes more extreme experimental techno, but with a more cultural attitude. For example, a Sonic Belligeranza track on the 2001 French compilation *Par tous le trous necessaires* on the electronic music label Cavage can help us to understand another way of presenting and representing the Italian cultural specificity of these kinds of music. Indeed, Dj Balli created a speed techno track *Mangia, mangia, mangia?* based on samples from Pierpaolo Pasolini's film *Le Cento Giornate di Sodoma*, a very provocative Italian movie from the 60s. Further Sonic Belligeranza productions that sample traditional Italian jingles, such as the public television's *Intervallo*, explicitly recall a cultural politics of "Italo-exploitation" as a recontextualization of the "black exploitation" (or "blaxploitation") strategy in American cultural

production. This appears to be a different strategy to make the Italian identity of the local roots of electronic music explicit, which we can define as the strategy of “citationism”. It seems to be a way of consciously making a local identity explicit in a music scene characterized by high-subcultural capital <sup>16</sup>.

#### **4. Rethinking the role of the local: practices of representation, deterritorialization and reterritorialization**

We have looked at some of the historical developments of Italian electronic music and especially that from Bologna, which is an important centre for electronic music in Italy. But the question now is why Bologna, more than other cities, has interacted so deeply with international music production. And how to explain the role of the local-global dialectic in generating the musical identity representation in the field of electronic music.

As regards the role of Bologna, we can conceive the role of the local as a question of *serendipity*. Speaking of this, the social anthropologist Ulf Hannerz, analyzing the role of the city in world cultural production, says that it is not only the quantitative factor represented by the population density. In a world characterized by extreme cultural complexity, the city is important because “it always also offers new occasions of *serendipity*; things can be found when they are not looked for, because they stay around us” (1992, p. 263). The quality that enables some cities to emerge in international cultural

production resides “in the easy, or even insistent, availability of cultural interfaces” (*ibidem*).

Moreover, focusing on music and particularly on the role of the local in an international cultural flow, we have to focus on what Stahl described - criticizing the concept of subculture – as “the insistence, the scene’s social persistence, a demand and desire that cultural life in the city be made meaningful in a different way” (Stahl, 2003, p. 63). Partially bypassing the distinction between musical genres, the understanding of local music’s role in a global world may be considered as the history and attitude of a place. And so also the concept of *habitus* proposed by Pierre Boudieu (1979) could be used to make sense of a local musical scene *habitus*, in so doing taking into consideration how a specific place creates a musical “agency” in the global world as the result of a creative adaptation to a structural system of opportunities, ideologies and causalities.

We have seen that the Italian disco and house production, which has achieved international success, has been a product of the traditional dance culture in Emilia Romagna, that of the *balere*; of the presence of Italian popular music studios and musicians in the city; of the technical training in the highly conservative Italian music conservatories such as the case of Mauro Malavasi; of the rock scene that has existed in the city since the end of the 70s (Rubini and Tinti, 2003).

We have also seen that, while in early 90s disco

**Table 1 – Practices of representation of Italian identity and de- and re-territorialization processes**

	Music which explicitly shows localness	Music which does not explicitly show localness
Music more connected with deterritorialization processes (more media interaction)	<i>Exoticism</i> (90s Dance - Lounge)	Strategic <i>dissimulation</i> (Disco - 80s House)
Music more connected with reterritorialization processes (more media interaction)	<i>Citationism</i> (Experimental Techno)	<i>Adaptation</i> to a subculture (Hardcore Techno)

music a practice of “dissimulation” characterized the construction of the local national identity, the affirmation of Italo-House at the end of the decade led to a practice of “exoticism” in the international dissemination of Italian music.

Hardcore techno developed in the city starting from a UK nomadic tribe who came to the region because of the presence of a theatre festival: they found a cultural and social *humus* in the politically-oriented sites of the *centri sociali* in which to develop their cultural practices; at the same time, a strong tradition of literary production created the context for rearranging the anti-cultural tendency of techno through the more conscious sampling activity of new musicians.

In the case of these strong subcultural fields, “dissimulation” and “exoticism” do not represent active strategies. After a process of deterritorialization, such music also experimented with a further process of reterritorialization (Lull, 1995). This further

reterritorialization enabled Italian techno tribes to redefine their own specificity through direct interaction with other foreign tribes. Therefore, Italian tribes met other tribes and, in so doing, built their own identity directly, presenting their own Mediterranean style, which characterizes the way they animate the techno parties they organize.

Following figure 1, we can affirm that in electronic music the different degree of deterritorialization and reterritorialization is related to practices of constructing a locally-rooted identity. Disco and House music are more marked by a deterritorialized condition and more filtered by the musical media, and, in so doing, in these fields the trend is to use active practices of hiding or showing the local identity of the music (through both strategic dissimulation or exoticism). In reterritorialized hardcore techno, the influence of a more direct and less media-driven interaction contributes to enabling other kinds of

practices. These practices can involve an adaptation of the style of their subculture as well as a more cultural strategy represented by the citation of specific Italian cultural references.

## Endnotes

1. The futurist painter Luigi Russolo was probably the first noise musician in history as well as a proto-theorist of the new music of the XX century with "The Art of Noises" (1916). The city of Milan was one of the three cradles of electronic music, together with Paris and Koln, in the 50s and 60s and figures such as Luciano Berio, Bruna Maderna and Luigi Nono are well-established fathers of electronic music.
2. A good indicator of the weakness of Italian electronic music production is the low presence of Italian acts in the AGM Guide to Electronic music, which contains more than 1,200 biographies and more than 5,000 album reviews (Bogdanov et al., 2001). In this guide, only four Italian acts are considered (one is Berio) and no more than 10 Italian albums are cited (among which are two Irma compilations to be considered later).
3. The ethnographic research was conducted into electronic music production in the city of Bologna, one of the Italian centres of electronic music. Part of the research is presented in Magaudda (2002); I have also collected material and interpretations of the drum'n'bass, experimental ambient and electroacoustic music scenes, but lack of space here prevents us from examining these other interesting cases.

4. Others who first used these concepts are Appadurai (1990), Featherstone (1995), and Morley and Robins (1995). For a wider discussion of these concepts, see Tomlinson (1999).

5. It is of interest that one of the main figures of 70s Euro-disco was the Italian composer Giorgio Moroder, who moved to Munich to work with the producer Pete Bellote. He produced some of the most popular Euro-disco hits such as “I Feel Love” by Donna Summer in 1977. Giorgio Moroder made his debut in 1969 with the single “Looky, Looky” and became famous with Euro-disco and the production of the Munich studio *Musicland*. In the 80s, he turned to film music, composing the soundtracks to Alan Parker’s *Midnight Express* (1979), Paul Schrader’s *American Gigolo* (1980) and *Cat People* (1983), and winning an Oscar for *Flashdance* (1983). Following that, he produced the British rock band *Sigue Sigue Sputnik*.

6. The singer was identified as Marzio, a ballroom singer on the Italian Riviera (Rimini). Marzio only sang on the first Macho album, and went on to record a solo LP called “Smoke on the volcano” (1980, EMI). According to sources, he died in the first half of 2001.

7. The attitude of Italian disco producers marked a change in popular music production, especially

concerning the aura of originality and the authenticity of the artists and music. It was probably the very first attempt to move from the idea of an authentic artist to that of technicians, more like today’s djs than the rock musicians of the 70s.

8. Former lead and background vocalist on *Change*’s 1980 and 1981 albums, *B. B. & Q.*’s album in 1981 and Peter Jacques’ band’s 1980 album, Luther Ronzoni Vandross, died on July 1st, 2005 in Edison, NJ. He was 54. He ranked as one of the most successful R&B singers of the 80s and broke through to even wider commercial success in 1989 with “The Best of Luther Vandross”, which included the song “Here and Now,” his first Grammy winning hit.

9. It is worth noticing that the popular USA dj Jeff Mills put a theme by *Change* on the 2004 compilation of his top 25 classic dance tracks. Moreover, it is important to know that when Malavasi, as well as the other producer Celso Valli, stopped making disco music, they became very popular music producers for some of the most famous Italian artists such as Lucio Dalla, Gianni Morandi and Andrea Bocelli (Mauro Malavasi) and Vasco Rossi, Eros Ramazzotti and Laura Pausini (Celso Valli).

10. Mauro Malavasi and Jacques Petrus had been producing their own music for almost two years under

the company name of “Goody Music Production”.

11. The success of this record was marred by controversy when it was revealed that the vocals had been sampled from Loletta Holloway’s “Love Sensation,” a disco song written and produced by Dan Hartman and released in 1980. The group had hired French model Katrin Quniol to pose as their singer. Quniol could not speak English and had trouble lip-synching the song on music shows. Black Box later pointed out that Holloway got an expensive fur coat out of the compensation money they had to pay her (see <http://www.songfacts.com/detail.lasso?id=3712> - access July 2005).

12. “Ride on Time” sold more than three million copies, also reaching number 16 in the USA hit parade. Moreover, it was also the unofficial soundtrack of the American televising of the *Superbowl* (cfr. Sada, 1995, p. 49). One of the producers, Daniele Davoli, was also inserted, together with the Italian Joe t. Vannelli and Claudio Cocoluto, in the list of the 100 top world djs in 1997 by the British dance magazine “Dj Magazine”. (Pacoda, 1999, p. 79).

13. After an initial period of dance remix production, Irma developed its own production in the genres of acid jazz, lounge and cocktail music, as well as in other fields such as hip hop. In 2000, Irma’s sales reached

500,000 copies and more than 90% of its production goes outside Italy. Indeed, Irma’s production, especially electronic, is clearly aimed at the foreign market, and some years ago the label opened two offices in London and New York. Irma also has a few sub-labels, one of which, the Will, only publishes for the American market. Moreover, it is worth noting that one of Irma’s Italian djs, Don Carlos, has been resident DJ at the cult dance club Ministry of Sound in London.

14. For example, the title of this compilation imitates the titles of other international electronic compilations such as *Future Sounds of New York* (1995, Emotive), *Future Sounds of United Kingdom* (1997, Open) and *Future Sounds of Paris* (1997, Ultra); in turn, these compilations echoed the name of one of the most famous UK electronic bands *Future Sounds Of London* (debut in 1989).

15. It is interesting to note that the *Mutoid Waste Company* arrived in Santarcangelo because this little town holds one of the most important alternative theatre festivals in Italy. It was there in 1990 that they presented an exhibition of cars transformed into military tanks and other postindustrial iron sculptures ([www.santarcangelofestival.com](http://www.santarcangelofestival.com)).

16. Trying to make a connection of this kind of attitude



with the local cultural scene explicit, it is useful to note that the “highbrow” strategy of representing the Italian roots in electronic music through the citation strategy is clearly connected with the literary experience of its leader Dj Balli. He is also a writer who published a book in 1998, *Anche tu astronauta* (Balli, 1998), a presentation as part of an international project Association of Autonomous Astronauts (AAA). In this respect, it is also notable that Bologna is one of the Italian cities where books and reading are a highly developed cultural aspect (Santoro and Sassatelli, 2002), as statistics about book selling in 2004 have shown, referring to Bologna as the city where more books per person are sold in Italy. It is also important to add that the relationship between music production and literature in Bologna presents many connections, mostly represented by musicians and singers who are also writers, such as Emidio Clementi (Clementi, 2001), singer of the dissolved rock band Massimo Volume and the new, partly electronic-based band, El Muniria.

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## Selected Discography

### **Full discography of *Change*, the most important Italo-disco project of Mauro Malavasi:**

-1980, *The Glow Of Love*, Goody Music/RFC-Warner Bros., singles: "A Lover's Holiday", "The Glow Of Love", "Searching", "Angel In My Pocket", LP.

-1981, *Miracles*, Goody Music/RFC-Atlantic, singles: "Paradise", "Hold Tight", "Miracles". LP

-1982, *Sharing Your Love*, RFC-Atlantic, singles: "The Very Best In You", "Hard Times (It's Gonna Be Alright)", "Oh What A Night", LP

-1983, *This Is Your Time*, RFC-Atlantic, singles: "Got To Get Up", "This Is Your Time", "Don't Wait Another Night", "Magical Night", LP.

-1984, *Change Of Heart*, Five/RFC-Atlantic, singles: "Change Of Heart", "You Are My Melody", "It Burns Me Up", LP.

-1984, *Greatest Hits*, Five, LP.

-1985, *Greatest Hits*, Renaissance, LP.

-1985, *Turn On Your Radio*, Renaissance/RFC-Atlantic, singles: "Let's Go Together", "Oh What A Feeling", "Mutual Attraction", "Examination", LP.

-1998, *The Very Best Of Change*, Rhino-Atlantic, CD.

-2003, *The Best Of Change*, Warner Music, 2CD.

-2004, "You Miss My Love", Yanis, Single.

### **Others:**

-AAVV, 1997, *Italian dance classics – ultimate Collection*

- *House*, Irma Records - CD

- AAVV, 1999, *Future Sounds of Italy*, Irma Records - CD

- El Muniria, 2004, *Stanza 218*, Homesleep – CD.
- Black Box, 1990, *Dreamland*, Carrere / Airplay Records, LP/CD.
- Giardini di Mirò, 2002, *The academic rise of falling drifters*, Homesleep - CD (remix by electronic bands of Giardini di Mirò's album, *The rise and fall of academic drifters*, 2001, Homelseep)
- Macho, 1978, *I'm A Man*, Goody Music/Prelude - LP.
- Macho, 1980, *Roll*, Goody Music - LP.
- Marzio, 1980, *Smoke on the volcano*, Emi – LP.
- Massimo Volume, 1993, *Stanze*, Underground Records – CD/LP
- Mills Jeff, 2004, *Choice: A Collection of Classics*, Azuli
- CD (track 19 is "The end" by Malavasi's band Change)
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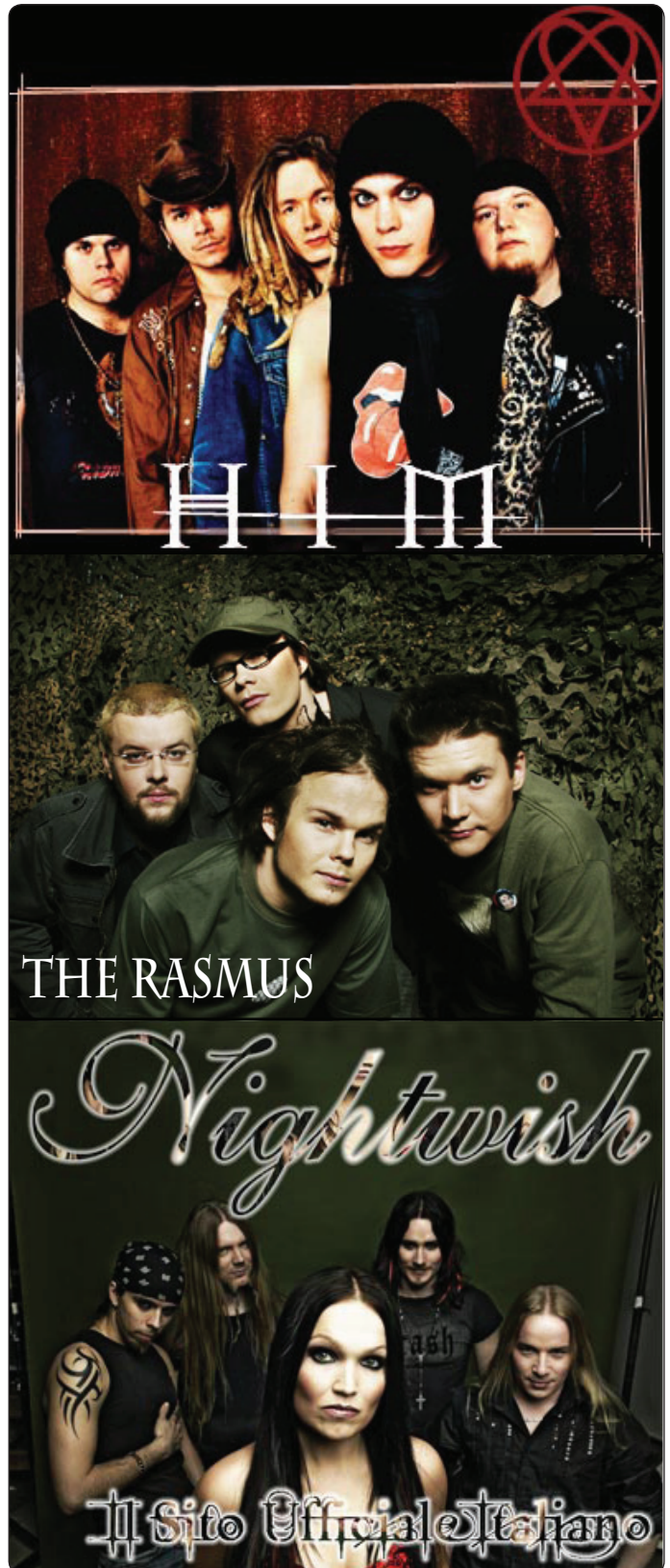
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## Selling Finland by the Sound: Finnish Popular Music in British Markets

Janne Mäkelä

If history of popular music is understood as history of winnings and successes, there is not much to say about Finnish pop and rock in British markets. Whereas British popular music has been hugely successful in Finland and almost everywhere else since the 1960s, Finnish music (apart from Sibelius) has played a very little role in Britain. Yet we must remember that history, be it history of popular music or any history, is not only triumphs and victories. History is also hopes, desires, obsessions, attempts, failures, laments, disappointments, and lost dreams. History may be something that never really materialized.

In this case, however, something finally came up. In 2000, both techno pop artist Darude and hip-hop group Bomfunk Mc's reached UK singles Top 10. In 2004, these acts were followed by the rock groups HIM and The Rasmus who took their places both in UK singles and albums Top 10 while Nightwish attracted metal music lovers. In addition to these major Finnish pop and rock names, performers such as Kimmo Pohjonen, Jori Hulkkonen, Värttinä and The 69 Eyes, to give but a few example, have enjoyed medium-scale success in Britain.



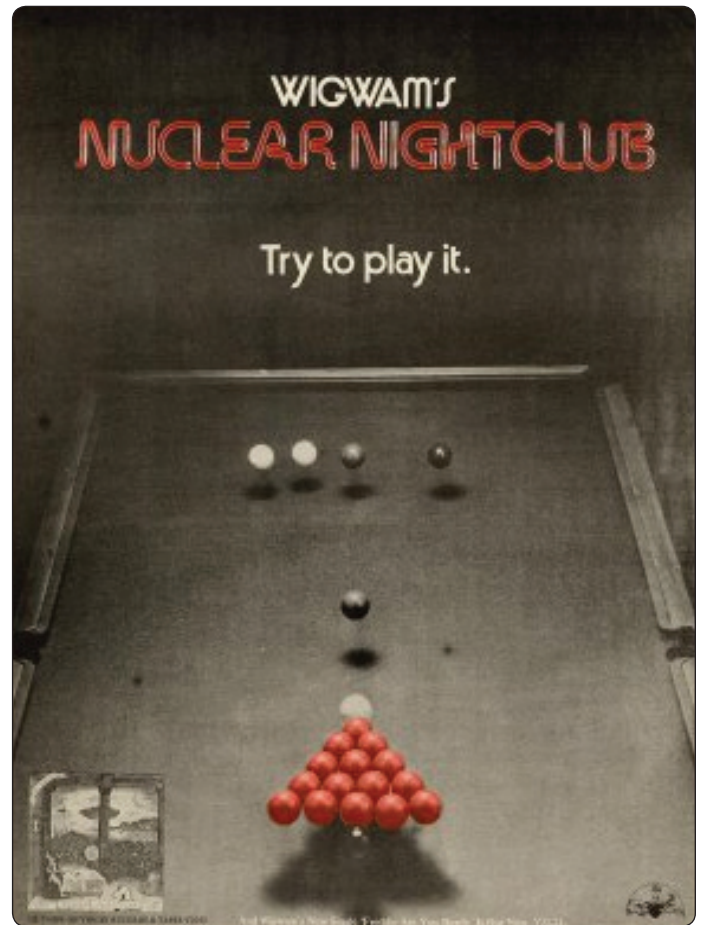


The usual explanation for the new wave of success is that contemporary Finnish performers are more competent to write catchy tunes and promote themselves and that they have more cosmopolitan tastes than previous generations. It is also often argued that there has been a rise in professionalism on behalf of the industry and culture export policy. It now seems that behind every successful artist there is an army of managers, promoters and other representatives determined to take care of the business.

While the role of the musicians, their backers and the music industry cannot be ignored it is evident that the internationalization of Finnish pop/rock also relates to wider cultural issues such as globalization processes, the changing status of Anglo-American pop/rock axis, the emergence of communication networks, the triumph of local music cultures, and the idealization of the margin. We should also bear in mind that even though the change has been rapid, the new era of success in Finnish popular music has a rather long history behind it.

### **Pre-Fame Days**

In 1960s Finnish popular music, attempts to win fame in Britain were very few. In fact, they were more like vague dreams than real attempts. Whereas Britain became a market leader and superpower in popular music, Finnish



pop clearly had a sense of inferiority at least in terms of gaining international recognition. It was not until the 1970s and the rise of the progressive rock music that the speculations about winning fame in Britain really took over. There was a lot of discussion whether Finnish performers such as Wigwam or Tasavallan presidentti would make it in British markets. These speculations were articulated not only in Finland but also in British rock press which for a short period took interest in introducing new European art rock groups.

Wigwam was perhaps the most renowned Finnish rock group in the early 1970s. As it became evident that Wigwam was able to produce as ambitious and well-



articulated music as any other progressive group at the time, great expectations were put upon the members of the group. The group, which was led by English-born Jim Pembroke, signed a recording contract with a new British company, Virgin, had tours in England and released records. Virgin even conducted a rather impressive marketing campaign in Britain.

Despite these efforts and promising feedback in the rock press the group did not achieve notable fame and soon ceased to exist. Chances for Wigwam to win fame in Britain also partly failed because ideas of progressive rock were challenged and eventually replaced by attitudes of punk rock.

One of the groups that punk culture produced was Hanoi Rocks, a Finnish combo which soon abandoned the punk style and began to adopt elements from gypsy imagery and glam/hard rock styles. When journalists Dave Roberts of *Sounds* and Dave Dickson of *Kerrang* enthusiastically wrote about the new rock sensation in 1982, Hanoi Rocks became a cult band in Britain.

The great breakthrough either in Britain or in the United States, however, never materialized (it did in Asia, especially in Japan) and after the drummer Razzle died in a car crash the band faced a break-up. In British album charts, the best position that Hanoi Rocks managed to

**YOUNG,  
BEAUTIFUL,  
TALENTED...  
AND RICH?**

**I**F YOU had a bottle of beer for every time Hanoi Rocks have come close to a severe duffing-up, you could probably retire on the refunds from the empties.

Gadding about town in the dark hours of the night with all the razzle-dazzle of a deb's birthday celebration – complete, and simultaneously tarty the Rocks have infuriated certain members of the musical community to the point of violence. Surprising what a bit of make-up can do for a bloke.

The ever-reaction, of course, comes from men: jealous lovers rebelling against the Scandinavians' instant and indisputable appeal to women; and hairy-chested machos imagining some sort of threat to their fragile masculine pride.

It's to various of the latter fellows that Hanoi Rocks have unwittingly dealt the cruelest blow of all. I can recall at least three vociferously heterosexual men falling in love with voluptuous blond vocalist Mike Monroe – and having to be restrained from

"I've worn make-up since I was 15," said Mike on a recent visit to the MM. "It looks bad, it's not as good as it used to be, but it's still there." "I did it 'cos Marlon told me to," added lead guitarist Andy "Anzil" McCoy. "He always said 'I look good without it... and I look better with it.' The women like it, but sometimes we get too many women following us about. It's all right shagging yourself to death; it's fun. But after some time it turns out to be a problem. I suppose it would be worse if we didn't attract any women, though..."

**D**ESPITE the disenchantment of some of their male observers, Hanoi Rocks are turning into one of



the biggest crowd-pulling bands on the pub/club circuit, with a seemingly universal appeal.

Punks, headbangers, bikers... everyone can enjoy them in the same way that we can all find something to appreciate in the repertoire of a group like the Stones.

It's that kind of music that the Rocks are offering: rude-faced rock 'n' roll that could rather poke its tongue out than seduce with subtlety. And it's delivered with the brazen conceit of a band who want your attention and submission more than your passing interest. They reach out; grab; don't say please.

"The day I came was the day I left," says Mike in the *Rock On!* book.

If there's any virtue in sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll, with all the associated imagery and hedonistic mythology, then Hanoi Rocks have the shiniest halo I know of. Familiar blatant references to sex and clichéd helpings of sexual symbolism crop up time and again in these songs, though the drug-laden atmosphere of the band is something that's inherently obvious and understood rather than articulated in any specific terms.

Certainly, the band will refuse to talk in interviews about dangerous substances, other than to credit their drummer Razzle with a predilection for magic mushrooms.

You would expect a band with such flair for self-presentation to be aware of the need to paint in a suitable background. You would expect stories either of extravagant wealth or extreme poverty, coloured with a series of seedy experiences to match the powerfully seedy nature of their live set. Here again, Hanoi Rocks can be relied on to complete the picture; they've got it.

*Andy Gifford*

Andy is the Rock who provides most of the tatty glamour. "If we don't get a record deal, I'll go back to doing what I used to do," he confided with a dangerous glint that suggested an imminent revelation.

"I used to be a gay prostitute in Stockholm. I could never keep an ordinary job before I joined the band; I never had enough money. So I started




**MIKE MONROE**

hanging about with faggots, and I enjoyed it. I'd do anything for money. And then the more I started getting, the more I spent.

"At the time I was living with this Swedish girl who was really rich. Her house had a waterfall in the garden, and her father was the man who took

While Andy was indulging in a simultaneously lavish and squalid lifestyle, the rest of the band were living out the necessary poor roles. "I was cleaning toilets and I was bumming in the streets," said Miko, shaking his blond hair out of his eyes. "I used to live in the subway corridors

... me and Sam (bassist) and Nigel (rhythm guitar). We were on the streets."



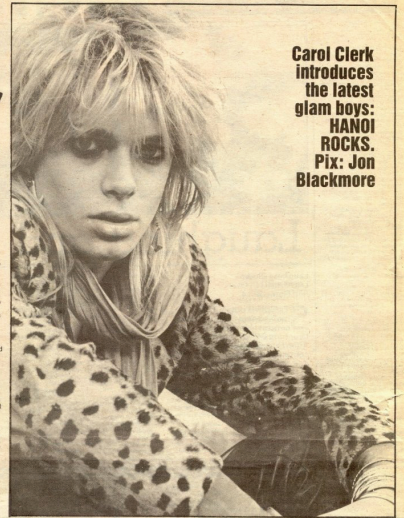
"all over the place", rather than in any one country. Universal... as I said.

"Last summer we started to notice more people coming to our gigs," said Andy. "I suppose Mike is the public image of the band, the blond singer with the long hair and a lot of make-up. But we all get attention in a way.

There's no weak personality in the group. Everyone's got a very strong character, so we don't mind when Mike gets photographs in the press. So long as someone in the band is getting into the papers, it's still Hanoi Rocks.

"Everything is alright for us as long as we keep playing gigs in every town and every country we can," said Mike.

**Carol Clerk  
introduces  
the latest  
glam boys:  
HANOI  
ROCKS.  
Pix: Jon  
Blackmore**



MIKE MONROE



**H**ANOI Rocks began in their native Finland two years ago, fulfilling a dream that they daydreamed other bands were attempting at that time.

"There aren't many bands like us anywhere in the world," says Hanoi Rocks' lead singer, Eric Burdon. "There are people everywhere now dressing up like us and trying to imitate us. We're making money there now."

"What we're doing is very trashy sort of rock 'n' roll."

In talking of their inspirations, Hanoi Rocks created a list that does not mention the bands most often cited in connection with them: the Stones and the New York Dolls.

"They say their music came to life after the example of people like Little Richard, the Shangri-Las, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Curtis, the Who, the Hoople, Alice Cooper and the MC5. And now that the public, not just in Britain but in Europe and beyond, have finally started taking notice of them, they see themselves as based

reach was #28 in 1984 with their aptly titled album, *Two Steps from the Move*.

In Finland, Hanoi Rocks meant a watershead. It was a signal that, yes, it might be possible to take the world or at least Britain by the storm. Yet the period between Hanoi Rocks and the year 2000 was marked by unfulfilled expectations. Several groups and performers (including Dingo, L'amourder, 22-Pistepirkko, Leningrad Cowboys, Gringos Locos, The 69 Eyes, Jimi Tenor, Poverty Stinks, Francine, Waltari, and so on) had activities in Britain. Such moments, however, were not seen satisfying in Finland. Pressures to win international pop fame had shifted from dreams and desires to obsessions which

gradually became unbearable.

### **Curing the Trauma**

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Finnish rock press was the most visible institution to speculate about Finnish pop and rock acts' search for international fame. Journalists recognised that the lack of resources and poor international contacts were a problem which had to be resolved if Finnish musicians wished to have international success. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, not only the rock press but the mainstream press and other media together with the music industry expressed their concerns about the slow development of internationalizing Finnish popular music. It was during this time that the term "export" was incorporated

in debates on Finnish popular music. Winning fame in international markets, especially in Britain or in America, became a major issue in Finnish popular music culture.

What followed was that more organised actions were taken. The annual event of Finnish music industry, Music & Media, which was established in 1989, took pop export one of its main concerns. National training programme for rock managers started in 1997. Two major reports (Ahonen et al.; Mikkola et al.) focussing on the internationalization of Finnish popular music were published in 1998. Finally, in 2002 a major organization, mostly a state-funded Music Export Finland, was founded to act as a link between musicians, industry and the state.

What is significant is that this process coincided the general debate on the national identity in Finland. In an era of post-communism and pan-European ideologies there was a need to reconfigure the idea of Finnishness as something that is based on the cultural interaction with the Western part of the world rather than with the Slavic culture. While performers such as the folk group Värttinä and the humorous rock group Leningrad Cowboys more or less owed debts to Slavic traditions the main aim for them or any other act was not to gain fame in Eastern Europe but in the West. This development was also clearly contributed by Sweden's extraordinary success in world markets.

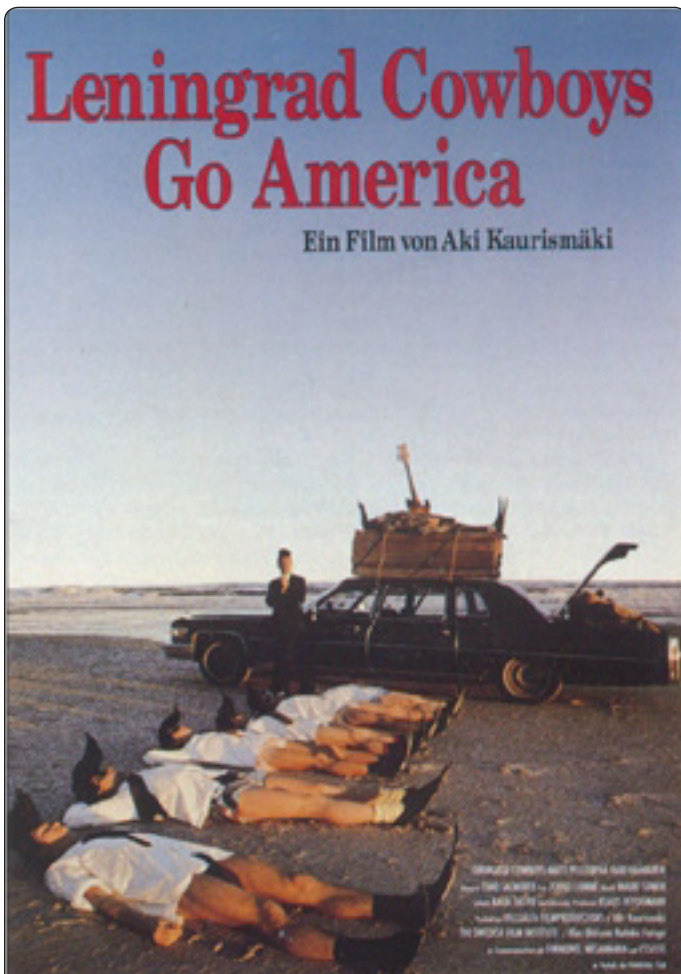


Jimi Tenor became a short-time medium-scale name in late 1990s British pop culture circuits.





Värttinä in 1996.



Aki Kaurismäki's film made Leningrad Cowboys famous.

It can be suggested that in addition to the changing geopolitical situation and the envy for Sweden, it was also globalization processes that had a powerful influence on new expectations for Finnish popular

music. In the 1990s it was often articulated that globalization in popular music means the dominance of the popular music industry by the major media conglomerates and the invasion of international music styles and stars. To simplify the complex pattern: there were fears that the global would take over and kill the local. What actually happened in popular music – and this is well-known – was that the local fought back and, at least in some sense, it won. In record sales, for example, the main trend in 1990s popular music was that the marketshare of national repertoires increased everywhere (See Table 1).

It can be argued, as Simon Frith does, that in popular music the globalization of the local has become the localization of the global. One consequence of this development is that small countries such as Ireland, Sweden and, eventually, Finland, have become successful in global markets. (2004, 51–52)

### British Dilemma

In Britain, consequences have been somewhat different. It has become evident that Britain cannot be considered such a market leader and trendsetter in popular music as it was in the 1960s or in the 1980s. British pop no longer produces regular worldwide pop phenomena. As a matter of fact, late 1990s Spice Girls craze remains so far the last great British pop story.

**Table 1: Marketshares in world music sales 1991–2000**  
Average repertoire of origin (% of value)

Year	Domestic	International
1991	58.3	35.6 (+ 6.1% Classical)
1995	62.3	32.8 (+4.9%)
2000	68.2	27.5 (+4.3%)

Source: Frith 2004/IFPI

**Table 2: Total Number of Countries in UK Top 10**

1950s	4
1960s	10
1970s	12
1980s	17
1990s	20

Source: <http://www.theofficialcharts.com>

Even though the UK now seems to be just another European music producer this is exactly not so. Because of Britain's historical contribution to the development of pop and rock music, British performers "still carry a particular kind of cultural status". New British rock music may not have significant commercial influence in international level but on the other hand it has become "a

kind of arthouse culture". (Frith 2004, 51). Not only British artists but also British pop markets enjoy certain cultural status. The official UK pop charts and music press are important promotional grounds and meter sticks which are followed by pop audiences and entrepreneurs working in music business. Take for example the Finnish pop/rock journal, *Rumba*, which still publishes not only the listings of Finnish and US pop charts but also UK charts. This is just one example implying that success in British markets still means something in popular music culture.

It has often been claimed that British markets are difficult to conquer for foreign acts (unless the act comes from America). This might be so – sales percentage of domestic repertoire in Britain has traditionally been one of the highest in Europe – but certainly things have changed during the past 40–50 years. We can see it, for example, in statistics showing the number of different countries in UK Top 10. While in the 1960s only 10 and in the 1970s 12 countries had acts that were privileged to reach Top 10, in the 1980s and 1990s the number of them were 17 and 20, respectively.

Table 2 is not a fully reliable indicator but it, however, implies that there has been a long-term shift from the "inside going out" to the "outside coming in" in British pop music culture. The music sales percentage of domestic repertoire in the 1990s indicates similar development.

Whereas in 1994 this repertoire was 51.1 %, in 2000 it was 51 %. The marketshare has practically remained the same in Britain whereas everywhere else the sales percentage of domestic repertoire has steadily increased as shown above in Table 1.

The same development can also be seen in the interest that British pop press has increasingly shown in various national music scenes such as Iceland or Finland. It is somewhat paradoxical that in British press there has been a strong tradition of mocking so-called provincial music cultures such as that of Finland. Yet at the same time these papers have often alleged that provincial scenes seem to produce more interesting and authentic music than scenes in London and other metropolitan areas. This interest together with more organised and dynamic attempts to export Finnish popular music partly explains why during the past ten years performers such as the shamanistic accordion player and performance artist Kimmo Pohjonen and the folk group Värttinä, both who almost stereotypically represent ideas of exotic Finnishness, as well as certain Finnish music festivals such as the event of electronic music, Koneisto, have received attention in British press.

### **Two Levels of Export**

Britain may be more open to European performers than before but well-manoeuvred practices of export are still

needed. In Finland, there are two levels of marketing popular music in international markets, including that of Britain. First, there are those major names such as HIM and The Rasmus and metal groups such as Nightwish, Stratovarius and Apocalyptica who are strongly backed by their recording companies and basically are in no need for the support from official sites of culture export. These groups have followed the traditional rock pyramid model (see Frith 1988), that is, they have “paid their debts” by climbing from local and national levels of fame to the international level.

In international level, including British market, they are not essentially identified as Finnish rock groups. The Rasmus, for example, has sometimes been taken as a Swedish band because the name of the group sounds Swedish and because the production company behind them is located in Sweden. Finnishness has obviously given an extra boost of exoticism to the marketing of these bands but it does not play a crucial role in promotional strategies nor in the music styles presented by the groups. In Finland, the matter is somewhat different. HIM, The Rasmus, Nightwish and other successful acts are regarded as essentially Finnish and treated as if they were national treasures.

The second level of pop/rock export is marketing middle-scale artists and new acts. This often means a cooperation between state culture policy and

Finnish record companies. In this level, the element of Finnishness may play a crucial role, take for example Värttinä who are widely identified as musicians performing Slavic and Karelian folk music styles.

Combining cultural identities and marketing strategies may, however, produce its own twists. A telling example is the case of In the City, Britain's annual music industry and media event, which in 2004 was held in Manchester. Within this event, Finnish artists had their own show case evening, Sounds Like Helsinki, which was organised by Music Export Finland (Muxex).



To promote this evening, Muxex produced *Sounds Like Helsinki* leaflet (above) in which Finnish popular music was described as follows:

Sunny, misty, capricious, invigorating – the Finnish weather throws up a wide variety of climatic conditions rather than

the typical misconception: just cold. The music currently coming out from Finland is equally surprising, tantalising, thought-provoking, ass-shaking and mould-breaking.

The variety of music styles in the showcase evening indeed was notable. The event provided lo-fi groove (Tigerbombs), country & western garage punk (Boomhauer), girrrl rock (Bitch Alert), hip-hop electronica (Giant Robot), and nu jazz (RinneRadio). Yet the geographical and cultural variety of the performers was not that wide. The celebration of Finnish popular music was reduced to mean sounds from the capital of Finland, Helsinki. The show case's emphasis on Helsinki thus had distortions which were only lightly covered:

For a whole lot of people Helsinki is the only thing they have heard about in Finland. We want to use all possible means to challenge you to get to know some more funsounding stuff! The bands will tell you about their own sounds of Helsinki – and as you hear them live, you will experience a whole lot more! (ibid.)

Muxex's promotional material implied that some of the groups presented in the show case might have come from somewhere else than Helsinki. One of the groups, Boomhauer, indeed was not from Helsinki but from its old rivalry, Turku, yet the cultural background of the group was not made explicit in the text obviously because that would have ruined the whole idea of "Helsinki sounds".





Paulina Ahokas, the director of Musex, later told me that the purpose of the event was to promote Finnish popular music but the British organizers insisted that the event should include Helsinki in its title. Thus, what was left here was the old dilemma of power relations and cultural identities. In order to reach the centre (British pop industry and the media), the margin (Finnish pop industry) was forced to use its own geographical centre (Helsinki) and ignore its so-called margins (local music scenes).

### Consequences of Export?

In normal cases, to equal Finland to Helsinki or the other way around would be an insult to the majority of Finnish people. Interestingly, the geographical/cultural distortion that was displayed in the Manchester event was not considered problematic by the Finnish media. In fact, nobody paid any attention to it. This comes as

no surprise since in contemporary Finnish pop export the end justifies the means. The whole discussion about Finnish pop export to Britain or anywhere else concentrates on national pride and economic affluence. The message of the Musex and representatives of the culture export policy is that consequences of Finnish pop export are extremely positive. According to various reports by the industry and state (e.g. *Suomalaisen musiikin vienti* 2003; Häyrynen 2004; Koivunen 2004), success in world markets means international recognition as well as money and jobs for Finns. Within this pattern of triumph and celebration, the greatest concern seems to be whether the acts such as HIM and The Rasmus, which have non-Finnish production forces behind them, would bring their earnings back to Finland or not.

International recognition and economic affluence dominate the discussion about Finnish pop export. Yet there are several other important issues waiting for further recognition. Behind the glorious facade of pop export lurk nasty questions of power relations and cultural identities. It is much more difficult to evaluate them than to measure the economic issue but they still need to take into consideration. It is, for example, rather easy to foresee that state-funded strategies of pop export and new practices of culture policy will not only create affluence but also build new forms of competition and hierarchies in popular music. Therefore, it should

be asked: Who decides what music to export? How to avoid geographical segregation? Do we sell Finland or Helsinki by the sound? Who is allowed to reap the fruits of success? At the moment such questions are not high on the agenda of Finnish pop music but they will certainly surface after the days of excitement and celebration have abated.

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## Fractioning Urban Space Musically: Processes of New York City Street Music

Stephen Mamula

As the latest purveyors of a long historical institution, present day street musicians in New York City embody great multiplicity: Chinese one-string fiddlers, Trinidadian steel drummers, Mexican mariachi ensembles and African jali represent a small fraction of musical traditions active on Manhattan's public spaces. Such spaces are likewise multiple, as they include cramped sidewalks where participants must be mobile or risk uneasy contact with fellow New Yorkers; precarious traffic medians flanked by speeding taxies, siren blasts, and pickpockets roving its dense crowd; similarly dense subway platforms that lay stage to the piercing sounds from breaking trains and (often malfunctioning) public address systems. Additionally there are parks, squares and plazas where skaters and flying objects of various sorts routinely interface with local pedestrian traffic. Significantly, these "spaces" are spatial in that all bear a relatively fixed and measurable arrangement of structures or entities, yet of equal significance they are spatial in that they are human: *they embody human action*.

Diverse thinkers have interestingly theorized on the humanness of space. Extrapolating the principles of Newton and Euclid, Raimondo Strassoldo devised the concept of "mesospace": "(a) practical space..." "...

utterly human (a) ... creation of the human biological and psychic structure" (1990: 19-20). Lefebvre speaks in more corporeal and sensual terms: "space... is experienced by means of the body, which walks, smells, tastes and in short lives a space" (In Wiles 2003: 10). This dynamic, bodily constituent is central to the present spatial equation as is the natural, surrounding physicality of space with which these bodies perpetually encounter, collaborate, and contend. Accordingly, for the purposes of this research, "space" is understood as either physical: rational-objectified-measurable (in the Cartesian and Newtonian sense); and/or human: irrational-subjective-experienced (as espoused by Lefebvre, Merleau Ponty, and also de Certeau [in McDowell 1994], and Harvey [1969]).

This is a study of musical performance space that defines itself in such binary terms. I employ these terms as a general framework for examining, through the phenomenon of street music, the relationship of live musical performance to public, urban geography.<sup>2</sup> How do musicians spatially contextualize themselves vis a vis such geography? Specifically, what are the ways they appropriate, construct, constrict, and often defy urban space so to invent and manipulate sounds, attract an audience, and transform that audience into

active participants in public, social communication? I maintain that spontaneous, live, musical expression - as represented by street music - and its public, immediate space of occurrence, operate synergistically to “engage” (Feld 1994) the participating bystanders in momentary yet meaningfully cultural - i.e., enculturative<sup>3</sup> - experiences. As John W. Murphy’s commentary suggests: “Space is bent or folded in various ways; space is altered by desire; space invites change, innovation and risk ...” (1989: 109).

### **Altered Space**

The “altering” and “changing” of space is practiced variously by equally various musicians. Two percussionists who frequently play in midtown Manhattan position their inverted compound cans (oversize plastic buckets functioning as drums), and assorted “found” percussion implements atop a Times Square subway tunnel. The powerful drumming produces an infectious resonance that greatly extends the sonic range of their instruments. Reciprocally, the tunnel throws up gusts of warm air that comfort the musicians and permits them year-round performance. Other musicians ranging from jazz woodwind and brass players to gypsy violinists and Andes mountain singers utilize specific performance spaces based on such acoustic factors, as well as physical ones. “Bucket” players deftly employ (fixed) physical properties such as concrete subway floors,

handrails and metal safety curtains as fleeting additions to their battery of “found” percussion instruments.

Many geographical variables are likewise dynamic yet not so utilitarian. High winds may blow paper money from an open instrument case; the NYPD routinely terminate street music performances with little forewarning or cause (Tannenbaum 1995; Mamula 1992; 1994a); extreme temperatures, vehicular exhaust, pungent odors, and sirens are persistent, moment-to-moment performance realities for New York City street musicians. A Washington Square singer has asserted: “Performing in the Square requires total and constant awareness of everything around you: flying Frisbees, soccer balls, skateboarders...”

Other public spaces both generate and are generated by uncompromising and sporadically destructive human action. On subway platforms I have observed musical instruments seized, microphone stands dragged and trampled, and amplifier speakers perforated by boots from the feet of impatient subway passengers thrusting toward exit ways. On weekend nights the City’s increased human density - generated largely from tourism and local leisure traditions - encourages urban bandits to prey on audience members and musicians alike. While witnessing such a theft from a percussion group playing in midtown Manhattan, a bystander remarked: “Yeah man, dudes be rippin’ the drummers off while they’re playin’. By the time they get up to chase

‘um their ass is across the street!’ These musicians, not unlike others, choose performance spaces primarily for their acoustic properties, which here generate from the sound of their instruments passing through the underlying subway tunnel. Hence the musicians are negotiating between spaces both human and physical/ favorable and unfavorable.

### **Patterned Space**

Conceptualizing the physical aspect of space in visually distinct patterns is useful in illuminating its human character. Philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (in Casey 1997: 03) distinguish between space as “smooth,” and “striated.” Striated space is homogenous of surface, linear, one dimensional, and marked` by regular motion that is point-to-point. Conversely smooth space is heterogeneous, intersective, irregular and multi-layered: “Smooth space provides room for vagabondage, for wondering and drifting...” (Ibid: 304). More specific to urban design, others (Willes 1997: 2; Hall 1990: 146-147) have delineated between the grid pattern, which virtually impedes social interaction owing its inherent tendency to separate activities, and the “radiating star” or “circle” pattern, which permits relatively freer, multidirectional interchange.

However, public, physical spaces that otherwise shape, direct or control urban, social action (such as the grid) are less so effective when musicians are in play. For

instance an electric guitarist who swiftly assembles an audience from zero to 150, while performing rush hours on Times Square in freezing weather, is negating many barriers (associated) to that urban space. Such barriers include: a reluctance of passersby to interrupt daily routines, in adverse weather, while hastily moving - during rush hour - toward their destination, within the socially isolating and separating grid design. Therefore the spontaneous, immediate interface with live music in public space potentially transforms that space to the point whereby social impediments normally linked to it are considerably diffused.

### **Constructed Space**

Street musicians locate themselves variably in relationship to their audience and to the public space they occupy. One common arrangement is the simulation of a traditional Western concert stage. This performance orientation, known widely as the “proscenium arch” design, features clearly demarcated, horizontal and vertical borders that are both real and – in street music - imagined. Within these borders the musicians typically center themselves, directing their performance frontally to an audience spanning about 140 degrees. In Figure 1 a gospel trio have transformed this SoHo building vestibule into a proscenium arch that conveniently includes overhead lighting and four standing tiers. Note that the singers arrange themselves and their





Figure 1: Gospel trio performing in a proscaenium relationship to this building vestibule in SoHo. Photograph by Stephen Mamula.

wares (self produced CDs and cardboard gratuity box) symmetrically within the arch. The musicians chose this physical space for its acoustical properties, which manifest through their powerful vocal harmonies reflecting and refracting from within the arch to the building tops across the street. On weekend afternoons when tourist traffic is high, audience members typically form a half circle that extends in depth from the sidewalk to the street.

In another proscaenium relationship, the violinist in Figure 2 is aligned within a tripartite arch in the Terrace Bridge tunnel in Central Park. The tunnel's large physical

dimensions and open ambience allows both frontal and posterior visibility and moreover encourages a potentially dense audience to either gather, or flow freely around and (unlike in Figure 1) through the proscaenium stage. Moreover, the physical space exudes a deeply reverberant, monastery-like sonic quality that greatly illuminates nuances of acoustic instruments, and for this reason is exceptionally popular with musicians and audience alike. Significantly, those physical areas customarily avoided within a conventional – indoor/built – proscaenium (such as the stage floor or orchestra pit of an auditorium), are likewise avoided by passersby here

in Central Park as in other “proscenium” arrangements throughout the city.<sup>4</sup>

A significant variable regarding the physicality of Central Park is its topography, fashioned largely in the mid 19th century by landscape architect Frederick Olmsted. Utilizing diverse influences such as English garden design, Renaissance painting, and rugged, natural panoramas of the American South, Olmsted’s landscaping provides – then as now - a rustic oasis to the rigidly structured, built surroundings of a perennially expanding Manhattan: “the fluidity of a pastoral landscape within the strict Cartesian format of the Manhattan grid” (Walker 1996: 1). Indeed, the high level of social interfacing and collective patience

typically practiced within the Park are seemingly clear by-processes of such a “pastoral” geography.

In addition to the proscenium orientation, musicians favor other and distinct spatial relationships to their audience. One prominent is a circular perspective whereby the latter lies 360’ in the round. Among its architects are the Andean panpipe ensembles, a staple to Manhattan streets and transient among major Western cities since the mid 1970s. Strategically to attract and retain audience participants, individual members of such groups draw themselves closely together, which in turn draws the circulating audience closer around them and further from neighboring, competitive performers, should they exist. From above this arrangement favors



Violinist performing in tunnel under Terrace Bridge in Central Park. Note symmetry in relationship to overhead, tripartite arch (facing north, entering) and virtual 180 degree positioning of audience. Photograph courtesy of Eva Sutton



a set of imploding concentric circles. Similarly tactful are those musicians (e.g., Caribbean percussionists, experimental jazz and new music chamber groups, poet/rappers) who, so to accelerate gratuity flow, relinquish their solo identities and join in ensemble.<sup>5</sup> Consolidating themselves and their sounds in physical space, musicians believe, consolidates a sparse and milling public and so transforms them into interested and potentially benevolent participants.

This skill of mollifying performance space, rendering it flexible, mobile, and as in the above examples to compress it, is virtually instinctive to oral music traditions as it is to street musicians. Within an indigenous, “traditional” context, orally trained players naturally utilize spatiality (as in drawing physically close) to expedite learning, hone ensemble cohesion and significantly, facilitate enculturation. Street musicians exploit spatiality to attract, and “engage” (Feld 1994: 79) the public audience in a “social, interactive...realm....” manifested by: rhythmic gesturing, swaying and dancing of various styles,<sup>6</sup> call-and-response, (unison/harmony) sing-a-longs, play-a-longs and requests. As with music performed by and to bearers of a musical tradition, these forms of (street) engagement assume the task of enculturating the public - if though momentarily, also significantly. Informants who’ve had only brief, yet memorable encounters with street music often render meticulous descriptions of, and reactions to, such

matters as vocal style, musical genre, language, kinds and playing technique of musical instruments, dancing and body movement; i.e., forms of expressive culture in which they have engaged.

Within the narrow and dense confines of a New York City subway car<sup>7</sup> hip hop ensembles optimize the several minute, uninterrupted ride between express train stops by performing succinct and highly athletic break routines. The dancers’ spatial sensitivity is so acute that demanding gymnastic maneuvers (e.g., running somersaults, back flips and various body spins) are deftly performed within the constricted train aisles and inches from attentive subway passengers. To such proximics and resulting musician-to-audience engagement, John Blacking attributes a humanly tactile relationship: “the audience were close enough to interact with the performers, rather than merely react to them. The intimate nuances of the dance and music could be meaningful in ways that might have been lost (otherwise)...” (1987: 137).

Blacking is referring to the cultural “meaningfulness” of musical processes in (spatially) proxemic terms. Those “intimate nuances” crucial to it are abundantly active in street music processes. Listeners see the “grain” (Barthes 1990) of the instrument as it is played; feel the vibrations produced from the player’s fingers, hands, and mouth; and respond interactively to the rhythmic gestures and body movement of the musician(s). Such (cultural) experiences

are in large measure spatial experiences because they originate and are contingent on spatial relationships. Musicians choose to contextualize themselves within some physical perspective (e.g., proscenium arch, circular arrangement; or, be contextualized by others, (e.g., subway car). They exploit physical space acoustically to produce, alter, and disseminate musical sounds; and proximically to gather and engage listeners to those sounds. As Feld asserts: "Engagement produces one's sense of meaningful pattern and experience..." (1994: 83). "(It) shapes, defines, maintains, and brings forth... realities for participants..." (Ibid: 79).

In summary, it is through engaging in street music that converts this typical social act into an atypical cultural experience. As field data overwhelmingly indicate, street music processes suspend prevailing social constrictions ascribed to physical urban space. Public behavior usually measured and cautious - such as eye/body contact - is substantially loosened and interfacing with fellow audience members enhanced. Likewise suspended are boundaries of difference linked to race, ethnicity and - crucial to class conscience New York - economic status. Street music serves as a mode to enculturate the non-culture bearing public by engaging them in musical practices not learned and absorbed in the traditional sense, but rather, experienced momentarily - yet meaningfully - through immediate spatial relationships of both the human and physical kind.

## Endnotes

All references to "street music," "street musicians," and variations thereof denote: *a live performance phenomenon, public and urban in domain, whereby its players (musicians) are openly soliciting gratuities.* This category includes so-called "beggar" musicians: those who play music to garner sympathy for personal misfortune; and "nuisance" musicians: those who, by intention, play so distastefully they are solicited to stop playing (paid to leave). "Street music/musician" and related references do not include those who play strictly for rehearsal, personal enjoyment, or other non-commercial purposes.

2. "Geography" refers to the general, surface (including physical and weather) conditions of a total, city environment: e.g., the *geography* of New York City. "Space" is the immediate, local and observable manifestation or production within that geography: e.g., "the subway platform space at 59th St." or "that vestibule space on Spring Street."

3. All references to "culture" and "enculturation" assume the (social) anthropological meaning of the terms: stressing the collective participation in mutual customs, beliefs, rituals, and expressive forms. Performances of so called "*invented* culture" or "*invented* tradition" (as

represented by expressive forms presumed indigenous by the audience yet specifically designed for tourist or foreign consumption) are often encountered in street music and not distinguished conceptually, in this research, from “authentic” (cultivated indigenously) musical forms.

4. The important exception to this avoidance being the offering of gratuities.

5. Musicians who join together in such ad hoc ensembles typically possess broadly compatible musical styles.

6. Interestingly and perhaps logically, a wider range of dance styles, and wider demographic (regarding age and ethnicity) of dancers is represented in music performance whereby *timbre is unitary*, and, *definite pitch non-existent* (e.g., single drummers and small drum ensembles of various styles, or break dancers’ accompaniment). That purely *rhythmic* structures are more musically universal than those structures based on pitch has been underscored by composers John Cage (1961), and Steve Reich (1974), and such public drumming scenarios – not an uncommon street occurrence – seem a strong case in point.

7. No internal photos of the subway cars are included as

this has been rendered illegal by post 9.11 law (My two attempts at photographing musicians inside the cars were precluded by undercover City cops).

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# Voicing the Open Eyes, Shouting to Deaf Ears: Political Cynicism and Civic Irony in Romanian Pop Musics

Marin Marian-Bălașa

## Introduction

**N**ice times, those of communist Romania, when pop musics were kindly celebrating all sorts of positive sentiments, were praising the benefits of erotic love and agropastoral nature, of nostalgic past and folkish themes. All was cute, wise, and docile, in total agreement with the official ideology and politics, those which were inebriating themselves with the faked myths of popular enthusiasm and hopeful satisfaction. Of course, Romania had its own receptivity to the Western music, and was always in a parallel pace of implementing, imitating or creatively synchronizing itself with what fashionably happened on the international stage of jazz, pop, rock, and dance musics. Yet, during communism all pop musics in Romania were centrally patterned, carefully inspired, effectively controlled, discretely censored. In what the musical contents were concerned, those musics had whatever was known in the West; whereas in what the lyrics were concerned, they carried on only positive, neat, healthy, optimistic contents and connotations. The apparent apoliticism of pop music was, in fact, a political way of playing/

pretending liberty, as well as a way of supporting the ideological system by contradicting it in no way. This homogeneous and especially dull atmosphere ended up immediately after the official overthrow of communism; from 1990 on, pop musics directly addressing social and political problems have become common reality in Romania, too. In the following pages I will not draw on a typically historical survey, of relatively equal point and topics, but I will comment only on a few cases that favor the suggestion of a phenomenological/symptomatic sketch.

## On the Twelve Years Old Tradition of Political Opposition

Politically radical songs, slogans, scanned rimes and shouted couplets were invented and repeated in the very moments of the bloody revolt and revolution in Timișoara and București in December 1989. Then, after the power in Romania was monopolized by a gang which performed faithfulness toward communist nomenklatura and toward the political police of the former regime, a progressively stronger opposition grew up in the first months of the 1990. From mid-

April until June 13 of that year, students, unemployed, workers, representatives of the civic society and independent associations occupied one of the most important crossroads and squares in Bucharest, *Piața Universității* [University's Square], and established on that space the most enthusiastic atmosphere of liberty, free thinking, and open political criticism. As it is well-known, that nonviolent demonstration was brutally ended by the hidden forces of the regime, which worked mainly with the blindly manipulated hands of miner hoards, police forces, and fooled civilians. Once called by the contested president with the very pejorative term *golani* (hooligans, thugs), the demonstrators accepted that name-calling and started to use it as a name of honor. The offence was turned into a noble irony, and plenty intellectuals who were sympathetic to the very democratic claims of demonstrators in Universității Square (including playwright Eugene Ionesco and the Romanian ambassador in France) declared themselves *golani*. However, during those almost three months of continuous demonstration, in the selfproclaimed “free of neocomunism zone” a particular, politically militant musical repertoire was born. This became known as *The Songs of Piața Universității*, or *The Songs of the Thugs*, and after a period of intense oral circulation, in 1991 it came out recorded on two LPs (Pațurcă et al. 1991). The songs were mainly composed and performed by the young Cristian Pațurcă and consisted in blending

appealing lyrics and original country-like tunes, accompanied by guitar. In those 1990's oppositional songs, the identification of the progressive social wings was sharp (“we”), the message unequivocal, the criticism obvious, and the things to be done (either by politicians or by citizens) were very clearly formulated. Songs were melodic and easily sang by whomsoever, prolonging in time the melodicism typical to folk/country, nostalgic, sentimental, balladic forms, equally romantic and martial. Calls and ironies addressed to the political establishment were equally direct and subtle, whereas revolutionary romanticism stood forth.

However, despite the fact that the elections in 1990 were won by those called by the radical democrats “crypto-communists”, in the following years the arena of political criticism kept some moral resources, optimism and stamina. The rotating system of power assured by democracy and even the chance for anticipated elections gave people hopes for better. Yet, things went for worse in Romania, economy felt down, corruption increased, living conditions decreased, hopes, trust and patriotism collapsed. A consistent political change occurred only in 1996, when presidential election gave power to the very democrat rector of the University of Bucharest, and in the parliament to a democrat coalition. Only that the coalition was destroyed by intestine fights, the president proved to be politically impotent, and the corruption of the newly elected ones added itself to the strong network

of corruption already set in motion by the former rulers. Many good things happened, yet in general the socio-economic and moral experience was catastrophic, as that in 2000 the population turned again toward the older politicians, re-elected the first post-1989 president, and even shown worrying sympathy to the extreme-nationalist and xenophobe party. After all these years of disappointment, there was little hope proper and guts for the romantic setting of words and tunes. The pop music scene was already familiar with the rap and hip-hop ways of social protest through song, rhythm, lyrics, or shocking/anarchic verbal gestures. Metaphors were dismissed as lacking of realism and power, and the brutality of the stronger ways of launching messages became more and more numerous. Since the political and social evil was no more easily identifiable, these songs addressed themselves to a sort of "whom it might be concerned". Not the songs coming from the bands and groups in good terms with the musical establishment, but rather those coming from the marginal sphere of poorly educated slums, a substantial part of the newly popular songs launched by Roma/Gypsy musical stars, gave voice to peoples' daily problems, complains, envies, fears, despair, hatred. The life of the major population, I mean the life of people under the level of economic decency, was expressed in this songs with violent rage and indecent words, and rappers and DJs, as well as fashionable Roma compositions ignored any

classic prettiness or refinement, demonstrating that less the lyrics and rather the general meaning, as well as the vocal magnetism and the rhythmical entrainment, were more important in performing and listening to music. If in the past the misery of life, the delinquency and the obsession for earning money were aspect doomed to appear distasteful and to properly belong only to the minimized, marginalized and ignored repertoires of Gypsy and prison songs, by the downs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century all these latter became in Romania widely popular. In its turn, politic and social criticism became either bold and descriptive, or very subtle, refined, of an appreciable intellectualism.

### **Post-1989 Context: The Social Atmosphere of an Economical and Political Failure**

As specified, the politics and economics of the Romania's 1990s were poor, failing more often than not, and establishing a situation which was perceived by the vast majority of the population as catastrophic. Repeated mismaneuvers and scandals occurring at all level of civil, administrative, economic, judicial and political life inspired people a feeling of mistrust, insecurity, deceit, and apathy. The immigration process galloped, and the most massive, prominent human categories which characterized this desperate immigration were the Romanian youths and the Romanian Gypsies. Two equally distinct and intermingled categories, the

first supplying the West often with highly educated and ambitious workers, from the other many individuals and gangs affirming themselves as socially infamous and dangerous assets. All these people left Romania, or tried to leave it, on the grounds of their disappointments and of their lack of chance. Some, like the immigrant Gypsies, were marked by the racist hatred the mainstream people cultivated against them. To most of the others – who left or wished to leave – the hatred they developed inside ended up into sheer antipatriotism.

However, the West was not prepared to receive a consistent, ever-increasing number of burdening populations (asylum seekers, refugees, and most of all economically handicapped crowds). It so happened that there also were criminal cases in which the Romanian citizenship figuring on the criminals' passport was brought into the fore, so that in many Western places the local hosts started to develop negative feelings against Romanians in general (see Marian Bălaşa 2003). Chased by the lack of chance inside their original country, Romanian immigrants became despised, meeting hatred from abroad, too. The most problematic and dramatic human categories became, thus, veiled into the shred of the most uncomfortable sentiments and prejudices and representations. But the uncomfortable feeling was not experienced only by those who succeeded to escape the apparent unsolvable internal situation; this remained dominant for the massive majority that

remained in the country, and the expressions of apathy, desperation, hopeless and faithless were generalized. The polls demonstrating that most of the people had trust only in religious and military institutions proved the pathetic morale of the inhabitants of a country. Whatever said here above accurately illustrates the situation of the decade 1990-2000. In 2001 and 2002 some signs of economic progress and political healthiness surfaced. Romania's accession into NATO and European Union became certitude. Yet, all these were drops into an ocean, still incapable to radically change Romanians' post-communist mentality. About this political impotency and real popular mentalities in the 1990s the newspapers and the intellectual elites spoke up loudly. Yet, besides pop music, none of the other arts took a decisive and strong stand against them. Pop music and the modern folk music of *manele* – the later being mostly a brand-new genre created by young Gypsy musicians – voiced this situation. And they did it with verve and irony, with cynical and parodic accents.

### **The Voice of Deception**

Deceived – the language of deception is, first, revolt and anger, complaint and exposure. If these expressions bring no fruit, or it seems they are ignored, people will simply abandon and sanction by voting for radical opposition. This is what happened in 2000, when the extreme nationalism threatened the presidential

position by obtaining support from more than 20% of voters. That was the signal masses sent to power and politics in general, and there was not much else to do by the masses. Everything else, mass media included, is in the hands of professional elites. And it is also to them to multiply the forms of political message and action in order to keep politics and politicians into scrutiny and vigilant check. A particular section of the civic elite is made by artists, and over the last decade the number of engaged, activist artists increased very much in the field of music. As articulated in the literary form of the pamphlet, the artistic criticism continued to maintain its standard, as best seen in the very intellectual weekly magazine 'Academia Cațavencu' (slightly similar to the French 'Le canard enchainé'). But that artistic criticism to be poured in musical forms, by the agency of sung lyrics, raised in intensity and diversity, in vivacity and number. After so many decades of essential non-involvement in the real life, in dramatic social and political issues, musicians of the 1990s performed this social and political insertion an involvement of their with seriousness, virulence, and even aggressiveness.

As said, milestone of this attitude of political criticism turned into comical irony and pamphlet, is the weekly newspaper 'Academia Cațavencu', where elitist intellectuals publish pamphlets (both by texts and faked/collage photos) addressing the political life. The comic group 'Divertis' follows. Whereas the highly and bitterly

ironic newspaper does not apply to music, 'Divertis' do that as a main form of performing/staging political criticism. The group, of around a dozen performers, has the pop singer Ioan Gyuri Pascu as a main member, and recently has included Monica Anghel, a star of the pop music scene. Under their musical leadership the entire group uses music for creating a sort of cabaret performances. 'Divertis' takes international and national hits, over which it puts satiric (ironic-caustic) political versifications. Very often their lyrics are quite bad (in terms of poetic value), in the sense that they represent simply rhyme-processing of banal political depictions. But the simple fact of associating pop musical hits with ideas and texts totally different from what the original meaning and message conveyed by those tunes matter constitutes most of the heaviest load. The mockery addressed by the medium of those particularly popular pieces adds a great deal of unconscious signification and especially pleasure to the whole of their group performance. I would summarize this experience as following: (a) the fact that 'Divertis' turns the pieces into a very different meaning and expresses something else than the original saves the gesture from mediocrity; (b) the company of those tunes with sarcastic, political verses surprises, and this experience of surprise generates a particular pleasure; (c) the real, innocent or snob pleasure already attached to the hearing of those popular tunes comes to give the new texts and message a more acceptable, again



### Țara Te Vrea Prost

Ce folos ai dacă-nveți prea multe-n viață?  
 Poa' să-ți explodeze creierul...  
 Ce folos din cărți despre domnitorii morți?!  
 Tot ce ți se cere azi e să fii nul...

La ce bun să-nveți limba română?  
 O vorbești cursiv de la doi ani...  
 Nu exagera nici cu matematica...  
 S-o știi numai cât să nu te-ncurci la bani...

*Ah, ce frumos...*  
*Viitorul luminos li se-arată celor idioți...*  
*Deci fii supus față de cel mai sus pus...*  
*Nu uita ca țara te vrea prost!*

Nu încerca să te realizezi în viață!  
 Nici o meserie n-are viitor...  
 Și nu cuteza să încerci sî schimbi ceva  
 După două mii de ani de somn ușor.

Mai cinstit e să-ți găsești o cunoștință:  
 Ca să te servească, tu să o servești...  
 Un spate solid te va promova rapid  
 În armata național-a capetelor seci!

*Ah, ce frumos...*  
*Viitorul luminos li se-arată celor idioți...*  
*Deci fii supus față de cel mai sus pus...*  
*Nu uita ca țara te vrea prost!*

### The Country Wants You Stupid

What's the gain from learning too much?  
 Your brains might blow up...  
 What's the gain from books about dead kings?  
 All that's requested from you is to be nil...

What's the point in learning Romanian?  
 You speak it fluently since two years old...  
 Don't exaggerate with mathematics, too  
 Know it only for handling the money...

*Oh, how nice...*  
*The bright future shows up open to idiots...*  
*So, be obedient to the one above you...*  
*Don't forget that the country wants you stupid!*

Don't try to achieve something in your life!  
 There's no future for any profession...  
 And don't dare to try changing something  
 After two thousand years of sweet sleeping.

It's much better to find a contact person:  
 He to serve you, you to serve him...  
 A solid back will promote you rapidly  
 In the national army of the empty heads!

*Oh, how nice...*  
*The bright future shows up open to idiots...*  
*So, be obedient to the one above you...*  
*Don't forget that the country wants you stupid!*

pleasant, setting; and (d) this also functions as a subtle criticism addressed to the music consummation market, because their manipulation of the hits is carnivalesque: it reverses the meaning and feelings conveyed or evoked by those songs, both creates and reveals an upside-down world and order, provokes and contradicts the old ideas, sentiments and attachments we cultivated around those musical hits previously, and thus forces our own openness and receptivity.

### Into the Music Proper

Sarmalele reci [Could Stuffed-Cabbage] (Zoltan Andras - voice, keyboards, Mihai Iordache – sax, Emil Viciu – guitar, Sorin Romanescu – bass guitar, Lucian Maxim – percussion) is a dance and rock troupe that was founded in 1995. The same year it released the cassette *Țara te vrea prost* [The Country Wants you Stupid]. Among the ten tracks: four songs of a street level love

## Prostia La Putere

(Mihai Iordache, Florin Dumitrescu)

(Refren repetat:)

*Nu știu cum s-a nimerit  
Nu știu cum s-a potrivit  
Ca la noi prostia-i la putere.  
Nu știu cum s-a întâmplat  
Prin ce fenomen ciudat  
Ca puterea-i plina de putori.*

Azi prostia e-n Senat  
Sindicat și patronat  
Azi prostia e-n foaier  
Cazinou și minister.  
Prostul n-are nici un chef  
Decât să ne fie șef  
Prostul n-are nici un rost  
Decât să ne meargă prost.

(Refren)

Azi prostia e un zid  
Azi prostia e-n partid  
Căci politica de găști  
I-o politică de proști.  
Prostul nu e prost destul  
Fără lanțisor și ghiul,  
Dați-i prostului măcar  
Un celular.

Prostia la putere!  
Prostia la putere!  
Prostia la putere!  
Prostia la putere!

(Refren)

Prostul azi e bătaș  
Măine-i mare trepăduș  
Azi e coadă de topor  
Măine-i mare senator.  
Prostul nu se sperie  
Dacă n-are pieire  
Protectorului la schimb  
Îi trage limbi.

Prostia la putere!...

## Stupidity In Power

(Repeated chorus:)

*I don't know how it came down  
I don't know how it matched  
Stupidity to be in power, here.  
I don't know how it happened  
Through what strange phenomenon  
That Power is full of scumbags.*

Today, stupidity is in the Senate,  
In unions and banking bodies;  
Today, stupidity is in opera balcony,  
In casinos and state departments.  
The idiot has no other desire  
Than to be our boss,  
The idiot has no aim  
Besides we to be fooled.

(Chorus)

Today, stupidity is a fortress  
Today, stupidity is in parties  
Because gang politics  
Is the idiots' politics.  
The fool is not fool enough  
Without necklace and signet ring,  
Give the idiot at least  
A mobile phone.

Stupidity in power!  
Stupidity in power!  
Stupidity in power!  
Stupidity in power!

(Chorus)

Today the idiot is a brawler  
Tomorrow, a sycophant  
Today he's an axe handler  
Tomorrow, big congressman.  
The idiot is never afraid  
Because he never perishes  
In exchange, to his protector  
He's a lick.

Stupidity in power!...

(where irony plays important role), one imitating the most popular songs among begging children in subway, one deploring the fact that all neighboring colleagues were scattered by emigration, and one describing the nightmare of having Ceaușescu junior as president. The main piece, which also gives the title of the cassette, has the following text (Please see table above left), whilst stronger accusations are directed to politicians in the following piece (*Stupidity in Power*, please see table above right)

In the 1998 CD, *Bucate alese* [Select Foodstuff] (which opens with the same *Țara de vrea prost*), this band has also a song (*Ilitch, Ilitch, Uber Alles*) in which they irony points at Ion Iliescu, Romania's recurrent president (1990-1996, 2000-2004). During Iliescu's first presidency, Ilitch was a popular nickname given to him not only because of the phonetic similarity with Lenin's name, but also because of his communist past, his Moscow education and connections, and his superficially erasable communist mindset. Of course, his mythology of having saved Romania from Ceaușescu, as well as his long lasting presidency, are main subjects of the rock band's sarcastic targeting.

These songs did not crystallize a separate, alternative and combative genre or species. They are not even the hardcore of these bands' creation, but go along with love songs or whatever else could characterize

the uncensored trends of popular music. Romanians love them, but a CD or cassette containing only such songs would not necessarily hit a great market score. Romanians are no more after mobilizing narratives, since they know now that revolutionary action was always manipulated and used by cunning profiteers; therefore they prefer to swear and laugh, discharging their rage into biting satire. Political humor is not the only one cultivated in the society, and the most popular and thus successful comics are those playing with everyday social encounters and with the street-level, pornographically spiced language. They rather seek that compensatory lubricity, which exploded and requested a lot of cheap pornography to be produced over the first ten years after communism, but which, now, is not used for covering old frustration, but newer ones. If by "old frustrations" we have to think of the lack of specific access (to pornography itself), by new frustrations we refer, this time, to unspecific, general frustrations. The general living hardships, personal failures, and lack of perspectives, which are countered by a particular psychology of taking refuge into the narcoleptic direct lubricity. Songs addressing the sensations required and the pleasures induced by the "lower sides" of the body, such as the Gypsy genre of *manele* and the violent and sometimes porno rap or hip-hop bands, go hand in hand with the sung political pamphlets. Laughter, lowering, criticism and mock inflicted to politicians are

the obverse of the coin for which the reverse represent the libidinous pleasures given by the erotic fantasies expressed vulgarly. This, because, in fact, similar to sex, setting ideas and images on song words has the same purpose and sense: dispels tensions and anxieties, consumes aggressiveness, relieves frustrations. Strong words substitutes, or do on our behalf, the violent action; it pleases us to see them at work, even if (sometimes especially because) they come from the stage and mouth of rebel youngsters.

Another element: smartness; surprising wit, demonstrating a freshness, intelligence and discernment which secretly encourage hope for and trust in the future. Be they teenagers or adults, demonstrating that they know well too well what is all about in local politics, the singers show a flair and stamina which will be most needed, one day, when they will get any access to power. This is the idea behind the public openness, or at least the public like for the daring songs of such kids. A perhaps condescending attitude, but really connecting with the public narrative of contempt for the corrupted world of adults and of hope for the ingenuous kids of tomorrow. These songs give voice to whatever people discuss in streets, in their kitchens, in pubs, at work, and wherever else. Only that these discussions leads to nowhere, whereas, they imagine, coming from and performed in the socially superior context which the scene is makes them believe or hope that their own

pain and political opinions will hit the target and have efficiency. In the end, one could speak about a “trust in the power of music”, if not the desire (things to be like that) would not force people to think that that really is. The sweet illusion of the stage, which people take as their own lifting up into the sphere of a much more powerful being, of an effective politics.

### **Is Cynicism and Sheer Irony the End of Activism?**

The pop group *Taxi* emerged as one of the most successful, intelligent and talented musical groups in mid 1990s. The brains and soul of this group, main vocalist and composer, is Dan Teodorescu (a Tracy Chapman admirer). He has excellent and rare vocal qualities, imprinting a specific composition style and vocal timbre to *Taxi*'s performances. All of their pieces are smart and subtle, perhaps sophisticated too, yet very accessible, not at all demanding. Reason for which their songs are popular among several populational layers. In 2000 *Taxi* also won the national contest for representing Romania at the “Eurovision”, where they presented a quiet and cozy ballad-like, slow-dance piece; this was also accompanied by a cartoon video clip, which featured transformative paintings of the contemporary surrealist painter Sabin Bălașa. One of the group's hits is titled *Criogenia salvează România* [The Cryogenics Saves Romania], which was released in March 1999 at the most prestigious pop music national festival (Festivalul

Mamaia), then being included in Taxi's debut album (November 1999). As the entire piece, the tile takes on one of the most argued, trampled, trashed and cursed social and political slogans from the early 1990s, namely "Monarhia salvează România" [The Monarchy Saves Romania]. Immediately after the bloody Revolution in winter 1989, and especially after realizing that the wished democracy and government entered the hands of former communists, many people turned toward the older political system, required the expelled king to come back, and monarchy to be reinstalled. But monarchists were very few, and the propaganda machine of the newly-democratized government was very effective in compromising everything related to monarchism, including the monarchic house. So, that particular slogan becomes today more of a irony, witnessing for well-intended but hopeless and helpless nostalgic folks. From 1995 on, when most of the urban populations in Romania nourished only negative thoughts and feelings toward governmental bodies, the *Taxi*, among many other troupes, embodied this mentality, picked up some of the most popular *topoi* and *loci communes* of the "Romanian despair", and played them into their patently subtle, I might say most intelligent lyrics and tunes. In Romanian, "criogenia" (cryogeny) rimes with "monarhia" (monarchy), and by exploiting irony and cynicism, *Taxi* saw and recommended the refrigeration method as the only way to rescue and preserve a nation with no hopes

and chances. Let's get frozen, they said, and wake up or resurrect after certain periods of time, in a distant future, because the present is with no horizon, failed, damned or doomed. A very good, shocking and efficient video clip was also shot, depicting the members of the band under the process of progressive refrigeration, hanging like animal carcasses inside the freezing-chamber. Through the grey-blue nuances dominate the whole film, the colors of the national flag transpire often, and even the whole flag shows up, covering or wrapping the musicians, for showing everlasting patriotism despite the conditions. The piece makes one to shiver, not only because of the images of iced bodies and the suggestion of an entire population being submitted to the process of getting frozen but also because the rhythms and beats of the music suggest animalism, absurdity, decadence, chaos, disaster. The music is typical hard-rock, and the text reads as follows (Please refer to table at right).

Of course, as any staging of negative feelings, the experience of listening to this piece and of watching the corresponding video clip are ludicrous and cathartic. People smile or laugh, reckoning the justice of this ironic, perhaps even cynical proposition and vision. And, of course, we all realize that there is a huge potential and actual political criticism here, because responsible for such an opinion and offer, arising because of the dreadful economic, social and political situation (the reform

**Criogenia salvează România**

Hai să ne băgăm cu toții  
În niște frigidere mari  
Să ne congelăm  
Pentru vreo sută de ani  
Și să-i așteptăm  
Liniștiți p-americani.

Poa' să vină japonezii,  
Poa' să vină și nemții  
Să ne facă reforma  
Că noi nu avem pretenții  
Doar atât le vom cere,  
Să nu ne uite-n frigidere.

(Refren)

Criogeniaaaaaa, salvează Româniaaaaaa!...

Hai să ne congelăm cu toții  
Până-n 2100 și ceva...

Nu ne mai trebuie mâncare,  
Nu ne trebuie nici bere  
O să stăm cumiți pe spate -  
O reală plăcere  
Și dac-avem destul freon  
O să fie beton.

Toată țara congelată,  
Nimeni n-o să muncească  
Nici Moldova, nici Ardealul  
Și nici Țara Românească.  
Viitorul e în față:  
România la gheață.

(Refrain) Criogeniaaaaaa...  
Salvează Româniaaaaaa!...  
Hai să ne congelăm cu toții  
Până-n 2100 și ceva...

**The Cryogenics Saves Romania**

Let us all enter  
Some big refrigerators  
To freeze ourselves  
For around a hundred years,  
And wait there  
Quietly for the Americans.

May the Japanese come,  
May the Germans come too,  
To make our reform  
Because we have no preferences;  
We'll ask them only  
Not to forget us inside the fridges.

(Chorus: shouted)

The cryogenics saves Romania!  
(musically repeated, rolling verses:)  
Let's freeze ourselves  
Until 2100 and some more...

We need food no more  
We need beer neither  
We'll quietly lay down on our backs -  
What a real pleasure,  
And if having enough freon  
It will be just perfect.

The entire country frozen,  
Nobody will work:  
Neither Moldavia, nor Transylvania  
And nor Wallachia.  
The future lies ahead:  
Romania on ice.

(Chorus) The cryogenics...  
Saves Romania!...  
Let's freeze ourselves  
Until 2100 and some more...

problem is clearly mentioned here), is no one except for the political clique. In the context of a complete political impotency, these musicians ridicule the ones supposed to come with and implement solutions, forwarding the extreme, absurd and ridiculous advice for everybody to get

dormant and frozen until better times. The hilariousness is ambiguous, and that's why this musical and filmographic piece is, from a political point of view, just perfect.

This type of national irony does not imply lack of patriotism. The same 'Taxi' has created and launched in 2001 the



piece *Americanofonia* [The Americanophony], a piece which also features in and gives the title of the band's third album. Here, the abrupt insertion in the Romanians' colloquial language of American words is profoundly ironic, the chorus repeating "we are clowns" with reference to Romanians using the gibberish of combining English words in their daily speaking. Therefore the whole gesture and political activism is not about hatred, by pedagogy.

So, there is no end of activism in irony or cynicism. In the contrary, in times when direct fight against corruption and bad political management is deceitful and thus undermines any healthy hope, the artistic representation and the musical performance seem to take over and lead with the only weapon left: the intellect.

### Epilogue

After 2000, both internal and external factors speeded up the process of Romania's transition. Pressures of the international bodies—interested in Romania's integration in the solid economic, political, and military structures—have helped the implementation and imposition of more efficient laws, regulations, customs, opinions, and mentalities. Everybody, politicians included, got convinced that only the remodeling of the entire society in accordance to Western models of civilization can be beneficial. This was why desired changes became more and more palpable, the bitter existential feelings diminished, and the need for the desperate criticism of the cynicism became outdated.

In a first place, after 2000, the Romanian economy started to show timid signs of improvement. The lifting of visa restrictions to Romanian citizens in the European Union (2001), the certitude of Romania's acceptance in NATO (2002), the exact scheduling of its access among EU states (2007), all these acted like factors which raised hopes. Under such circumstances, a piece like Taxi's *Criogenia* would have less sense and no more public endorsement. In a second place, by the end of the 1990 and especially after 2000, laws against calumny and for the right to personal image were heavily strengthened. Thus, the polite reference to public figures became enforced civic rule, and the political pamphlet became a carefully self-censored art form. Pieces such as those released in 1995-1998 by Sarmalele Reci became tabu: if ever performed, might immediately become subject to judicial fining, censure, suppression. It is also true that, on the other hand, strict regulations regarding the media discourses led to the improvement of social and intercommunity attitudes. However, the validity of the civic activism through malicious irony was less and less popular. For this reason, all the songs discussed here did not have a longer life. They were received and consumed with a joyous lubricity the days, weeks and months of their fresh release. The quoted pieces of Sarmalele Reci and Taxi enjoyed empathy for slightly longer periods of time, then faded away.

Almost none of the pieces reproduced above have survived. Since the last trimester of 2002 they have never been taken again, resampled, performed, broadcasted, promoted, enjoyed. Definitely, they referred and addressed themselves to a transient phase of transition, therefore their radicalism became less and less appropriate. By the end of 2002 they are already history.

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## Music Practice of the Japanese Ventures Tribute Bands

Keiji Maruyama and Shuhei Hosokawa

### Introduction

**M**usicians can express their respect for great artists in a variety of ways. Composing variations on his or her themes, sampling a one second-long sound bite, inventing alternate chord progressions, quoting signature passages, writing lyrics about and naming song titles after the artist are some common means. The tribute band is another form of homage that is widespread in local rock scenes. This type of performance practice is hard to find outside rock culture, though learning skills through copying appears to be a fundamental procedure for individual musicians almost everywhere.

The affinity between rock and the tribute band form can be explained by several factors:

1. the relative accessibility of basic performance techniques;
2. a wide range of listening publics who can recognize tributes as such;
3. relaxed performance settings that allow laughter among the audience;

4. a visibility of bodily actions in contrast to the obscure processes of computerized sound-making;

5. “band” as a group expression and a collective identity; and

6. the ideological authenticity of “live” performance.

The aesthetics of tribute bands depend heavily upon the artists to whom tribute is paid, rather than upon the idiosyncrasies of particular band members. Some tribute bands exaggerate these differences for humorous effect, while others try to minimize them.

The object of our research is the Ventures tribute band community in Japan. Compared to Led Zeppelin, Beatles, Queen and other tribute communities in Japan, the Ventures tributes are distinctive in terms of their core age group, their engagement with a particular vintage guitar market, and the marginality of the Ventures in rock history textbooks. We will first provide a history of the reception of the Ventures in Japan. The second section deals with the overall organization of the tribute band community, with an emphasis on the processes of socialization and learning. The subsequent section discusses controversies concerning copying and

creativity among the players. We conclude the paper with an argument about how guitar collection is complicit with the Ventures' revival. Overall, we seek to understand more of the motivations, value systems, interaction, socialization and joys of amateur music-making.

### **A History of the Reception of the Ventures in Japan**

The Ventures are among the most successful surfing genre bands formed in 1959. They pioneered the use of the fuzz box, although standard rock and electric guitar histories have given little credit to them. But this is not the case in Japan, where the Ventures still tour nationwide every summer (fiftieth tour in 2005) and have played more than 2000 concerts.

Their unusual story starts in 1965 when their Japan tours in January and July-August caused a huge sensation. In this summer tour, the group performed 57 concerts. It was the first time that the electric guitar became both an object of admiration and an abomination. The musicians' jargon for the instrument *eleki* (the abbreviation of "electric") became a household word. This term denotes both the instrument itself and the surfing music genre. When in the late 1950s Elvis-like singers brought about a moral panic, vehement criticism was directed at the odd fashions, foolish stage actions, "untuned" vocals and noisy drumming. However, the electric guitar at

that time was exempt from adults' blame. The Ventures changed this view. Most of the criticism was of the "unbearable" sound of the band. The Ventures craze was highly intense, yet transitory. The Beatles' June 1966 concerts steered local popular music fashions from instrumentals to vocal bands. The new bands were keenly conscious of hairstyle, stage uniform, gesture and other forms of visual appeal, so that instrumental groups were marginalized.

The Ventures could have been forgotten if not for "Futari no Ginza" ("Ginza Lights", 1966), a Ventures piece sung by the duo of youthful film stars. Reduced to commercial and musical oblivion at home, the band reinforced their Japanese connections. From 1965 on, they have extensively toured the country every single summer (except in 1969). Throughout the 1970s and 80s, however, journalists systematically treated them as an obsolete band. The members, they mock, did not play the music any longer at home but toured Japan only as "seasonal workers" who repeatedly played the old stuff.

This somber key was transposed towards the end of 1980s. The re-evaluation derived not only from nostalgia, but also from a contemporary revision of the surfing sound as proto-rock, and from an overall awareness of the ageing ("maturation") of rock music. Journalists now praised their longevity, comparing them with the Rolling Stones. What had been belittled as mediocre was now

applauded as showing persistent belief in the music they created. The annual summer tour was no more a “seasonal job” but a steadfast act which could not be accomplished without deep empathy with Japanese culture and its people. Being “big in Japan” turned into a positive sign of their closeness to the hearts of Japanese people.

### **Play It Again, Old Boys**

The *eleki* boom stimulated the birth of electric guitar manufacturing in Japan. The number of manufacturers skyrocketed from six in 1962 to 40 in 1965, and the total product multiplied over 13 times in the same three years. The vast majority of buyers were schoolboys and college students inspired by the Ventures and their Japanese imitators. The principal manufacturers co-sponsored band contests which were broadcast on prime-time television. It is no exaggeration to say that every junior high and high schools had its Ventures copy bands around 1965-8. Some cities and schools banned the electric guitar. With the demise of instrumentals, however, a majority of amateur players gave up pursuing their initial inspiration. Throughout the 1970s and 80s, only a small number of aficionados maintained tribute bands, but with no connecting organization.

In sync with the revitalization of the Ventures in the 1990s, amateur *eleki* bands surfaced again. The weekly *Aera* (Ugaya 1995: 46), for example, spotlighted extreme

cases: a 52-year-old father who trained his four sons to form a Ventures cover band that played as front act for the Ventures themselves; a formerly Ventures freak (39) who once retires from the office to open an oldies bar, where he sometimes plays Ventures tunes by himself with karaoke backing tracks. The article portrayed them as eccentric yet pure enthusiasts who realized the dream of their adolescence. Sensitive to this trend, in 1997 NHK (the Japan Broadcasting Association)’s Fukuoka division launched a band contest, *Nekketsu! Oyaji Batoru* (Hot blood! Battle of the middle-aged men). Its special rule was that the average age of band members should exceed 40. A year later, *Eleki Guita Bukku* (the Electric Guitar Book) series, the first periodical targeted at *eleki* guitarists, was launched.

The core age group of these new *eleki* bands is over 40 years, or the generation that was in its low or middle teens in 1965-8. Many of our interviewees state that stable life conditions have allowed them to again start playing the instrument they had left in the closet or sold so many years ago. They are often motivated both by the mediated presence of their imagined peers (on television and in magazines), immediate experiences of listening (at amateur band gigs and meetings with old band members, or a Ventures concert) and finding the guitar they had aspired to buy in their teens in an instrument shop. In addition to financial and domestic stability, the increase in hobby guitarists may have



much to do with the leisure-conscious lifestyle (critically reviewing previous workaholic lifestyles) that has prevailed since the 1990s among the Japanese middle aged. According to this new life plan, leisure activity is as valuable as work. Having a good hobby (fishing, social dancing, sports, cooking...) is recommended. Playing *eleki* music is a good option because the community is in practice confined to the same age group, training results in public concerts where the players are spotlighted, members are decisively compassionate and the music sounds joyful. The presence of supportive audiences and co-players boosts self-confidence. The “harmful noise” of 1965 has been completely converted into healthy music-making.

The Ventures Club, established in 1997 in West Tokyo, is one of the well-organized circles and has approximately three hundred members. They arrange rehearsal meetings called “V Sound Seminars” a few times a year at public institutions. Usually 20 to 40 players and observers gather from the Greater Tokyo area. Jam sessions are the basic form, for they not only make it easy for newcomers to join in but also consolidate an affective bond with the club rather than with individual bands. The rehearsal and concert that follows are useful for technical improvement, musical motivation and for consolidation of human networks. Being able to play loudly is one of the most important advantages of participation in the group rehearsals.

The experience of hearing and being surrounded by the sound they produce through their instrument and amplifier is no doubt a basic pleasure for electric players. By plugging in, they re-live the memory of adolescence for an overwhelming loudness was the first aural shock at Ventures concerts.

Since the style and repertoire are fully fixed, switching instruments and participation by extra players are not unusual. The first thing to do when a band is formed is always to come up with a name. Bands have names such as the Hiroshima Ventures, The Knock Me Out (after a Ventures hit), the Uentures, while members have stage names such as Nokie Suzuki and Don Tanaka (after Don Wilson, the original rhythm guitar player since 1959). Some call their act “the Ventures *gokko*” (the Ventures make-believe). The parodic art of self-naming, often mixing respect and locality with humor, is also reflected in parodic cover designs of their private CDs circulated inside the *eleki* community. Deadly serious copying and playfulness (even childishness) co-exist side by side in the rehearsal and concert spaces.

The homework for participant players is aimed at committing chord patterns and other basic techniques to memory. Memorization through “purposive listening” (Green 2002: 61) is fundamental for all the practitioners we interviewed. All of them can read music but copying by ear is more practical. In the “V Sound Seminar,” one often sees experienced players demonstrating to non-

initiates how to improve their technique. Both “peer-directed learning and group learning” (Green 2002: 76ff) are seminal in the rehearsal.

Many interviewees underline the egalitarian character of the Ventures, and say that unlike bands that feature vocals or one virtuoso performer, the Ventures have no hierarchy among members. The lead guitar certainly “leads” the band, yet the rhythm guitarist can show off with tremolo glissando in “Pipeline” and the drummer has a solo in “Caravan” and “Wipe Out.” The bass guitar has fewer virtuoso opportunities but the technical accessibility of the bass lines encourages players with moderate skill to join in the ensemble. The band members feel that they are not backing someone else, but playing their own music.

The community, despite the egalitarianism proclaimed, is not only guitar-centered, but also male-centered. Female members are only found as keyboard players who in all cases were too young to experience the peak of the Ventures. Many of the young women extoll the persistent passion for music-making of senior band members. In contrast to the rehearsals, wives, daughters and women friends are usually present at the public performances (concerts, Christmas parties, local festivals, etc.) as if to show that they have authorized the men’s hobby. Egalitarianism, then, functions as an ideological marker of Ventures tribute bands that differentiate them from the vocal-centered tribute bands.

### **Competing Aesthetics: The Complete Copy vs. Creative Re-interpretation**

Among Ventures tribute bands, two aesthetic tendencies compete with each other. One is to copy a recorded performance including musicians’ mistakes, the instruments they used, their fingering positions, gestures, and costumes. The other is to allow a certain amount of room for deviation from the original. The vast majority of players adhere to the former, and most refer to three live-in-Japan albums recorded and/or released in 1965. Copying the original note by note is sublimated to a discipline. The inevitable gap between the copy and original is where their respect lies. The smaller the gap, they think, the more respect is shown. In other words, the more they train to copy, the more they perceive the incomparable superiority of the Ventures.

By contrast, a minority group co-exists that is oriented to creative re-interpretation of the Ventures, particularly their material recorded after the 1970s. This faction includes professionals and advanced amateur players who have been playing consistently since their youth. For the owner of Paparock, a Mosrite guitar shop and a hub of the Ventures circles, copying a live recording’s wrong notes shows “disrespect for the artist” (Yoshiaki Kawabata, interview, 2003). His own band is one of the few who try to copy the studio recordings of the Ventures, which are musically more complicated than

the live albums. A professional guitarist tells us that he works out ad-libbing after the copying. Playing in a house band, he continues, repetition of the same performance material bores regular customers. What he seeks is a cover band as imaginative as the Ventures themselves. Only amateur bands can repeat the same old copy because they play more for their own pleasure than that of their audience.

These aesthetic discrepancies, however, are not insurmountable. After all, reverence and love for the Ventures unites all the members, and they are clearly conscious of the marginality of their niche in the music world. None of the amateur musicians we interviewed intend to turn professional. They prefer socializing with players who share their tastes, to the competitive world of professionals.

### **The Mosrite Guitar Fetishism**

“Let’s talk about the Ventures and the Mosrite guitar!”, Paparock, a Mosrite guitar shop in Machida, West Tokyo, advertises on their web site that the Ventures circle employ to organize meetings. This call shows the close ties between the Ventures community and the Mosrite, the guitar manufacturer with which the Ventures contracted as exclusive artists in the mid-1960s. Pursuing the idol’s guitar is common among amateur players of all kinds. Most Ventures tribute players believe that Mosrite is the most authentic guitar

brand. In the same way as the Ventures themselves, it is “big in Japan” in the electric guitar world, made even more special because of its defunct and marginal status.

Mosrite went bankrupt in 1968, and there followed litigation by the Ventures, who still have a blatant aversion to the Mosrite. Around the same time, a Mosrite guitar shop in Tokyo, Fillmore, became the general agency for Mosrite and was authorized to manufacture the Japanese models. On the other hand, the Kurokumo Manufacturing Company subcontracted the original Mosrite design and had produced imitation models since around 1967. Both the Fillmore’s “Mosrite of Classic” and Kurokumo’s “Mosrite of California” used a Ventures logo. In 1998 the latter sued the former for infringement of a registered trade mark and lost. To make things more complicated, the Ventures themselves licensed and started using the other Japanese products, Aria’s Ventures Models in 1990, but many followers are averse to using them, preferring to buy Mosrites. This twist may be exceptional to the rule of the signature model that decrees that the fans choose the guitars authorized by their idol. The inclination toward Mosrite shows how most Japanese Ventures fans fetishize the early Ventures.

Worship of the Mosrite can be also observed in the Mosrite Kids Club (M.K.C.), an owners’ club founded in 2002 by Fillmore. To enhance the affective and economic

relationship between the consumer and the brand name, owners' clubs are usually operated among users of luxurious commodities such as Alpha Romeo and Harley Davidson. Fillmore's objective is to showcase expensive guitars to kindle the desire of club members to purchase them. We gained the impression that in the M.K.C. rehearsals, many fix their eyes more on which guitars are used rather than listen to what kind of music is played. Using the "authentic" guitar model is essential for the fantasy of self-metamorphosing into the Ventures. Performing and listening serves to articulate an alternative form of the self and create an imaginary identity.

In macroscopic terms, the age, economic standing and many other points of the Ventures tribute guitarists are shared with the American baby-boom guitarists interviewed by John Ryan and Richard A. Peterson (2001): the first electric shock in the 60s; withdrawal for decades; a return in their thirties and forties; and a mixture of private playing, local band activity, and guitar collection. Their music-making can be reflective of their own life course, passions, oblivion, memories, and a re-affirmation of the past and present.

## Conclusion

Upon the release of a Ventures compilation CD in 1997, the London label Ace's bulletin described the worth of the Ventures as follows:

*They had a seemingly inexhaustible supply of good tunes and a gift for clever arrangements that would act as a do-it-yourself template for the booming number of aspiring guitarists and drummers (Burke, 1997, our emphasis).*

Japan must be a model case of this endorsement. The quote is in harmony with Ryan and Peterson's idea about the popularity of the guitar among baby-boomers: "the guitar fitted well with the 'do-it-yourself' ethos of the youth of the day" (2001: 107). School boys who took to the guitar to replicate the Ventures sound marked an important point of beginning for Japanese rock music.

Some 30 years on, an after-school teen leisure activity now gives them an after-work social life. In both life stages, playing with a band and listening to peer bands constitutes an alternative subjectivity. Making music is far from pragmatic routines in school, workplace and family, as a creative process that rekindles school days, identification with their past idols, reliving old experiences with new friends here and now, and expressing personal inclinations and special skills to the band members and public. As the sociologist Tia De Nora notes, music serves as "a container for the temporal structure of past circumstances", where "[M]usical structures may provide a grid or grammar for the temporal structures of emotional and embodied patterns as they were originally experienced" (2000: 66-67). This quote may well explain

the fundamental pleasure of playing the music of one's adolescence in a social setting of relatively homogenous members. De Nora then develops her idea of "musically composed identities," or the locating of "me" (2000: 68) in the ongoing act of listening (and performing, in our argument). Both physically (through performance) and socially (through same age and gender groups with shared musical values), our tribute players relive the original experience of the 1960s. The involvement of bodily action in the process of remembrance makes their stance towards collective memory different from that of vinyl and memorabilia collectors. It provides a "real" and intensive experience for them to participate in imagined forms of egalitarianism and adolescence, imagined forms of the communal and the emotional.

The Ventures' influence in Japan has been both short-lived and long-lived. Their ephemeral nature has served as a generational marker for passionate fans, while their longevity helps the band to be a role model for the actively ageing. The consistency of the Ventures, having had an almost-fixed personnel for more than 40 years, teaches fans the worth of family-like bonding and banding. Ventures copyists not only pay tribute to the band, but also to their own life and generation.

## Endnotes

This article is an abbreviated version of our forthcoming article, "Yearning for *Eleki*: On the Ventures Tribute Band in Japan," in Shane Homan, ed., *Across All Eras: Tribute Bands and Global Pop Culture*. The authors thank Nokie Kaneko, Yoshiaki Kawabata, Ken Otani and others who generously granted interviews. All the interviews were conducted in June-December, 2003. We are thankful to Hugh de Ferranti for his editorial advice.

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## The Ingenues (all-girl jazz band), Vaudeville and the Feminization of Mass Culture

Kristin McGee

### I. Introduction

From the late 1920s on, the appearance of all-girl bands in the combined vaudeville/sound film presentations significantly contributed to an emerging mass culture which gained currency in part because of the widely successful and highly sexualized spectacles of 'girl acts' featured in vaudeville, film and variety revues. During the 1920s and 1930s, all-girl bands, more often than not, were promoted as the featured attraction of a motion picture house's stage show. These vaudeville-style stage shows typically provided one to two hours of live entertainment before the showing of feature-length films. For a quarter, film patrons could take in a variety show exhibiting twelve to fifteen acts which often included a jazz band, dancers, comedians, acrobatics, blues and operetta singers and a whole range of novelty acts from whistlers to saw players, jugglers and mimics.

As talkies were first introduced in the late 1920s and early 1930s, film companies began rewiring movie houses and leasing vaudeville theatres for showing privileges of feature length films (Snyder 1989). The decline of vaudeville, not surprisingly, roughly corresponded with the

addition of sound to films in the late 1920s (1). In an effort to compete with the new sound films and the elaborate picture palace presentations, most big time vaudeville houses reintroduced the film/vaudeville combinations which predated the picture palace phenomena by several decades. During the 1930s, however, only the larger movie palaces in cities like New York, Chicago and Los Angeles managed to continue financing the elaborate live entertainment presentations and feature film combinations that began in the 1910s and peaked during the 1920s (2). Although rarely mentioned in contemporary culture, jazz or film histories, there were dozens (if not hundreds) of extremely popular all-girl jazz bands active during the 1920s and 1930s including Ina Ray Hutton and Her Melodears, The Harlem Playgirls, The Dixie Sweethearts, The Ingenues, Wayman's Debutantes and many more. The more privileged all-girl bands enthusiastically contributed to some of the first experimental short subject sound films. For example, during the 1920s and 30s, all-girl bands including Ina Ray Hutton and her Melodears and the Ingenues appeared in Vitaphone, Pictoreels and Fox Movietone music shorts.

In this paper, I explore the musical and performative practices of the Ingenues, one of the most prominent all-girl jazz bands of the jazz and swing era. I further

examine popular discourse surrounding the band and their relationship to the growing mass entertainment industry. Indeed, the multi-versatile, vaudeville-style, all-white Ingenues performed in all three of the dominant mass mediated entertainment genres: vaudeville, variety reviews and short subject films. By linking all-girl jazz to the earlier, and increasingly commodified spectacles of 'girl-acts', I argue that the unprecedented popularity and prominent role of all-girl bands in the stage shows presented in the spectacular, urban movie palaces as well as the struggling vaudeville theatres was in part facilitated by the careful construction of a 'feminine novelty' which codified and synthesized some of the contradictory symbols of modernity and mass culture from automated machines, to racially constructed notions of "exotic" or "primitive" jazz, as well as notions of innovation, consumption, sexuality, novelty, versatility and musical amateurism. These highly successful all-girl jazz performances, in varying degrees, borrowed and refashioned the theatrical and filmed presentation of gender, sexuality and spectacle in the variety and vaudeville chorus girl acts all the while negotiating complex public associations of race filtered through popular music, jazz and popular dance during the Jazz Age.

## **II. The Feminization of mass culture and the rise of female spectatorship**

While mass culture critics faulted the over mechanization of the nationally organized vaudeville circuits as well as

their leader's so-called 'spineless' submission to the growing film and radio corporations, they also criticized what they perceived to be the over feminization of twentieth century vaudeville productions (Kibler 1999: 206). By the turn of the century, vaudeville's producers devised various ways to encourage respectable middle and upper class female patronage and by extension, promote the refinement, morality and cultural uplift of its productions. Their efforts to create 'respectable vaudeville' with programs that were suitable for entire families were in large part successful, as middle and upper class women began attending theatres in greater numbers during the 1910s. To further encourage female patrons, vaudeville management began regulating theatre patron's behavior by prohibiting prostitutes from entering the theatres and by barring rank and lewd commentary in the galleries. These behavior codes, along with the theatre's self-monitored censorship of harsh language and 'inappropriate' humor by vaudeville entertainers, were enacted to reassure reluctant female viewers. These measures were generally successful and by the 1920s, women accounted for the majority of attendees for vaudeville theatre's matinee performances (Kibler 1999).

The inclusion of all-girl bands along with female comedians, opera singers, solo dancers, chorus girls and serious female actors was indicative of vaudeville's attempt to elevate, feminize and refine its entertainment

for a wide variety of patrons, male and female, and to entice members of both the upper and working classes. Because ticket prices remained reasonably low, these luxurious vaudeville theatres also provided one of the first twentieth century meeting places for men and women from a wide variety of ethnic, economic and social groups.

As more women performed in vaudeville, either as leading attractions or as chorus girls, older vaudeville theatrical practices like blackface were reintroduced to explore an alternative 'feminine' past which both resembled and contrasted with the masculinist invocations of minstrelsy. During the 1910s and 1920s, prominent producers of girl acts constructed blackface numbers for their dancing women to link the increasingly mass produced and modern sexual spectacles of variety revues to the largely white, working-class and 'autonomous' male-culture of nineteenth century minstrelsy. Further, the casting of similarly typed and largely nameless girls reinforced the patriarchy and control of modern vaudeville's producers and designers over their docile, malleable and feminized subjects, much in the way that blackface caricatures rendered black artists immobile, objectified and emasculated. The reception of these early chorus girl acts critically informed the ways that all-girl bands later exploited racialized musical and physical signifiers to gain popularity and recognition on the vaudeville circuits.

As vaudeville and variety revues successfully feminized both their content and patronage, public concerns over these new gendered contexts were vehemently expressed by male vaudeville unions (the White Rats), trade journalists, mass culture critics and American modernists who lamented the erosion of vaudeville's "robust, authentic masculine aesthetic" and its increasing reliance upon scandalous female stars or attractive "debutantes" with little vaudeville experience. Mass culture critics rebuked Albee and Keith, the founders of the national vaudeville circuits, for over-mechanizing theatrical conventions and for instigating an overtly feminized theatrical culture, which catered to women's perceived sentimentality, artifice and low intellectual capacities (Kibler 1999: 206). Ironically, it was during this unstable transitional period, in the 1920s, when American vaudeville theatres began to incorporate sound films, and when newly wired sound film theatres began to phase out live performances that all-girl bands received their first breaks. With their slowly dilapidating yet richly decorated, and highly ornate interiors, vaudeville theatres such as the Palace in New York City provided all-girl bands with their first performance venues. The well established feminine clientele of vaudeville, variety revues and more recently sound film as well as the heightened interest in jazz, swing and syncopated popular music set the stage, so to speak, for such feminine jazz performances.

It's hard to conceive of, in this day and age, the sheer variety of live entertainment offered to theater patrons during the 1920s and 1930s. Imagine a full evening of entertainment involving dozens of live musicians; enough to comprise both a jazz band and sometimes a full theatre orchestra, not to mention the various vaudeville performers included in a variety style stage show. The gamut of music programmed for stage shows, which incorporated everything from blues, jazz, tin-pan-alley and ragtime, to light classical works, 'ethnic' ballads, cakewalks and melodramatic serious songs undergirds the variety of musical offerings movie patrons were accustomed to hearing. Such variety, which spanned theatrical and musical conventions from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, incorporated aspects of minstrelsy, vaudeville, carnival and tent shows and more formal theatrical genres such as opera and serious drama. This wealth of musical and theatrical entertainment was in part required to account for the wide range of popular tastes represented in the mass audiences of vaudeville's theatres.

All-girl bands booked on the prosperous and multi-faceted RKO (Radio-Keith-Orpheum) circuit were also those that worked with the nation's leading booking agencies. William Morris and Irving Mills, the leading Hollywood and New York agencies, recruited and promoted male jazz bands as well as all-girl bands during the 1930s (3). These booking agencies prominence and

their widespread connections to radio, theatre and film ensured that all-girl bands like the Ingenues were able to take advantage of the most prestigious and visible performance outlets on the national entertainment circuits.

### **III. Case Study: The Ingenues**

The Ingenues emerged as one of the original white, American, vaudeville all-girl bands and perhaps the first female jazz band to perform throughout the world. Of the all-girl bands, the Ingenues also enjoyed one of the longest professional performing careers of the first half of the twentieth century. The band's enduring popularity ensured steady employment for some of the original members who performed for over a decade, from 1926 to 1937. The band began performing in vaudeville theatres and film houses in Chicago probably in late 1925. However, the Ingenues' murky beginnings can only be inferred from suggestive headlines and sensationalized publicity campaigns. Between long vaudeville runs at theatres in California and Chicago in 1926 and 1927, the band set out on a series of national tours and performed extended runs at film houses, theatres and ballrooms. In 1927, Florenz Ziegfeld contracted the band for his 1927 Ziegfeld Follies, 'Glorifying the American Girl.' The band's huge success with the Follies garnered them international tours in Europe, South Africa, Asia and Australia in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Little is

known about the Ingenues after 1932, but the band did make several short films and recordings for Vitaphone and Vocalion in the late 1920s and early 1930s (4).

Deeply entrenched in the vaudeville tradition, the Ingenues participated most often in variety revues and vaudeville performances which featured a range of entertainers from mimics, shout singers, acrobatic artists to dance troupes, comedians and mimes. Frequently, an evening's entertainment would be divided into two halves; the first consisting of several shorter vaudeville style acts and the second featuring a complete stage show by the Ingenues. For picture houses, theatres and palaces, the vaudeville revue was often programmed immediately prior to one or sometimes two full-length, feature films. For example, the Ingenues' performance at the Wintergarden theatre in 1928 was part of a larger program which included a double film feature, *Somehow Good and Lady Raffles* (5). During their set, the Ingenues not only provided big band arrangements of jazz and popular music, but also provided light classical works, ballet dances, jitterbugs, vocal specialties and comedic routines.

In 1927, the Ingenues were discovered by Florenz Ziegfeld who immediately 'bagged' the orchestra for the Ziegfeld Follies (6). Other female all-girl band members later gained experience performing with the Follies, most notably Ina Ray Hutton who starred in the Follies of 1934. According to the *Morning Telegraph*, the

Ingenues competed with Paul Whiteman's orchestra for the Follies' 1927 run. Apparently, Mr. Ziegfeld first discovered the Ingenues at the Palace in California, where he attended the vaudeville style revue three times before propositioning the band. The *Telegraph* emphasized Mr. Ziegfeld's surprise and delight at the fine appearance of the women musicians: 'Flo was delighted to find slim pretty girls in the orchestra and said that he expected to see a band of women wide in the beam and aged in the wood. [Instead he] found cuties who were expert instrumentalists and will be a genuine novelty in a revue as [he] intend[s on] presenting them' (6). It's clear that women's ability to garner the more commercial performing opportunities depended upon their youthful and attractive appearances. At that time, all-girl band's images as novelty acts, however, did not necessarily imply musical amateurism, but rather, their novelty status as competent female instrumentalists was a desirable asset cultivated by the producers of big-time Broadway revues.

The Ingenues were frequently billed as the 'Female Paul Whiteman's of Syncopation.' Paul Whiteman, celebrated during the 1920s as the 'King of Jazz,' was praised for his 'sweet' orchestrations and sophisticated treatments of jazz harmonies and rhythms. Whiteman's brand of jazz was further valued for civilizing, elevating and cultivating the raw materials of a more 'primitive,' 'raucous' and 'primal' music epitomized by the improvised jazz and

Dixieland of the early 1920s. Whiteman's famous Aeolian Hall concert in 1924 commemorating Lincoln's birthday was billed by Whiteman himself as an 'Emancipation Proclamation, in which slavery to European formalism was signed away' (Rogin 1996: 138). One movie reviewer sanctioned Whiteman's 'righteous' efforts claiming that he took his orchestra 'into the sacred precincts of Aeolian Hall in an attempt to make an honest woman of Jazz, at that time a cheap and notorious wench (7).' Here, it is not difficult to recognize the overt negative sexual associations of gender and the subconscious references to "loose" female theatrical performers. One also recognizes the way that mass culture critics often invoked gender to connote something debase, "cheap" and heavily commodified.

Whiteman himself acknowledged the African origins of jazz in his autobiography but claimed that jazz's true artistry was white: 'Jazz came to American three hundred years in chains...', and reaffirming the European refinement and authorship of jazz, he continues 'Negroes themselves knew no more of jazz than their masters' (Whiteman 1926: 3). By positioning jazz against 'high brow,' imitative, European-based musical cultures, Whiteman attempted to authenticate its national production claiming 'Jazz is the spirit of a new country...the essence of America' (Whiteman 1926: 4).

Personified as the 'female Paul Whiteman's of

syncopation,' the Ingenues legitimated their own musical performances by aligning themselves with the King of Jazz. Such comparisons also served to distance these young, white, female performers from the imagined crude and vulgar origins of black musical culture. As the 'Queens of syncopation' (as opposed to Queen (singular) of Jazz), female musical appropriation of black styles remained largely anonymous and failed to acquire the individual mastery and ingenuity of autonomous jazz composers and directors. As syncopators, a term which prompted notions of light, popular music, the Ingenues could only hope to imitate and stylistically recreate Whiteman's music. Comparisons to Paul Whiteman offered two forms of necessary cultural distancing which facilitated these women's increasingly prominent and potentially threatening public presence. The first identification (to Whiteman) enabled the necessary distancing from the dangerous associations of urbane black music, and the second (identification to 'syncopation') from the innovation, and authenticity of white, male jazz (8).

Most promoters of the band typically alluded to the great versatility and showmanship and especially the youthfulness of the Ingenues. Each woman of the ensemble mastered several instruments and performed them during the course of the evening. Many members of the orchestra also sang and danced for specialty numbers. One review by Fred High in an unidentified



clip introduced the Ingenues as '16 College Girls, with Peggy O'Neil' and described their show as representing 'an endless variety and an inexhaustible range.' High also praised the 'showmanship and musical talent plus pep and good taste' exhibited by the ensemble. He claimed they furnished 'one surprise after another' (9). During the band's world tour in 1928, one review of the Ingenues' performance at the Wintergarden Theatre highlighted the great versatility of orchestration and musical genre exhibited by the various women:

*Each member of the band is versatile. For instance, one girl plays on instruments so widely separated by period and usage as the harp and banjo. Another distributes her attentions between the cello, sax, and bassoon. Offering mainly jazz, the band's work strikes one as very efficient. Being 'ingenues' does not debar their playing as having the precision as a military band. Though the players are feminine, the brass is 'fierce' in the fortes, but the players can tone these instruments down to a whisper. Another feature of the music is the constant change of colour, and some interesting instrumental grouping is effectively demonstrated. The 'Ingenues' jazz music is snappy; they give a plantation air with the necessary atmosphere, and can play an extremely seductive waltz (10).*

The last musical descriptor betrays the rigorous musical, aesthetic and gendered requirements for all-girl bands as they cunningly negotiated a variety of feminine, racial and theatrical tropes. These included cultural vestiges of the Victorian era, racial conventions of minstrelsy and the more radical gendered and musical innovations of the jazz age. Other international reviewers completely avoided ascertaining the band's musical qualities and resorted instead to lengthy treatises comparing the relative physical attributes of the various band members. Mr. Maloney, the owner of the Tivoli, waxes pretentiously about the 'bevy of beautiful girls from America,' comparing the women of the Ingenues to Tennyson's 'Dream of Fair Women' of which he protests were 'after all, a figment of his fevered imagination while these were women of warm flesh-and-blood, pulsating with the joy of life, and no man could, with a clear conscience and experienced judgment, say that one was more lovely than the other (11).' In some ways, the various depictions of these jazz women depended upon the venues and places in which they performed, as they variously enacted fair-skinned and refined Victorian white women; independent, world-traveling, jet-setting, jazz musicians; or mechanized, choreographed, automated chorus girls.

### **Maids and Music (1937)**

Like many all-girl bands of this era, the Ingenues were deeply entrenched in the theatrical conventions

of vaudeville and like their black-face, chorus-girl predecessors, the Ingenues also musically exploited and revived feminine adaptations of minstrelsy. In *Maids and Music*, a short subject film produced in 1937, Ray Fabin's Ingenues perform a medley of American folk tunes including 'Oh Susanna,' 'Jimmy Crack Corn' and 'She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain.' While it's unclear if urban audiences would have understood or recognized the black vernacular roots of these rural southern melodies (filtered through the compositions of Stephen Foster), these songs were frequently racialized and depicted as 'darkie' music in southern musical performance contexts. Equally fascinating is the manner of musical and feminine representation, which aesthetically parallels the abstract presentation of women in the spectacular all-girl revues as well as the famous 1930's Busby Berkeley musicals. In the second musical sequence, the women are presented in simple country dresses and nearly identical curly-Q hairdos, and are arranged in three tiers outlining a V formation (a symbol not yet readily established as a patriotic pun).

In each tune of the medley, the girls play the same novelty instruments. First, we see and recognize 'Oh Susanna' performed by 25 smiling girls plucking banjos in complete unison. Now one frame fades out and the second frame fades in with the tune of 'She'll Be Coming Round the Mountain' and behold, 25 girls blowing 25

harmonicas. Then the girls materialize smiling and fanning 25 accordions and so on in an endless parade of feminine novelty and uniformity. Like children, the women are depicted as pliable creatures, easily trained to learn new and simple tricks that were both novel and cute. Significantly, these women's musical associations with black southern roots belied a similar practice of representing and depicting black musicians who were often viewed as childlike, playful, primal, malleable, and intuitive (Bohlman 2000, Radano 2000, Agawu 1995, Lott 1993, Pieterse 1992).

While the Ingenues performance of a medley of 'darkie' music seems insignificant and even bizarre in the context of big band jazz, the choice of repertoire enabled a feminine reading of blackness, which essentially precluded these women's reputations as serious musicians. Had the Ingenues performed a number of Fletcher Henderson arrangements as did the Benny Goodman big band during this era, they would have been perceived as innovators, interacting with the most ingenious and revolutionary urban (black) subcultures. By programming a number of old-fashioned southern black folk tunes, women musicians were implicated in the then out-moded cultural discourse which signified a southern nostalgia for more simplified racial interactions as well as trivialized, through excessive novelty and instrumental minstrelsy, notions of 'pre-modern' black origins.

#### IV. Conclusion

Jazz histories rarely mention the activities and popularity of all-girl bands during the 1920s and 1930s. Further, the theatrical/film contexts in which many early jazz and swing bands (male and female) performed is often casually mentioned or left out all together. During the jazz age, all-girl acts were included to compete with the flashy and extravagant revues, and were promoted as groups of similarly typed 'girls', novelty acts or sexual spectacles. These all-girl spectacles, with all of their racialized associations to vaudeville and further back to minstrelsy and blackface, constituted the philosophical and artistic groundings for a particular type of gendered presentation of all-girl jazz bands. All-girl ensembles and orchestras like the Ingenues provided fans with groups of similarly-dressed women, who not only played instruments but danced, sang and led comedic skits. Indeed, the seemingly incomprehensible range of musical material exhibited by all-girl bands was not all together inconsistent with the artistic renderings of earlier vaudeville and variety revue programs which consciously attempted to seamlessly weld high and low, classical and popular and masculine and feminine genres, all the while patronizing the various ethnic, rural and 'homeland' connections of newly arrived urban immigrants.

The intentional mixing of high and low cultural genres in vaudeville, the feminization of the nationally expanding

film houses and pictures palaces and the self-conscious move towards 'cultural uplift' provided the necessary social and gendered milieu for all-girl jazz music. Indeed attempts by theater moguls Keith and Albee to elevate the more masculine and middle class origins of vaudeville belied commercial interests to broaden their audiences by creating family oriented theater. Once a marker of vaudeville's refinement, during the 1920s, women became associated with its decay and implicated in broader modernist's discussions about the mechanization of mass culture most potently symbolized by the popular chorus girls acts (Glenn 2000, Kibler 1999, Latham 2000, Rabinovitz 1991, Stamp 2000, Brown 2001).

Within all-girl bands, the cultural mixing of musical repertoires, the special attraction of classical female soloists, the sensation appeal of multi-talented female band leaders and the inclusion of comedy, singing and dancing drew upon vaudevilles' and variety revues' earlier cultural conventions which readily mixed high and low and significantly relied upon the public's familiarity with both popular music and light classical melodies. In this respect, white all-girl bands were just as likely to perform symphonic arrangements of well known popular songs or light classical melodies familiar to their audiences as newly-composed, jazz works. However, black and white bands like the Queens of Rhythm and the Melodears readily admitted their allegiances to vaudeville, revue and sound film as well as their desire to embrace all

things modern, in their flashy novelty acts, their access to the latest technologies, their sporty flapper costumes and endless displays of musical versatility. For such novel talents enabled, for the first time, all-girl jazz to see the world, and for the world to see all-girl jazz. Indeed, all-girl bands, like the talented and well-traveled Ingenues, glimmered at home and over seas, out-shinning their vaudeville hosts, just as the spotlights of America's first mass entertainment gave way to the flickering lights and synchronized recordings of sound films.

## Endnotes

1. As early as 1909, most picture houses succumbed to reformist's pressures and excluded vaudeville all together. One exhibitor summarized current trends by motion picture management in a trade paper in 1909 by asserting that 'a properly managed exclusive picture show is in a higher class than a show comprised partly of vaudeville' (Czitrom 1982: 47). Ironically as picture houses and nickelodeons expanded in the 1920s, these new theatres once devoted entirely to motion pictures, began to add vaudeville acts to their film shows as a novelty to draw new patrons. However, many observers agreed that vaudeville was by far the most 'pernicious element of the whole motion picture situation.' Movie historian Daniel Czitrom claimed that during the 1920s, ethnic vaudeville remained particularly popular in immigrant ghettos, and became a particularly worrisome aspect for film reformers and culture traditionalists who feared the uncontrolled and uncensorable quality of live singers, dancers and dialect comics (Czitrom 1982: 46).

2. Of course silent films had long included various forms of live entertainment before the implementation of sound films. Of the various forms of live musical and theatrical entertainment preceding silent film showings were "presentations" "prologues" "vaudeville" and "overtures."

The accompaniment of silent films by pianists, organists and live orchestras is otherwise minimally documented but not the subject of this article. For more on silent film musical accompaniment see Carbine 1990, Kozarski 1990 and Crafton 1997.

3. William Morris became one of the most prominent vaudeville booking agents during the 1920s and 1930s and worked with such celebrated vaudevillians as Charlie Chaplain, Al Jolson and the Marx Brothers.

4. Those films for Vitaphone are *The Band Beautiful* (1928) and *Syncopating Sweeties* (1928). The Ingenue's 1930s film is *Maids and Music* (1937) for Pictoreels. Paula Jones, 'trick' trombonist and novelty comedic performer with the Ingenues maintained a scrapbook of some of the orchestra's travels and activities. This scrap book was found in the attic of a Victorian home now within the premises of the Cosley Zoo in Wheaton, Illinois. The current manager of the zoo then donated the book to the Chicago Historical Society where it was placed in a sealed glass case during the Society's recent 'Fashion, Flappers 'n All That Jazz' exhibit from the summer of 2002. Some correspondence from the scrapbook was addressed to Miss Jones in Maywood, Illinois. From the scrapbook it appears that some of the other members of the band hailed from Springfield, Illinois; Omaha, Nebraska; Chicago, Illinois and Kentucky.

5. 'Entertainments' in the *Brisbane Courier* (Australia or England, probably 1928, but undated clip) from Paula Jones's Scrapbook.

6. 'What's Going on In Amusement? The Ingenues in the 'Ziegfeld Follies' at the New Amsterdam' in *The New York Evening Enquirer* (23 October 1927) and 'The Ingenues, 20-Musical Maids-20 with Peggy O'Neil. 'Last Engagement in Vaudeville before Joining Ziegfeld's New Follies' from Paula Jones's Scrapbook (unidentified).

7. *Morning Telegraph* (20 June 1927).

8. Rogin's discussion of Whitman's cultural positioning as well as Whiteman's visible representation in the 1930's film *King of Jazz* inform my interpretation of the Ingenues' musical alignments (Rogin 1996).

9. 'Fine Palace Bill Makes Big Hit' (25 August 1926 (unnamed)).

10. 'Entertainments' in the *Brisbane Courier*. Undated clip from Paula Jones scrapbook, but probably from 1928 at the Wintergarden Theatre in Australia or England.

11. D.H.S. 'Adelaide Leyfeld & Paula Jones: Two typical Ingenues' in *Life and Stock and Station Journal* (3 August 1928).

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## Shades of Dystopia in Emerson, Lake & Palmer's "Jerusalem"

William McGinney

Emerson, Lake & Palmer were one of the more notorious groups to emerge from what is itself one of the more controversial genres of rock music, British "progressive rock" of the early 1970s. While the definition of what constituted "progressive rock" is admittedly problematic, stricter definitions emphasize peculiarly British tendencies toward emulating the music of high culture through the appropriation and imitation of forms and materials taken from classical music, sometimes even wholesale arrangement of classical pieces.<sup>1</sup>

Emerson, Lake and Palmer, or ELP, were the most prolific in arranging classical music, producing no fewer than nine arrangements over the course of the 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Virtually all of these arrangements were of instrumental works, which were adapted to fit the trio's rock-based instrumentation and context.<sup>3</sup> An exception to these, their arrangement of Charles Hubert Parry's hymn "Jerusalem" featured on the 1973 album *Brain Salad Surgery*, is noteworthy not merely because it is an example of arranged vocal music, but also because of the nationalistic and religious associations surrounding the original tune. ELP's apparently reverent treatment of "Jerusalem" appears at first to be an unusual choice for a group whose own religious convictions

were ambivalent at best.<sup>4</sup> A closer examination of ELP's arrangement reveals that in adapting the song, the band exaggerated certain gestures that connote religious music – particularly plagal cadences and 4-3 suspensions – in a manner that ultimately undermines the devotional sentiment of Parry's original hymn. Their negation of the hymn's religious sentiment results in an ironic statement that is consistent with the dystopic vision of humanity's future that characterizes the *Brain Salad Surgery* album, exploring levels of emotional detachment and desensitization that devolve into numbness and indifference.<sup>5</sup>

Despite this arrangement's ambivalent approach to religion, the band quite possibly hoped that their version might appeal to a particularly British communal experience through the shared heritage of Anglican music with which "Jerusalem" was so strongly associated.<sup>6</sup> The unlikely combination of the song's connotations of English communalism coupled with their arrangement's religious cynicism could have appealed to the countercultural aesthetics of ELP's British audience. While the album's huge commercial success and moderate critical praise might suggest that they had succeeded with the general public, the negative response to "Jerusalem" from the BBC and the

British rock press indicates that ELP's hopes to appeal to British communalism failed with these two groups. The BBC's disapproval of an ironic arrangement of an established nationalist hymn probably comes as no surprise, but the negative reaction of rock critics is curious. One would have expected these critics (as self-appointed spokespersons for the British counterculture) to have recognized and applauded the irony within ELP's "Jerusalem" as a deconstruction of the institutional values consistent with countercultural ideals. Instead, British rock critics attacked ELP's "Jerusalem" as either desecrating a national treasure or else as pompous self-indulgence. Either way, they failed to respond to those aspects of ELP's "Jerusalem" that should have appealed to the British countercultural audience whose aesthetics they claimed to represent.

The text and music of "Jerusalem" carried strong nationalistic connotations from its beginnings. The English composer Sir Charles Hubert H. Parry created the hymn setting in 1916 for the organization "Fight for Right" as a means of countering German propaganda and boosting public spirits during the First World War.<sup>7</sup> The hymn became very popular throughout the country, furthering the cause of "Fight for Right" and firmly establishing the song into British culture. The song was later taken up by the Women's Movement, the British Federation of Music Festivals, the Royal Albert Hall Promenade Concerts, and even the British Labour

Party.<sup>8</sup> "Jerusalem" found its way into popular culture, occasionally being employed by the Monty Python comedy troupe and appearing prominently in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*; in fact, the title of the film was taken from the hymn's second verse.<sup>9</sup>

The source of the text, William Blake's poem "Milton" of 1804, was itself a strong source of nationalistic sentiment. Blake shared a conviction with John Milton and William Stukeley that England was a "chosen nation," a conviction that his poetry expresses through its unique combination of English history and Biblical myth.<sup>10</sup> His fervent nationalism is evident despite his obscure theology, and the utopian vision of "England's green & pleasant land" in his poem's preface would have been very attractive to a group such as "Fight for Right" that was interested in advocating the British cause.

The popularity of "Jerusalem" reflected not just patriotic sentiments, but also acknowledged the shared experience of the Anglican choral tradition among members of English society. Edward Macan has argued that this tradition was a strong influence on the development of English progressive rock.<sup>11</sup> Even the sounds and performance styles of many progressive rock musicians – from the singers' use of a clear head voice to the use of a Hammond organ to evoke a church organ – had precedents in Anglican music.<sup>12</sup> Keith Emerson himself described "Jerusalem" as "basically a hymn that everyone sang in school."<sup>13</sup>

He added:

*"I had always loved the tune. The opening chord progressions sound a bit like 'Pictures at an Exhibition,' and everyone in England knows that hymn. It's a traditional, patriotic tune that evokes good feelings in every Englishman. I had originally wanted to do it with The Nice, but we never got around to working it up."*<sup>14</sup>

Other contemporary progressive rock musicians—notably Chris Squire of Yes, Peter Gabriel and Tony Banks of Genesis, and John Wetton of King Crimson and UK—describe the singing of hymns as part of their own early childhood education.<sup>15</sup> These sentiments were not limited to musicians; Richard Green of *Music Scene* described "Jerusalem" specifically as "the song that all of us sing in the bath and even then treat with respect."<sup>16</sup>

ELP recorded "Jerusalem" during September 1973 along with the majority of the *Brain Salad Surgery* album.<sup>17</sup> The album was released in the first week of December 1973, with "Jerusalem" being released as a single simultaneously.<sup>18</sup>

Comparing ELP's arrangement of "Jerusalem" to Parry's original shows that the most significant changes are to the meter (from triple to largely duple time) and the re-composition of the prelude, interlude, and postlude. Although these re-compositions are newly

composed material, they retain a few characteristics of the originals; Emerson preserved the opening, fanfare-like of the prelude and made it a significant feature of the postlude as well.

Of particular interest in ELP's arrangement is its self-conscious use of plagal cadences and of suspended fourth gestures. These gestures have a distinct association with "church music"; Protestant hymns frequently close with a setting of the word "Amen" over a plagal cadence, and the *New Grove Dictionary of Music*, Second Edition, refers to the plagal cadence as the "Amen cadence."<sup>19</sup> The 4-3 suspension is a similar gesture, particularly when it occurs at a closing cadence as often occurs in sacred vocal music of the Renaissance.

Parry's original setting actually contains relatively few instances of suspended fourths or plagal cadences. The most overt of these occurs in the postlude, which echoes the opening bars of the tune itself. This gesture behaves much like the concluding plagal cadence of Protestant hymns articulating the final "Amen." By contrast, these gestures appear throughout ELP's arrangement. The fourth line of each verse concludes with a plagal half cadence that passes by almost unnoticed in Parry's original but is drawn out and exaggerated in ELP's version due to the change in meter. Similarly, the close of the first verse in ELP's version features a prominent 4-3 suspension, again exaggerating the "religious" aura

of the song, whereas Parry's original setting contains no suspension.

This prominent suspension within ELP's arrangement is foreshadowed and echoed by the similar suspensions in the newly composed prelude and interlude, both of which conclude with 4-3 suspensions on F that are essentially the same as the gesture ending the first verse. Like the suspension ending the first verse, these gestures have no counterpart in Parry's original setting. They are included in ELP's version to exaggerate the religious connotations surrounding the song.

Significantly, the prominent 4-3 suspension that closes the first verse in ELP's version is not repeated at the end of the second. Furthermore, the newly composed postlude does not contain the semblance of a plagal cadence found in Parry's original postlude. Whereas Parry's postlude essentially completes the opening phrase of the hymn, producing the IV-I plagal cadence, Emerson's uses a sequential treatment of the opening phrase to move from I to IV to bVII (E flat) before concluding the song with a "modal" flourish of alternating F major with E flat major.

Despite the exaggerated plagal cadences and suspensions elsewhere throughout ELP's "Jerusalem," neither gesture appears at the end of the piece, the point at which a plagal cadence does occur in Protestant hymns generally and in Parry's original setting specifically. There is, in effect, no "Amen" to affirm the

religious sentiment of the song; the gesture that connotes religious aura onto the song is missing from its most appropriate place. This lack of the "affirming 'Amen'" at the end of ELP's "Jerusalem," particularly when that gesture has been emphasized and exaggerated earlier within the setting, effectively undermines the religious convictions that the song might otherwise express.

This subtext of the song and its ultimate denial of religious conviction is in keeping with the mood of the rest of the album. Critical commentary on *Brain Salad Surgery* has identified its unifying "concept" as essentially "man versus machine," an idea no doubt drawn directly from the scenario within the final track, "Karn Evil 9, Third Impression."<sup>20</sup> This song caps an album that is shot through with a self-conscious detachment and indifference toward violence, morality, and compassion that all relate to the machine consciousness in "Third Impression." The lack of a traditionally affirmative ending to "Jerusalem" may suggest that its promise of utopia is lost from the beginning, that Jerusalem will never be built "in England's green and pleasant land."

Within six weeks of its release, *Brain Salad Surgery* had reached number 3 on *Melody Maker's* list of the top 30 albums in Britain and number ten on the list of the top 30 albums in the U.S.<sup>21</sup> The critical reception was somewhat mixed, although a survey of reviews in the magazines *Creem*, *Downbeat*, *Melody Maker*, and *Rolling Stone* shows them to be generally favorable, if



reservedly so. One distinction between the reviews of the American rock press and the British rock press was the respective reaction to “Jerusalem”; the British rock press’s response to the band’s arrangement of the song was decidedly negative, while American reviewers were indifferent or even somewhat complimentary. *Melody Maker*’s review of the album closed by calling attention to the “heavy metal version of the hymn ‘Jerusalem,’ which does of course include words by a real poet, one William Blake, who must be turning in his grave.”<sup>22</sup> The magazine’s review of the single appeared four weeks later and similarly attacked ELP, stating “having callously savaged Mussorgsky they now turn on the unfortunate William Blake. The pomposity of the arrangement and of Lake’s singing is sufficient cause for more than a mere chuckle.”<sup>23</sup> Richard “The Beast” Green of *Music Scene* had perhaps the most scathing review: “Bloody sacrilege! To the pits with these people! Burn them at the stake! ‘Jerusalem,’ Jerusalem,’ the song that all of us sing in the bath and even then treat with respect has been mutilated, sodded about with and heathenised by these three perpetrators of weird noises”<sup>24</sup> Such comments seem sympathetic to the reaction of the typically conservative BBC, which refused to play the song over the air. Carl Palmer later recalled:

*“‘Jerusalem’ was banned in England on the radio. Although we tried to get a very orchestral feel,*

*as with all pieces of music that we played with Emerson, Lake and Palmer, it was still labeled as a piece of pop music. For that alone, the BBC would not accept ‘Jerusalem’ as a serious piece of music. Even though ‘Jerusalem’ itself is a very serious piece of church music, the BBC thought we were degrading it.”<sup>25</sup>*

By contrast, American-penned reviews in either praised the song or neglected to mention it at all. *Creem*’s enthusiastic review of the album made no mention of “Jerusalem.”<sup>26</sup> *Downbeat* merely noted that the “ambitious adaptation...would have been more majestic with a lighter electronic touch.”<sup>27</sup> *Rolling Stone*, referring to the “olde English hymn ‘Jerusalem,’” was impressed the most by Lake’s “interpretive vocals,” which “pulled off [the song] with particular aplomb.”<sup>28</sup> These reviews should come as little surprise from Americans, who had no awareness of the cultural significance of “Jerusalem” for the British. To American critics, the song was either a quaint old English tune, as described in *Rolling Stone*, or else not even worth mentioning.

In his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” Louis Althusser describes “interpellation” or “hailing” as part of the ideological apparatus that preserves the social and political status quo. According to Althusser, interpellations are “signs” that encourage self-identification with the larger hegemony and its power

structures.<sup>29</sup> He uses the example of individual subjects who, when addressed or “hailed” by a policeman, will instinctively turn as though assuming the hail is meant for them. For Althusser, this metaphor describes how individual subjects effectively see themselves as reflections of the higher authority and demonstrate allegiance by acknowledging the hail.

National anthems and patriotic songs, such as “The Star-Spangled Banner” or “Jerusalem,” can be effective hails, encouraging self-identification with a nation’s cultural, ethnic, political, and even religious institutions. These hails may even encourage individuals to express their self-identification with those institutions by saluting, singing, placing a hand over one’s heart, or some other act of solidarity.

Sometimes these hails can be rejected by one who refuses to profess allegiance to the authority behind the hail. Additionally, such hails may even be appropriated to encouraged self-identification with a separate group that is somehow opposed to the original higher authority behind the hail. Both of these are true of Jimi Hendrix’s rendition of “The Star-Spangled Banner” performed during the Woodstock Festival of 1969.<sup>30</sup> Hendrix’s use of heavy distortion or “fuzz,” his free rhythm and virtuosic improvisation were all denials of the implicit hail of the American “Establishment” and Nixon administration within the national anthem.<sup>31</sup> At the same time, Hendrix’s “Star-Spangled Banner” was itself a hail

to the hippies and members of the counterculture; his free rhythm and use of distortion were sonic codes that signified the “psychedelic” music of the counterculture that opposed the war and challenged conservative American values.<sup>32</sup>

ELP’s arrangement of “Jerusalem” functions in much the same way, but within the context of British progressive rock rather than blues-based psychedelic music. Although they had used such blues-based codes in other songs, “Jerusalem” used gestures taken from classical and Anglican music, notably the exaggerated cadences and suspensions connoting church music. These exaggerated gestures provided an ironic commentary on the interpellative power behind the patriotic and religious convictions of the original “Jerusalem.” ELP’s version denies the religious and perhaps even the politically patriotic hail behind the original, yet its ironic religious treatment becomes a hail to the British counterculture, a group that may also respond to the song’s appeal to British ethnicity if not its hail to political nationalism.

British rock critics largely missed this, however. Although one would expect their publications to reflect the values of the counterculture who constituted their readership, their response seems more in line with that of the “Establishment” in the form of the BBC. The reasons for this are not immediately clear. Macan blames this reaction largely on the neo-Marxist stance of those critics, who increasingly began to condemn

ELP's brand of progressive rock as inauthentic, elitist, and lacking an ironic self-consciousness or an aspect of social or political rebellion that these critics believed was necessary in rock music.<sup>33</sup> In fact, it is just as likely that these critics may not have objected to the progressive rock style as much as to ELP specifically; elsewhere in the issue of *Music Scene* carrying his scathing review of "Jerusalem," Richard Green wrote glowingly about Rick Wakeman's album *The Six Wives of Henry VIII* and Genesis's *Selling England by the Pound*, two hallmarks of any progressive rock "canon."<sup>34</sup> Still, the juxtaposition of such a patriotic hymn with a soundscape as dystopic as that in *Brain Salad Surgery* is certainly ironic and arguably even somewhat "rebellious," particularly when the music incorporated exaggerated classical and Anglican gestures to subvert the hymn's original meaning. This should have presented an ideal interpellation for the British counterculture, whose opinions these critics presumably reflected.

Yet, these critics missed this interpellation within ELP's "Jerusalem." They failed to see any irony in the setting itself or in its relationship to the dystopia presented in *Brain Salad Surgery*. Instead, they reacted like the conservative arbiter of propriety, the BBC, in condemning the song as degrading rather than reading a potentially subversive message within the song's rhetoric. Any possibility of irony in ELP's setting of the song was lost on the very critics who valued irony and

social awareness in rock music, perhaps bestowing the greatest irony of all on ELP's "Jerusalem."

## Endnotes

1. See Allan F. Moore, *Rock: The Primary Text – Developing a New Musicology of Rock*, 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 64, 68-69; Although he uses the term in its more restrictive sense, Kevin Holm-Hudson also recognizes Moore's broader definition of progressive rock in Kevin Holm-Hudson, "Introduction" in *Progressive Rock Reconsidered*, ed. Kevin Holm-Hudson (New York: Routledge, 2002), 2. See also Edward Macan, *Rocking the Classics: English Progressive Rock and the Counterculture* (New York: Oxford, 1997), 26-27; Paul Stump, *The Music's All That Matters: A History of Progressive Rock* (London: Namara, 1997), 9-10.

2. "The Barbarian" and "Knife Edge," from Emerson, Lake & Palmer reworking Bartók's *Allegro Barbaro* and Janacek's *Sinfonietta*, respectively; "The Only Way" from *Tarkus* paraphrasing Bach's Toccata in F and Prelude No. 6 from the *Well-Tempered Clavier*, Book I; "Hoedown" from *Trilogy* excerpted from Copland's Rodeo; "Jerusalem" and "Toccata" from *Brain Salad Surgery* reworking C. Hubert Parry's hymn and the fourth movement from Alberto Ginastera's First Piano Concerto; "Fanfare for the Common Man" on Works Vol. I a reworking of Copland's original; and "Canario" from Love Beach an adaptation of Rodrigo's *Fantasia para un gentilhombre*.

3. Dominic Milano, "Keith Emerson," *Contemporary Keyboard* 13, no. 10 (October 1977), 25.

4. Lake's views are related in Forrester, Hanson, Askew, *Emerson, Lake & Palmer*, 65, 85; Previous songs addressing Christian subjects include the "hymn setting" "The Only Way," and the "carol" "I Believe in Father Christmas." Emerson, Lake & Palmer, *Tarkus*, Victory 383 480 017-2, 1971, Compact Disc; Emerson, Lake & Palmer, *Works, Vol. 2*, Atlantic SD 19147, 1977, LP.

5. The album's theme of man versus machine has been discussed extensively in George Forrester, Martyn Hanson, and Frank Askew, Emerson, Lake & Palmer: *The Show that Never Ends* (London: Helter Skelter, 2001), 85, 88-89-198-202; Jim Curtis, *Rock Eras: Interpretations of Music and Society, 1954-1984* (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1987), 289.

6. Curtis, *Rock Eras*, 287.

7. Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 483.

8. Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry*, 484-485; Samuel J. Rogal, "Blake's 'And did those feet' as Congregational Hymn" *The Hymn* 44, no. 3 (July 1993), 22, 24; Jerry

McCulley, liner notes to Emerson, Lake & Palmer, *Brain Salad Surgery*, Rhino R2 72459, 1996, Compact Disc, 7.

9. Rogal, "Blake's "And did those feet,"" 25.

10. William Blake, "Milton," in Mary Lynn Johnson and John E. Grant, eds., *Blake's Poetry and Designs* (New York: Norton, 1979), 235, 238; Rogal, "Blake's 'And did those feet,'" 22-23.

11. Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 147-149, 150-152. See also Curtis, *Rock Eras*, 287.

12. Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 33-34, 38-40. Some bands, notably Yes on their albums *Close to the Edge* and *Going for the One* and ELP on their debut album and *Tarkus* actually used a pipe organ for certain tracks to evoke the sense of a cathedral space.

13. McCulley, *Brain Salad Surgery* notes, 7.

14. Blair Pethel, "Keith Emerson: The Emergence and Growth of a Style," (DMA diss., Peabody Institute, 1988), 72.

15. See Dan Hedges, *Yes: The Authorized Biography* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1981), 15; Armando Gallo, *Genesis: I Know What I Like* (Los Angeles: DIY, 1980), 14; Tom Mulhern, "John Wetton: Asia's

Progressive Rock Bassist," *Guitar Player* 17, no. 1 (January 1983), 33.

16. Richard Green, "Albumscene – Emerson, Lake and Palmer: *Brain Salad Surgery*" *Music Scene* (January 1974), 38.

17. Forrester, Hanson, Askew, *Emerson, Lake & Palmer*, 82-84; Notes accompanying Emerson, Lake & Palmer, *The Return of the Manticore*, Victory 383 484 004-2, Compact Disc

18. Forrester, Hanson, Askew, *Emerson, Lake & Palmer*, 85.

19. *Grove Music Online*, s.v., "Plagal Cadence."

20. Curtis, *Rock Eras*, 287; Forrester, Hanson, Askew, *Emerson, Lake & Palmer*, 89, 202.

21. *Melody Maker* (January 26, 1974), 2.

22. Steve Lake, "ELP: Stale Salad," *Melody Maker* (November 24, 1973), 39.

23. Geoff Brown, "ELP Go Back to School," *Melody Maker* (December 22, 1973), 14.

24. Richard Green, "Albumscene – Emerson, Lake and Palmer: *Brain Salad Surgery*" *Music Scene*, January 1974, 38

25. Carl Palmer, *Applied Rhythms* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1987), 60.

26. Wayne Robins, "Emerson, Lake & Palmer: *Brain Salad Surgery*" *Creem* 5, no. 10 (March 1974), 63. Ironically, this positive review appeared in the same issue as Lester Bang's scathing critique of ELP, "Blood Feast of Reddy Kilowatt," in which he described ELP's music as "robot music mixmastered by human modules who deserve purple hearts for managing to keep the gadgets reined in at all," and dismissed progressive rock in general as the "insidious befoulment of all that was gutter pure in rock," noting that "everybody knows that Classical-Rock (alternative w. -Jazz) Fusions never really work." Lester Bangs, "Blood Feast of Reddy Kilowatt: Emerson, Lake & Palmer without Insulation," *Creem* 5, no. 10 (March 1974), 40-44, 77-78.

27. "Emerson, Lake & Palmer: *Brain Salad Surgery*," *Downbeat* 41, no. 3 (February 14, 1974), ??.

28. Gordon Fletcher, "Brain Salad Surgery: Emerson, Lake & Palmer" *Rolling Stone* (January 31, 1974), 50.

29. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in Slavoj Žižek, ed., *Mapping Ideology* (London: Verso, 1994), 130-131.

30. Jimi Hendrix, "The Star Spangled Banner," on *The Essential Jimi Hendrix: Volume Two*, Reprise HS 2293, 1979, LP.

31. I am indebted to Dr. David Schwarz for this illustration stemming from his seminar in musical semiotics during the spring of 2004.

32. Sheila Whiteley, "Progressive Rock and Psychedelic Coding in the Work of Jimi Hendrix," in *Reading Pop: Approaches to Textual Analysis in Popular Music*, ed. Richard Middleton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 236, 258-259.

33. Macan, *Rocking the Classics*, 169, 170; Lester Bangs colorfully sums up this stance in Bangs, "Blood Feast of Reddy Kilowatt," 40, 43-44, 76.

34. Richard Green, "Music Scene Band of the Month: Genesis," *Music Scene*, 'Albums O' the Year," *Music Scene*, January 1974, 21.

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## Paolo Conte: Italian 'Arthouse Exotic'

Tony Mitchell

### I. Introduction

Piedmontese *cantautore* (singer-songwriter) Paolo Conte has been lauded in Italy for the distinctively broad global focus - what Paolo Jachia has called an 'exoticism' and 'a search for elsewhere in the texture of the everyday' (1998:102) - in his urbane, sophisticated, jazz-oriented songs, which often explore the dilemmas of characters who are in imaginary flight from the everyday. But despite his long-term acclaim in Europe (since performing at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris in 1984) he has only recently, in his mid to late 60s, begun to receive recognition in the UK and the USA. After his 1998 USA tour, *Rolling Stone* designated his album *The Best of Paolo Conte* 'essential listening' for that year, and Robert Christgau listed it in his top 100 albums in *Village Voice*. Conte's 8 city sell-out 2001 tour of the US and Canada consolidated this acclaim. Ranked by Jachia as one of the two 'major figures of the contemporary Italian music scene' (along with Franco Battiato (1998:100)) and highly regarded in Europe for his suave performance persona, droll humour and songs suffused with pre-1920s-jazz influences, Conte is an undiscovered treasure for many Anglophone

listeners, despite the fact that a number of his songs are either partially in English or are peppered with (often nonsensical) English phrases. His deep, languid and gravelly baritone vocal delivery and often cynical, dark and metaphysical lyrics evoke striking affinities with Tom Waits and Randy Newman, who are probably his closest peers in the USA, but the language barrier his highly idiosyncratic songs only partially cross continues to hinder him from the global recognition he deserves.

Roberto Caselli concludes his 2002 monograph on Conte with the statement: 'Undoubtedly Conte is an Italian public figure of major current international status, without being bound by fashion and ephemeral cultural references, which he is able to both engage with and at the same time resist within the extraordinarily classical foundation with which he has imbued the various elements of his music' (2002:118). The use of the term 'classical' is notable here – seemingly an artistic judgment which seeks to distinguish Conte's music from the 'ephemeral' and the fashionable popular, which he both 'involves' and 'resists'. This positions him within 'a kind of arthouse culture' in popular music, to borrow an expression used by Simon Frith (2004:51) in relation to commercially independent niche forms of music.

The issue at stake here is one of value – as Frith has noted elsewhere, ‘one way of ascribing popular cultural value is to show that a successful record is, in fact art’. The value and importance of Conte’s music, together with the fact that it is not appreciated as it should be, according to those who value it, is related to what Frith has referred to as the ‘*unpopular popular*’: ‘Culture as transformation ... must challenge experience, must be difficult, must be unpopular (1996:20, 21).

There is a telling moment in Mark Dezzani’s 2000 English language documentary *Paolo Conte: A Face on Loan*, which illustrates how Conte is both popular and ‘unpopular’: a snippet from Adriano Celentano’s ‘huge international hit’ version in 1968 of Conte’s song ‘Azzurro’ (Sky Blue), about a lonely, bored guy whose girlfriend has gone off to the seaside on holiday, and who toys with the idea of catching a train to join her, then thinks better of it. Celentano strolls through film projections of summer streets as he sings it on an Italian TV pop variety show, finishing up with the train chorus, for which he is joined by a dance troupe of men in suits and women in striped mini skirt outfits, gauchely simulating a train going forwards, and then backwards. This is followed by Conte’s own far more urbane, suave version of the song, performed to a rapturous concert audience in Amsterdam in 1988, with Conte playing solo piano, intoning one of his more iconically ‘exotic’

lyrics, almost in a rap idiom (‘I dream of Africa in my garden, with oleander and baobab’...), accompanied in the final chorus by the voices of his 11 piece jazz ensemble. Celentano’s performance of the song comes across as 1960s seaside pop kitsch, whereas Conte’s own, far more subtle, nuanced and sophisticated version of it, which transforms it into a ‘classic’, is much easier to define as ‘art’. Yet arguably his reading of the song and its enthusiastic response is largely dependent on its audience’s memories of Celentano’s popular hit version. As the song with which Conte chooses to finish his Amsterdam concert, and one of the main, far from ‘classical’ foundations on which his reputation as a singer-songwriter is based, it neatly poses the dilemma of whether Conte’s music should be read as popular music or as a more ‘arthouse’ form of songwriting. What follows is an appreciation of some of the transformative, cosmopolitan, but still distinctively ‘popular’ aspects of Conte’s career.

Conte’s recent acclaim in the USA, along with his decidedly niche market cult following in the UK (his 2000 musical *Razmataz* was launched at the Barbican Theatre in London, and he gave a concert after the release of his 2004 album *Elegia* at the Royal Festival Hall in May 2005), give pause for reflection on what appears at first sight to be an historically entrenched Anglophone resistance to popular songs in Italian. His

engagement with jazz and his avoidance of politically engaged songwriting distinguishes him from most of the prominent *cantautori nuovi* such as Francesco De Gregori, Fabrizio De Andre, Lucio Dalla, Claudio Lolli, who emerged in Italy in the late 1960s in the wake of the student movement, and who tended to sing about social and political themes. Gianni Borgna, in his authoritative volume *Storia della canzone italiana* defines Conte's style of singing as 'provincial swing', alluding to his Piedmontese origins in the small agricultural and famous wine-producing town of Asti, 30 kilometres from Turin (Borgna 1992:359). Borgna's description is apt, given that Conte continues to live in his family's home in Asti, and has composed all his songs on his parents' piano, absorbing all the US jazz influences from the 1920s onwards which they introduced him to via illegal 78 records smuggled in from France during Mussolini's ban on American music (Perrier 1989:27). At the same time, perhaps more than any other Italian *cantautore*, he is a musical *flan  ur* who draws on a cosmopolitan panoply of musical influences.<sup>1</sup> These extend from Neapolitan song to various forms of early US jazz from boogie-woogie to swing (in *A Face on Loan* he cites Fats Waller, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Sidney Bechet), as well as Brazilian and other Latin American musical influences (such as the Argentinian tango and milonga, rumba, samba and Cuban habanera), Charles Aznavour, Georges Brassens and French chanson,

French quadrille and possibly German cabaret, to the extent that his is an admixture of distinctively eclectic, nomadic and syncretic styles of music. His songs take the listener on imaginary exotic voyages - to Hawaii, Africa, South America, as well as to historic places like Paris in the 1920s, the setting of his 2000 magnum opus *Razmataz*. Conte has stated that 'I don't like travelling, or holidays, I like to stay in my own place and fantasise. I don't sing about the world, or current events, or politics ... perhaps my dabbling in exotic names is a kind of modesty, a way of hiding' (in Jachia 1998:102). It is not the fulsome exotica of Les Baxter, Martin Denny or Arthur Lyman, with their orchestral evocations of Orientalism or African primitivism or Tropicalia, rather more miniature evocations of imagined images and locations, alongside a more 'provincial' concern with towns in Northern Italy, peopled by day dreamers, love stories and relationship breakdowns.

## II. Conte and the *canzone d'autore*

Franco Fabbri's categories of Italian *canzone* provide a useful, if rather loose taxonomy in defining seven types of Italian popular song: the traditional song, the pop song, the 'sophisticated song', the *canzone d'autore*, the political song, the rock song and the children's song (1981:123). Conte, along with some of his contemporaries, could be categorized relatively unproblematically as practising primarily the *canzone*



*d'autore*, along with elements of the 'sophisticated song' and the traditional song, broad as these genres may be. In terms of lyrics, Fabbri distinguishes the *canzone d'autore* from other genres in that it contains

*the highest level of complexity, with regard to richness of vocabulary, rhetoric and syntax. Both in the music and in the lyrics the different levels of complexity are expressed in the syntax, understood in the wider sense of relationship between parts. [...] The tendency of the canzone d'autore towards individual characterization can be seen above all in its lyrical vocabulary, which is richer and more open to literary suggestion [than other genres] (1981:124, 127).*

These features are readily identifiable in the lyrics of Conte's songs, which often contain oblique, fragmentary observations, and opaque, disconnected images which verge on the poetic. The literary aspects of Conte's lyrics were given acknowledgment in 1981 when he was awarded the Premio Montale, a prize established in honour of the Nobel Prize-winning Italian poet Eugenio Montale, which is normally given to literary figures. (It was also awarded to Francesco Guccini in 1992.) In a discussion of the usually 'indirect, filtered and second hand' relationship between poetry and the *cantautori* – many of whose song lyrics are published

in book form – Umberto Fiori cites Conte, along with De Gregori, Dalla and Jovanotti, as one of the more celebrated *cantautori* who are occasionally acclaimed by audiences, critics and reviewers as 'poets' but more often likely to reject such claims and regard their songs as 'inept photographs of poetry' - to quote the Roman *cantautore* Antonello Venditti (Fiori 1996:157). An example from one of Conte's most famous – and poignant - lyrics, 'Un gelato al limon', invoked by Barry Singer as 'romantic, bittersweet, extravagant, yet cunningly concise' can serve to illustrate that in Conte's songs, it is the intonation and emphasis of the singer's voice together with the musical arrangement of the song that provides a three dimensional 'poetry' that the lyrics on the page can never evoke :

*A lemon ice cream, lemon ice cream, lemon ice cream*

*Hidden away at the end of the city*

*It's real lemon,*

*Do you like it?*

*While another summer's about to end*

*(Un gelato al limon, gelato al limon, gelato al limon,*

*sprofondati in fondo a una città*

*un gelato al limon*

*e vero limon*

*ti piace ...?*

*mentre un'altra estate passerà ...)*

Leaving aside the awkward redundancy of the translation of the song's title and the flat rendition of 'sprofondati in fondo a una città' which suggests more the almost desperate and exhausted mood of 'collapsed at the bottom of a city', the song dramatises a conflict between the banal and almost obsessive repetition of the trite ice cream refrain with regrets about the end of summer and the protagonist's mixed feelings about his involvement with a woman 'about to enter my life with baggage full of perplexity'. His suggestions of what he can offer her become more and more banal on the one hand ('a shower in the public baths which are in the depths of tepidity', 'the intelligence of electricians, so at least our sad hotel room will have some light') and more grandiose and exotic on the other ('the afternoon moon for the Arab dream you love') in a contrast between simple, ordinary everyday surface rituals with deeper, more emotionally seismographic events. Conte's delivery is wry, restrained but also at times ironically melodramatic, and the piano carries most of the melodic weight of the song. As Caselli has commented, it is 'An unusual, brilliant declaration of love, delicious in its formulation, to some degree epic, which holds out hope despite an awareness of transience' (2002:56). His use of the term 'epic' hints at a Brechtian cast, but this remains purely

within the emotional and existential terms of the song's characterisation, as there is no direct address or social or political commentary. Mario Bonanno in his rather hyperbolic book-length study of Conte goes so far as to suggest it is '[p]erhaps the most beautiful – and least silly – declaration of love ever put to music' (2001:41). The live version of it which Dalla and De Gregori performed on their *Banana Republic* tour in 1979 turned it into a far more up-tempo, carefree affair, losing the melancholic subtlety and resonance of Conte's own rendition. But the 'poetry' of the song is undeniable, and expresses, in Conte's words, 'a general poetic sense. There should be poetry in the music as well as in the lyrics, the cadences, the composition, the orchestration, the intensity of the interpretation. It's the harmonic ensemble of all these components that should be poetic' (in Caselli 2002:41).

One characteristic of the urbanity and complexity of the *canzone d'autore* in the 1960s and 1970s which Fabbri outlines is its retention of aspects of older forms of Italian song, such as the dialect song, the traditional song, and the nightclub song, traces of the latter two of which are present in Conte's early songs. He generally writes lyrics in 'standard Italian' (mixed with macaronic English, and 'Quadrille' and 'Reveries' are in French), although few aspersions can be cast on his regional authenticity. As Lorenzo Coveri has noted in his study of the use of dialect in recent Italian popular song: 'A genial

provincial like Paolo Conte is not afraid of revisiting the unfashionable armory of the songs of the past, ennobled by a solid swing background, with exotic special effects (although Conte is outside the dialect tradition, even if he has provided the best characterisation of the Genovese in 'Genova per noi') (1996: 30-31).

Other elements Fabbri notes as endemic to the *canzone d'autore* and which can be detected in Conte's songs are intellectual aspirations, literary influences (although cinema is more of an influence), overtones of French existentialism, and jazz. A related aspect which arguably can be found in a number of Conte's songs, is the tendency of the singer to create a personality which can be identified with the protagonist of the song, and for this personality to dominate:

*things that might be considered mistakes of intonation or bad pronunciation in other genres are accepted as characteristics of individual personality, which is of primary importance in this genre. (1981:126- 27).*

These idiosyncratic 'mistakes of intonation' apply not only to Conte's widespread use of an assortment of grunts, gasps, laughs, scat singing and other onomatopoeic vocalisations, but also to his employment of a number of fragmented, nonsensical, and often non-sequitur,

English expressions which are often pronounced rather oddly (Conte claims to speak no English). A prominent example of the latter is the well-known chorus of 'Via con me', which quotes Gershwin's song 'Swonderful': 'Swonderful, 'swonderful, 'swonderful, good luck my babe, 'swonderful, I dream of you ... chips chips, du-du-du-du' (and which Roberto Benigni parodies in *A Face on Loan*.) Fabbri designates Conte, along with Enzo Jannacci, (especially in the latter's collaborations with Dario Fo), as the two most important and successful innovators of a revival of the forms and conventions of the *canzone d'autore* which distinguished it from the growing clichés of rock music in Italy in the late 1970s. This suggests that in terms of his place within Italian traditions of popular *cantautori* Conte, along with Jannacci (who, as Jacha notes, performed and recorded some of Conte's songs in the late 1970s and early 1980s, most notably 'Genova per noi' (Genoa for Us), 'Questa sporca vita' (This Dirty Life) and 'Sudamerica' (South America), and shared with him 'a vein of all-consuming, melancholy lunacy (1998:77)), represents complex and contradictory aspects of both song tradition and innovation. Fabbri's conclusion to his 1981 essay, which describes Conte and Jannacci's shared idiosyncracies, is worth quoting in full:

*Jannacci is a doctor, Conte a lawyer; both are over forty, both sing in an untidy way with a*

*certain gestural embarrassment, both have a solid musical preparation even if they are self-taught. Both use a particularly rich vocabulary, which is characterised by social extraction or geographical location (Jannacci lives in Milan, Conte in Asti, a small town in Piedmont); both knowledgeably mix poetic and prosaic tones, both use metrics without recourse to banal words accented on the last syllable. If their songs are musically fairly well characterised (with frequent stylistic quotations from various genres or periods), arrangements appear deliberately anonymous and out of fashion.*

In other words these two accumulate a series of violations of the current rules of the *canzone d'autore*, partly by returning to the character of the origins, and partly by showing that they share the hope for renewal, whilst respecting many of the fundamental rules. It is possible that a future study of the *canzone d'autore* will show as rules of a future period features which today appear as individual characteristics of these two cantautori (1981:141-2).

Paolo Jachia, in his 1998 book *La canzone d'autore italiana 1958-1997*, partially confirms Fabbri's prognosis. Jachia, careful to note that 'rather than referring literally to a musical genre, with *canzone d'autore*, we refer to a

rather blurred area that collects a host of heterogeneous musical phenomena' (1998:9) evaluates 109 Italian *cantautori* in a musical graph, including a number of recent hip hop MCs, according to the concentration of elements of rock, pop, folk, jazz, funk/soul, melodic tradition and innovation discernible in their songs. Conte scores five out of five for jazz and innovation, three out of five for melodic tradition, and nothing in the other categories, while Jannacci is one of twenty artists who get five out of five for elements of innovation, while also scoring two or three for rock, pop, folk, jazz, funk/soul, and melodic tradition. Jachia ranks Conte and Fabrizio De Andre as the two most important links 'between the Genovese *cantautori* of the 1960s [Gino Paoli, Luigi Tenco, Bruno Lauzi, Sergio Endrigo, Umberto Bindi and Pietro Ciampi] and the anxieties of the current musical scene, and the only ones consistently capable of playing on present tendencies, and taking new artistic and creative risks with each new release' (1998:100). Jannacci is reduced to a slightly more marginal status: 'He has perhaps not made an impact on the history of *canzone* but he has ensured that *canzone* plays a more moral and dignified part in Italian history' (1998:71) <sup>2</sup>.

Caselli's 2002 study of Conte concludes with a critical list of newer *cantautori* whom he identifies as 'heirs' of Conte, beginning with his brother Giorgio Conte, and his former guitarist Jimmy Valotti, and including Vinicio

Capossela, who has recorded with Conte's orchestral arranger and saxophonist Antonio Marangolo, Sergio Cammariere, Gianmaria Testa, who like Conte uses jazz, tango and habanera, and Marcello Murru, who has worked with Conte's former producer Lilli Greco. Of these, Testa has begun to reach a Francophone and Anglophone audience and recorded a number of outstanding albums on La Chant Du Monde. Even a US swing jazz group called 8 1/2 Souvenirs (a name no doubt deriving from Fellini) has recorded two songs by Conte, 'Happy Feet' and 'Come di'. This suggests that his influence has been widespread; Caselli concludes that '[a]ny attempt to group together all the influences that Conte has exerted on his younger and not so young colleagues is almost impossible since a myriad absolutely heterogeneous personalities move through the undergrowth of the *canzone d'autore*, making more or less obvious references to the open and emotive poetics refined by well known and much appreciated artists, among whom Conte is one of the most representative' (2002:116-7).

### III. Cinematic Songwriting: Conte and Randy Newman

As US commentators have suggested, there are unmistakable stylistic affinities in both vocal style, musical orientation (at least in relation to his very simple piano style) and lyrical content between Conte's songs

and Tom Waits and Randy Newman. Conte is reported to have expressed a desire to meet Newman when he toured the USA in 2001 (<http://www.musicaitaliana.com/news/it/2001/01020304.html>), and the *New York Times* 1998 profile of him described his music as 'a stone's throw from a recent American songwriter tradition', while Barry Singer in the same newspaper in 2001 invoked (rather stereotypically) 'Randy Newman on a Fellini soundtrack' and described Conte's voice as 'a wistful, sometimes comic, eloquently expressive, conversational rasp ... more Tom Waits than Louis Armstrong' (Singer 2001).

While comparisons between Conte and Waits are arguably related mostly to their eccentric musical and vocal resemblances, Conte's similarities with his US label mate Randy Newman (both are part of Nonesuch's stable since Newman signed to them in 2003) are evident. Both Conte and Newman make important epoch-defining statements, portraits and characterisations in their songs, which are often concise, elliptic, enigmatic 'flashes' of around 3 minutes duration, although Conte does not share the polemic edge of some of Newman's more abrasive songs such as 'Political Science', 'Sail Away' or 'Rednecks'. Both Conte and Newman are primarily composers who reluctantly developed a singing style which provided a resonant, if raw, but decidedly 'grainy' (to use Barthes'

well-known expressive designation of vocal distinction) vehicle for the nuances and subtleties of the songs, while also expressing strongly in both cases what Frith has referred to as the notion of 'the voice as a person' (1995:6), and what David Brackett identifies as 'the point ... at which ... the idea of "voice" collides with the figure of the author' (1995:11). Like Newman, the tone of many of Conte's songs is often, in Sarlin's words, 'laconic, funny, grim and solitary', and the subject matter of the compositions of both are equally concerned with 'often tiny human idiosyncracies' and 'the banality of contemporary living' (136, 117, 120).

In Conte's song 'Lo zio', in which there are flashes of both Shanghai and Duke Ellington dressed as a boxer in a dressing gown, 'everything rolls like a film in the projector'. This introduces another affinity between Conte and Newman, namely their deployment of cinema – not simply in the sense of writing music for the cinema (Conte has done music for films by Lina Wertmüller and Roberto Benigni, among others, and won a David di Donatello award in 1996 for his music for the animated film *La freccia azzura* (The Blue Arrow)) – but also in their conception of songs as mini films. In *A Face for Loan*, Conte talks about Gershwin's 'cinematic syncopations', and describes his songs as 'cinematic flashes'; in his interview with Perrier he states 'my songs are like pieces of film. When the atmosphere is

established, when the characters are firmly in place, when everything is set to happen, I offer a CLOSE UP ON THE IMAGE' (1989:101):

*I have always said that my generation was more nourished by film than by literature. For us, and particularly for provincials like me, the cinema was the great discovery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was our opening on the world. For me, cinema would be a real education, in the sense that it would allow me to tell stories in a visual way, as in a film. Simple, even banal stories, at first sight, but with something more in the interpretation, the writing, a certain colour in the use of words, in the pauses and hesitations which take us beyond a simple narrative. The secret of art is to be a bit enigmatic (1989:103-4).*

One of Conte's songs is entitled 'Rebus', and it provides a fitting metaphor for this enigmatic, cinematic aspect of a number of his songs. Two particularly brief and cryptic examples occur on his 1987 album *Aguaplano*. In 'Hesitation', an eavesdropper in a hotel interprets an afternoon seduction scene occurring behind a locked door, in which a 'hesitation' takes place, and the carpet under the door 'seems electric' and the 'roses he had given her were there waiting to be understood'. 'Max' is even more cryptic, describing a 'lucid, tranquil'



figure whose 'fluency doesn't simplify things', and who is asked to let the protagonist get out, as he 'sees a secret approaching'. The song ends with an arresting clarinet figure, augmented by piano and violin, and then repeated by an accordion, which seem to absorb the enigma of the lyrics into a melodic resolution. (Conte has explained that he wrote the music for this song before the lyrics, as he usually does, and had particular difficulty composing the lyrics until he 'had a vision of a voluminous, even monumental character ... who was friendly, but led a dangerous life, driving cars and riding racehorses' (Perrier 68). Caselli suggests 'Max' is an example of Conte's 'hermeticism': 'one has to deduce, reconstruct, extrapolate and naturally seek help from the music in order to conclude that this is a small masterpiece' (2002:30).

Many of Conte's songs have an open-endedness which encourages the listener to create their own 'film' to accompany them. Cinematic analogies can be applied to not just their dramatic situation and meaning, but also to their musical structure and their use of elliptic minimalism. Indeed, Conte has suggested one of the reasons he uses English in his songs is because 'My music has a cinematic quality, and the English language is more cinematic than Italian' (in Singer 2001). This cinematic quality of Conte's songs was evoked extensively by John L. Walters in his UK *Guardian*

review of Conte's Royal Festival Hall concert in May 2005:

*His musical world is ... an arthouse movie soundtrack imbued with self-mocking humour and nostalgia for an imagined past. Each song suggests a fragment of a screenplay: an encounter, a missed opportunity, tall stories told through a haze of alcohol and smoke. Though the concert programme helpfully includes English translations, Conte's orchestrations illuminate each scenario like a master cinematographer ... Conte conjures up circus bands, seaside dancehalls and spaghetti westerns - shades of Nino Rota and Ennio Morricone. ... This is a courteous, accomplished and grown-up music of the highest quality, without the slightest hint of rock'n'roll (2005).*

This establishes conclusively the 'arthouse' aspect of Conte's output, as well as its status as mature, adult-oriented popular music distinct from the youth orientations of rock'n'roll, aligning it with more 'serious' music.

### III. Categorising Conte: What Kind of Music?

Conte's music is at once 'provincial', 'exotic' and 'global,' in its wide musical frames of reference and

its wide spread of appreciation and influence. He is an Italian *cantautore* who is among the most distinctive and prominent in the field of the *canzone d'autore*, and he is also a sophisticated concert hall singer and jazz performer capable of filling the most distinguished venues in Europe and the USA (he even played at the Blue Note in New York in 1989), where he is apt to scat sing and perform on two kazoos at once between vocal lines. He has also played standards on vibraphone with his Paul Conte Quartet in 1962, and in concert performances around Italy with the Doctor Dixie Jazz band in the 1980s and 1990s, with fellow *cantautore* Lucio Dalla, on clarinet and vocals, and Gerry Mulligan on bass, among others <sup>3</sup>. His reception as a singer in the Anglophone world has been largely within serious artistic milieus, as indicated by his concerts at the Royal Festival Hall, and the exhibition of his paintings at the Barbican Gallery in London, and the release of *The Best of Paolo Conte* and *Reveries* in the USA on Nonesuch, described on the Warner Music Italy website's page on Conte as a 'very refined label (Philip Glass, Steve Reich, Bill Frisell, etc.)'. This association through Nonesuch with contemporary US classical and jazz composers elevates Conte into the realm of serious, artistic concert hall music, away from many of the arguably more popular connotations of the cantautori in Italy. Nonetheless the popular, albeit the 'unpopular popular', may be a more suitable way out of the impasse of categorisation for this

transnational Italian singer whose 'arthouse' reputation makes him something of an exotic figure even within the ever broader, increasingly vague and difficult-to-define reaches of what Frith has called 'new forms of so-called world music' (2004:57).

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to Bianca Galipò for her assistance with this article. All translations from the French and Italian are by the author, except where otherwise indicated.

## Endnotes

1. I am not alone in describing Conte as a flâneur; commenting on Conte's throwaway comic song 'La vecchia giacca nuova' (The Old New Jacket) from his 2004 album *Elegia*, Max Cavassa claims the song evokes 'in one fell swoop Baudelaire's flâneur, the incommunicability of the Nouvelle Vague and Ingmar Bergman, and Fellini's fierce and tragic *Dolce Vita*' <<http://www.kalpoz.com/recensioni/elegia.htm>>.

2. I have written elsewhere in English about the theatrical, musical and narrative aspects of some of the songs of Jannacci and Fo, with help from Fabbri's taxonomy (Mitchell 2000), as has Carlo Testa, (1996) in an insightful study of the existential, carnivalesque and dialect aspects of some of Jannacci and Fo's songs .

3. The CD *Paolo Conte & Doctor Dixie Jazz Band*, Hamburg: Amici 2001, is a curious compilation, containing live performances of Ellington, Goodman and other standards in various parts of Italy between 1983

and 1996. Despite the billing, and the biographical note about Conte on the inner sleeve, he plays vibraphone on only 4 of the 12 tracks and sings on none, whereas Lucio Dalla either sings or plays clarinet on 5. The Doctor Dixie Jazz band is an amateur band founded at the University of Bologna in 1952 as the Superior Magistratus Ragtime Band, and it took on its present name in 1972.

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## The Treatment of the Mythological Themes in *Heavy Metal*

Natàlia Motos

I have divided this paper, *The treatment of the mythological themes in Heavy Metal* into five parts. The first one is a basic introduction explaining what Heavy Metal is and its characteristics. The other parts are more specific and they are concerning the role of Mythology in *Heavy Metal*, the differences and connections between the Northern and Mediterranean mythologies, the example of two bands (METALIUM and RHAPSODY) and finally the treatment of Mythology in American bands.

What is *Heavy Metal*? It is a musical style constituted by a sonorous code and also by visual characteristics. The essence of *Heavy Metal* is the music itself. It means that the most important aspect for the bands and for their audience is the music, that is what you feel when you listen to it. So, although there is a criticism against the society, it is not much evidenced.

The main characteristics of *Heavy Metal* (also called *Metal* at the most recent time) are: power, energy, virtuosity and transgression. Some musicologists and sociologists like Robert Walser, Deena Weinstein or Silvia Martinez have already talked about it. All these features are expressed through the instruments: guitars,



Concert of DORO in Washington D.C., U.S.A. in autumn of 2000 (This picture was kindly given by Nick Douglas)

bass, drums and voice, by the distortion and by the speed (tempo). I have to point out that the keyboards are also very used since the '90s but it is an instrument which does not denote these characteristics as its sound is delicate and it conveys atmospheric sensations. The following picture is a live performance of the German-American band DORO in the moment they transmit all these features.

We can divide the substyles of *Metal* into two branches. The first one is *Classic Metal* which follows more melodic features and the second one is *Extreme Metal* which



follows more rhythmic characteristics. Inside these two branches there are many other subbranches. But we will talk about the treatment of the mythological themes in the branch of *Classic Metal* and its subbranches. Other authors have divided *Metal* in other subbranches. I have done this division following the division of the sociologist Deena Weinstein. She argues that the ramification of *Heavy Metal* was made from a first division in two branches: the first one followed melodic characteristics and the style that defined it was *Lite Metal*. The other one followed rhythmical characteristics and *Trash Metal* was the style that defined it better. As she says in her work *Heavy Metal. The Music and its culture*:

*I will refer to the subgenre that emphasizes the melodic element as "lite metal". This term indicates the removal of the thick bottom sound of traditional heavy metal. Lite metal has also been referred to as "melodic metal" and "pop metal". (45, 46)*

And also when she says:

*If lite metal results from the latitudinarian movement in metal, speed /trash is its fundamentalism strain. Its dominant departure from heavy metal is an increase in tempo. (48)*

Some substyles of *Extreme Metal* adapt two forms of literary expressions basically through its lyrics: the lyric and the epic poetry. Both have their origins in the Ancient Greece. Aristotle established the division between these two literary genres besides a third genre: the drama. But following the point of view of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche who relates the epic with its relationship with the Apollonian and the lyric in relation with the Dionysian I have established this dichotomy in connexion with *Metal*. The lyric is directly related to the inner world of the author and it communicates his own state of mind. Passions, feelings and emotions are its foundations. The epic poetry relates heroic facts by an extrinsic form of the poet. The Homeric poetry, concretely the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, is a good example in the Mediterranean world. In the Northern countries there are very important works as the *Chant of the Nibelungs*, *Beowulf* or the *Elder Edda*. Generally, the epic poetry relates real facts reinforced by the tradition with legendary and fantastic facts where the divinity is very important. After seeing the difference between lyric and epic poetry I can assert that *Metal* bands that use Mythology and Fantasy in their lyrics express it from epic poetry.

The sources for Mythology in *Heavy Metal* are the Enlightenment and the Romanticism as they recover Mythology through Art and Literature. As Maite Solana who is specialist in Classical tradition of the XVIII century says:

*with the triumph of the romantic spirit emerged to the light myths rooted to the Middle Age, to the Christian tradition or to the Eastern cultures. This way there was a resurgence and a appropriation of determinate figures of the classical mythology which would have a persistent presence in Literature and on the aesthetic ideas. (Bonney 33)*

As Romanticism, Heavy Metal finds in Greek Myths a vehicle to express the actual human condition. It takes these heroic and vital images to transmit the desire of breaking-off with the corrupted world we are living in. With the Enlightenment, the sense of the myth changes. It has no more the sense of the immanent reality and the unequivocal veracity of the first breaths of the creation of our Greek ancestors, for being a recreation of the past times. Maite Solana explains it when she says:

*Towards the last third of the century it is perceptible the interest that arouses among the writers a heroic and idealized Middle Age surrounded by the darkness that the Enlightenment had looked down on. This new interest is partially related to the claim of a modest and natural life in front of the corruption of the modern society. (Bonney 41)*

In the same way that mythology has been interpreted in different ways through time, *Heavy Metal* also does

an interpretation. Totally separated from the sense that Ancient Greeks and other later historic and cultural moments have wanted to give it, *Heavy Metal* takes myths with the symbolic purpose to transmit the power, vitality and energy that emanate from the own music. I think that the Ancient Greeks also had the intention to transmit these three concepts, but they did it under a subliminal background in answer to the forces of creation and life. *Heavy Metal* doesn't have this sense. It is far away from the hope to give answer to the question of the origins. Its intentionality is related to the context of the reality where it lives, in a world dominated by the human inequalities ruled by who yearn for the power and the submission of the people, by those who destroy the circle of the Nature and favour the own extinction of the human race.

Through the power of the images related with mythology as for example the magnificence of the warriors conceived as gods, we perceive the energy that *Heavy Metal* conceives as a vital and positive energy in relationship with our own inner fight. This way, we can see that it is a vital music and not a violent music, as a part of catholic entities has tried to demonstrate many times. The recreation that *Heavy Metal* does of the mythic aspects does not have the character of the myths of the first times. As I have explained before, the character of

the myth changes through history. In the case of *Heavy Metal*, as other forms of artistic and literary expressions, the myth is used as a way to transcend the own historic time. This idea is very well perceived when Mircea Eliade says in his work *Aspectos del Mito (Aspects of the myth)*:

*The novel doesn't have access to the paramount time of myths, but in the extent that it relates a realistic history, the narrator uses a time (apparently historic) and, nevertheless, condensed and dilated, a time that has all freedoms of the imaginary worlds.*

*In literature it is suggested a rebellion against the historical time, the desire to access other temporal rhythms in which we are not necessarily obliged live and work. (163)*

*Heavy Metal* uses the mythic elements in the same sense that literature does, according to Mircea Eliade. It transcends the historic and real time and travels to imaginary worlds. Precisely, its sources of inspiration are the literary and fantastic works and in another level, comics and movies.

Far away from the rationalism and near the passions, *Heavy Metal* approaches to the essence of the Greek thought and to the classical world that arrived at the

Western Europe through Christianity although it does not share the same ideas.

It is difficult to assert the existence of a differentiation on the treatment of myths in *Metal* at a geographical level without a very thorough study. But from my viewpoint, in Europe there is a proliferation of Northern myths much more intense than the Mediterranean ones, because *Heavy Metal* was born in England and Germany has been and still is a very important focus. Another question is the treatment of the Northern myths in *Metal*. I think that in the case of the mythological German themes they are closely related with the Greek because after the Northern Bronze Age (1500 BC – 400 BC), mainly with the German invasions of the V century and with the expansion of the Christianity, these two peoples had a strong contact with other cultures as the Celtic, the Slavic, the Greek, the Latin and the Christian. That caused an evolution in the own concepts of their myths.

We can perceive a differentiation between the Greek mythology and the Northern mythology since the own land from where they have emerged: Northern myths were born in arid lands. As R. B. Says in *Diccionario de las Mitologías Europeas (Dictionary of the European Mythologies)*,

*German and Northern countries are, more than others, tributaries of a natural hard substratum that never, even today, have given facility to the human existence. By general rule, the ground is rough, rocky, dry, worked on the ice and polished by the glacial; the winter nights turn to be never-ending and conducive to all kinds of treasures; the water (of the seas, of the lakes, of the rivers, of the swamps) is omnipresent and hostile, imposes their dangers and makes all distances complicated; at last, the sun, essential but miserly of its beneficial effects, has all the properties of the power for excellence. Rocks, water, sun: these are the principles. (Bonnefoy, 174)*

Starting from this context, Germans conceive the ash tree called Yggdrasill, arisen among the rocks, as a mediator between the principles and source of life that connects with the gods, keeping the order of the world. Northern mythology, differently to the Greco-Roman, is developed under a logic plot. The foundations of its myths are related in the *Elder Edda* and due to the arrival of the Christianity they could not be completely developed.

The principles of *Heavy Metal* are connected with Northern mythology because they share the idea of fight, a fight for life, and the cult to the energy. The idea of the destiny as a force subjecting the reality and impossible

to avoid. But it is original of Greece and it appears under the personification of Zeus.

Mediterranean heavy metal bands and Northern heavy metal bands share their elements. For example, the Italian *symphonic power metal* band RHAPSODY (as a



Cover of the record *Symphony of Enchanted Lands II - The Dark Secret* by the band RHAPSODY

Mediterranean band) which was founded in 1993 uses Northern elements as fight, warriors and heroes. The influence of the literary work *The Lord of the Rings* by the English writer J.R.R. Tolkien is also manifested on the covers of their records. We can see it for example in the cover of *Symphony of the Enchanted Lands II – The Dark Secret* through its landscape: the dragon flying in the sky, the mountains, the castle and the waterfalls on the top... which evokes atmospheric sensations.

But they also use Mediterranean elements taken from Greek mythology and from the Bible such as unicorns, gargoyles, the devil and the fallen Angels; and they include Latin and Italian language on their lyrics. We can see it through the song *Agony is My Name* from their work *Power of the Dragon Flame*:

The German band METALIUM, founded in 1999, (as an example of a Northern band) as many other Northern bands, uses especially Northern elements as fight, warriors and power. Its music is stronger and their purpose is to fight for *Heavy Metal* as for them it means the same as life. Here there is a Northern treatment on the idea of fight that contrasts with the passionate features of the Mediterranean mythology. The Destiny which is very used in their works is a Greek element (fire, air, water and earth). Finally METALIUM conceive *Heavy Metal* as a song to the gods which we can relate to the Greek tragedy. It is interesting the contrast between the treatment of the covers as they are more powerful in accordance to their music (not so atmospheric as RHAPSODY but more energetic and stronger) with the idea of transmitting their message. One of the covers that represent it better is *Hero Nation-Chapter three* on which we can see a Greek character, Atlas, holding the world. The drawing is also made with sharper lines giving more consistency. This image also reflects the essence of the message of the band as it is powerful and energetic. The Hero called

### **Agony Is My Name**

One for the pain and two for my name  
Three for my wonderful kingdom  
Four for my king, five for my queen  
Six for the fall of my wisdom...  
Earth's calling me!

VITA, MORTE, GLORIA, ONORE...  
Airin, Arwald, Tharos in my painful dreams

Horror and death crossing my way  
Paint all the unreal landscape  
Villages burn, the black fire runs...  
Runs through the heart of the forest...  
Killing my trees!

VITA, MORTE, GLORIA, ONORE...  
Spazio e tempo plays the rhythms of human lies!

ALGALORD'S CALLING FOR HOLY REVENGE  
THE RAGE OF THE HEROES IN MY HANDS  
THE FURY WILL RISE AND SOON  
THEY WILL TASTE MY SILVER BLADE  
AND THEY WILL FACE THE PROPHECY  
'CAUSE AGONY IS... MY NAME!

Black is the rose that's now in my hand



Black for the blood of the fallen  
 Symbol of death will soon be reborn  
 Into the life of my tears' fall...  
 Reborn and grow!



Cover of record *Hero Nation – Chapter three* from the band METALIUM

Metalian is the main character of the conceptual story and I think it is related to Atlas. The world, in this case, I think we can link it with the world of *Heavy Metal*. Then, we can perceive the intention of METALIUM just looking at the cover: the triumph of *Metalian* (who also represents all fans of the band) and of *Heavy Metal*.

We also can perceive these characteristics that define METALIUM through the lyric and the sound of the song *Erania* which appears on their release *State of Triumph-Chapter two*:

### Erania

Land spit by rivers,  
 Storm rises fast  
 Rain whipped by winds  
 Thunder it blasts  
 Rocks, like giants of doom  
 Dangerous figures  
 Blazed by the moon

Apocalyptic scenery forms  
 To weaken my courage  
 And scare me by dawn  
 See my objective ahead  
 There lies the cavern

Sent here  
 By the gods in my visions

(Goddess of the fire)  
 You shall be the one,  
 You will carry on

Soon I'll reach for Erania  
 Endows me with sight  
 For a triumphant fight

Crawling into through darkness



Fingers for light  
 Inhaling the fragrance,  
 Blackest of night  
 It calls now the ground  
 Starts to shake  
 A rift opens up, I take

Erania  
 Cristal of animus  
 (Goddess of the fire)  
 You shall be the one  
 You will carry on

Erania  
 Will protect and guide me  
 Endows me with sight  
 For a triumphant fight

(Goddess of the fire)  
 For centuries  
 Our kind's been waiting  
 For the force to come  
 The first of four tasks  
 Is completed  
 By the godly son  
 He will lead all Metalians  
 Through the Circle of Fate

To be the emperor  
 Of the kingdom  
 Our triumphant state

Mythology is not so used in the American bands as in the European ones. The main themes of *Metal* in America (pointing out that the main American country where *Metal* is more important is the US) are society and sex, and there is a more direct criticism. Some of the most representative American bands are: MÖTLEY CRÜE, L.A. GUNS, KISS or ALICE COOPER. But some American bands like VIRGIN STEELE or SYMPHONY X take mythological themes from the European mythology. The way through which it arrived at America is the Fantastic Literature, especially *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R.Tolkien and it influenced the music of the 70's although only for a short time.

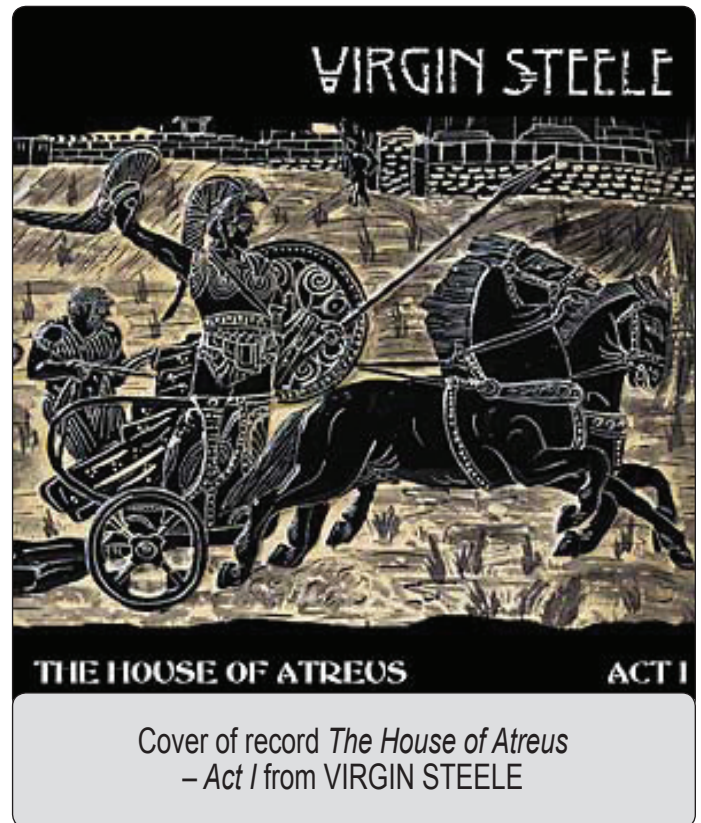
The main releases of VIRGIN STEELE that make a reinterpretation of the Greek tragedy the *Oresteia* written by Aeschylus in 458 BC are: *The House of Atreus – Act I* and *The House of Atreus – Act II*. Their music is defined by themselves on their website in the following way:

*As we approach the new millennium, we see our goal to be a union, a convergence of various Forms into one. Music, be it ROCK based, CLASSICAL based or whatever, Poetry, Theatre, Painting,*

*Sculpture and Film can and will be moulded,  
blended and reborn in new and exciting shapes  
which enrich our World, galvanize our emotions,  
open our senses, our hearts, our minds to  
Spheres, Plains, Oceans of unlimited possibilities  
through which we may see our Universe and  
our relationship so it in a new different Light! To  
truly live, to drink the new Wine, to bathe in new  
Waters strange and beautiful, to embrace what  
was lost and what may be found, this is the Spirit  
which drives our passion ever onward !*

The *Oresteia* is divided into three parts: *Agamemnon*, the *Coëfores*, and the *Euménides*; and it is about the tragedy of the house of Atreus after the war of Troy. The cd-cover of *The House of Atreus – Act I* expresses it through its elements: the king Agamemnon on top of the tank with the horses pulling it and with the lance and the shield ready for fighting the Trojans. And it is interesting how much the drawing resembles the Ancient Greek sculptural relieves.

Musically the songs of VIRGIN STEELE also reflect the solemnity and the majesty characteristic of the Classical World, which we can perceive in the concept of their releases. A song that exemplifies it very well is *Return of the King* from the CD *The House of Atreus – Act I*:



### Return of the King

ELDERS:

Return of the Hero, our Conquering king  
Agamemnon our Lord, you'll know here in time  
If fortune in War guarantees the will of the Crowd  
As is not well there is Evil in your House tonight

ELEKTRA & ELDERS:

Beware thy Name, Black Stars  
Fall, Forces Rising, time  
You were gone

ELDERS:

The Conqueror of Troy wields the

Power the Gods have  
designed

Shedding his Daughter's Red Blood for one Wanton  
Bride

A Dowry of Death, Artemis waits by your side  
Glory too high is a Dangerous Gift from the Gods

ELEKTRA & ELDERS:

Beware thy Queen, Black Stars fall, Voices Rising, time  
You were gone

KLYTEMNESTRA & ELDERS:

Lord of the Desert, we welcome him home  
The Lion of Vengeance, the Death of Priam  
Fire on the Wind, Fire in the Sky  
Raping Black Harvests of Blood, til the End of the  
Dawn

ELEKTRA:

Beware thy Queen, Black Stars fall, Force is Rising,  
Time we were gone !

ELDERS & ELEKTRA:

Lord of the Desert, the Hour's at hand  
The Black Cloak of Evil, the Next of the Damned  
Fire on the Wind, Fire in the Sky  
Raping the Heart of the Sun, til the End of the... Dawn

I would like to conclude asserting that both Mediterranean and Northern *Heavy Metal* bands share their elements. I think that *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R.Tolkien is an essential work for the treatment of mythological and fantastic elements in *Heavy Metal*, and it is also very important for the arrival of Mythology in America. It is also very important to state that the principles of *Heavy Metal* are connected with Northern Mythology because they share the idea of fight, a fight for life, and the cult to the energy.

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## Instrumentality, or Why do some songs have no words?

Lutgard Mutsaers

### Introduction

Contemplating today's theme of 'Voicing Meaning', my initial action was to try and find a song about the Eternal City of Rome. I found 'The Burning of Rome', a 'march twostep' for piano solo by the American composer Edward Taylor Paull, published in 1903. It came with a detailed explanatory description of the various sections by the composer. He inscribed meaning in a song without lyrical content except for a title, and in doing so left little or no room for imagination and interpretation.

As you can see here [Song sheet music cover], it is about the big fire in Emperor Nero's time, in the year 64, for which he blamed the marginal but upcoming christian community in Rome<sup>1</sup>. The piece is conceived as the soundtrack to several scenes: first a festive chariot race at the Colisseum, then the parade of the victors, the return home of the spectators, the evening song of the christians from their secret worshipping places, then suddenly the big fire breaking out and raging for six days, causing 'terrific crashes' and 'a veritable pandemonium'. Paull described this section in terms of: 'Alarm of Fire', 'People in Consternation', 'People in Panic', 'People

Rushing Through Streets' and 'Fire Fiercely Raging'. The undeniably dynamic piece culminates in a grand finale based on the victor's theme, that, according to its composer, '...is thoroughly in keeping with the spirit, life and enthusiasm of the occasion being described.'<sup>2</sup>

After the recent bombing in peacetime Europe of Madrid and London where the blame was also cast on a passionate minority religious cult operating from within, the fun of pieces like 'The Burning of Rome' subsides, and instead creates an eery feeling. What I gained from this example however was a growing interest in how original instrumental pieces are endowed with meaning – in accordance with a title that usually points in a certain direction –, and how they work when put before an audience. It seemed most instructive to focus on an era in which the song with lyrics had become the rule in mainstream pop chart hits, which can be pinpointed at the year the British Invasion materialized in the US and consecutively, the world, in 1964 (exactly 19 centuries after the Big Fire of Rome).

### Words: why not?

'Why do songs have words?', Simon Frith asked in 1987 in a now famous piece by the same title.<sup>3</sup> His answer



boiled down to: 1) singers need lyrics, and 2) lyricists are entitled to royalties. Needing words for songs is as old as the road to Rome. The organisation of the economic side is a lot younger. Frith quotes from a letter written in 1918 by a top British publisher to a lyricist requesting royalty payment for a popular song that was a bestseller at the time. He wrote to her: '[lyrics] are a big contributing factor to the success of the song. Unfortunately, we cannot afford to pay royalties to lyric writers. [...] If we were to introduce the principle, there would be no end to it.'

<sup>4</sup>

In our time there is no end to it. Successful singer-songwriters and musically creative rappers earn double royalty incomes and live like kings.<sup>5</sup> Some lyricists choose to make a living in the shadows of the artists performing their work. Others compete for the spotlights at the annual Eurovision Song Contest.<sup>6</sup> So far for the economic incentive to develop and professionalize lyrical talents.

The first argument – singers need lyrics – holds three facets that are inseparable in reality but can be studied separately: 1) the words and their 'meaning'; 2) the sound of a singer's voice; and 3) the way singers perform the words of their songs. We can, as a result, discuss in qualitative terms what lyrics do for songs through singers and vice versa.<sup>7</sup> But what if there are no words, no singers? Are there substitutes for words and singers to turn lyricless pop tunes into hits?

Much has been written about a pop singer's voice being a highly characteristic instrument, an irreplaceable individual expressive medium, something there is no hiding behind. We also know how and when the singer became the focal point of popular music culture in the United States.<sup>8</sup> The pursuit of popularity is successfully undertaken by singers mostly. It is difficult to name more than one post-WW2 instrumentalist-only as a pop star of world fame, dead or alive. The only alternative non-singing pop star role is the DJ, whose artistic identity remains debatable.

In the middle of an ocean of hit songs with words, those without, better known as instrumentals, automatically stand out. Is it because they lack something, or because they have a special ingredient? Paraphrasing Frith, the question is: Why do some songs have no words? What kind of mentality is instrumentality in the age of predominantly vocal pop in the singles charts?

### **Authoritative sources on instrumentality**

Encyclopedias of pop and rock more often than not just ignore the instrumental as such, but not so the British Encyclopedia of Rock by Phil Hardy and Dave Laing (of IASPM fame) published in 1988. They classify instrumentals in two categories: 1) dance tunes, and 2) melodic and mood pieces. 'Instrumental hits', they wrote, 'have generally been confined to either those hardy perennials, film themes, or straight novelty numbers'

after the British beat boom of the mid-sixties.<sup>9</sup>

This historical demarcation line was already established in The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll published in 1976. In his chapter 'Instrumental groups' Greg Shaw called the (white) westcoast surf sound of 1961-63 'the last hurrah for instrumental rock as a popular genre'.<sup>10</sup> In black popular music however, as early as 1957 a switch took place towards becoming, according to Shaw, 'almost purely vocal as far as recording was concerned.' The rhythm and blues dance bands with saxophone and organ players as lead instrumentalists, towards the end of the 1950s gave way to the electric guitar based sound. Johnny and the Hurricanes and The Ventures in the US, with their British counterparts The Shadows and The Tornados, set the tone.<sup>11</sup> Shaw characterized instrumental rock hits as: 'usually built on a simple riff, a catchy melody or some piece of electronic gimmickry. They're novelty records.' Last but not least, Shaw recognized the fact that in non-English speaking territories tuned into mainstream pop/rock, instrumentals were more likely to be 'elevated to a level of importance never matched in the US.'

Charles Hamm in his book *Yesterdays, Popular Song in America* (1979) a priori excludes from his discourse the genres that are instrumental by design.<sup>12</sup> From his perspective as a musicologist, he calls the film theme music of 'Exodus', the US *Cash Box* number one hit of 1961, 'not even a song'.<sup>13</sup> Consequently he does

not dwell on the 'last hurrah for instrumental rock as a popular genre' (Shaw). Audiences however may well have experienced these pieces as 'songs'. Seamlessly, instrumental surf tunes turned into 'real' songs when the formidable Beach Boys hijacked the genre taking popular song into unprecedented heights of respectability.

### **Instrumentals after 1964**

British Beat was also about vocals, but certainly did not kill the instrumental. At least for a while the instrumental hit thrived in the new context. 1968 was a top year in terms of musical variety. 'Classical Gas' by Mason Williams won a Grammy Award, and the contrasts could not have been bigger between André Popp's 'Love Is Blue' by the orchestra of the Frenchman Paul Mauriat, 'Soul Limbo' by Stax studio band Booker T and the MG's and 'Camp' by the Danish pop group Sir Henry and his Butlers. 'Albatross' by Fleetwood Mac (1969), 'Popcorn' by Hot Butter and the Grammy winning 'Outa-Space' by Billy Preston in 1972, 'Love's Theme' by the Love Unlimited Orchestra (1973) and 'Pick Up The Pieces' by Scottish act Average White Band (1974) all hit the highest regions of the charts, while instrumentalists with a mission found new territories in album based progressive rock and jazz rock.

Remarkably, the disco craze in the 1970s with its overproduction of functional dance records for the discotheque market, did not bring back the strictly

instrumental pop hit as a genre. Instead, a new danceable hit song type invaded the charts: hybrids with long instrumental intros and breaks and vocalists blending in the instrumental soundscape with sparse instructions, exhortations and elementary choruses. The Philadelphia Sound set the tone, with its studio band MFSB, catapulting the almost completely instrumental 'TSOP' to the top hit regions in 1973. Two years later, 'Do The Hustle' by Van McCoy and his Soul City Symphony decisively broke the new format into the mainstream. By that time, continental Europe was beginning to become a serious player in the pop field. Especially Western-Germany was a hotbed for electronic experiments at the Kling Klang studios of Kraftwerk in Düsseldorf and Giorgio Moroder's studio in Munich. Electronic beats and sounds and ever more prominent basslines increasingly competed with vocal parts.

Again, the instrumental hit did not subside altogether, nor did its variety. The 1980s brought the mood piece 'Aurora' by the synthesizer trio Nova (1982), the sharp sounding 'Rockit' by Herbie Hancock (1983) accompanied by a futuristic video, the film theme of *Beverly Hills Cop* (1984) 'Axel F' by Harold Faltermeyer in 1985 (in 2005 revived as 'Crazy Frog Axel F', the first ringtone download number 1 hit in the UK), and the latin dance number 'Lambada' by Kaoma in 1989. Techno/house dance music used the same strategy of maximum effective limited vocality for a place in the international

pop charts. 2 Unlimited was symbolically instrumental in pushing this type of dance song.

### **Instrumentality**

In the strict sense of the word, 'instrumental' in a musical context refers to a piece for or by musical instruments only. In the English language, the notions 'instrumental' and 'instrumentality' transcend this musical meaning.<sup>14</sup> Instrumentality refers to the state or quality of being instrumental for some purpose; a means, an agency; a subsidiary branch, by means of which functions or policies are carried out. These qualifications point at intentionality, not accidentality.

The quality of instrumentals lies in their musical syntax and production. Beat and sound are the ingredients of pop that can create novelty sensations, more so than melodies and harmonies, let alone form. A particular rhythm combined with a specific sound can work as a hook (e.g. the cowbell riff of 'Soul Limbo'), an ingredient that works as a powerful drug. In 'Soul Finger' (1967) by the Bar-Kays the noises of a participating cheerful audience are integrated in the piece; the voices repeatedly shout the title 'Soul Finger', which works as a hook and at the same time is commercially clever. 'Pick up the Pieces' (Average White Band 1974) used the same tactic.

Instrumental pieces can be a means for performers to impress, a vehicle for virtuosity or pastiche. 'Il Silenzio'

by Nino Rosso (1965) featured the trumpet, 'Classical Gas' by Mason Williams (1968) the acoustic guitar, and Vanessa-Mae's hit version of J. S. Bach's 'Tocatta and Fugue' of 1995 brought the violin (back) to the singles pop charts. 'Doop' by Doop (1993) featured a Benny Goodman soundalike clarinet hook over a housed-up charleston beat. Instrumentals can also work as an agency for the promotion of unusual, possibly annoying sounds, such as 'The Birdie Song' ('Vogeltjesdans' 1980 by De Electronica's; by The Tweeties in UK 1981) with its schmalzy aura, or 'Poing' (1992) by Rotterdam Termination Source featuring the digitalized sound of a tennis ball.

As a subsidiary branch of popular song, instrumentals not only familiarize beats and sounds, but also promote the instruments that produce them, such as the bass guitar, the drum computer and the synthesizer, or gadgets such as the electronic hand clap device. The instrument of rock instruments, the electric guitar, apart from its function as a rhythm and harmony instrument, was also explored as a lead melody instrument and as such showed a great range of expressive possibilities, especially when enhanced by electronic devices, such as 'wah-wah' and flanging effects.<sup>15</sup>

This phenomenon of instrumental parts working as vocal parts, except for precise linguistic meaning (diminished considerably since rock 'n' roll), in my view is the key to understanding the instrumental hit in the age of songs.

### Talking instruments, playing voices

Using the musical instrument as a voice, and vice versa, the voice as a musical instrument, is a concept developed by jazz and blues musicians, ignoring or purposely digressing from European academic ideals while personalizing their craft into a unique and, once heard, immediately recognizable sound. Leading artists in this field were African-Americans; some were instrumentalists and vocalists in their own right (e.g. Louis Armstrong). African retentions in American popular music account for the dominance of prominent beats and dance rhythms that find their expression in voices as well as musical instruments.

Instrumentality in the strict musical sense therefore is not an issue really in popular music that has stayed close to African-American aesthetics.<sup>16</sup> It is (more of ) an issue in music from other sources and localities. Therefore, the instrumental pop hit is best studied and understood in its entire context, historically, geographically and musically. This also goes for its element of so-called novelty or new-ness. The popular music historian, always alert to source-based complexities in underpinning theoretical simplifications, must also take into account that a monster hit poses an extra problem. This can be clarified with a wellknown quote from Goethe: 'Alles was eine grosse Wirkung getan hat, kann eigentlich gar nicht mehr beurteilt werden' ('Everything that has had

a major impact, really cannot be judged anymore').<sup>17</sup> A number one hit is, within the context of popular music, the equivalent of something that has had a major impact. 'Crazy Frog Axel F' (2005), the first ringtone-download to become number one in the British pop charts, is the most recent example that comes to mind.

## Conclusion

Coming back now to E. T. Paull's instrumental 'The Burning of Rome'. E. T. Paull's sheet music pieces, of which he published around 400 from 1893 onwards, are nowadays veritable collector's items, not because of their musical content but because of their cover art work illustrating his spectacular titles taken from ancient and American history. The lithographic technique of color layering resulted in extraordinary bright and powerful images. This way Paull wanted to grab the potential pianist or listener's attention before they even heard the piece. His oeuvre is not issued on record, but the website promises the recording of most of Paull's compositions, in spite of their being 'predictable' and 'limited in scope'.<sup>18</sup> So now is an excellent time, I'd say.

An interactive moment to end this presentation with. [Sheet of photograph of beautiful blood red sunset] This picture was taken on January 26, 2005, at 5.35 in the afternoon, at 0 degrees Celsius. It is a view on the Dutch city of Utrecht – in the middle you can spot the tower of its cathedral –, from a safe distance. Imagine

this will be the cover of an instrumental piece by a local composer. What would you suggest for a title? [IASPM-chorus: 'The burning of Utrecht'?!]. Thank you.

## Acknowledgements

After this paper a lengthy discussion followed; among other things it brought to light that the definition of 'charted hit song' – so necessary for the sake of argument within this particular subject – easily escapes people's attention, perhaps willfully, as a majority of IASPM based researchers perhaps tend to favor research into less commercial areas of popular music production. So complete instrumental genres that never were hit genres in the sense and timeframe I defined to start with, were passionately thrown into the heated discussion. Also the European perspective not necessarily coincides with a 'dominant' view developed by US authors and/or researchers. At over 40 degrees in a stuffy Sapienza room at the end of a long day, it was some challenge. In the extended version I will integrate the useful suggestions received at this unique occasion. Special thanks to Christopher Ballantine, Rob Bowman and Dale Cockrell for a lively and engaging discussion.

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1. Emperor Nero (37-68) was the inventor of the ancient version of the 'Idols' competition in which he participated himself. He is immortalized in the Christian faith as the first Antichrist. His last words before committing suicide were: 'Qualis artifex pereo' ('What an artist the world

loses in me'). Source: <http://www.roman-empire.net/emperors/nero-index.html>.

2. <http://www.perfessorbill.com/lyrics/lybmrme.htm>

3. Simon Frith (1987) 'Why do songs have words?' in: Avron Levine White ed. (1987) *Lost in Music - Culture, Style and the Musical Event*, p. 77-106. Reprinted in: Simon Frith (ed) (2004) *Popular Music. Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (Oxford University Press), Vol. III, *Popular Music Analysis*, part C, chapter 50, p. 186-212.

4. Frith (1987), p. 77.

5. The hiphop and metal rock world capitalized on the power of lyrical content since the introduction in 1985 of the PMRC 'Parental Guidance – Explicit Lyrics' sticker.

6. ESC since 1956 awards composers and lyricists, not performers.

7. The work of Barbara Bradby stands out in this respect.

8. Reebee Garofalo in his book *Rockin' Out. Popular Music in the USA* (1997; Third Edition: Upper Saddle River NJ: Pearson, Prentice Hall 2004) explains the rise of the vocalist as the centerpiece of pop in the



1940s as a combination of factors, such as technology (microphone and amplification) and the musicians' union strikes in radio that did not include singers. Interestingly, the vocalist as a live performer rose within dance music culture of the swing craze age. The increasing importance of visual mass culture that had begun with film and was established with television, positioned the singing performer firmly on top of the pop pyramid. Music television and video consolidated the phenomenon.

9. Phil Hardy, Dave Laing (1988) *Encyclopedia of Rock* (New York: Schirmer Books, Mac Millan Inc.), p. 226.

10. Greg Shaw (1976) 'Instrumental groups' in: Jim Miller (ed) (1976) *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll* (New York: Rolling Stone Press), p. 104-108. All quotes in this paragraph are from this chapter. Discography 1956-1965 included.

11. All are white bands. Johnny and the Hurricanes had two major instrumental hits in 1959. The band is still working and in 2005 can be booked via its founding member Johnny Paris at [johnnyparis@johnnyandthehurricanes.com](mailto:johnnyparis@johnnyandthehurricanes.com). Their site: <http://www.johnnyandthehurricanes.com>. The Ventures are also still active <http://www.theventures.com>). The Shadows issued their DVD *The Final Tour* in 2004. The Tornados have disappeared from (my) view.

12. Charles Hamm (1979) *Yesterdays. Popular Song in America* (Norton/Norton paperback 1983), p. XVIII.

13. Charles Hamm (1979) *Yesterdays. Popular Song in America* (Norton/Norton paperback 1983), p. 417.

14. In the Dutch language, 'instrumentaal' means 'with musical instruments only' and 'instrumenteel' covers the rest of the meanings of the term 'instrumental'.

15. Steve Waksman (1999) *Instruments of Desire. The Electric Guitar and the Shaping of Musical Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press)

16. Timothy J. Dowd, with Maureen Blyler (2002) 'Charting race: the success of Black performers in the mainstream recording market, 1940 to 1990' in: *Poetics* 30, p. 87-110

17. Quoted in: Walter Benjamin (1963) *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technische Reproduzierbarkeit. Drei Studien zur Kunstsoziologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1963; 3. Auflage 1969), in the chapter 'Eduard Fuchs, der Sammler und der Historiker', p. 99; originally published in: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 6, 1937.

18. <<http://www.perfessorbill.com/pbmidi4.shtml>>. E.T. Paull collector Wayland Bunnell: [wtarrytown@aol.com](mailto:wtarrytown@aol.com).

## Zen in the Art of Sound Engineering

Carlo A. Nardi

### Introduction

If we consider the centrality in recording studios of music-production tools with a graphic interface (sequencers, virtual instruments, plug-ins, etc.), it seems hard to believe that most sound engineers still accomplish their tasks mainly by means of a thorough refinement of hearing. With this paper I intend to present a kind of practice in the recording studio which falsifies certain diffused statements about both technology and sensing.

More precisely, I will show that studio equipment, rather than merely substituting for human functions, engages the user in a mediated activity which requires a special training of the senses. Moreover I will contrast reductionist definitions of technique, which on their turn are often based on determinist, procedural and sight-centred interpretations of technology.

It is especially important to avoid the occurrence that verbal language would impose its own structuring schemes on musical practices. More in general, an exclusive focus on the written word and mathematical language, with regard to the definition, storing, codification and expression of knowledge, would lead to

*Techniques of listening articulated listening to reason and rationality [...]; listening became a discrete skill (Jonathan Sterne, The Audible Past)*

*Just as one uses a burning candle to light others with, so the teacher transfers the spirit of the right art from heart to heart, that it may be illumined (Eugen Herrigel, Zen in der Kunst des Bogenschiessens)*

*The essential nature of the rock experience does not consist of decoding the music as a structure of meaning but rather in being able to place one's own significance on the sensuous experience which it provides. Thus music is performed according to an aesthetic of sensuousness" (Peter Wicke, Rockmusik: zur Ästhetik und Soziologie eines Massenmediums)*

Hearing	Seeing
Spherical	Directional
Immerses its subject	Offers a perspective
Sound comes to us	Vision travels to its object
Interiors	Surfaces
Physical contact with the outside world	Distance from the outside world
Inside the event	Perspective of the event
Subjectivity	Objectivity
Into the living world	Toward atrophy and death
Affect	Intellect
Temporal sense	Spatial sense
Immersion in the world	Removing from the world
(Sterne 15)	

a hypertrophy of abstractive competence. Concerning this, many authors – among the others, David Howes and Constance Classen [1] – advocate the acknowledgement of the “multiple ways in which culture mediates sensation (and sensation mediates culture)” (Howes, *Empire of the Senses* ix), in order to “recover a full-bodied understanding of culture and experience” (*ib.* 1). In fact every kind of knowledge, even the more abstract, can’t be learnt out of the senses.

This said, extending Marcel Mauss pioneer conceptualization, a technique can be defined as a more or less codified complex of rules and procedures, which is accepted by a community and which is transmitted or transmissible through training; a technique is aimed at performing a determined and recurrent intellectual and/or physical activity.

Needless to say, the functioning of the human sensorium is not determined once for all. Nevertheless, “the history of the senses has been, essentially, the history of their objectification” (Mazzio 159). In particular, it is believed that seeing is analytical and reflective and needs distancing, while hearing is synthetic and immediate, merging the subject with the environment. However, the traits of this dichotomy are representative of Western ideological beliefs about the sensorium; this means that what Jonathan Sterne calls “audiovisual litany” symbolizes the mainstream discourse on our sensorial abilities, but doesn’t explain their practices:

### Practice of theory

Now I will illustrate how sound engineering reveals the

biases implied by this dichotomization, drawing from a field research I conducted in various recording studios in Italy and Germany. In particular, the juxtaposition of Zen and sound engineering was suggested during a visit at Calyx Mastering studio, where Zen is habitually practised [2]. At first I thought it was simply a curious detail; then I realized that the association was all but a coincidence.

Immersed in the quietness of Viktoria Park in Kreuzberg, Berlin, Calyx is quite popular in and out of Germany, having developed masters for Tosca, Jazzanova, Nuspirit Helsinki and others. The studio is run by Bo Kondren, known in German electronic music community as 'das Ohr', the Ear. Notwithstanding this fame, he and his assistant Henner Gerdes have been so kind to book three hours of their service for a very reasonable fee, and most of all to explain me meticulously all the phases that lead from a mix to a master [3].

In order to develop what I call, inverting Bourdieu's idea, a 'practice of theory', the mastering process at Calyx concerned the mix of a song of mine [4]. My aim was to take part in the process, not just as a researcher but also with an active role in music-making; furthermore I could rely on a high familiarity with the musical material thus manipulated. Only this way I could expect to get an internal understanding of a process which cannot be grasped by mere verbal reflection or by classic visual observation.

### Hearing perspectives

Starting from a conception in which senses and their interaction are culturally constructed, hearing itself is less a residue of a stereotyped oral culture, therefore implying immediacy and involvement, than a real aural perspective: techniques based on hearing allow instead a detachment between the hearing subject and the object heard, assuring judgments based on a method that resembles that of natural sciences. Talking about aural perspectives means placing the hearing person in a certain, calculated position of both symbolic and physical distance from the sounding objects, and within the resounding environment. Paraphrasing *Longman Dictionary's* definition of the term 'perspective', from this detached positioning the subject is able to "judge in a sensible way", "compare situations", supply the perception of sound with "distance and depth", construct her own knowledge according to the way hearing is structured. The aim is reaching an objective point of 'view' through the application of determined techniques of hearing, in a way that, in a mediated setting, can be traced back to the employ of such devices as the telegraph, the stethoscope and even the phonograph, whose use entailed the development of a capacity to discriminate between a signal and background noise.

One premise of this approach, sustained by the objectification provided by recording, is to take sound

apart into its meaningful constituents and treat them individually, in a sort of musical chemistry: sonic items are parcelled, disassembled, analysed, measured and subsequently reassembled during multi-tracking, sampling, looping, and so on.

For instance, dynamic equalizing is accomplished by means of sweeping through the frequency spectrum with a notch filter and emphasising frequencies until a disturbing resonance is found; subsequently, some gain is cut from that region. Then it is suggested to test whether the manipulation has improved the musical program or not, by means of by-passing the equalizer. In general, it is about controlling some parameters while changing others, in order to check the consequences of the intervention. Here we recognize the same procedure conducted in a scientific laboratory, with experimental and control variables. If the elaborate metering of the graphic interface portrays an instrument of precise and scientific measurement, techniques like that of dynamic equalizing provide what I call an *aural evidence* - that is, another instance of the scientific method applied to music production.

Then we should consider those techniques which guarantee a necessary detachment from both the characteristics of the sound system (speakers, amplifier, sound card, etc.) and those of the environment (walls reflections, etc.). In fact the latter is a medium in itself:

the sound engineer needs to carry out determined artifices in order to filter the environmental 'intrusion' out of sound, or to control it effectively, by means of the application of techniques of hearing and a proper setting of the environment. At any rate, this result can be obtained only through a process of abstraction, as it is hard to imagine sound out of place.

Summing up, it seems that sound engineers place more reliance on their hearing than on their sight. Of course, this is an educated faculty of hearing. On the other hand, technology is used mostly in order to isolate different sonic parameters and treat them separately (e.g. intervening on certain frequencies, filtering, etc.); the idea itself of dynamic equalizing, for instance, is based on the presupposed concept, that music can be decomposed into meaningful constituents and recomposed in an improved form.

### **Zen...**

Now I want to point at some aspects of Zen which are relevant for the purposes of this dissertation. Zen is a Buddhist current, founded by Bodhidharma in China in 527 B.C.; in 1191 Ei-Sai introduced it in Japan, where Zen took a diverse and specific character. Even though aim of Zen is surpassing the contrast between the particular and the whole, between the self and the other, this aim can be accomplished only by means

of an attentive and responsive interplay between the senses and the world – a world carefully ‘prepared’, as shown by traditional exercises like archery, tea ceremony, ink painting, theatre, flower arrangement and swordsmanship. In other words, going beyond the deceptiveness of the world doesn’t mean staying away from the senses; rather, it is important that they are put in an appropriate condition:

*“When followers of Zen fail to go beyond a world of their senses and thoughts, all their doings and movements are of no significance. But when the senses and thoughts are annihilated, all the passages to the Mind are blocked and no entrance then becomes possible. The original Mind is to be recognized along with the working of the senses and thoughts, only it does not belong to them, nor is it independent of them” (from Huang-Po’s Sermon, Denshin Hoyo, Treatise On The Essentials. The Transmission Of Mind, in Suzuki 62, Engl. Trans.).*

In Zen the proper state of the body is achieved through a ritual, with a meticulous repetition of actions and a mimetic relationship between the sensing subject and the world [5]. The ritual is a way both to reach and to express a kind of being which verbal knowledge could hardly vehicle. As a matter of fact Zen can be acquired

only through direct experience. This also means that it can’t be taught through, expressed in, reduced into verbal or written language. Dorinne Kondo, about the tea ceremony, writes: “The essence of tea and of Zen is said to elude logical, discursive analysis. Zen favours experience and intuition over intellection, and although the tea ceremony has given rise to a long tradition of scholarly exegesis, the Zen arts continue to emphasize the primacy of transcendence through alogical, non-verbal means” (287). Substance itself is revealed intuitively, which is not the same as by sheer chance: techniques are fundamental, but they must be embodied first, through a severe and long apprenticeship. Hence the practice of Zen gives life to a different and valuable form of knowledge; moreover, there is no need to conceptualize this understanding, let alone before experiencing it (see Herrigel).

### **...and sound engineering**

Back to the recording studio, we can see as the brief sketch of Zen herein traced helps to make sense at least of three features of sound engineering: education through practice, incorporation of automatic techniques and careful setting of the sensory environment [6].

In fact, contrarily to natural sciences, sound engineering is acquired largely through apprenticeship in a studio, also due to the difficulty to express its competences in words. Far from being a reason for discredit, in a world



in which the dominant knowledge is often mediated by the written word, the body techniques thus learnt permit irreducible ways of approaching the world and the body itself.

Certain choices in sound engineering have to be taken immediately, without too much thinking. Still, the detachment from consciousness is valuable only after a thorough training. Once a competence has been introjected, the body can answer automatically to a certain situation. As a consequence, the ability to judge can be reduced by an excess of consciousness [7].

Moreover, in order to work properly, hearing needs to feel at ease, the whole body needs to be alert, attentive, as far as it is placed in an accurately prepared environment. Sound engineering demands to get rid of such deceiving factors, as the mediation of environment and equipment, in order to let hearing achieve its full potential. This includes also setting the right conditions for the body: the instability of hearing is in fact one of the main problems, when attempting to obtain a constancy in judging acoustic events. For instance, listening in repetition to the same piece reveals the instability of hearing, which would eventually bring to a sort of satiety of the latter.

Another aspect of the detachment, implied by assuming a determined hearing technique, occurs when a music-maker places herself into someone else's shoes, that is

when she hears what and how somebody else will hear a piece. Here the term "technique" means that a subject detaches herself from her normal sensorial activity, aiming at matching someone else's modality of making sense of the 'noisy ball' (see Drobnick). For instance, Antoine Hennion has stated in several circumstances that main competence of a record production team is that of being able to represent the audience's way of hearing, for which he mentions a real "dictatorship of the public" (203). Furthermore, we can register that one of the concerns of sound engineers, in particular when working with renowned performers, is comprehending the latter's modality of hearing and being able to reproduce a realistic copy of it on the recorded track. Though this disentanglement from the self is temporarily and often consciously engaged, its way of functioning can be better described as a form of empathic and immediate way of sensing.

## Conclusions

Since I am a chronic Western, I need to find an explanation for the practice of Zen in a recording studio. Assumed that basically the experience of the audience will be synthetic more than analytic, the point is that a musical piece, after having been nearly dissected, must be reconstructed into a meaningful, living whole. Consequently, in order to reach an effective communication with the listener, each fragment, which

formerly has been treated separately, must be considered in rapport with the final product. In order to recompose the dichotomy between analytic music-making and synthetic listening, the music-maker will put into practice determined techniques, whose effects are predictable, and parallelly simulate ways of listening similar to those of the audience. In other words, the analytic approach is not enough, and asks for a complementary disposition that will encourage immediacy over reflection, participation over detachment, synthesis over analyticity.

The metaphor of Zen can thus be interpreted within this cultural framework: being learned through practice and encompassing a particular setting of the sensory environment, it enhances full-bodied ways of being which are commonly neglected in the West, establishing a dialectic relationship with methods derived from natural sciences.

## Endnotes

1) See e.g. Classen, *Worlds of Sense*, *The Color of Angels*; Howes, *The Varieties of Sensory Experience*, *Sensual Relations*.

2) Meeting with Bo Kondren and Henner Gerdes at Calyx Mastering studios, Berlin, Viktoria Park, Kreuzberg, on the 24th of March 2005.

3) I am especially thankful to Claas Brieler of Jazzanova, who introduced me to Bo Kondren. Without his help I would have hardly gotten in touch with anyone at Calyx.

4) For the piece at issue – *Les Jeux Sont Funk*, *Back & Forth (Endlessly)* – I have to mention also singer Sara Picone, who took part in the recording process.

5) About knowledge through mimesis, see Taussig.

6) During our meeting at Calyx, Bo Kondren explained me: “You have to *keep your own cosmos safe*, that’s why I practice Zen and I teach Zen practice to my young engineers, together with some psychological exercises which make you more calm, more attentive, more mindful. *I believe the environment is far more important than the machine, the most important thing is being in*

*a good situation, where you can be at ease and listen properly, being attentive; that's what you can wish for, rather than having the best gear available".*

7) Talking about the use of the stethoscope – a technique of hearing in its own right – Jonathan Sterne asserts that “as a part of the entire procedure, the character of the instrument itself must be erased from consciousness during mediate auscultation” (Sterne 112).

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## Amour, Anxiety and Ambivalence; When the Artist Meets the Audience

Keith Negus

**M**y theme is the relationship between artists and audiences - the links that connect musicians, songwriters, or performers to their fans - and the dynamics and consequences of that relationship. In general terms, I'm interested in linking the study of audiences and their activities more explicitly to the creative practices of musicians. Rather than treating fans as separate or after the musicians and performers (interpreting and appropriating the words, sounds and images), I want to raise questions about how the activity of the public feeds back into or has an impact on the creative process. (Given the time available, this will inevitably be tentative and schematic).

At a basic level, the audience provides recognition. This is visible and audible at live events – we hear the applause, shouting, singing, cheering; we see the dancing, and various bodily responses. The listener recognises the artist by buying the recording, writing letters, sending messages to websites, wearing the T-shirt (recognition is accorded in various symbolic ways). The audience also rewards the artist by paying for concert tickets, purchasing the CD, and a whole lot of merchandise (the musicians make money out of their fans).

As we know fans don't provide recognition and rewards in a rational, instrumental or straightforward manner. Fans invest all kinds of beliefs, assumptions, expectations and fantasies into their appreciation of an artist (as many studies have shown). Ultimately, many fans fall in love with the artist and when they attend concerts they often wish to express that love.

When Michael Jackson was at the peak of his popularity, and playing stadiums, it was common to see members of the audience holding home made banners with the words 'We Love You Michael'. At Smiths concerts many young male fans would shout of their love for Morrissey, jumping on to the stage and embracing him.

But it's not just young fans doing this. At Bob Dylan concerts over recent years I've noticed that a number of people over 50 years old (men and women) will stand up and shout 'We Love you Bob!', 'We Love you Bobby!' (continually, throughout a concert). So, I'm not just referring to youth fan cultures or young people.

I want to show a brief clip to illustrate and extend this theme. This features David Bowie and is taken from a BBC Arena documentary, 'Cracked Actor', (first

broadcast in 1974 and unfortunately not yet officially available). This clip illustrates some of the points made in the literature about fans and stardom. It shows how the star provides an opportunity for fans to realise some aspect of themselves. It shows how fans become integral to the re-affirmation and endurance of the star's identity and persona. In this clip you can get a tangible sense of how the audience impacts on the artist, and how Bowie is quite reflexively aware of the audience. You can visibly see the connection between artist and audience – the performer shaking hands with and kissing members of the audience [at this point a brief edited extract of about 3-4 minutes was shown].

Well, it was Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band who sang: 'You're such a lovely audience, we'd like to take you home with us, we'd love to take you home'. That line was itself a playful comment on a cliché - a play on that moment when the artist expresses their love for the audience from the stage, the performer who tells the crowd 'you've been a wonderful audience'.

It wasn't The Beatles who sang 'you're such a lovely audience'. The Beatles had given up playing live because they couldn't hear their instruments above the screaming of the crowd. It was Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club band singing that, to a cheering audience constructed through recording technology, sampled

from elsewhere and placed on to tape. The Beatles were actually getting away from the fans and in to the studio.

On this point I want to pick up on something Bowie said in the clip I've just shown. Bowie spoke about how sudden recognition made him nervous. He found it difficult to cope with. Fame and the public that it attracts can be very scary - in its extreme form it leads to the tragic death of John Lennon. And, this leads me to a more tense relationship between artist and audience (and its artistic consequences).

I want to illustrate this tension with another clip taken from a documentary about Pink Floyd, 'Behind the Wall', first broadcast by Channel 4 in the UK during 2000. The clip begins with commentators talking about the success of *Dark Side of the Moon* (released in 1973), a phenomenally successful album that brought Pink Floyd an entirely new sort of audience. The clip features members of the band talking about this experience. Here we can get a sense of a disjuncture or rift between the experience of the band and the pleasures of the audience [at this point a short extract of about 4 minutes was shown. This featured band members talking about how the aims of the artist and expectations of audience had diverged, and Roger Waters recounting how we had spat in the face of an audience member clambering



up the front of the stage. His alienation from the partying audience led to the idea of building a wall in front of the stage to symbolically affirm the separation of artist from audience].

This is the audience as a constraint, as a limitation. The audience as something the artist wishes to be distanced from - signified in the building of the wall. For Roger Waters the audience had become 'arseholes'.

Back in the 1970s, the same word (arseholes) was used to refer to his record buyers by Lou Reed, when he suddenly found himself embraced by a large audience of glam rock fans who followed performers such as Bowie and Alice Cooper. It has been claimed that Lou Reed's double album *Metal Machine Music* - 4 sides of white noise derived from guitar feedback - was, at least in part, a provocative attempt to get rid of such fans.

About two years ago, The Coral achieved a lot of sudden public recognition after the release of their second album *Magic and Medicine*. In response, the lead singer James Skelly began to announce in interviews that it might be necessary for the band to get rid of what he called 'the MacDonald's public' - the new fans who had discovered the band and sent their album to No 1 in the UK charts.

This ambivalence and anxiety about sudden recognition, and contempt for a certain type of audience goes back a long way. It's a significant strand within popular music history. Over 60 or 70 years, many rock and jazz musicians have been uncomfortable with the attention that has been paid to them by various audiences, fans and obsessive. They have often reacted by symbolically turning their back on the audience in concert - or putting out material that has wilfully challenged the musical assumptions of record buyers.

As far as I'm aware there is not too much written about this dynamic. In an article first published in the *American Journal of Sociology* in 1951 Howard Becker wrote of the culture of the dance musician, drawing on his experience as a piano player in jazz bands in Chicago during the late 1940s. Eventually published in his book *Outsiders*, he considered how musicians differentiated themselves from the squares. Quote: 'The square is thought of as an ignorant, intolerant person who is to be feared, since he produces the pressures forcing the musician to play inartistically' (Becker, 1966, p89). For Becker the difficulty for the musician was that the squares can get their way because if they don't like the music in a club then they will not return.

The musicians in Becker's study considered themselves hip, and derived amusement from observing the

behaviour of squares. But, they also feared the square, because 'the square is the ultimate source of commercial pressure ... it is the square's ignorance of music that compels the musician to play what he considers bad music in order to be successful' (p90).

Here is a quote from a 1940s jazz musician about the audience:

*Well, if you're working on a commercial band, they like it and so you have to play more corn. If you're working on a good band, then they don't like it, and that's a drag. If you're working on a good band and they like it, then that's a drag too. You hate them anyway, because you know they don't know what it's all about. They're just a big drag (p91).*

As Becker remarked at the time, even the jazz fans that liked the good music were seen as a drag and despised. This is an enduring belief that can be tracked over time – the fans don't understand the musician's experience.

The constraints of a twenty minute presentation now necessitates a jump in time to quote Brian Eno from the mid-1990s. Eno was contacted by a fan and asked if he'd like to participate in an e-mail list discussion of his music. He declined. I'll read just part of his response

(which can be found in Eric Tamm's study of Eno):

*Of course success has many nice payoffs, but one of the disadvantages is that you start to be made to feel responsible for other people's feelings: What I'm always hearing are variations of 'why don't you do more records like - insert any album title' or 'why don't you do more work with - insert any artist's name'? I don't know why, these questions are unanswerable, why is it so important to you, leave me alone ... these are a few of my responses. But the most important reason is 'If I'd followed your advice in the first place I'd never have got anywhere'. I'm afraid to say that admirers can be a tremendous force for conservatism... (in Tamm, 1995, p183-4).*

Eno acknowledged a key tension. He said; 'It's great to be acknowledged ... it makes you feel gratefully connected to your culture ... [but] ... there's a tremendously strong pressure to repeat yourself'.

So, there are sets of tensions here. And, inevitably given twenty minutes I've slightly simplified them. On one side is the fear of having a large audience of people who have no understanding of the musicians' life or their music; the 'Macdonald's public' with its pressure for more of the same, aesthetic repetition - performances to people you

despise. But, some very significant economic benefits and an important form of public recognition. On the other side, are anxieties about losing the audience; following the artistic muse, being innovative, doing something different - but, playing to empty seats, with no record contract and no big house in the country. These are just some of the tensions that continually arise when the audience meets the artist – tensions that can have a direct impact upon the creative decisions taken by musicians.

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# 'Vocal authority?' Perceptions of singing style and singer personality among Irish-based audiences

John O'Flynn

## Introduction

In this paper I explore how individual voices and personalities of singers come to be perceived by domestic audiences in Ireland. Two interrelated sets of data are presented and interpreted. First of all, I report on a national radio poll carried out in 2004 in which listeners were asked to identify who they believed to be the most distinctive male and female voices in Ireland. This is compared with a discussion and analysis of interview transcripts and ethnographic observations that I carried out at selected music events in Ireland between 1999-2001 as part of doctoral research. Before looking at perceptions of singers' voices and personalities I would like to offer some general comments on the production and consumption of music in Ireland. This is to give some idea of the popularity of the singers in question, as well as to locate the reported perceptions of listeners in the wider context of musical consumption at the national level.

## Music in Ireland: Trends in Production and Consumption

Firstly, let us examine the mythological status of

Ireland as a musical island. Looked at globally and in crude monetary terms, Irish-produced music would appear to have substantial economic value relative to the Republic of Ireland's population of less than four million. This is certainly the case if domestic production is measured according to the international market share of some Irish-based artists (1). Given these economic international successes it is perhaps not surprising that Irish popular and traditional music is sometimes included in articulations of national pride. However, a closer examination of quantitative data pertaining to domestic production and consumption reveals a far different picture.

Perhaps the most striking pattern to note from statistical data over several years is the small market share enjoyed by Irish-produced music in the domestic recorded music market. The market share of indigenous products can be seen to be proportionally low *within* Ireland and also by comparison with equivalent data from other countries.

The contradictions implied by this poor performance of indigenous industries compared to the proportionally

**Figure 1: Percentage share of record sales by repertoire in Ireland 1997-2001**

Year	Domestic	International	Classical
1997	28%	67%	5%
1998	26%	69%	5%
1999	27%	71%	2%
2000	26%	72%	2%
2001	22%	78%	

Information provided by Phonographic Performance Ireland (PPI) January 2003.

**Figure 2: Comparison of sales by repertoire between Ireland and a selection of other countries for the year 2001**

Country	Domestic	International	Classical
Ireland	22%	78%	
UK	43%	48%	9%
France	59%	36%	5%
Germany	40%	52%	7%
Japan	76%	24%	
Greece	54%	42%	4%
Denmark	32%	68%	

Information provided by PPI, January 2003.

high success of national-based artists abroad is consistent with the designation of Ireland as the most 'globalised' state in the world (2). It is arguable that 'globalised' in this sense applies as much to issues of cultural identity as it does to the economic domain.

How do these industry statistics compare with chart information? The following general tendencies were

observed in a selection of national chart data from the period 1996-2003: a) international repertoire is dominant; b) Irish popular artists who feature in singles charts are usually also internationally successful (for example, U2, The Corrs, Westlife); c) while domestic artists of all genres generally fare better in album charts than in singles charts (and this is the case with the majority of artists discussed in this paper), international

popular repertoire still dominates both categories (3). Thus, not surprisingly, chart data is generally consistent with the industry statistics presented above. From a positivist perspective, these sets of data and observed tendencies do not say much for any uniqueness and/or diversity of musical tastes in Ireland. In particular, they present a stark contrast between, on the one hand, the celebratory discourse of Irishness and Irish music, and on the other hand, the reality that, proportionally, Irish people consume more international music and less indigenous music than other peoples.

It needs to be stated, however, that charts and music industry statistics present an incomplete picture of musical tastes and music consumption in any nation-state (see Manuel, Malm and Wallis). Even if we limit the discussion to recorded products it should be borne in mind that the sale and purchase (not to mention the illegal copying) of many items falls outside the purview of industry statistics. The actual amount of CDs sold by domestic artists is likely to be underrepresented by statistical data since many transactions take place during discrete events and/or national tours. Additionally, there are several local and genre-specific music scenes that can lead to small-scale CD or cassette industries (Clancy and Twomey)

Additionally, the range of music broadcast on national

and local radio stations suggests a greater diversity in the listening habits of Irish people. Radio listening is one of the primary sites of music consumption in Ireland, with an estimated 88% of the adult population tuning in to national and/or local stations daily (4). However, there is as yet no unequivocal legislation that positively discriminates in favour of domestic-produced music. In this regard, domestic-produced music in Ireland compares unfavourably with that in many other nation-states, for example, the UK and New Zealand (Shuker and Pickering, Cloonan). At the same time, radio play can be considered as an important factor in shaping national imaginings of Irish produced music. It has been argued that influential DJs helped maintain the dominance of rock in domestic popular production and consumption throughout the early 1990s (Clancy and Twomey 38). This continues to be the case with Dave Fanning (for 2FM, the 'popular music' station of the national broadcaster RTÉ) and Tom Dunne (for the national independent Today FM). Irish traditional music is well served by the Irish language *Radio Na Gaeltachta* and to a lesser degree by RTÉ 1, the 'flagship' station of the national broadcaster which offers a mix of news, chat shows and documentaries in addition to music. As we shall see below, RTÉ 1 also plays an agency role in the promotion of popular domestic artists who do not strictly fall into traditional or rock categories.



Another significant development over the past few years has been the production of TV series and compilation disks in various genres of Irish music; while there have been numerous compilations of traditional music from the 1970s onwards, the emergence of such titles as *The History of Irish Pop* and *Tom Dunne's 30 Best Irish Hits* is a fairly recent phenomenon. Interestingly perhaps, Irish TV has in recent years simultaneously promoted the transmission of both mainstream pop/rock and 'alternative' popular music scenes. For the past three years, a 'Popstars' format has been chosen as the means of selecting an Irish entry to the Eurovision Song Contest. Against this perhaps, the national broadcaster has also transmitted (and subsequently released in recordings) a series of live gigs under the general title of 'Other Voices' (5). From this very title, we can interpret that a national audience is invited to consider a communal sense of otherness from and with a number of groups and singer/songwriters performing in diverse genres. Certainly, the narrative of both the TV series and the album sleeve suggests that the show's production and creative team hold the same concern expressed above vis-à-vis an imbalance in respect of domestic production and consumption.

#### **'Ireland's Most Distinctive Voices'**

The John Creedon Show is presented daily from mid-morning to lunchtime on RTÉ Radio 1. The show's

format comprises a mix of chat, quizzes, and music, some of which is performed live in studio. The music mix can be characterised by domestic traditional and popular genres, along with a selection from more acoustic-based international genres such as jazz, blues and folk. Not surprisingly perhaps, national listening polls (Market Research Board of Ireland) suggest a more 'mature' audience for this show, though its appeal can be interpreted as much broader than this given that an average of 30% of the national listening public tune in to the show. Producer and presenter John Creedon actively promotes matters pertaining to Irish culture and identity. His role in the promotion of individual musicians (gigs, recordings) has been widely acknowledged over the years, but Creedon took a more active agency in the promotion of national imaginings of music over a year ago when he invited listeners to nominate what was termed 'Ireland's Most Distinctive Voices'. The method of data collection appeared to be straightforward enough: audience members were asked to nominate one male and one female singer via mobile text messages. Following this a list identifying the top ten male and the top ten female singers (based on the total number of nominations) was broadcast live. From this list listeners were asked to select Ireland's most distinctive male and female voices. One of the show's researchers reported some difficulty with this final stage:

*Even though we did state regularly that it was the most distinctive, not favorite voice that we were looking for, I'm afraid that people did still tend to vote for their favorite (Newport).*

This interpretation on the part of the show's producers and researchers is of itself interesting as it suggests a dialectic along the lines of popularity/likeability as against distinctive/authentically Irish. Without having exact evidence to hand, one could suggest that the national poll was to some extent usurped by regional patterns of voting, a situation that is arguably reflective of voting patterns for national and international song contests.

And the winners were...According to listeners to the John Creedon Show, the most distinctive female voice belonged to Eleanor Shanley, a performer whose singing style could be described as traditional Irish (in the English language) albeit with more than a hint of country and western (also known locally as country and Irish) flavour. The selected track here features Shanley's version of '[The Summer of My Dreams](#)'. The radio poll suggested that Ireland's most distinctive male voice belonged to Jack L, a singer/songwriter who, as his name might suggest began with cover versions of material by Jacques Brèl. Most of his material is now self-composed as in the album *Metropolis Blue* (1999).

Listening to this jazz and rock influenced music, and in particular to Jack L's velvety crooning baritone style, I can see how the show's researchers and producers might have been disappointed with this selection of the general public, given its lack of any apparent, distinctive markers of Irishness. Bearing in mind Jack L's 'official' standing as the number one (most distinctive) Irish male voice, and cognisant of the setting for this conference, I couldn't resist including an excerpt from a track entitled [Numero Uno](#) here.

As disappointed as the show's researchers and producers might have been with these 'most distinctive' vocal selections, I believe there is much to interpret from an overall view of the top ten lists for male and female performers. For the purpose of this discussion I have coded these according to broad style categories. While I do not discuss each of the singers listed here, audio examples are attached to a number of these for illustrative purposes.

#### **Top Ten Male Singers (random order):**

Christy Hennessy (Traditional/Folk)

[Jack L](#) (Chanson/Jazz/Rock)

Ronnie Drew (Traditional/Folk, former member of *The Dubliners*)

Luke Kelly (Traditional/Folk, former member of *The Dubliners*)

George Murphy (Traditional/Folk)

Christy Moore (Traditional/Folk, Folk Rock)

Tommy Flemming (Traditional)

Damien Dempsey (Contemporary singer/songwriter)

Sean Keane (Traditional, *Sean Níos*)

Shane McGowan (Folk Rock, former member of *The Pogues*)

### **Top Ten Female Singers (Random Order):**

Eleanor Shanley (Traditional/Folk, Country and Irish)

Margaret Barry (Traditional/Folk)

Mary Coughlan (Jazz/Folk)

Sinéad O Connor (Rock, Traditional/Folk)

Rita Connolly (Traditional/Folk, *Sean Níos*)

Mary Black (Traditional/Folk)

Dolores Keane (Traditional/Folk, *Sean Níos*)

Bridie Gallagher (Traditional/Folk, *Sean Níos*)

Lasairfhiona Ní Chonaola (Traditional/Folk, *Sean Níos*)

Cathy Jordan (Traditional/Folk, *Sean Níos*)

(Source, Margaret Newport, The John Creedon Show)

Briefly, from this list, the main points that I wish to interpret and which find resonance with findings from the empirical work reported in the next section are:

1. The lack of any classical voice, of an Irish equivalent of Andrea Bocelli or Lesley Garrett in the views of the show's listeners. This is in keeping with a nationalist-colonial dialectic observed in Irish musical studies in which 'classical' and 'Irish' come to be identified as exclusive terms, at least where matters of musical-cultural identity are concerned (see White).

2. By the same token, there is a tendency to regard Irish music and Irish traditional music as synonymous terms, though this is not necessarily interpreted in uncritical ways by consumers of the same music (O'Flynn).

3. A small minority of singers in more international popular styles come to be recognised as distinctively Irish. Perhaps the best-known voice from the list above is that of Sinéad O'Connor, to whom I shall return later.

4. This fourth point can only at this stage be termed as an impression – but I would suggest that there are some significant differences between the overall lists of males and females. If anything, what is deemed distinctively Irish by female category seems to be more firmly rooted in traditional, rural and 'Celtic' ideas. Geographically, the majority of these women come from western regions of the country, 'The West' being mythologized as the essential Ireland. Conversely, there is clearly a more eclectic range of genres represented by the collective output to the nominated top 10 male singers. Three of these are from Dublin, a further three from the province of Leinster, also in the East, and one, Shane McGowan, comes from a London-Irish background.

### Interviews with audience members

I now move to data gathered during 1999-2001 as part of doctoral research investigating identity and Irish-produced music (O'Flynn). The excerpts used below represent but a small part of interviews carried out with sixty-seven research participants at sixteen popular,

traditional and classical music events in Irish towns and cities. While most of the interview questions were specific to the live music heard at each event, my final question during each interview related to whether a number of well-known Irish musicians sounded Irish or not. As part of this question I specifically asked interviewees to compare the potential Irishness of Mary Black and Dolores Keane, two of the singers who four years later would feature in the national radio poll's top ten list of the most distinctive female voices.

Practically everybody that I interviewed had no hesitation in considering the music of Dolores Keane to be Irish-sounding. What follows is an extract from an interview conducted at a traditional/classical crossover concert at Limerick with Fionnuala, Deirdre, Máire and Betty:

### Fionnuala, Deirdre, Máire and Betty

*J: If you were comparing Mary Black with Dolores Keane, who sounds more Irish and why?*

*All: Dolores Keane.*

*Fionnuala: You can't take her accent away...*

*Betty: You can't take it from her.*

*Deirdre: She can be up and singing the liveliest jazz and she has the 'nyaa' all the way.*

*Máire: But even her talking voice...*

*Deirdre: Ah, she has it all the way.*

*Máire: Mary Black? Mary is from Dublin, isn't she?*

*Betty: Her accent comes through to me, and I suppose that is Irish as well.*

*Deirdre: Well, there's no doubt that Mary Black is ... [pauses]... very good, but I would, if I was to rate them, I'd say Dolores is more Irish. It's just her...you cannot describe it...it's just her distinctive style.*

Three key words used here are style, accent and what Deirdre refers to as 'nyaa', an expression commonly used in reference to aspects of *sean nós* (literally translates as 'old style') singing. Depending on the context, 'nyaa' might be understood as microtonal inflection, glottal stops, nasal timbre or combinations of these elements. Broadly speaking, it tends to be regarded as a particular and unique kind of (Irish) vocal grain. As with the opinions expressed among some other interview groups, both singers were regarded as Irish. However, Dolores Keane is afforded a greater degree of Irishness, and I would argue that this arises from a differentiation made between Irish sounds that are heard as unique and Irish sounds that are heard as continuous with other musical cultures and/or styles. Máire's question regarding the geographical origin of Mary Black adumbrates an issue that will be discussed below, namely, the importance of region and place in imaginings of Irishness in music.

Accent was a term that was used with some frequency when I inquired whether certain artists sounded Irish or not. This was a very positive marker of Irishness for singers such as Christy Moore and Dolores Keane, both of whom could be described as having strong 'country' accents (a term generally used to describe all rural accents). Sometimes, accent was referred to as the only identifiably Irish aspect in a musical act. For example, Mick (a teenage interviewee at a traditional music concert) described The Cranberries as 'rock n' roll with an Irish accent'. The following extract reports part of an interview held following a light classical concert (The Celtic Tenors) when I asked a group of audience members whether or not there was any Irish sound to a range of domestic pop and rock acts.

### **Clare, Marie and Ita**

*J: What about the various Irish boy bands and girl bands?*

*Clare: Boyzone – they could be from anywhere, the same as Take That, for instance*

*Marie: ...unless you were tuned into the accent*

*Clare: Well, that's where I think B\*itched have it – in the Dublin accent*

*Ita: And Westlife have it too.*

*Marie: But you still wouldn't pick it up as being Irish*

*J: How about U2?*

*Ita: No, nothing*

*Marie: Their accents are Irish but their songs?...*

*No, I don't think so.*

In these responses, accent is recognised as Irish but this of itself does not render the music Irish. Like many other interviewees, Clare, Marie and Ita were unequivocal about the Irish sound of Dolores Keane, identifying her Galway accent as a clear marker of Irishness. This suggests a distinction between a literal meaning of accent, which would refer to regional variations in speech production, and a broader conception of accent that would also include vocal timbre as well as the personality or 'soul' of the artist. As already stated, the two Irish performers that were most associated with this quality were Dolores Keane and Christy Moore. This is how Bren and Thomas, who attended a popular gig together, compared the voices of Mary Black and Dolores Keane:

### **Bren and Thomas**

*Bren: Well, I think that Mary Black sounds...well, sounds very polished.*

*Thomas: She could be from anywhere whereas Dolores Keane has a strong accent and comes across...and has more of a personality or something. I don't know. I wouldn't listen to her music very often, but just from what I've heard.*

If Thomas did not listen very often to Dolores Keane, I doubt if he would be acquainted with the personality of the singer, in the way that the word is usually understood. However, 'personality' here is more likely to refer to an expressive character that is interpreted from the vocal sound, and it is interesting to note how this quality is measured in opposition to a vocal character that is described as 'polished'.

Something similar happened when I put the same question comparing Mary Black and Dolores Keane to Doreen, who attended a recital of music by E. J. Moeran at the National Concert Hall in Dublin. Doreen had identified herself as a classical piano teacher who also played tin whistle at a local traditional club in South Dublin.

### **Doreen**

*J: If you were to describe one as being more Irish-sounding than the other, how would you rate Mary Black in relation to Dolores Keane?*

*Doreen: I think Dolores Keane is more Irish.*

*J: Why is that?*

*Doreen: I just said that instinctively without...I think her music is quite a bit more Irish, there's more of a basic Irish melody to it.*

*J: And if they sang the same melody?*

*Doreen: Yeah, I still think Dolores Keane, because*



*Mary Black has more of a trained voice (6), whereas Irish traditional melodies and singers, you can just...they have music in them, you know, they just sing from the heart.*

Of note here is that a person who had sought out (and apparently enjoyed) the performance of an art music song cycle should regard musical training and musical soul as almost mutually exclusive concepts, at least where Irish music was concerned. However, not everyone that I interviewed responded to my (admittedly provocative) question in such black and white terms. For example, Marie, who attended the Celtic Tenors concert referred to above felt that this was too difficult a comparison to make; while Dolores Keane had a definite 'nyaa' in her voice, Mary Black also had a unique vocal quality that was Irish, but less obviously so. That said, an overwhelming number of interviewees were unequivocal in the distinctions they made between the two singers.

While it could be speculated that most listeners perceived a difference in the tessitura of the two singers (Keane as a deep alto, Black as a light soprano), this distinction was not articulated during any of the interviews. Overall, it is not difficult to see how the particular qualities of Keane's voice (low range, nasal timbre) might be perceived as more unique and therefore more Irish than the sounds

produced by popular or classically trained singers. However, this type of belief needs to be examined in the wider practice of *sean nós* and traditional singing in Ireland, encompassing as it does a wide variety of vocal qualities and techniques:

1. Tone quality, or 'timbre', may vary from extreme nasality, to a hard or constricted tone, to a relaxed, 'open' one.
2. Registration may exclusively use chest voice, or have a preference for the highest register, or head voice.

*The Companion to Irish Traditional Music*  
(Vallely 338).

Although this eclectic conception of traditional singing would appear to accommodate equally the potential Irishness of both Dolores Keane's and Mary Black's voices, we have already seen how the majority of interviewees apply a more constricted view of 'vocal Irishness' in their appraisals of these singers.

For some singers, it seemed that no matter what they produced, it would come to be perceived as Irish, a phenomenon that could be described in terms of an Irish 'vocal authority' (Potter). To quote Deirdre's remark

about the varied repertoire of Dolores Keane once more: 'She can be up and singing the liveliest jazz and she has the 'nyaa' all the way'. In this Deirdre suggests that no matter what is sung by this performer, it will be heard as Irish. Another Irish singer who would not usually be labelled as traditional, but was yet regarded as Irish-sounding was Sinéad O'Connor (Audio Track 6). One interviewee at the Celtic tenors event described this singer in the following way:

#### Marie

*I think she does sound Irish....I don't know why but I think she does. I know she sings all sorts of things but I still think she sounds Irish. There's something about her.*

Again, we have the idea that irrespective of repertoire, a certain performer may create an inherently Irish sound. With Marie's statement, it could be speculated that the instinctively felt 'something about her' is a reference to O'Connor's voice, personality or both of these. Mick, whom I interviewed at a traditional music concert, offered this opinion on the Irishness of O'Connor's voice:

#### Mick

*J: How about Sinéad O'Connor, would she sound Irish to your ear?*

*Mick: Yeah, she'd be very close to the Irish sound ...It's just, I don't know, it's the flavour in Sinéad O'Connor's voice, I mean, like in Dolores Keane's. There's a... you can tell there's a whole Irish buzz but with Bono you can't get that at all, like.*

Two interrelated levels of musical meaning can be inferred from this. Firstly, there is the general expressive plane that is described by Mick as 'a whole Irish buzz'. He also identifies one inherent musical element that partially explains the music's general feel, namely, that of vocal grain. It is noteworthy that Sinéad O'Connor was the only rock performer who was consistently deemed to be Irish-sounding among sixty-seven interviewees, not in any specific way, but more in the general sense of 'Irish soul'. That fact that no other (internationally successful) popular artist was identified in the same way is significant, particularly in the light of claims often made in the various narratives of Irish popular music.

Vocal grain was mentioned most often in relation to Dolores Keane, but such remarks were never far from statements about the singer's musical character, personality and even ethnicity. These themes emerged with some force during my interview with Maurice and Jimmy at a traditional music session in Noone's Pub, located in the Stoneybatter district of Dublin.

## Maurice and Jimmy

*J: Comparing Mary Black and Dolores*

*Keane: how would you rate them in terms of an Irish sound, if any?*

*Maurice: I like Dolores Keane. Mary Black is...a nice singer but it's commercially driven.*

*J: What is it you like more about Dolores Keane?*

*Maurice: She sounds like a fuckin' knacker [A pejorative term that is sometimes applied to the distinct ethnic group of Irish travellers]*

*...Now, that's not...[laughs]...now that's an insult to both knackers and Dolores*

*Keane. It's just she fuckin' sounds as if she's one of them...no, not a knacker. She sounds as if she lives on an island.*

*Jimmy: The Galway accent.*

*Maurice: Maybe it is, yeah.*

The link that Maurice makes between this singer's vocal character and a marginalized Irish ethnic group echoes similar articulations of identity noted by Van De Port in his ethnography on the reception of Gypsy music in Serbia. In this case, however, Maurice – with the help of Jimmy – shifts from the notion of the traveller to an idealised version of 'native' Irish ethnicity that comes to be represented by 'The West'.

Ironically, 'The West' equates the oriental, or as a way of 'othering ourselves' in dualistic conceptions of Irish cultural identity. Earlier, I reported on how some people differentiated between Dolores Keane and Mary Black not only on the basis of a perceived sound, but also in regard to their respective places of origin, Galway and Dublin. Even those people who regarded Mary Black as Irish-sounding, implied somehow that Dolores Keane was *really* Irish-sounding, as the following example shows:

### **Eoin (teenage audience member at a traditional music event in Dublin)**

*Well, it depends how you define Irishness. I mean, if you were in Australia, Mary Black is one hundred per cent Irish. There's no doubt about it. Whereas, Dolores Keane, you know, is different. She comes from a different Irish world than Mary Black's from ...and they're completely poles apart. But they're both distinctly Irish, do you know what I mean?*

In this comparison, Irishness is discussed exclusively in terms of place, and the two singers are considered to be poles apart. Yet, unlike several other interviewees, Eoin does not deny the Irishness of Black's voice on the basis of her Dublin background, even though we can sense his identification with Keane's Irishness is more comfortable

and immediate. However, when the comparative idea of place moves from an insider construct (Dublin/The West) to an outsider construct (Ireland/Rest of World), then Eoin has no difficulty in affirming the Irishness of Mary Black.

The material evidence would suggest that, along with other forms of Irish-produced music, traditional music is widely practised in Dublin. At a historical level also, it could be pointed out that the national organisation *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* originated in Dublin, and that many of traditional music's greatest exponents – Séamus Ennis and Tommy Potts to mention but two – came from Dublin. It is possible that the tendency to perceive Dublin as less Irish arises from its former status as the centre of colonial administration and concomitant perceptions of residual 'Britishness'. (The potential power that a Dublin/Ireland dichotomy might hold in the imagination of Irish people was brought home to me quite recently when a Dublin-based traditional music acquaintance told me that she believed her playing always improved whenever she 'got out of Dublin'.) And certainly, if we glance back at what the 2004 radio poll suggested to be the most distinctive female voices of Ireland, it would appear that the idealised, rural West retains its grip on the collective Irish imagination.

### **Conclusion: Authenticity and National Vocal Authority**

So why do I choose to conclude this paper with (yet

another) discussion on musical authenticity? As Timothy Taylor describes, for musicians and listeners alike, authenticity can be real inasmuch as it is believed in, talked about, and can actually influence musical behaviours. Allan Moore (221) echoes this dynamic application of the term when he argues that the academic consideration of authenticity needs to focus on the activities of perceivers rather than on the intention of various originators.

For any listening subject, authenticity in music may be constructed with reference to a) a particular sound experience or a set of similar experiences, and b) the totality of an individual's sound experiences as they relate to overall social experience. In practice these are processes that interrelate, although the ways in which people construct musical authenticity can vary greatly, with some constructions very much based in the apprehension of sonic details while others could be considered as more arbitrary (Moore 209). A key finding to emerge from the interviews referred to above was the significance that the personalities of individual performers could hold in the recognition or non-recognition of Irishness in music. Moore (209) suggests three possible performance modes that can be linked to such constructions of authenticity:

*First person authenticity:* Artists speak the truth of

their own situation.

*Second person authenticity:* Artists speak the truth of the situation of (absent) others.

*Third person authenticity:* Artists speak the truth of their own culture, thereby representing (present) others.

On the surface, it might be assumed that first and third person authenticities are the only modes applicable to a study that comprises musicians and listening subjects based in Ireland. In the first person, musicians need to be heard as 'natural' and 'honest'. To qualify in the third person sense they must somehow convey a sense of representing some (imagined-) real Irish qualities with which listeners can immediately identify. Yet as significant as these processes of *identification* may be, they appear to be closely linked to notions of *alterity* which are also intimately involved in authentications of Irish music. It seems that in order to represent a national vocal authority the singer must also speak of our other selves, of our imagined rural and pre-modern histories.

## Post Script

Some of the questions I received after delivering this paper at the Rome conference have since caused me to reflect on ways that Irishness in music may be appraised by listeners who are familiar with globally distributed Irish musical products but at the same time do not have an 'insider' view of domestic scenes (in the way that participants in the radio poll and contextual interviews would have had). This raises further questions about listener competences and subjectivities and suggests a need to investigate how a dialectic of insider/outsider perceptions might operate differently at local, national and international levels. I'm also conscious that the paper touched on issues pertaining to constructions of gender in the production, distribution and consumption of music, and that these were not explored in any substantial way. Distinctions of this nature particularly came through in the radio poll, both in terms of its initial design and in the patterns observable from the collated results. This clearly marks out a key area of analysis for future studies of musical identities among Irish-based audiences.

## Endnotes

1. To present one example, sales of albums by Irish artists represented eight per cent of all album sales in the UK during the year 2000 (British Phonographic Industry

[BPI] Statistical Handbook 2000). In the same year, two Irish popular bands, U2 and Westlife, were among the top ten earners of all acts in the UK and Ireland combined (U2, earning STG £50m were second only to The Beatles and were significantly ahead of Elton John, The Rolling Stones and David Bowie. Source: 'The top 10 Heat list of British and Irish music stars', published in *The Guardian*, January 30<sup>th</sup> 2001/ [www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4127337,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4127337,00.html), accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2002.

2. Ireland was consecutively ranked as the most 'globalised' of 62 states included in the annual AT Kearney/*Foreign Policy* magazine survey in the years 2000 and 2001 (Cliff Taylor, *The Irish Times*, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2003).

3. Primary sources included *Hotpress* magazine and *Top Thirty Hits* broadcast on Network 2, a national TV station.

4. Source: Broadcasting Commission of Ireland (BCI) press release, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2002.

5. Various Artists. *Other Voices: Songs from a Room*. Dara/RTÉ, TORCTV CD 1153, 2003.

6. The timbre of Mary Black's voice is certainly close

to the tone quality generally associated with a 'trained voice'. However, Black's musical background was in fact established through more informal family traditions of instrumental playing and ballad singing. Her first public performances were through the folk club scene that had become established in Dublin during the 1960s.

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## Macaronics in the Heart of Europe: Foreign Languages in Czech Popular Music

Aleš Opekar

### Introduction

Czech is the language of a small nation in the middle of Europe, and as such, it is far from being a global language. During the Czech National Revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Czech scholars tried to purge their language of foreign influences, and develop it in a spirit appropriate to its roots and its own characteristic grammar. At other times, however, when Czechs did not feel threatened by outside, foreign forces, their language - on the contrary - willingly and spontaneously took on elements of different foreign languages, and saw them as being an enrichment. We should note that this is still the case today.

The incorporation foreign-language elements into Czech has, in the past, served different functions and taken on different meanings throughout Czech society and culture. Among other things, foreign languages have influenced the lyrics of popular songs. A typical example is that of the so-called 'macaroni song' which combines Latin with Czech. Even in contemporary Czech pop music we often find entire texts or at least a verse, phrase, or word in English, German or some other foreign language.

The aim of this article is to investigate, in several chosen cases, the purpose and significance of just such foreign words, phrases and verses by putting them into a historical, artistic and social context.

### Latin

Latin was the first important foreign language to have an impact on Czech; it has so since medieval times. Church services were conducted in Latin, and so its influence spread all over the country. Equally, Latin was the language of science alongside the other subjects studied at the country's newly established universities: theology, medicine and law. Technical terms were translated into the vulgar tongue, but in academic circles, and amongst students, they were used in their Latin original. The knowledge of and, in certain areas, the lack of alternative to Latin led to the integration of technical terms and set phrases in their Latin originals into the vulgar vernacular. In music, this phenomenon can be seen, amongst other examples, in 'macaroni songs', the lyrics of which combine the two languages. The 'macaroni principle' of song-writing was employed in particular by medieval university students in their poetry. A good example is the composition *Detrimentum pacior*:<sup>1</sup>

Detrimentum pacior      *Pain is making me suffer*

nynie i v každém času      *Now and forever*

Usque ad mortem quacior      *The suffering is killing me*

Vše pro její krásu      *And all for her beauty*

Expressions which are a typical part of the medical vocabulary are used here in an amorous context; they serve to heighten the text's urgency. Knowledge of Latin was linked to education, but equally with an orator's attempts to be at least superficially regarded as scholarly. At that time, education was not one of the most highly regarded assets, students were often notoriously poor. Wandering student-vagrants would earn their keep by begging. Combining languages in one text could, and clearly did frequently, produce a comic effect. It could also work as parody. An example of just one such medieval, 'macaroni' text is an interlude – a market scene – from "Mastičkář" ("The Charlatan"<sup>2</sup>):

Sed', vem přišel  
mistr Ypokras      *Sit down, gather  
round, here comes  
Mr. Ypokras*

de gratia divina!      *of such divine beauty*

Neniet' horšieho  
v tento čas      *(There is nothing  
worse right now)*

in arte medicina      *(In the art of  
medicine)*

In this, and other macaroni songs, lines in Czech alternate with those in Latin, and in the majority of cases, Czech rhymes with Czech, and Latin with Latin. In the extract above, highfalutin compliments in Latin are undermined by open mockery of the charlatan's quackery in Czech. The structure of the song is such that the odd lines, as a rule, impart the main message, while the even lines provide some commentary upon this message, formulating it in another way, often with quite the opposite point of view. In other cases, the even line serves to reinforce the message or fill in any gaps that might be left outstanding by the odd-numbered line preceding it. If the odd-numbered lines carrying the key message are in the foreign language, then we can suppose that the song was written for an educated audience. If Latin is used as a reinforcement in the evenly-numbered lines, then the whole thing is more comprehensible to a wider audience. The influence of Latin gradually lessened, however, this was often to the benefit of languages which grew out of Latin in the first place, especially Italian.

Latin has not disappeared entirely even from modern popular music, even if it only makes a fleeting

appearance here and there in contemporary texts. It most frequently serves at moments when a generally accepted truth, saying, or cliché is included into an otherwise completely Czech song. Such a device is employed by singer-songwriter Karel Kryl in the second half of the 1960s:

Mé oči uviděly	My eyes saw
tu strašně dálnou	This very distant
vteřinu zapomnění	Moment of forgetting
Seržante! Mávnou	Oh Sergeant! They wave
a budem zasvěceni	And we will be made sacred
Morituri te salutant	Going to death
Morituri te salutant	greeting you

*(From the song Morituri te salutant, Kryl 1994, p. 70)*

Kdekdo křičel při té hrůze	The world and his wife screamed during the atrocity
Inter arma silent Musae	Amongst the weapons the Muses fall silent
Krále z toho strachu trefil šlak	The king had a stroke he was so scared

Klaun tiše se smál	The clown quietly laughed
a zem žila dále	And the country lived on
a neměla krále	And it didn't have a king
Klaun na loutnu hrál	The clown played on the lute
Klaun na loutnu hrál	The clown played on the lute

*(From the song Král a klaun, Kryl 1994, p. 72-73)<sup>3</sup>*

### Italian

Italian started to conquer Europe together with the development and popularity of Italian art, architecture, and baroque and classical music in particular. This music gave other European and world languages its musical terminology. Italian, as the dominant language of classical music left its imprint on other nation's languages, in the form of terms still used today, such as piano, lento, largo, crescendo etc. Equally, musicians' pseudonyms or nicknames were often born out of the popularity that Italian culture enjoyed. In the beginning, Czech musicians working in Italy or elsewhere abroad were given Italian names which showed where they came from, (Bohuslav Matěj Černohorský - Padre Boemo, Josef Mysliveček – Il Divino Boemo or

Venatorini, Václav Stich – Giovanni Punto). The use of Italian-sounding names then became fashionable even amongst those working in the Czech Republic.

A typical example of the influence of Italian on the composition of Czech classical music is illustrated by the story of the text to the original Czech baroque opera ‘O původu Jaroměřic’ (The origins of Jaroměřice)<sup>4</sup>: Firstly, the Czech composer F. V. Míča altered the original story to make it fit the needs of a libretto. Following on from this, the author P. Ignati composed a comedy which picked up on the key motifs in this story, which was translated into Italian. Next, another composer, N. Blinoni, created, on the basis of this comedy in its Italian version, a libretto. For this libretto the original composer Míča finally composed the music. Only after the completion of the musical score was the libretto translated into Czech and German.

The famous melodious-ness and tunefulness of music originally written in Italian did little to hinder its popularity outside of its homeland. Individual arias from operas often became something like smash hits in their own right. Lots of expressive phrases from these songs became firmly entrenched in memory, even in their Italian original. Such is this case even with more recent popular songs. Should the composers manage to place an easily-memorable and yet original, melodic phrase in either a sonorous chorus or at the start of a verse, then not only is the evergreen quality of the song assured,

but also the instant recognition of a commonly-known extract from the song, and its independent function in other areas of the language. The listener does even need to know the exact name of the song, nor the rest of the tune’s lyrics, nor indeed who composed it or performed it originally (see “*volare, cantare*” from the song *Nel blu, dipinto di blu* written by Migliacci & Modugno, 1958, or “*ciao bambino*” from the song *Piove*, written by Modugno & Verde, 1959, in both cases originally interpreted by Domenico Modugno).

### German

The longest-running and most intensive linguistic influence upon Czech comes from the country’s German-speaking neighbours. From the battle of Bílá Hora in 1620 until 1918, German was the dominant language in the Czech lands. After WWI, and especially after WWII, the influence of German diminished, giving way to English, which shortly after that became the modern tool for international communication.

The Czech lands long formed a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, for this reason, German was the official bureaucratic language. German culture also had a large influence on all areas of social life. German’s influence did not just come from the fact that it was the lingua franca of the Habsburg authorities, but also from the importance of developments being made in German science and culture at the time, and the inspiration such developments produced.

German could equally be found in popular music and – said in today's terms – pop-culture. For example, songs from vaudevilles were sung in German at cabarets at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In more recent times, we still find a whole number of German expressions forming part of spoken Czech and which, for this reason, have found their way into song lyrics. There are Czech-ified expressions, which have been fully assimilated into the language, to the point that they no longer maintain any German character whatsoever (knedlík = dumpling, cimra = room, sokl = base). Then there are expressions which have preserved their German character, and which are still considered to be foreign words, although they are understood by all (ajncvaj = 1,2; hoch = lit. high - but means proud in Czech; hochštapler = crook; ksindl = knave; numero = number...). An example of a text which employs Czech-ified German words is a vaudeville song by Josef Heřman-Zefi called Barbora Hacaperková from the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:<sup>5</sup>

Já jsem mutr domovnice	<i>I'm the woman of the household</i>
ženská neni cimprlich	<i>A woman isn't a wuss</i>
meju okna schody dvěře	<i>I wash the windows, stairs and doors</i>
ve všom jsem já ordentlich	<i>In everything I do I am thorough</i>

The interspersing of German into song lyrics reflects its interspersing in common Czech speech. Often in a corrupted form it became part of a dialect spoken on the streets, particularly of larger towns, that's not to mention in places where there was a higher German speaking population. Alongside the spontaneous penetration of German into urban Czech dialects there was again the attempt of members of the lower social classes to rise up through society by use of German. Again, however, it was easy to tell the difference between genuine and forced aristocratic behaviour, and this difference provided a number of comic themes and a subject for parody to a lot of the above mentioned vaudevilles in particular, as well as other cabaret productions. Czech remained the language of the countryside, the language of the poor, and the language of folk songs, in all of its different dialects and variations.

Another completely different example of German permeating Czech culture comes in more recent times. The underground musician, singer and bandleader Mikoláš Chadima rather frequently uses German alongside Czech in the original songs he writes. Chadima (\* 1952) started to learn German already into his adult years, around the middle of the 1980s. He greatly admired the work of several authors writing in German, such as Gustav Meyrink and Ivan Wernisch. With the socio-political situation in Czechoslovakia before 1989 as his backdrop, Chadima explains his impetus to put German texts to music.<sup>6</sup>



*"Of course I tried in the beginning to sing in English too. But these were only covers of other people's songs and I didn't enjoy it, because I didn't know English well enough to remember the lyrics, which I had just picked up phonetically through listening to the songs, and I hadn't been able to translate them into anything comprehensible in my head. This wasn't so with German. (...) And another thing that was important was the quality of German in Wernisch's texts, which as my level of German increased, started to open up to me. And then, when I started to write my first songs using Wernisch's texts and then gradually decided to do whole concerts of them, it was because I had the impression that to give some commentary on what was going on, ie. to sing in Czech so that it could be understood, was redundant. Telling people that the whole festering communist system was worth shit? I'd already tried that, and I didn't want to spend my whole time repeating myself. In fact I realised that the whole system didn't actually bother me that much, nor Commies as such, but this whole bunch of lousy right-wingers born and bred, which were its spine, whom there were so many of, and who, all told, would never be free in any system. From a purely musical standpoint, then a different language means a different rhythm, different phrasing, a different*

*source of inspiration. It's easier to work with German, perhaps, however, there's the problem of the small number of voiced consonants in our mother tongue. You have to give it a great deal of thought so that the Czech sounds natural if you don't want to streeeeeeetch it out. (...) I worked with quite a lot of texts. And so, by the time I put them to music it doesn't matter to me which language they are in. For example 'Lež', in Fuchs' original text 'Leicht', I'll sing in German at one concert and Czech at another. Maybe it's so that neither the original, nor the translation feel neglected."*

Clear and unambiguous authorial standpoints in song lyrics work as propaganda the first time you hear them, but upon repeated listening, lose some of their impact. Mikoláš Chadima set out to work with more encrypted messages. Alongside Czech lyrics full of allegory, allusions and metaphors, use of a foreign language, namely German, helped him achieve this goal. He did not want to use German in order to communicate with native speakers. He wanted to, and indeed still wants, to sing in German to a domestic Czech audience, to whom the way that German sounds evokes a certain amount of emotion and has certain connotations. In a new context this sounds encrypted, even when the core of the message may remain understandable

to all. The hard, sharp and mechanical character of German rhymes, which sometimes sound as if they are being recited more than sung, fits well alongside the black sound of Chadima's alternative rock. The result is a specifically mysterious, sometimes even scary atmosphere, a product of the combination of German's phonetic nature with slow and heavy rhythms in a dark electronic sound-scape.

Sie hatten Häuser gebaut	<i>They built houses</i>
Und getanzt	<i>And danced</i>
Und gesungen	<i>And sang</i>
Aber dann, als nach ihnen gegriffen wurde	<i>But then it started</i>
Als Hubschrauber kreisten	<i>Helicopters circled them</i>
Und die Hunde bellten	<i>Dogs barked</i>
Kauerten Sie	<i>They cowered</i>
In der Mitte des grossen Platzes	<i>In the middle of the big square</i>
Hoffend	<i>Hoping</i>

Das nur ihre Ausweise kontrolliert werden	<i>That they were only going to check their documents</i>
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Dass die Guterwagen noch nicht	<i>That they hadn't brought along</i>
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Bereitstehen	<i>The trucks</i>
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*(From the song Gorleben – the lyrics taken from Jurgen Fuchs, translated into Czech by Ivan Wernisch, recorded illegally in 1986, Fuchs and Chadima 2002)*

## English

As a result of the First World War and the gradual spread of attractive-sounding dance music of African-American origin, the influence of English on different European languages grew rapidly. Czech was no exception. The export of high-quality new technology and new machinery produced by America and Great Britain's booming economies played a role in the spread of English. But music played an undeniable role in this process too. And it was popular music above all responsible - jazz, blues, country & western, later on rock'n'roll, and then rock, that's as well as commonly known popular songs. These sorts of music became the most natural and most attractive spontaneous motivation for people to learn English. Many languages have adopted musical terminology and a musical vocabulary from English, just as in more recent years, at the turn of this century, the same languages have borrowed their IT terminology and vocabulary from the English language.

The development of popular music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century has been closely linked with the English language all over the world, be it artists singing in English, or the names of genres or instruments etc. This is also the case on the Czech music scene.

The first significant subculture in Czech popular music which grows under the direct influence of stimuli from English-speaking countries, especially from North America, is tramping. The first Czech tramping settlements emerged even before the First World War, the main boom taking place, however, in the 1920s. Amongst the names of tramp settlements, and indeed the nicknames of the wild scouts themselves, are lots of anglicisms such as 'Roaring Camp' (a settlement later renamed 'Ztracená naděje', meaning 'Lost Hope'), Rawhide, Camp Boys, Strong Boys, Settlers' Club etc. Less frequently-used expressions came from American native languages (Waikiki), or indeed from Spanish (Santa Puelo or the pseudonym Pedro Mucha). The majority of Spanish which made its way into the tramping vocabulary was, however, taken from place names which today can be found in the United States, and so in fact, most Spanish made its way into Czech through the English language. The names of places and proper names (Niagara, El Paso) were the English words that most frequently cropped up in tramping songs.

The influence of English continued as jazz and dance music inspired the creation of those involved in the

Osvobozeného divadla, as well as the pioneers of Czech jazz and dance in the 1930s. The 'forbidden fruit' quality which such music took on during the Second World War did little to dampen its popularity. A distinctive and fundamental phenomenon which new jazz rhythms brought to light in Czech lyrics was the disharmony between the system of stresses in the Czech language, and the rhythms in music which had originally been written for an English text. The rhythm and the meter of English over this music sounded natural and fitted-well. The rhythm and meter of Czech lyrics are, however, completely different. The accents are on the first and then subsequently the odd syllables, in accordance with a so-called trochaic meter in linguistics. The syncopated nature of dance music, which stresses the even syllable, was at odds with Czech, which was like an item of clothing put on back-to-front when placed over such melodies. Lyricists working with the genre were at a loss, and this led to a lowering of the quality of the entire song. Unstressed syllables often found themselves exposed in a stressed position in Czech jazz lyrics, long vowels were chaotically shortened, short vowels lengthened. This phenomenon of 'transaccentuation' sounded random, violent and dissonant, it made for difficult listening. Yet, it was the case in a whole number of hits of the swing era.

A new approach to this whole question was brought by Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich in their work. At the

end of the 1920s, they started to write Czech lyrics to popular Anglo-American melodies for their first play. In the process they quickly realised that it is possible to create rules out of the chaos of accents in the wrong place, giving a new order and sound to the whole composition. The musical accent intersected with the unstressed syllable in the line regularly, in the same position throughout all of the lines and verses. Through this, they gave the song a further rhythmic dimension and an expressive tension. From the point of view of Czech prosody, the correct accents in Voskovec and Werich's text should look like this:<sup>8</sup>

**Pra, pra, prabába mé prabáby**

**Až teprv baba jaga**

**jak praví stará sága**

However, in the resultant performance of the song, the influence of transaccentuation is lessened - accents are intentionally and deliberately mixed up in the spirit of the rhythm of syncopated music. In the first line, the unstressed syllable is shifted into the position stressed by the music through a lengthening of the vowel which goes before it. In the following extract the opposite occurs, with the removal of stress from the first (in Czech normally stressed) syllable. Instead, the stress is shifted to the end of the musical beat which precedes this normally-stressed, first syllable:

**Pra, pra, prabááába mé prabáby**

**Až teprv baba jaga**

**jak praví stará sága**

The humorous and parodic sound of these lyrics by Voskovec and Werich is not only unhampered by this mix-up of accents, the muddle actually enhances the comic effect of the song. It is necessary to note that this method would not work in songs which are intended to sound more serious. However, it is proof that it is possible through creativity to turn a negative into a positive. Voskovec and Werich often combined such play with patterns of stress in a song with internal rhyme. Internal rhyme linked a section of a line which was rhythmically chaotic, if the rhythm was not going to emphasise something, then internal rhyme would (it brought something which had been rhythmically neglected back into the foreground). On this subject, the pair themselves wrote:<sup>8</sup>

*"We didn't at all understand the meaning of the English lyrics, but we heard their musicality, the way that the text and the music went together one with the other. When we then heard the same song performed in Arena with Czech lyrics we couldn't contain our anger. Embarrassing rhymes, arduously arranged so that in the end*

*they offered the listener some sweaty joke or sugary picture - lyrics which turned Czech upside down, which massacred the precise jazz rhythm of the melody around them, whether the song was syncopated or not - caused us great sorrow. (...) We wanted to make something that resembled the English pattern in terms of its jazz rhythm and in the simple subordination of the text to the rhythm, in the colour of the music. Then the cheeriness, the subjectless comedy, the grotesque, absurd content, whose only aim was to make people laugh – we wanted to recreate that also. (...) We have been criticised in the past for having a declamatory standpoint, people say we ridicule the Czech language and we don't respect its natural stress-patterns. (...) but inverting Czech's accents, if it isn't a matter of shortening long or lengthening short syllables, can prove very effective in certain jazz compositions. (...) its usage emphasises the rhythm of the piece which would be less plastic if the normal accents were used. Anyway, such violence is offset by lots of internal rhymes, which give the lyrics their own harmony, the origins of which the listener does not even realise."*

The lyrics of Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich, in conjunction with the music of Jaroslav Ježek, had a new rhythm, a

new feeling and a new sound. The contribution of this creative trio was extremely inspirational for later lyricists and composers, for example for Jiří Suchý and Jiří Šlitr. Suchý's Czech lyrics fitted equally well into syncopated compositions. His compositions corresponded well with the smooth rhythmic flow of sung English, but didn't use so much of the afore-mentioned shift in stress-patterns. Instead he used sound-rich, pregnant, and utterly original rhymes ("vlasy samou loknu – přistoupila k oknu", "zčervená – ramena"), stressing the sound of the final consonants and sometimes he even doubling these consonants up ("Woody ddovedde").

The social and the cultural-political atmosphere of the totalitarian 1950s in Czechoslovakia was one in which the authorities did not want to see a knowledge of the English language spread. Even during the freer 1960s, knowledge of English remained generally very low. Despite this fact, new emerging jazz and rock groups preferred English to Czech when singing. Singers considered English as the only appropriate language for their chosen musical direction. They tried to sing cover versions in their own original language and write their own texts directly in English. They even tried to draw inspiration from English when deciding what to call themselves, albeit often with little to no idea of the rules of English grammar (for example, The Hells Devils). The authorities still found cultural activity linked with English very suspicious in the late 1950s and early

1960s. Young musicians, for this reason, tried to stay one step ahead of police attention by adopting 'lofty' names like "Studijní skupina big beatu" ("The Big Beat Study Group") or the "Big Beat Quintet", and through the use of other exotic titles borrowed from languages other than English (Syrinx, Jantar, Orion...).

Just as rock musicians tried to copy English or American recordings as faithfully as possible through listening to foreign radio stations or from tape recordings, so singers for the most part learnt the words to songs phonetically, while having no idea about the actual contents of the song's lyrics. The 'master' in this field was the singer of the afore-mentioned Hells Devils, Miloš Vokurka, known as Reddy. Thanks to his innate musical talent this trained miller was capable of imitating everything that he heard. His fans were convinced that he was an excellent English-speaker – the audience of such bands of course had an even smaller knowledge of English than the singers. They wouldn't have been able to understand the lyrics of an English song even if they were sung by a native speaker. Nor were the audience able to understand Czech cover versions of the song too well, because the singer often put his own finishing touches to the piece. Listeners from an English speaking country would not have been able to understand these songs the way they were sung either. English served only one function here, it evoked a certain feel, a certain rhythm, phrasing and sound.

Badly picked-up English lyrics with a large number of imaginary and indeed completely non-existent words started to be called "telephone books". A famous creator of this form of English song was the singer, guitarist and songwriter Karel Kahovec. In the days of big-beat songs filled with rhythmic jargon and good-sounding lyrics - which didn't actually mean a thing - such incomprehensible compositions were said to be written in "kahovština" ("Kahovecian").

A similar example from a different musical sphere is the song 'Sou fár tu jú aj mej' from the Czech parody Western 'Limonádový Joe' (Lemonade Joe, 1964). The lyrics imitate English or even Spanish, but are written phonetically without any logical sense:

*"Sou fár tu jú aj mej / for tu náj mí tú sej / Mučáčita  
mia kára verá / an maj dej sej áj..."<sup>9</sup>*

This was all part of the parody that authors Jan Rychlík (music) and Jiří Brdečka (lyrics) were trying to achieve, but audiences of the period often considered the song to be sung in proper English.

The influence of English obviously can also be seen in rock songs which were originally written in Czech. After the initial enchantment with rhythm and sound, groups started to feel a greater need to actually communicate something to their listeners through their texts. Lyricists searched for monosyllabic rhymes and word forms



which at least sounded a bit like English, for example the informal, spoken endings of -ou or -ej (see Eduard Krečmar, Pavel Vrba, Josef Kainar).

The story one of the first big rock projects to use Czech, *Město Er*, (Supraphon 1971) by the Framus Five, is reminiscent of the Italian-Czech story of the opera 'O původu Jaroměřic' which we mentioned earlier. The musicians surrounding the singer Michal Prokop first of all wrote the lyrics in English. They used these lyrics as a basis around which to write the music. The writing of the new Czech lyrics based upon the melodies they came up with was then delegated to the poet Josef Kainar.

During the 1970s English disappeared from Czech popular music. As a result of the unhappy events of August 1968, and the so-called normalization period which ensued, English was banned in song lyrics, and in band names. An era began of soulless and content-less commercial pop lyrics on the one hand, and a tendency towards metaphor, symbols and allegory, encrypting dissident opinion on the other. At this time, at the start of the 1970s, a new singer-songwriter emerged who created a specific new generation of 'macaroni songs', this time combining Czech with English.

Svatopluk Karásek was a priest who was banned from preaching by the communists shortly after being ordained at the end of the 1960s. Later, he

was tried alongside other activists belonging to the Czech underground in 1976-1977 – he was condemned alongside members of the Plastic People of the Universe and others. After being banned from carrying out his religious duties, he continued to preach through the means of his guitar. He became a folk songwriter, a protest singer. He was never an excellent singer, nor an excellent guitarist, the components of his music came from the tradition of the African-American spiritual, the lyrics of his songs came from biblical sources. From this we can say that his music is by no means brilliant in terms of its musical or thematic originality or in terms of the singer's performing technique. Regardless, Svatopluk Karásek became extremely influential in informed circles and one of the favourite singer-songwriters of his time. His songs were attractive and, in their own way, they had a secondary sort of originality in that they were 'macaroni songs' created out of this specific mix of languages. From the start he set Czech and English alongside each other, English is the language that carries the song and concludes the song with a biblical theory or a generally-accepted truth while the Czech part of the song develops different variations, contexts and connections. Sometimes English lines can be found in between their Czech counterparts as a means of generating a certain rhythm:

Bojím se, že v  
soudný den

*I worry, on  
judgement day*

Where shall I be?

Lehkým budu nalezen

*I'll be found easily*

Where shall I be?

Snad se v nebi ustrnou

*Perhaps in heaven  
they will be merciful*

Where shall I be?

Nad mou duší hubenou

*Above my meagre soul*

Where shall I be?

*(From the song 'Byl boj', Karásek 1993, p. 30-31)*

Karásek's macaroni compositions reached their zenith when he employed the humourous principle of highlighting phonetic similarities between select Czech and English phrases, even when the concrete meaning of these expressions was, of course, completely different from one language to another:

It's too late, too late,

too late, too late, too late.

Oni se k sobě tulej tulej

*They cuddle up  
to each other*

tulej tulej tulej

jako by lásky poslední  
den měl být

*As if it were the last  
day of their love*

*(From 'Je pozdě', Karásek 1993, p. 66-69)<sup>10</sup>*

Say no to the  
devil, say no

Say no to the  
devil, say no,

Devil is a dissenter

He wants treat  
nobody right

Say no to the  
devil, say no

Sejmou ti podobu,  
sejmou

*They will take  
away your form*

sejmou ti podobu, sejmou

tvář tvou zmažou ti hlinou

*They will smear your  
face with clay*

chtěj mít jen masku  
posmrtnou,

*They only want to  
make a death mask*

sejmou ti podobu,  
sejmou.

*(From 'Řekni d'áblovi ne', Karásek 1993, p. 62-63)<sup>10</sup>*

Karásek often pronounces Czech words so that their similarities to English are accentuated. The effect of this is a hint of humour or irony, which permeates nearly all of his songs. After showcasing a biblical theme in English he continues, in the majority of cases, to expound upon a love or romantic theme in Czech. The second tension latent in Karásek's songs is the parallels he draws between biblical themes and the contemporary political situation in the Czechoslovakia of the time. The texts take apart some biblical motif in the course of the song, however, in one verse or at the song's conclusion a new light is shone on things, a confrontation with the modern reality or with the collective experience of people appears. The wordplays and the jokes in the song are leant a frosty touch of unhappy reality.

An example comes in the form of the song "Ja jsem nákej stounavej". The musical basis for the song is "Angel Rolled the Stone away". The song starts and ends with this biblical motif in English. The majority of verses develop different variations upon the themes

of trouble in love and other areas of life. Always as a common denominator, following the old pattern of the vaudeville mini-refrain, the eponymous sentence "jsem nákej stounavej" ("I'm probably ill") comes in as a final line at the end of each verse. Only one inconspicuous verse in the middle of the song makes an allusion to a situation in which people can not normally talk openly about what they really think to themselves. They are scared of the truth, it seems, because their eloquence could jeopardise their position at work, the development of their career and so on:

Angel rolled the  
stone away,

Angel rolled the  
stone away,

Early on Easter  
Sunday morning,

Angel rolled the  
stone away.

Já jsem nákej stounavej,

*I'm probably ill*

Já jsem nákej stounavej,

že v mém žití všude  
chybí láska,

*My life is lacking in love*

z toho já jsem stounavej. *And this makes me ill*

V práci se chci  
zastat pravdy, *At work I want to stand  
up for the truth*

pak si řeknu, bacha dej. *And then I say to  
myself 'watch out!'*

Zase držím hubu  
na špagátě, *So I keep schtum*

pak jsem z toho  
stounavej. *And this makes me ill*

*(From the song 'Já jsem řákej stounavej',*

*Karásek 1993, p. 70-72)*

In 1980 Svatopluk Karásek was forced by the communist authorities to move abroad. He set up home in Switzerland. His 'macaroni songs' continued to be circulated here on tapes, and they were sung in pubs alongside those of Kryl, Hutka and others. In the 1970s and 80s the Czech public devoured as much Anglo-American music as possible, especially through the purchase of records sold on the black market and through the occasional licensed event. Original Czech composition in English was infinitesimally small. With the exception of several individual songs written by a few alternative bands (Extempore in 1974 or Švehlik at the end of the 1970s) the majority of English lyrics were found only at the end of the 1980s (for example

the hardcore group Insania in 1987-1988). The modern boom in English song-lyrics written by Czech artists came after 1989, and the level of English used in more modern times is incomparably better. These lyrics, in fact, often are a product of direct cooperation with Americans, British and Australians either temporarily or permanently living here in the Czech Republic.

### Other Languages

We should not miss out some of the other major world languages:

*French*, to our ears, is associated with an aristocratic noblesse (in expert Czech literature, elegant expressions such as 'par excellence' can constantly be found) as well as with a specific musical genre – chanson. A long-term propagator of French songs is Lenka Filipová, in recent times the Pardubice band Miou Miou write and sing their originally Czech electro-rock compositions in French (see their album *La La Grande Finale*, 2006).

*Spanish's* influence has never been particularly strong on Czech music, as Czech and Spanish have never overlapped in any time or place. But a strong interest in not only Spanish culture, but the cultures of Central and Southern America has been growing. An indefatigable propagator of sung Spanish, and music influenced by Latin-America, was Zuzana Navarová.

*Russian's* popularity grew for a short time in the 1930s (remember for example the “da da da” scene from the film ‘Hej rup!’ with Voskovec and Werich from 1934) and during the Second World War. This popularity soon changed into aversion because of post-war political developments in Central and Eastern Europe and because of the fact that Russian was an obligatory subject at school, even though the knowledge of Russian proved to be useless for Czechs in later life. More recent, popular singer-songwriters such as Bulat Okudzhava, Zhana Bichevská and Vladimír Vysocký have not had an easy time trying to change people's attitudes to Russian.

The iron curtain of the 1950s, defending against an onslaught of English to the benefit of Russian, willingly or otherwise, did open the door to some other languages. During the Cold War cultural phenomena from countries which were not judged to be playing a prominent role in the political and economic power struggle going on were allowed to penetrate Czech society. A big space in Czech mass media, and in listeners' hearts alike, was dedicated to songs with a touch of the exotic to them. The most obvious cases were songs selected from the most far-apart corners of the world by the ‘Kučerovci’ – a band consisting of the Hawaiian-guitar player Václav Kučera and singer Marta Kučerová. On Czech stages languages all the way from Indonesia (Rege, rege, Ajo mama), through Argentina, Cuba and Mexico (again Spanish: La

Paloma, Cucurucucu) as far as the Pacific Ocean, the Hawaiian islands and Tahiti (Nani tahiti) could be heard. These are all songs which were interpreted entirely in their own original languages. But what about this ‘macaroni’ form of song which combines two languages and which this article is about? With only the slightest amount of exaggeration, we can say that some popular songs of the 1950s which were imported into the Czech music scene from abroad bear some of the traits of macaroni songs. Together with a musical component sometimes even a main phrase in the chorus was borrowed from the original language, even though the rest of the original song was rewritten in Czech. Amongst the most popular of these songs were French and Italian:

Arrivederci Roma (Rascal-Garinei-Sandro/ Z. Borovec; sung by Milan Chladil, 1956)

O, Cangaceiro (Nascimento/ S. Šindelka; sung by Karel Duda, 1957)

Souvenirs (C. Coben/ Z. Borovec – S. Tompich; sung by Waldemar Matuška, 1960)

Arrivederci, Hans (H. Mayer, G. Buschor/ J. Pixa jr.; sung by Marie Vršeková, 1969)

The principle of combining phrases from a foreign language in a chorus or at another point in the song inspired some home-grown lyricists in the 1960s. It can even be found emerging in popular songs originally composed in Czech. Top of the list is the parodic story of an enamoured Brit in Brno:

O.K. Mařena (B. Sedláček/ J. Čekan, sung by Pantůček brothers, 1964)

C'est la vie (J. Klempíř/ J. Štáidl, sung by Karel Gott, 1966)

Oh, baby, baby (B. Ondráček/ J. Schneider, sung by Helena Vondráčková, Marta Kubišová, 1966)

Lady Carneval (Karel Svoboda/ J. Štáidl, sung by Karel Gott 1968)

Such paltry bits of the outside world gave Czechoslovakia, trapped in the pincers of the socialist bloc, at least the smallest semblance of some modest opening onto the world. Languages spoken in the socialist bloc surrounding the country were limited in their Slavonic-ness, eventually German and Hungarian figured as well. Not one of these languages fitted the dance rhythms which were integral to the modern direction popular music was taking. A short-lived

exception was the relatively large popularity Hungarian rock groups enjoyed during the first half of the 1960s (omega, Locomotiv GT, Illés, Metro). The influence of Polish popular music, the country's jazz, reggae and rock scene continuously gave birth to very interesting fruit, but it was limited (with the exception of Czesław Nieman or the group SBB) to the north of Bohemia and in particular the north of Moravia. The mix of inhabitants in border regions and the mutual contact accelerated into bilingual projects after 1989. A recent musical theatrical performance and album by Jaromír Nohavica, Tomáš Kočko, Renata Putzlacher and Radovan Lipus has a typically 'macaroni' double-title: Těšinské niebo/ Cieszyńskie nebe (Brno 2004, Indies Records).

### **From 'Swahili' to 'Vlodivojnish' to International Globetrotting**

The new wave of rock music in the late 1970s, early 1980s, brought with it a new approach to working with the Czech language. At the forefront of songwriters' interest was communication with the listener. Foreign languages therefore appeared in such songs only minimally. Writers of these new-wave songs, however, very much favoured the use of bizarre and funny neologisms and words stuck together unusually. One of the foremost bands of this era was Pražský výběr, who started to call the language they used in some of their songs 'Swahili'. The real Swahili language, an East-African Saharan



language, contains a lot of expressions which sound to a Czech audience extremely unusual and completely incomprehensible. In the past, spontaneously and out of fun, people had called a cluster of sonically expressive syllables which the band had recorded on a demotape of their new songs, which would serve as a basis for writing the lyrics around later, 'Swahili'. But Pražský výběr really were inspired by a Swahili-Czech dictionary and integrated into their lyrics some evocative-sounding words like kato, pase, javali savali... This was not just supposed to be funny and to introduce the listener to a new sound, but the use of such words equally conveyed a sense of playfulness and freedom of expression. The impression of a code and a conspiracy also played an important role.

Others were influenced indirectly (often subconsciously) by the 'Swahili' legacy of the new wave; those influenced were often adherents to the modern trend of world music. For example the group Posmrtné zkušenost employed neologisms in the titles of their songs such as Vlkolíneč, Pehuenchos and Tarifa (from the album Aither, Možnost, Indies Records 2006). Or take, for example, the Brno band Čankišou, who dreamt up an imaginary territory belonging to the Čanki people and who sing many of their songs in 'Čanki', which combines freely-created evocative combinations of consonants with words from actual ethnic languages. Their album Gamagaj (FT Records 2004), for example, contains the compositions Tajo<sup>11</sup>, Lebada Roti, Buri na Lati and Henaá. Similarly

the duo 'Dva' from Hradec Králové compose lyrics from fragments taken from languages like Hungarian, Finnish, French and others. Their album Fonók (Indies Scope Records 2008) includes translations into Czech as well as into English, however, the main reason for their original multilingual lyrics is to serve as an amusing audio game<sup>12</sup>.

A very unusual and original contemporary variant upon 'Swahili' is the work of an Ostrava-based singer who performs under the name of Vladivojna la Chia. With her group Banana she has recorded three albums (Banana, 2003, Trip, 2004, Jungle, 2006, all on Universal Music). Vladivojna created her own language in the course of her childhood, her 'Vladivojnish' often imitates Czech, in part English, German, Dutch, Japanese and Russian. Even when she does sing in Czech, she treats the language very freely.<sup>13</sup> From its rules, she creates new forms and conjoined words. The roots of her musical language go back to her childhood, which she spent alone and uncommunicative. Her inner world is enriched by an above average number of dreams and fantasies, a virtual world with a whole network of characters and mutual relationships. As an artist, she also designs her album covers. An integral component of her concerts is movement on the stage, dance with lots of colourful outfits and wigs. The significance of her language can be found mostly in the sphere of emotion. From half-improvised and half-fixed consonant clusters

to unbelievably quick and throatily-produced rhythmic syllables, she expresses extreme moods and precarious emotions. The resulting impression leans tension by different grotesquely colourful and varied vocal pitches from a high falsetto down to a heavy-metal growl. Beside purely emotional communication we can find in several of Vladivojna's texts even more concrete codes and clues to hidden meanings (for example "samčo samčo pudolero" indicates a male's instinct).

But let's return to actual languages. Europe, and the world as a whole, opened up for Czechs after 1989. People could travel as they so wished, and took advantage of this. When the female a-capella group Yellow Sisters make a journey to Africa, you can be sure that they will bring back a song in one of the local languages (see their album *Singalana*, Indies Scope Records 2006). The level of English and other foreign languages which young people speak today is incomparable with that of, let's say, thirty years ago. 'Macaroni' word games of the sort "*sleep, sleep, sleep my baby/ slípky už šly spát (the hens have already gone to bed)/ cheese, cheese cheese my baby, čistotu mám rád (I like cleanliness)/ love, love, love my baby/ lavor mi podej (hand me the basin)*" (from the song 'Do you speak English?' from the album 'Jednou měř', 2 x Neřež, Indies Records 2004) are noticeable and understandable to almost every educated person. There are increasingly large amounts of space to use foreign languages for a concrete, artistic

purpose. In recent years a whole number of examples can be found of people doing just that, for example the globetrotting Radůza, who enjoys wandering through Europe with her guitar or her accordion in tow. Along the way, she finds stories in and inspiration from the most varied of languages. And these things are then incorporated into her songs.

The album 'V hoře' contains phrases from five different European languages. And not one of them is English. The significance of using foreign languages in her case lies in enriching the final sound of the song, in the joy of belonging to several regions at once, to Europe, to a world community. Equally Radůza enjoys depicting different national characters. The song 'Na Sever (Førde)' contains a phrase in Norwegian. The Czech text is then used in a way so as to sound like Norwegian, that is to say in a more harsh-sounding way. In the composition 'De Nîmes', which has entire verses in French, the singer does the opposite and maintains the contrast between the way the two languages sound.

A stejně jako  
doma v Praze

*And just as it is  
here in Prague*

nad fjordem førde

*The fjord above the fjord*

z nebe Bůh volá na zem

*From heaven God  
cries down to earth*

Hei! Hvordan går det?    *Hey! How are you doing?*

Na mě Thor dup    *Thor stamps on me*

tak do hor jdu    *So I leave for the hills*

a tu svou českou mordu    *And there, my  
Czech face*

smočím ve fjordu    *I moisten in the fjord*

*(From 'Na sever'/'Førde', CD Radůza:  
V hoře, Indies Records 2005)<sup>14</sup>*

## Conclusion

There are hundreds of different languages in the world and each one has its own specific traits. It is obviously an advantage to have a mother tongue which is spoken all over the globe, and which also has lots of other native speakers. But this advantage can lead to complacency and laziness. Being a small nation with a language only spoken regionally can sometimes have its advantages too. It is more necessary for Czechs to learn other foreign languages, and this in turn brings with it the understanding of more systems of thought and ways of feeling. Through learning foreign languages, Czechs are able to take into account the obvious rhythmic and sonic transformations and richness of different languages.

The significance of foreign-language elements in lyrics which are otherwise written in Czech can be found on several levels. The most immediate effect on the listener is the unusual sound which foreign phrases and words have. They can help create the atmosphere of a song or they can serve a humorous and satirical purpose, especially when the sound of a foreign expression corresponds to that of a Czech song-lyric written alongside it. A line or a stanza in a foreign language can serve in a song, just as it does in common speech, as a means of adding the appearance of expertise, lending the one who uttered it an aura of education. From there, it is just a small step towards parody and the ridiculing of such attempts. Then there is the play with symbolic meanings, linked to a wide scale of shades of meaning and comprehension: from the concrete reference itself, through the uncertain ways in which lots of foreign expressions are understood, through to complete misunderstanding. The play with symbolic meanings can also generally be linked with the whole cultural way that a foreign nation is perceived. It can serve to depict a character or as a typological reference. Instead of a foreign language being employed, this can also work when the incorrect pronunciation of a foreigner speaking Czech is mimicked in a song.

Each foreign language can be used in a Czech national context in different directions, with different functions and effects. Indeed the public's own experiences, their upbringing, and age are all very important in terms

of the way that the foreign language is received and understood. German has different connotations for people who lived through the Second World War, just as the use of Arabic can have different associations before and after September 11.

The function of internal linguistic rhythms and sounds is stable. Historical legacies, political appeals and references to the most varied of social situations or other artistic fields can be in different contexts perceived differently. Sometimes one foreign word used in a Czech context can be enough to evoke a whole range of different meanings. Sometimes an entire text in a foreign language is employed to do so, or a mix of two different languages in the old 'macaroni song' tradition. In each and every one of these cases, the penetration of foreign languages into our national speech, including our popular song lyrics, characterises an enrichment of our lives, perception of art, and the world around us.

## Endnotes

1. Balajka 1970, p. 49.
2. Dějiny českého divadla 1971, p. 9 and 31, also Vlašín 1977, p. 218. Audio extract Nr I.
3. Audio extract Nr II and III.
4. Helfert 1924; Opekar 1972, p. 652.
5. Dějiny českého divadla 1971, p. 17-18 and 34, example No. 28. Audio extract Nr IV.
6. Chadima 2005.
7. Sound extract V.
8. Voskovec, Werich 1934. Sound extracts VI and VII.
9. Suchý 1999. Sound extract VIII.
10. Karásek 1993. Sound extracts IX and X.
11. Audio extract Nr XI .
12. Audio extract Nr XII.

13. Audio extract Nr XIII.

14. Audio extract Nr XIV.

## Audio Extracts

I. "Sed', vem přišel mistr Ypokras" from the play "Mastičkář"

II. "Morituri te salutant" by Karel Kryl

III. "Král a klaun" by Karel Kryl

IV. "Já jsem mutr domovnice" from a Czech couplet

V. "Gorleben" by Mikoláš Chadima

VI. "Pra – pra – prabába mé prabáby by Voskovec and Werich

VII. "Pohádka o katu a bláznu" by Voskovec and Werich

VIII. "Sou fár tu ju ajmej" from the film "Limonádový Joe" by Karel Gott

IX. "Je pozdě" by Svatopluk Karásek

X. "Řekni d'áblovi ne" by Svatopluk Karásek

XI. "Tajo" by the group Čankišou

XII. "Kisma ajoas" by the group Dva

XIII. "Jelo Banana" by Vladivojna La Chia and the group Banana

XIV. "Na sever" (Førde) by Radůza

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## Stardom, genre, and myth: The role of pre-existing popular songs in Aki Kaurismäki's film

### "The Man without a Past"

Erkki Pekkilä

#### Introduction

Let me start with a quotation: "Flipper machines, jukeboxes, rockabilly records, the tango.... garbage containers, blue moons, blue moments, losers, paradise in the shadows, low life, rock and roll, Melrose Avenue, vodka, petty criminals, cars, the right road, guitars, beer cans, cords...." The list continues, but this is how Robert Connah characterizes Aki Kaurismäki's films in his book entitled "A Couple of Finns and some Donald Ducks". (Connah 1991).

Aki Kaurismäki, the Finnish film director who directs, writes and produces his films, has created an imaginary world consisting of old cars and interiors that is repeated from one film to another, thus creating a number of intertextual connections between the films. What is also typical of Kaurismäki is that there is a lot of music in his films. The music usually consists of pre-existing music from the fifties and sixties, mostly in Finnish. Even though Kaurismäki's films are based on Finnish music and also on the exaggeration of a number of Finnish national peculiarities, he still has quite a few fans in a

number of countries, including Germany, Japan, France and, to some extent, even in the United States.

My paper deals with a film by Kaurismäki, "The Man without a Past", from 2003. It is a story about an unnamed man, called in the film "M", who is robbed and brutally beaten in a park, as a result of which he develops amnesia. Without remembering who he is and from where he comes, he starts a new life in a community of outcasts who live in abandoned shipping cargo containers. The film has a happy ending; the man starting a relationship with a female Salvation Army officer.

As in Kaurismäki's films in general, there is a lot of music in the film. The soundtrack is very eclectic, consisting of Finnish rockabilly, American blues standards, Salvation Army songs, and even a Japanese song. The music also has a distinctive role in the plot.

What is typical of Kaurismäki's films is that he seems to be enamored with old Finnish hits and pop songs from the fifties and sixties, which are also performed in the

original language they were written in. Another thing is that Kaurismäki also uses visible sound sources like jukeboxes to justify the use of pre-existing music. He also often uses guest stars from the popular music of past years, as well as old Finnish schlager songs, their lyrics becoming a commentary of the film.

He thus mixes up everyday reality and fiction. There is the “raw” reality that is close to everyday life. Furthermore, there is also the level of mythical reality displayed in the lyrics of the songs, created from the songs’ vague and symbolic nature. Moreover, there is also one level of reality caused by the presence of the famous pop singers since they have life histories of their own and bring something from those with them to the film. Finally, there is naturally also the plot of the film, the narrative level of which the pre-existing pop songs used in the film become a part of. Thus, the film is composed of a number of different elements with different meanings and connotations, and this is what makes a Kaurismäki film a complicated text and an “open” text: there may be a number of different readings of it.

### **The Jukebox**

In film music theory, a distinction is made between “diegetic” and “non-diegetic” music, the former denoting music coming from a visible source and the latter so called mood or underscore music. What is very typical of

Kaurismäki is that he seems to be avoiding underscore music and using diegetic music. Thus, there is often a visible sound source like a radio receiver or jukebox visible in the scene. A visible sound source is naturally a convenient way to justify the use of music. However, the jukebox especially seems to bear a number of cultural connotations.

In one of the scenes in the film, M wants to become a small-time rock promoter. As his girlfriend is a female Salvation Army officer, M has contact with a Salvation Army band and decides to persuade them to play some rock and roll. After they express interest in the idea, M takes them to his home and tries to teach them by playing them some music from a jukebox, the brand of which is “U fonic M-120-M Hi-fi”.

The Salvation Army band members are sitting on a sofa with their uniform caps on their heads and listening to 12-bar guitar blues. M, a cigarette in his hand, sits in the role of a spiritual master: he is converting the Salvation Army band players into the faith of rock and roll. Although nobody is speaking, we can see that the music has an effect on the listeners: one of the players starts to drum his knees with his hands, and somebody’s foot is tapping the ground. M smiles as he watches his pupils.

The scene actually references to an early Kaurismäki

film “The Leningrad Cowboys Go America”. This was a road movie about a Finnish rock band who went to the United States to make the big time there, but after travelling through the whole country, ended up becoming a band playing weddings in Mexico. The scene is also an homage to the actor Matti Pellonpää, who played the manager in the Leningrad Cowboys film and was featured in a number of Kaurismäki’s films until he suddenly died of a heart attack some years ago.

However, if we think about the importance of the jukebox, it becomes here a fetish, a symbol of the mythical era of the 1950s and 1960s. On a more general level, the jukebox also becomes a symbol of the emergence of rock and roll and the American dream that Kaurismäki gently mocks in his film. Kaurismäki thus juxtaposes the American dream represented by the jukeboxes and old American cars with the European reality.

Another way in which Kaurismäki uses diegetic music is that he often hires elderly Finnish popular music stars. In his film “The Match Factory Girl”, for instance, Kaurismäki used a scene where a famous tango singer from the 1960s, Reijo Taipale, was performing with his band. In “The Man Without a Past” another pop star from recent years, Annikki Tähti, whose last name, by the way, is a pun and really means “a star” in Finnish language. What is interesting about these elderly stars

is that they bring with them an aura from a certain time period as well as something from their own “star text”, the mythical personal history based on their career.

### **Annikki Tähti**

In “The Man without a Past” is the role of a Salvation Army flea market supervisor played by Annikki Tähti, one of the most famous female vocalists at the end of the fifties and sixties, when her career was at its peak. She recorded some 200 songs and her voice was frequently heard on the Finnish radio. She also acted in a number of Finnish “schlager parade” films. The films, which were mainly meant as a marketing tool, were a cavalcade of popular songs performed by a number of stars of that time. They had some sort of a plot to integrate the songs into. Anyway, these films made Annikki Tähti a media persona whose face was familiar to the audience.

Tähti’s presence in Kaurismäki’s film in a cameo role is interesting in the sense that after the sixties Tähti gave up singing for a while and withdrew from public life. Thus her appearance in the film in a role of the thrift shop manager and amateur singer might make someone think that this is what she has been doing all of these years in reality, as well.

In the film, Tähti sings two songs, which have an important meaning to the film. During the first song, M,

Film Narrative		Song Lyric
1	The song is introduced to the audience by a Salvation Army officer	-
2	-	The verse and the refrain of the song are played by a rockabilly band and sung by Annikki Tähti
3	Dialogue between the two Salvation Army officers	Instrumental part
4	Dialogue between M and Irma, he asks her for a date	Instrumental part continues
5	-	The song continues with the verse

the protagonist, starts a love affair with Irma, a female Salvation Army officer. During the second, they obviously become a couple.

### **So small is the heart of man**

At the beginning of the first scene a Salvation Army officer introduces the song that is going to follow. Then the song begins. The band is playing, the singer is singing, the audience seen on the film is listening to the music. During the instrumental part of the song, there is a dialogue between two Salvation Army officers and then between M and Irma. M asks Irma for a date and after a short hesitation, Irma agrees. The song then continues and ends.

There are different levels of reality in the scene. Firstly, the scene has a connection to “raw” reality or to certain historical facts. For instance, the role of the male Salvation Army officer who introduces the song is

played by Peter von Bagh, who appears in a cameo role. In real life, he is a famous film historian who has also written a number of books on the history of Finnish popular music. Annikki Tähti, the vocalist, is also here in a cameo role, and the song she sings is one of her big hits from the fifties. Thus the scene is a mixture of a documentary and a tribute to old Finnish popular songs and their performers.

On the other hand, the scene is a part of the film plot. The Salvation Army officer first announces the song, thus framing it and making it a part of the film story. In the middle of the song is the dialogue between the male and female protagonists.

Furthermore, there is also a third level, and that is the level of the song lyrics. The song lyrics use poetic language about one's heart and feelings, about dreams and contrasting emotions like hate and love, joy and pain, happiness and sorrow. In real life we would

probably relate the vague concepts of the lyrics into our personal experiences and think about what they mean to us. However, in the film context, we relate the song lyrics to the story of the film. Thus, as the vocalist sings about “burning emotions” and a “frozen feeling”, we attach these to the characters of the film.

Even though the music of the song is pre-existing, in context of the film it becomes part of the film. Here it both absorbs meanings from the film, and shows the old song in a new light. Thus the line in the song, “So small is the heart of man, such vast, uncharted land, within it you find the grandest dreams...” becomes a commentary on the emerging love affair of the couple in the film. The song, even though it is diegetic music, becomes a kind of mood music, and thus affects us and our reading of the film.

### **Do you remember Monrepos?**

I would now like to tell you about the “aura” that Annikki tähti creates as she sings her 1955 gold record song, “Do you remember Monrepos?” at the end of the film.

In the film, Tähti is accompanied by a twang guitar band. Stylistically, the song is a fusion of a traditional 1950s hit and the later twang guitar music of the sixties. Although Annikki Tähti had never before performed with a guitar band, the scene does not distort the Finnish

history of popular music but is in a certain sense truthful to it. Namely, this musical style actually existed in the eighties when two artists, Badding Somerjoki and Topi Sorsakoski, would sing with the accompaniment of a sixties-style twang guitar band.

On the narrative level, the scene is built on the song in much the same manner as the song in the previous scene, “So Small is the Heart of Man”. Thus, we are first invited to watch the performance of the song. Right in the middle of the song, however, we are shown the reunion of the loving couple of the male hero and the female Salvation Army officer. The music fades out so that we can hear their dialogue better. After some hand holding and staring into each other’s eyes, the couple leaves the building, walks across the rails at the railway station and then disappears into the distance. After this, we hear the last stanza of the song; the music here playing the role of non-diegetic, underscore music that affects our mood. This is what takes place on the surface level, corresponding to what an ordinary viewer can see.

On the surface level, there is a band playing and a female singer singing a song on the screen. The song is a melancholy waltz and is paradigmatically linked with a number of other international waltz tunes: similar songs can probably be found in any country. Thus the song



becomes a sign of a certain musical genre, the waltz. On a musical level, we have this melancholy minor melody where the hook is probably the Ab7 chord in C minor in the second bar of the song.

However, there is also a second reading of the scene, which is based on certain cultural-historical facts and on a number of associations. This song, “Do you remember Monrepos?”, was a hit song in the 50s. Actually, Monrepos is not a fictional place but a real one. The Monrepos the song tells about is an English garden near the city of Viborg in Karelia, and the park is a tourist attraction today. It dates back to the 18th century when it was a part of the grounds of Earl Ludwig von Nikolay’s mansion. The tragedy linked to the park is that it and the whole Karelian territory where it was situated were annexed to the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Thus “Do you remember Monrepos?”, although seemingly a light nostalgic song about a beautiful park and perhaps love, as well, is also a hidden lament about lost territories and a lost war. The symbolic value of Monrepos is heightened by the fact that Karelia, where Monrepos is situated, was the area where Elias Lönnrot collected rune songs and most of the material for the Kalevala, the Finnish national epic -- and is thus a holy land. Actually, there was even a statue of Väinämöinen, the hero of the Kalevala epos, in Monrepos, but it was destroyed during the war. Thus on a connotative level

the song can be regarded as a time machine that takes us back to the European post-war era and to the post-war “Angst” or anxiety.

Although this all is anachronistic in the sense that the film takes place in an undefined presence, the connotative meanings that the song may evoke beautifully match the narration. After all, the hero is defeated and poor, just like post-war Europe, and he has also suffered a number of losses. He lost his job, his house, his former wife, and even his collection of LPs playing blackjack. Furthermore, he has become an amnesiac in the robbery and lost all memories of his past. However, there is also an optimistic undertone in the song lyrics since, when telling about the beautiful park, the words also hint at a love affair that may have taken place there. In a way, too, the lyrics tell about an imaginary fairy land where M and his new love seem to be heading when they disappear into the distance and the film ends.

### **Reading the film**

To conclude, I would like to say something about the use of pre-existing popular music in films. Kaurismäki makes extensive use of old popular songs in all of his films. He especially seems to be enamored of the songs of the fifties and sixties. When there is some pre-existing popular music in a film, it automatically brings with it a number of connotative meanings about the

historical era it dates from. The performers, especially when performing in the film in cameo roles as Annikki Tähti has in this film, bring with them a certain kind of “aura”.

Firstly, popular songs signify an era of time. This is due to the fact that popular music is based on fashion and fashion changes quickly. When we hear an old song, we immediately know which decade it comes from. Another thing that is also important is the lyrics. The songs have lyrics. They are sung in a given language. The song and the language connects the song to a certain geographical and linguistic area. Thus they give the scenes some local flavor. Quite similarly, the song lyrics also become part of the narrative because their context determines how we read them. The same applies to the musical stars in cameo roles, since they also become characters in the film narrative.

From an international perspective, most viewers will probably deal with the songs on the level of musical genres. One might say that many popular music genres -- like the tango, the waltz, or the foxtrot -- are international and their local variations are comparable to speech or idiolect. For instance, the twang guitar music that Kaurismäki often uses, is an international phenomenon. It could be compared to a certain kind of language which, however, has local variants that could be called,

in a Saussurian sense, as “parole”. On a surface level, the twang guitar music in the United States, England, Italy, and Finland is more or less the same. However, on a deeper level there are national varieties and what is more important, also natural meanings.

It is obvious that there are two alternative ways of reading a film with pre-existing popular music. It seems that on the horizontal axis, or on the syntactical level, the songs used in a film always become part of the film narrative and derive their meanings from the context of the film. Thus it may not be necessary for the viewer to know anything about the cultural connotations of the music used. This may also explain the fact that even though in Kaurismäki's films the music often consists of Finnish schlagers and pop songs, the films still have an international appeal and there is an international -- although limited -- audience for them.

However, it also seems that on the vertical, or on the paradigmatic or cultural level, the songs also evoke different kinds of cultural and connotative meanings, the interpretation of which needs some cultural competency. This level of signification is culturally bound and its roots are in the local history of popular music, the life histories of the artists and the history of the nation in question. On this level, the performers in cameo roles contribute their “star texts” and thus affect the reading of the film.

Similarly, individual songs always carry a number of signifiers referring to a certain time, place and cultural setting. Awareness of this level is not essential for appreciating the film, but it gives rise to one possible way of reading the film.

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## Appendix

### Pieni sydän (So small is the heart of man)

Visuals	Lines	Song Lyrics	Song Structure	Comment
A male Salvation Army officer (Peter von Bagh, a famous film historian in a cameo role).	“Because tomorrow is Midsummer, although a pagan feast, our choir will now make an exception and perform a song about the human heart. In its lyrics, however, we discover thoughts of the futility of our worldly life without Christ”.	-	-	The song is placed in the framework of the film plot.
Annikki Tähti and a “rockabilly” combo perform before a group of homeless people. (Tähti is a famous schlager singer in a cameo role).	-	“So small is the heart of man, so vast, uncharted land, within it you find the grandest dreams, the worlds of hate and love.”	A (stanza)	Reality (on the level of the visuals) meets the myth of song lyrics. Annikki Tähti and real homeless people make the story more “true”.
The singer, her band, and the audience.	-	“The wealth of all joy, the sum of all sorrows, glorious love and pain’s poisonous arrows. all can be found in the smallest of hearts, happiness, joy, oh!”	B (stanza)	As there is no dialogue nor a storyline here, the viewer listens to the song lyrics.

The singer, her band, and the audience. Some persons start to dance.	-	“Shallow thoughts and noble ideals burning emotions and frozen feelings All those can be found in the smallest of hearts all that fate brings by...	B (verse)	Focus on the song lyrics.
Two male Salvation Army officers have a conversation.	“I wonder if this was a wise thing to do?” “God knows, but let them dance.”	-	C (instrumental interlude)	The viewer is reminded that the song belongs to the story of the film.
M (the hero) and Irma, the female Salvation Army officer, have a conversation.	“Will you go out with me on Saturday?” “We are out now”. “I’ve got a car, too.” “I can’t set up shady meetings during working hours. But it’s all right”.	-	C	The plot of the film now continues.
Annikki Tähti continues performing her song.	-	“So small is the heart of man, so vast, uncharted land -- within it you find the grandest dreams...	A	Although diegetic, the song now functionally becomes non-diegetic, underscore music. It is a commentary on a previous dialogue, thus reflecting the inner feelings of the characters.

## Bastard Pop: Signification, Practices and Textuality

Andrea Perna

First of all, I would like to provide a short definition of bastard pop: an illegal genre born in the Internet few years ago. A bootleg remix (this is the name of the bastard pop pieces) is the vertical mixing of two already published songs taken from different genres whose connection sounds ironic and strange. The instrumental part of a song (you can easily get it cutting off the frequencies of the vocals) is played a tempo with the vocal part of another song, which is illegally downloaded from the Internet through file-sharing software.<sup>1</sup>

The diffusion of home made music and, of course, of the home remixing phenomenon, are quite well known. But bastard pop, compared to the others, is the *practice* which has raised major curiosity.

Even if Simon Reynholds wrote some clever instant comments about bastard pop (Reynholds, 2004, 289-307), the hype about it has not led to a systematic consideration yet; maybe due to its light and often kitsch features.

The aim of this research - conducted with the instruments of semiotics - on the contrary, was to avoid any bias or personal aesthetic opinion in order to maintain a *bonne distance*, which becomes essential when it comes to contemporary matters. So the focus is on the two faces

of bastard pop's signification: its textuality and the *social signifying practices* it involves.

I would like to make it clear that in this paper *practices* are considered, as stated by Ferraro, as *widespread forms of an everyday semiotic and social acting*. They lay in between the top made of codes and grammars, and the bottom made of texts.

The increasing diffusion in what Lotman has called *semiosphere* of trans- and meta-textual hybrids, of new modalities of production and fruition of the mediatic textuality and of manipulatory practices in already configured texts, forces the disciplines working on texts (like popular music studies do) to look in three directions: a) the semiotics of culture by Yuri Lotman; b) Roland Barthes' suggestions about the open text and the *Plaisir du texte* (Barthes, 1973); c) Omar Calabrese's insight about the *Zeitgeist* of the *età neobarocca* (Calabrese, 1987). So we should think of an open text (Barthes) in time (Calabrese) and in the semiotic space (Lotman's *semiosphere*).

The first matter we have to face talking about bastard pop is understanding whether it can be described as a genre, a style, a form or a practice. Musicologists would say it is a 'repertoire'. But it is not arguable that other



more “dangerous” categories are richer than ‘repertoire’. Style and genre are too vague and do not properly fit this object, which evidently entails something more than genres and styles do. Since our method is semiotics, ‘form’ seems to better fit the idea of textuality, but this category fails to take into consideration something as important as textuality: the production of bootleg remixes is different from the production of other musical forms, so we must look at bastard pop as a practice too.

We could study bastard pop as a ‘phenomenon’, that is what the Italian dictionary Zanichelli describes as «everything that can be observed and studied through direct knowledge. [...] A fact which can be distinguished through peculiar features.<sup>2</sup>

This word allows to take into consideration both the pertinent faces of this analysis: the *form* (*textuality*) and the *practice*.

It seems clear that as far as bastard pop is concerned, we need to consider what Umberto Eco - since his *Lector in fabula* - has always left out of his researches about interpretation, that is the *use* of texts in order to create new ones and the *practices* involving the enunciator and enunciatee, mixing up and reworking their roles.

Bastard pop is one of the first results of the combination between the possibilities provided by digital technologies and the distribution of music through the Internet (Reynholds defines it as «the definitive aesthetic

expression of file-sharing consciousness, where history and geography are transcended») (Reynholds, 2004). In fact, it is based on the editing facilities that easy to use pieces of software - like, for instance, *Acid* - provide every owner of a computer; and the availability, through file-sharing software, of almost any song and in any recorded version of it. It is an extreme way - and maybe Lotman himself, who talked about texts from the past constantly entering culture (Lotman, 2000), did not think about it - of reworking texts and make them source of new information.

According to Diderot’s *Encyclopédie*, bastard pop should be an ‘empirical’ art as it is made adapting materials by cutting and combining them through fusion, composition etc. (Diderot, 1773) These deformations, according to Greimas, are not themselves an aim: «but an attempt to give a new coherence, a second level signifying organization» (Greimas, 1976). Unlike remix, which demonstrates that we can never consider closed any text and that any version is only one of the many possible textual coherences, bastard pop demonstrates the promiscuity and the possibilities of proliferation of texts in that macro-text constituted by the *semiosphere*.

The fact that who makes bootleg remixes is not authorized, is not a negligible detail as far as attantial roles. Like remix, it is a *practical reading*, that is the carrying out of a *recreational enunciative praxis*. In the

same way, when you make a bootleg remix you are doing *endosemiotic interpretation* acting on a substance that has already been carried into effect. But, unlike remix, in bootleg remixes this substance comes from two texts and so, before finding the textual coherence inside the new text, some kind of textual coherence has to be found (or imposed) between the two source texts.

Besides carrying out a *practical reading*, when you make a bootleg remix, you are of course doing a *writing act* fulfilling «the possibility of composing a space according to a will.» (de Certeau, 1990) But if in *writing*, according to Derrida, «an asymmetric division indicated, on the one hand, the fact that the book is closed and, on the other, that the text is open» (Derrida, 1967), with bootleg remix this asymmetry gets so thin that it almost disappears: both the text and the file are open and incorporeal and share more similarities than the book and the record do.

I propose to distinguish two kinds of bootleg remix that I have called *rhythm oriented* and *harmony oriented* respectively. The first one is made by the juxtaposition of segments of two (or more) different songs on a common omorhythmic base. At least one of the songs must not have strong harmonic features - just like, for instance, most hip hop music. Lots of cases are sensibly different from this description, but they should be included in this first category if the rhythmic element is the main one.

But the kind of bootleg remix this paper is focused on is the second one, the harmonic oriented. It is made through

the insertion of the vocal part (and sometimes of other elements that strongly characterize the melodic profile) of one song on the instrumental part (characterized and recognizable in its turn) of another. I called this kind of bootleg remix 'harmonic oriented' because attention is focused on harmonic superimposability and not on just a common rhythm. Here the fact that the pieces share the same rhythm and tempo is just a precondition, and the harmonization of the two fragments is a feature that rhythm oriented bootleg remixes do not have.

Besides having an extra feature, harmonic oriented bootleg remix (which from here will be called just 'bootleg remix', since I will not take into consideration the other type anymore) is not subject to the functional logic of dance music and has larger expressive autonomy, allowing it to put into action more complex textual and narrative strategies.

One of the main points in bastard pop is the question of authorship. I want to make clear the positions of the subjects involved in the enunciation of a bootleg remix, since common sense expressions referring to the authors of source songs and to the DJs making the bootleg remix can be misleading.

First, we have to consider the problems of authorship in popular music, in general. Unlike other arts like painting, where the author is unambiguously just one, in this case everyone who has worked on music, lyrics,

arrangement, interpretation, recording and mixing is, in a different way or level, an *empirical co-author*. But in the common perception the interpreter is «regarded as the Author with capital “A”». He is identified as the enunciator, who, according to Fontanille, is an *arci-actant*, the syncretism of many attantial roles. Since he is the one who raises the narration, he «is both the character and the event. [...] The song is listened to as if it was a story told in first person by a narrator who is physically inside the text through the grain of his voice.» (Sibilla, 2003, 115-6) The author can not manage the game of his presence/absence through the use of *débrayage* and *embrayage* in the same way this happens in other textual forms, like the ones enunciated using the natural languages are.

In bastard pop things get more complicated because there are two source songs, whose authors become *hypo-authors*, and one target song with its *meta-author*, who becomes it after having been *empirical reader* of the hypo-texts.<sup>3</sup>

This enunciatinal tangle rises from the fact that the material of bastard pop are the original parts of the hypo-texts. In fact, the idea of singing a song on the instrumental base of another giving thus birth to a third one is not new at all. Some performers who love cross quotation often do it in their live performances. In this case he (since the interpreter is credited as the Author with capital “A”) is regarded as the enunciator and the subject of the new enunciative

doing; he is the person who suggests *suo nomine* a new interpretation of the hypo-texts. The modality of this kind of practice is quotation. According to de Certeau «to quote is to confer reality to a simulacrum produced by a power, letting believe that other people believe in it, but without providing them any credible objects. [...] In the scriptural culture, quotation combines effects of interpretation (allows to produce a text) with effects of alteration (dis-quiets the text). [...] The *reminiscence-quotation* [...] marks the unusual and fragmentary return in language (like a gash of voice).» (de Certeau, 1990)

On the contrary, in bastard pop the author of the target song is perceived as a meta-author and - which is most interesting - he is the subject of a *re-interpretative doing*, while the authors of the hypo-texts are still the subjects of the *enunciative doing*. So, who creates that kind of closed texts that works of popular music are, undergo a retaliation in which they are responsible, in a more than figurative sense, for the violence that their works suffer. The modality of bastard pop is *making say* (vs *quoting*). Some more words are necessary here: the mechanical replica of an utterance directly involves the level of the relationship between the quoting author and the quoted author. Bernardelli writes:

*The quoting author seems to say «it is not me who is talking, [...] these are the exact words by another author.» Now the responsibility [...] is completely upon the quoted author. [...]*

*Notwithstanding the apparent mechanical involvement of only the textual level, in literal quotation the relationship between the two authorial figures - between the two different enunciations of one utterance - comes into play (and is often questioned as well). (Bernardelli, 2000, 36)*

Another interesting aspect in bastard pop is its peculiar paratextuality. According to Genette, the *peritext* is made of the interstices of the physical space of the text. In records it is the space filled with titles, pictures and credits. Due to the lack of a physical medium and to the possibility of being edited and put again in the Internet by anyone, the peritext of bootleg remixes differs from the one of phonographic genres both from the quantitative and the qualitative point of view. Firstly, the surface of bootleg remix is limited to the name of the file, but it is sometimes extended by using the first or the last part of the song in order to provide other information. In the version of *A Stroke of Genius*, while the music is fading-out, someone suggests the title and the author of the bootleg remix. That is quite similar to the era of ancient and medieval manuscripts that through the centuries have not had [...] any room to display the name of the author and the title of the work, apart from the possibility of integrating, or submerging them in the first (incipit) or last (explicit) sentences of the text. (Genette, 1987)

Nonetheless, the main place of the peritext of bastard pop is the space for the name of the file, which is quite flexible and extensible. It usually shows the name of the two artists from whose repertoire the ipotexts are taken, separated by "vs". This place of peritext has marked enunciative virtualities. It indicates the hypo-authors, and it may shape a conflictual relationship between them, in which the meta-author presents his text like the staging of a fight between subjects and texts. It happens in a bootleg remix where Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears - who, when I found it, were one of the most famous couple in the field of American pop - are put together, but, *separated* by 'vs', they become two clashing subjects.

Secondly, we find the title of the bootleg remix. It usually takes something from the titles of the hypotexts (and sometimes the names of the hypo-authors) and irreverently mixes it anticipating the twisting they are going to undergo. We can see it in *Smells like teen booty*, where the combination of Nirvana's angst and Destiny's Child's frivolousness lead to this impudent title, which surely sounds insulting to fans of the band from Seattle.

Lastly, we find, but not in every bootleg remix, the name of the meta-author. Since we are talking about a *bootleg* practice, we never find the real names; but in popular music we have been accustomed to pseudonyms and aliases ever since. Pseudonyms can have different

valorization: 'Freelance Hellraiser', for instance, underlines the confusional, bewildering, subversive aspect; in 'Too many dj's', 'Frenchbloke' or 'Richard X', instead, the mask pseudonym aspect, meant to remain anonymous, is predominant and it is somehow similar to anarchical and subversive attitudes characterizing from the beginning some web user communities, like, for instance, the *Luther Blisset Project*. The use of pseudonyms (in order not to be identified) and the turning to anonymity (*structural*, due to the objective difficulty in putting the name in the paratextual space) are another echo of the pregutenbergian era and of the classical practice of anonymity.

The fact that every user of the Internet can *manipulate* (edit, delete etc.) the paratextual marks of bootleg remixes and afterwords release them on the Internet, brings about the loss of identification.

The release from an *anagrafic* system and the new *poacher like* modalities of fruition of the textual universe introduced by file-sharing software make bootleg remixes spring up with that mutagen character that ensures their hybrid, unrestrainable and *in divenire* essence. The control meta-authors *appropriate* can be continuously *dispossessed* by other subjects in a virtually endless chain, in which there is not one text and one original author anymore, but a rhizomatic body made by all the stratifications born of everyone who has anyhow acted or edited the text or any of its filiations.

To insert the melodic part of a song on the harmonic tissue of another song means, firstly, to *decontextualize* it, extrapolating it from the harmony for which it had been created (or that had been created around it), in order to *recontextualize* - and *resemantize* - it on another one independent from the first one.

If, following the *use*, one wants to create a consonant effect, he should find two songs whose lines harmonize. The fact that they are not dissonant or out of tune means that the graft created a new balance rather than an imbalance. Which produced variations among interval relationships between harmony and melody.

I did not find any example yet, but it is possible to use variations in interval relationships for aesthetic-expressive purposes rather than just seek for plain *euphony*. Now it is clear that the above mentioned *decontextualization* and *recontextualization* are not neutral at all as far as signification and thus expression and aesthetics. In fact, according to Stefani, intervals are not just pitch differences, but involve musical techniques, functional relationships within systems, styles and even social practices (Stefani, 1982, 41-84). A skilful musician creates a melody in relation to the harmony of a song benefiting from the opportunities provided by the interval relationships.

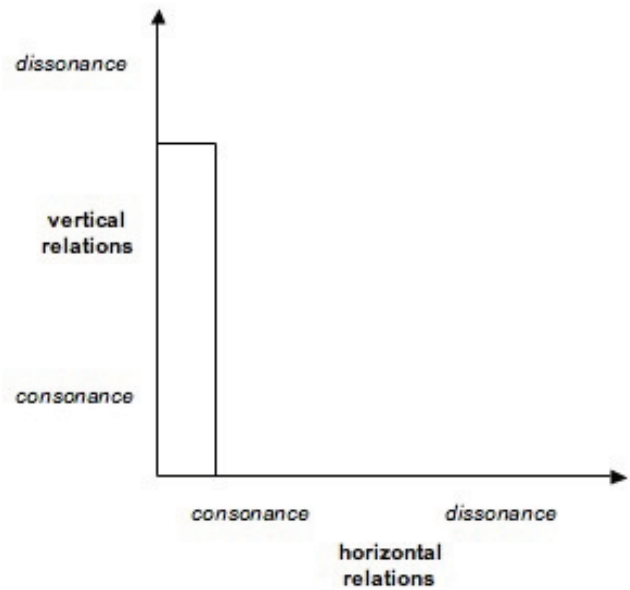
We can precisely examine the synchronic representation of the double articulation of interval relationships if we put on Cartesian axis in abscissa the linear-horizontal

(melodic) relation and in ordinate the vertical (harmonic) one. Consider a diatonic melody, plane and catchy, characterized by thirds (consonant interval), but built to be often in relationship of second major (slightly dissonant) with chords. This melody sounds euphonic from a horizontal point of view; but vertically some dissonances are perceived and it sounds less pleasant, resulting, as a whole, in a very peculiar effect. In instant T in graph 1 we can see a third in ordinate (so we are completely in the consonance zone) and a second major in abscissa (here we are in the beginning of the dissonance zone). To take this melody off its harmonic substratum means to decontextualize it and take that dissonant effect off, leaving it just a diatonic character which would probably sound banal.

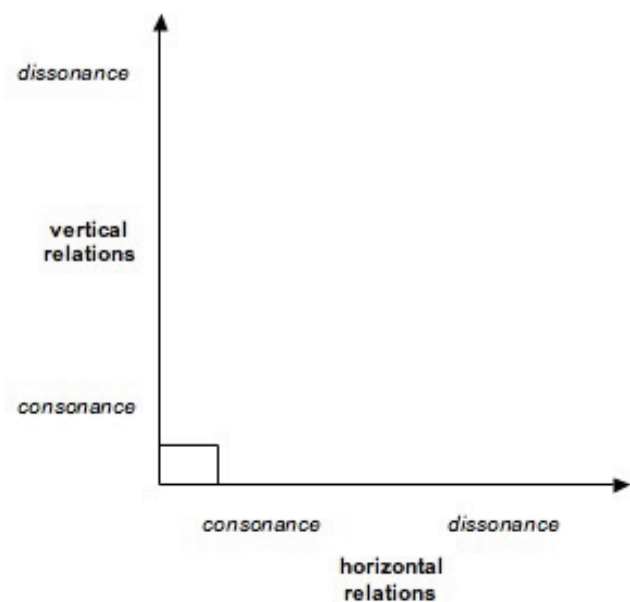
To recontextualize it on a chord basis with whom it keeps eighth relationships may mean to willingly stress the consonant aspect, thus creating a new sense effect, came off in contrast with the first one (see graph 2).

The decontextualization and the ricontextualization of the melody, just like of the instrumental part, share some features with *collage* and patchwork. According to Stefani, the patchwork process is dominant in the most popular kinds of melodies: «from the *ballata* to dances to the Sanremo's *canzone*, the use of *cliché*-phrases, of combined standard formulas is clearly an evident constant factor.» (Stefani, 1987, 136) In bastard pop the “figurative fragments” are not quotations but *carried into*

**Graph 1. Instant T**



**Graph 1. Instant T'**



*effect substances*. What is used is not just the expression or the content, but the sign *tout court*, and so the sign carries *both* the expression facet *and* the content facet. Besides being practices, *collage*, patchwork and bastard pop as well, are *forms of knowledge* based on mythical thought (vs scientific thought), or better, that “primary”



rather than primitive science which Lévi-Strauss has called *bricolage* (Lévi-Strauss, 1962). Unlike the scientist, who operates through concepts and thus aims at enlarging his instrumental universe, the *bricoleur* operates through signs and aims at *rearrangement*, which always leads to risemantization. Therefore, it is not arguable that the bootlegger is a *bricoleur*, just like some kinds of musicians are scientists. In fact, the musician has at his disposal the open set of tones, rhythms, timbres etc. Moreover, above all in classic music, the musical creation is often led by a project, for whose carrying out he does equip himself with *ad hoc* instruments.

The example of Edgar Varèse is to me very representative: he imagined a music made of sounds that can remain sustained at any pitch and asked engineer Lev Theremin to make an instrument able to produce that kind of sound.

On the contrary, the bootlegger works with the finite and irregular set of the songs he has at his disposal. After examining and screening this set, he adapts the original material drawing the fragments he will edit and recombine, modifying the tempo, the pitch and the volume of the sounds. The result of this operation depends both on the clash of the used signs and on the meaning they had in the original texts. Bastard pop is, as de Certeau could call it, «an combining art inseparably linked to an using art. (de Certeau, 1990)

## Endnotes

1. Bastard pop was born illegal, but after gaining some popularity some artists and labels started producing legal bastard pop. Of course, the name of this kind of pieces can not be 'bootleg remixes': I propose to call them "mash ups" or "soundclash", names that have already been used in journalism without distinguishing legal remixes from illegal ones. This paper aims to look into bootleg remixes because of their greater interest to semiotics compared to mash ups.

2. All the translations of the quotations in this paper are mine.

3. I want to underline that the meta-author has been empirical reader and not model reader, since he does not cooperate with the text, but acts on the text and uses it for poprous that the author did not foresee. (Eco, 1994, 50-85)

4. In tracing bastard pop back to the neobaroque aesthetics, to recall one of the symbols of gothic letterature - which is one of the first recurrence to the baroque sensibility - seems to me the first squaring of the circle.

5. The words "joint" and "mixing", and the concept of *bricolage* too, recall the idea of construction versus the

idea of discourse. In fact, the principle of construction shapes the doing and the enunciative praxis of bricolage and thus of bastard pop (just like the principle of discourse is immanent to the scientific thought). And the same principle is inside the material of this doing, that is the hypo-texts by which the bootleg remix is being constructed. The construction oriented texts are more economic. Like a wall shows the bricks it is made of, this kind of texts show their pieces, and so they are fit to be used for a new construction.

Decontextualization, ricontextualization, bricolage, collage, patchwork, construction. More: mosaic, piece, joint. They are all words that deal with the dialectic relationship between the idea of “part” and the idea of “whole”. According to Calabrese, the Zeitgeist of the età neobarocca (that is our age) is characterized by the loss of the whole and the twilight of integrity in favour of the polarity “part” and its two synonyms “detail” and “fragment” (Calabrese, 1987, 73-95).

Bastard pop, “art of the concrete”, plays with parts pointing out them to the detriment of the whole. Bastard pop substitutes the integrity, the one, the indivisible, the atomos with details and fragments. Bastard pop splits the atom. It operates on music, it makes a musicotomy. It dissects bodies-texts in order to reassemble them in a frankenstein,<sup>4</sup> monstrous and immoral being, born of profanations and exhumations.

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### Selected Discography

In this section I listed both mash ups and bootleg remixes. The last ones are marked with the abbreviation "W.I." (white label). I reported the date of publication only in the few cases it was specified in the file's tags - since it is almost impossible to come to know this information in other ways. Moreover, I reported the name of the authors and the titles according to the commonest reading (in almost any case there are files with conflicting paratextual marks).

*Fatboy Slim vs Public Enemy - Public Enemy 2000.*

W.I., 2000

*Daft Punk vs Prince - Kiss da Funk*. W.I., n.d.

*Basement Clash - The Magnificent Romeo*. W.I., n.d.

*Eminem vs James Brown - My Name is Sex Machine*. W.I., n.d.

*Yeah Yeah Yeahs vs Debbie Gibson - In My Dreams*. W.I., n.d.

*Bjork vs Depeche Mode - Violently Happy*. W.I., n.d.

*Daft Punk vs Madonna - Da Funk Music*. W.I., n.d.

Dj Blueglue. *Brandy vs Marvin Gaye - What about Sexual Healing*. W.I., 2002

Dj Brokenwindow. *Parallel Universe #1*. Violent Turd, 2002

---. *Parallel Universe #2*. Violent Turd, 2003

Dj Marchino. *Panjabi Mc vs Beastie Boys - Bach is movin'*. W.I., n.d.

Freelance Hellraiser. *Nas vs The Doors - It Ain't Hard to Tell*. W.I., n.d.

---. *The Strokes vs Christina Aguilera - A Stroke of Genius*. W.I., n.d.

Girls on Top. *Richard James vs Whitney Houston - I'm Licking Every Woman*. W.I., n.d.

Mochipet. *Combat*. Violent Turd, 2004

Richard X. *Gary Numan vs Sugarbabes - Freak like me*. W.I., n.d.

Saint Ken's. *Britney Spears vs Justin Timberlake - Like I Love Boys*. W.I., n.d.

Soulwax. *Destiny's Child vs Nirvana - Smells like Booty*. W.I., n.d.

## Manchester - Identity in the World's First Industrial City

Beate Peter

**M**usic made in Manchester that is: 10cc, A Guy Called Gerald, A Certain Ratio, 808 State, M People, Lisa Stansfield, Man from Delmonte, The Untamed, The Walkabouts, New Order, Durruti Column, Electronic, Stone Roses, Take That, Bee Gees, Bandwagon, The Smiths, Baby Suicide, Simply Red, Buzzcocks, Space Monkeys, The Dakotas, Quando Quango, The Riots, The Fall, Happy Mondays, James, Inspiral Carpets, Joy Division, John Cooper Clarke, and Oasis and many, many more.

This is what people in the UK come up with when asked about Manchester: Manchester United, New Order, smoke, bars, gay people, Friedrich Engels, industry, violence, gangs, ship canal, drugs, Hacienda, Manchester City, dynamic, Trafford Centre, young, Happy Mondays, students, unemployment.

Identity is made up of many characteristics by which a thing or an individual is known. The attributes that make someone unique as an individual and different from others can appear to be very common characteristics but their combination with each other defines, indeed, a special and unique identity. Identity is not at all what we might think of ourselves but what others think of us. Social positions, as stated by Bourdieu, constitute our personality. Society's structure is manifested in

legal and moral laws providing a codex for living. The organisation of a social structure, whether horizontal or vertical, is acknowledged by the majority of society's members. In case of ignorance or rejection the members will be reminded by means legal action. Because of this, a specific social position is far easier to determine than personal and very subjective scales of human features. And yet, there exists some sort of cross fertilisation in what both parties, the people to be identified and the authorities who identify, communicate and exchange. Identity is not built around someone or something and, thus, a stable and fixed condition but an interactive continuous process. The laws change with the altering priorities of society, which can be influenced by either natural or social events. Eventually, identifying aspects need the approval of the authorities in order to be acknowledged by society. In other words, the value of certain social positions can be changed by not only by the authorities but also by progressive subcultures, which set new trends.

In order to understand the identity formed in Manchester, we have to look at this city from different angles. First, I will look at the geography of Manchester. British consciousness established by laws and national as well as international recognition is very much a part of

Manchester's identity. Second, Manchester's history of industrialism and economic decline lay the ground for the "northern pride" that has not vanished since and can still be experienced when living in Manchester. Third, music as means of identification for people desperate to make themselves heard and acknowledged again gave them back their pride and their identity and, in addition to that, there was a lot of successful and popular music produced.

Manchester is a city in the North West of England with neighbouring cities such as Liverpool, Leeds and Sheffield. The British Isles with a north-south division and the south as an economic and political centre by being close to the continent gives its habitants a notion of being different. This could be explained by Great Britain being a kingdom with a monarchy as opposed to many continental countries with a democracy. Of course, the government under Tony Blair makes the united kingdom a democracy, too. And yet, patriotism and the presence of a queen shape the consciousness of British citizens. To celebrate the kingdom by singing "God save the Queen" every time Great Britain is represented shapes the consciousness of a nation. The Euro or the absence of the Euro acts as another diversion. Although this might be interpreted by many as a disadvantage, British people are very proud of their strong currency, which, again, uses the image of the Queen as a means of belonging. When the

Germans had to give up the Deutschmark it became obvious how much money can be part of an identity. One could ask what exactly the former British colonies celebrate when participating in the Commonwealth Games. Is it the acknowledgement of the kingdom again? The goal to establish an atmosphere of equality has to fail if the territory is defined by the geography of the above mentioned former colonies. I argue that the former power and strength of the Kingdom is something almost everyone wants to hold onto because of a long established British identity. A country that claims to have overcome the distinction of classes ironically refers to classes constantly and one might wonder if this is due to the permanent presence of symbols, traditions and images associated with the kingdom and, subsequently, a class system.

The north of England, and especially Manchester, demanded a large workforce since the geographic conditions made Manchester the almost ideal place to build factories and produce goods. Manchester is situated almost in the centre of the country connecting England and Scotland, the canal system provided access to the sea via Liverpool, and the first railway in the world running between Liverpool and Manchester gave the opportunity for another distribution channel to be developed. The cotton industry brought Manchester its wealth as well as its decline. Being the first city with housing estates, public wash-houses, hospitals



and the first public park Manchester appeared to be attractive for people and other businesses at the end of the 19th century. By the beginning of the next century Manchester provided drinking water for everyone, a gas and electricity network and many highly acknowledged institutions of education. Because the industrialists in Manchester failed to invest in new technologies, soon the cotton industry had to face competition in the form of synthetic fabrics. Additionally, Britain failed to expand the cotton market and rather focused on existing markets. When India decided to change the suppliers because it was cut off the UK for a while, the Britons only started to realise what it could mean to lose a market with a monopoly.

The 1950s were known as an era of decline and were followed by the 60s that were defined by the attempt to turn Manchester into a modern city. Multi-storey tower blocks did most certainly not help the Mancunians to establish a close social environment among neighbours. Even more, the lack of space for people living in those blocks was part of the reason why gangs started to fight for their territory. The space called home became smaller and smaller unless people moved to the suburbs of Manchester. There slums came into existence and people had to face the same problems. Between 1961 and 1983 Manchester lost over 150.000 jobs in manufacturing. Many factories had to close down and Manchester had gone from a wealthy and

very progressive city to a dirty, old city with high crime and teenager pregnancy rates struggling with high unemployment and violence.

The question arising from this is what happens to your pride, self respect and confidence if everything you worked for or helped establishing is taken away or destroyed and you find yourself in a situation with no future prospects and no hope? Manchester had been a very important city in the UK and had lost its economic importance. Fortunately, pride is not something to be taken away easily. The arrogance of the Mancunians found some new grounds in the music created in Manchester – Madchester. The punk era had brought to Manchester the DIY attitude and, with enough empty warehouses for rehearsals and a support for everything that presented the chance to escape unemployment and a miserable life, the people living in and around this city created their own style. Although creativity is not limited to a certain group of people defined by class, origin, gender or education, the music made in Manchester was music made for the working class. The lyrics, most of the time, reflected the daily life of a member of the working class describing misery and depression. Maintaining a certain humour, probably based on the previous importance of Manchester, the cotton industry and the annual profits, Manchester music was honest and realistic combining a reflection of daily lives and ongoing parties.

He talks about all the music that came out of Manchester – the Smiths, Joy Division and New Order, the Happy Mondays – and believes that Margaret Thatcher was responsible for it.

*“It’s gotta be down to the dole culture. There are gangs of lads with loads of time on your hands, and you’re all in the same boat...you’re never alone on the dole in Manchester.”*

Guitar-based music became faster and more danceable. The development of new technologies like synthesisers and samplers resulted in a blur of the boundaries between handmade music and electronic music. Bands like the Happy Mondays or Stone Roses hired DJs to mix their music in the studio. The non-destroyable attitude of a hard life and an even harder party is manifested in the very Mancunian style. Psychedelic influences including drugs, a lifestyle that did not focus on the rather negative future, yet one that did not consider any consequences provided Manchester with its very own space of party, dance and drugs thus escaping the depressing place Manchester was at that time. The music and the recordings did not have to be perfect and it did not matter if songs were sung in tune. In fact, some of the most popular Madchester tunes sound rather loose around the edges: Joy Division-Atmosphere, Inspiral Carpets-This is how it feels, Happy Mondays-Step on, New Order-

Blue Monday, A guy called Gerald-Voodoo ray. Because all these bands were pioneering a sound, an eclectic mix of dance elements and British pop music, it was much easier for the people in Manchester to actually label this music as their very own music giving them an identity that made Manchester an important and trendy place again. The history of the Hacienda shows how the working-class audience was extended by including the mainly middle-class students who stormed Manchester. Student nights at the Hacienda were the first to bring money into the club and to the city on a regular basis. With a rather fast beat and a repetitive structure using samples and synthesisers, depressing lyrics that fully disappear in some songs focusing on new technologies and trends the music and yet maintaining the typical British pop music Madchester music is easy to distinguish. Additionally, the contradiction between lyrics and the sound gave an idea of the philosophy of the Mancunian working class. The lyrics gave a very realistic picture of a post-industrial North whereas the sound appears to be positive, even funny. A tough life does not mean that the party is over. The local support of these bands, a result of a strong bond among people sharing the same destiny and the hope that some of their children will make it led to a national recognition that made the Mancunians proud again – proud of their city, of their origin, of their history. Students coming

to Manchester did not have problems adopting the working-class attitude of dole, drugs, party and self-made music since it had become popular. Furthermore, Manchester now had found a large enough audience to promote and support its very own music and make it a successful business.

After a brief history of Manchester and its significance I have tried to show how music can be a means of identity and has the ability to change a city's fate. Of course, other factors effected the development of this certain style of British music, too. I have chosen only the most significant components which I think make Manchester's identity. Manchester today is a city discovered by the creative industries, which realised that it has been and will be a tool of creativity used by people whose pride and refusal to give up on life made them even stronger.

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## New Adventures in Lo-Fi: Ringtones and Other Directions in Portable Music

Paolo Prato

A telephone is no more that big black thing that once was hung on the wall, or lying on a desk. Once in motion, it has become a magic box, a juke-box and even more: a sort of Alladin's lamp that, at your command, displays wonders of all times and places in a tiny monitor and from a microscopic loudspeaker.

Mobile phones seem to offer a new opportunity to recover a music business affected by a major crisis on a world level. Ringtones and other options such as ringback tones and truetones downloaded from the Web or sending songs to friends as once you did with postcards or short messages, have opened a new frontier in the economics of music and may remap its inner relationships. At the same time, mobile phones are becoming the new "sound machines", thus representing a further development in the history of portable music – from transistor radio to sound boxes, from car stereos to the walkman.

Mobile phones: the innovation lies not in the fact that they are just another music reproducer, but in the fact that they bend music to a use which music had never been thought to. "Addio al vecchio drin drin...!" (the normal beep) says an advert from an Italian ringtone producer (Super Eva): "Goodbye to the old phone sound...! Make your cellular phone dance to the sounds

and the rhythms of the present".

How are ringtones made? Who are the people that produce them? Is there any artistic control on the part of rights holders?

Ringtone music manufacturers are not composers but arrangers of existing compositions for ring tone, and are required to follow the original as closely as possible (Mitsui 2004, p.49)

### **1. From calling machine to juke-box: the Object and its History**

Mobile phone today: a multimedia platform able to offer audio and visual contents, put you in connection with the World (Wide Web), record audio and visual (moving images and photos) moments of your everyday life and share them with whoever you like. No other device in history provides more reliable immediate access to people than the mobile phone.

From being a safety device, wireless mobile phone has become a portable stereo. In this epochal achievement, music has so far dominated the contents of mobiles: 50 % of their content revenues comes from music, according to the IFPI 2004 Report.

Looking at the kind of music that is available in the form of ringtone and the like it is no surprise to find, on mobile

phones, a portable version of what is on the air on Top 40s radios and more generally a blatant copy of the teen-oriented multinational market.

Music via mobiles has quickly evolved from ringtones, to the use of full audio recordings in ringtunes, ringback tunes (those that you hear when you call someone, before he/she answers), full-track downloads and other multimedia applications.

Ringtone business began in 1997-98. The first ones were *monophonic* and sounded very much like piano toys: short, high-pitched melodies lasting from 15 to 30 seconds. Song bites that perform “an urban and modern digital concert” (Pekkilä 2001). Together with ready made ringtones – some of which were “auteur’s tunes”, as the famed Nokia tune – you had the chance of creating your own melody on a full tone scale, with no semitones. In 1999 came *polyphonic* melodies, firstly with four different tones at a time (melody, bass line and two for harmony). In 2001 the number of tones increased to twelve and to 16 or 32 in 2002. Polyphonic ringtones are “synthesized song “sound-a-like” clips that play instead of a normal ring” (Beals 2005 p.2).

In December 2002 a major firm in Japan introduced a new function which enabled one to download and hear a part of a CD recording through the mobile phone. The length varied from 15 to 30 second.

This time you can hear the original vocal music, in contrast to the electronically arranged version of the

song. It is the ringtone song, or ringtune. The copyright market extends then its benefits from composers to performers and record companies, which start to gather the agreed royalties.

The replacement of monophonic and polyphonic ringtones (that are destined to disappear) with real music ringtones entails a dramatic change in the organization of the market segment and its actors: the record labels get into the business and make alliances with mobile operators, to manage and distribute the contents. Some artists, like the Italian Elio & le Storie tese have announced that they are composing personalized ringtones, new pieces just for cell phones.

In the meantime, an emerging act such as the singer/songwriter Povia, has sold more than 200,000 ringtones whereas his debut record (*I bambini fanno ooh*) is stuck to far fewer copies in the Summer of '05. The next step concerns a software that allows users to convert music into ringtones: thank to this software you can create personalized custom ringtones from your existing digital music library, therefore with no additional fees payable to anyone: songs, sound effects, spoken words and whatever you own. This technology will pave the way to an emerging market – the custom ringtone market – “which is truly revolutionary because it completely bypasses the artist label, publisher and the carrier” (Beals 2005, p.3).



As noticed by sector experts, “ironically it is the Napster generation, whose downloading habits have permanently wounded the music industry, that has finally found songs they are willing to pay for in the form of customized: 30 second ringtones” (ivi).

## 2. Acoustic quality of mobile contained music

There are quite a few reasons why I chose such a title for this paper, borrowed from an album of R.E.M (*New Adventures In Hi-Fi*). I do not intend to discuss technical questions concerning the digital perfection of the music contained by cellular phones. What matters, to me, is the phenomenological observation of how that music is listened to. First, it comes from a small, tiny device which contains a much smaller loud (?) speaker. Even if small does not necessarily mean low quality, the outdoor listening of mobile transmitted music cannot be said to belong to a hi-fidelity experience. Second, there is no woofer to exalt the bass frequencies and there is just one speaker, so that you hear only in a mono mode. You can switch to stereo only if you wear earphones but at this point a mobile becomes a walkman, only with much more music at disposal. Its ordinary use – outdoor, mono-aural – makes it first of all a functional object able to offer a poor, lo-fidelity music experience.

After all, a mobile phone is not meant for music listening: the act of listening involves an aesthetic intention, which one tries to achieve by creating an ideal acoustic environment and an adequate mood.

Phenomenologically speaking, the experience of music listening via mobile phone is no more than a bad copy of what can be a better and more complete listening (at home, or through the walkman, the I-Pod, etc.), since the noise level is much higher (and so the amount of information is lower, the emotional charge is less meaningful...) and the time of exposition to the music is shorter.

This is why I like to speak of “lo-fi”: it is not only the medium’s characteristics which make it similar to other lo-fi reproduction media, but the whole experience of listening via mobile phone, being as it is mostly an outdoor medium with no acoustic barriers that could protect sound or at least get it better as it occurs with such highly protected media as the walkman or the I-Pod<sup>1</sup>.

A mobile phone is a medium that is totally exposed to the noise of the environment, which certainly brings a lot of fresh air in the roaring traffic’s boom... but does not represent a step further into better sounds at all, which has been the aim of music technology since its beginnings.

For the first time the music industry makes business out of a sound technology that is sensibly inferior to the stage already achieved.

Mobile phone technology may certainly be the most advanced in terms of possibilities offered to the consumer, but on an acoustic level I would speak of

a toy-like technology. And it could hardly be different, since mobile phones are small and must be as small as possible; they are used mostly outdoor and /or while walking, driving or cycling, that is to say in what Murray Schafer would call a lo-fi soundscape.

### 3. Impact on the Music Industry

One thing strikes me in considering this new frontier of portable music: the fact that music industry has paved a way to make money not by selling better sounds but by selling new opportunities. Seeing the encouraging results, we may say that this is a major turn in the very history of music industry: we go back to pre-Fifties sound quality with no stereo sounds available on the state-of-the-art technology and we went even further back with the almost dying business of monophonic and polyphonic ringtones, which are to music what black & white is to cinema or television... In this context I'm not interested in judging the music business' strategies. I am only saying that this is an epochal turn, with respect to an over centennial development in sound recording and reproducing. It is a turn because figures are stunning and are depicting a change in the dynamics of music consumption that is happening in these years.

In Britain copyright from ringtones has taken over that for CD singles in 2004 and in the same year the global revenue for ringtones exceeded US \$ 4 billion, already a tenth of the overall global music market (Ewalt 2005,

p.2). The mobile music market is already big business in Asia, particularly in Japan and South Korea. Japan has a ringtone market worth an estimated US \$ 100 million in 2004. In South Korea it is US \$ 158 million in 2003. Record companies have launched various initiatives. EMI offered prewies of Robbie Williams' music video *Misunderstood* in partnership with mobile multinational 3. And the artist's latest album was also sold in memory cards. Others featured live concert footage of bands like Rooster.

Global portable digital market totalized circa US \$ 7 billion in 2004 and in november Billboard launched a ringtone chart. In Italy VAS (value added services) reached 615 million Euros in 2004: out of this figure, 140 million come from ringtones and the like. It is about half of what Italians spend for CDs. On the copyright side of the market, Siae (the public agency in charge of gathering copyright and royalties) has established that 12% of revenues must be payed to authors. The new copyright opportunities are still very lille thing in Italy, but the Japanese market - the most developed - totalled 54 million Euros of in 2004.

In Europe mobile penetration exceeds 80% in countries such as Finland, Norway, Sweden, Greece, Italy. No wonder that over US \$ 11 billion will be generated by all forms of mobile music by 2010. (*Mobile Music* 2005)

### 4. Bonsai music and the jingle philosophy

In a few years ringtones have switched from a ludic level (they sound like toy pianos) represented by the

monophonic ones to a level in which they became simulacra of the original, with the introduction of polyphonic ringtones. Now they have reached the digital level, and sound exactly like the original, even if squeezed in a small, low-fi device. What I call “bonsai music”: the final achievement of an aesthetics of reduction (you reduce a whole piece of music to a shorter but recognizable part of it that works as sign of it) that is regularly applied to TV and radio commercials but also in many rap, techno and progressive records. Music is an art that develops in time, although this commonplace has not always been taken for granted by everybody<sup>2</sup>. And time sometime creates problems, for it is difficult to fit a piece of music into a fixed duration. Ringtones offer a fascinating example of the clash between duration and meaning of a piece of music. Very often the melody is cut or compressed to fit in the 15 or 30 seconds format of the ringtone, Miniaturization and ‘ludification’ (if you can say so) are the two trends that feature the development of cellular phones in the last few years: it must be smaller and smaller and it must contain always more opportunities of a playful kind. It’s the opposite of what mechanic industry did with early means of transport: trains and planes, for example, started as fair curiosities before finding their functional destination. Telephone instead started as a functional machine, then it turned out to be a multifunctional object charged above all with playful and emotional values.

Sticking just to the sounds that best fit into its mobile version, it is easy to observe that their preferred format is a very brief one but always self-accomplished. What I like to call the “jingle philosophy”, seems to find in mobile telephones its most advanced and complete realization: from Steven Spielberg’s seminal *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* – remember the prototypical jingle that identified the starship and permitted to communicate with the aliens? – to ringtones, there is an increasing use of jingles in everyday life, so as to personalize identity even in a sonic sense. Jingles are like daily bread for TV and radio commercials but their influence on today’s soundscape has gone much further: their pervasive presence has started to change the listening behaviors of many, and especially the younger generation who are less and less able to follow a song in its full length, not to speak of a more complex piece of music<sup>3</sup>.

The jingle philosophy offers a vicarious experience of a longer, more complete and satisfactory listening. It’s the part for the whole, the politics of the bite (“song bites”, as Errkki Pekkila calls ringtones), or what Brenda A. Johnson called “a truncated art”, in a seminal article of 1984. “ordinary pop songs give an illusion of completeness, give a whole picture...” whereas “the urge to truncate betrays a distrust in continuity, a dire to avoid the complacencies that a completed structure encourages” (Johnson 1984, p.41 and 43).

What counts is the single track, even a fragment of it,

a quotation: in the physical audio market (from corner shops to media stores...) singles make up roughly 10% of unit sales compared to 90% for albums. Online music consumption shows an almost inverse pattern to this. I-Tunes reports only one in ten transactions. It's a long term shift in music consumption, from album to singles. I'd like to borrow Walter Benjamin's forecast on quotations as the future of literature because it seems to work in the contemporary soundscape: this latter is indeed full of bits and pieces of songs, TV tunes and all that jazz. Extracts, reductions, miniatures, that is quotations but almost never the whole piece of music is certainly the present if not the future of music.

### 5. Meaning construction

Sonic signals are as old as human kind. They are utilized to give information of various type: civilized seavorld (from steamships to liners) has its own communication code according to which a predefined number of different messages are expressed by different combinations of a few tones; cars and buses make use of horns most of which are single tones assigned to single brands and models, but few of them must have distinct horns which everyone can immediately recognize – e.g. ambulances. Homes are provided with electrical bells that may sound different from one another but very rarely exceed a two-tone sound. Everyday life as we have been experiencing for a long time is therefore

filled with sounds that are meant just to signal one and only one thing. It is what in linguistics is called the “denotative” level of communication, where nothing is left to interpretation. This applies to telephone too, whose sound is very simple and usually limited to a sort of ostinato sometimes leading to nervous breakdown... With the advent of mobile phone, a soundscape traditionally crowded by denotative sonic messages has begun to change and turn to connotative types of messages. As happened with clothing or hairdressing, which have long transformed vital functions such as dressing or taking shelter from bad weather into complex cultural adventures in the presentation of the self, so have mobile phones started to invest personal identity with sonic meanings. These meanings are constructed in the virtual and ephemeral space of a phone call and are never fixed, because they pertain to the level of “connotation”.

“The ringtones are meaningful to their users. Basically, it is the cultural ‘negotiation’ of the meaning, as many say, that we are dealing with here”. Following the mainstream of cultural studies can say that “the songs are only fragments of existing tunes and it is the receiver that has to work on them to build up cultural meanings” (Pekkilä 2001).

In short, what does a ringtone communicate?

At a denotative level, it informs you that “someone wants to talk to you”. At a connotative level, we must distinguish the two perspectives involved in the listening act:

a) the personal perspective, that is me, the owner of the phone: “to that someone I have attributed a music that represents him/her and that ringtone not only tells me that a certain he or she is calling me but does add a load of connotations that I hear in that music and in its being associated with that person”.

Incidentally, the idea that someone be associated to a music is not at all new: Bruce Chatwin, in *Songlines*, narrates that in the aborigenes’ myth of world birth, every man is associated to a song<sup>4</sup>. The same happened in Wagner’s operas, with leitmotive, and this idea was later transposed to Hollywood film.

b) the others’ perspectives, that is all the people that – willy or nilly – listen to my ringtone, cross for a short or long moment my aural soundscape: for them, that music says something about myself, my choices, my world.

In this sense mobile phone is the opposite of walkman, that hides my choices: the use of walkman is the ultimate subcultural gesture for it takes to the extremes the notion of subculture (e.g. its marking an off-limits territory) by making it coincide with the self. On the other way, the use of the ringtone is the opposite of the subcultural gesture: its approach is blatant, narcissistic. It aggressively invades others’ territories. It is the private that enters the public and outrages it, for you cannot close your ears...

Research indicates that people do judge mobile users based on their ringtones (Ewalt 2005): Tesco Mobile surveyed 1000 customers and discovered that 21% of them had “uncool” ringtones, since they were standard. Those who use their own recorded voice as a ringtone are “self-obsessed” and those who constantly change their rings might be flighty and unreliable...

Sharing the same objects of consumption has long become a most important factor of cultural integration (see e.g. the works of David Riesman, in the Fifties and Richard Sennett in the Seventies). Ringtones help people to make personal statement. Ringtones are about personalization and self expression, telling everyone around you something extra about you. They are a new form of lifestyle identification allowing people to label themselves with their favorite music (Beals, p.5). More than one’s CD or movie collection, a custom ringtone screams out something personal to the world because it’s so public: anyone within earshot can make an instant assumption about you (Ewalt 2005, p.3)

## 6. Music into the Age of Referentiality

By 2009 the global revenues from downloaded music will be 8 billion Euros: out of these, 3.6 billion will be originated by the downloading of ringtones, whereas revenues from full tracks will be 1.4 billion, according to Juniper Research. This means that the trend is clear and epochal: people are more inclined to buy music for

improving their phones than for mere listening reasons. Money spent for aesthetizing your communication facilities is much more than the money spent for the pleasure of music in itself. This trend regards the practice of downloading and not the spending habits in general, but it's an important sign, however.

Music seems to shift towards an Age of Referentiality, after and Aesthetic Age that took over and an age dominated by rituals and social functions. We are in an Age of Referentiality when music is meant more to give (or add) information than aesthetic pleasure, although we are well aware of the fact that the two are abstract categories and more than often do mingle together, i.e. you cannot rigidly separate the two sphere (functional and esthetic).

The reception of a ringtone in itself has very little of the listening act, at least because – from the moment it starts to ring – you are urged to stop it, as soon as possible, in order to answer. If you wait too long, you may lose the call. A ringtone gives you an “interruptus” pleasure and in doing so, it keeps you swinging between the emotional drive towards music and the rational need to answer and talk.

The “interruptus” listening act first generates surprise: the phone receives a call, something which breaks into your routine and urges you to suspend it so as to be able to answer. Then it generates pleasure, for the routine is broken by a piece of music which you have chosen, one

of the many you have stored in you memory card. And that pleasure – probably shared by those who happen to be around you in that moment – is very similar to the pleasure Adorno thought was primary when relating to popular music: “the pleasure of recognition”. To like it is to recognize it, he said. And this seems to be the only aesthetic criterion for relating to ringtones and all other tunes coming out of a mobile phone.

In an old paper presented at the Reggio Emilia IASPM Conference of 1983, I focused on musical kitsch by analysing what I called the “close encounters between pops and classics”. One of the most common typologies I took into consideration was what I termed the poetics of the digest, that is the habit of putting together bits of well known pieces (from classical music to disco hits, as in medleys) on the same rhythmic pattern: I defined “digest as the outstanding example of music as a test of knowledge of the code” (Prato 1985, p.381), making an implicit reference to Baudrillard's idea that every reading of the message is a perpetual testing of the code. Back in 1979, Baudrillard wrote that the role of messages (he referred to advertising and fashion messages, first of all) is no more linked to information but to test and poll (testing and polling). “Nowadays the object is no more ‘functional’, in the traditional sense, it does not serve you: it subjects you to a test” (Baudrillard 1979, p.75).

I see many relationships with ringtones and the way music is used and perceived through these objects:



they provide endless sequences of tests about your musical knowledge and your capacity of living in this contemporary world by sharing its collective choices.

Finally, only in the third step, the decoding, I translate the aesthetic input in mere information: I should answer because Mr. X is calling me, or I don't want to answer because Mr. Y is calling me<sup>5</sup>.

### **7. Mobile music and the aestheticization of everyday life**

From machine to figure, from signal to sign, mobile phone enacts the spectacularization of an elementary function, that of informing you that someone wants to talk to you. Within the world of objects, I defined spectacularization as the representation of the object provided by the media, which tends to transform it in a work of art. On the other hand, by aestheticization I mean the individual representation of the same object, which tends to transform it in a source of pleasure<sup>6</sup>.

Searching for a rationale, cellular phones are the latest (presumably non the last) expression of a long tradition in mobile music. A tradition born out of a deterritorialization of music promoted by the spatio-temporal revolution generated by technical media of reproduction, that has impacted on music in XIX th Century<sup>7</sup>.

On the one hand, music is transported everywhere: first home, then to the automobile and other means of transport, then to work places, shops, department

stores, leisure areas and so on. On the other hand, music is transported everywhere by individuals, by means of corporeal protheses such as transistor radios, sound systems, walkman and cellular phones<sup>8</sup>.

This process – which has been going on for more than a century – produces a musicalization of the entire human environment and the entire range of human activities: it invests both time and place.

Broadly speaking, nothing seems to be so sacred to be able to avoid musicalization: neither work (offices and full of music) nor study (at home). My final argument – which I can only hint at in this context, for it deserves a separate investigation - is that the always more intense/totalizing use of music as an element of the physical and social environment (filling any void, eliminating silence) equals the idea of transforming social and private life into a endless party.

This is the ultimate end of the many technological innovations that brings us more sounds, more images, more videos, more news everywhere we are and we go, at anytime of the day. Watching a TV screen showing the latest finance news at the airport lounge, or on a public bus; sharing the latest R&B hits downloaded on your Motorola with your friends, reminds me of what Durkheim wrote about the sense of effervescence which was a fundamental ingredient of the archaic feast. By uttering the same words and doing the same gestures, the primitive community reinforced its inner links. In the

age of consumption, that feeling of belonging is more often generated by the sharing of the same consumer's experience.

Mobile phones, as a further step towards the total musicalization of experience, are a fundamental ingredient of a broader process which aims to simulate the situation of a perennial feast. Life is a party, or, if you prefer life is a cabaret, old chums...

## Endnotes

1. The I-Pod, the million seller gadget launched by Apple and immediately become an international cult, offers only a few innovations with respect to the walkman. E.g. it theoretically provides an endless source of music that allows the user to stay closed in his/her personal sonic world, separate from the rest. With the walkman you had to change cassette, after 45-60 minutes, and in that moment you had to step back to public life. The I-Pod, being able of storing thousands of songs, provides you with a permanent soundtrack from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed. But basically, the I-Pod works as an enhanced walkman.

2. See e.g. Adorno: "The obvious remark that music is a temporal art, an art that is performed in time... signifies that time is by no means a characteristic of its own but that it constitutes a problem for it" (Adorno 1969, p.6)

3. My argument is not based on any survey but only on my daily work in radio as program director, who is in charge of the weekly playlist as well.

4. Their number is limited though, which justifies why people die: they die because there must be songs available for the new comers.

5. It's a third step from a logical point of view, although it may contemporary to the other two.

6. These concepts have been treated extensively in Prato-Trivero 1989.

7. Murray Schafer uses the term 'schizophonia' with respect to the impact of music reproduction technology. For a discussion of this notion, see Prato 1998.

8. On music mobilization see Hosokawa 1984, Prato 1999 and Bull 2000.

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## The Songbird's Image & the Jazz Singer's Music-Making: Voice as a Visual Construct

Jacques Protat

The notions of “voice” and “listening” as I use them are partly and loosely derived from Charles Hartman’s *Jazz Text* and Peter Szendy’s *Écoute*. My overall argument is somewhat grounded in performing arts esthetics, semiotics and other fields that please academics. However I have made no attempt to use or provide a specific theoretical frame: it should be read as a product of my personal observations as a viewer, listener and jazz singer. Hearing the “voices” I describe requires a shared cultural capital on music-making which I am confident this audience shares. Mostly, it takes concentration, imagination and a genuine engagement in the few photographs shown: their role is *not* to illustrate. They fully partake of the meaning-making experience this presentation attempts.<sup>1</sup>

Light is born of Darkness.

Music is born of Silence.

This paper was born of an Abstract:

*This paper explores the way the image of the jazz singer alters their credibility as a jazz musician. Drawing from historical examples of photographs by William Gottlieb, I will explain how the aura of the performer is modified by the narrative*

*the viewer builds. This in turn influences some qualities of the singer’s ‘voice’ as perceived by the viewer—i.e. the combination of their vocal characteristics, their musicianship, the way they convey the song’s meaning and their stage persona.*

And then there was...

*I will then shift perspectives to current mainstream vocal jazz icons such as Diana Krall, Jane Monheit, Peter Cincotti or Michael Bublé, to analyze the hiatus between the image they project and their music-making.*

But the offspring would have been overweight, so I will merely pose the questions I meant to address. The starting point could be a situation in which someone who sings very much like Frank Sinatra (deliberately?) takes on the looks of Chet Baker (see fig. 1-2).

As it would be futile to even start trying to demonstrate them here, the reader will kindly allow me to take the two sweeping statements within this proposition as a couple of premises, so we have a hypothetical example to illustrate the following questions:

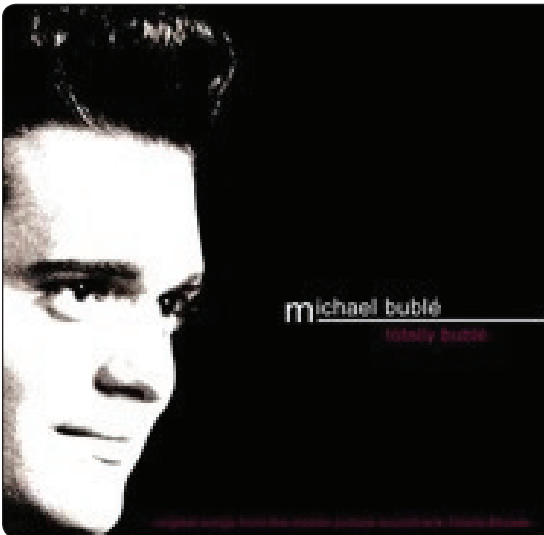


Fig. 1. Michael Bublé, *Totally Bublé*  
(DRG, 2003).



Fig. 2 Chet Baker, *Sings & Plays the Standards*  
(EMI, 2003).

- How does the CD cover alter our expectations?
- What influence do these expectations have on our listening experience?
- How do the three performers' auras interact to help "totally" constitute Bublé's persona?

The three answers would take us halfway to an understanding of the hiatus between the image projected by the younger generation of classic pop/jazz singers and their music-making. That analysis will have to be attempted in a further article. For now I will provide

preliminary tools through an exploration of possible hiatuses between photo narratives and jazz singers' voices.

Meaning is born of the interaction of our senses with our intellect, our imagination, our memories. We have a constant urge to make sense of the world around us, and one defining characteristic of human activity is that it unfolds in time. We cannot make sense of a photograph without unconsciously making up a before and an after—in other words a *narrative* that helps us understand what the photograph means: a story that simply cannot be contained within one single shot, and that we need to make up so the frozen moment of eternity the photographer captured translates into a fragment of life as we know it. This has three direct consequences:

- No two viewers are going to build up the exact same narrative from a given image, and that is only one of the many reasons why we never give the exact same meaning to a picture;
- For a photographer or an editor, for the agent or record label, one of the criteria toward the choice of one specific shot in a series of images may be its depth as a reservoir for narratives;
- In turn, the success of a photograph with the public will depend largely on its depth as a depository for viewers' narratives—not necessarily in terms of



variety, but certainly in terms of the interest of these stories: the viewer needs to relate to the situation depicted, so they can tell themselves a tale they believe in.

If viewers make up their own narratives from photographs, based on their individual cultures, knowledge, interests and tastes... then there would seem to be no point trying to figure out what influence the image of a singer has on the way we listen to them. Thankfully, there is such a thing as a common body of culture, knowledge, interests and tastes in a given audience, a shared cultural capital that we can assume exists in a theoretical category of viewers. More importantly, the pictures chosen by performers

or their agents for image-building purposes are so heavily loaded with clichés that what we'll be talking about eventually is not individual story-making, but something closer to "cultural signifying."

So far, I have only mentioned a *time*-linked aspect of story-making, but the narratives that photographs trigger do not merely rely on an expansion of time. Actually, for some shots like the one used for the cover of Diana Krall's *The Girl in the Other Room* (see fig. 3), consideration of what occurred one second before or one second after the shutter opened and closed may not be a prime concern of the viewer. What we might be more keen to produce is

- an expansion of space,
- a reading of mind and intentions, and, more relevant to my point,
- *sound* imaginings, the invention by the viewer of the *inner* voice as well as the *physical* voice of the singer: the singer's voice as she feels it emotionally and esthetically, in musical and affective terms, and the singer's voice as perceived by one individual member of the audience whose attendance is imaginary—the viewer.



**Fig. 3. Diana Krall, *The Girl in the Other Room* (Verve, 2004).**

In other words, any photograph functions like a freeze-frame, a still photograph from a cinematic take, and the

viewer can only make sense of this framed, motionless and silent slice of life by

- mentally reinserting it into its off-screen space or a spatial context; that may even involve a specific camera move, zooming in to reduce the frame on the pianist's hands or on the singer's face, or zooming out, tracking or panning to show us the stage, the gear, the rigging, the lights, the audience and the musicians;
- a second mental process that I suggest cannot be controlled is that the viewer will strive to grasp the state of mind that the singer's face reveals, as captured by the photographer;
- because this state of mind is directly connected to her musical expression and voice, because of the synesthetic power of some photographs at least to make us *feel* the physical and emotional impulses of the singer, the viewer will feel their head tilting to the left, their left shoulder straining up to control the weight of the hand on the keys; *and*, they will feel the emotional flow that runs behind the singer's closed eyes at the same time as they hear a reconstruction of her voice—to each viewer their own note and sound as they listen to the jazz singer's voice in their own heads.

What becomes of a musician's "true" voice and story when the viewer works so much at building their own

narrative from the photograph? Nat Hentoff argues in his introduction to *Jazz Giants*, a collection of jazz photographs, that it can only be preserved if the musician's stage presence reflects their ability to express themselves through their instruments, that is if they are telling a better story than the one we could be tempted to make up: "to have been a powerful enough storyteller to be included in this photo microcosm of living jazz history, all that emotion and technique had to fuse into a personal *presence* that made the player immediately identifiable as *only* himself or herself" (6). For Hentoff, who knew personally a number of jazz musicians in the collection, those will tend to remain *themselves* onstage rather than take on a stage persona and wear the sort of theatrical masks that most performers do when they perform—after all, the mask is part of the very definition of a stage persona, and a performer will necessarily have a specific set of behaviors onstage, that make them a different person than among family or friends, or in various social contexts. Hentoff writes: "Because jazz musicians are less likely than most people to wear masks, their faces make for marvelous portraits of the person within" (7). In turn, it takes the *photographer* specific skills and know-how to share with us their esthetic experience of jazz-making: "in photographing these jazz improvisers, much more than technique is required. Soul, the jazz spirit of risk-taking, and an understanding of the inside of the music are all essential.



**Fig. 4. William P. Gottlieb, Portrait of Billie Holiday (New York, N.Y., Downbeat, ca. Feb. 1947); Library of Congress. 3 Sept. 2003.**  
<http://memory.loc.gov>

And that's what all these photographers brought to the jazz experience. They, too, are part of it" (7).

Could it be that the jazz singer many consider to be the greatest of all time escaped that rule? That she indeed wore a mask? Robert O'Meally certainly suggests so much in *Lady Day: The Many Faces of Billie Holiday*: "No camera,' one writer said, 'could ever contrive to capture once and for all the elusive essence of Billie Holiday'" (91). To him, the elusiveness of her image reflects the many roles she played in her career: her face and looks changed so much over the years as to give viewers the impression that they're looking at different persons. O'Meally comments on *Lady Day*'s use of many names referring to an "American tradition"

of mask-wearing (92), and yet—even though the book's emphasis is on Billie as an artist—he fails to link Billie's masks with the notion of theatrical persona.

So in effect the autographic immanence (Genette) of this shot of Billie by William Gottlieb (see fig. 4) may not provide us with a direct connection to the person carefully hidden behind the costume and mask. What it does give us access to is the photographer's reading of Billie's music-making and stage persona: his image of her voice. If we combine this image with the sound of her music, the scene comes to life and we are able to reconstruct one perception of her stage immanence, from the perspective of a front-row 1947 member of the audience (as for each of the audio samples, the reader is invited to play the audio extract—or better still the complete tune which can be found on the Net—zoom in on the photograph and enjoy a profound meaning-making experience):

**Audio extract 1. Billie Holiday, "The Man I Love," by George and Ira Gershwin, rec. 13 Jan. 1947, New York City, CBS Studio 58 (radio broadcast). 23 July 2005.**  
<http://www.billieholiday.be>

This is one of the very few 1947 recordings that exist of Billie Holiday, and we may feel more entitled to associate it with Gottlieb's photograph, knowing that it was recorded live the same year the Downbeat photograph was taken.<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 5. Billie Holiday and Teddy Wilson receiving their *Esquire* award from Arthur Godfrey (New York City, CBS Studio 58, 13 Jan. 1947); 23 July 2005 (Also in O'Meally 148, credited Avalon Archives). <http://www.billieholiday.be>

This anonymous shot of Billie and Teddy Wilson receiving their *Esquire* award from Arthur Godfrey on the very same radio show (see fig. 5) will make for a nice transition to my next point: see how each of the looks in the three protagonists' eyes tells a different story, and how strongly we are invited to make up a coherent narrative from those three contradictory points of view.

Same year, same club, same photographer: this is another famous shot by William Gottlieb, of Ella Fitzgerald at the Downbeat (see fig. 6). Like Diana Krall's on her CD cover shot, Ella's eyes are closed, which we naturally/culturally interpret as a sign of concentration, focus, perhaps even introspection. In "Images of Jazz," Krin Gabbard's take on this particular attitude is that Ella "seems to lose herself in the lyric" (338). The lyric?

Why not? From what I know first-hand of jazz singing and from the specificities of Ella's relation to lyrics and music-making, I would rather say she is listening to her inner voice and focusing on one or two or all of the instrumentalists. One thing we know for a fact is that she is not listening to Dizzy Gillespie (see fig. 7).

Dizzy is not playing his trumpet, and the only way we can imagine Ella listening to him as a musician is that she would be responding to an earlier chorus of his, or anticipating on the next: her discourse-as-response is a further expansion of the narrative we can produce. However familiar Krin Gabbard may be with jazz singing, I take his interpretation to be typical of audiences' perceptions of the singer as being in charge of delivering the lyrics. In the big band jazz field, such was one function of the songbird, who also had to look





**Fig. 6. William P. Gottlieb, *Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Brown, Milt (Milton) Jackson, and Timmie Rosenkrantz* [2 of 2] (New York, N.Y., Downbeat, ca. Sept. 1947); Library of Congress LC-GLB23-0284, 23 July 2005. Detail.**  
<http://memory.loc.gov/music/gottlieb/02000/02800/02841v.jpg>

pretty. To me, reading this attitude as a sign of Ella's lyric-centeredness is tantamount to negating the jazz singer's status as a jazz musician. Cabaret or chanson are about the lyrics, jazz is about music-making (Protat 559-608). And the Ella of 1947 onwards is definitely a jazz musician—so much so that I do not consider her to be as great an exponent of songs as such.

Alternative explanations to her eyes being closed at this moment could be that her eyes are tired, or that she

doesn't want to meet the look of a patron in front of her or, more to the point, that she doesn't want to be disturbed by Dizzy's antics. This in turn would explain Ray Brown's angry look: these are professionals working for a living. Again, Krin Gabbard reconstructs a different narrative, based on what he knows of the personal histories of the protagonists—Ella was Ray Brown's girlfriend at the time (they got married that same year). To him,

*While the singer closes her eyes and seems to lose herself in the lyric, Gillespie appears at the right margin smiling dreamily and perhaps*



**Fig. 7. Ibid. Framed as published in *The Golden Age of Jazz* (Pomegranate Artbooks).**



**Fig. 8. William P. Gottlieb, *Portrait of Billie Holiday*, (New York, N.Y., Downbeat, ca. Feb. 1947), from the negative; Library of Congress, 23 July 2005.**  
<http://memory.loc.gov/music/gottlieb/04000/04200/04213v.jpg>

*flirtatiously at Fitzgerald. Ray Brown, at the other side of the photo, seems to be eying Gillespie with a trace of suspicion. In the bottom of the picture is the balding head of the Danish jazz connoisseur and record producer, Tim Rosenkrantz. In his note to the photograph, Gottlieb points out that Rosenkrantz was a titled aristocrat. With this one image Gottlieb has played with the complex social (and sexual) milieu in which music takes place, as well as the vastly diverse levels on which people can listen to it. (338-9)*

The larger narrative in which Gabbard has inserted this shot goes far beyond the immediate past and future, to suggest a *ménage à trois* plot. In theatrical terms, his comment on the social implication of the presence of an aristocrat makes it sound as if Gottlieb has deliberately staged a Brechtian *gestus*, in which the positions of the protagonists symbolize their social relations. Gabbard's reading questions the aura of the singer as a jazz musician: one possible consequence of this kind of narrative-making is that Ella can be read here as a



**Fig. 9. *Idem*, as published in *The Golden Age of Jazz* (Pomegranate Artbooks).**  
<http://memory.loc.gov/music/gottlieb/04000/04200/04211v.jpg>

lower-class object of desire trying hard to express the meaning of the lyrics. And yet Krin Gabbard did not read anything in this photograph that Gottlieb did not deliberately place. Composition here is paramount: a close-up (see fig. 6) would have allowed us to listen to Ella's voice and it would have preserved the jazz singer's aura, just like he intentionally managed to "capture the



personality” (Gottlieb, “Billie Holiday”) and express the intensity and anguish in Billie’s voice with this photo (see fig. 8-9, same year, same place).

The published version of the photograph (see fig. 7), a medium shot of Ella, Dizzy and Ray is simply too evocative of any number of stories to preserve this kind of aura. It is a great photograph precisely because it tells a story: that could be the reason why the photographer had to justify the balding head he could not get rid of by giving him a part in that scene (today, a photographer might be tempted to edit the head out of the frame). Gottlieb himself explained why he included Dizzy, although he usually did not manipulate people to compose pictures:

**Audio extract 2. Gottlieb’s comment (“Ella Fitzgerald and Dizzy Gillespie”).<sup>3</sup>**

*But in this case, I did want to get Dizzy into the act. Dizzy was my favorite subject, he seemed to be alert to all nuances, and simply by wiggling my shoulder at him, he understood what I wanted and he moved into position, so he would be not far off from Ella when I took my picture; And he assumed that angelic look which he was able to put on. At that moment I “clicked the shutter,” as they say, and the ensuing picture was the result. (My transcription)*

Not only was this picture the result of interaction with a major protagonist that is on our side of the frame—which does not preclude other interactions between the subjects in or out of the frame—but, additionally, the photographer and/or publishers also made a choice of what to include in the frame from the original negative (see fig. 10).

Other narratives would have been evoked if the second microphone and spotlight had been included, if the aristocrat’s ear had been preserved, or if Ray Brown’s reflection in the mirror had balanced his look and helped us consider the musician as well as the jealous lover. Our situation can be compared to that of the reader of a theatrical play, who will more likely identify to the actor than the character—the reader will picture him- or herself acting the part. Likewise the reader of this photograph will more likely identify with Ella singing than with the photographer or the aristocrat as a member of the audience. As I watch this representation of jazz-making, I am listening to Ella’s inner singing. Florence Naugrette wrote that, when reading a play, “the total absence of any mediation for the character’s words forces the reader to take on the part” (76, my translation). Likewise, the reader of a jazz photograph substitutes their inner voice to the jazz singer’s. I am listening to Ella’s voice inside me, or to my own voice within Ella. The narratives I build from the elements around the singer distract me from this



Fig. 10. William P. Gottlieb, *Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie*, from the negative.

music-making by questioning the performer's aura—as with an alienation effect. The very theatricality of this shot made it a natural for a book of jazz photographs.

This other, more neutral shot (see fig. 11) would have been less evocative of any stories but that of a music-making situation. Ray Brown focuses on his playing. His tired look takes us to Dizzy whose expressionless stare leads us to a brightly-lit Ella Fitzgerald. We are sitting front row next to a balding patron who is also directing

our attention to the singer. Ella's eyes are open, with a rather vacant look above the audience's eyes: she could be avoiding eye contact. Nothing theatrical here, nothing engages us to the scene as such: we are mostly drawn to the singer. This leaves me craving for Ella's voice; my eyes are causing my mind to make my lungs vent out air through my pipes: I'm hearing a personal reconstruction of some ideal Ella Fitzgerald performance—I am Ella singing until I can actually hear her, on this CD for instance (see fig. 12):



Fig. 11. William P. Gottlieb, *Portrait of Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Brown, Milt (Milton) Jackson, and Timmie Rosenkrantz* [1 of 2] (New York, N.Y., Downbeat, ca. Sept. 1947); from the negative. Library of Congress LC-GLB23-0285, 23 July 2005. <http://memory.loc.gov/music/gottlieb/02000/02800/02851v.jpg>

Here a close-up was cut from the previous photograph, which leaves Ray Brown his place as an accompanist, in Ella's shade. The recordings are 1936-1939 takes, none of them featuring Ray Brown or any of the other instrumentalists, so its use as a record cover is not directly relevant, although it does fulfill its purpose for the listener to put a face on the voice they hear. As the following extract shows (audio extract 3), the Ella featured on the record is simply not the same artist (see figure 11 for visual immersion):

**Audio extract 3. Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight, "Shine", by Mack, Brown and Dant, rec. 1936, NYC. Also available 23 July 2005.**  
<http://www.jazz-on-line.com/artists3.htm>

The Ella singing here is not the singer Gottlieb captured. Not only is she with different musicians in a different setting, but her singing esthetics changed drastically in the interval from her role in 1936 as a songbird, singing the song straight in front of the band rather than using songs eleven





Fig. 12. *Ella Fitzgerald* (Editions Atlas : Jazz & Blues Collection 1, 1995). WIS CD 601.

Audio extract 4. Ella Fitzgerald with Bob Haggart, "Oh, Lady Be Good", by George and Ira Gershwin, rec. 1947 (DECCA, 23956, 73820). 23 July 2005.  
<http://www.jazz-on-line.com/artists3.htm>

years later as material for her personal jazz-making. Here she is in 1947 (audio extract 4), making bebop jazz from a Gershwin tune (see figure 11 for visual immersion).

Arguably, the hiatus between the photo narrative of bebop Ella (figure 11) and the songbird's voice (the Ella of 1936, audio extract 3) does not produce an esthetic clash though, because Ella's music-making does not translate into a theatrical attitude—she remains "herself", as Nat Hentoff wrote.

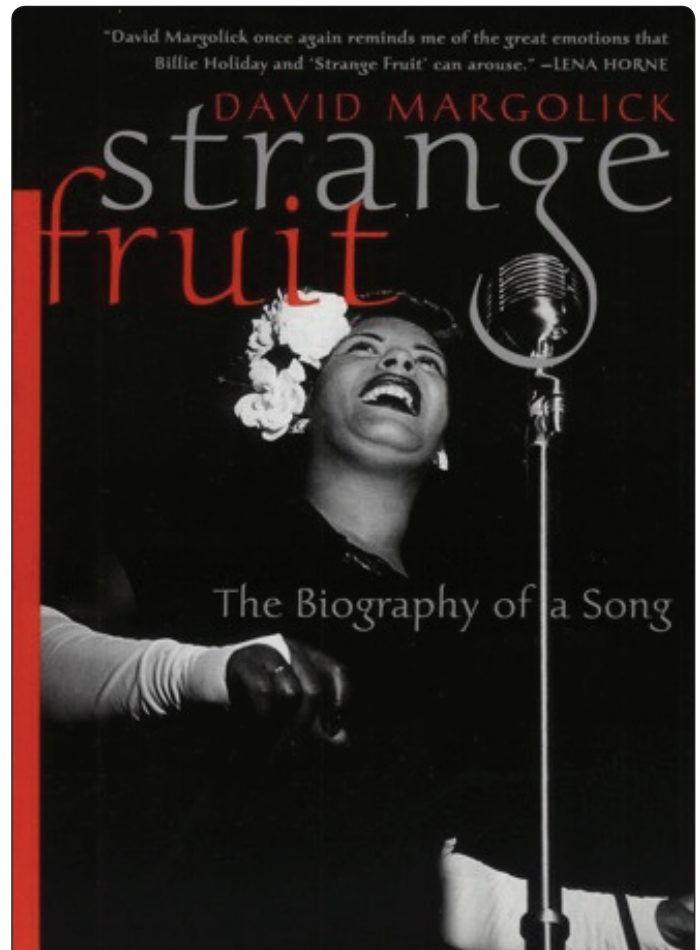


Fig. 12. Cover of David Margolick, *Strange Fruit: The Biography of a song* (NY: HarperCollins, 2001); photograph by Michael A. (Mike) Gould (ca. 1948?), © 1987 Delta Haze Co.

On the other hand, the choice of this Billie Holiday photograph (see fig. 12) for a book on "Strange Fruit" does pose a more disturbing problem of esthetic coherence. This graphic song on lynching was instrumental in making Billie Holiday a more theatrical performer. What voice do you hear in your individual reconstruction of Billie's interpretation, as informed by the performer's attitude on this photograph? (You are invited to commit each line of Abel Meeropol's lyrics to memory, to immerse yourself in Mike Gould's photograph of figure

12 and mentally sing the words with Billie's "voice" as so reconstructed.)

*Southern trees bear a strange fruit,  
Blood on the leaves and blood at the root,  
Black body swinging in the southern breeze,  
Strange fruit hanging from the poplar trees.*

How do the narratives you construct from this photograph collide with the lyrics? As a consequence, what is the effect of the choice of this photograph on Billie's credibility as the prime exponent of this song? The author dismisses the stories of Lady Day singing the song for months without realizing what it was about: he quotes Barney Josephson of Café Society saying Billie "sang it just as well when she didn't know what it was about" and finds the idea "inconceivable. Still, the question of precisely what she understood the song to mean arose repeatedly in her life" (Margolick 29). How much weight does the cover shot add to that "still"? Finally, how do you reconcile your reconstructed listening with her 1939 recording (Audio extract 5)?

**Audio extract 5. Billie Holiday with Frankie Newton's orchestra, "Strange Fruit," by Abel Meeropol, rec. 1939, Commodore. 23 July 2005.**  
<http://www.jazz-on-line.com/artists3.htm>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Attendees were invited to make sense of this paper from the Powerpoint presentation as combined with my voice-over reading and the audio samples. I have tried to stick as close as possible to the conference version for these proceedings, but I have suggested ways for the reader to recreate the effects of its original presentation, which involved a dynamic use of large images in a dark environment.

<sup>2</sup> It is not directly relevant to this paper, and in no way does it deal with music but, for a discussion of the social contexts of photographs and how we reconstruct their meaning, see Hans Durrer, "Reading Photographs", *Soundscapes*, vol. 7 (July 2004). [http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/VOLUME07/Reading\\_photographs.html](http://www.icce.rug.nl/~soundscapes/VOLUME07/Reading_photographs.html)

<sup>3</sup> How much more authority does this narrative of Gottlieb's image-making gain from the fact that we can hear it from his own voice? That is another dizzying question (pun intended).

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## Performing Histories and Cross-Cultural Dialogues: Australian Indigenous [Aboriginal]

### Rock as Response to Colonisation

Liz Reed

**A** boriginal rock music in Australia has been a site where ongoing resistance to colonisation has been performed since the 1970s in pubs, at concerts, festivals, and on CDs, addressing audiences composed of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The rock groups themselves frequently include at least one non-Aboriginal member, but define their music as Aboriginal rock. In doing so, Aboriginal performers have drawn upon a longer history of appropriating western forms of music for their resistance purposes, at the same time as they have retained customary modes of expressing stories, histories and identities via musical performance prior to “discovery” in 1770 by British naval officer Captain James Cook and subsequent colonisation in 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet carrying 717 convicts and 290 sailors, soldiers and officers in charge of them.

#### **Background: effects of colonisation and resistance to these**

Upon colonisation, British settlers immediately began the systematic dispossession of Aborigines from their lands and although formally subjects of the Crown, Aborigines were progressively deprived of

their human rights. Accompanying the often violent acts of dispossession that occurred throughout the continent from the 1790s until the 1930s when the final ‘frontiers’ had been ‘settled’, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial officials enacted policies and legislation that progressively denied Aboriginal basic human rights. These policies were euphemistically called ‘protection’, whereby Aborigines were segregated from the rest of society by being placed on church or state-controlled missions or reserves. Here, white Australians believed, Aborigines would obligingly die out as a ‘race’ as a part of the natural progression from savagery to civilisation that Social Darwinist theories predicted. A mantra of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century expressed this belief neatly, by which colonial officials and philanthropic bodies were able to convince themselves that by physically removing Aborigines from their lands and the rest of the population and incarcerating them on reserves or missions (later to be described as their descendants as concentration camps), they were carrying out their Christian duty to ‘smooth the pillow of the dying race’ as it was often expressed. When it became clear that although Aborigines who were designated by legislation

as well as racial and racist ideology as 'full-bloods' were in numerical decline but that 'half-castes' were rapidly increasing in number, attempts to manage this situation were made, whereby Aborigines would be assimilated into white Australia. Assimilation, it was believed by white Australians, would be achieved through a careful programme of inter-breeding. Aboriginality would be 'bred out' over a few generations.

One of the means to achieve the aims of assimilation was the practice of state-sanctioned removal of Aboriginal children from their families (later to become known as the 'Stolen Generations'). One of the aims of this stealing of children was to assist the breeding out of Aboriginality, and it also provided a pool of cheap labour for middle-class whites in the cities who employed Aboriginal girls as servants, and for landowners in rural areas who employed Aboriginal boys as labourers. With few exceptions, these were situations of extreme exploitation and hardship, with the complementary problem that many of the boys and girls were sexually abused in the situations into which the Protection Board for their employment had placed them.

For many Aboriginal people the stealing of their children by the state has been termed an act of genocide and/or cultural genocide. The extent to which Aboriginal mothers and fathers attempted to persuade the state authorities to allow their children to return home is expressed in a large body of desperate and poignant

letters, which dispel the white myth that they quickly forgot their children and/or willingly gave them up so they could gain the benefits of being absorbed into white society.

Slightly more than two centuries of colonisation has resulted in Indigenous males having a life expectancy of 56 years compared to non-Indigenous men's 77 years, and Indigenous women expecting to live 63 years compared to the 83 years for non-Indigenous women. Although approximately just two percent of the population of nearly 20 million, statistics on health, employment and education are consistently the lowest in the nation. Highest, though, are those of incarceration, which reflect a disproportionate interest in Indigenous people on the part of the police, and the sentencing processes of the legal system. A Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody in 1991 reported that Aborigines were 27 times more likely to be in police custody than non-Aborigines, a situation that remains unchanged, indeed has worsened since the Royal Commission's 300-plus recommendations to change this.<sup>(1)</sup>

Since invasion and colonisation, in spite of the concerted efforts of settlers and the state, Aboriginal people have maintained a strong sense of their diverse identities. The strength of this resolve has been combined with their strategic deployment of non-Indigenous forms of political and cultural protest since around the

middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, from warfare in the early periods of resistance as the land was being stolen, through to a complex range of other resistance techniques, Aborigines continue to respond actively to the state's attempt to exercise its power and control over them.

Having struggled successfully for their civil and citizenship rights throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the early 1970s Aboriginal political activity (re)focused on attempts to regain their lands, with the language of 'land rights' providing the unifying theme for what is a national movement.(2)

### **Rock music as response**

Aboriginal rock music, which I broadly define here to include reggae, rap, hip hop, heavy metal (and more), began to be performed in the 1970s, following in the musical footsteps of country and western performances which in turn had drawn on traditional ways that music has been used by Aborigines as a form of performing histories and story telling. One of the first rock groups was *No Fixed Address (NFA)* formed in Adelaide by Bart Willoughby. *NFA* had an instant appeal for non-Aboriginal audiences also, and was from its inception a medium through which rebellion and resistance against the state was articulated. As well, *NFA* provided 'living theatre' because of its frequent encounters with Adelaide's police force which consistently and violently

broke up the group's gigs in actions that were clearly racially motivated, which had a significant impact on the ways that non-Aboriginal audiences witnessed such racism first hand. The group's encounters with, as well as resistance to, police racism and that of white hotel managers when they discovered the groups they had booked were Aboriginal, were captured on a 1983 film, *Wrong Side of the Road*, which included the subtext of the search by one of the band members for his biological mother from whom he had been stolen as a child by the state.(3)

*NFA* was also significant for its early embrace of reggae and its lyrics of survival and defiance, which as Bart Willoughby expressed it, signaled both a personal and universal history of the 'horror and torment' of the 'white man's world'. Singing of being 'hassled by the cops nearly all [his] life', Willoughby's triumphant statement that 'You can't changed the rhythm of my soul/you can't tell me what to do', explains why *NFA*'s song 'We Have Survived' effectively became an anthem, always performed at concerts and festivals around the country. This song was of central importance to the 1988 'Invasion Day' concert held in Sydney, as an expression of solidarity and support for Indigenous Australia in its struggle for recognition. This 'Building Bridges' concert, as it was called, was a collaborative act of musical resistance on the part of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal musicians as a counter to the prevailing discourse of

the government-sponsored Bicentenary celebrations and slogan of 'living together'. This slogan was not only assimilationist but also ignored the realities of ongoing racism at all levels of Australian society two centuries after dispossession of Aborigines began. Aborigines and their supporters adopted a counter-slogan in 1988, that 'white Australia has a black history', which as the year progressed highlighted the denial of this 'black history' and the government's rejection of renewed calls for a treaty that would recognize the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples. The song that closed the 'Building Bridge' concert was *NFA's* 'We Have Survived', where Bart Willoughby's words spoke of the 'horror and the torment of' colonisation.

### **'Ethnic cleansing' and Australia**

Nine years after the Bicentenary, Bart Willoughby's song 'Ethnic Cleansing' on his solo CD titled 'Pathways', articulated a more global view on human rights, comparing the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia with the atomic tests at Maralinga (his father's country). The song suggested for the first time that 'ethnic cleansing' was something that had and was still happening in Australia. Although Aborigines are clearly not an 'ethnic' group in Australia, but rather have a distinct and unique identity as the sovereign, first peoples of the land, the deployment of the term 'ethnic cleansing' highlighted that this was not something that happens elsewhere, but applies directly

to 'home'. Bart Willoughby's response to both Bosnia and Maralinga was to situate 'ethnic cleansing' as a 'dirty word' that people use and abuse, pointing out that 'ethnic cleansing' is 'not what it seems as it's seen on TV', where people get mileage out of its use. Describing it as 'our worst fears' having been realised, he concludes characteristically with the defiant reminder 'but we have survived'.<sup>(4)</sup> Willoughby's primary use of 'ethnic cleansing' was to refer to the historical experiences of his people, the Pitjantjatjara, and the neighbouring Kokatha people who were forced off their lands in 1956 when the Australian government allowed the British government to test their atomic weapons there, without consultation with the Aboriginal owners. These atomic tests directly exposed the Pitjantjatjara and Kokatha peoples to radioactive contamination and their lands remain unsafe for habitation for another 250,000 years. Nevertheless, since the 1980s the people have been returning to their lands.<sup>(5)</sup>

### **The Aboriginal diaspora and survivor narratives-**

Rock music provides a space for Aboriginal peoples to perform narratives of their dispossession and resulting internal diasporic experiences. This internal diaspora reflects that Aborigines have been rendered, effectively, refugees in their own country. Having survived the physical and cultural devastation of

colonisation, the stories they have to tell – through the performance of rock music – constitutes what I am calling ‘survivor narratives’ that seek to distil and convey their histories to their Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal audiences.

For Queensland singer, Kev Carmody, often pigeonholed as a protest singer, even the Bob Dylan of Aboriginal rock, the ‘words are easy, they just flow [but] the music is harder’. Whilst believing that Aboriginal issues are ‘universal’, Carmody has pointed out that as an Aboriginal songwriter he is, as he put it, ‘not exactly scratching around for topics to write about’. Carmody is content to describe himself as a storyteller who is trying to raise awareness about a range of issues common to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities within Australia.<sup>(6)</sup> These include domestic and other forms of violence, drug abuse, religious brainwashing, environmental destruction and the continuing relevance of class and its intersection with race. Indeed, these are linked in his analysis of the destructive power of wealth which ‘supports environmental crimes’, and his lyrics juxtapose images of ‘a white Rolls Royce’ with homelessness on the streets where people

*live in a cardboard box ... [and] you're free to live  
In a poverty in a democracy, under a monarchy.*

(7)

Singing about the death of a young Aboriginal man ‘in the police van ... driven from the site’,<sup>(8)</sup> Carmody dedicated the song to ‘all families who have suffered a loss through a death in custody ... both black and white’,<sup>(9)</sup> thereby placing the emphasis on the power and brutality of the police as agents of the state. In this way he engages in dialogue with non-Indigenous listeners in an act of solidarity, at the same time as he instills into his songs ‘the feelings, emotions, ideas and pain that my people have suffered’. The message is clear – we are all in the struggle together, if we choose to be.

### **Teaching histories, teaching how to behave**

The long-standing collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous songwriters and performers has produced what might be called history songs that proclaim stories of agency and cross-cultural engagement. Perhaps the best known of these is Kev Carmody and Paul Kelly’s ‘From Little Things Big Things Grow’, which sings the history of the Gurindji people’s successful land rights struggle during the 1960s.

Similarly Yothu Yindi’s ‘Homeland Movement’ sings the history of the decision in the 1970s, of many Arnhem Land people to move back to their country.

Numerous singers have performed songs of their survival as members of the Stolen Generations, such as Archie Roach’s ‘Took the Children Away’, which ends on

an intensely personal note with the line 'I came home'. Both Roach and Ruby Hunter (his partner) used music as a means to engage in dialogue with their listeners, offering not only powerful statements of survival, but also of defiance in the face of the attempted denial by Prime Minister John Howard and sections of the non-Indigenous population of the extent of the damage that had been caused by the policy of child removal. For Deb Morrow, whose songs of Stolen Generations survival have not received the same degree of exposure, the dialogue has seemed almost secondary to her lyrical explorations of her own 'anger [and] hope', and her hope that by offering these as what she has termed 'healing songs', she might assist others to 'gain the will to heal'. (10) Deb Morrow's music has been among other things a way for her to learn what 'has been hidden from us, what has been denied, and to make connections again between women and children and my people'.(11)

Aboriginal rock is also used to teach about ways of behaving. Some of these songs could be termed 'songs of redemption', such as Archie Roach's 'Charcoal Lane' which tells of his recovery from alcohol abuse in inner Melbourne.

Similar redemptive uses have been made collaboratively, such as the 1998 involvement of Indigenous and non-Indigenous musicians and industry technicians in the production of a CD by the Aboriginal men resident at the Galiamble Men's Recovery Centre in St Kilda, an

inner suburb of Melbourne. This CD, titled 'Changed', consisted of songs written by men who had never imagined they might write or perform anything, but whose lyrics spoke of having reached rock bottom in their lives and having hurt loved ones in the process, as well as the long and difficult task of drying out and staying sober. There were also songs that asked for forgiveness, and sought to process feelings of anger, hurt and violence.

Throughout the country just about every Aboriginal community has its own rock groups, often singing in language, never recorded but well known from performing at festivals. Much of their music engages with specific problems encountered within the communities, such as Warumpi Band's 'Gotta Be Strong', aimed at the very young, against petrol sniffing. 'Petrol is Poison', performed by Tjalkuri from a small community on the border of South Australia/Northern Territory, sings of how petrol is not only personally destructive but affects the whole community, that is, how Aboriginality itself is damaged.

### **Land, the unifying theme**

Underlying all aspects of Aboriginal rock music's performance of histories is land. Land resonates through the music, as it did before the invasion, when the complex relationships between people and land and the laws and customs that arose from the land as



it was being created in the Dreamtime were the subject of song and performance. In contemporary Aboriginal rock music, the past connects with the present through articulations of land and of land rights, and of the ways these are central to identity and ongoing relationships with non-Aboriginal people such as me.

Land is signified by the very name 'Warumpi', which is the name given to the 'honey-ant dreaming site near the Aboriginal settlement of Papunya in the Northern Territory. Papunya is the place from which the Warumpi Band originated.(12) Warumpi Band consists of two brothers from that area, one white man who had gone to the settlement to work and another Aboriginal man from Elcho Island off the coast of north-east Arnhem Land. Warumpi Band's 'Blackfella, Whitefella' which was always sung at every appearance, either as an encore request from the audience or as a part of the concert, directly appeals to 'all the people of different races', doesn't matter as long as they're 'true fella' and prepared to stand together in solidarity to bring about the changes necessary in Australia. Lead singer George Rrurrambu actively engages in a cross-cultural dialogue with his audiences, appearing to speak to each of them individually, as he asks 'Are you the one who's always ready with a helping hand?'(13) Thus land can be seen as the most potent site of cross-cultural history telling and the possibilities of unity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people based on the recognition of the

sovereignty of the first peoples. Tantalisingly, to return to Bart Willoughby's solo CD, the song called 'Turf', which follows on directly from 'Ethnic Cleansing' sings of 'this land [which has a dark side and a white side] is whatever you make of it ... This turf, Australia, belongs to you and me ... Blackfellas land'. With these words Willoughby indicates a willingness to share the land with non-Aboriginal people, on their recognition that the land remains Aboriginal. Thus the two strands of contemporary Australian politics are entwined around the naming of his land as Pitjantjatjara and Australia, and the songs speak of the ways that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal histories are intertwined, of identities, sharing, and reconciliation, without ever losing the focus on the necessity for the sovereignty of Aborigines to be recognised.

## Conclusion

Aboriginal rock music can be seen as a site of multidimensional meanings and voices. It can also be seen as a site of resistance and survival, through its articulation of identities and of cultural continuities, mediating the fundamental importance of land and of land rights. Embedded with statements of pride in identity and country as well as history lessons, it also offers a vision of a future in which mutual recognition and respect might be based upon acknowledgment that all non-Aborigines are newcomers and that the 'turf' on

which they all live is 'Blackfellas' land', which they can help save from further environmental degradation. But in order to do that, as a first step, as the songs discussed make clear, white Australians such as myself must be prepared to return the land to its owners.

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## In the Wake of Hendrix: Reflections on a Life after Death

Chris Richards

### Prologue

I was never a fan of Jimi Hendrix. Perhaps I was the right age at the right time. But I bought none of his records (Richards, 1998). Perhaps Hendrix was just too much on show. The sort of exotic piratical bricolage of his first TV appearances, with the success of *Hey Joe*, certainly tore into the banality of pop. But the accumulation of subsequent images seemed to flip over, in their excess, from cool to uncool, productive more of embarrassment than identification. Kneeling in feigned orgasm over the body of his guitar or lecherously waving his tongue (more phallic display than an offer of oral sex; see Dyer, 1985) did not provide a space for a sexuality with which I could be at ease. On the contrary, this was a masculinity I couldn't emulate, couldn't inhabit.. In 1968, *Electric Ladyland's* display of naked women ended the lingering possibility that I might actually buy one of his LPs. It must have been a close thing, with the inclusion of *All Along the Watchtower*. I wasn't articulating some kind of proto-feminism. I just couldn't 'do' this apparently predatory masculinity, not so much because it oppressed women, but because it oppressed me. Following Are

*You Experienced?*, the cover of *Electric Ladyland* looked like a boast, showing off Hendrix's groupies. But somewhat contradictorily, I also didn't like the photograph; too many of these women didn't look good enough (see Perry, 2004: 62). Because I neither went to see Hendrix, nor bought his records, I heard only the most widely played tracks on TV and radio. His wider musical innovations, and his subsequent influence, were thus unknown to me.

Beverley Skeggs (2004) provides one way of rethinking the grounds of this rejection:

*To...read the site of projection as the 'truth' of the person or object is to mis-recognize and mis-read one's self. To read something (a body or object) as excess is to render it beyond the bounds of propriety, to locate it within the inappropriate, the matter out of place, the tasteless. A reading of a body as excessive is therefore to display the investment the reader has in maintaining propriety in themselves...Excessive sexuality, as Mercer and Julien (1988) detail, is the thing which, par excellence, is a threat to the moral order of Western civilization. (Skeggs, 2004: 100)*

Perhaps disowning and denying material taken to be 'embarrassing' or 'vulgar' was integral to the production of a particular, and especially white, middle-class self, almost austere remote from the risk of bodily contamination (Dyer, 1997). Maybe this was also about the production of a self-identity, defined against the 'common', undiscriminating, consumption of trash. In the later 1960s, 'excessively' commercial black music and the 'show business' stylized choreography and stage dress associated with it or the 'vulgarity' of sexual display in some musical performances, including those of black performers, certainly provoked the kind of response Skeggs suggests. And even Hendrix, though apparently playing 'innovative' rock, was perhaps not cool (or cold) enough and not white enough (Dyer, 1997). By contrast, as John Perry notes, 'English blues guitarists of that era generally stood still looking *extremely serious*' (2004: 40).

**'Hendrix After Death is a growth industry' (Tate, 2003: 64)**

I want to discuss the 'debate' over Hendrix's posthumous reputation and status in a selection of academic and journalistic writing - to illustrate how 'Jimi Hendrix' is contested, appropriated into a variety of competing discourses. In the final section of this chapter, I will discuss a British band, the Hamsters, well known for their 'tributes' to Hendrix. Here, I want to begin with several black authors.

Nelson George locates Hendrix in the binaries of a racialized discourse, where 'Black' and 'White' constitute almost mutually exclusive domains. The result is an almost uncompromising dismissal of Hendrix, representing him as turning back (to blues) and thus isolating himself from the forward movement of black music. In George's account the black audience is characterised by a 'consumerism and restlessness [that] burns out and abandons musical styles'; meanwhile, 'white Americans...seem to hold styles dear long after they have ceased to evolve' (George, 1988: 109). In relation to this polarized construction of 'Black' and 'White' audiences, Hendrix's creativity was, in several senses, misplaced:

*Blacks create and then move on. Whites document and then recycle. In the history of popular music, these truths are self-evident...Hendrix drew from a style blacks had already disposed of...removed from the traditions of black America, Hendrix in London... emerg[ed] with a black based sound drenched in flower-power rhetoric that had little in common with the soul consciousness of James Brown or Aretha...Unfortunately, Hendrix fatally damaged his connection with black audiences because of his innovative brilliance on the electric guitar, an instrument that, with the declining interest in the blues, fell into disfavor... (George, 1988: 108-109)*

George concludes his lament with 'you just couldn't dance to it' (1988: 109). Mark Anthony Neal places Hendrix in much the same way, arguing that he was 'never claimed by the black community, in large part because of his own refusal to have his music reduced into any specific genre' (Neal, 1999: 113).

Paul Gilroy, implicitly accepting that Hendrix had little support from a black audience, construes Hendrix as 'made up' for white audiences in England:

*...Hendrix was reinvented as the essential image of what English audiences felt a black American performer should be: wild, sexual, hedonistic, and dangerous....Sexuality and authenticity have been intertwined in the history of western culture for several hundred years. The overt sexuality of Hendrix's neo-minstrel buffoonery seems to have been received as a sign of his authentic blackness by the white rock audiences on which his burgeoning pop career was so solidly based.*

*(Gilroy, 1993: 93)*

In this perspective, Hendrix is, again as George suggests, 'misplaced' for a black audience. These are broadly convergent accounts, together suggesting that his music was anchored in a dying genre (blues) and an instrument falling into disfavour (electric guitar);

that he did not produce music within a currently live and popular black genre; and that he was performing to a white audience in terms suggesting complicity with white fantasies about black sexuality.

But addressing the same issue – the apparent alienation of black audiences from Hendrix's music – David Henderson ([1978] 2002) attributes such tastes to the manipulative power of white-owned radio rather than to an 'authentic' expression of cultural preference or aesthetic sensibility. He comments:

*In many ways Jimi Hendrix's appearance in Harlem [September 1969] brought up the true paradox of his fame. Jimi was known world wide, but not in Harlem, his symbolic hometown. Both he and Eddie O'Jay knew that this reality was the result of corporate conferences. Eddie O'Jay nearly had to admit to the crowd that he did not control his own play-list (a horrible admission for any DJ). In fact, his play-list was controlled by the Sonderling Corporation of Dallas, Texas – a white corporation that owned a string of the biggest black radio stations in America and ran the stations as a component of specialised radio for black markets. Their seven-day, 24-hour air time was the heaviest advertisement-saturated format in radio. Their interests in the cultural*



*development of their listeners did not rise above black R&B Top 10 and the most legally allowable ad density. (Henderson, [1978] 2002: 313)*

For Henderson, Hendrix was unknown because he was unheard, not because he played blues, or the guitar, or too much for a white audience, or appeared to have embraced hippie rhetoric (see also Tate, 2003: 30-1).

In common with all of the preceding authors, Greg Tate doesn't question the argument that black audiences have shown little interest in Hendrix. But his project is to intervene. *Midnight Lightning* is:

*...a Jimi Hendrix Primer for Blackfolk. A user-friendly introduction for all of My People who don't get that Hendrix was a Black man who came from several Black worlds to make extraterrestrial Black music for all God's children whether they got rhythm or not...it is...a Jimi Hendrix Reclamation Project. One that dares come demanding he be accepted in the fold of twentieth century Black icons by all who ever dared think he played 'white boy music'. (Tate, 2003: 8)*

Tate, a performer as well as a writer, is implicitly aligned with a movement of musical recovery concerned to revisit the blues. Since Nelson George's apparently terminal judgement (1989), the blues has been the

object of a 'rehabilitation by a new generation of black performers', actively challenging its 'dismissal by 1960s black power activists as accommodative and appropriated by whites' (Negus and Pickering, 2004: 101). Public Enemy's Chuck D, for example, figured prominently in a recent homage to Chess Records and Muddy Waters (Scorsese, 2004). And by contrast with George, Charles Shaar Murray has also provided a detailed overview of the many disparate reworkings of Hendrix's music through the past thirty years (Murray, [1989] 2001) suggesting, in effect, that Hendrix's music was far from 'backward looking'.

But Tate's project is more than a matter of *musical* recovery. Arguing that African-American culture tends to resist radical change, he construes Hendrix as living, prefiguratively, beyond 'race': 'Any book about Hendrix with race on the brain has no choice but to recognize him as a destroyer of our racialist worldviews. This holds for black and white folk alike.' (Tate, 2003: 11)

*If Hendrix is a Black Icon, he is also a destabilizer of Black Masculine stereotypes from both within and without African American Culture. Hard where the culture says soft (the volume level of his guitar), relaxed where the culture says either 'ghost' or fly into a rage (when among mobs of white folk). For this reason I consider him a supersignifier of*

*Post-Liberated Black Consciousness. Someone who tried to show by example what life as a Black Man without fear of a white planet might look like, feel like, taste like. (Tate, 2003: 30)*

In some respects, Tate's 'Hendrix' appears here as a precursor of other more aggressively masculine black men acting in defiance of a 'white planet': Shaft and more recently the many gangsta rappers openly asserting their right to sexual involvement with white women. Is the cover of the British edition of *Electric Ladyland* thus more appropriate than Hendrix himself acknowledged, in that it implies precisely this liberation from the fear of violent reprisal (castration, lynching) for the act of miscegenation? The difficulty here is that however 'relaxed' Tate suggests Hendrix may have been, the security of his position seems to have depended on precisely the racial mythology of black phallic 'superiority'. So, if this is liberation from the 'fear of a white planet' it seems largely dependent on an inflection of an image of black masculinity with a long history: just another black man/beast with a very big penis (Hall, 1997: 262-3; Mercer, 1994; Mercer and Julien, 1988). Tate cites his 'Harlem-based girlfriend' Faye Pridgeon: 'There were times when he almost busted me in two, the way he did a guitar on stage' (Tate, 2003: 56). David Henderson similarly documents Hendrix's sexual reputation, 'for Hendrix

the chicks were release, part of his creative fashion, a way for him to maintain his drive and keep his energy peaked. That Hendrix's sexual appetite was enormous made him more the pimp in Devon's eyes, the super-pimp, the master game pimp... Hendrix's joint "was damn near big as his guitar"' (Henderson, 1978/2002: 326-7).

Tate's 'recovery', like Henderson's, is thus not without problems. But any appropriation of, or tribute to, 'Hendrix' cannot evade this issue. Hendrix as the black stud can't be bracketed out from Hendrix as the blues 'innovator' or 'virtuoso' guitarist. This is an issue especially central to any consideration of white emulators of Hendrix, including, as I will discuss below, the Essex-based band the Hamsters. The selection of particular attributes to emulate in tribute performances and recordings necessarily entails a series of implicit judgements about Hendrix as a *black* musician/performer.

I want to turn now, albeit briefly, to outline the posthumous construction Hendrix as hero in a variety of white authors' recollections and analyses of his influence. Some comment on him in the context of more broadly focused autobiographical reflections. For example, Sheila Rowbotham, born in the 1940s, uses a memory of Hendrix in performance to present a condensed image of an historical moment:

*...at the Saville Theatre...the wild energy of Hendrix on stage tearing up the American flag was accompanied by ear-bursting music exploding from the biggest speakers I had ever seen... music was no longer just for dancing; it signalled psychic discovery. (Rowbotham, 2000: 131-2)*

Though a few years younger, Donna Gaines (born in the early 1950s) similarly associates Hendrix's playing of the *Star-Spangled Banner* with a liminal moment in twentieth century history:

*My lasting impression of burned-out 1960s idealism was the sound of Jimi Hendrix cranking the national anthem as the sun rose over Woodstock...The culture of consumption had peaked. On a noise guitar note you understood the American Century was fading; the dream was over. In that moment Hendrix sounded the death knell for an economy predicated on consumption and waste. (Gaines, 1990: 106)*

Gaines thus gives the memory of Hendrix a perhaps more negative inflection, implying both the apparent end to the long consumer boom of the fifties and sixties, and to the 'psychic discovery' located by Rowbotham just two years earlier. But elsewhere, Gaines more straightforwardly contributes to the

construction of Hendrix as hero:

*Zen master of the Stratocaster. Ruler of haircuts and dress codes, now as in the hour of our deaths. Undisputed King of our rock and roll universe. (Gaines, 1990: 178).*

Germaine Greer, speaking in the 1973 documentary by Joe Boyd and John Head comments that:

*Well, he was a Black man in a white man's world, there's no doubt about that...I put it down in a general sort of way to the impotence of the community he played for. We had no way of making him understand what he meant to us. He knew what the press thought, but he didn't know how much we needed him or what kind of energy he was giving us. (cited in Tate, 2003: 55).*

Consistent with Rowbotham and Gaines, Greer construes Hendrix as a singular focus for a generation of white youth. An expressive 'energy' is located in Hendrix. Sheila Whiteley, in *The space between the notes* (a title taken from an interview with Hendrix) argues that:

*The extreme use of noise, in conjunction with the hypnotic nature of the Hendrix sound with its overwhelming energy and drive, created a means*

*through which he could tune into the 'collective unconscious' of his audience. This provoked the mass sexual ecstasy often associated with his concerts, which moved towards a corporeal sense of tribal unity. (Whiteley, 1992: 25)*

Here, as Greer foresaw, it is as if the intensity of meaning attributed to Hendrix's performance has to be reanimated, articulated years later, in what, especially from academic writers, is peculiarly 'excessive' language.

It is perhaps because invocations of his performance so persistently *intermingle* political and sexual imagery that the 'meanings' attributed to Hendrix can appear so extraordinary. For some, the 'intensity' of his playing is translated explicitly into sexual hyperbole. Ruth Padel, for example, offers this graphic elaboration of the usual phallic metaphors:

*In Greek terms, a hero is a man with a bit of god in him, divinity that flares in heroic daring and the way women keel over before him. Hendrix was also a world-wide sex symbol, a guitar ejaculating over the world: far out innovation plus daring technique went with legendary sexuality. A guitar hero, brandishing the magic weapon that turned him into a god. (Padel, 2000: 81)*

All of these writers happen to be women. But for George Lipsitz too, though embedded in some more dispassionate comments on 'technology' and 'technique', Hendrix is represented as extraordinary: his 'sensuality' is 'apocalyptic' (Lipsitz, 1990: 129).

Gilbert (1999), a retrospective fan of the Velvet Underground, not Hendrix, and born in the early 1970s, is more sceptical of Hendrix's construction as a 'hero':

*Jimi Hendrix deployed the resources inherent in electronic amplification largely to extend the melodic range of his instrument and thereby to secure his place as the ultimate phallocentric guitar hero...[the received image of Hendrix the lone guitar hero is in stark contrast to that of the four members of the Velvet Underground immersing themselves...in the wall of noise]. (Gilbert, 1999: 42, 48 endnote).*

Gilbert's acknowledged 'cheap shot at Hendrix' (Gilbert, 1999: 48n.) is a productive interruption to the chorus so uniformly evident in writing from the earlier generation of critics. For example, while arguing, apparently legitimately enough, that white rock music in the 1970s 'progressed' by taking over, without acknowledging, the features of African-American musical performance he exemplified, both Iain Chambers and Robert Walser

reiterate the attribution of heroic genius to Hendrix. Chambers portrays Hendrix as 'a black guitar hero in a very white world' (Chambers, 1985: 100-101). Walser reasserts Hendrix's place in relation to heavy metal as the 'first truly virtuosic hard rock guitarist', producing 'a virtuoso's vocabulary of extravagance and transgression' (1993: 77).

There is an important paradox here. Both Chambers and Walser contest the 'denial' of Hendrix and yet at the same time draw upon and further Hendrix's reputation as a lone hero, a guitar virtuoso, a reputation not that they have to (re)establish, but which has already been constructed. They identify the sound feeding progressive rock and heavy metal as Hendrix's alone, not of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, as the product of ensemble playing between three players. White and English, Mitch Mitchell and Noel Redding are erased here (though not entirely from either Henderson [1978] 2002, or Murray [1989] 2001). They thus further indulge an insistent fascination with Hendrix *alone*. All that is exceptional, intense and innovative is located only in the black member of the trio. It is Hendrix, not the 'Experience', that is most consistently hailed as the properly 'authentic' source for all that followed.

This is, in part, an effect of the individualising, and essentializing, discourses of genius. Negus and Pickering (2004) trace the history of such discourses, linking later variants to 'race thinking' in the nineteenth

and earlier twentieth centuries. They refer, for example, to 'a romanticized ideal' involving 'an assumed raw, unspoiled vitality' and of 'primitivism' (in art) as speaking to 'a sense of lack in white subjectivity' (Negus and Pickering, 2004: 142). 'Hendrix' is constructed through a later inflection of this discourse. In effect, in the discourse through which he is constructed as a lone guitar hero, he is positioned as embodying a 'raw' power, oscillating in its expression between sexual and musical innovation, excess and transgression. His sidemen are just 'competent' (Gilroy, 1993b). And when Bennett and Dawe refer to Hendrix as 'single-handedly pioneering a new style' (Bennett and Dawe, 2001: 3), they further articulate the dominant discourse through which Hendrix is currently recalled. Of course Hendrix produced some exceptional music but, as Negus and Pickering argue, it is possible to disentangle a recognition of exceptionality from an essentializing, and in Hendrix's case a 'racializing', mythology of creativity. They suggest that 'the sense of genius as an entire person' should be abandoned (Negus and Pickering, 2004: 159). Instead they emphasise that exceptionality 'depends upon a longer process of *becoming*, from which the exceptional creative act that is termed genius can emerge' (Negus and Pickering, 2004: 158). Following this, and to break with the racializing tropes sedimented in the discourse of 'primitive' genius, Hendrix's musical innovations need to be located in both his own substantial prior experience

in r 'n' b and in the specific collaborations (with other musicians and with producers) in the period from late 1966 until his death.

### **The Hamsters**

Following Manthia Diawara, Skeggs remarks that: '... the 'Blues', as a form of music appropriated by white musicians, was the site where 'cool' as an attribute was formed' (Skeggs, 2004: 188). Of course blues in Britain in the 1960s had a substantial place alongside soul and Motown and, eventually, psychedelic rock. Blues, unlike other black music, was probably first encountered by many, both live and on record, as it was played by white performers. To play blues guitar was, as Skeggs suggests, a very cool thing to do. Transferred to the bodies of young white men, the dexterity and 'down' demeanour of blues playing bestowed a mystique and an understated (hetero)sexuality unlikely to be read off from the bodies of its (seemingly always already old) black performers. Take, for example, in the mid-1960s, Eric Clapton or Bert Jansch by contrast with B.B. King or John Lee Hooker. In some respects the 'cool' stance of white blues players implied a male sexuality both elusive and (dis)passionate. It was serious, plain and accomplished.

In many respects, the Hamsters are inheritors of this version of 'cool' rather than, in any overt way, the dressed

up, showy sexualised performance style associated with Hendrix. And yet they are known as a band substantially devoted to performing and recording material produced by the Jimi Hendrix Experience. They play regular sets, sets dedicated entirely to Jimi Hendrix and sets combining Hendrix with Z-Z Top, largely on a pub rock and beer, biker and blues festival circuit in England, and to some extent in Holland and Germany. But the Hamsters are not young white men. They formed the band in 1987 and are now in their fifties. They are thus men entering later middle age, largely playing music associated most strongly with the 1960s in Britain, when they were teenagers. Their most prominent spokesman is the lead guitarist and singer Barry Martin (known as Snail's Pace Slim). Andy Billups (Zsa Zsa Poltergeist) plays bass. Alan Parish plays drums and is also known primarily by a facetious pseudonym, the Reverend Otis Elevator.

Elements of self-mockery in their presentation, though not generally in their on-stage musical performance, are persistent, strongly marking their distance from what they typically refer to as 'muso' culture. In interviews given to various music magazines (collected on their website), they present themselves with a self-deprecatory humour and position themselves as addressing an audience construed neither as young nor with pretensions to musical expertise. Thus their drummer comments:



*I'm not a particularly technical player and there was a period in my playing life when I got very hung up about that...and there were all these guys around the area where I was in, Southend, you'd go and see them and think, 'Fuck me, that was clever', but at the end of the day, does the guy in the street give a toss about that? Not really...Put it this way, I'd rather send home 198 normal people happy and 2 musicians who don't think much of it. (Bateman, undated)*

In a lengthy interview for *Guitarist Magazine* (Marten, 1991) Snail's Pace Slim similarly constructs their audience as *ordinary*:

*The last thing I ever want to do is play to a room full of musicians every night. We're a punter's band, we like people to come out and see us and go home saying, 'Yeah, I had a really good time.'*  
(Marten, 1991)

Such an audience is ordinary according to a variety of implicit criteria, including being predominantly (though not exclusively) 'older' (perhaps 35 or 40 and above), mostly provincial, perhaps particularly male but also musically non-expert and primarily loyal to the genre of blues-rock:

*I was working in a record shop when Dire Straits*

*came along, and there were all these guys coming in who probably hadn't bought a record since Cream or early Fleetwood Mac, because they didn't like Gary Numan and Madness and The Clash. It wasn't the fact that it was a revival; it was simply that these people started hearing something they liked again...(Marten, 1991)*

The successful growth of the audience for the Hamsters in the early nineties is substantially attributed to their inclusion of an increasing proportion of material from Hendrix.. This is represented as a recovery of an older audience, though Slim also acknowledges people too young to remember his music: '...there are a lot of people out there who have never seen Hendrix, or who haven't heard him for years' and 'the legend is so strong that there are now lots of young people who have heard about him' (Marten, 1991). But, the music industry, like much of the media, is portrayed as both 'metropolitan' and as 'youth' obsessed, thus defining what constitutes popular music in narrow terms obstructive of a potentially stronger cross generational appeal – suggested, emblematically, in a reference to 'fathers who were into Cream bringing their son with his Megadeth T-shirt on':

*...let's face it, A&R people are all eighteen and nineteen years old and they're all trapped in this London thing, or now it's Manchester, and they*

*think they've got to sell records to kids. Well there aren't any kids in comparison to what there were. People who buy records are older now and they've got more money to spend. And with a band like us it's the music that matters, not the hair-dos and clothes. The people who are interested in the kind of music the Hamsters play are the same people who bought Stevie Ray Vaughan records.*

*(Marten, 1991)*

Recalling Nelson George (1989), the Hamsters appear to confirm his view of white audiences and the lamentable dead-end represented by Hendrix's success with them. The recovery and perpetuation of music from between 35 and 40 years ago seems unarguably backward looking, and the audience invoked in all three interviews appears to confirm such a view, being mostly composed of white men seeking to hear the music they listened to in adolescence (Frith, 1987). Equally, there seems little evidence that the Hamsters have any interest in repositioning Hendrix as a distinctively black musician – as Greg Tate has advocated he should be. Indeed, Snail's Pace Slim, though acknowledging the crucial early influence of Little Richard on his musical tastes (Foster, 2000: 43-4) identifies even those blues guitarists of interest to him as mainly white – Stevie Ray Vaughan, Ronnie Earl, Anson Funderburgh, Duke Robillard, Robben Ford, Hollywood Fats (Marten, 1991).

In their repertoire, Hendrix is thus seemingly assimilated to a blues-rock tradition to which black players are by no means central.

However, it is crucial that The Hamsters do not emulate, in the sense of seeking to re-embody, Hendrix. Hendrix as an 'icon' (Tate, 2003) is present as a visual motif: for example, his image is displayed on one of Slim's guitars, a T-shirt, and a shirt imprinted with the cover art from *Axis: Bold as Love* (worn at the Half Moon, January 2005). But they do not dress or perform as if to replicate Hendrix himself nor, though they are a trio with bass, drums and guitar, to replicate The Jimi Hendrix Experience. The Hamsters' musical recovery implies a de-essentializing of Hendrix's music, asserting that 'it can be played by others – not 'note-for-note' ('we're not necrophiliacs' - Marten, 1991) – but as music stripped of the mystique of embodiment in Hendrix alone. The band has consistently constructed its own identity. They have developed their own stylized cartoon iconography – mainly featuring hamsters – and gestures to Hendrix are confined to the addition of bandannas, military jackets, left-handed guitars and to playful parodies of album titles – *Electric Hamsterland*, *Band of Gerbils*. The band's name is traced back to punk and, according to Slim, was chosen partly to avoid 'macho posturing'. While they tour widely within England, they are still also firmly located in Essex, in the South-East. The claim

that 'we never set out to re-create Jimi Hendrix; we just set out to do us doing versions of Hendrix, that's all' (Marten, 1991) positions them as reworking, without necessarily making innovative changes to, the music of the Jimi Hendrix Experience (Bennett, 2000: 146). Slim adds, 'I don't actually think I play anything like Hendrix... We just try and capture the spirit of what he did, and that slots nicely in amongst our rockier, bluesier things' (Marten, 1991). Indeed, at the Torrington (a pub in Finchley, north London), Slim wore a black shirt bearing the repeated imprint of Ozzy Osbourne's face, rather than Hendrix. At the Half Moon in Putney he wore a 'Sex Pistols' shirt for the first half of the set. They routinely end their performances walking among the audience, swopping guitars, while playing a Z-Z Top track. Thus the Hamsters situate themselves in a larger web of musical references rather than seeking to 'reincarnate' Hendrix.

The Hamsters' 1995 *Jimi Hendrix Memorial Concerts*, recorded live at the Robin Hood, Brierley Hill, includes interesting evidence of their relationship with audiences in the earlier phase of their career. On both *Foxy Lady* and *Purple Haze* the audience is drawn into a participatory relationship with the performance. Though this is no more than a matter of shouting out the chorus 'Foxy lady!' in the first case, with *Purple Haze* there is a more particular invitation in that the singer (Slim) leaves

lines incomplete – so that the audience can shout out the missing words: 'scuse me while I kiss the sky', 'put a spell on me', 'or the end of time'. The track fades with the audience chanting 'Hamsters, Hamsters, Hamsters!' Andy Bennett has drawn attention to how 'via processes of selective appropriation into types of vernacular discourse, popular music is continually being reaffirmed by audiences as their music and thus as a form of folk music' (Bennett, 1997: 99). Certainly, it is possible that the songs in question (and perhaps others such as *Hey Joe*) have become a part of a popular repertoire, perhaps somewhat divorced from their original circulation. In this respect, their performance by the Hamsters could be seen as furthering such a 'divorce' rather than securing the audience's knowledge of the Hendrix performances. The Hamsters' first album *Electric Hamsterland* (1990) includes both *Foxy Lady* and *Purple Haze* and, for some, it may be that in the 1995 concert the Hamsters are heard as performing a version of their own recording rather than that of Hendrix. But hearing both simultaneously seems equally possible. The Hamsters' performance of their own previous studio recording need not displace the Hendrix recording, to which their own production is a response.

How current audiences for the Hamsters 'hear' their performances is obviously an elusive matter. Such audiences are not quite as exclusively male, or as

middle aged, as their earlier interviews may suggest. Though the first of their appearances I attended (at the Cauliflower, Ilford) certainly seemed to be favoured by white men over thirty, there were women present. At the Torrington there were also several much younger white women, in their late teens and early twenties, mostly located close to the stage. Though still addressing the audience in characteristic informal 'pub band' banter (Bennett, 1997: 99), and reaffirming a sense of belonging to a blues-rock 'tradition', Slim identified and placed songs, if only loosely, in the contexts of their initial circulation. It could be argued that their playing of a track from *First Rays of the New Rising Sun* and *Manic Depression*, and if also more predictably, *The Wind Cries Mary*, informed a younger audience of the wider Hendrix repertoire. Despite this, the Hamsters are still primarily concerned to address an older audience. Thus, in announcing a fifties r 'n' b song, Slim pointed out, with mildly confrontational wit no doubt directed at the younger people present, that the r 'n' b in question was not that of Beyonce Knowles but of a much earlier genre.

The Hamsters do not play Hendrix as primarily a psychedelic or proto-jazz guitarist. To the contrary, as I have argued, his songs are incorporated into a British blues rock tradition through which, in both live performance and modest 'independent' recording, the

Hamsters assert their musical authenticity. From some standpoints, such a relocation of Hendrix will imply a dis-authentication, a degradation, and perhaps a whitening of his music. But the Hamsters revisit Hendrix's music as a 'source' rather than as the object of pastiche, parody or major elaboration. Slim insists: 'All we try and do is get the spirit of his music into what we do', 'Hendrix was a major innovator, but I've never looked upon him as a sacred cow', 'we never set out to recreate Hendrix' (Marten, 1991).

However, the Hamsters do venture into significant irony in reflections on their own relationship to rock's hard masculinity. When the Hamsters' play Hendrix's music, in a context framed by jokes about ageing and bodily failings, it can produce a distinctive, and subversive, 'disembodying' of Hendrix as hero. At the Half Moon in Putney, Slim ended the first half of their set with a reminder of the implications of 'prostate problems' and their recent 'in performance' DVD is entitled *To Infirmary and Beyond* (2004). The ironic disparity between Hendrix's 'apocalyptic sensuality' (Lipsitz, 1990) and the Hamsters' decidedly ungodlike self-presentation is well illustrated in the concert video, filmed in Milton Keynes in 2003. Slim's comic banter with the audience, addressed as ageing with them into their fifties, significantly inflects the meaning of the tribute:

*Thanks a lot folks...It's usually about this time of night we stick a Jimi Hendrix thing in for ya...For the uninitiated, we've always enjoyed Jimi's songs but we have encountered some criticism from the music press for playing Hendrix songs, they think it's uncool...well I'm afraid they have confused us with someone who might give a shit. The real reason is we've got a combined age of 150...when you get that old you're far more worried about having to get up three times a night for a piss than what some spotty little virgin on the NME has to say about you...and the other good thing about getting old is you don't have to do drugs anymore 'cause you get the same effect just standing up quickly...anyway, as most of you know. (Slim, in *To Infirmary and Beyond*, 2004)*

The audience is addressed here with familiarity, acknowledging implicit loyalty to the band and distance from the music press, and inviting an awareness of ageing and its consequences. These are not performers putting their bodies on display. To the contrary, though they move rather more than some of the more austere sixties blues guitarists, their actions are more mundane, primarily those of 'working musicians'. Even Slim's relatively extravagant gesturing with the guitar in his

playing of *Star Spangled Banner* is more a matter of technical necessity than of mimicry of Hendrix-as-bodily-performer. Though Slim's verbal style is jocularly abrasive, there is, amidst the hard rock playing, a paradoxically self-effacing refusal of the phallic posturing so often enacted by lead guitarists.

### Conclusion

The Hamsters are one among many of those who continue to recover, and variously pay tribute to, Jimi Hendrix and the Jimi Hendrix Experience. Their performances and recordings, though clearly adapting Hendrix to a British blues-rock tradition, also offer a convivial and determinedly unpretentious take on Hendrix's music. They also, and increasingly as they work into their fifties, provide a slightly wry commentary on a faltering masculinity that, however unintended, suggests an ironic counterpoint to the image of Hendrix as phallic guitar hero constructed in the late sixties and after his death.

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## Selected Discography

Recordings by the Hamsters [Rockin' Rodent Recordings, with the exception of Electric Hamsterland]

To Infirmity and Beyond [DVD] (2004) Filmed at the Woughton Centre, Milton Keynes, February 28th, 2003.

Open All Hours (2004)

They Live by Night (2001)

Condensed Hamsters (1989/90)

Pet Sounds: 10 Years of Rodent Rock (1998)

Jimi Hendrix Memorial Concerts (1995/6)

Route 666 (1995)

The Hamsters (1993)

Hamster Jam (1991)

Electric Hamsterland (1990) [On the Beach Recordings]

## Trance-mission<sup>1</sup>

Hillegonda C Rietveld

### Introduction

This presentation attempts to make a start to a mapping of global flows of information within which contemporary dance cultures operate. Relevant dance events are characterised by the prominence of DJs who create a soundscape from studio-based dance music; the use of a large powerful sound system; a dancing crowd of between 50 to 3000 people; events that last between 5 and 12 hours, in some cases (teknivals) even several days with up to 25.000 people attending. The music has a clear electronic component, particularly in terms of repetitive drum programming, producing body-vibrating amplified beats in the bass frequency range. Such repetition can bring dancers into a certain state of trance, especially in combination with sleep deprivation and/or chemical enhancement. Yet, despite clear similarities in technologies, formats and histories, such electronic dance music genres and associated scenes tend to be recognised as through demographic, geographic and generic variations – they are categorised thus with labels such as House, Techno, Trance, Breaks, as well as hosts of subgenres.

Although global electronic dance cultures are by no means homogenous, there are enough similarities to recognise a commonality, which can be traced through global changes in subjectivity, uses of electronic information technologies and specific marketing strategies. In this presentation, it is argued that the spread of post-disco and post-rave dance club music relies on is a type of cosmopolitan cultural capital. Economically strong urban areas, in particular global capitals such as London and New York, have created blue prints for further development and global exploitation of electronic dance cultural products. In the process, existing global economic power relations are reproduced and followed. A sense of post-industrial, even a post-humanist, spirituality seems to be forged at these (mostly nightly) dance rituals.

### **Global dance culture: wherever there is electricity?**

In trying to map out flows of information within which electronic dance music scenes exists in a global context, one finds quickly that globalisation is not evenly spread. Significantly, with the exception of South Africa and a few privileged West African artists - particularly from Lagos, Nigeria - most of the African continent



**Figure 1: Global Underground DJ mix series, featuring DJ sets that took place in Tel Aviv, Prague, Oslo, Tokyo, Sydney, New York, Sao Paulo, by DJs from London and Manchester, UK. Despite its name, there is a corporate edge to this label's compilation outputs.**

seems to be missing from cosmopolitan exchanges. Such patchiness of globalisation is clearly illustrated by, for example, Castells' mapping of concentrations of internet servers (Castells, 2000: 376), which follows a similar pattern as the globalisation of dance culture, because the internet relies on similar needs in electricity supplies, available telecommunication networks and networks of distribution.

In the case of electronic dance music, there seems to be an important creative exchange between London and New York as well as Sao Paulo. In addition, in line with Sassen's identification of three global cities in which global economic power is centred (Sassen, 2001), there exists a strong marketing exchange between New York, London and Tokyo. Such places produce strongly defined marketable dance cultural capital, which is globally distributed.

In particular, New York and London have been strong

players in the development of dance cultural capital. Within the global city inequalities of power (in terms of class, race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality) have resulted in idiosyncratic music scene formations, which ultimately benefit from their positions in as global cultural nodes, both in terms of access to distribution of output, as well as access to a range of imports. Straw has usefully described the musical scene as:

*"... that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization." (Straw, 1991: 373)*

One can understand the production of new dance genres in such contexts such as disco, hip hop and dance hall from New York; house music from Chicago, via New York and then via London and then Tokyo; and drum & bass from London (Mitchell, 2001; Rietveld, 1998).

The Internet plays increasingly an important a role in dance music formation and the distribution of dance cultural capital, featuring thousands of sites with discussions, event announcements and music products (Rietveld, 1999). Yet, as Castells has demonstrated, the access to the Internet is as uneven as globalisation itself (Castells, 2000). In addition, localised inequalities in Internet access exist, caused not only by economical contexts, but also through identity politics and discursive exclusion. For example, a case study of British web based discussion list UK-Dance in 2000 revealed that the majority of participants were white Anglo-centric middle class males who were mainly 25 to 35 in age



**Figure 2: Earth Dance, London, October 2001.** This is a yearly underground Trance event for world peace and the liberation of Tibet, a Californian initiative that reputedly connects around 50 countries by Internet. The Prayer for Peace attempts a positive countering of corporate globalisation. ALL participants hold hands and engage in the prayer at the same time, preceded by a speech by a Tibetan monk, at midnight GMT. See also: <http://www.earthdance.org/>



**Figure 3 (Above): Australian underground 'doof' in Byron Bay's outback at Sunday dawn, April 2002, after almost 12 hours of Psy-Trance through the dark night. Backpacking participants camp in the Eucalyptus bush around the event, visible only by small camp fires.**

**Figure 4 (Below): Tokyo rave in Yoyogi park on a Saturday afternoon, April 2002. Underground youth culture as part of weekend life style shopping. See also: <http://unknowngenius.com/blog/tag/yoyogi>**



– their world view prevailed in the list's discussions (Rietveld, 2000).

### Flows of Dance Cultural Capital

Geographically, flows of information are not just unevenly spread, they are also uneven in terms of direction. This

has been theorised adequately elsewhere (for example, Malm and Wallis, 1992) and similar patterns of flow occur in the development of dance cultures, whether considered corporate or underground. A 'corporate approach' adopts an efficient overt strategies to create openings in markets. An 'underground approach' seems characterised by a set of pathways that flow towards areas of least resistance – although some independent organisations may work according to clear strategies, there seems a preference for short-term tactics to enable dance events.

For example, throughout the 90s and into the new millennium, underground Trance parties in India's province Goa and the beaches of Thailand were organised by and for tourists, while the music, psy-trance, was produced in richer countries such as Germany, Israel, the USA and Japan. These events tend to pioneer and exploit 'unspoilt' spaces, in a longing to embrace nature - but with machine sounds. In such musical and party outputs, South Asian culture is often represented in an exoticized dreamy manner, stripped of the material realities of everyday life (figure 2). This is musically signified as a disembodied spirituality, mostly a meandering single note in mid-high frequency ranges, in what is otherwise robustly physically present dance music. Goa trance, or psy-trance, is danced to in a range of settings, including the Israeli desert (Schmidt, 2005),



**Figure 5: Zouk is Singapore's flagship club, part of an Austral-Asian DJ tour circuit that is run by agencies based in Melbourne. Here trance is danced to by cosmopolitan girls in cocktail dresses (February, 2002).**

the Australian outback (St John, 2005), the Japanese mountains or the centre of Tokyo (sabbatical research, 2002).

Meanwhile, since 2001, a franchise of Ministry of Sound, a successful London based club, has been trying to import its club concept to Bangkok with sponsorship by a global lemonade brand. In effect, it provides UK DJs, in particular those featured in Global Underground CD series, a platform into Asia. Its PR agency, manned by staff from Melbourne and Singapore, told me that the mission is "to educate the Thais" into the concept of club culture. Since the Thai prefer to sit around a table to drink, rather than expose themselves on a dance floor, each week one more table is removed from the dance floor, until a local crowd will start to behave like a London



crowd. This seems to work for a mixture of cosmopolitan corporate clients and foreign backpackers, who are carefully separated through a strict VIP system. A similar concept is imported in Singapore, but due to its historical relationship with the UK, the crowd there already actively takes part in the production of youth culture according to a cosmopolitan dance club blueprint. The Bangkok branch closed in 2003. In 2005, a new Singapore franchise is in the process of being developed at Clarke Quay.



**Figure 6: Allusions to BKK's Ministry of Sound in this ad create a connection with its franchise in Bangkok, which is sponsored by the same global corporate brand (Feb, 2002).**

However, in Bangkok, the formats of Trance and House are warmly accepted by Thai urban youth when imported from Japan. Imports and special issues of compilation CDs for the Thai market are widely available in Bangkok's many air-con shopping centres. In addition, sugar sweet speeded up pop versions of Trance and House are locally produced for and by young urban Thais and intensely consumed in huge table filled bars where people enjoy locally brewed Whiskey (showing a the influence of American Vietnam War veterans). In particular, Royal City Avenue (RCA) has become an institution, with about 10 bars and its flagship bar, the retro-American Route 66. There is a recording devoted to this bar strip that is endlessly repeated: "RCA RCA RCA - the people are nice" shouts a miniaturised girly voice over a break neck Trance backing. One American clubber aptly observed that:

*"... the music is mostly Thai disco (for example the 170 bpm 4 on the floor meth-disco remix of "Jump Around" by House of Pain, with full rap vocals at normal pitch but chipmonk speed. Or the "hwa chi ngo bai RCA!" club anthem (heard all over Thailand) mixed with occasional medleys of the poppiest American pop, and one Thai ballad an hour."* (Messiah,

*2004: www)*



Figure 7: from <http://bangkoktonight.com/pictures/rca.shtml> (2005)

The global proliferation of dance cultural scenes can be regarded as a type of cosmopolitan cultural capital<sup>3</sup>, produced in economically strong areas. Underground forms of dance cultures flow in similar directions as corporate cultures, whether it is Earth Dance's trance mission for world peace or broken beats from London (Rietveld, 2002). This is exploited by corporate branding strategies, such as by the UK's Ministry of Sound (MoS). In this scenario, both London and Tokyo are efficient in repackaging marginalised urban cultural forms into marketable youth cultures, through niche magazines, limited music releases, the export of rave concepts, of club concepts, and of underground break beats from the locality. These repackaged forms often seem to have developed with New York as their prism, influenced by dance genres such as disco, hip hop or house music. In fact, some underground New York artists are now

also on branding their outputs, such as Masters at Work (MAW). Brazilian grooves are similarly repackaged for jazz dance scenes, Germanic Trance is repackaged as epic trance by the label Global Underground and UK produced rave party formats and drum'n' bass are sold back to the USA.



Figure 8 (Left): London 2000.

Figure 9 (Below): New York 2000



### Post-industrial Spirituality?

Although there are clear similarities in the format of dancing to records and the production of electronic dance music, local configurations produce new contexts

Figure 10: New York 2000. Flyers for 'classic' UDM events (underground dance music – see Fikentscher, 2000). Club night Dance Ritual has MAW's Louie Vega as its resident. Club space Vinyl, previously The Shelter, had a perfectionist sound system that had been inspired by seminal dance club Paradise Garage and Mancuso's Loft. Vinyl closed down after 9/11 because it was positioned close New York's destroyed World Trade Centre.



and new meanings to the events. Yet, these similarities do seem to point to a shared relationship to information technologies in, arguably, post-industrial societies. The participants in electronic DJ based dance cultures seem to share economic and technological changes in which the manufacture of goods is being pushed aside in favour of economies of information flows and support services. In such societies, the development of leisure

spaces and creative industries become important stimuli in urban regeneration, to replace the gaps left by industrial desertion<sup>4</sup>

I have argued elsewhere (Rietveld, 2004) that in particular post-rave techno and trance events produce a specific type of spirituality that allows the dancer to cope with the rapid change in a man-machine





Figure 11: London 2004. New York's UDM DJ Joe Claussell in the original Ministry of Sound (itself inspired by a New York club, The Shelter).

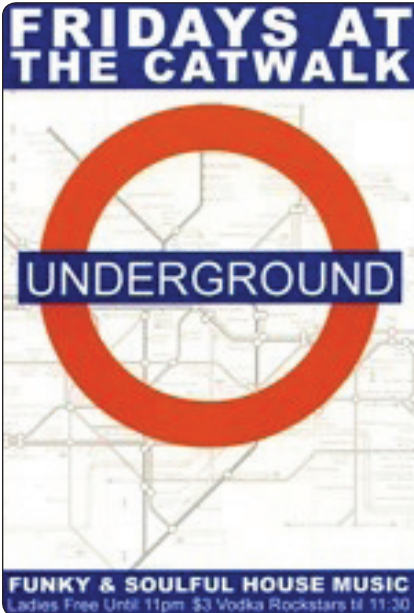


Figure 12: Seattle 2004. An image from London's underground metro network

relationship that is associated with this shift. The experience of such relationship seems to be gendered. Information technology renders the notion of a physically powerful male body obsolete, while women are more historically more exploitable workers, willing to work for less money in insecure work arrangements. This also has an economic impact on the notion of the man as patriarchal provider to the family (Rose, 1994). Therefore, electronic technology can become a fetish,

symbolising both a threat that must be controlled as well as the promise of omnipotence. The result is a techno eroticism (Springer, 1996), which is worked out on the dance floor in the machine metaphors of techno and related electronic dance music, from electro to trance, and from industrial to drum'n'bass. And so, even though the dance floor is traditionally seen as a space for men to ogle women, we now find heterosexual men dancing together to the metaphors of the machine, melting flesh into machine, as ritual cyborgs revelling in the matrix of the mechanised beat. Within the framework of a dance event, this is framed like a spiritual ritual<sup>5</sup>.



Figure 13: Sydney 2002 (for a discussion of Detroit techno, see Rojola, 2005).

Where does this situation women? Several viewpoints are possible, which are beyond the purpose of this particular paper, except to note that many women seem to focus more on human relationships, rather than fetishize studio and DJ technologies and abstract techno sounds. For example, at Earth Dance, mostly women organise the holding of hands during the Prayer for Peace. In record shops it is often noted that a majority of women

prefer vocals. Most club DJs will say the same. Yet, if one looks at the Top 100 DJs, one finds that successful female DJs are techno DJs, playing abstract non-vocal tracks. Would this mean that female DJs are placed within a patriarchal structure to personify fetishised technologies for throngs of male dancers? Compare, for example, the robotic vamp in the machine in the 1927 film *Metropolis* (Huyssen, 1986), Fritz Lang's dystopian vision of 2026. Many of the club flyers discussed during this conference in the DJ panel show cute girls with huge guns (Farrugia, 2005; Schwanhauser, 2005) - such phallic imagery seems to point to a type of fetishized denial of the female anatomy. And so, within the rituals of dance cultures, the shift towards the 'new' man in this spiritual and eroticised man-machine relationship, is nevertheless mostly worked through in a manner that mostly seems to suit male subjectivity<sup>6</sup>.

## Conclusion

In this paper, global power relations and a sense of post-industrial spirituality have been assessed in terms of the global transmission and mediation of the dance cultures. First, an uneven spread of dance cultural capital was mapped out, which seems to rely on globally economically powerful cross-points for formatting, marketing and distribution. Then I addressed the existence and complexity of local scenes in global networks, with a focus on Bangkok, Singapore, East

Australia, Tokyo, New York, London. Lastly, I have shown a certain commonality in the globalised ritual of dancing to electronic dance music, in terms of coping with a socio-economic shift to electronic information technologies in post-industrial areas. Electronic music is both a result of as well as a metaphor for such technologies. Dance events allow for a coming to terms with a specific man-machine relationship as shared post-humanist sensibility. How this is worked out differs per locality, as well as inside each locality<sup>7</sup>. The perceived intensity of this shift also differs in the context of marginalised identities and subject positions, which in this paper was addressed in the context of gender.

## Endnotes

1. Inspired by the title of a dance compilation CD, *Trance Mission*, created by a Japanese company for the Thai market in 2000.
2. Unlike an American music industry's racially loaded use of this term, 'urban' is literally meant here as 'from the city'.
3. For a discussion of subcultural capital, see: Thornton (1996)
4. See also Schwanhauser (2005) on East-Berlin.
5. For a comparison between dance club events and Christian worship rituals, see Till (2005).
6. This topic was also addressed in the IASPM conference discussion that followed the presentation by Christodoulou (2005), to which especially several of the female dance culture researchers made valid and useful contributions.
7. See also Maguadda (2005) and Fikentscher (2005) on Italy.

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Figure 14: From <http://www.earthdance.org/> (2005)

## Appendix

### 1. Earth Dance

#### Prayer for Peace

*"We are one global family*

*All colors, All races*

*One world united.*

*We dance for peace and the healing of our planet*

*Earth*

*Peace for all nations.*

*Peace for our communities.*

*And peace within ourselves.*

*As we join all dance floors across the world,*

*let us connect heart to heart.*

*Through our diversity we recognize Unity.*

*Through our compassion we recognize Peace.*

*Our love is the power to transform our world*

*Let us send it out*

*NOW..."*

## Deconstructing the Rainbow: Nation, 'Race' and Popular Music Listening in South Africa

Mary Robertson

Reconciling a shared national identity with the various heterogeneous racial, ethnic and religious identities that exist within the boundaries of nation states, has been the subject of much scholarly debate. In the context of South Africa, in which, for many years, systematic discrimination was justified in terms of the maintenance of difference, this tension is particularly acute. However, in 1994, it seemed that centuries of division and conflict had been set aside, as all South Africans were brought together as one nation under a democratically elected government for the first time. The image of the 'rainbow nation' became a dominant symbol for this newfound national identity based on the celebration of difference. However, the rainbow as a metaphor for South African society has drawn criticism from many scholars for a number of reasons. The dominant interpretation of the metaphor was a stylised rainbow in which each colour was clearly bounded from the next. Some have argued that this image has perpetuated 'race' as the primary determinant of difference in South Africa, portraying these racial categories as static and seamless. Scholars such as Gqola have pointed out that difference is celebrated on a superficial level while the underlying divisions remain unexplored (98-99). Neville Alexander suggests further

that the symbol of the rainbow constructs an image of South Africa in which racial and/or cultural identities take precedence over a national identity (107). Such an image disables the attempts of citizens to actively seek out common ground on which to base an identity that is first and foremost South African. In this paper, I will discuss some of the ways in which popular music is involved in the efforts of individual South Africans to engage with the shortcomings of the rainbow as national metaphor.

The material I will discuss today is drawn from in depth interviews conducted by myself with 28 South Africans from across the racial spectrum, between the ages of 18 and 25. In these interviews, I asked all research participants whether they would classify themselves as belonging to a racial group. The bemused expressions I received in response to this question followed by an answer such as, 'well, I'm white and there's nothing I can do about it', illustrates the common sense status that the existence of race has assumed in South Africa. In the interviews, discourses constructing the audiences of genres such as kwaito and rock along racial lines were also evident – kwaito as 'black music' and rock as 'white music'. Parallels may be seen

between a conceptualisation of a number of genres of music each representing the tastes of a particular racial group, and the image of the rainbow, in which each band of colour represents a 'race' within South Africa. By problematising simplistic articulations of music genre to racial group, listeners could critique the homogeneous, bounded 'races' represented by the symbol of the 'rainbow nation'. An illustration of this approach is provided by the case study of Tina, a black, 23-year-old postgraduate humanities student. Tina classified herself as a kwaito fan, and explained that one of the reasons for this enjoyment is the link kwaito forges with the history of black South African urban culture. She saw this link as being created, for example, by the traces of mapantsula style in what is known as 'loxiön kulca' – the style of dress and dance that kwaito artists have adopted.

However, although kwaito allowed Tina to affirm a sense of the continuity of black South African history, she was critical of monolithic labelling of kwaito as 'black music'. She pointed out that not all black South Africans have the same degree of understanding of kwaito. She felt that the genre springs from the experiences of black South Africans living in the township, and thus listeners who are familiar with these experiences have the greatest understanding of the music. She further explained that as someone

who left the township at an early age, and who does not spend much time there now, she is unfamiliar with certain references in the music to township life, such certain aspects of township slang. Nevertheless, she felt that she could participate in kwaito by being familiar with the dances that develop in relation to particular tracks, and by understanding something of 'loxiön kulca' and its history. In this way, Tina pointed to the existence of degrees of identification with kwaito music. She explicitly connected this observation to her belief that there are multiple experiences of blackness in South Africa.

*By seeing myself as black, I see myself as a particular kind of black. I don't now say that there's one type of blackness in South Africa. I mean you can see that when I said, OK fine, I dig this kwaito thing, but I'm not necessarily part of it because of certain things...the way I see it as so distinctively localised from particular experiences...I just think there are as many different experiences of being black...as there are many different black people.*

By complexifying the relationship of black South Africans to kwaito music, Tina could affirm her belief in the impossibility of reducing the experiences of black people to a single homogeneous racial category as implied by the image of the 'rainbow nation'.

A second way in which music served as a tool for grappling with shortcomings of the rainbow metaphor was in allowing listeners to uncover the social divisions underlying superficial celebrations of diversity. The case study which best illustrates this point is that of Khaya, a 21-year-old black Communications student. In his interview, we discussed his anomalous status as a black metal fan. Khaya explained that a reflexive analysis of his own taste in music had led him to reject essentialist explanations of racial division in music preferences. While growing up, his parents had moved frequently around the country. Because of this, he had been exposed to a wide variety of music. He contrasted this with the experience of the majority of South Africans in which, he felt, the boundaries of 'race', place, and music coincide. He provided the example of the township of Kwa-Mashu, where he lived for a short while. He described how the vast majority of people who live there are black, and how the music one hears in this environment is limited to certain genres. In his words:

*...you walk past a house in KwaMashu, and they're all playing [house music and kwaito]... You see it everywhere, and you become so used to it, that it becomes a part of you.*

In this way, Khaya explained racial division in music taste in terms of the spatial dimension of racial division

in South Africa, rather than as being a manifestation of some deeper racial essence. He underlined this point by remarking that if a black baby from KwaMashu was taken to the suburbs and raised in an environment in which rock and pop were the genres most commonly heard, he or she would grow up to enjoy this type of music, rather than 'black music'. Khaya felt that the experience of growing up in a constantly changing environment, in which he heard a variety of musical styles, had led to him developing an awareness of the contingency of links between 'race' and music. By focusing on his love of metal as a personal choice, Khaya opposed the inevitability of 'race' as the primary determinant of identity in South Africa. By focusing on the roots of racial division in music listening practices, he was also able to explore the real divisions below the surface of superficial rainbow representations of diversity in South Africa.

For others that I spoke to, music provided a means for engaging with a further limitation of the 'rainbow' image, namely, its representation of a South Africa in which national identity is secondary to racial and cultural identity. As I mentioned before, this poses a challenge for citizens attempting to establish common ground that may serve as a starting point for imagining a nation that is not merely the sum of the diverse social groups that inhabit the same space, but do not

communicate with each other. For Devasha, a 20-year-old Indian Geography student, music played a role in the conceptualization of such common ground. Devasha named constant exposure to diversity as the one experience common to all South Africans. She felt the 'New South African' was defined by an attitude of openness to this diversity, and by making a conscious effort to communicate with others and learn from them about different cultural experiences in South Africa. Music was one of the primary resources on which Devasha drew in her efforts to penetrate boundaries of difference. The main reason that Devasha gave for listening to kwaito was that it provided an entry point for starting conversations with Zulu-speaking listeners. She described seeing groups of Zulu girls laughing while listening to kwaito, and approaching them to ask about the meaning of the lyrics and the source of the humour. It was clear that she imagined a reciprocal desire in others to learn about her culture, represented by its music. She described, for example, taking one of her coloured friends to her home, and answering her questions about the Indian religious music they heard emanating from a Hindu temple. Devasha believed that music could play an important role in allowing South Africans to experience and learn about cultural diversity, and that it could contribute in this way to building an integrated, unified national identity around this shared experience. In her words:

*...we're living in the new South African now, things have changed...that's why we are South Africans, because we have a diversity of cultures...If you're gonna just have your culture, and your music, if you're gonna say, 'I don't want you to listen to my music, cos it's my music', then it's not fair, because...[in] South Africa, everybody needs to be exposed to everybody else's music tastes and languages, otherwise we're not going to know about the different people that live in this country.*

Although Devasha's interpretation accepts the discourse in which a racial group may be represented by a genre of music, by listening to a variety of musical styles, she was able establish grounds for communication with individuals from groups other than her own. In this way, she was able to conceptualise a fluid and dynamic situation in which the identities of South Africans are relational and mutually formative, rather than the static, fixed model represented by the image of the rainbow.

Musical practices such as these may prefigure a future in which a South African identity is felt more strongly than sub-national groupings of 'race', culture or class, and in which a national identity exists in harmony with the multiple other identifications present in any individual subject. However, it was clear from many



of the interviews that at present, many South Africans experience a conflict between a shared national identity and an exclusive racial one. This was most evident in comments about the kwaito artist Mandoza, who has had the most success in crossing over to an audience outside of a black South African demographic.

Research participants expressed conflicting interpretations of Mandoza. Some saw him as a South African symbol, representing a racially integrated nation, while others believed he has become inauthentic, and has sold out his township roots and diluted the 'blackness' of his music to appeal to a white audience. This point is illustrated in the following exchange between two research participants, Tina and George:

*Tina: Why is [Mandoza] being criticised? Surely if we are all aiming for this post-apartheid South African ideal...then it is a good thing for kwaito to cross over to other people? [...]*

*George: Because people will always want to own something.*

*Tina: But then it's being owned nationally, surely? Then what's the problem? Why is it when whites like it, suddenly it's not black anymore? [...]*

*George: There's a feeling that it's been appropriated, it's been stolen. It's not like, we're all sharing, it's like, they're taking it from us.*

This exchange shows the tension between those claiming Mandoza as a symbol of national identity, and those who contest the legitimacy of this claim. The experience of racial division and inequality on a daily basis poses a challenge for the refiguring in the minds of some South Africans of white appropriation of kwaito into national sharing of kwaito. However, it seems that music can play a role in developing a sense of shared national identity. Alexander argues that for such an identity to emerge in South Africa, individual citizens must "open windows onto one another, allow as much mutual influence to happen as possible" (107). It is clear that for listeners such as Devasha, the Indian Geography student who enjoyed kwaito, music provides precisely such a window, establishing grounds for interpersonal communication from which the foundations for a national identity may be built.

The day after I wrote the first draft of this paper, I read an article in a local Sunday newspaper criticising the ruling ANC party for a perceived abandonment of the ideals of the 'rainbow nation' (21). A policy document of the ANC was quoted in which the 'rainbow nation' was criticised as being a "nebulous concept" that "may

lull us into a false sense of complacency" (21). From comments such as this, it seems that the limitations of the rainbow metaphor highlighted in academic quarters are filtering into the political sphere. How to address these limitations at a political level has become a contentious issue, with heated debates around calls for a national identity based around the equally nebulous concept of 'Africanisation'. However, it seems that there are alternatives to these top down attempts to enforce constructs of national identity, such as the interpersonal relationships initiated through music in which common ground between individual South Africans may be explored. It is clear that at a micro-level, individual South Africans are engaging with the limitations of the discourse of the rainbow nation. In this paper, I have tried to illustrate various ways in which music is involved in these efforts. Music itself is deeply implicated in the discourses of race sustaining the image of the rainbow. Listeners cannot escape this labelling, but they can engage with it creatively to resist and oppose a rainbow that encloses each according to their respective colour, fixed in place, with no means for engaging with other bands of the rainbow.

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## Musical Improvisation and Visual Arts

Matthieu Saladin

**F**ree improvisation is a musical practice where the musician improvises without a support. As opposed to the majority of musical practices, the musicians start the concert without a known repertoire, predetermined structures or preconceived ideas on what is supposed to occur, in short without a *prefix*. However the refusal of a material support shows us the presence of another kind of support which is considered as more *immediate* and circulates in the diffuse complexity of the unique character of the performance.

Beside this established fact, the short history of this practice shows us that various experiments involving a concrete support, generally visual, have been carried. The idea is then to confront the improvisation with an element (a visual support) which would be antagonist in definition with what founds it. The improvisation pits itself against the picture and tries to transfer it into a system that would make it convergent with the global process.

We will analyse, in this paper, what such an encounter between picture and sound in the improvisation can teach us about the practices and their reception by the public. What changes in the implemented performance? For this purpose, we will focus on three examples where this situation occurs, i.e. the influence of visual arts

on the practice of free improvisation, the experience of graphic scores and at last the improvised music performance during a movie screening.

### **1. About the influence of visual arts on the constitution of the practice of free improvisation**

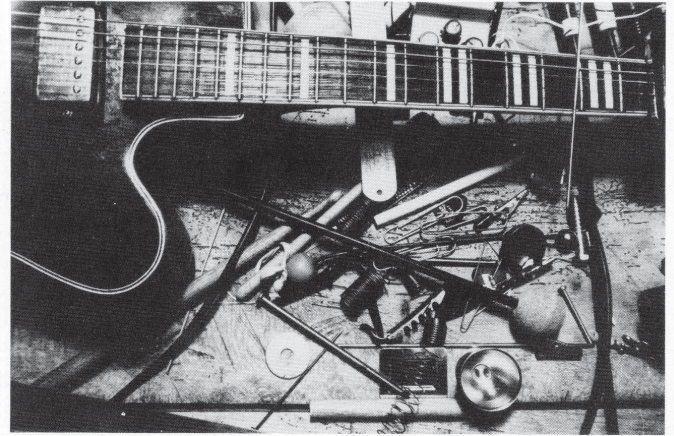
In the first place, it needs to be specified what the practice of free improvisation means:

In the mid-sixties, a category of improvised music appears in Europe with musicians like English groups *AMM* and *The Spontaneous Music Ensemble*, Italian groups *Musica Elettronica Viva* and *Gruppo Di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza*, but also German musicians like Peter Brötzmann, Peter Kowald, Alexander von Schlippenbach and his *Globe Unity Orchestra*. It is characterised by its more radical aspect. What matters for those musicians is to improvise freely, completely and immediately, in the present, i.e. to break away from both popular traditions like jazz (even free), which could correspond to another cultural field, and sound determinism of a certain “serious” contemporary music. Those various ensembles with their changing musicians were trying to work out solutions into action, to find many lines of flight. According to interviews, what was important for them was to play their own music,

a personal music, which would not be a simple copy of what already existed, in short to consider the free improvisation as a practice, each time unique, and not as a style.

Nevertheless, like in any artistic breakthrough, various structural elements emerge here and there which constitute possible filiations, claimed or not by the musicians, and moderate finally the supposed *tabula rasa*. These influences can be musical or belong to other fields of creation. Some musicians express clearly the influence of visual arts on their way of playing and more generally on their musical experience (Wilson). Among these musicians we will be interested here in the English improviser Keith Rowe, trained as visual artist, founder member of the *AMM* group and primarily known as a pioneer in the prepared guitar's use. Indeed, in his interviews, Rowe is constantly saying how certain painters and visual artists are important to him. He explains for example that his strange use of electric guitar directly responds to the famous gesture of Pollock which consists in painting on the ground. While Pollock transforms radically the relationship with the canvas by putting it horizontal, thus enabling him to modify his point of view and try out new techniques, Keith Rowe lays his guitar flat on the table which consequently becomes the central part of an electric set-up in which all kinds of objects can be grafted like as many details magnified by amplification.

## Keith Rowe guitar



A DIMENSION OF PERFECTLY ORDINARY REALITY

**Illustration 1.**  
**Jacket of his album solo "A Dimension of Perfectly Ordinary Reality", Matchless Recordings, 1990**

In a diachronic way the English guitarist also frequently refers to artists like Caravaggio (1) or Marcel Duchamp. The latter occupies a very particular place in Rowe's speech. On stage, beside the prepared guitar, Rowe indeed uses a radio set with which he produces interference and randomly picks up a few snatches of broadcasted programs. He considers his radio samples as well as the various objects he inserts between the strings of his guitar as a heritage of the duchampian concept of ready-made (2). However, as William Ashline underlined very well, the interpretation of ready-made by Rowe differs and is even to be in contradiction with that of Duchamp. Rowe reinvests the duchampian gesture apart from a completely duchampian prospect, in the sense that he moves the found object in an aesthetic

project. It's a modernistic aesthetics which simply aims at introducing some noise in the traditional musical field of sounds, but this move blocks out at the same time the initially critical gesture of Duchamp about the art and its institutions: "Duchamp, for Rowe, was the artist who brought the found object into the arena of art. The effect was then "additive" rather than critical." (Ashline 24) This reference to Duchamp is interesting, because Rowe attributes it to a whole section of the contemporary free improvisation and tries thus insidiously, through his *authorised stories*, to rethink some recent developments of improvisation, mainly electroacoustic, in the wake of a precise artistic tradition, to break into history by the story.

Lastly, we can mention the influence of the Cubist movement through which Rowe understands the early *AMM*'s experiments: "The Cubism breaks the relationships between foreground and background, abolishes the concept of perspective and creates the feeling of a flat surface [...] In the same way, there is in *AMM*'s music no more rhythm section, nor of soloist, all is on the same level. If you listen to "The Crypt" (3), the music is like a layer of sound. The Cubists integrated some pieces of newspapers torn and stuck into their works. In a similar way, I used the radio since the beginning of *AMM*." (9)

In reality, these references to visual arts in the musician's analysis go way beyond the revealing of a simple legitimating speech. It is not a matter of dissecting the

well-founded historical and interpretative influences. It is not about showing that such instrumentalist confuses Cubist stuck papers and Duchamp's ready-made, but of detecting through them what happens in the very practices of these musicians, or rather in their constitution always in becoming. As recalled by Mary Douglas, what we remember and forget is always in a close connection with the present action. We are constantly reformulating, to a certain extent, the past according to the present or rather to the becoming. I. e. it is not a matter of understanding these "traditions games" and their retrospective analyses in a negative way: they take part concretely in the practices, they are constituent of them (4). Below the possible meanings Rowe gives to his gestures, those very ones are modified by them in their actuality.

## 2. Graphic scores

If some improvisers consider to be influenced in their practice by the visual arts, the use of "graphic scores" shows a different kind of merging between improvisation and visual support. "Graphic scores" is generic name given to a set of unusual research which came through the field of "serious" music in the Sixties. These scores seek to join up written system and sound experiments within the same process in order to free, to some extent, the sound phenomenon from notational determinism. If these scores are not, for the majority, explicitly dedicated



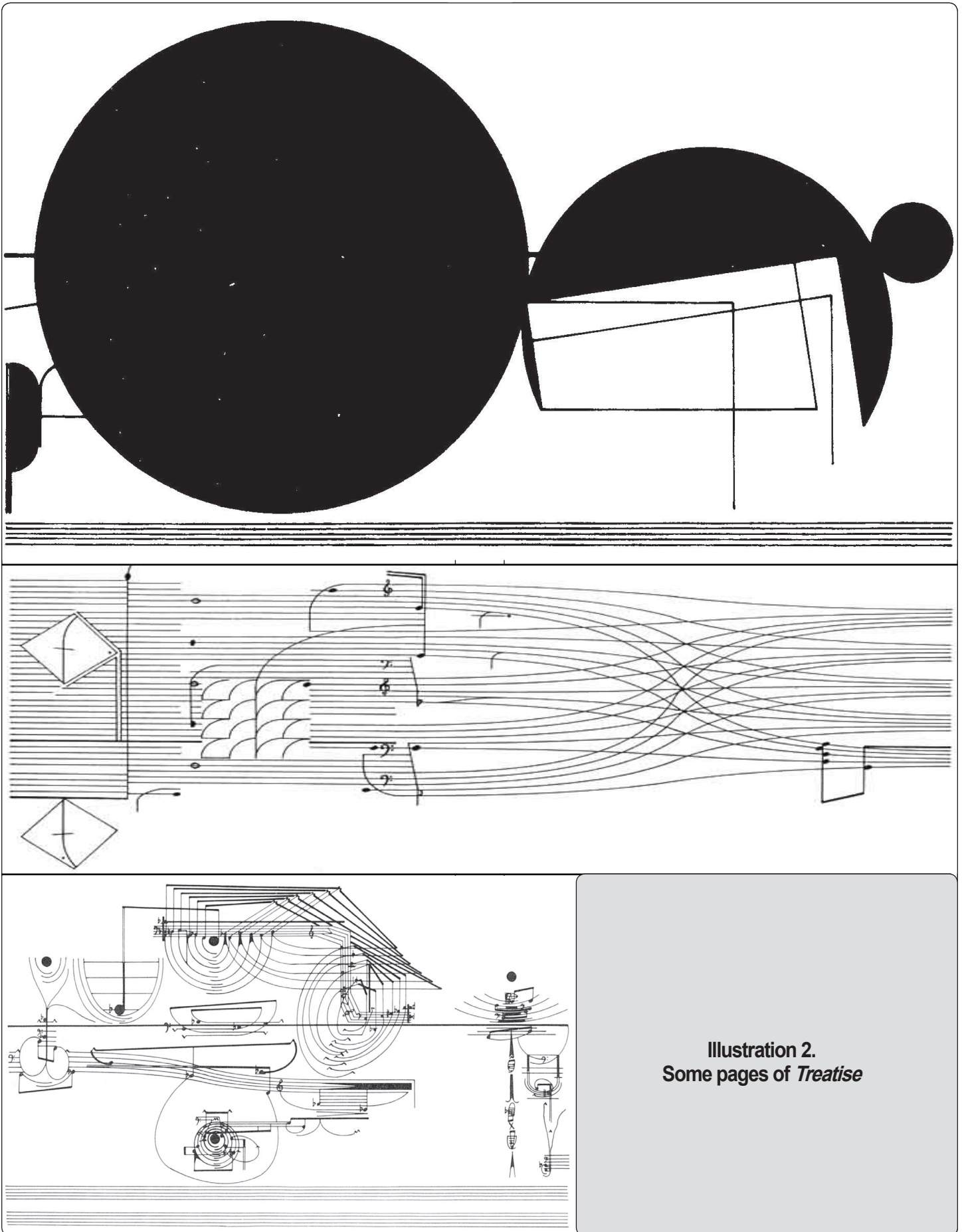


Illustration 2.  
Some pages of *Treatise*

to improvisation, at least they try to involve the musician in a new relationship with visual supports while often offering a multiplicity of readings or interpretations possible.

Among these experiments, one is extremely relevant to improvisation. It is the *Treatise* score by the English composer Cornelius Cardew, a giant score of 193 pages created between 1963 and 1967 (illustration # 2, ). This score was immediately interpreted by improvisers, Cardew being involved with this scene notably as early member of the *AMM* group. *Treatise* with its meaningless graphics is offered to the musicians in the sense that, as Cardew explains: “What I hope is that in playing this piece each musician will give of his own music – he will give it as his response to *my* music, which is the score itself.” (*Treatise* 10) In this score, Cardew reverses the traditional relationship between sound and notation. The sign written on the page is not a symbol of a referring sound. On the contrary, it is the musical gesture that allegorises the score in its stating: “The sound should be a picture of the score, not vice versa” (Cardew, *Treatise* 3).

In a booklet published later, *Treatise Handbook*, Cardew noticed that the score often confuses trained musicians whereas fine arts students with basic music skills showed a greater ability in its interpretation: “Ideally such music should be played by a collection of musical innocents ; but in a culture where musical education is

so widespread (at least among musicians) and getting more and more so, such innocents are extremely hard to find. [...] My most rewarding experiences with *Treatise* have come through people who by some fluke have (a) acquired a visual education, (b) escaped a musical education and (c) have nevertheless become musicians, i.e. play music to the full capacity of their beings.” (19)

From a musical point of view we could say that the score furthers the improvisation according to two principal axes. At first by focusing the attention, some musicians consider that it allows a certain cohesion between the musicians in the case of a collective improvisation. Then if the musician really gets into improvised interpretation, the graphic score will allow him to go beyond his playing habits, and thus to open to him new fields of experimentation. More generally, we could say that the relationship to the visual support, far from being a constraint in the freedom of improvisation, enhances the practice of freedom.

In the Seventies, Cardew criticised his own experiments. He noted that the discrepancy that the graphic score created in the improvisation process could be appreciated negatively, as preventing what it was supposed to promote. From its statute, the score can seem indeed like a simple pretext for the realisation of a practice supposed to elude it, repeating, although in a more subtle way, a traditional relationship between

musicians and composer. It would also prevent the improvisers to be focused on what constitutes their usual “support”, i.e. the relationship to the other musicians and the audience: “In performance, the score of *Treatise* is in fact an obstacle between the musicians and the audience. Behind that obstacle the musicians improvise, but instead of improvising on the basis of objective reality and communicating something of this audience, they preoccupy themselves with that contradictory artefact : the score of *Treatise*.” (Cardew, Stockhausen 85)

### 3. Improvisation and picture screening

This interference in the live performance Cardew refers to is probably more relevant to the third-point of this presentation, namely the relationship between improvisation and pictures or movie screening. The main difference with the graphic scores, it is the screening. The visual support is not dedicated here to the musicians only but also to the audience. The material support of improvisation is given to watch or rather it becomes autonomous by the screening, in the sense that the audience’s attention is shared between the concert and the movie or video which unreels. This attention thus becomes that of audience who follows a movie but also that of audience who follows musicians who themselves follow a movie or that of audience who follows a movie accompanied by another viewer who

modifies the shared experience with his improvisation. Functionalised improvisation as musical accompaniment of movies is not recent. It mainly accompanied the history of silent movies and is reused through the dynamics of rediscovery of the silent film heritage. Musicians in this field tend to come essentially from the jazz, classic and electronic music scenes (5). We must observe besides that this practice is not really common in the strict field of free improvisation, unlike its associations with the theatre and the dance. Musical accompaniment of movies should also be distinguished from projects more focused on a generalisation of improvisation into various media, like the German-Dutch group *E-Rax* (6).

More generally we could tell that the research of experimental improvisation seems to repeat, in its criticisms, those addressed to any relationships between cinema and music considered as hard to understand. These criticisms are mainly of two kinds. The denunciation of the stratagem that aims at “relocating” a music with a lack of audience, as put by Michel Chion, and the “neutralisation” that the movie would produce on the music, an idea put forward by Adorno and Hanns Eisler (7). Whether we are concerned about focusing on music through pictures or the contrary, any successful experiment would account for the double alteration analysed by Deleuze (8). According to him, sound and picture alter themselves one another by their respective otherness and autonomy. This alteration of autonomy is

probably intensified here by the concert's situation itself, the musician's presence taking part in this disjunction between the listening of the picture seen and the view of the listening music.

In another way, we could finally wonder about the statute of the increasing electronic instrumentation in this kind of meeting. Electronic improvisation seems to call itself for the presence of picture to restore the lack of effective theatricalness and performativity during live shows. Mauricio Kagel already noticed this established fact in early concerts for loudspeakers, where the audience kept an attention directed towards the scene in waiting, he supposes, that musicians' bodies suddenly pop out of membranes. If the visual support used in improvisation is not only, as we saw, that of musicians but also that of the audience, we could also think that its supposed necessity implies the possibility of an aesthetic experience where the aurality would be freed from the visible (Stuart). The renewed meeting between picture and sound would be interpreted then as the shared reproduction or rather the continuity of a traditional theatrical set-up where we could have predicted the possibility of a different listening experience.

## Endnotes

1. See notably the booklet of the record "The Hands of Caravaggio" by Mimeo, <http://www.erstwhilerecords.com/catalog/021.html>
2. Keith Rowe, interview by Dan Warburton, January 2001, <http://www.paristransatlantic.com/magazine/interviews/rowe.html>
3. AMM, « The Crypt », Matchless Recordings, 1991, is the recording of their performance at The Crypt, London, on 12th June 1968
4. In the same sense that Language game of Wittgenstein are constituent of our view of things. We could also compare it with the bergsonian concept of *fantasising* (*Les deux sources de la morale et de la religion*. Paris: Quadrige PUF, 1997) and more precisely with Deleuze's interpretation in *L'image-temps* about Pierre Perrault's movies: "It's the becoming of the real character when he starts 'fictioning', when he is "caught legending", and thus contributes to the invention of his people. The character is not separable from one before and from one after, but he joins together them in the passage from one state to another. He becomes himself one other, when he starts fantasising without never being fictitious." (Deleuze 196)

5. We could notably quote in France, “the association Cinémémoire [which] supports since 1991 on the initiative of Christian Belaygue, programs of movie concerts in which, besides reconstitutions or scores made in the spirit of the time and movies, are supported various options: improvisations of jazz groups or contemporary music, orders for composers. For several years, moreover, rock’n’roll bands or “free”, like “Un drame musical instantané”, travelled with traditional silent classics by Murnau or Marcel L’Herbier, creating a free “counterpoint” on the screening’s movie.” (Chion)

6. Group founded in 1999 by Peter JA van Bergen, Gert-Jan Prins, Thomas Lehn et Petra Dolleman.

7. “It is as if the fangs of aggressive music had been filed [...] conservative listeners themselves would consume without turning a hair any music in movies which would arouse their hostility in a concert hall.” (Adorno, Eisler 95)

8. In *L’image-temps*, and also Pierre-Henry Frangne, « Musique et image au cinéma », in Masson, Marie-Noëlle, and Mouëllic, Gilles. *Musiques et images au cinéma*, Rennes: PUR, 2003.

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## Flyerspaces/Technoscene. Field Research on Urban Formations in Berlin

### Or: How Scenes make Meaning of the City

Anja Schwanhäußner

“**M**aking meaning” is what the conference is dealing with. I also want to ask how meaning is created, not only through music but also through the whole social and cultural network around it, what you would call scenes or subcultures. The kind of meaning-making I would like to discuss is *how scenes make meaning of the city* – The city as a certain kind of *space*, of interconnected social worlds and spaces, of shifting networks of alliances and of an ever changing flow of people and objects through these urban spaces. What I would like to argue is that *scenes* provide a *field of experience* through which the city can be experienced and made meaningful. I would like to argue that living in scenes helps to develop a specific kind of *mentality*, which I call *urban mentality* (1), that is necessary to understand what the city is all about: how to behave in the city, how to move through the city, how to make acquaintance in the city and how to *enjoy* the multifaceted aspects of city-life.

I have to add that I stayed with the Canadian research project “Culture of Cities” in Winter 2002/2003, which had urban “Scenes” as one topic of research. My work

is very much inspired by Alan Blum, Will Straw and Geoff Stahl who worked for the project (2).

I would like to introduce to you some of the material of my field research in one of Berlin's many subcultures. What I am interested in is the temporary use of space through parties and other sorts of happenings, which is sometimes referred to as „raves“, but that's not the whole story. After the fall of the Wall in 1989, East Berlin offered an abundance of empty spaces – old factories, warehouses, corner shops, old GdR architectural building, etc. – that could be temporarily occupied. At this time and still nowadays, a lot of young artists, students, punks and squatters invaded East-Berlin and played around with these spaces. There were many different experiments going on, but the most popular one drew from the rave culture: to squat empty buildings for a night or a weekend, sometimes longer, but always temporary, celebrated parties in there and after that move on to other places. In the early 90s, this took place under almost no governmental control, since the Administration had to struggle to transform the socialist administration into an effective, westernized

system. The scene nowadays refers to these earlier days as “law-free zones”. Today of course, there are less empty spaces due to gentrification processes, but it is still more than in other cities and the culture still is very lively... So this is where I did my field research, which means: participant observation, trying to become part of the scene, trying to live a life as a scenester does. I wrote down field notes every time I joined the scene, so I have a field diary of about 400 pages.

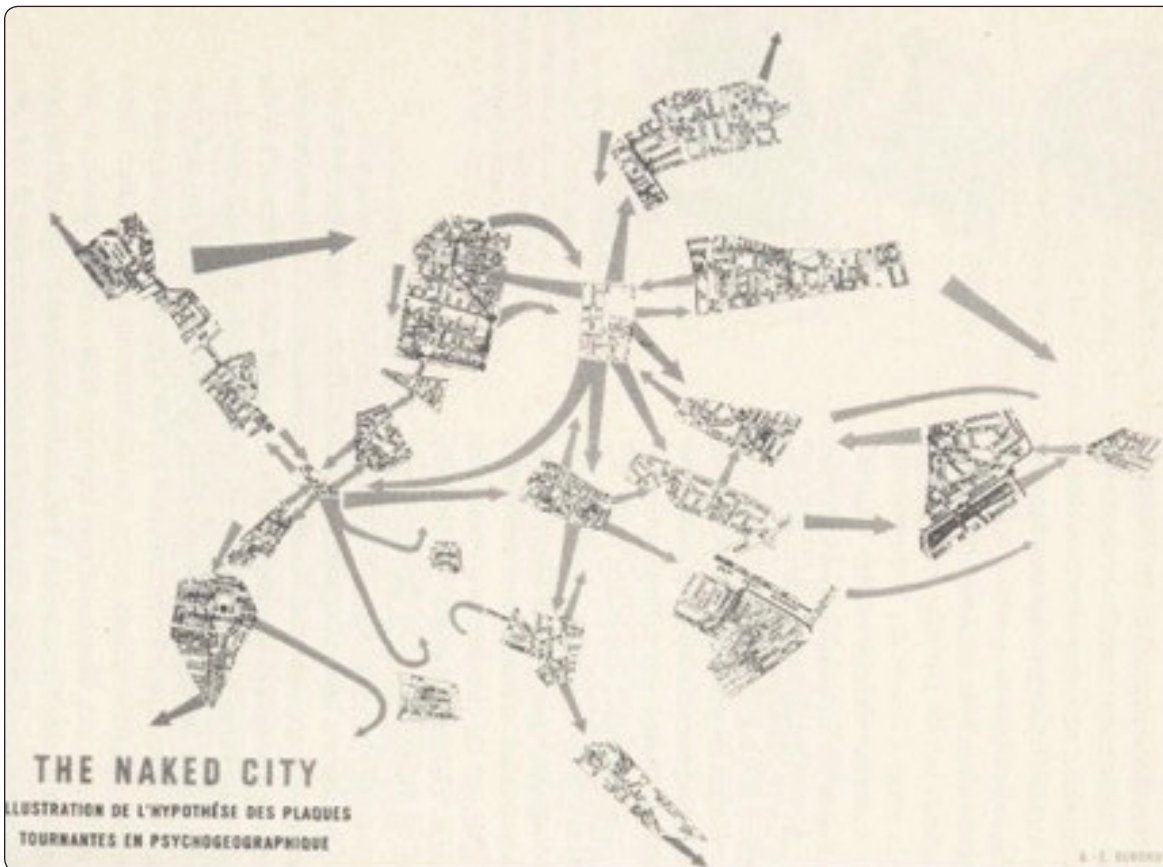
The following flyer shows the self-understanding of the scene as always being on the move through the city.



Hakim Bey, as you might know, wrote a book on the temporary use of space, which he called Temporary Autonomos Zones (3) – and some people in the scene know Hakim Bey. The avantgarde of this movement, that Bey also refers to, was the artist group “International Situationist”, that was wandering through the urban space in a similar way. They worked on revealing the

various emotional qualities of urban space, and tried to find out the relationships between certain streets, corners and neighbourhoods and certain psychological states of the mind. Their wandering through urban space, what they called “dérive”, was also a technique to juxtapose different spaces and thus reveal the ambiguity and transitoriness of urban space. The sociologist Henri Lefebvre, who was associated with the group for a period of time, demanded “a total mobilization – not of the people but of space. Transitoriness must take control over space. Every place must become multifunctional, polyvalent, transfunctional, with continuous turn-overs of its function. Groups should squad places, to perform expressive actions and creations while deconstruction is on the way.” (4)

To give you an impression about the various locations, that are explored, I would like to show you some pictures of the parties. They are published on the website of the most popular Underground activists in Berlin who are called „Pyonen“. The people from the Pyonen were former squatters from Hamburg who were active in the streetfights around the street “Hafenstraße” – these fights were very much present in the media in the late 1980s – and they moved to Berlin in the early Nineties and squatted a building in the traditionally Bohemian neighbourhood Prenzlauer Berg. The picture I want to show you are from there Website and they also show



Collage by Guy Debord  
(L'Internationale Situationniste)

the self-understanding of this group as urban explorers, that work on revealing the aesthetic dimensions of the post-industrial and post-socialist landscape.

See: [www.pyonen.de](http://www.pyonen.de)

Before I continue, I should give you a brief description of the people who join the scene and who you saw on the pictures: they are between 25 and 40, so they are older than the general youth culture. They all have a background ranging from petty bourgeois, lower middle class up to middle class background and within this class section they can be divided in two groups: on the one hand you have what Bourdieu calls the new, particularly urban middle class, who work in the creative

field of the media – music, graphic design, film, etc. – for whom making a living is rather easily combined with a Bohemian lifestyle that you need to have to join this rather time consuming scenic life. On the other hand you also have the more traditional drop outs, squatters, punks, etc., who quite often have a higher education but resist to integrate into the capitalist “living-to-work”-kind-of-model. They have temporary, low paid jobs, trying to realize an autonomous lifestyle as good as possible. You find both groups in the scene – the more successful creative workers as well as the dropout which are some might want to call losers. There are strategies of distinction going on between these groups, but really the boundaries are rather fluid, and the creative worker is quite aware of the risk of becoming jobless pretty soon.

So to catch up with what I said earlier: So you have to imagine several different groups in Berlin who organize these temporary partys, and every weekend there are different locations that you have to find out about. So you have this fluid organism that the scene builds: transitory spaces that are only used for a period of time and a polylocal structure of events where different events happen in different locations that spread over the city and that you have to find out about. You don't have a club that you go regularly – this is what all actors from the scene say: we don't go to clubs or bars – but you rather have to be up to date all the time and catch up with what happens where, what Georg Simmel would call heightened nervous sensitivity: “Steigerung des Nervenlebens” (5).

I would like to describe the topography of the scene by showing you a map of Berlin... (See Below)

And by trying to find your way through these spaces, you develop a distinct urban mentality. When I first tried to join the scene I was totally lost: I didn't know where to go or I went to the wrong locations at the wrong time. What I had to find out is that above these changing spaces there are several structures and institutions that help you to orient within these spaces: there are certain groups and names of DJ and party-organizers, who are important, there are certain mailing-list, that you have to join, and, even more important, I had to find out the particular spaces in the city, where the scene hangs out



Historical Map of East-Berlin



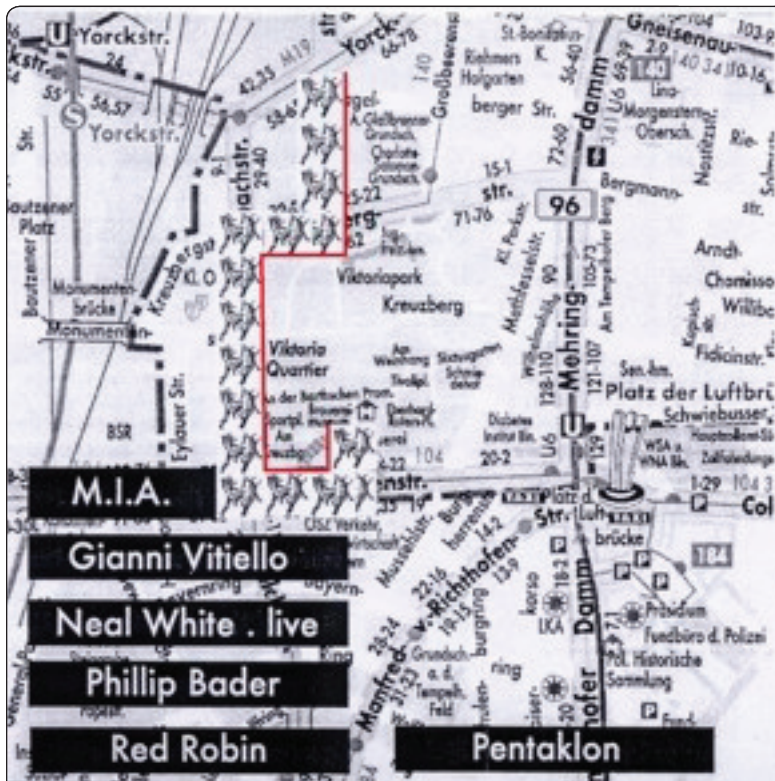
apart from the temporary partys. These places are most often the places of creative production and consumptions, where subcultural activities meet commercial activities, such as table studios, offices of party organizers, certain stores that serve subcultural interests and particularly the record store: for me, a certain record store in Berlin became very important to find my way into the scene, because there, an important DJ of the scene worked there every Tuesday and many people from the scene would step by to visit him. So spaces that are socially and economically constructed in the city are very important. In visiting this store every week, I gradually got to know some of the people. This leads me to the most important factor in how to make sense of the everchanging space of the scene: Even more important than the Mailinglist and knowing the DJ-names it is important to join the social network of the scene that interlinks groups and people. Once you become part of this network, you start to move through the city in the rhythm of the scene. You know where to go and when to be where. This rhythm is defined by constant interaction with people, being physically present in city life, by becoming part of the flow of information that runs through the scene and, most of all, to share similar cultural or subcultural values and habits. The most striking effect was, that once you become part of this rhythm, you allways see the same faces wherever you go. So even if the places change, you will allways have a certain familiarity with your surrounding since other people in the network move in the same rhythm as you do.



Flyer

And this is – at least one aspect – of what makes the scene particularly urban: this tension between fluidity and stability, coherence and openness. The social network of the scene is specifically elastic, since it has no fixed territory since the locations are allways changing, but at the same time there is a rather stable social network that is reproduced through the temporary locations just as through the more stable subcultural spaces. In becoming part of this network of spaces and people you experience the city as a fluid but nevertheless coherent cultural pattern.

The most tangible materialization of this cultural pattern are the flyers, the party-invitations, that you all know – this is why I call it Flyerspaces. Flyers ly out in one location and they point to the next location. Through there referentiality, by connecting one location with the other, they help to create pathways through the city through which the scenesters can orient themselves. They are guidances through the

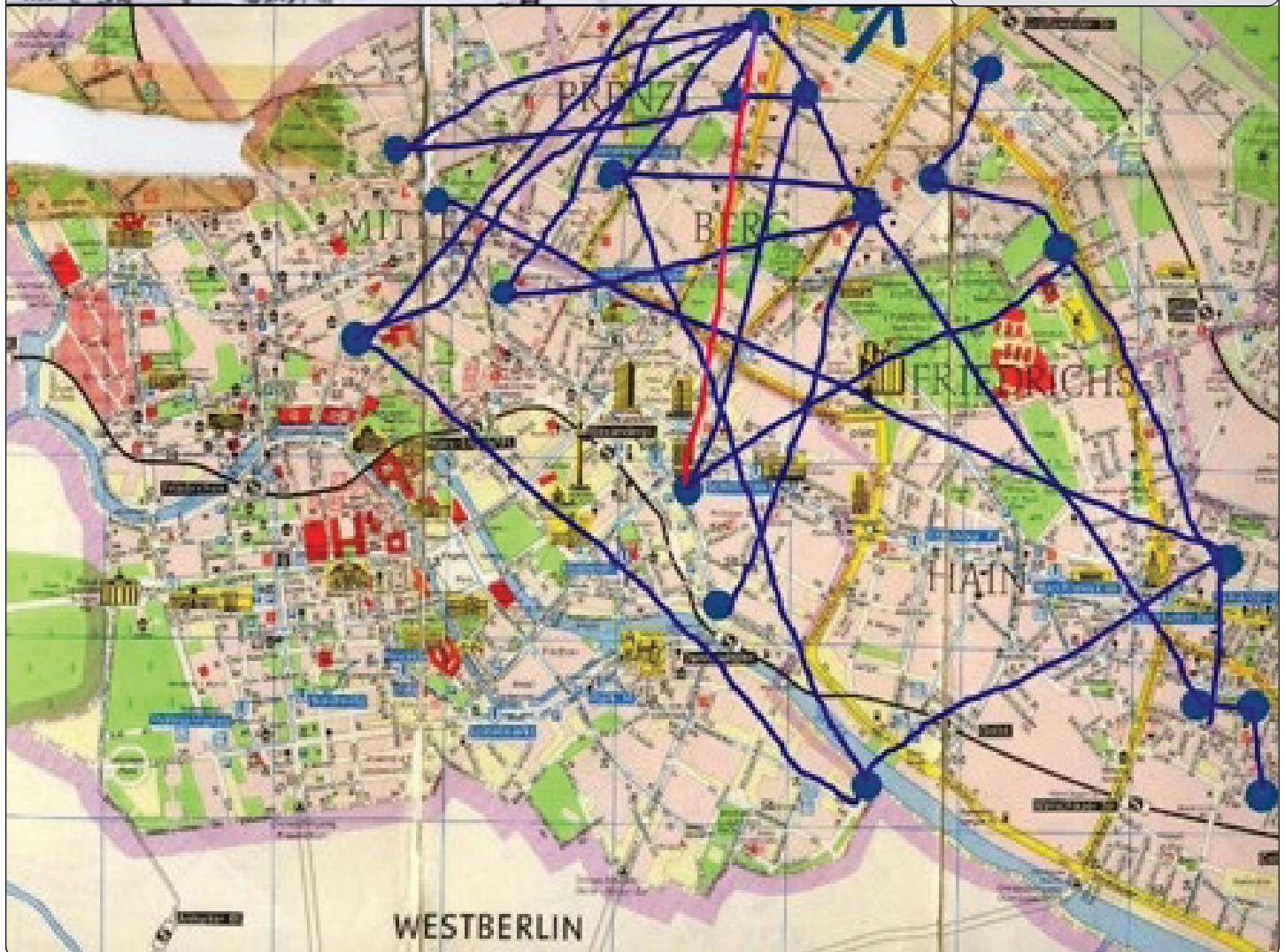


die tanzen  
Maschinenhalle



Möckernstrasse  
rechts abbiegen in die  
Kreuzbergstrasse  
links abbiegen in die  
Katzbachstrasse  
links abbiegen in die  
Dudenstrasse  
links abbiegen in den  
Park  
nach 150 m kommt  
auf der rechten Seite  
eine Holztür!!!!

**Left: Connecting Locations**  
(the Map was handed out together with the Flyer)





urban space that make sure that you keep the track. They materialize the urban flux by indicating that urban spaces cannot be understood but in connection with each other. Flyers are symbols that the movements through the city have a specific shape, a specific *Gestalt*.

The city has allways been described as an organism in flux, starting with Georg Simmel (6), who in 1909 already talked about the flow of people and goods. All urban sociologists throughout the century have drawn on Simmel. For example Henri Lefèbvre (7) and Michel de Certeau (8), who both described the fragmentation, dynamization and interconnectedness of urban space – just to name the two especiall popular theorists. So the scene is part of this dynamic organism of movement and fluid spaces. But not only that: The actors not only move through the city from place to place, from location to location, they also develop a social and cultural pattern that makes the urban logic of change and mobility tangible. As I said in the beginning, the scene offers a “field of experience” for its actors to develop a specific urban mentality. In reproducing the city as a network of fragmented locations that are interlinked through movement through the city, the fluid nature of the city receives a specific, meaningful shape.

## Endnotes

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## Composing 'America'

Michael J. Shapiro

*A nation's emergence is always predicated on the construction of a field of meaningful sounds. Just as infants babble through a welter of phonics to achieve phonemes of a native language, so conglomerates of human beings seeking national identity engage myriads of sounds in order to achieve a vocabulary of national possibilities.*

*Houston A. Baker, Jr.<sup>1</sup>*

*What do we hear when American sings? What sounds from the disembodied voice of a nation so traumatized and confused by its own racial constitution? What might the music tell us that we fail to discern in other artifacts of culture?*

*Ronald Radano<sup>2</sup>*

### Introduction: Counterpoint and Menage

Two inspirations inaugurate this investigation of 'American music.' The first is the contrapuntal soundtrack of Spike Lee's 1998 film, *He Got Game*, in which an American basketball story provides the main narrative. An African American father in prison on a murder conviction for killing his wife (accidentally as a flashback shows) is temporarily paroled to try

and convince his son, a high school basketball star, to sign a letter of intent to play for the Governor's *alma mater*. He is offered a commuted sentence if he succeeds. The film explores a range of corrupt college recruitment practices as well as the avarice of those who would live off the athletics skills of a young black athlete - politicians, colleges, family members, friends, and lovers. While the film story is focused on two major venues for the capture of the African American body, the penal system and the sports system - depicted in parallel montage as the father, Jake Shuttlesworth (Denzel Washington), is shown shooting baskets in a prison exercise yard while the son, Jesus Shuttlesworth (Ray Allen), shoots baskets on a practice court - the soundtrack enacts a different contrast.

The musical background of Lee's film alternates between the vernacular-inspired symphonic music of Aaron Copland and the rap sounds and lyrics of Public Enemy. As Lee states, he selected Copland's music because "when I listen to [Copland's] music, I hear America, and basketball is America."<sup>3</sup> Certainly Copland aligned himself with composers who drew from vernacular sources, but he aimed at transcending specific idioms to create a uniquely American music:

*Our concern was not with the quotable hymn or spiritual; we wanted to find a music that would speak of universal things in a vernacular of American speech and rhythms.<sup>4</sup>*

But which 'America' does Copland's music reference? While Copland's earlier music was "reflective of his Jewish, New York, and Paris experiences," his post 1935, and now most familiar music, "*Billy the Kid*, *Rodeo*, *Lincoln Portrait*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and *Appalachian Spring*...speak to a wide breadth of American sensibilities."<sup>5</sup> Of course most of the "sensibilities" within this "wide breadth" are Euro American ones. The pieces that Lee's soundtrack incorporates are doubtless intentionally those associated with some of the spaces of white America (*Appalachian Spring*) and those associated with the Euro America's movement westward (the "Ho Down" from *Rodeo* and *Billy the Kid*). As Jessica Burr suggests,

*Copland's western works are fundamental to his pre-eminence in American music because the West looms so large in the national consciousness...It is well known that Copland's use of open intervals and wide spacing, clear orchestration, and plain folk-like materials has given Americans a powerful musical image of their frontier...<sup>6</sup>*

Effectively the melodic landscapes of Copland's music - their "rising and falling pitches"<sup>7</sup> - articulate well with the western landscapes they accompany in the film. At the same time that big-name schools in the already-settled West (musically framed in Copland tunes) are bent on recruiting Jesus, another America, its urban venues inhabited by much of the African American population, is framed by the rap music of Public Enemy, whose staccato rhythms and inner city-directed lyrics speak to and mimic other sensibilities. And while Copland's music, with its inter-articulated vernaculars, references a comfortably shared America, Public Enemy's provides a more strident political edge; it supplies a commentary on the predatoriness of those who run a sport system that exploits young African Americans and more generally on the ever-present commerce that inflects the game. Note for example the lyrics of their "Politics of the Sneaker Pimps": "I see corporate hands up in foreign lands. With the man behind the man gettin' paid behind the man." And some of their other songs treat the pervasive inequalities that constitute the political economy of America's racial-spatial order - for example, "white men in suits don't have to jump."

Lee's soundtrack thus stages a contrapuntal encounter between the exemplary musical scores of two alternative American thought worlds, connected with alternative American experiences. To situate the soundtrack's political resonances, we can heed Jacques Ranciere's

insight that the politics of aesthetics has its impact on “the system of self evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, in contrast with an aesthetic that aims toward fashioning the “in common” (Aaron Copland’s) is a more radical political aesthetic, that of Public Enemy, who, when arrayed against Copland’s musical American, become political subjects by, in Ranciere’s terms, “reconfigur[ing] what are given to be facts.”<sup>9</sup> Their contribution to Lee’s soundtrack offers a counter aesthetic that focuses on dissensus and “establishes a grid that makes it possible to think through the forms of political dissensuality...by undoing the relations between the visible, the sayable, and the thinkable.”<sup>10</sup> They help reframe a sports story, making it one that addresses America’s racial politics.

The second inspiration is Richard Powers’s novel *The Time of Our Singing*, in which he interweaves a meditation on America’s hybrid musical history with key moments in the mid twentieth century struggle against racial discrimination. The novel features the family of Delia Daley, an African American concert singer from Philadelphia, and David Strom, a German Jewish emigre physicist, who meet at an historic occasion, Marian Anderson’s 1939 concert on the Washington mall. They marry and raise three children in a musical environment that belies the cultural and racial divisions raging around

them, as first the civil rights movement of the 50’s and 60’s and subsequently the more militant forms of activism ultimately exert divisive pressures on their children.

What is especially notable about the music in their household is the contrapuntal interludes they stage in a way reminiscent of America’s often fraught, inter-racial musical self-fashioning, running from the late nineteenth century through much of the twentieth: “after dinner they came together in tunes, Rossini while washing the dishes, W. C. Handy while drying.”<sup>11</sup> Delia, had “come from more places than even her hybrid children could get to, and each one of those clashing places sang its signature tune.” (143) She and David often played a game call “crazed quotations” in which Delia, sitting at the piano, would begin playing a simple melody - say Dvorak’s slow reedy spiritual ‘From the New World’. The husband then had two repeats to find a response. The children watched in suspense as Delia’s tune unfolded to see if Da could beat the clock and find a countersubject before the mother reached the double bar....He rarely failed. By the time Dvorak’s stolen folk song looped back around, the fellow found a way to make Schubert’s *Trout* swim upstream against it...The game produced the wildest mixed marriages, love matches that even the heaven of half-breeds looked sidelong at. Her Brahms *Alto Rhapsody* bickered with his growled Dixieland. Cherubini crashed into Cole Porter. Debussy, Tallis and Mendelssohn shackled up in unholy menages a trois (13).

Like Lee's contrapuntal musical score, Powers's mixed marriage and menage metaphors and clashes of ethnic musics provides a powerful provocation to explore the historical construction of "American" music, which in many of its forms is a product of encounters among diverse ethnic thought- and experiential worlds. The musical menages Powers stages in the midst of the Daley-Strom family, an articulation of an intertextual music and interracial household, is echoed in some contemporary musical compositions - for example William Bolcom's song cycle, *Songs of Innocence*, a William Blake-inspired encounter of 'contraries' "that encompasses styles ranging from solemn chorales, lush romanticism, abrasive, dissonant modernism, to jazz, folk, country and rock."<sup>12</sup> Bolcom's commitment to combine the diverse ethnic sources of American music has a heritage that begins with Antonin Dvorak's American compositions, especially his *New World Symphony*. And inasmuch as Powers's reference to Dvorak's "stolen folk song" stems from the earliest attempt to fashion an American musical idiom that welcomes the participation of Euro, African, and Native American traditions, he provides an appropriate threshold for a treatment of the historical encounters and initiatives that speak to the changing shapes of 'American' music, as diverse ethnic musics reflect both centrifugal and centripetal political sensibilities as they collide, clash, and coalesce.

### Dvorak versus Tocqueville

There is a telling contrast in the responses to a multi-ethnic America of two famous nineteenth century European visitors, Alexis de Tocqueville and Antonin Dvorak. As is well known, for Tocqueville the American ethnoscape was to be Euro-American dominated. He saw the "Negro" as hopelessly incapacitated and otherwise inadequate as a participant in an American democratic future, and he saw Native Americans as also unqualified participants, in their case by dint of temperament and cultural practices (although he did hold out some hope for the benefits of "racial mixing"). Although he lamented the practice of slavery and the demise of Native Americans, he showed little ethnographic interest in either. He ranged as far as Minnesota to gawk at immiserated remnants of nearly destroyed Indian nations, and during his journey to the South, he looked at slaves from an even greater conceptual as well as physical distance than his plantation owning hosts: "Habitually assum[ing] an aristocratic attitude toward American ideas and customs," his view of all aspects of America was conditioned by "the social position [that Aristocrats] had lost after the french revolution." Rather than immersing himself deeply in the various dimensions of vernacular culture, what Tocqueville observed was screened through his preoccupation with his "unworked through attachments to the aristocratic tradition."<sup>13</sup>

In contrast, appearing on the American scene almost 60 years after the Aristocrat, Tocqueville, Dvorak, a descendant of farmers and tradesmen, welcomed and incorporated America's ethnic diversity into his musical compositions. Displaying an ethnographic rather than aristocratic regard, he was committed to fashioning a musical America that partook of African American and Native American as well as Euro American musical idioms. As he famously stated in his 1893 *Harpers* essay, "In the Negro melodies of America I discover all that is needed for a great and noble school of music...There is nothing in the whole range of composition that cannot be supplied with themes from this source." Accordingly, he "saturated himself with the spirit of the old tunes [e.g., "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" in the second theme of his first movement] and then invented his own themes." He even used a "flatted seventh [a characteristic passed on to jazz, known as a 'blue note']..."<sup>14</sup> And he "tried to combine Negro and Indian themes," for example composing a largo movement to his *New World Symphony* after reading the famine scene in Longfellow's *Hiawatha*.<sup>15</sup>

Although Dvorak's grasp of "Indian music" was based exclusively on the degraded impressions of the music produced by Euro Americans outside of its original contexts, his interest in the music inspired others - for example Edward MacDowell and Arthur Farwell - to mine authentic Native American musical traditions. Although the music was to serve as "raw material" in their own

synthesizing compositions, at least they worked with "ethnographic transcriptions and recordings" derived from Indian performance venues.<sup>16</sup> MacDowell's "Indian Suite," was derived from his study of "the Indians, their dances and songs," but he resisted calling it "American music."<sup>17</sup> In contrast, Farwell, like Dvorak, wanted to appropriate Indian musics in order to craft an American music. Contrasting his appreciation of Indian music with the collection of artifacts that constituted the museum approach to Native American culture, Farwell asserted that the method of filling museum shelves with artifacts has "an aristocracy, a free-masonry about it all, that constitutes an almost impassible barrier between it and the American people." Instead, he insisted,:

*The only way wholly compatible with democratic ideals...is to bring the American people as a whole into sympathetic relation with the Indian. For through his simple, direct, poetic expression, in ritual, story and song, which he is willing to communicate to one who approaches him as a fellow man, we are able to recognize, once for all, his humanity and wealth of interest and significance which it offers for the enrichment of our own lives.*<sup>18</sup>

However worthy one might deem Farwell's commitment to a democratic recognition in word and musical



deed - he was inspired by what he saw as original “musical ideas” in the Native American soundscape and composed “Indian Melodies,”<sup>19</sup> - a better sense of the way the Native American thought-worlds are articulated in hybrid musical forms yield themselves with attention to how contemporary Native American writers, composers, and performers interpret their relationship with other American musics. However, before turning to a treatment of the diversity that an approach to American music deserves, I want to treat briefly a notable Eurocentric, anti-diversity impulse that articulated itself in the form of an American musical nationalism early in the twentieth century.

### **A Reactive Yankee America: And a Fraught Emergence of Jazz**

At the same time that Farwell and a few others were seeking to realize Dvorak’s pan- ethnic American musical vision, there existed a strong Eurocentric anti vernacular impetus from prestigious “Yankee” composers whose cultural version of racism remains alive in contemporary anti-immigrant texts, both popular and academic.<sup>20</sup> Exemplary among these composers was Daniel Gregory Mason (born in 1873) who sought to uphold what he saw as a racial inheritance, an Anglo-Saxon “moral community,” expressible in music, against a younger generation of composers, born between 1895 and 1900 who enacted a model of ethnic diversity in their

compositions.<sup>21</sup> For example, in reaction to composers who incorporated such vernacular American idioms as ragtime, Mason wrote:

*It is strange and somewhat repulsive to see European musicians, with a long and intensive culture behind them, at the behest of tired nerves throwing it all away and acclaiming American ragtime, the sweepings of our streets, as the rejuvenator of their senile art.*<sup>22</sup>

However even Mason’s “European musician” was selectively identified. For example, while he grudgingly acknowledged that “the more sensuous Slav’ productively counterbalances ‘the more convention-beset Anglo-Saxon,’” in the production of a national music culture, he remained convinced nevertheless of the preeminence of “the Yankee composer.”<sup>23</sup>

The virtual worship of a hierarchical view of American culture that Mason and other Yankee composers expressed as a virtual mission to transplant Anglo Saxon culture and its attendant “Victorian assumptions about music and art”<sup>24</sup> constitutes what Macdonald Smith Moore usefully calls “redemptive culture.” Describing themselves in terms of “race,” Mason and his contemporary, Charles Ives, “believed that the true moral community of neighborliness had been born in Old New England” and that it was their job to help “reaffirm the

meaning of American community for each generation.” Mason, Ives, and other “Centennial composers” would fulfill their calling, Moore suggests, “if they could create through musical culture a grammar of national identity.”

<sup>25</sup> However, as Moore’s gloss on the history of American music suggests, it was ultimately an “ethnic dissonance” rather than a racist redemptive sensibility that was to have the most telling influence on American music, especially after jazz “burst into the awareness of white Americans at the close of World War I.”<sup>26</sup> “The jazz Age,” he added, repudiated an older tradition of redemptive culture.”<sup>27</sup> Thereafter a musical culture war developed, with some, primarily Anglos, who were committed to a model of a racial hierarchy, attempting to dismiss jazz as a remnant of an inferior culture and others, mostly Jewish emigres, incorporating jazz and aspects of its ragtime roots into a new hybrid American music in both symphonic and musical theater genres. As Moore puts it, those involved in the struggle sought “to control the root metaphors of their self-definition as Americans.”<sup>28</sup>

Among those who entered the culture war with a redemptive mentality was the auto magnate Henry Ford, whose redemptive impulse reached into America’s rural back country rather than, like the Yankee composers, sorting various American inflections of European music. The historical context for Ford’s redemptive involvement with music was “a widespread fear of the loss of white Anglo Saxon Protestant Hegemony in American political

life and culture,” which led, among other things, to an sponsorship of an “old-time” music thought to represent the threatened way of life.<sup>29</sup> Through his broadly dispersed company dealerships, Ford sponsored music and dance events aimed at displacing jazz with “old-time fiddling” and jazz dancing with “old-time square and round dancing.”<sup>30</sup> Ford and those who shared his views disparaged not only ethnic musics but also America’s dependence on Europe for models of artistic inspiration.” For example, among this type of musical nationalist was the composer-conductor Lamar Stringfield, who issued a handbook through the University of North Carolina Press in 1931 to promote a national music, disparage jazz, and identify the centrality of American culture in a purportedly authentic American vernacular music, thought to be the music of the common people.<sup>31</sup>

Rather than being concerned with the elevation of alternatives to jazz or with musical purity, African American composers and musicians have struggled against the appropriation of African American musical idioms by white composers and performers. For example, a primary critique articulated in Amiri Baraka’s famous *Blues People*, is that the commercial appropriation blues and bluesy jazz is a thin commercial version of a music that has had ontological depth. African American blues and bluesy jazz, as it departed from its predominantly African-inspired vocal and rhythmic forms, according to Baraka, remained a resistant, highly coded mode of

signifying musical expression of the African American "meta society."<sup>32</sup> It reflected the situation of a people whose music enacted their sense of difference and their struggle for solidarity. Or, in the words of Ronald Radano, "Black sounding practices identified a difference that, while constituted within the master-slave relation, gave material significance to a people under siege."<sup>33</sup>

For Ralph Ellison as well, "the blues is an impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolations of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism."<sup>34</sup> But although he also lamented the loss of historical context in the trajectory of jazz developments, Ellison saw it as more a function of performance venue than of racial difference. He was discontent about the disconnect that had taken place between the music and dance. Prizing the "palpable *physical* dimensions of the blues/jazz ritual,"<sup>35</sup> Ellison complains that "the thinness of much of so called modern jazz," its "loss of wholeness" can be attributed to its distance from "the small Negro public dance," which is its most authentic venue.<sup>36</sup>

Nevertheless, for Ellison jazz is a pan ethnic American phenomenon, a classic expression of American vernacular music and a melange that defies any boundary between high and low,

*that speaks eloquently to the United States's predicament as a still-forming nation, black, white, brown, and beige, that is still in the state of relative nakedness..but this nakedness allows for a greater degree of personal improvisation, and with the least hindrance from traditional social forms, rituals, manners, etc.*<sup>37</sup>

And he observed that "jazz seems somehow to give expression to the times much better than does classical music in the European tradition - though of course I love them both."<sup>38</sup>

Ellison's love of "both" has an interesting heritage. As he reports, while a student at Mrs Zelia N. Breau's music school in the black school system of Oklahoma City, he was exposed to both traditions. She insisted on strictly classics by day but by night "she was the owner/operator of the Ira Aldridge Theater where Duke and Louis reigned in the footlights, along with Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Jimmy Rushing and the Blue Devils as creators and perpetuators of the shouts, smear, and muted rhapsodies that characterize blues and jazz."<sup>39</sup>

The political significance of Mrs. Breau's division of the day is parallel with another such division reported by Jacques Ranciere. In his analysis of the political assemblages and writing initiatives of nineteenth century proletarians, he refers to the way workers used their evenings to make of themselves political

subjects. By devoting the night to writing, they turn the night into a political zone, a space within which to invent themselves in a way that resists the worker identity that exhausts the bourgeois conception of them.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, the musical work in Mrs. Breaux's school, which by day is dominated by a Euro American musical pedagogy, is countered by a welcoming of an African American musical idiom at night, effecting a reassertion of a musical identity that is suppressed hours earlier. The "love of both" to which Ellison refers is enacted in important compositions by Euro and African American composers, although with varying political inflections. Notably, the compositions of George Gershwin and Duke Ellington are explicit attempts at combining Euro and African American musical idioms to compose "America" in sound.

### George Gershwin's Intertextual America

There is little doubt about what Gershwin thought he was up to as he worked on his *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924). Very much in tune with the spirit of Dvorak's approach to American music, he stated that his *Rhapsody* "began as a purpose not a plan...as a sort of musical kaleidoscope of America - of our vast melting pot of our incomparable national pep, our blues, our metropolitan madness [indeed Gershwin's initial plan was to entitle his piece 'American Rhapsody']"<sup>41</sup> Moreover, his *Rhapsody in Blue* was premiered at a concert where a

prestigious committee of famous musical personalities - Sergei Rachmaninoff, Jascha Heifetz, Efrem Zimbalist, and Alma Gluck (among others) - were to decide the question, "What is American Music."<sup>42</sup> And, as the report continued (in the *New York Herald Tribune*, January 4, 1924), it was noted that "George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto, Irving Berlin is writing a syncopated tone poem and Victor Herbert is working on an American suite."<sup>43</sup>

It is tempting to impose a linear narrative on the influences shaping Gershwin's *Rhapsody*, the composition in which he saw himself as a producer of a uniquely American musical idiom. One might suppose that Gershwin, being already steeped in classical music, added a jazz inflection to create what emerged as a form of symphonic jazz. But musical thought-worlds are not simply temporally additive, moving from earlier to latter compositions. If we think intertextually, we can achieve a different assumption; rather than seeing Gershwin's *Rhapsody* as a product of a linear music history, in which we imagine him taking classical forms and adding blues, slide, jazz forms, etc., we can recognize that his approach to classical forms is already shaped by his appreciation of jazz/blues/rag forms. Thinking intertextually - about the interweaving or crossing of texts - presents a challenge to the typical idea of a linear history of musical influences. As Michael Klein puts it, "Broadly conceived, intertextuality has

the potential to disrupt our notions of history and the unidirectional timeline that runs from an earlier text to a latter one.”<sup>44</sup>

In Gershwin's case the kind of “classical” forms that play a role in his compositions are romantic. His musical training is primarily in “the romantic piano literature (Chopin, Liszt, Debussy) not the symphonic classics.”<sup>45</sup> For one familiar with the improvisational challenges to traditional musical intelligibility in the development of jazz, it's not surprising to observe a jazz-familiar composer turning to the romantics who, initially influenced by Wagner's departures from the traditional quadratic form, created a music that violates familiar meaning conventions, especially by disrupting syntactic expectations.<sup>46</sup> For example, “Claude Debussy's melodic ideas are not contingent upon a rigid tonal scheme.”<sup>47</sup> In ignoring the norms of musical periodicity, his compositions music resist expectations of closure. Rejecting the authority of conventional tonality, his scales have no conventional points of beginning and ending; for example they often have whole-note intervals, a practice that violates the tonality conventions through which musical spacing and narrative had been commonly understood.<sup>48</sup> In addition, Debussy uses a “reiterative phraseology” with “oscillating chords” which constitute “a mode of musical continuity that is diametrically opposed to the goal-directed syntactical harmony of traditional tonal music.”<sup>49</sup> Instead of developing themes, Debussy

creates musical fragments, a multiplicity, a non-linear set of musical associations, and repetitive patterns that resist instead of moving toward a stable narrative or set of references.

As is the case with Debussy's music, the jazz aesthetic, which early in its development incorporated blues scales, ragtime rhythmic motifs, chromatic voicing elements, repetitive phraseology, and unconventional, polyphonic tonalities, disrupts conventional musical form and the expectations of closure with which conventional music is associated. As James Snead puts it, “Black music sets up expectations and then disturbs them.”<sup>50</sup> While in Debussy, there are no conventional beginnings and endings, in blues/jazz compositions, there are many new beginnings; they are characterized by pervasive cuts, abrupt “skipping back to another beginning.”<sup>51</sup> Gershwin's *Rhapsody* makes good use of the aesthetic homology between romantic and jazz forms, especially the swing style of jazz, which drew significantly on the “arsenal of Debussy's harmony.”<sup>52</sup> “Debussy bequeathed his harmonies to jazz...[as reflected in] Gershwin, Milhaud, Constant, Lambert, and Bernstein” who wrote music that effaced the highbrow-lowbrow divide, creating a music “grounded in harmony and counterpoint.”<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, as David Schiff points out, there is a pervasive African American musical presence in Gershwin's *Rhapsody*; its five basic tunes are “all based on the blues scale...”<sup>54</sup> In sum, there are recognizable elements of Debussy's

piano music,<sup>55</sup> of ragtime (especially stride piano) styles, vaudeville style comic piano motifs, and even elements of American popular songs. Apart from his classical training, Gershwin studied with Luckey (Charles Luckeyeth) Roberts “the master ragtime pianist.”<sup>56</sup> As a result, the *Rhapsody* constructs American music as an inter-articulation of parts of a Euro-classical form and a variety of vernacular idioms and styles.<sup>57</sup>

Gershwin’s synthesis in his *Rhapsody* is also apparent in his folk opera, *Porgy and Bess*, in which he also saw himself attempting to “forge an American musical language,” while achieving an artistic unity out of a historical and ethnic diversity. He wanted his music to represent what he called the “the rhythms of these interfusing peoples...clashing and blending.”<sup>58</sup>

Doubtless Gershwin achieved a musical fusion or inter-articulation, but if one treats the historical depth and phenomenological significance of the different sound worlds with which he was working, the issue of composing an inter-ethnic American defies a simple, compositional solution. Wynton Marsalis (among others), does not regard “fusion” music as jazz because. “what makes fusion not jazz is that certain key elements of jazz are not addressed. First and foremost the blues.”<sup>59</sup>

But certainly Gershwin’s *Rhapsody* contains blues melodies. In his *Creole Rhapsody*, seemingly a combination of appreciation and response to Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, Duke Ellington, whose piece begins

with “the same harmonic progression” goes on to render his *Rhapsody* “bluesier.” A more radical departure among pieces that “would not have been written without the example of [Gershwin’s] *Rhapsody*,” African American musician composer, James P. Johnson’s *Yamekraw* (or “Negro Rhapsody”), which Schiff notes, is “an act of ethnic definition, a pulling together of elements from the African-American musical traditions, not a bridge between those traditions and European music.”<sup>60</sup>

On the other hand, when the African American pianist/arranger Marcus Roberts interprets Gershwin’s *Rhapsody*, he achieves the “clashing and blending” to which Gershwin refers. Roberts approach effectively interweaves the kind of African American self-definition that “a jazz sensibility” reflects, without, he suggests, “destroying the essence of Gershwin’s original score.” It places that jazz sensibility “within a classical environment.”<sup>61</sup> Wanting to “create a modern dialogue with the entire history of American jazz piano,” Roberts’s treatment of Gershwin’s *Rhapsody* includes the influence of the hesitation pacing of Thelonious Monk, the “shuffle-based New Orleans groove, anchored by bassist Roland Guerin and drummer Jason Marsalis,” and the kind of syncopated swing “first introduced by Louis Armstrong.”<sup>62</sup> However to understand the tensions between self-definition and respect for traditional form that has produced American musical traditions, one has to move beyond the mere idioms



that various composition incorporate and explore the ethnic experiential trajectories that have eventuated in such hybrid sounding practices.

### **Jewish American and Africa American Self-Definition**

It is clear that the history of African American sounding practices have operated in a more fraught situation than that experienced by Gershwin and other Jewish American composers and musicians. While granting that “[a] nation’s emergence is always predicated on the construction of a field of meaningful sounds,” Houston A. Baker, Jr. points out that the black musical contribution creates a disjuncture. He notes that the “*national* enterprise of black artists and spokes persons, since the beginning of the century, have been involved in “a mode of *sounding* reality”<sup>63</sup> that resists the Euro-American state’s desire for a unitary nationalizing enterprise. In contrast, the Jewish American musical contributions have been driven for the most part by an assimilationist motivation. For example, as Andrea Most points out in her treatment of the Jewish contribution to musical theater, “the Broadway stage was a space where Jews envisioned an ideal America and subtly wrote themselves into the scenario as accepted members of the mainstream American community.”<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, despite what emerged as differential sensibilities operating as both ethnic groups connected

with mainstream Euro America, there is one striking homology between Jewish and Afro Modernity as they articulated themselves into their respective sound worlds. Both Jewish American and African American musical inventions owe aspects of their forms to the kinds of doubleness and masking imposed on peoples who are forced to function within cultures from which they are in varying degrees abjected. Both Jewish and Afro modernity stem from traditions in which disguise has constituted an integral part of their cultural productions. In the Jewish case, as it is treated by Gershom Scholem, the beginning of their modern consciousness can be traced to “sixteenth century Marrano culture” and the seventeenth-century Sabbatian movement” within which “the Marranic split between inner belief and outer identity” was “sacrilized.”<sup>65</sup> Given the condition of a people who desired to preserve their beliefs while, at the same time seeking to survive in national, Gentile-dominated environments where their beliefs were disrespected and/or outlawed, their aesthetic forms - their humor, music, and drama (among other genres) - reflect a situation that recalls the way masking constituted many African America aesthetic forms. And, arguably, “the self-conscious role playing demanded by modernizing societies led Jews to develop talents that were highly suitable for the theater.”<sup>66</sup> But while their aesthetic productions throughout the nineteenth century accommodated both their divided presentation

of self and a recognition of divided audiences, by the twentieth century the Jewish American contribution to the Broadway musical theater was oriented toward inventing a mainstream American musical/theatrical idiom.

Certainly Irving Berlin's musical trajectory is exemplary with respect to the assimilationist cast of the Jewish American contribution to inventing a musical America. Berlin ultimately saw himself as one "writing American music."<sup>67</sup> Having ceased writing ethnic novelty songs by 1914, Berlin, "a gifted assimilator of a variety of musical traditions and an equally eager champion of dominant American institutions and values," composed music that contained "a vision of America devoid of all evidence of difference and conflict."<sup>68</sup> While there existed a musical theater that was more critical - using flashbacks, broken timelines and the projection of a character's interiority on stage...to express the contingent quality of all we 'know,'<sup>69</sup> Berlin was participating in a mainstream Broadway musical theater that featured simple, linear narratives and uncomplex musical voices. Aspiring to the invention of a unitary national voice, his imagined geography was national in scope. Berlin's patriotic songs: "God Bless America," "The Freedom Train," and "the Song of Freedom," among others, map an ideationally undifferentiated national space,<sup>70</sup> and his personae are protagonists rather than antagonists. Rather than creating conflicting voices, as in the call and response mode of much of the African American musical tradition,

Berlin's music tends toward an edifying process reflected in one voice. In accord with the ideological frame of the Jewish American *Bildungsroman*, Berlin's early songs were usually written as the expression of a single protagonist "whose identity," as Charles Hamm puts it, "was encoded into the text and music, then projected, clarified, or even changed in the act of performance."<sup>71</sup> Subsequently, the narrative trajectory of the characters in the Tin Pan Alley musicals of Jewish Americans tended to reflect a confidence in one's ability to assimilate into mainstream American culture.

By contrast, given the more intense levels of discrimination, exclusion, and rejection with which African Americans were faced, the veil or mask was a more persistent feature of the aesthetic within which their sound world emerged. And in contrast with the macropolitical, national-level territoriality of Berlin's music, African American music recognized a split between mainstream American politics and the micropolitics of African American survival strategies (a split that, for the most part, Jewish modernity left behind in Europe). For example, the early examples of African American-produced musical theater featured minstrelsy and racist, denigrating "coon songs" that had been integral to the amusement white audiences. However in subtle ways, the songs and minstrel structure were recontextualized to give black audiences possibilities for reception different from what white audiences were

experiencing. Houston A. Baker, Jr. puts the aesthetic problem of Afro modernity compellingly:

*An African American spokesperson who wished to engage in masterful and empowering play within the minstrel spirit house need the uncanny ability to manipulate bizarre phonic legacies. For he or she had the task of transforming the mask and its sounds into negotiable discursive currency.*<sup>72</sup>

Baker points out that to understand the emergence of the African American aesthetic in the twentieth century, as it was articulated through both writing and musical genres, one must heed two alternative African American relationships with the aesthetic forms produced by Euro Americans. One involves “the mastery of form” and the other, “the deformation of mastery.” As an exemplar of the former, Baker treats Booker T. Washington’s autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, which manages to tell a story of American racism in a way that articulates with white American modes of reception of black America’s aesthetic forms while simultaneously addressing “the contours, necessities, and required programs of his own culture.”<sup>73</sup> To do this, he self-consciously adopts “minstrel tones...reassuring sounds from black quarters” while, at the same time engaging in a “rhetorical appropriation” that [Baker calls] “the mastery of form.”<sup>74</sup>

The mastery of form to which Baker refers can be applied to the early African American musical theater, in particular in Will Marion Cook’s *Clorindy: Or the Origin of the Cakewalk* (opening 1898). This musical comedy, with words by Paul Lawrence Dunbar, was the first all-black musical comedy with an original score.<sup>75</sup> Roughly one third of the songs in the show bear a surface similarity to “coon songs: chicken mania, fancy dressing, and generally raucous behavior.”<sup>76</sup> However, like Booker T. Washington’s subtle rhetorical offerings to his African American audience, many of the Cook/Dunbar coon songs “contained topical humor that obliquely commented on the state of racial affairs”:

*Dey’s gwine to be colored policemen,  
all over dey say  
If dey do, it’ll be [the]  
leading topic of de day,  
I’d like to see colored people  
rise up to de mark,  
But I’d rather not see a coon  
on de street or in de park,  
For it’s hard enough to find  
a white policeman after dark.*<sup>77</sup>

While the double level of address in Cook and Dunbar’s *Clorindy* manifests Baker’s “mastery of form” aspect of the African American aesthetic, some

subsequent black musical theater productions exemplify the “deformation of mastery” he ascribes to such African American writing as W. E. B. DuBois’s *Souls of Black Folks*. The deformation of master is characterized by “distinguishing rather than concealing,” and by enacting “a go(ue)rilla action in the face of acknowledged adversaries.”<sup>78</sup> Thus for example, in a subsequent Cook musical, *The Sons of Ham* (1900), the black audience is directly addressed, as in this narrative about a “proud southern girl” who moves north and prepares to confront different regional and class conceits:

*Ah’s heard so much ‘bout their high-toned ways,  
 “Bout dem actin’ ore like white folks ev’ry day,  
 If dey tries to come it on me too gran’  
 Ah’ll tell ‘em who I am—*<sup>79</sup>

Yet, the audience address of the trajectory of African American sounding practices is only part of identity context within which they have been shaped. When Duke Ellington insisted (in his first article) that “rhythmic sequences” are more important than “the show part of the band - the melody instruments,” he was evoking the historical space of the jazz tradition, the dance hall, and thus also the relationship between music and the body, a reception that is experienced in movement, not merely in listening.<sup>80</sup> Rhythm according to Ellington is as important to the musical production as it is to its reception:

*Long association between players should result in their being able almost to anticipate each other’s thoughts [to] play as one man...The first step to this end is to stabilise the rhythms played by the section.*<sup>81</sup>

In addition to his concern with the bodies addressed by his music, Ellington was keenly sensitive to the interrelationships among his players. His compositions are oriented toward a recognition of both the individuality of each musician and the dynamic rapport of the ensemble. The construction of consonance and dissonance, characteristic of the jazz aesthetic that Ellington disproportionately invented was guided by a democratizing ethos. Accordingly, it was a familiarity with Ellington orchestras, among other groups that encouraged Ralph Ellison to assert that the jazz ensemble achieves the essence of democratic practice: “True jazz is an art of individual assertion within and against the group”<sup>82</sup> And Ellington himself also pointed out that what he called “Negro music” went well beyond the mere entertainment supplied by a marginalized minority. For example, addressing himself to the subject of a Langston Hughes poem, “We, Too Sing America,” he insisted, “we play more than a minority role, in singing ‘America’:

*I contend that the Negro is the creative voice of America, is creative America...It was out voice*

*that sang 'America' when America grew too lazy,  
satisfied and confident to sing.<sup>83</sup>*

### Duke Ellington's "Deformation of Mastery"

*Ellington's music reconfigures the context in  
which everything, that is to say music, is read.<sup>84</sup>*

In contrast with an aesthetic that wore a mask, Ellington, at least in his music, was direct and confrontational. He insisted that he wanted "to take Uncle Tom out of the [musical] theater;"<sup>85</sup> and after the premier of *Porgy and Bess*, he said that "the times are here, to debunk Gershwin's lampblack Negroisms."<sup>86</sup> To address those "times," he staged his own musical, *Jump for Joy*, with an all-black cast. In this musical, his deformations even ran to an amusing reversal (which he removed as possibly indelicate before it was performed). In the face of the Jewish actor Al Jolson's black minstrelsy-oriented face role in *The Jazz Singer* (1927), the first script of Ellington's *Jump for Joy* included a scene in which there were "three colored guys sitting on a table in a tailor shop, sewing and singing Jewish songs."<sup>87</sup> "All the sketches had a message for the world," Ellington said, and the indictments of Uncle Tom imagery were explicit and humorous. For example the finale of the first act was "Uncle Tom's Cabin Is a Drive-In Now":

*There used to be a chicken shack in Caroline,  
But now they've moved it up to Hollywood and Vine;*

*They paid off the mortgage - nobody knows how -  
And Uncle Tom's Cabin is a drive-in now!<sup>88</sup>*

In its original conception, Ellington's *Jump for Joy* also satirically treated the racial-spatial order; removed from the opening of the second act was the line, "I've got a Passport from Georgia (and I'm going to the U.S.A.)"<sup>89</sup> Effectively, to use another of Baker's expressions (with Booker T. Washington resonances), Ellington's music was designed, like other genres belonging to the "black spokesperson," to pursue the "necessary task of employing audible extant forms in ways that move clearly *up*, masterfully and re-soundingly away from slavery."<sup>90</sup> Certainly Ellington pursued this move. His theater music is, in his words, "a statement of social protest...without saying it." "This," he insisted, "calls for the real craftsman."<sup>91</sup>

Shortly after writing and staging his *Jump for Joy*, he undertook a longer work that would sound "the history of the American Negro" his *Black, Brown, and Beige: A Tone Parallel to the History of the American Negro*. In this piece he inter-articulates history and sound to demonstrate the fortitude a people who had moved "re-soundingly" *through* slavery as well as away from it. In his words, "The first section, 'Black,' delved deeply into the Negro past...the second section, 'Brown,' recognized the contribution made by the Negro to this country in blood...the third section, Beige...refer[s] to the common

view of the people of Harlem, and the little Harlems around the U.S.A.”<sup>92</sup>

Debuting at Carnegie Hall in 1943, *Black, Brown, and Beige* is an exemplar of Baker’s “deformation of mastery.” Rather than simply reinflecting the “phonic legacies” of “conservatory trained musicians” whose music had dominated that venue, Ellington’s working injunction was to write a piece “from the inside by a Negro.”<sup>93</sup> Thus “Black,” which inaugurates the musical, constructs the “Negro past” with a “Work Song” and a spiritual, “Come Sunday,” a combination that refers to “the time when the workers had a church of their own.”<sup>94</sup>

Nevertheless, *Black, Brown and Beige* is a work of synthesis inasmuch as it has a European framing; it is a symphonic suite incorporating much of the history of the African American sound world, and it required “recasting a jazz band composition for a symphony orchestra.”<sup>95</sup>

Despite the incorporation of different ethnic musical traditions within the piece however, *Black, Brown and Beige* manifests a striking disjunction. On the one hand, as a piece written from “inside by a Negro,” it explores not only evolving structures of feeling but also the spatial diaspora of African Americans, a spatial history with long global trajectories within which those structures of feeling were evinced. There is of course an intimate connection between structures of feeling and African American spatial history. For example

Nathaniel Mackey demonstrates that connection in his description of a moment when he and his ensemble are playing at a Thelonious Monk homage evening at the city of Oakland’s club, Onaje’s. As he is listening to another group playing Monk’s composition, *Pannonica*, he at first hears a “wistful strain” through the set; but at a certain point, he says, “Wistfulness turned into *saudade*. As I stood there I couldn’t help remembering that the quality Brazilians call *saudade* goes back to the homesickness the slaves felt for Africa.”<sup>96</sup>

On the other hand, Ellington’s piece is designed for an enclosure, the concert hall, which as Jacques Attali famously noted, displaced the earlier spaces of music that had witnessed a co-articulation of cultural life and sounding practices. The concert hall, as Attali points out enfranchised a different kind of music; it changed both the space and the economy of music. The evolution of musical space to which Attali refers begins well before Ellington’s attempt to use an enclosed space to articulate a historically and geographically extensive one. The process of enclosing and revaluing organized sound became a pervasive reality in the eighteenth century. Where as prior to that time, “the musician, the social memory of a past imaginary, was at first common on the villages and the court, and was unspecialized; he [subsequently] became a domiciled functionary of the lords, a producer and seller of signs who was free in appearance, but in fact almost always exploited and manipulated by clients.”<sup>97</sup>



Attali goes on to note that by the nineteenth century, the space of the concert hall was dominated by a “star system” as part of an irresistible feature of the music market. And central to this development was the piano repertory.<sup>98</sup> However Ellington’s approach to orchestration resisted the star system. As jazz musician Wynton Marsalis puts it, Ellington “as the inventor of the real American orchestra... advanced the conception of democratic creation.”<sup>99</sup> Unlike those orchestral forms in which a featured soloist is in the foreground while other forms of instrumentation are in the background, Ellington “created a new system of harmony [in which]...the personality of the sound of each member of the orchestra took importance over the organization.”<sup>100</sup> He exulted in the “freedom of expression” of each band member.<sup>101</sup>

Nevertheless, Ellington was also the ability of each member of his orchestra to “anticipate each other’s thoughts.”<sup>102</sup> Again, Mackey provides a telling instance of this kind of rapport, which was in evidence at the Monk homage evening at Onaje’s Oakland club. As his group was playing despite the absence of one of his band members, “Penguin”: “at the beginning of the second repeat... we heard an oboe join in from near the club’s entrance, perfectly in tune and right on the beat. We looked over the heads of the audience, all of whom had turned around to see who the oboist was. And there was Penguin playing away while slowly making his way toward the stage.”<sup>103</sup>

However, as Mackey has pointed out, the rapport in which jazz band members are able to anticipate what Ellington calls “each other’s thoughts” operates within what is distinctive about the musical thought world of African American musicians. Recalling Amiri Baraka’s discussion in his *Blues People* of the big-band jazz in the twenties and thirties of Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington and Jimmy Lunceford, Mackey points out how the special meaning of *swing*, which functioned as a verb connoting the improvisational character of Afro-American music, became in the hands of some (white) commercial imitators “a less dynamic, less improvisatory, less blues-inflected music, and, in the political level, a containment of black mobility.”<sup>104</sup> The improvisatory privileging of the verb in Afro-American compositions/performances, he argues, connects with the more general linguistic situation “among a people whose ability to act is curtailed by racist constraints.”<sup>105</sup> Accordingly, through its improvisational character, Ellington’s music, like that of other black composer/musicians, resists “the nounization of swing.”<sup>106</sup> The musical innovations that restore the improvisational character of the music are part of what (the ever historically aware) Ellington called “the Marcus Garvey extension - a movement in its reaction to [the appropriated versions of] swing, from noun to verb.”<sup>107</sup> As Ellington notes in his discussion of how his orchestra works, “we do not use any printed orchestrations. These are

much too stereotyped.”<sup>108</sup> But the political significance of Ellington’s role in the dynamic phenomenology of the African American sound world is subordinate to the politics of history to which his *Black, Brown and Beige* is addressed. That project, which is reminiscent of Dvorak’s earlier attempt to make Africa American music a major part of the American musical canon, is an exemplar of his contribution as the major composer of “American music.”

While Dvorak was privy to one historical African American musical idiom, the spiritual, whose musical idioms migrated into the blues-jazz traditions, Ellington’s compositions are primarily manifestations of the swing aspect of the blues. However, in his *Black, Brown and Beige* Ellington treats a long historical trajectory of African American musical idioms, while inter-connecting the history of the American black experience with the history of their music. While there are many powerful moments in the way he stages the inter-articulation of music and historical experience, perhaps the most poignant occurs during the *Black* segment in the piece entitled “Come Sunday,” originally an orchestral piece but subsequently produced in a vocal version sung by “the great spiritual and gospel singer Mahalia Jackson” (in her only appearance with a jazz group).<sup>109</sup>

Musically, “Come Sunday” straddles the two dimensions of the blues tradition famously distinguished by the classical and music scholar Albert Murray, the blues

as feeling and the blues as music.<sup>110</sup> The former, he suggests, is a feeling of resignation and defeat, while the latter is a musical response to the ontological condition of African Americans. In this latter dimension, blues as music functions as “an experience-confrontation device that enables people to begin by accepting the difficult, disappointing, chaotic, absurd, which is to say the farcical or existential facts of life.”<sup>111</sup> It moves beyond the negative facts of life to not only cope but also to triumph. The orchestration of blues through jazz then becomes “a fundamental device for confrontation, improvisation, and existential affirmation...for improvising or riffing on the exigencies of the predicament.”<sup>112</sup>

To understand the “predicament” to which “Come Sunday” is addressed, we have to consult Ellington’s poem, in which Boola, his character who moves through the narrative of *Black, Brown and Beige* approaches a church in white congregation is assembled for a service:

*Came Sunday, Boola was irresistibly drawn  
To that pretty white house with the steeple  
So tall, shining there in the sun. Everyone  
Who entered there was scrubbed and polished  
And all dressed up. How happy they seemed!*

*While the white voices inside rang out  
In triumph...the blacks outside would grunt  
Subdued approval. When the white voices inside*

*Were raised in joyous song, the blacks outside  
Hummed along, adding their own touches....*

Enacting this affirmation with instrumentation, Ellington's "Come Sunday" composes "short, lyrical statements by solo trombone and trumpet [to] introduce the 'song.'" and includes a "typical blues style 'flatted fifth.'" And making the musical articulate with the emotional resonances of a people who are at once kept outside while nevertheless affirming the spirituality in progress inside, "the music holds still, catching its breath [as] 'the blacks outside... grunt/Subdued approval'."<sup>113</sup> The expression, Subdued approval," seconded by the musical resonances speaks powerfully to Ellington's mission. His recovery of the history of "Negro music" is aimed not only at elaborating the experiences and structures of feeling within which it was spawned but also making the case that "we too sing America." "Subdued" there fore has a double resonance; it reflects the historical fact of a people who have been subdued and it expressed their ambivalence about granting approval to a nation that has subjected African Americans to coercion and violence .

Thereafter, in the *Brown* segment, the rhythms and tonalities of the spiritual follows its historical and musical migration to the blues. In this register the music features the traditional twelve bar blues structure. Narratively, Ellington's "conceptual persona,"<sup>114</sup> Boola experiences the blues in the last segment of *Brown* in which

"Ellington's song 'The Blues,' is a masterpiece *about the blues*," as Peress puts it.<sup>115</sup>

By the time the narrative moves to *Beige*, the character Boola morphs into Ellington, as the story shifts "from the mythical to the autobiographical" and Ellington's Harlem, Cotton Club experience is at the center of the music. It is in this section that the narrative moves from a "weary blues mood to a hopeful one that is reflected in the intellectual contributions of the Harlem Renaissance and the patriotic contributions of black America's participation in the war effort. This latter emphasis articulates with the financial contribution of the Carnegie Hall debut of the piece, which was in support of Russian War Relief. The continuing and pervasive blues element in *Beige* contains reprises from the earlier segments, as emotional (and thus tonal) vicissitudes abound, and Ellington's piano "returns in medium stride to introduce the final shout chorus [incorporating] bits and pieces from 'Come Sunday' and 'work Song'" from *Black*.<sup>116</sup> However one wants to construe the musical contribution of *Black, Brown and Beige*, with Ellington, Dvorak's desire to locate the African American sound world at the center of American music is realized. As he puts it, "Negro music is America. It developed out of the life of the people here in this country."<sup>117</sup> But, at the same time, the African American sound world creates reflects disjuncture as much as it blends because. Ellington recognizes that "Negro music" must articulate

dissonance with dissonant chords because “dissonance is our way of life in America. We are something apart, yet an integral part.”<sup>118</sup>

### **The Blues Pervades the American Ethnoscape: Red**

To treat one of the important implications of Ellington's creation of a place for the blues tradition in the center of American music, I want symbolically to add *Red* to his *Black, Brown and Beige* and treat the migration of the blues into other disjunctive musical spaces, the Native American sound and thought worlds, with a treatment of two Native American artistic contributions, Sherman Alexie's novel, poetry and musical participation involved in the novel and accompanying music in his *Reservation Blues*, and John Trudell's poetry and music, especially as reflected in his *Blue Indians* recording. As is noted in my discussion of early twentieth century efforts at composing “American music,” the existence of distinctive Native American sound worlds got the attention of both the European visitor, Antonin Dvorak, and subsequent “Yankee” composers who wanted to incorporate aspects of Native American music in their creation of a genuinely American soundscape. However, as a result of earlier contact, the Native American soundscape has undergone significant changes. For example, after having been “(forcibly) taught to sing Christian hymns,” formulated “to facilitate learning,” Native

American peoples created musical hybrids, adjusting and performing the hymns in “their own vocal style...[in] characteristically flat, nasal delivery with its glissandi... [as contrasted with] the European bel canto (operatic) ideal of singing.”<sup>119</sup>

And, arguably, given the inter-ethnic associations, both voluntary and coercive, between African and Native Americans in the Southeast, well into the nineteenth century, their musical idioms had mutual impacts, especially because the some of the homologies between the percussive aspects of African and Native American ritual song forms, the existence of call and response patterns in both musics, and because of intimate connections between song and dance forms in both cultures. In the case of the former, Native American music becomes simply part of a vernacular-inspired melodic potpourri, while in the latter there is a blues translation with ontological depth. Accordingly, although there is a wide range of musical idioms in the history of Native American sound worlds, my emphasis here is on the contemporary relationships between the African and Native American musics, with a special emphasis on blues. Nevertheless, it should be noted that “contemporary Native American music is rich and diverse, incorporating many tribally derived traditions, as well as popular and commercial forms and styles, including polkas, country musics, folk, rock and roll, blues, jazz, and reggae.”<sup>120</sup>

In his novel *Reservation Blues*, Sherman Alexie pays particular attention to the potential of the impact of the blues on Native America and emphasizes its redemptive power, the characteristic that Murray ascribes to the blues as music.<sup>121</sup> To note the significance of the blues in the novel, however, we must recognize as well that for African Americans, the blues aesthetic has not been merely articulated in various art forms. As Clyde Woods points out, it has had epistemic and ontological significance; it is a system of social explanation and a practice of identity-shaping solidarity respectively.<sup>122</sup> Accordingly, when *Reservation Blues* begins with the legendary African American blues man, Robert Johnson, traveling to a Spokane reservation and lending his guitar to the Native American, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, who ultimately plays for the Coyote Springs rock group, a linkage is established between the African American and Indian experiences of separation and political disqualification.

Alexie's assemblage of the Coyote Springs players also creates a linkage between Native and white American mythology. Thomas Builds-the-Fire manifests much of his participation in a blues aesthetic through story telling. As a result, when the two white women Betty and Veronica, whose names derive from the venerable Archie comic strip, join the group, two ethno-mythologies are conjoined. The narrative in *Reservation Blues* therefore constitutes a resistance to simplistic identity

politics. It impugns Native American resistance to the forging of cultural and political coalitions as much as it offers a critique of the white dominance manifested by the reservation system. As is noted in the novel, at the point where Robert Johnson arrives, Johnson's blues created a problem for those Spokanes who were practicing forgetfulness. At a moment when Alexie has Johnson singing about "worried blues," he writes:

*The music stopped. The reservation exhaled. Those blues created memories for the Spokanes, but they refused to claim them. Those blues lit up a new road, but the Spokanes pulled out their old maps. Those blues churned up generations of anger and pain: car wrecks, suicides, murders. Those blues were ancient, aboriginal, indigenous.*<sup>123</sup>

In addition to trying to ward off the power of the blues aesthetic, the Spokanes in Alexie's novel are resistant to accepting a culturally diverse rock group. The Wellpinit Rawhide Press, a Reservation paper, carries a column in which someone writes:

*Dear Tribal members, As you know, Coyote Springs, our local rock band, has just returned from Seattle with two white women. They are named Betty and Veronica, of all things. I'm*

*beginning to wonder about Coyote Springs ability  
to represent the Spokane tribe.<sup>124</sup>*

Alexie's political point works not only for the Spokanes but also for all those engaged by a blues aesthetic: For the blues to be redemptive, a people must not only claim its past but must also reclaim its relationship with an estranged otherness.

Accordingly, Alexie recognizes the disjunctive cultural forces that have assembled contemporary Native American identities. As one subject to such disparate influences as Stephen King's novels and television's *The Brady Bunch*, he regards his participation in a white dominated literary culture as one among many of the "tiny treaties" to which he must add his artistic signature.<sup>125</sup> The music of the Coyote Springs rock group in his novel and the musical sound track in which he subsequently participated (as a reader) reflect the mix of white and red aesthetic idioms to which he subscribes. The "treaty" in Alexie's case is a negotiation and inter-articulation of diverse aesthetic idioms, conjoined within a "blues matrix. Reflecting the historical trajectory of violated Indian-white treaties, the poem in the novel and song in the recording contain these lines (while the song itself combines traditional Native American rhythms and vocals with modern popular music):

*Treaties never remember  
They give and take till they fall apart*

*Treaties never surrender  
I'm sure treaties we made are gonna to break this  
Indian's heart*

Reflecting the pervasiveness of the "tiny treaties" within Native America's contemporary habitus, Alexie's characters represent the fraught hybridity of contemporary Indianness. For example his character, Chess, worries about the "*quarter-blood and eighth-blood grandchildren [who]...will get all the Indian jobs, all the Indian chances because they look white.*"<sup>126</sup>

But Alexie recognizes and accepts an Indianness that collects parts from diverse ethnicities and elements of popular culture. "Big Mom," the primary cultural icon in the novel has made "Jimmi Hendricks, Janis Joplin, and Elvis... honorary members of the Spokane Tribe."<sup>127</sup> As Alexie has noted, contrary to some Native American approaches to literature, he resists the "corn pollen and eagle feather school of poetry."<sup>128</sup> Rather than searching for authenticity, Alexie's artistic productions incorporate a model of Indianness as a ceaseless, inter-cultural becoming.

Accordingly, rather than treating Native Americans as an originary "blues people," he has them welcome and reinfect the blues in a process of cultural encounter that he represents, metaphorically as a crossroad. The legendary blues man, Robert Johnson, exchanges his soul or freedom to a stranger for a sublime musical



ability. Thereafter, crossroads imagery abounds, with encounters between the blues tradition as it arose in the African American sound world and its expression in Native American oral traditions, represented by Alexie's ever present story telling character, Thomas Builds-the-Fire, who in this novel receives the magical guitar from Robert Johnson, a guitar that within Johnson's frame is regarded as dangerous and in Thomas's as powerful. The Coyote Springs band becomes the carrier of hybrid blues idiom at the center of the novel, as their lyrics reflect the individual and collective catastrophes of Native Americans. Within the novel, the blues serves as Alexie's frame for recounting oppression associated with Native American history. For example, the inability of the Coyote Springs band to get a recording contract results from their being rejected by producers named Sheridan and Wright, who are obviously named for the infamous cavalry colonels historically involved in the destruction of tribal peoples. In particular, Colonel George Wright is known for destroying over 800 horses after the defeat of Tilcoax of the Spokanes, a slaughter that became known as Wright's bone-yard. Alexie has Big Mom use a flute made from a horse's bone. Her morning songs on the flute - a reminder of the daily creation of the world - recall both the ritual significance of traditional Native American music and the historical moment associated with Wright's destruction of an Indian resource.

While Big Mom's playing serves as an emblem of

the ritual past of Native American music, the Coyote Springs band plays a music that inter-articulates diverse American cultural forms. The *Reservation Blues* sound recording, with Jim Boyd's music and Sherman Alexie's readings, produced to represent the musical dimension of the novel with lyrics from the novel's poems, achieves the same musical hybridity as that of the Coyote Springs band. Songs such as "Reservation Blues," "Urban Indian Blues," and the above noted "treaties" among others), have lyrics that address both past injustices and current catastrophes - for example a reference to the infamous "trail of tears" in the poem/song "Indian Boy Love Song," and to alcohol addiction in "Father and Farther" respectively - and combine traditional tribal sounds and instruments with contemporary ones from jazz and rock ensembles (for example oral chants combined with jazz and rock instrumentation). Moreover, some of the songs address the ironies in the history of white-red antagonisms, as in "99% Alike," in which we hear Alexie saying that because there is, biologically speaking, only 1% difference between white and red, he and Custer are 99% alike. Musically, like the Coyote Springs band in the novel, Jim Boyd and an occasional chorus of singers combine elements of traditional Native American and diverse contemporary popular musics. Boyd plays a cedar flute as well as guitar, bass and keyboard, and the vocals include traditional chanting styles as well as modern popular rhythms.

The inter-cultural style of Boyd's music is not unlike that of one of the most gifted Native American poet-musicians, John Trudell, whose work combines elements of the traditional Native American sound world with a blues idiom and tonality and a modern rock style inspired by the composer and singer Jackson Browne, who, with his appreciation of how to combine blues with rock and roll, has helped produce and has participated in some of Trudell's recordings. The primary thought world that pervades Trudell's inter-articulation of a soundscape and ideoscape harks back to a Crazy Horse quotation that Trudell repeats often and is the basis of the song "Crazy Horse" in his *Bone Days*:<sup>129</sup>

*One does not sell the earth*

*The people walk upon*

*We are the land*

*How do we sell our mother*

*How do we sell the stars*

*How do we sell the air...*

Musically, Trudell's homage poem (to both Crazy Horse and the earth) is accompanied by elements of a traditional Native American soundscape - chant-style vocals by Quiltman and drum rhythms - and of contemporary blend of blues and rock music, played by both a slide and electric guitar and a keyboard.

The thought world conveyed and the and musical

infusion within which it is articulated achieve their first assemblage in Trudell's *Blue Indians*, which like the Alexie/Boyd musical collaboration, translates aspects of the blues tradition for the contemporary Native American predicament. But Trudell is less eager than Alexie to see Native American culture suffused with Euro American aesthetic forms. Although he shares Alexie's sense of ethnohistory as a story of oppression, he constructs the predicament of Native Americans more in terms of authenticity and distortion than culture as encounter and becoming. Thus his "Blue Indians lyrics" notes that "nothing escapes myth slayers" and adds that "Distortion streams, wearing away inside of hearts.." And cultural encounter only pulls Native Americans away from their culture:

*Blue Indians being pulled into*

*Melting pots...*

*Terminologies change*

*Progress as evolution in*

*Terminal strange*

*Blue Indians being pulled into*

*Melting pots...*<sup>130</sup>

As in the subsequent *Bone People* songs, "Blue Indians" combines Trudell's reading with the traditional vocals of Milton "Quiltman" Sahme, traditional Native

American-style percussion, and popular music style and instrumentation (slide and regular guitar plus organ). And in this recording, there are “backing vocals by Trudell’s musical collaborator, Jackson Browne, and by guitarist Billy Watts. In sum, Trudell’s turn to music produces sounds that speak both to contemporary popular music consumers and to those familiar with the evolution of Native American soundscapes while, at the same time turning his for poetry into exemplary blues ballads, so that a significant part of the Native American thought world achieves musical articulation. As Neal Ullestad points out, “This isn’t simply pop rock with Indian drums and chants added. It’s integrated rock and roll by an American Indian with a multicultural band [reminiscent of Alexie’s *Coyote Springs*] directed to anyone who will listen.”<sup>131</sup>

Specifically, Trudell’s music speaks of a people who achieve “power” (a spiritual identity) through a respect for and attachment to the earth. As result, “the blues,” as it is manifested in word and sound evokes a past of imperiled attachments and a present of redemptive commitment to, (as Trudell has noted elsewhere) “always act for the love of the people and the earth.” Waxing pedagogical, he insists, “We have to understand our role to natural power,” and although he laments those Native Americans who give into continuing brutality by “the predator, he asserts that although “we feel oppressed,” unlike white America, which is not oppressed but feels powerless, “we do not feel powerless.”<sup>132</sup>

### Conclusion: “Mixing”

As I noted at the outset, the nineteenth century foreign visitor, Alexis de Tocqueville was quite certain that Euro American culture would remain the only one left standing in a relatively short time after his visit in the 1830’s (in contrast with the view of Antonin Dvorak, who roughly 60 years later worked toward an inclusive, multiethnic musical culture). However despite his fairly firm conviction that Euro America would (and should) ultimately exhaust the cultural and political options and yield a coterminous ethnocracy and “democracy in America,” Tocqueville did ponder the possibilities for mixing. But by “mixing,” Tocqueville meant intermarriage, noting that because of a possible future of antagonism, “the Negroes and the whites must either wholly part or wholly mingle.” (373) Extensive mixing between whites and Native Americans seems not to have occurred to him. Expecting their extinction and abjuring their relative lack of civilizational orderliness, he saw “Indians” as incapable of adjusting to others because of their stubborn attachment to a “pretended nobility of..origin.” (334). As for other kinds of mixing, Tocqueville paid little attention to instances of hybrid cultural forms - musical, linguistic, or otherwise.

The composer’s thought worlds - products of considerable “mixing” - addressed throughout this essay reflect different visions of an America that is deployed

across a fractionated social order. For example, given the economic and spatial segregated among diverse ethnicities, many of the inter-ethnic encounters in the typical American city are freighted with anger, violence, and hostility, seeming to confirm Tocqueville's (and Jefferson's) worst fears about a shared American ethnoscape. Paul Haggis's film *Crash* (2005) depicts such encounters in contemporary Los Angeles, where, among other things, white fears of black crime, black fears of white police harassment, and everyone's fear of middle eastern cultures are rampant. As the film thinks cinematically, showing how everyone's initial perceptions of other ethnicities are either blocked architecturally/spatially or screened through store and car windows, the dialogue seconds its perspective: "We are always behind this metal and glass," says a police detective (Don Cheadle) to his partner/girl friend. The city as space seems to be designed to heighten class and ethnic alienation and, except in rare encounters, prevent people from recognizing each other's vulnerable and often sympathetic humanity.

Doubtless, soundscapes have lent themselves more readily to mixing than cityscapes. While as noted, some of the "Yankee composers" abjured an ethnically co-invented American sound world, music has nevertheless been a relatively active domain of cultural hybridity, thanks not only to those composers dedicated to inter-cultural creation but also to the ability of sound

to permeate structures and media that have been more effective impediments to sight and movement. Historically, although the development of concert halls temporarily inhibited the deployment of music, closing it off, limiting its audience, and thus displacing it from the open spaces of ritual allegiance and cultural reproduction, subsequent technologies of recording and dissemination once again opened up the spaces of music. Although, as Attali points out, the opening of musical space did not halt a process of commodification that changed an ontological cultural form into something controlled by exchangeable value, or, in his words from something than had been "an affirmation of existence" to something "valorized," cultural mixing was nevertheless facilitated by music's extended reach.<sup>133</sup>

The impact of music's dissemination on cultural mixing is evident in the cosmopolitan perspective of the contemporary writer, Salman Rushdie, who illustrates the effects in his novel *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Rushdie attributes his ability to think "outside the cultural frame" within which he was raised to being able to receive a variety of music and other global cultural forms from radio Sri Lanka as he was growing up.<sup>134</sup> In the novel, which maps the effects of the "earthquake songs of a fictional composer, Ormus Cama, whose songs "are about the collapse of all walls, boundaries, restraints."<sup>135</sup> Rushdie includes an alter ego, a photographer named Rai, who articulates an anti nationalistic perspective.

Rai's post-national perspective, like Rushdie's is also owed to an artistic genre with global reach. It develops in the cosmopolitan city of Bombay, where he was able to view of foreign films. As a result, he is motivated to use his photographic practice in a way that parallels Ormus Cama's music - in acts of creative imagination that mix cultural forms to oppose exclusionary (especially nationalistic) myths.<sup>136</sup> Like Rushdie, Ormus Cama is subject to inter-cultural musical forms:

*The music he had in his head during the unsinging childhood years, was not of the West except in the sense that the West was from the beginning, impure old Bombay where West, East, North and South had always been scrambled, like codes, like eggs.*<sup>137</sup>

As is the case with Rushdie's fictional Ormus Cama, the composers that have been my primary focus have mixed sound worlds in a way that defy an exclusionary form of cultural nationalism. Although there are significant idiomatic differences in their compositions, "they" - in particular Gershwin, Ellington, Boyd/Alexie, and Trudell/Browne, et. al. - are carriers of and innovators in one of the twentieth-century's major musical force, the blues. Susan McClary puts the case for the importance of the blues across America's soundscapes succinctly:

*If twentieth century music has no single stream, it does have something more coherent to bequeath the future than the various trickles we grasp at...I have no qualms comparing it to a mighty river. It follows a channel cut by a force known as the blues.*<sup>138</sup>

Thus, even though America is composed musically from diverse ethnic/experiential perspectives, the blues remains a major "matrix" within which various compositions are initiated.<sup>139</sup> However that said, it must be noted that while the blues has managed to leap across the fault lines of "a nation so traumatized and confused by its own racial constitution" (to repeat Ronald Radano's words from the epigraph), one must acknowledge that the sounds within its compass often retain incommensurate resonances.

For example, merely hearing the a blues-inflected composition might evoke for some simply the recognition of a style. On the other hand, recalling, as John Gennari does Duke Ellington's injunction that "It don't mean a thing. If it ain't got that swing," the implication of the embodied experience that is called forth for a musician or dancer is that she/her is:

*making an affirmation and hence exemplary and heroic response [to the human condition]... to the exigencies on which [she]/he finds himself*

*[/herself]...confronting, acknowledging and contending with the infernal absurdities and ever-impending frustrations inherent in the nature of all existence by playing with the possibilities that are also there.<sup>140</sup>*

To recognize the alternate inflections of the blues as articulated within incommensurate but nevertheless mutually influencing ethnic imaginaries we can visit Baker's conception of the "blues matrix." Noting that "Afro-American culture is a complex, reflexive enterprise which finds its proper figuration in blues conceived as matrix [which is]...a web of intersecting, crisscrossing impulses always in productive transit," Baker sees this dimension of "American creativity" located in the particular spaces, historical experiences and "material conditions" of slavery.<sup>141</sup> In short it is the mediating frame for the African American blues performance.

However, as I have noted, given some of the similarities between Afro and Jewish modernity, it is not surprising to see a Gershwin incorporating a blues aesthetic. Although it doubtless had a different historical resonance in his version - he left behind a different world from the one experienced by African Americans (as well as being received into his new one differently) - the blues "wide appeal" that affected him could be because, as Baker suggests, "it expressed a toughness of spirit and resilience, a willingness to transcend difficulties which

were strikingly familiar to those whites who remembered their own history."<sup>142</sup> Similarly, one can understand that an aesthetic articulated as part of an "Afro-American discourse" by those seeking to successfully negotiate an obdurate 'economics of slavery' and achieve a resonant, improvisational, expressive dignity" would find its way into Native American sound worlds, the worlds of a people seeking to negotiate an economics of displacement.<sup>143</sup>

Baker's blues matrix can therefore be deployed into a variety of sub matrices, each framing alternative but intimately interconnected aesthetics. What remains is to ponder the significance of the blues musical aesthetic - a major inter-cultural force - on a multi-ethnic democratic imaginary, which was notably absent when Tocqueville visited and wrote his still influential treatise. The answer has to be connected to the blues's role as a vehicle/genre that has carried voices articulating claims about pain and injustice within the range of our collective hearing.

To situate such a blues contribution to a multi-ethnic democratic imaginary, it is useful to recall a contrast I have offered in another place between the contribution of the blues and the historical trajectory of American social science. As I noted, the late political theorist, Judith Shklar, the only President of the American Political Science Association to mention chattel slavery as a major part of the American experience in her



presidential address, asserted that the stain of that experience has been effectively wiped away by the social sciences within which “the democratization of values” is implicit.<sup>144</sup> But as Clyde Woods points out, in his investigation of the post slavery period in the Mississippi Delta region, the social sciences aided an abetted what he calls “plantation bloc explanation,” which supported an anti African American world view and provided a legitimization for continuing oppression. Woods’s elaboration of “blues epistemology,” to which I have already referred, is offered as an antidote to plantation bloc explanation. What I want to note beyond what Woods’s critical insights imply is that given the migration of the blues into diverse ethnic sound worlds, it provides a frame for widely distributed thinking, - across deeply embedded, historically engendered ethnic fault lines - about the promise of a yet unrealized American democracy. If “democracy” involves, as Jacques Ranciere suggests, encounters between policing and politics, where non-grammatical excluded parts voice claims and thereby “undermine” the authorized “distribution of bodies into functions corresponding to their ‘nature’ and places corresponding to their functions,” we have to regard the blues as a major genre of democratic expression.<sup>145</sup>

However, following Duke Ellington’s insistence on dissonant chords because (to repeat his remark) “dissonance is our way of life in America. We are

something apart, yet an integral part,” the democracy to which the blues contributes is one that embraces that which is both apart and an integral part.<sup>146</sup> That tension between being within and being apart is what Jacques Ranciere refers to as “dissensus.” And, as he suggests, a genre is political not when it addresses epic historical moments (as in the novels of Emile Zola), but rather when (as in the novels of Virginia Woolf) it is attentive to micropolitical levels of dissensus.<sup>147</sup> Siding with Ranciere’s condition of possibility for democratic equality to obtain, I endorse his position that it requires “being able to think politics.”<sup>148</sup> But, inasmuch as there are always competing thought worlds (and sound worlds that articulate alternative thought worlds) a concern with equality can generate a democratic politics by heeding alternative voices - moments of dissensus, which, among other places, are in evidence in the struggles to compose America. Those struggles, as I noted at the outset, involve a history of “the changing shapes of ‘American’ music, as diverse ethnic musics reflect both centrifugal and centripetal political sensibilities as they collide, clash, and coalesce.”

## Endnotes

1. Houston A. Baker, Jr. *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 71.
2. Ronald Radano, *Lying Up a Nation: Race and Black Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 2.
3. Quoted in William Brooks, "Simple Gifts and Complex Accretions," in Peter Dickinson ed. *Copland Connotations* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2002), p. 104.
4. Aaron Copland, *Music and Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 101.
5. Quotations are from Alan Howard Levy, *Musical Nationalism: American Composers' Search for Identity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), p. 110.
6. See Jessica Burr, "Copland, the West and American Identity," in Dickinson ed. *Copland Connotations*, p. 27.
7. The concept of a melodic landscape is treated in John Snyder and Marti Hearst, "ImproViz: Visual Explorations of Jazz Improvisation," at: [http://www.offhanddesigns.com/jon/docs/snyder\\_improViz.pdf](http://www.offhanddesigns.com/jon/docs/snyder_improViz.pdf) (Obtained 4/27/05)
8. Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics* trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum), p. 12.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 65.
11. Richard Powers, *The Time of Our Singing* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), p. 11.
12. The quotation is from Edith Eisler's description of the work, performed and recorded at its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2004 by the University of Michigan orchestra and Choirs under the direction of Leonard Slatkin - at: [http://www.softforall.com/shop/William\\_Bolcom\\_-\\_Songs\\_of\\_Innocence\\_and\\_of\\_Experience\\_\(William\\_Blake\)\\_Slatkin,\\_University\\_of\\_Michigan\\_School\\_of\\_Music-B000641YZK.html](http://www.softforall.com/shop/William_Bolcom_-_Songs_of_Innocence_and_of_Experience_(William_Blake)_Slatkin,_University_of_Michigan_School_of_Music-B000641YZK.html)
13. The quotations are from Donald Pease "Jose' Marti, Alexis de Tocqueville, and the Politics of Displacement," in Jeffrey Belnap and Rau Fernandez eds *Jose Marti's 'Our America'* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), pp. 29-30.
14. Quotations are from Maurice Peress, *Dvorak to Duke Ellington* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 25.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 23.

16. Quotations are from Tara C. Browner, *Transposing Cultures: The Appropriation of Native North American Musics 1890-1990*. Dissertation in the Department of Music, University of Michigan, 1995, pp. 8-9.

17. Quotations are from Francis Brancalone, "Edward MacDowell and the Indian Motives," *American Music* 7: 4 (Winter, 1989), p. 359.

18. Arthur Farwell, "*Wanderjahre of a Revolutionist*" ed. Thomas Stoner (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1995), p. 6.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 79.

20. See for example Samuel P. Huntington's *Who Are We?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004) for an example of Anglophilia combined with anti immigrant sentiments. And for a critique of immigration alarmism, see my "Narrating the Nation, Unwelcoming the Stranger," Chapter 2 in Michael J. Shapiro, *Cinematic Political Thought: Narrating Race, Nation and Gender* (New York: NYU Press, 1999).

21. See Macdonald Smith Moore, *Yankee Blues: Musical Culture and American Identity* (Bloomington:

Indiana University Press, 1985).

22. Daniel Gregory Mason, *The Dilemma of American Music and Other Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1928), p. 140.

23. Quotations are from Nicholas M. Evans, *Race, Nationalism, and Modern Culture in the 1920S* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000).

24. Moore, *Yankee Blues*, p. 5.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 67.

29. Quotations are from Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 59.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65. The anti-pluralist and racist fantasy of authenticity that spawned this brief redemptive

movement is thoroughly lampooned in the Coen Brother's feature film *O Brother Where Art thou* (2000). The main singers in the film, three escaped convicts who become the Foggy Bottom Boys" and record a hit blue grass song that becomes wildly popular without their realizing that it has hit the airways, are not the film's actual singers. The gap between the songs and the singers is one among several ways that the film critiques the idea of an authentic music. Suffused with the rural music of the South, mainly country and blue grass - for example a version of the country singer, Jimmie Rodgers's "In the Jailhouse Now" - the film presents stereotypic versions of the southern experience - with revivals, Klan rallies, a river baptisms - and a panorama of stereotypic characters, among whom is a racist Klan member mayoral candidate who rails against "miscegenated" music.

32. Leroy Jones (Amiri Baraka) *Blues People* (New York: Morrow, 1999), p. 57.

33. Radano, *Lying Up a Nation*, p. 104.

34. Robert G. O'Meally ed. *Living With Music: Ralph Ellison's Jazz Writings* (New York: Modern Library, 2002), p. 103.

35. The quotation is from Robert G. O'Meally's

"Introduction" to *Ibid.*, p. xxv.

36. Ralph Ellison, "Remembering Jimmie," in *Ibid.*, p. 47.

37. Quoted from a conversation with O'Meally in *Ibid.*, p. xii.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 260.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

40. See Jacques Ranciere, *The Nights of Labor: The Workers' Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* trans. John Drury (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989).

41. Quoted in David Schiff, *Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 12.

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52. The quotation is from music theorist Ernst Krenek, who saw the Debussy-jazz/swing connection but expressed much contempt for the what he regarded as the swing arranger's despoiling and banalization of Debussy's innovations; see his *Music Here and Now* trans. Barthold Fles (New York: Russell & Russell, 1939), p. 249.

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54. Schiff, *Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue*, p. 14. Most of my discussion of the various elements in the *Rhapsody* are indebted to his observations.

55. See *Ibid.*, p. 38.

56. Quotation from Peress, *Dvorak to Duke Ellington*, p. 68.

57. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-39.

58. The quotations are from David Horn, "From Catfish

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60. Schiff, *Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue*, p. 77.

61. The quotations are from Marcus Roberts's liner notes that accompany his *Portraits in Blue* (New York: Sony, 1996).

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68. Quotations are from Christian Appy, "We'll Follow the Old Man': The Strains of Sentimental Militarism in Popular Films of the Fifties," in Peter J. Kuznick and James Gilbert eds. *Rethinking Cold War Culture* (Washington DC: Smithsonian, 2001), p. 8.

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71. Charles Hamm, "Genre, performance and ideology in the early songs of Irving Berlin," *Popular Music* 13: 2 (May, 1994), p. 145.

72. Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, p. 24.

73. *Ibid.*, pp. 33-36.

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75. See Schiff, *Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue*, p. 55.

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78. Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, pp. 50-51.

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80. Duke Ellington, "The Duke Steps Out," *Rhythm* (March 1931): Reprinted in Mark Tucker ed. *The Duke Ellington Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 46.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 47.

82. Ralph Ellison, "The Charlie Christian Story," in O' Meally ed. *Living with Music*, p. 267.

83. Duke Ellington, "We, Too, Sing 'America'," in Tucker ed. *The Duke Ellington Reader*, p. 147.

84. Fred Moten, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota

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85. Quoted in Michael Denning, *The Cultural Front: The Laboring of American Culture in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Verso, 1996), p. 313.

86. Quoted in Joseph P. Swain, *The Broadway Musical* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 56.

87. See Duke Ellington, *Music is My Mistress* (New York: Doubleday, 1973), p. 176.

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

90. Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, p. 101.

91. Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, p. 180.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

93. The Ellington quotations are from Harvey G. Cohen, "Duke Ellington and *Black, Brown and Beige*: The Composer as Historian at Carnegie Hall," *American Quarterly* 56: 4 (December, 2004), p. 2006.

94. Ellington, *Music is My Mistress*, p. 181.

95. The quotations are from Peress, *Dvorak to Duke Ellington*, p 171. The discussion of the piece by Peress, who scored it for symphony orchestras after its 1963 publication and sought, in his words “to capture the inflections, phrasing, and coloration of Duke’s own magnificent orchestra” (172) is my guide through this section.

96. Reported in Nathaniel Mackey *Atet A. D.* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2001) pp. 3-4.

97. Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* trans, Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 46.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

99. Wynton Marsalis, “Ellington: Sweets,” *Down Beat* 58: 6 (June, 1991), p. 17.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

101. Among the places that Ellington uses this expression is *Music is My Mistress*, p. 118. But See his remarks about the special character of each of his band members’s throughout this autobiographical text.

102. Ellington, “The Duke Steps Out,” p. 47.

103. Mackey *Atet A. D.*, p. 5.

104. Nathaniel Mackey, “Other: From Noun to Verb,” *Representations* 39 (Summer, 1992), p. 52.

105. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

106. *Ibid.*, p. 61.

107. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

108. Ellington, “The Duke Steps Out,” p. 48.

109. See Peress, *Dvorak to Ellington*, p. 182.

110. See Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).

111. Albert Murray, *The Hero and the Blues* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973), p. 104.

112. Albert Murray, *The Blue Devils of Nada: A Contemporary American Approach to Aesthetic Statement* (New York: Vintage, 1997), p. 15.

113. Quotations from Peress, *Dvorak to Ellington*, pp. 182-183.

114. The concept of conceptual personae comes from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

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117. Ellington, "Interview in Los Angeles: On *Jump for Joy*, Opera and Dissonance, in Tucker ed. *The Duke Ellington Reader*, p. 151.

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121. See Sherman Alexie, *Reservation Blues* (New York: Warner Books, 1995).

122. See Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, Power, and the Blues in the Mississippi Delta* (New York: Verso, 1998).

123. Alexie, *Reservation Blues*, p. 174.

124. *Ibid.*, p. 175.

125. See Alexie's poems, "Tiny Treaties" and "Seven Love Songs Which Include the Collected History of the United States of America," in *First Indian on the Moon*, pp. 56-57 and 62-65 respectively.

126. Alexie, *Reservation Blues*, p. 283.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 201.

128. Sherman Alexie, "Sherman Alexie, Literary Rebel," Interview with John and Carl Belante *Bloomsbury Review* 14 (1994), p. 15.

129. John Trudell, *Bone Days* (Daemon records, 2001).

130. John Trudell, *Blue Indians* (Produced by Jackson Browne, 1999).

131. Ullestad, "American Indian Rap and Reggae," p. 73.

132. John Trudell, *Stickman: poems, lyrics, talks a conversation* (New York: Inanout Press, 1994), unpaginated.

133. See Attali, *Noise*, p. 36.

134. See Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands* (New York: Penguin, 1992), p. 14.

135. Salman Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (New York: Henry Holt, 1999), p. 24.

136. I do a more extensive reading of Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, in Michael J. Shapiro, *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp. 69-70.

137. Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, pp. 95-6.

138. Susan McClary, *Conventional Wisdom: The Content of Musical Form* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 32.

139. The matrix expression applied to the blues belongs to Houston A. Baker, Jr. In his *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

140. See John Gennari, "Jazz Criticism: Its Development and Ideologies," *Black American Literary Forum* 25: 3 (Fall, 1991), p. 4.

141. Baker, *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*, pp. 10-11.

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143. Quotations from *Ibid.*, p. 13.

144. The piece in which I cite Shklar's address is "Securing the American Ethnoscape: Official Surveys and Literary Interventions," in *Worlds & Knowledges Otherwise* (Fall, 2004). Shklar's address appeared originally in the *American Political Science Review* in March, 1991. The quotation is from the version that was subsequently reprinted in Judith N. Shklar, *Redeeming American Political Thought*, a posthumously assembled volume edited by her Harvard colleagues, Stanley Hoffman and Dennis F. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 92.

145. See Jacques Ranciere, *Dis-agreement*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), p. 101.

146. Ellington, "Interview in Los Angeles: On *Jump for*

Joy, Opera and Dissonance, in Tucker ed. *The Duke Ellington Reader*, p. 150.

147. See Jacques Ranciere, *The Politics of Aesthetics* trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004), p. 65.

148. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

## The Voice of Australian Country Music

Graeme Smith

### How do Australian country music singers sing, and why?

Australian country music emerged in the 1930s and 1940s as Australian singers produced localised versions of the musical styles of American performers like the Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter family, and the singing cowboys Hank Snow and Wilf Carter. One of the pioneers of this genre was the singer Tex Morton, who recorded this localised hillbilly song in 1936- The Yodelling Bagman. Over the past 70 years it has grown into a national genre with a mass audience, and it makes persistent claims to be Australia's authentic music, the true representation of Australian experience and national identity. (See Smith, Singing 85-96).

The base now is in rural and suburban fringe working class Australia. It remains a low status genre, loosely linked to the more fashionable alt-country genres of inner urban aficionados. It is listed a favourite by from 15%-20% of the adult population.(Bennett, Frow and Emmison,174-7;AMR Quantum Harris, 1996,1997)

The national ideological and musical position occupied by Australian country music is not an unusual one:

many popular music genres around the world create local mixes of nostalgia, nationalism, regionalism, rural and working-class address, and social conservatism in similar ways. American ethnomusicologist Aaron Fox and Christine Yano have sketched out a field called Global Country. (Fox, Global Country) Within it the genres of the session would fit comfortably. We might include from Japan, Enka from Brazilian sertaneja, Czech Trampski music or from Thailand, Pleng Luk Thung. Ireland has produced a comparable genre generally known as Country and Irish. (Yano, Reilly, Goertzen)

Whilst sharing many similarities, these musics map onto local cultural landscapes. For example, although the idea that the land or 'the country' is the basis of national experience and identity is widespread, how this land is differently imagined in different national histories. (Smith, Singing 110-11)

The dominant ideological framework of Australian country music is often dubbed "the Australian Legend" a metahistorical conception formulated in the 1950s in the work of the radical nationalist historian Russell Ward (Ward). Ward's thesis was that the Australian character or



social type was essentially anti authoritarian, egalitarian and naturally socialist, and nurtured twin virtues of self reliance and class solidarity. This was formed in the convict roots of settler Australia, in the rural workers movements of the nineteenth century of the 1890s. Thus Australian-ness is most strongly expressed in the rural, male, white, working class. Though this thesis has come under great criticism from the 1970s from both the new left and the right, it remains at a national popular level, the dominant core of Australian nationalist ideology. (Roe 34-41)

Formulated in the defensive cold war left of the 1950s, (and with roots in earlier ideas) it has since been mobilized by a range of movements, from the anti-Vietnam war social movements expanding its place in popular culture in the 1980s, and more recently vigorously supported by the conservative Howard government in its symbolic nationalist tendencies. (Frankel 60-3)

But it is a complex ideological formation. It links most strongly to the white male historically defined rural proletariat. From its powerful formation in radical nationalism in 1950s it linked cultural independence to an anti imperialism and predominantly anti American sensibility. And the puritan tendencies of the left of the 1950s added to this cultural a wariness of American popular culture. (see Smith, Making Folk, Docker)

This of course raised some problems for Australian

country music, as it mobilizes Australian legend imagery in its claims to national significance and authenticity. For with all its significant localizations, Australian country music has continually been inspired by and modeled on American models. How then does Australian country music reconcile this with its Australian legend national ideology?

One area where this was played out was in the question of accent and dialect.

For many fans and performers, an approximation to an American accent is a normal and necessary part of country music. It is the unmarked form of singing, and its use enables easy and immediate access to the genre's emotional range and its themes. For others the distance of this accent from 'natural' Australian spoken discourse is a weakness and erodes claims to national significance and distinctiveness, as well as to authentic emotional address. Says singer Greg Champion:

*Some fans of country music think it's OK if you have an American accent. They argue that country music is more or less born in the USA, and they grow up listening to it and it's OK if singers and performers have a bit of a twang in their singing style. Another school of opinion, which I think basically splits people 50-50, is that*

*we should be striving for an Australian style of country...I prefer to be in the second school. I think it is quite important for our national identity and for the advancement of Australian culture that the Australian accent is paramount in Australian country music. ("Who needs a Golden Guitar")*

Country American or Australian enhances its allusion to the natural voice by techniques such as alteration of registers of address, oscillation between spoken and sung delivery, and even the famous highlighting effect of the emotive shock of the tear in the voice. All these encourage familiar ways of establishing the relationship between performer and listener, a poetics of de- and re-naturalisation that carries the desire for an authenticity of address and meaning. (Fox, Real Country, Jukebox 54-6 )

But the relationship between speech and singing by no means simple. To transform the sounds of ordinary speech to pitched singing requires more than merely maintaining a constant pitch through the sound of a word. It involves choices of the way resonating vocal areas are used, in particular the use of glottal and nasal areas, the allocation of the primary vowels of a diphthong through a sustained note, the way vowel formants need to be modified in different parts of the vocal ranges. Ultimately a singer develops a system which is partly personal and idiosyncratic, and which partly uses

recognizable and public stylistic conventions. Thus the sung representation of a spoken accent is never natural; as Champion acknowledges, it is something to be 'striving for'.

Australian country singers, in common with other popular music performers, often adopt idiosyncratic strategies to establish a conventional mapping between spoken and sung forms. The sung voice strives not so much to accurately reproduce the phonology of Australian speech, or any variety of it, but to highlight and express gestures and signals within a field of alternatives of accent and dialect. Within this, the Australian-American dichotomy is only one; it also intersects with the cultivated/broad polarity in Australian English. This is the most widely recognized indicator of class in Australia and so is implicated in country music's claim to sing in the voice of 'ordinary' Australians.

Linguists generally classify Australian English into cultivated, general, and broad forms. As these names indicate, they correlate approximately with differences in education and socio-economic status, and are conventionally associated with social stereotyping. Yet the accents we use are not merely determined by our exposure to language models. We also make often unconscious choices to speak with the accent of particular groups we identify with. Studies of users' perceptions of Australian English show that the cultivated form is frequently read as 'good speech used

by phoney people whereas broad is bad speech used by real people'. (Horvath 24)

Sociolinguists describe the deliberate choices of apparently low-status language variants as demonstrating the 'covert prestige' of such dialects in certain circumstances or for certain groups, a strategy of where 'bad but real' is preferred to 'good but phoney'. (Coates 80-2, Trudgill 169-85) Yet despite the congruence of this linguistic strategy with the address of country music, models for representing Broad Australian in a sung voice are still relatively unstable in Australian Country music, and are often associated with comic and novelty songs. None the less, the interplay between Australian accent and language-inflected singing styles plays an important part in individual country singers' claims to national identification.

This process is most strongly represented in the work of John Williamson whose development of a hyper-Australian style in the mid 1980s created a new way for contemporary Australian country music to identify with Australian experience.

John Williamson is now one of the most successful of Australian country music singers, a position he has established with an insistently nationalist repertoire, sung in a hyper-Australian accent. He developed this

style in the 1980s when he had a number of high selling (for country) commercial record releases (Smith, Singing 120-4).

Although Williamson's 1970s songs were often of hometown nostalgia and recognizable Australian locations, but still contained epithets of American country, and the instrumental settings of his recordings were full of conventional country instrumental coloring, Most importantly, in contrast to his later recordings, the projection and vowel repertoire of his vocal style was that of a smooth country crooner, an Australian Jim Reeves.

Around the early 1980s Williamson began a period of intense touring as a solo performer that resulted in a much clearer projection of an Australian style. He started to move his singing voice into a surprisingly explicit evocation of the Broad Australian accent, with a fairly low level of sung quality and a general shift of his vowel positions and elongated diphthongs in ways suggestive of older Australian rural accents. He emphasized the diphthong glides that most strongly mark the accent levels in Australian English, and dropped his vowel positions to evoke a hypothetical archaic rural accent. At the same time he stripped his voice of the bright 'twang' of nasal resonance associated with American-influenced Australian country singing

styles, and decreased the projected, sung quality of the voice in favour of an intimate spoken quality. The sung-spoken polarity that this move invokes is by no means exclusively Australian, but is part of the general affective armoury of country singing. However, when Williamson links this with the Australian accent, he evokes the nationally distinctive emotional register of laconic understatement.

This remodelling is most clearly seen in Williamson's song 'True Blue', recorded twice by Williamson, first in 1982 and then in 1986.<sup>1</sup> The second version of this song broke into the pop hit parades, and became an advertising theme song for an economic-nationalist promotional campaign 'True Blue'. The song nostalgically invokes a putative vanishing working-class Australia and its values.

*Hey true blue, don't say you've gone  
Say you've knocked off for a smokoe,  
and you'll be back later on.*

True Blue is working class, self-assured, a good improviser, and above all loyal to his mates, the very character of the Australian Legend, and the song warns of the threats to this character and to national independence presented by international capitalism with lines like 'If they sell us out like sponge-cake, do

you really care?'. The song also relies heavily on forms of coercive solidarity "me and you", But it also suggests structures of sociality on which national identity, the unspecified 'it' of the refrain, might be based - family, friendship, and a shared symbolic repertoire are invoked in the lyrics.

Williamson's pronounced shift to the hyper Australian accent can be seen by comparing the 1982 and 1986 versions of this song. In this second recording of 'True Blue' a stark keening upper voice in the background singing an octave above Williamson is used, and bluegrass influenced harmonies in the chorus of the first version is replaced by a cosy, if jingoistic unison chorus, sung first time through by rough-hewn male voices, and second time by a mixed sex group. The women's voices in the chorus strikingly expand the song's scope to include women (Williamson Mallee Boy, True Blue).

Now this is reinforced by a single word alteration in the chorus line where 'is it standing by your mate when he's in a fight?' becomes 'when she's in a fight'. This shift of pronoun generalises the song's address: The song now demands that all Australians accept its imagery, reinforcing its move from a nostalgic invocation of a vanishing type to a call for national unity.

This little twist shifts our attention to one of the key

issues of this national ideology and the strategy of covert prestige on which it is mobilized.

Some linguists, notably Peter Trudgill and others, argue that the linguistic strategy of covert prestige is predominantly available to males. Historically this has been the case in the public and dramatic representations of the Australian accent. Trudgill explanation of the gender asymmetry of the strategy of covert prestige, is clearly supported by the gendering of hegemonic Australian populist nationalism, in both radical and reactionary manifestations. (Horvath 89-95, Trudgill 195, Andersson and Trudgill 9)

In the 1980s the songwriter, producer and historian of the Australian country scene Eric Watson overwhelmingly, Australian female country singers were tied to models of American singers: that there was no popularly accepted model of a recognizably Australian sung vocal accent. (Watson 75-6)

Against this background then, in 2000, A singer from the Australian country scene, Kasey Chambers has had a sudden and durable rise to national popular crossover fame. (Hicks, Lomax)

Chambers, after a classic country music musical foundation, touring with a family band, a background in

the marginal rural economy, started to be noticed by the mainstream Australian music industry in 2000?, and in the past years has won multiple industry awards, and is now taken as the voice of a new country. Although some of her repertoire is in the pop-crossover model, she projects a hard country public image, uncompromisingly working-class ordinary in style, and maintaining a hard honky tonk vocal stylings. There is, however, almost no reference to Australian accents within her vocalizing. When she moves away from a standard hard country voice, it is in the direction of the alternative post punk British. Kasey Chambers reference points are all clearly American, she is much likened to Lucinda Williams and other alt-country performers.

This by the thematic range of her localization evident in her songwriting. Many of her songs draw on the non-urban repertoire of images of country, they avoid any association with the economic role of the agricultural construction of the land and country: absent is the ideology "countrymindedness" essentially a subset of the Australian legend where the true spirit of Australia is seen as residing in those who work the land productively (Aitken) Although they draw on the established symbolic resource of country, such as the road, travel and family faithfulness, as with many alternative country performers the meanings and references are revised. Some of her songs are positioned in a generalised 'country',

but those that refer to a specific Australian landscape reclaim it for both her generation and her gender. Her paeon to the outback landscape, 'Nullarbor Song', presents it as a site for the personal introspection and angst associated with rock music: 'swallowing the sky I feel no anger, I feel no shame, I feel no reason to cry'. (Chambers, Nullarbor Song) Against the background of her family history, Chambers' country is not that of the settled agricultural land but of the non-arable outback – the Nullarbor Plain and living lightly upon the land. For a new young urban audience this understanding of country has greater appeal than the reclamation of white rural historical experience. Thus, although the Dead Ringer Band had a number of songs about the Australian farmer, agricultural land and experience has almost no presence in Kasey Chambers' lyrics.

If I was to finish this paper in 2003 then this comparison would eloquently demonstrate not merely the way in which accent choice is strongly identified with structures of nationalist ideology, but that these are clearly imbricated with gendering not merely of this ideology, but of dialect variation in Australia.

However from 2003, another young female singer has achieved great popularity and public prominence with a dialect strategy which explicitly imitates that of John Williamson.

Sara Storer was a singer and a Northern Territory

schoolteacher who released her first recording *Chasing Buffalo* in 2000. Her sung accent relies on a what strikes the listener as a prominent disposal of diphthong glides during sung notes, as well as more usual highlighting of alternation of "ing" endings to "n" and the use of iconic lexical markers. Unlike Chambers, she deliberately foregrounds the images of "countrymindness", the persona of the grateful younger observer of the pioneer generations prominent in her songs. Her accent style can be heard in the song "Tell these hands" from her CD *Beautiful Circle*.

Storer's strategies are paralleled by other non-country female singers whose point of reference for the authentic Australian voice is singer-songwriter direct authenticity: so the voices first of the singer Angie Hart from Frente from the mid 1990s has been taken up by the young award winning Missy Higgins. (Frente, Higgins)

Clearly the conjectured limitations of covert prestige no longer simply apply, or at least are being weakened, though the quite common abreaction to these accents demonstrates that the style is still seen as going against the grain of dialect use. Storer's latest CD, released last week, demonstrates an small extension of themes, but a continuation and consolidation of her singing accent package. (Storer, *Firefly*) We can expect the continued use of accent to encode meanings at the



supralexical level will extend in richness, and the range of connotations generated by these pioneers in the foreign land of the familiar.

## Endnotes

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## The Saxophone in Choro: The introduction of the saxophone and the changes in the performance of the choro style of music

Rafael Henrique Soares Velloso

### The *Jazz Band Sul Americana*

The spread of jazz in Brazil around the 20's brought up the need for further study and proper qualification of the musicians who wanted to perform in the best orchestras in such a competitive field. A number of players, such as Romeu Silva, Donga and Pixinguinha, made up their own jazz bands, attempting to integrate the best instrumentalists. But what kind of style and sound had been used by those bands? Did they follow any orchestral pattern? Were they influenced by different musical conceptions? In which ways have the traditional Brazilian rhythms been influenced by this? How did the musicians react to so many changes?

The answers to these questions are essential, as they hold a clearer view of the changes that occurred in the *choro* style of music and the Brazilian popular music in the 20's. The saxophone and the arrangers played major roles in that musical scenario towards the changes that brought not only new bands. Also, the new musical input contributed to the established traditional styles, mainly samba and *choro*, which then presented the saxophone in their repertoire more often.

The *Jazz Band Sul Americana*, conducted by Romeu Silva, was one of the most important jazz groups. Gonçalves Pinto (1936) appreciated Romeu Silva's work:

*"Conductor, our music representative abroad and thus considered a celebrity for his musical talent and patriotism, Romeu Silva is a writer and an excellent performer. His saxophone has the melody magic. He is a fully qualified jazz band leader. He initially came from the band Meninos Desvalidos and after playing in several choro performances, he worked as harmony director of the Flor de Abacate, inspiring learners. Later, invited by Napoleão de Oliveira, singing director of the Ameno Resedá, Romeu acted diligently as a harmony director for two years. Romeu Silva was glorified abroad, bringing popularity to Brazil, which certainly owes him its music spread in those civilised countries. Romeu is a gentleman. Dedicated and kind, he is an artist of great value."*<sup>1</sup>

The famous Brazilian pianist and composer Ary Barroso,

as transcribed by Cabral (1993), also referred to the artist:

*“Tall, strong, tanned. Short curly hair. A still, superior walk. He leaded the best jazz-orchestra from that time (1924), demanding ‘posture’ from his musicians. He was a (poor) saxophone player. He was constantly invited to brighten up the most elegant balls in São Paulo. The only one standing still on stage. The other musicians should stay sat. When a beautiful lady crossed the salon, he played the saxophone softly, as if blowing her a kiss. He had been to America and Europe. Nowadays, he looks so different! Not a shadow remains of that good-looking, popular man. I refer to Romeu Silva, leader of the former Jazz Band Sul Americana.”<sup>2</sup>*

Both descriptions illustrate the active role of Romeu Silva and his influence in the careers of many musicians in Rio de Janeiro in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Undoubtedly, the diverging opinions about him have been aroused by his varied professional life – he used to be a jazz band conductor, a carnival music harmony director and also a *choro* instrumentalist. Despite Ary Barroso’s view of Silva as an inferior saxophone player, according to Pinto, Romeu’s saxophone had “the melody magic”. However, the first did recognise Silva’s performance

as a jazz band leader, in which he stood out with the introduction of different music styles. In Gonçalves Pinto’s opinion, Romeu was a patriot, responsible for taking the Brazilian sounds abroad as a prodigious harmony director.

In accordance with the statement of Alcir Pires Vermelho, transcribed by Cabral (1993), Romeu Silva learned how to play the saxophone at the João Alfredo school. In 1919, Romeu formed his first musical group, the *Orquestra Sul Americana Brasileira*, specialised in operetas and Neapolitan songs. In 1921, the North American navigation enterprise Munson Line invited the orchestra to the inaugural travel of the American Legion ship, from Rio de Janeiro to New York.

In America, Romeu was impressed when he first watched a band play with two trombones, two trumpets, bass, piano and drums. On his way back to Brazil, he organised a similar crew, adding a trombone with a tube measuring two metres long. He named the group *Jazz Band Sul Americana*. Their first performance show was held in one of the main movie theatres downtown Rio de Janeiro, the Palais. Two years earlier, the same theatre also launched *Oito Batutas*, Pixinguinha’s band. From that time onwards, every club in the city had an orchestra performance as a must-have item in their parties.

In 1925, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Félix Pacheco, took the band on a trip to Europe, as a cultural supplement regarding the Brazilian coffee business. Romeu Silva

and his orchestra spread the Brazilian popular music all over Europe for 10 years. The band was formed by Francisco Marti (piano), H. Rico (saxophone, clarinet and flute), Bibiano Miranda (guitar, drums and dance), Luiz Lopes (cavaquinho, guitar and banjo), Henrique Planares (sousaphone and trombone), Fernando de Albuquerque (banjo, guitar, cavaquinho and vocals) and Mario Silva (trumpet).

To Vasconcelos (1984), Romeu Silva had an important role in the *choro* history, for he not only added it as a vital element to his orchestra and encouraged other bands to do the same, but Romeu also wrote and recorded *maxixes* that are now part of the main *choro* cultural states from that period.

The jazz bands fashion boosted instrumental music presentations throughout Rio de Janeiro in the 20's, as the local journal *A Notícia* registered in October 1923. The article highlighted the undeniable influence of the new style of music in the existing audience. Party guests would enjoy “sophisticated” musicians, who should have American songs in their repertory lists.

Pixinguinha (MIS, 1997) denied that the jazz influence had introduced wind instruments in the *choro* style, stating that the bands had been changed for mere commercial reasons. He recalled Candinho and Luís de Souza's solo presentations of the Brazilian traditional *choro* with trumpet and trombone. At that time, musicians with different backgrounds made a reasonable amount

of money playing in the clubs and theatres at night. *Choro* musicians, or *chorões*, such as Luiz Americano and Pixinguinha, *samba* musicians, as Donga and Ary Barroso, and even foreign musicians were a hit in the city. They played mixed rhythms and genders in the elegant balls at the Fluminense and the Jockey Club of Rio de Janeiro.

Ary Barroso, who was not considered as a great pianist by some critics, played the North American rhythms exceedingly well and developed his professional career performing amongst the jazz bands spread in town. There had always much work to do for good musicians at that time. The movie theatres hired artists to play during the silent exhibitions on the big screen and in the waiting rooms. The theatres presented musicals and also filled the waiting rooms with orchestras, small bands or even soloists. The most elegant hotels each had their own orchestras, as did the night clubs, the Assírio – inside the Municipal Theatre, the cabarets and the social clubs. Ary Barroso described this period of time, as follows:

*“I am a professional pianist. I started playing in a movie theatre, in the Iris cinema projection room. Then I joined the Sebastião orchestra, playing in the waiting room of the old Carlos Gomes theatre. After that I entered J. Thomáz's orchestra, in Rialto's waiting room. So I started*



*being famous as a jazz pianist. From Rialto, we were transferred to the Central cinema, belonging to the businessman Pinkfield, who gave us the stage. That was when my salary raised: 28 thousand réis per day. We did balls for 10 thousand réis an hour! The top of my career was when I joined the famous Jazz Band Sul-Americana, leaded by Romeu Silva. It was the elite orchestra. We performed at the main clubs of the city: Country Club, Fluminense, América, Botafogo, Jockey Club, Tijuca, Guanabara. I left the band when Romeu took his orchestra to Europe.”<sup>3</sup>*

J. Thomáz, to whom Barroso refers to, was actually Joaquim Silveira Thomáz, a carioca from Catumbi, who started his musical career in December 1920 as a rhythm follower in the band *Oito Batutas*. He left the band in January 1922, when it went to Paris and he couldn't join them due to a serious illness. Arnaldo Guinle then joined the *Oito Batutas* in France. He sent J. Thomáz a modern drums set. The instrument's popularity was now increasing in Brazil after the arrival of the North American drummer Harry Korasin and his technique. Korasin had great success amongst the Brazilian jazz bands during the time he stayed in Rio. He even created his own orchestra and participated in several album recordings. J. Thomáz tried to imitate him.

When the *Oito Batutas* came back from Paris, J. Thomáz rejoined the band and flew with them to Argentina. According to Pixinguinha (MIS, 1997), in that group J. Thomáz played the drums and the tambourine: “When we came back from Paris, we brought the banjo, the banjo-guitar, and I brought the saxophone. Those were instruments for playing jazz. It was the time for jazz bands, and for this reason J. Thomáz played the American drums”.

The band split up after their time in Argentina. J. Thomáz, Donga and Nelson Alves formed a new group called the *Oito Cotubas*. One of the band's performances in São Paulo called a reporter's attention. The article from *O Correio da Manhã* depicted the show with great enthusiasm, describing J. Thomáz's drums as “a massive attack with the most curious effects”.

Encouraged by success, J. Thomáz decided to have his own orchestra – a fashionable jazz band with two pistons (Sebastião Cirino and Waldemar), a trombone (Wantuil de Carvalho), two saxophones (Lafaiete Silva and João Batista Paraíso), a violinist (Wanderley) and a pianist (Augusto Vasseur). The band was named *Brazilian Jazz*.

It is important to note that the balls and events at that time counted on the Brazilian musicians who formerly played *choro* and popular music. However, there were bands formed by foreign players who performed the authentic American jazz. Cabral (1993) refers to the

French author Blaise Cendrars as an illustration of the dispute between the musical conceptions of the Brazilian musicians and the foreign players.

Cendrars was taken by a friend to one of those fashion night clubs, The Diamond's Club, in Laranjeiras. There, two "wicked" orchestras played seemingly as rivals every night: the former, a North American band headed by the trumpeter Wild Bird, from Saint-Louis, and the latter, typically Brazilian, called *Os Batutas*. In that occasion, Cendrars said:

*"On the musical fight between the two bands formed both by black musicians, they presented themselves equal in their origins, but different in terms of writing and inspiration. Each band's desire was to get over the other one with the contrasted rhythms of a black bottom followed by a constant swing, irresistible, charming, from the macumba and the erotic acceleration only seen in the samba and maxixe styles, as an attempt to bit the nervous mechanic of the two-steps or the blues charming slips, triumphing over the cake-walk, which ends in a releasing improvisation performed by the virtuous players from Louisiana and overexciting all the dancers."*<sup>4</sup>

Cendrars' description confirms that the Brazilian orchestras did not limit themselves to copying North

American songs, despite the fact that those were a great success in the occasion. J. Thomáz's himself had a varied repertory which listed both imported songs and Brazilian *maxixes*. The records list found at IMS (Chart 3) are an evidence of such repertory variation, combining *foxtrottes*, *sambas* and *maxixes*, all recorded in 78rpm and part of Humberto Franceschi's collection.

Chart 3 - Humberto Franceschi's Collection

Song	Artist	Composer	Gender	Release	Label	Album	Track / Side
<i>Chá pra dois</i>	<i>Jazz Band Sul-Americana</i>	Vicent Youmans	Foxtrote	1921-1926 (*)	Odeon	122954	Single
<i>Está na hora</i>	<i>Jazz Band Sul-Americana</i>	J. Luiz de Moraes	Samba	1921-1926 (*)	Odeon	122855	Single
<i>Fleur d'amour</i>	<i>Jazz Band Sul-Americana</i>	José Padilha	Foxtrote	1925-1927 (*)	Odeon	123000	Single
<i>Levanta meu não</i>	<i>Orquestra J. Thomáz</i>	Pixinguinha	Maxixe	1931	Victor	33460	Side A
<i>Procura outro homem</i>	<i>Orquestra Pan Americana do Cassino Copacabana</i>	Carlos de Almeida	Maxixe	1925-1927 (*)	Odeon	123120	Single
<i>Ukulele baby</i>	<i>Jazz Band Sul-Americana</i>	Jack Meskill	Foxtrote	1925-1927 (*)	Odeon	123001	Side A
<i>Vê se pode</i>	<i>Orquestra J. Thomáz</i>	J. Thomáz; Sátiro de Melo	Maxixe	1931	Victor	33460	Side B

(\*) Inaccurate sources. Results refer to the period within, according to the number of the related album.

## Endnotes

1. Alexandre Gonçalves Pinto, *Reminiscências dos chorões antigos*. Page 179. 2.
2. Ary Barroso's quote. Cabral, Sérgio. *No tempo de Ary Barroso*, 1982, RJ. Page 37:5.
3. Cabral, Sérgio *No tempo de Ary Barroso*. (29:3).
4. *Ibidem* (37:2).

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## One With The Fallen Angels: Joni Mitchell Orchestrates a Transition in 'Court and Spark'

Daniel Sonenberg

Early in her career, Joni Mitchell was the archetypal singer-songwriter. Her work was primarily acoustic, personal to the point of confessional, and fans and critics alike mined each song for clues about the so-called “real Joni Mitchell,” or, to borrow a phrase from David Brackett, the “author outside the text.”<sup>1</sup> In most cases, such clues are presumed to reside primarily or entirely in her lyrics, but today I’d like to argue that the autobiographical nature of Mitchell’s music can extend, in rather subtle ways, to its non-vocal elements. Mitchell has always been an articulate and poetic lyricist, and in her first decade of recording, her crystalline, acrobatic voice propelled her texts, and seemingly her soul, to the forefront of the sonic texture. But Mitchell’s musicianship – as not only a singer, but a guitarist, pianist, composer, and later arranger – was from the start refined and original, and only grew in expressive potential as her career developed. Today, focusing primarily on a single song, I’ll examine the ways in which Mitchell exploited the narrative and self-reflective potential of instrumental accompaniment to add substantial layers of meaning to her work.

My focus is the title track of Mitchell’s 1974 album

*Court and Spark*, which constituted a turning point for her in a number of ways.<sup>2</sup> Mitchell, whose earliest work had been entirely acoustic, had begun to incorporate wind instruments and occasional rock rhythm sections on her previous album, 1972’s *For The Roses*, but was now for the first time working with a full-fledged backing band, Tom Scott and the L.A. Express.<sup>3</sup> With three Billboard-charting singles, including “Help Me,” which peaked at number seven, and reaching the number two position on Billboard’s album chart, *Court and Spark* has been Mitchell’s most commercially successful album to date.

Commercial success itself was an issue, as well as a frequent song subject for Mitchell. Especially as she began to achieve genuine stardom, her first-person narrators often struggled to maintain personal and artistic integrity amidst the popular music industry’s never-ending drive toward commodification. This was a central topic of the album *For The Roses*, whose title track chronicles the rise and fall of an earnest young singer-songwriter at the hands of callous music executives. Another of the album’s tracks, “You Turn Me On, I’m a Radio,” was Mitchell’s admittedly deliberate attempt to court an A.M. radio audience that had previously eluded her.

### Opening Lyrics to “You Turn Me On, I’m a Radio”

*If you're driving into town  
 With a dark cloud above you  
 Dial in the number  
 Who's bound to love you  
 Oh honey you turn me on  
 I'm a radio  
 I'm a country station  
 I'm a little bit corny  
 I'm a wildwood flower  
 Waving for you  
 I'm a broadcasting tower  
 Waving for you*

With country band accompaniment featuring steel string acoustic guitar, electric bass, harmonica and drums, and drawing subtle connections between huckstering songs on the radio and prostitution, “You Turn Me On” expressed Mitchell’s conflicted feelings about her own commercial ambition, all the while earning her a number twenty-five hit. Such ambivalence remains well in evidence in the song “Court and Spark.”

### Lyrics to “Court and Spark”

#### VERSE 1

*Love came to my door  
 With a sleeping roll*

*And a madman's soul  
 He thought for sure I'd seen him  
 Dancing up a river in the dark  
 Looking for a woman  
 To court and spark*

#### VERSE 2

*He was playing on the sidewalk  
 For passing change  
 When something strange happened  
 Glory train passed through him  
 So he buried the coins he made  
 In People's Park  
 And went looking for a woman  
 To court and spark*

#### BRIDGE

*It seemed like he read my mind  
 He saw me mistrusting him  
 And still acting kind  
 He saw how I worried sometimes  
 I worry sometimes*

#### VERSE 3

*“All the guilty people,” he said  
 They've all seen the stain –  
 On their daily bread  
 On their Christian names  
 I cleared myself  
 I sacrificed my blues*



*And you could complete me  
I'd complete you*

#### VERSE 4

*His eyes were the color of the sand  
And the sea  
And the more he talked to me  
The more he reached me  
But I couldn't let go of L.A.  
City of the fallen angels*

The lyrics describe an encounter between a female narrator and a wholesome male stranger – a Christ-like itinerant musician who has forgone the materialist endeavor of “playing on the sidewalk for passing change” to search for true love and spiritual communion in the form of “a woman to court and spark.” In a seeming screed against selling out, he condemns “all the guilty people” who have “seen the stain on their daily bread,” maintaining that he “cleared [him]self” by “sacrific[ing] his blues” (a somewhat opaque proclamation to which I shall return). The narrator is moved by his purity and empathy, but is ultimately too tied to her sullied urban existence in L.A., the “City of the Fallen Angels,” to join his holy union.

The placement of “Court and Spark” as the premiere song on Mitchell’s most commercial album – her first full collaboration with a band – is significant. Coupled with her then recent preoccupation with the music industry’s darker side, it suggests a specifically autobiographical

subtext for the song. It is as if Mitchell is dramatizing her own feelings of guilt and impurity over her increasing engagement with the “starmaker machinery behind the popular song,” to quote another of the album’s tracks.<sup>4</sup> Such an interpretation is bolstered by the skillfully choreographed deployment of instruments throughout the recording. The short instrumental introduction does not betray the presence of musicians other than Mitchell herself.

#### Piano: Introduction to “Court and Spark”



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Transcriptions by Daniel Sonenberg.

From the outset, then, Mitchell’s identity as an instrumentalist is thrown into relief. The presence of a band on the entire album means that the sovereignty of that identity, which heretofore in her output had gone unchallenged, will now be called into question. An underlying narrative of instrumental autonomy thus emerges. The extent to which Mitchell the pianist, and Mitchell the guitarist can resist being either absorbed

or overwhelmed by Tom Scott's LA Express becomes a central issue in "Court and Spark," and one with particular thematic and narrative importance. As I have mentioned, a persistent theme in Mitchell's work of the time was the opposition of commercialism on the one hand, and artistic and personal integrity on the other. On her previous albums Mitchell had often created a connotative link between full band accompaniment and compromised purity. In addition to "You Turn Me On," *For The Roses* contained the song "Blonde in the Bleachers," in which Mitchell's line "You can't hold the hand of a rock and roll man very long" triggers the entrance of a band, associating rock and roll with infidelity. On her almost entirely acoustic 1968 debut album, *Song to a Seagull*, only "Night in the City," a song that celebrates the seductive, yet superficial joys of urban nightlife, has electric bass and honky-tonk piano.<sup>5</sup> In "Court and Spark," Mitchell employs such textural signification with greater nuance.

The entrance of the voice coincides with the first hint of the more complex sonic texture that will characterize the song. The piano sonority is now bolstered by the subtle addition of electric piano doubling the right hand part, yielding a richer and less pure sound. The momentary entrance of a flute in mm. 11-12 is a second indication that the specific deployment of instrumental forces over the course of the song will play a role in highlighting and deepening the meaning of the text. Here the flute's

### "Court and Spark" mm. 8-19

The musical score for "Court and Spark" mm. 8-19 is presented in a multi-staff format. The vocal line (V) is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The electric piano (E.P.) and piano (Pno.) parts are in grand staff notation. The flute (Fl.) part enters in measure 11. The lyrics are: "Love came to my door With a sleep-ing ro-ll And a mad-man's so-ul He thought for su-re I'd seen him Dan-cing up a riv-er in the da-rk Look-ing for a wo-man To cou-rt and spark-". The score includes measure numbers 8, 10, 13, and 16, and a time signature change to 3/4 at measure 16. A rehearsal mark 0:37 is placed above measure 16.

brief phrase, commenced with a trill, is like a summoned memory of the male protagonist “Dancing up a river in the dark.” The subtlety of the flute’s entrance – it is in fact quite easy to miss – echoes the entrance of the electric piano, and is in turn echoed by the subsequent gradual entrance of the full band. Each instrument seems almost to sneak into the texture, its own timbre arising naturally from the resonance of the piano. First the bass joins at m. 16, relieving the piano’s left hand of its duty for the return of the prevalent quarter-note triplet motive. The drums and electric guitar then enter together at m. 20, the former with a soft sixteenth-note pattern on the hi-hat, and the latter with a smooth, bended-note gesture that fades in by way of a volume pedal and echoes the melismas on the words “dark” and “spark.”

The overall impression given by the band’s entrance might be described as “coy,” thoroughly in keeping with the song’s theme of courtship. Once the full band has joined, the sound has the smooth sheen of jazz-tinted pop. The playing is decidedly tasteful, with the guitar continuing its volume-pedal-enabled incursions, the drums maintaining and occasionally syncopating its sixteenth-note hi-hat pattern, and the bass sustaining root tones with sporadic lazy elaborations. Although the piano is still perceivable as a distinct entity, more and more it gels with the sound of the band – fulfilling a process that began with the entrance of the electric piano.

### “Court and Spark” mm 20-31

20

V

E.Gtr.

Bs.

Dms.

E.P.

Pno.

23

V

E.Gtr.

Bs.

Dms.

Pno.

24

0:51

V

E.Gtr.

Bs.

Dms.

E.P.

Pno.

He was play-ing on the side-walk For

pass-ing change When some-thing

s-trange happened Glo-ry train passed through him So he

volume pedal

n.

v.p.

sim.

pp

26 0:58

V buried the coins he made In People's pa rk And went looking for a woman to

E.Gtr.

Bs.

Dms.

E.P.

Pno.

28 1:03

V cou rt and spar

E.Gtr.

Bs.

Dms.

E.P.

Pno.

30 1:06

V k

E.Gtr.

Bs.

Dms.

E.P.

Pno.

On the one hand, the meshing together can be heard to represent the communion of souls in which the song's male protagonist seeks deliverance. This construal is given added legitimacy in the song's bridge, where it is supported by the lyrics, the harmonic structure, and the further blurring of instrumental boundaries. Here, the narrator describes her own actions and thoughts through the filter of his understanding gaze: "It seemed like he read my mind; he saw me mistrusting and still acting kind; he saw how I worried sometimes." A chord progression featuring motion by descending fourths supports a tender melody, imbuing her words with tangibility.

The sonic metaphor of total selfless coexistence with another would seem to be completed by this section's blending of timbres. The drums play a straight rock beat, replete with snare and bass drum, and the bass line is considerably more active and rhythmic than it had been in the second verse. The electric and acoustic pianos play in nearly identical registers, sometimes trading phrases, and sometimes doubling one another. In the two verses that follow the bridge, the unfolding of orchestrational events suggests a different interpretation of the band's significance. The text for the third verse is the male character's obscure proclamation about "all the guilty people." At the start of this verse the arrangement is similar to that of the second verse. The drums return



### “Court and Spark” mm. 34-42

to their understated sixteenth-note pattern on the hi-hat, and the bass, filling in the texture's bottom, retains some of the increased activity it first assumed in the bridge, with syncopated chromatic passing tones and anticipated downbeats. The electric guitar is notably absent, and the electric piano returns to doubling the

acoustic piano's right hand. The flute, joined by another woodwind, returns with a trill-like figure in m. 50, a fanfare for the male character's dramatic revelation: "I cleared myself I sacrificed my blues."

As the pivotal word "blues" is sung melodically, the drums drop out, and the electric piano, bass, and woodwinds sustain their triad for one measure before also quitting the texture (mm. 52-53). Here we can understand the word "blues" to refer not to any downtrodden emotional state, but rather to the actual music that the male character was playing for passing

### “Court and Spark” mm. 47-54

change. Thus the sacrifice of his music – the stain on *his* daily bread – is strikingly enacted by the band's abandonment of *their* music. At m. 54, suddenly, Mitchell – the instrumentalist – is left alone.

The drama of this moment is immediately compounded by the orchestration of the next line: “and you could complete me.” The syllable “-plete” is sung on the downbeat of m. 54, and is emphasized by the entrance of a new instrument: acoustic guitar. Just as the last resonance of the electric piano fades, the entrance of Mitchell's trademark instrument with an emphatic strummed chord and characteristic riff redefines our understanding of the word “complete.”

Again, it is difficult to resist making biographical connections between the narrator and the historical Mitchell. The acoustic guitar is the instrument with which Mitchell to this point in her career had had both the closest and longest association, and on which she had the most developed personal style. The guitar's pronounced entrance on the very word “complete,” immediately following the band's hasty departure, suggests that completeness involves not the absorption of one's own persona into a powerful but faceless multitude, but instead the very opposite – truth to self. Thus the progressive commingling of Mitchell's instrumental work with that of the band did not, in fact, symbolize the union of two souls so longed for by the

### “Court and Spark” mm 55-63

The musical score for measures 55-63 of "Court and Spark" is presented in three systems. Each system includes staves for Voice (V), Acoustic Guitar (Ac. Gtr.), and Piano (Pno.).

- System 1 (Measures 55-56):** The vocal line begins with "I'd com- plete to you". The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note ostinato in the left hand and a hemiola motive in the right. The acoustic guitar enters with a strummed chord and a characteristic riff.
- System 2 (Measures 57-60):** The vocal line continues with "His eyes were the col- or of the sand". The piano accompaniment remains consistent. The acoustic guitar continues its riff.
- System 3 (Measures 61-63):** The vocal line concludes with "And the more he talked to me you know The more he reached me but I could- n't let go of L. A. Ch- y of the". The piano accompaniment and acoustic guitar continue their respective parts.

male protagonist. Instead, we may now understand, it depicted the narrator's entanglement with the “guilty people,” her corruption by association.

The following, reciprocal line, “I'd complete you,” in mm. 55-56, yields to a demonstration of sorts. In mm. 57-62, the acoustic guitar offers intermittent solo statements over the piano's steady eighth-note ostinato in the left hand, and hemiola motive in the right. The guitar's part is marked by a higher degree of rhythmic independence than any instrument has thus far exhibited, and yet sometimes also falls in line with the



piano. The passage offers a demonstration of the kind of relationship the narrator's stranger truly envisions: one in which each partner retains his or her identity, all the while contributing to form a complex and beautiful union. And here the lines between the narrator and the historical Joni Mitchell are further blurred. Just as this moment of completely acoustic music evokes the purity of a relationship unstained by the distractions of greed and urban existence, it also hearkens back to Mitchell's earlier music, which in its acoustic purity was less inculcated in the sordid machinations of musical commerce.

This spare instrumentation carries over into the next verse, where the narrator compares her seducer/redeemer's eyes to "the sand and the sea," and acknowledges his deep impact on her. But the song's tragic denouement follows immediately thereafter, and is likewise depicted both in words and orchestration. In mm. 66-70 the narrator admits, "I couldn't let go of L.A., city of the fallen angels." The first syllable of the pivotal word "angels" falls on the downbeat of m. 70, and coincides with the return of the electric guitar, bass, drums and winds. The entrance of the band here creates an interesting symmetry. In the previous verse, the word "complete" was emphasized and interpreted by the entrance of the acoustic guitar. Now, in this verse, the "fallen angels" identities are verified: those agents of corruption and obstacles to the narrator's fulfillment

– and by extension Mitchell's acoustic, non-commercial, folk-like integrity – are confirmed to be none other than Tom Scott and the LA Express. The acoustic guitar plays a final flourish in mm. 70-71 before exiting the texture for good, apparently unable to share the sonic stage with its foil.

### "Court and Spark" mm 64-78

The musical score for "Court and Spark" measures 64-78 is presented in a standard musical notation format. The score includes staves for the following instruments: Voice (V), Flute (Fl), Electric Guitar (E.Gtr.), Acoustic Guitar (Ac.Gtr.), Bass (Bs.), Clarinet (Clm.), Drums (Dms.), Electric Piano (E.P.), and Piano (Pno.). The key signature is one sharp (F#). The score shows a complex orchestration with various instruments playing in harmony and rhythm. The vocal line is in the top staff, with lyrics "fall on angels" and "winds". The piano part features a prominent bass line and chords. The electric guitar and acoustic guitar parts are also clearly defined. The drums provide a steady beat. The electric piano and clarinet add to the texture. The score is well-organized and easy to read.

The full band's raucous rendition of the song's persistent hemiola motive may be heard as a devilish dance of victory, all the while conjuring the dying throes of the narrator's struggle for independence. This interpretation is only bolstered by the entrance of chimes, whose overtones add to the growing cacophony. When the rhythmic and harmonic discord finally resolve to the sustained E major chord in mm. 75-78, all of the distinct instrumental timbres cease to be clearly distinguishable, and a composite, homogenous sound remains. The failure, whether it is the narrator's to retain true love, or Mitchell's to resist the loss of her individual identity to the carnivorous popular music industry, is complete.

### Conclusion

With "Court and Spark," Mitchell projects a self-awareness that extends beyond a mere conception of herself as a difficult woman seeking love, or one enamored by the resolute independence of a man she cannot keep – personae she had often previously inhabited. A principal subtext of the song – hinted at in the lyrics but made viscerally clear in their setting – is Mitchell's cognizance of her own identity as an artist and a star at a particularly crucial moment in her career. Her at times grudging, at times eager entanglement with the popular music industry had already provided subject matter for earlier material. Here, however, she approaches this topic with a greater degree of subtlety and refinement.

The personification of artistic integrity and commercialism by Mitchell's acoustic instruments and the band's electric sound respectively help to clarify the song's symbolic lyrics, while also providing a mechanism for Mitchell's instrumental blurring of the lines between her in-song persona and historical self. Particularly in the treatment of the acoustic guitar – whose power to convey the "completeness" alluded to in the lyrics, as well as the themes of purity and independence, rests largely on its signal role in Mitchell's output to that date – Mitchell turns the conventional conception of the self-referential persona on its head. Here it is not merely a question of autobiographical clues in the lyrics lending intrigue to the song (and fodder for obsessive fans and pop journalists), but rather a case of the symbiotic three-way connection between lyrics, instrumentation and Mitchell's personal history instilling the work with an essential layer of meaning.

## Endnotes

1. David Brackett, *Interpreting Popular Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 16.
2. Joni Mitchell, *Court and Spark* (Asylum 1001, 1974).
3. Joni Mitchell, *For the Roses* (Asylum 5057, 1972).
4. Joni Mitchell, "Free Man in Paris," *Court and Spark*.
5. Joni Mitchell, "Night in the City," *Song to a Seagull* (Reprise 6293, 1968).

## Techno Circus and Terra-Punk: Sound Systems in Australia

Graham St John



*"Why do they keep calling our generation,  
generation x, when actually we're generation y?*

*...*

*Why? Because we're the ones asking the  
questions"*

*"Monkey" Marc Peckham in Sydney zine  
Sporadical (2001: 21)*

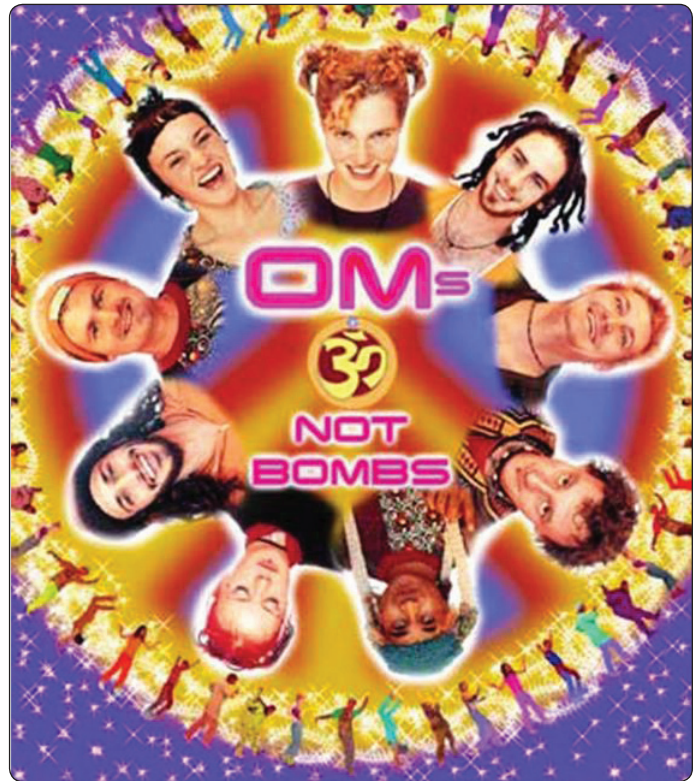
**M**onkey Marc Peckham's statement underscores an inquisitive and compassionate intervention taking place within a radical contemporary Australian milieu. It's an intervention worthy of consideration, especially since members of this milieu aren't just asking questions, but desiring to find solutions (to neo-liberalism and the impact of colonialism). They are

desiring to make a difference. Responding to ecological imperatives and the plight of Indigenous Australians, DJ Monkey Mark is co-founder of alternative energy/multimedia sound system Labrats, and is one of the principal inspirators of Combat Wombat (See Left). Combat Wombat is an amorphous and hybrid outfit. At the core of the current arrangement is MC Elf Transporter and DJ Wasabi, along with the founding member MC Izzy Brown and Monkey Marc. Downstream from various musical and subcultural traditions, Combat Wombat have emerged at the confluence of funk, punk, hip hop, reggae and techno. Here, I focus on the punk inflection. In an interview with the author, Marc himself referred to Combat Wombat as "punk-hop", indicating something of the confluence of anarcho-punk and the message rap of the likes of Public Enemy. But a punk legacy has also arrived through a more complicated history: the techno-punk convergence apparent in European hardcore 'tekno' and in the hardcore sound system tradition of the early 1990s UK. This is a development which would become attractive to Sydney anarchists adopting electronic audio technologies enabling collective DiY artistic endeavours. Inheriting this tradition, the Labrats/Combat Wombat intervention possesses the hallmarks of the angry independence of



post-punk anarchism. Though, here, the motivation is more ecology and human rights (particularly Indigenous justice) than 'class war'. According to a post-punk/post-settler logic, the spectacular contempt for authority displayed by forebears is eclipsed by a deference to that which is felt to constitute the 'proper authority': the country and its traditional custodians. With Combat Wombat, a fusion of punk-inflected traditions would become implicated in the cultural politics of a settler society struggling towards legitimacy. Drawing upon ongoing ethnographic research, it is the results of this process that I will discuss. But first, some history.

Its early 1990s Sydney, and a techno-punk confluence was manifesting in the likes of DiY audio bombers and party-protest crews such as the Non Bossy Posse collective, Vibe Tribe and Oms not Bombs.<sup>1</sup> Emerging in 1995, Oms not Bombs was a particularly momentous social and environmentally conscious outfit (Above Right). Later dubbed Ohms not Bombs, Oms was an extraordinary fusion of anarcho-punk and the techno-counterculture emerging out of the early 1990s San Francisco. Initially consisting of around 20 musicians, artists and activists, they formed to catalyze a movement for a nuclear free future and sovereignty for Indigenous Australians. The brainchild of expat Londoner and "agit-house" pioneer, Pete Strong (Strong and Strong 2000; Strong 2001), Ohms renovated an old State Transit bus and drove it around Australia on their 1998



Dig the Sounds Not Uranium tour, a tour involving 30 events held over four months before reaching Jabiluka uranium mine in the Northern Territory's Kakadu National Park – and becoming involved in a successful national campaign mounted in support of Aboriginal traditional owners (the Mirrar) who opposed the mine on cultural and environmental grounds. With a syncopated audio-visual apparatus and information stalls communicating anti-nuclear and other ecological and Indigenous justice issues, Ohms was a mobile tactical media assemblage which Strong labeled a "doofumentary" ('doof' being a common term for outdoor dance party in Australia: St John 2001; Luckman 2003). Undertaking an independent initiative within a national climate of 'reconciliation', carriers of new historical and ecological sensibilities, Oms was driven by Strong's vision of tapping the party 'vibe' for extra-party purposes.<sup>2</sup>



The *technomadic* sensibility displayed by Oms has its roots in the European traveling techno circuses of the late eighties/early nineties. Itself influenced by an émigré Caribbean tradition rooted in Jamaican dancehall (Stolzoff 2000), London's Spiral Tribe sound system was particularly influential (Above) Spiral Tribe and other industrial, jungle and ragga outfits like Bedlam and Desert Storm were the product of a techno-traveller-punk mix which would see punk take to the road in a post-apocalyptic—Mad Max meets Judge Dread inflected—revision of the New Age Traveler lifestyle and festival. As has been previously

documented (see Rietveld 1998), in the wake of the UK acid house explosion, and subsequent legislated repression, the disenfranchised would satiate their desire to disappear from the grid by escaping the confines of the city and British nationalism, a longing for *difference* satisfied on the road to other places and other times, and in 'tribes' succeeding from the parent culture. These techno-tribes would begin amassing at European "teknivals" or techno-festivals. Under the slogan, "make some fucking noise", Spiral Tribe were the trailblazers of an international techno-circus, whose reclaimed sites contextualised techno-culture's





performance to itself—reaffirming a techno-punk identity. The Spirals' most noted track was probably *Breach the Peace*, and members started numerous independent record labels. Describing their relentless performance, one observer saw the Spirals “promising something and then screaming ultrasonic violent chaos .... Rhythms careering forward piling into the future, bellowing into the sky, and then a voice sampled *YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH*” (Stroud 1994).

The outfit had a great influence on Glasgow's Desert Storm who, with their 'beats not bullets' sensibility, formed during the 1991 Gulf War (Above). Like the Spirals, Desert Storm displayed a preference for camouflage netting, transporting themselves in “rapid development vehicles”, dressing in khaki and black, and playing a range of hardcore tekno. According to commentator Alan Lodge, “Desert Storm gigs feel like they are taking place in a bunker with a civil war going on outside. The visual impact of a Desert Storm gig drives home the concept of a revolutionary culture boiling under the surface of modern Britain”. In 1994 this affected

'war machine' joined a worker's aid convoy to Tusla in Bosnia. According to member James:

*We started playing on the move and we had thousands of people following us through the streets in two foot snow and minus ten degrees. We played one techno record with a chorus that went 'Get going to the beat of a Drum BANG!' and all the soldiers fired their AK-47s in the air 'kakakakaka' and it was such a fucking buzz it was incredible. We played the same record about ten times. At one point a policeman came up to tell us to turn the volume up, but to turn off some of our lights as we were attracting shellfire. The frontline was only ten kilometres away. (Lodge)*

Probably the most influential and inspirational force in this transnational techno-circus nomadology was London's Mutoid Waste Co (Below). Emerging in London in 1983/84, the Mutoids were (and remain) imaginative installation and pyrotechnic artists whose remixing of found objects (including military hardware refashioned into installation art at techno parties) was analogous to the practice of the punk and electronic artists with whom they worked. In the 1980s, the prospect of nuclear Armageddon gave shape to the artistic lifestyle of the Mutoids, who had a near obsession with a post-apocalyptic Mad Max aesthetic (Cooke 2001). A re-



phrasing of the UK Nuclear Disarmament Party slogan “Protest and Survive”, the Mutiod mantra, “Mutate and Survive”, appeared to have a significant influence on a subterranean vanguard humping techno to the front lines. Orchestrating tactical dance floors, sound systems were beginning to conduct international cultural work.<sup>3</sup>

A combination of the post-punk Mad Maxian aesthetic and the activist “doofumentary” provided inspiration for the Labrats sound system (Over Page, Above - Top). With a solar powered PA and a wind powered cinema hauled by

a van with an engine converted to run on used ‘vegie’ oil, the Labrats would become an innovative alternative energy outfit. MC Izzy Brown, and funk, reggae and dub selector Marc Peckham met in 1998 at Jabiluka where they were exposed to the Ohms Not Bombs spectacle. With Izzy and Marc subsequently responding to Arabunna elder Kevin Buzzacott’s call for assistance, they would mobilise to support his opposition to Western Mining Corporation in outback South Australia, 180km north of the town of Roxby Downs. Understood to represent a threat to the physical and cultural survival of Arabunna, Western Mining had





been mining and milling one of the world's largest uranium ore deposits at Olympic Dam, Roxby Downs since 1988. WMC's growing demands on underground water in one of the driest regions on the planet has had a devastating impact on Arabunna peoples since such sources feed the precious springs around the Lake Eyre region essential for their cultural survival (Above - Kevin Buzzacott speaking at Mound Springs, Lake Eyre South).

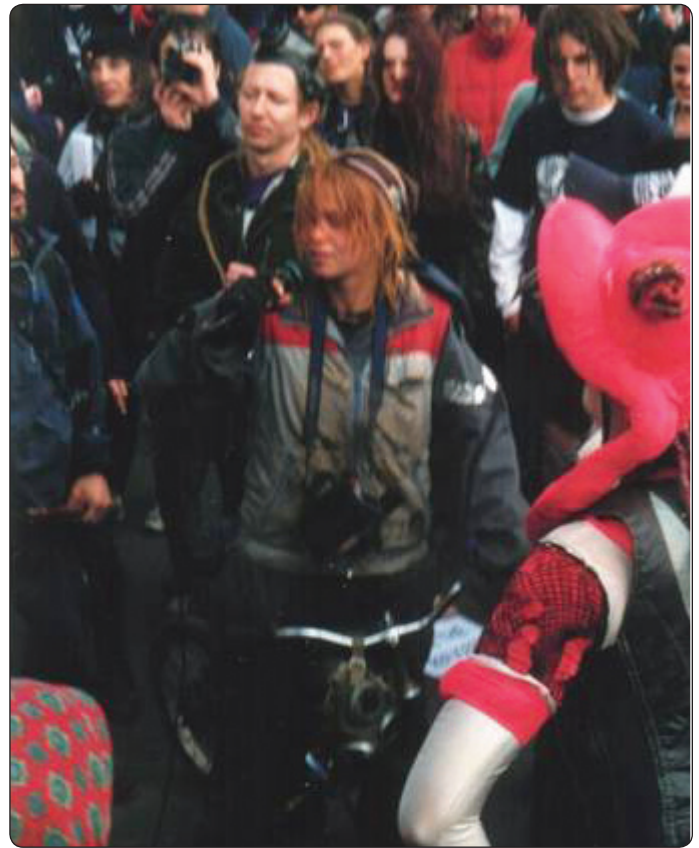
Adopting a direct dance-activism, towing a caravan housing a solar and wind powered recording studio and computer with video editing software, these *terra-ists* would probably

constitute the soundest system yet seen. As Izzy and Marc the solar powered sound system pulled 'the party scene back to its roots as a revolutionary force of beats and breaks, bleeps and squeaks in the face of an authority that is destroying our environment and the people that depend on it for their survival' (Brown and Peckham 2001:92). Developing a multi-media assemblage and participating in Reclaim the Streets and alternative media festivals, the Labrats have communicated their antagonism with mining companies and promoted their alternatives to audiences in outback locations and metropolitan centres Australia-wide. This would be achieved through the screening of film documentaries and through their nascent outfit Combat Wombat. Their award winning documentary *Tunin' Technology to Ecology* (which won a New Filmmakers Award at the 2003 Wild Spaces film festival), features early footage of Combat Wombat at an RTS in Sydney in 2002.

**Video Clip from the DVD *Tunin' Technology to Ecology*.  
(Mouse Click Below To Play)**

The piece *Miraculous Activist* (just seen performed) features on Combat Wombat's debut album *Labrats Solar Powered Sound System* released in 2002. Not only do we see evidence here of the sound system's inheritance of the anarchist and traveller free party tradition, but an obvious hip hop influence. Combat Wombat employ politically charged vocals and samples using cut up and sampling techniques (perhaps 'agit-hop'). While *avant-garde* and counter-hegemonic projects are uncommon to a scene Ian Maxwell describes in his book *Phat Beats, Dope Rhymes* (2003:16) as 'espousing decidedly conservative discourses of nationalism and community', and while somewhat removed from the machismo of hip hop, Combat Wombat give voice to that which is a virtual given in that culture: an identification with *place*. In most urban hip hop, the neighbourhoods or the suburbs are defended turf. But the 'place' Combat Wombat appear to defend is the country itself. Tracks on their debut album convey a desire to defend threatened country and culture (see St John 2005b).

In May 2000, Marc commented to me that "Lake Eyre is calling, and its calling us back. The old spirits are calling us to come and protect the country and look after the country. So we need to be there to make sure nobody comes in and stuffs up the country. So basically we sit on our hill that overlooks Lake Eyre. We keep an eye on Lake Eyre". The 'eye' that is fixed on country, and the



*uncle kevin's charging them with genocide  
to pay the rent for all those that died  
and his cultural lands that have been destroyed  
some times it makes me wonder why  
but ain't gonna sit back and cry  
got to go out there and show ya care  
coz we can make a difference everywhere*

*From White Australia on Combat Wombat's  
Labrats Solar Powered Sound System (2002).*

relationships formed with traditional owners, triggers the language used to *represent* country. It is commonly understood that to 'represent' is to communicate a 'true'

(committed) expression of the arts of hip hop, a process amounting to what Maxwell (2003:10) identifies as “the subordination of self to [hip hop’s] cultural essence”. And to be true (to yourself, and those who you represent) is to be ‘hardcore’—where practitioners are motivated by goals other than wealth or fame. Hip hop is the medium *and* the cause, its true expression enabling a respectable hardcore sensibility. But with political hip hop, we find that commitment to causes apparently external to the aesthetic itself provides a principal motivation. Combat Wombat identify as “messengers” who’ve been “called”: to mediate the stories of custodians whose lands and culture are threatened by mining companies; called to represent country. While she reminds me of the young female skate-punk Kourier, Y.T., from Neil Stephenson’s *Snow Crash*, Izzy’s deliveries have always been her own, and dedicated to exposing the ‘truth’. When she rhymes that “white Australia has a black history”, as she does in the track *White Australia*, Izzy divulges the ‘real’ history—one that should be recognized (Lyrics Also on Previous Page):

**White Australia, from Labrats Solar Powered Sound System (2002)**

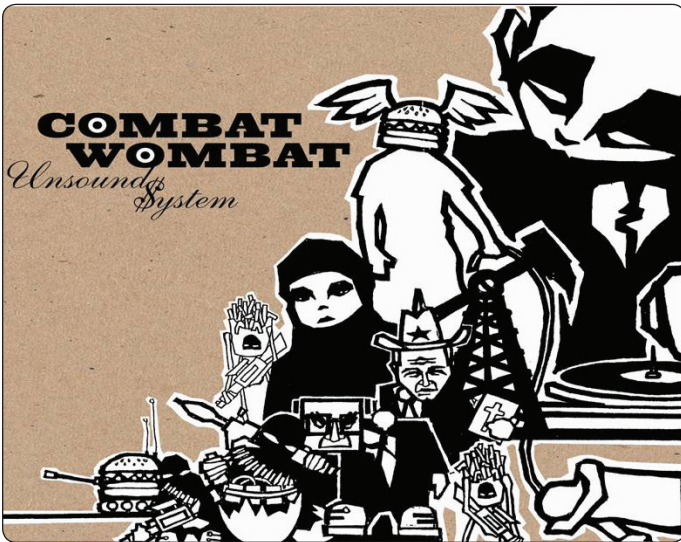
*these old people these mates of mine  
have been roamin the land since the start of time  
they know the creation stories of the land  
and i try my best to understand*

*but a lot of the lands been poisoned or stolen  
as capitalism keeps the western world rolen  
multinational companies dividing up the communities  
with brain washing and bribery  
stories you wont read in the library  
coz white Australia’s got a black history  
that never ceded sovereignty.*

*uncle kevin’s charging them with genocide  
to pay the rent for all those that died  
and his cultural lands that have been destroyed  
some times it makes me wonder why  
but ain’t gonna sit back and cry  
got to go out there and show ya care  
coz we can make a difference everywhere.<sup>4</sup>*

One of the most compelling features of the Labrats/ Combat Wombat intervention is the remarkable level of playback immediacy in their performances. The issues with which they are concerned—including the impact of the uranium industry on Indigenous communities—are given expression (via vocal samples and live MCing) through their direct experience in the desert regions of South and Central Australia where they have spent considerable time since 1999. Their music is thus consistent with *traditions* (including punk and hip hop, along with blues, folk, dancehall, and techno) conscious of transmitting a *rawer* version of events enabled by





proximity to social marginality; with *agents* whose 'true' representations of 'the real' issues are thought to derive from physical proximity to 'the streets', and its vulnerabilities. Only here, the 'truth', and the claim to being hardcore, derives from a proximity to threatened country (and beleaguered Aboriginal communities), to remote and interior regions, contested sites ("the dark heart of Australia" (which their second and latest album, *Unsound System*, has been promoted as exposing).

With the release of *Unsound System* (on the Elephant Traks label), and with their hit *Qwest* reaching # 2 on Triple J's Net 50, Combat Wombat have become something of a *cause celebre* (especially in underground circles) (Above: *Unsound System*). Earning the respect of members of a growing activist hip hop or punk hop scene in Australia, and pursuing the tradition of collectivising the sound, *Unsound System* features guest MCs such as Ozi Batla (from The Herd) and Seed MC (from TZU) and a couple of Afghani rappers (MCG



and SMS) (Above Right & Over Page: The Herd). With their recent national tour and repeated journeys back into Central Australia (to conduct hip hop workshops at remote Aboriginal communities), Combat Wombat continue to be a rallying point for opposition to that which is commonly perceived as the threat to 'country' (a term designating something like indigenous, if not, sacred, landscape). Marc has stated that "there are many people who come to our parties for the music, but who, after hearing the message from the street, became involved in campaigns" (Brown and Peckham 2001: 102). It could be said that Combat Wombat also *represent* this community of activists, an "underground





to a counter-colonial sensitivity. Indeed it could be argued that a *bushwise* sensibility has evolved through a proximity to threatened country, an intimacy with wounded land, and respectful proximity to Indigenous custodians and traditional owners who've called upon them for assistance. By contrast to sound systems like Spiral Tribe who desired invisibility, anonymity and a dissonant incomprehensibility, Combat Wombat would demonstrate a desire to be visible, to *be comprehended*, to communicate their cause for legitimate presence. Not an inflection of the Mad Max 'road warrior' who knows 'no future', and who respects no 'authority', they mount creative solutions in a post-settler becoming.

nation" who've felt the threat to country. Thus in their anthemic *Miraculous Activist* (from their debut album), Combat Wombat acknowledge the presence of a movement of those who "hear the call".

Combat Wombat exemplify a post-punk desire to make a difference (to *make a noise*) in varied responses to conditions of social inequality, injustice and unsound environmental practice— to rupture the present with more than merely an expression of their own difference. Adopting new multi-media and alternative technologies, and with an independent punk (*streetwise*) aesthetic inflected through their techno, traveller and hip hop inheritance, Combat Wombat would give expression

## Endnotes

1. For a discussion of the significant role of Non Bossy Posse and Vibe Tribe in this unfolding see St John 2006a.

2. See St John 2005a and St John 2005b for further discussion of the Oms/Ohms intervention. For elaboration of the dance cultural 'vibe', see St John 2006b and St John 2006c.

3. The Spirals toured the US in 1996 where they would influence local outfits such as New York's Blakkat sound system, and would later be an inspiration for the French tekno scene. London's Bedlam sound system would also tour the US and traveled Australia for a year from late 1999 with a custom built 20,000 Watt PA. In 2003/2004 the Boundaries-to Bridges (Circus of Madness) tour would see artists, media workers, scientists and technicians form a 'caravan' functioning as a sound system, circus, mobile cinema and a stage for theatre and performance in Spain and North Africa ([http://www.memenet.de/tour\\_phil\\_eng.html](http://www.memenet.de/tour_phil_eng.html)).

4. From the track 'White Australia' on Combat Wombat's *Labrats Solar Powered Sound System* (2002). The lyrics are reproduced verbatim. As Morton

indicates (1996: p 122-123), the phrase 'White Australia has a Black History' is simultaneously condemnatory (of a dark, imperial history) and celebratory (with a 40-60,000 year Aboriginal heritage benefiting national identity).

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## The Subject of U.S. Musical Property: Artists, Industry and Works Made For Hire

Matthew Stahl

### Introduction

Authorship and ownership exist in a curious relation in US copyright law. In theory, authorship underwrites and is the condition of ownership, but in practice it often seems that ownership establishes authorship retroactively, as its own ground. Because it is the basis for the monopoly control of copyrights and claims on profits, the authorship / ownership complex is central to the relations of production of popular music. My presentation concerns the relations of “featured artists” to the sound recordings they produce, their record label contractors, and their back-up musicians, producers, engineers and other creative collaborators, as mediated in the US by copyright law.

This paper concerns a recent episode in the annals of American copyright law. In the fall of 1999, the RIAA – the trade association that represents the major record labels in Washington DC – obtained a change to copyright law that transferred authorship and ownership of sound recordings from featured artists to the companies with whom they contract. At a stroke, record labels became authors, and artists were legally dispossessed of all rights to their recordings. Outraged, artists and their

advocates demanded a hearing, and, in just under a year, managed to get the new law repealed.

The RIAA engineered this change through work-for-hire doctrine, that part of copyright law which, since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, has constituted *employers* as the default authors and owners of intellectual property produced in the workplace. Record labels, of course, are not *employers* but *contractors* of artists; work for hire doctrine, however, also often applies even where there is no employment relation. Under certain conditions the *commissioner* of a given work is its author and owner, and the *commissioned* creator is dispossessed in the same manner as the *employed* creator. What the RIAA did was add the category “sound recording” to the list of types of commissioned works eligible for work for hire status.

Focusing on the arguments presented in the May 25, 2000 hearing, I’m going to show that the artists’ refutations of the RIAA’s central claim rested in large part on the artists’ invocation of work-for-hire doctrine *against* their collaborators in the studio recording process. I’m going to argue that the double form of authorship/ownership in the music industry, whether asserted by labels or artists, rests on the naturalization and maintenance of what I’m calling “non-proprietary authorship” – authorship that is legally constituted as alienated, precluded from claims of ownership.

## Contemporary Work for Hire Law

To determine whether a given intellectual property is a “work made for hire,” the law provides a “two prong” test. First, all copyrightable material produced by an employee is by definition work for hire; regardless of who actually creates it, the legal author/owner of any work produced by an employee is the employer. The second prong concerns works made on special commission, not by employees but by freelancers. Under the 1909 Copyright Act most commissioned works were treated as employee works. The framers of the 1976 Copyright Act intended to eliminate work for hire eligibility for commissioned works and shifted the law in favor of direct producers. Nevertheless, thanks to aggressive lobbying by the motion picture and publishing industries in the mid-sixties, we now have nine legislated categories of commissioned works that can be considered works made for hire. These are:

- a contribution to a collective work (such as an encyclopedia or dictionary),
- a part of a motion picture or other audiovisual work,
- a translation,
- a supplementary work,
- a compilation,
- an instructional text,
- a test,

- answer material for a test, and
- an atlas.

If a work falls under one of these categories, and there is a contract specifying that the work is a work made for hire, then the commissioner is the author, and the actual creator has no rights to the work.

Before 1972, when sound recordings became subject to copyright in the US, there was no federal prohibition of their reproduction. Master recordings were somewhat like manuscripts in the pre-copyright era: control could only really be exercised through control of the physical recordings themselves. By the late 60s, the counterfeiting of popular recordings was so widespread that the recording industry was able to convince Congress to grant a copyright in sound recordings in order to protect income flows. Ever since then, standard recording contracts have included non-negotiable language to the effect that the sound recordings produced under the contract are works made for hire (additionally, stipulates the typical contract, if they are ever found *not* to be works made for hire, then the artist thereby transfers rights to the company). On the other hand, music lawyers tell artists that work for hire language is ineffective because sound recordings are not among the work for hire categories, and they’ll be able to reclaim their copyrights after 35 years. This 35 year time limit is called “termination of transfers” or “reversion” and was



included in the 1976 Act as a way to insure “a second bite at the apple” for artists who, when they signed their contract, may have had very little leverage, but whose recordings may have become hits and earned the label significant profits. It was considered just that the artist should be able to rectify an “unremunerative transfer” and reap some benefits in his or her declining years by bringing the copyright to the market themselves.

Assignments of rights made following the 1978 enactment of the 1976 Act will terminate beginning in 2013, and the record companies are extremely anxious about what one writer called “the time bomb in record company vaults” – when the termination timer runs out, evergreen artists will be able to withhold their licenses or negotiate with other companies. Enter the RIAA. In the fall of 1999, through a Congressional staff person (a guy they were to hire as chief lobbyist a short while later) the RIAA caused to be inserted into an unrelated omnibus spending bill a change to copyright law whereby “sound recordings” were made a tenth category of works eligible for work for hire status.

An American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) lobbyist discovered the change and contacted her employer, soon a battle between artists and the RIAA was raging, most prominently (and researchably!) in the pages of *Billboard*. Artists expressed disbelief, indignation, and outrage, vehemently asserting themselves as authors justly entitled to ownership, and, especially in the persons of Don Henley and Sheryl Crow, pressured Congress

to hold hearings. Artist lawyers, managers, and other advocates added their voices through interviews, letters, and press releases, and the managing editor of the *Billboard* contributed some very strong editorials against the new law.

### **RIAA Arguments**

At first, the RIAA, through their president Hilary Rosen, argued that the amendment was a technical one, made to reflect the “actual reality” that, because of contractual work for hire language and the fact that labels register them with the copyright office as works for hire, sound recordings are *already* works for hire. This put the RIAA in the strange position of having to argue (quote) “we didn’t seek this change because we thought it was necessary.” By the time of the May 25, 2000 hearing, they had settled on what was to be their final and most aggressively pursued argument for the law: economic efficiency. In her testimony Rosen warned that, unless authorship and ownership were concentrated in the record labels, the termination of transfers clause of the ’76 act would spell chaos for the industry. This is the “time bomb in record company vaults” I mentioned earlier. In Rosen’s words:

*work for hire status is essential to preserve the marketability of highly collaborative works like sound recordings. ...that’s why Congress*



*exempted works made for hire from the termination right otherwise granted to authors. ... Think about the disruption that would ensue if, 35 years after its creation, each of the multitudes of authors involved in each and every track of an album could reclaim copyright ownership of that track. Imagine trying to reconstruct the facts on each such claimant 35 years after the fact. ... litigation would flourish, while commercial exploitation in the marketplace would wither.*

The allocation of authorship and ownership to the labels would benefit everybody, she argued, by streamlining marketability.

### **Artist Community Responds**

Recall, however, that there are two prongs for determining work for hire status. Since record labels do not employ artists, all *their* arguments dealt with prong two: either the creation of a new commissioned works category, or the interpretation of an existing category such that sound recordings could be understood to fall within it. On the other hand, *artists* usually *employ* session personnel, and thus the work of session personnel is almost always (in the majors) unambiguously work-for-hire under prong one.

Several members of the artist community offered testimony along these lines. Michael Greene, president

of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences addressed the threat of unmarketability head on:

*this so-called chaos theory the recording companies are advancing is merely confetti being tossed into the air to hide the reality. All non-featured performers, such as side musicians, backup singers, and engineers are hired to work on a song with a contractual understanding through industry standard agreements that their contributions are made without claims of authorship. This has been the standard practice forever, and anyone who has contracted, recorded, or produced a record certainly knows this.*

The only artist to testify was Sheryl Crow, who took a hard line on the naturalness of unitary proprietary authorship. "A sound recording," she asserted, "is the final result of the creative vision, expression, and execution of one person – the featured artist. ... any claims to authorship by producers, hired musicians, background singers, engineers would be false." Her attorney, Jay Cooper (who was later to represent the artist community in negotiations over repeal language with the RIAA) argued that to determine where work for hire came into the relations in production,

*we have to go to the contract that Ms. Crow and most artists sign. And in that contract, it says to*

*Ms Crow, 'You pay for all the recording costs. If you exceed the advance, it comes out of your pocket. You will hire the producer. You will hire the musicians. You will hire the studio. You will hire the engineer. You will hire the mixer. You will hire all these people'. [...] So if there is a work for hire at all it would be by the artist because the artist is engaging everybody that is concerned with the recording.*

A little later in the hearing, Cooper was questioned by Congressman Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), who was interested precisely in how the line between proprietary and non-proprietary authorship was drawn, and whether sauce for the goose, in this case, would also be sauce for the gander. He asked about the status of Clarence Clemmons, saxophonist for Bruce Springsteen. Music attorney Cooper said that since Clemmons is a sideman, he is "under work for hire for the artist." Wexler pressed his point: "If he is in fact a work for hire for the artist, and then we change the rules as you suggest we do between the artist and the recording company, are we then obliged to change the rule between the artist and the 'Clarences' of the world?" Cooper replied that "when you contract with musicians, you contract with a certain employment form...and he is paid as an employee just like any other hired hand..." The difference in position between artist and side musician is naturalized and

justified through a contract the terms of which include the side musician's abandonment of all claims of authorship. Congressman Wexler asked Cooper to clarify: "So you are not advocating that we do for Clarence necessarily what you would advocate we do for the primary artist?" Cooper said "no, not whatsoever." The artist community argued that, under existing copyright law, their established status as employers legally entitled them to dispossess their "hired hands" of all rights, and confirmed the artists as the unitary, proprietary authors whose absence, according to the RIAA, was to cause industry chaos.

### **History of Work for Hire**

As Catherine Fisk shows in her current "Ideas at Work" project, default ownership of knowledge and intellectual properties produced in the workplace shifted from workers to employers between the 1870s and the 1920s. Around the time of the Civil War, common law was that employees owned what they learned or conceived while on the job; they could obtain patents and copyrights, as well as use what we now understand as trade secrets to set themselves up in competition with their former employers. By the beginning of the Depression, judge-made law had reversed this. This "massive transfer of autonomy from creative workers to their employers," as Fisk terms it, was made possible by the rise of "contractarian" thinking in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historically,

contract acted as a solvent on previous systems of institutionalized employer obligations and employee rights. Fisk writes that

*the stable regime of mutual obligation that had characterized pre-industrial employment relations gave way to a contractarian regime that eliminated employer obligation while yet enforcing dependence and subservience on employees under the guise of formal equality. The judicial endorsement of a contractarian view of copyright ownership paved the way for employers to gain control of copyrights more effectively by enabling employers to contract around employee rights that previously had been all but irrevocable."*

Contract, thus implemented, shifted from the description of an employment bargain to its pre-scription, while invoking the liberal notions of choice, free will and consent in a relation of supposed formal equality between employee and employer.

In protecting their work from appropriation by the record companies, the artist community relies on, reproduces, and reinforces this contractarian logic: established artists like Sheryl Crow offer rare work opportunities for professional musicians; it is through contract (established in collective bargaining agreements) that *quantitative* difference in market power is translated

into *qualitative* difference with respect to ownership of the final product and the resulting "monopoly rents" associated with licensing.

## Conclusion

Marxist theorists make much of the relationship between concrete and abstract labor, and Marxian analyses of cultural production often suggest that what makes cultural labor exceptional is its irreducible concreteness: Ryan and Miede, for example, both argue that cultural products need to be associated with concrete, named authors in order to be fully valorized. But a closer focus on the relations of production show that there are historical legal institutions that cut across culturally productive activities, constituting as *concrete*, and therefore linked to proprietorship, the labor of one small group of authors, and as *abstract*, and therefore merely as *labor power* entitled only to a wage, the labor of a much larger group: those categorized as employees under American copyright law. The artist community's active participation in the material reproduction and symbolic naturalization of this division of property-producing and non-property-producing creative labor, I suggest, is regressive. Their reliance on the law to legitimate the dispossession of others of rights that they themselves hold as both sacrosanct and natural extends the very practices of forcible appropriation and alienation that they oppose so vigorously and publicly when operationalized by the recording industry.

## Endnotes

1. Randy Frisch & Matthew Fortnow, *The Time Bombs in the Record Company Vaults*, Entertainment, Publishing and the Arts Handbook 111, 116 (1994).
2. (Hearing transcript, p. 185)
3. (Hearing transcript, p. 129-131)
4. (Hearing transcript, p. 181)
5. (Hearing transcript, p. 166)
6. (Hearing transcript, p. 190)
7. The tenuous moral nature of the featured artists' assertions with respect to the creative work of their collaborators is evidenced by the ways in which, despite the absolute nature of work for hire, backup musicians are entitled to quasi-royalty payments. Union (AFM) musicians are entitled in certain circumstances to "pocket residuals" – payments made by the contractor when a work to which they contributed is, for example, used in a television commercial or movie. In addition, following the creation of the new digital performance right, the royalty split was mandated to include backup musicians (copyright holder gets 50%, featured artist 45%, backup musicians 5%). Moreover, some featured artists create their own systems of recognition and reward by, for example, "cutting in" their backup musicians on songwriting credits, as Norah Jones has done.
8. (Hearing transcript, p. 222-224)
9. Catherine L. Fisk, "Ideas at Work 1890-1930" (Paper presented at "The Ambiguities of Work: Controlling Knowledge, Controlling Outcomes." Conference at the Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware, November 2003). p. 4 (see also her "Authors at Work: The Origins of the Work-for-Hire Doctrine" *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities* 15/1, pp. 1-70)
10. Fisk, p. 4
11. Fisk, p. 11
12. See *Reid v. CCNV* for details on criteria for finding employment relationship.

## Cognitive Poetics in the analysis of Popular Music: A new approach to song lyrics?

Yngvar B. Steinholt

*And how did you find yourself this morning?*

*Well, I just pulled back the sheets and there I was!*

*- The Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band*

### 1. Literature studies in popular music research

Having observed the variation in academic disciplines and theoretic approaches to popular music studies represented at this and past IASPM conferences, it is becoming increasingly difficult to imagine that forty years ago, studies of contemporary popular music entered Academia through departments of *literature*. There is little point in disregarding pioneering works that helped open a new field for academic study by imposing on them in retrospect the multidisciplinary standards of today. Yet, it is tempting to ask how popular music studies could possibly get off to a more reductionist start. Pointing the barrel back towards ourselves, it seems appropriate to ask how this initial problem of reduction is reflected in our present works and approaches. Despite the canonical status

interdisciplinary approaches to popular music have been given within our organisation on the theoretical level, the 'original sin' of leaving the music out is still tolerated to a surprisingly high degree on the practical level.

When it comes to the part of literature studies in this multidisciplinary mosaic, its status has diminished considerably since the pioneering years. We should no doubt be grateful for that. During the postmodern wave of rock studies in the late 1980s to early 1990s, however, soberly noting that words were only *part* of a song's message was no longer enough. Put to its extreme, the new refrain was that words were there not to *mean* anything, but to mean *anything at all*. Popular music was reduced again, this time to a brainless backdrop for youth rites and mating rituals. Consequently, any literary (or musical) analysis of pop songs became irrelevant, passé and worth little more than a passing smirk from the enlightened postmodernist. This attitude has certainly not helped researchers with a background in studies of literature define their niche in interdisciplinary popular music studies. On the other hand, the discipline itself has stubbornly continued reeling out works (predominantly masters theses) that show alarmingly

little progress when compared to vintage Dylan studies. For those who insist that literature studies belong among the disciplines involved in popular music studies, and that it has a significant piece to offer in the research of this complex field, such isolation is no solution. It is time to ignore the raised eyebrows and 'why-are-you-still-here' looks that tend to follow when one's institutional background is revealed. After all, there is little evidence to suggest that the words of songs are better left to be semi-considered by musicologists, anthropologists, or sociologists. The crucial question is how a literary analysis of song lyrics can be embedded in the musical, performative and social contexts of popular music. In the 1990s the cognitive turn in psychology and linguistics started to spread into the study of literature. The concept of cognitive poetics might yield a perspective and an apparatus that can help us develop the part of literature studies in interdisciplinary approaches to popular music.

Thus, my purpose with this paper is, without delving into hardcore theory, to invite to some reflection on how the role of literature studies in popular music analysis - and its interaction with the other involved disciplines - may benefit from a cognitive turn. In the following I shall first lead you to a brief definition of cognitive poetics. Then, I shall give a short account of the song analyses of my previous study, which 'after the fact' pointed me

in this direction. Finally I will suggest a few examples of how cognitive poetics may help improve the analysis of popular music.

## 2. A detour to a definition

As a manner of introduction I invite you to listen to the first sound file: Butthole Surfers: *Some dispute over T-shirt sales*. While listening, why not try to consider how you would quote and describe this song in an academic article for a prestigious journal of cultural studies?

Admittedly, not all popular songs utilise performative and non-verbal modes of expression to the extent demonstrated in *Some dispute*. Still, all songs *do* utilise to *some* extent the signifying potential inherent in vocal delivery. All singers use their voices as musical and rhethoric instruments and this affects the way we interpret the messages they convey. Moreover, the vast majority of rock songs entail a staging of one or several characters that inhabit the song. *Some dispute over T-shirt sales* does so quite explicitly.

So how do we 'dance about this architecture'? No matter how imaginative our transcriptions, our attempt to quote this lyric in writing would be hopelessly inadequate. The same goes for the vast majority of song lyric quotations in works of popular music studies. And still we cling to this practice. We present, analyse, and draw conclusions



about songs on the basis of their lyrics as if words on a paper were their primary medium. We use fragments of song lyrics to support our theories and arguments about the worldviews and political orientations of musical communities. However, when we fail to acknowledge that song lyrics are not only words, but also musical sounds produced by living bodies, we become scholars of a paradoxical popular music studies *without music*. The point has been made before, but we need to keep asking:

*-What justifies our ignorance of the human body in music?*

*-How can we remain in contact with the human body when we transform songs to ink and paper for our analysis?*

*-Are there ways to investigate how the human body is embedded in the song on the performative level as well as on the perceptual?*

During the 1990s cognitive poetics sailed up as the next big thing in literary studies. It is now commonly held as an important corrective and supplement to existing approaches to literary analysis. Cognitive poetics is founded on the basis of cognitive linguistics and cognitive psychology. According to the British theorist

Peter Stockwell, the basic premise of these disciplines is that they - to a much greater extent than previous approaches - bind all forms of conscious expression and perception in our biological circumstances. In other words: we think, say things and perceive things in the forms we do because we are all human-sized containers of air and liquid, bipeds with our main receptors at the top of our bodies. This implies that our minds are embodied both literally and figuratively. Thus, one of the most fundamental impacts of the cognitive perspective is its challenge of the philosophical distinction between body and mind.

In popular music studies, this distinction is reflected in an implicit assumption that the music speaks to the listener's body, whereas the lyrics speak to the listener's mind. This hard-dying assumption has enabled us to either over-emphasise or ignore song lyrics the way we have during the past few decades. Following a cognitive model of understanding, the lyrics are an integral part of the musical experience, and they enhance the possibilities for the listener to identify with the song. As listeners we identify with texts (musical and lyrical) by imagining bodies that inhabit them. A text might be abstract, it does not necessarily construct any explicit body or character as such. The fact that the sounds and words of a text originate in other human beings is sufficient for us to experience the implicit body in that text. In short, not only

do we identify with lyrics as if they were bodies not unlike our own; in order to negotiate meaning in a text we also project certain sides of ourselves onto an 'outer' body, which we are prepared to send into negotiations with the imagined body in the text

Let us begin with a simple example involving only a written poem and its reader: In order to open herself to the poem, the reader will activate certain sides of her personality and experience. She constructs a default reading body which she is prepared to bring into negotiation with the poem. More or less spectacularly, the default reading body enters in a dialogue with the imagined body in the poem. As a result, the reader is invited to develop her reading body, bring in new experiences, activate new thoughts and emotions to bring into the dialogue. Thus, if the poem is able to engage the reader, it can bring forth new insights and experiences through its encounter with the reading body. Now, of course, several bodies, or sketches of bodies can reside within the same poem. The imagined voice or voices of a poem can be more or less present. The possibilities of variation are virtually infinite, but in principle the poem always houses at least one implicit body with which we can identify.

Now we can make the situation more complex by letting someone read the poem aloud to one listener. In addition

to the default reading body of the listener and the body (or bodies) that reside in the poem we now have the default reading body of the reader to deal with. The latter is also a performing body, and the performance of the poem involves a process of interpretation in itself. Add more listeners to this poetry reading, and the reading bodies of the audience members will start influencing each other as individual reactions are considered by other listeners, potentially resulting in the formation of a collective reading body which adds to, rather than replaces the individual reading bodies. Is this becoming more than a handful already? Just wait until we make our poetry reader sing rather than read, give her the backing of a fully electrified rock band, sound- and lighting engineers, style-specific stage outfits and a ten-album recording history!

If we allow this ensuing mass of bodies to roughly represent the field of popular music studies, the primary object of study for the science of literature can center on the body or bodies which reside in the lyrics. This body does not exist in isolation from any of the other bodies involved. It becomes meaningful through its interrelationship with these bodies: imagined, projected and physical. The task of literature science in popular music studies, then, must be to shed light on the interrelationships between the body constructed in the lyrics and its surrounding environment.

### 3. An arrival to the realms of cognitive poetics

My interest in cognitive poetics emerged from my doctoral thesis, entitled *Rock in the Reservation: Songs from the Leningrad Rock Club 1981-86*. In retrospect, I have become aware of some distinct cognitive traits in my own approach. I suspect these traits to be suitable to demonstrate some of the potential for cognitive poetics in popular music studies. This goes for song analysis in particular, but also for our general treatment of songs and their lyrics.

Among the challenges I had to face in my thesis was a dominant set of ideas within the Leningrad rock environment. Critics, fans and musicians shared notions that clearly reflected a fundamental dichotomy between body/music on the one hand and mind/lyrics on the other (See Table Above Right).

Another cornerstone idea that sprang out of this dichotomy was that, compared to Anglo-american rock, Russian rock was regarded as poetically superior, but musically inferior. The 'russianness' of Russian rock thus became limited to lyrics, closely related to the Russian literary tradition, whereas the music was 'borrowed from the west'. On the one hand, my research had to respect that these opinions were fundamental in the self image of the Leningrad rockers. On the other hand, non-Russian

Pop (Soviet estrada)	Rock
Inauthenticity	Authenticity
Dance	Literature
Cliches	Poetry
Female singers	Male singer-songwriters
Love songs	Existential questions
Moscow	Leningrad
Commercial	Intellectual
Entertainment	Art
Mass culture	High culture
Body	Mind

friends who listened to the bands I was studying claimed that the music sounded Russian to them. I had already decided to analyse four songs by rock club bands and include them as sources of information for my study. So, I decided to take the analyses further to see if I could challenge the local view of a musical 'westernness' combined with lyrical 'russianness'.

My method of analysis was based on a small-scale version of Philip Tagg's qualitative approach. I provided thirteen non-Russian speakers with recordings of the four songs. They were asked to describe the songs (sound, instrumentation, production) and account for their immediate notions of mood and meaning in the tracks (PMFA ParaMusical Field of Association). They were asked to consider 'what person in what state of mind would use the kind of voice that the singer uses'. And, finally, they were asked to mention songs and artists

they associated to when listening to each of the Russian tracks (IOCM: Inter-Objective Comparison Material). In other words, I was offered insight into thirteen different reading bodies negotiating meaning from the same song.

Not unexpectedly, the singing voice became responsible for a large and significant part of the information I gathered from my little panel of informants. For this paper I have limited my examples to the part of the analysis that dealt with the vocals, the lyrics, and their interrelationship. On the basis of respondent descriptions of the vocals and of the comparison material they suggested, I began investigating the stylistic context of the vocal performance.

*-Was the mode of singing related to - or determined by - a specific musical style?*

*-Did the vocals, the various parts of the accompaniment, the general sound picture, and mix refer to the same style?*

*-If the song corresponded to an established rock style, would style conventions affect the song's message or choice of subject?*

Moving on to the lyrics:

*-Did they correspond to the musical style?*

*-Were they influenced by any particular style conventions in their mode of expression and their thematics?*

Starting from the comparison material suggested by my informants (and with some valuable help from the IASPM mailing list), I began looking for rock songs about similar subjects. This LCM (Lyrical Comparison Material) of songs about the same topics, helped me consider:

*1) How established stylistic contexts in the global rock tradition influenced the Russian words.*

*2) Local differences and peculiarities in the treatment of common rock motifs.*

*3) How the Russian language and performative context affected motif, message and sound.*

For illustration please listen to the attached fragment of Poslednii geroi ('Last hero') by the band Kino (translated lyrics below) and the selection of its IOCMs and LCMs. Poslednii geroi was written and recorded in Leningrad in 1984. My full analysis included twenty-nine IOCMs and LCMs.

The song lyrics construct an explicit body, a character, yet a second body implicitly resides in the lyrics, which

### Last Hero

The night is short, the goal far away  
At night you often feel like a drink  
You go out to the kitchen, but the water's bitter,  
You can't sleep here, you can't live here

Good morning, Last Hero!  
Good morning to you and to all of your kind!  
Good morning, Last Hero!  
Greetings, Last Hero!

You wished to be alone but the urge quickly passed  
You wished to be alone but you couldn't face it  
Your burden is light but your arm's getting numb  
And you meet down over a game of 'fool'

Good morning, Last Hero!  
Good morning to you and all of your kind!  
Good morning, Last Hero!  
Greetings, Last Hero!

In the morning you opt for a fast getaway  
Telephone call's like a 'Forward!' command  
You go somewhere you don't wanna go to  
You go there to find no-one's waiting for you

Good morning, Last Hero!  
Good morning to you and to all of your kind!  
Good morning, Last Hero!  
Greetings, Last Hero!

presents that character to the listener. This second, 'invisible' body constructs the image of the songs main character by the use of a self-inclusive 'you'. This leaves the listener little choice but to identify with the main character. Thematically '*Last hero*' stands in a context of rock songs about boredom and alienation. Stylistically it has strong references to 'new pop'. New pop shares with punk, new wave and post-punk

a preference for topics such as idleness, decay, and loneliness. In addition it often expresses fear of a de-humanised machine society.

In a cognitive approach, the song cannot be studied as merely the vocal message of the singer, musically mediated by a band. Since the vast majority of rock songs are not merely narratives, but character songs, the body in the lyrics is frequently constructed as a character that is in turn staged by the performer. The mood and message of the song is mediated through this imagined character. Consequently, listener perception is based on an identification not only with an imagined body in the song, but with a fully staged fictitious character - an explicit image of a human being.

By investigating the character of Viktor Tsui's '*Last hero*' - and by comparing him to other bored and alienated song characters from Lou Reeds junkie waiting for his man, via Iggy Pop's chairman of the bored, to Ian Curtis' pack of disillusioned young men - I was able to identify special Russian traits in the character of the last hero. This led me to further investigations of the interplay between external and local impulses in the Russian song. '*Last hero*' introduces a common rock scenario to a late Soviet context. Its 'russianness' can be measured by investigating how the character and his surroundings are embedded in late Soviet reality. The

song thus represents both a rock view on Russian reality, and a Russian view on rock. To complete the analytic circle: these views were also reflected in the music.

This already demonstrates a substantial progression from the initial concept of a 'western' music combined with 'Russian' words. By turning attention towards the character *in* the song, it is possible to come closer to bridging the artificial gap between music and lyrics, between body and mind.

### So?

A cognitive approach to popular music and its lyrics can help us reach a higher level of quality and ethics in quoting, describing, and analysing songs and their messages. It reminds us:

*-That song lyrics are an integrated part of a musical performance;*

*-that the message of a song is partly determined by performance;*

*-that music and lyrics combined speak to both body and brain simultaneously;*

*-that our perception of songs is governed by our identification with the imagined characters that inhabit them.*

There appears to be a lot to gain from turning to cognitive poetics for new resources and concepts when analysing songs and their lyrics. In this manner, the responsibilities of literature studies in popular music analysis can be re-defined. By concentrating not only on rhetorical and poetic structures in the lyrics, but on how these construct human-like images with which we may identify, and which interact with other images in the creation of meaning, it can bring results which are more immediately relevant for the other disciplines involved in popular music studies. Cognitive poetics has to the best of my knowledge not yet been applied to the analysis of song lyrics on a larger scale. Yet, it might well expand and improve existing approaches to popular music and lyrics both within and beyond discipline of literature.



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## From Star-Ratings to Prizes: The Mediation of Musical Quality

John Street

### Introduction

This paper is about the ways in which quality is attributed to records. It looks at two examples of this process (ones that also apply to schoolchildren): the awarding of stars and the awarding of prizes. Records receive stars from reviewers (1\* to 5\*) on a weekly or monthly basis, while there are annual prizes and awards, such as the Brits or the Grammys or the Mercury Music Prize (MMP).

Both of these processes are relatively recent developments, and one of the questions raised by this paper is why they have emerged as ways of ascribing quality to music. Another question is about how these devices are used – about who gets the prizes and who gets the 5\* star review. A final question is about the significance of such developments for the way we think about, and investigate, the issue of value in music.

### Background

Why is the attribution of ‘quality’ an interesting or important issue? One answer to this question is that the idea of ‘value’ has re-assumed importance within the study of culture. Debates about ‘dumbing down’ or

about political correctness have, within the mass media, articulated a set of concerns about the worth of forms of culture which have, in turn, prompted or highlighted discussion within the academy about how (and whether) value can be attributed to culture. Within popular music studies, this concern is best represented by Simon Frith’s (1996) *Performing Rites*. In arguing for the centrality of value judgement, one of the legacies of Frith’s book is the suggestion that attention needs to be paid to the processes by which value is attributed to music. This is not just a theoretical point; it is an empirical one. The attribution of value matters to what people – musicians, fans, industry executives – do.

This empirical dimension is, anecdotally at least, apparent in the way in which the awarding of prizes or stars influences action. Take, for example, these comments from contributors to a *Guardian* debate about the impact of stars in reviews:

*‘Performing at Edinburgh this year, I experienced first hand how stars affect a play’s success. A three- or four- star review is how you sell your show and draw your audience in. With so much choice, it’s the only immediate way in this consumer culture to advertise your show.’ (Guardian, G2, 3/02/04)*

*'As a discerning movie-goer I admit to being swayed very much by the star rating system and only really consider seeing those rated four and five star'. (Guardian, G2, 3/02/04)*

*'I am ashamed to confess that I find the stars a useful first indicator' (Guardian, G2, 3/02/04)*

Add to these, the now common use of star ratings in advertisements for records, and we can see how stars might be seen to matter. Similar effects can be detected following the award of prizes. It is well known, and widely noted, that the awarding of prizes boost the sales of those shortlisted and those who win. What is true for the Booker or Whitbread prize for literature, is also true for the Mercury Music Prize (MMP). When Ian McEwan won the Booker Prize for Amsterdam in 1999 his sales rose by 455%; when DCB Pierre won the same prize in 2003, his sales increased by 20,000 in the two weeks after the announcement. A similar benefit accrues to those who are merely nominated. In 1993, the year after the MMP was introduced, *Music Week* (18/9/1993) reported that sales rose by as much as 300% for MMP nominees.

The impact is not felt in sales only. Prizes in particular can shape business practice in the sense either that a winner is likely to receive preferential treatment, or that all future marketing will refer (as will reviews) to

the prize and that future signings will be influenced by the desire to find a 'Mercury' act. The economist Victor Ginsburgh (2003: 100) produces data to suggest that prizes are 'correlated with economic success and may even influence or predict it.'

This paper takes as given that stars and prizes matter. What it is concerned with is how such devices for attributing arose and how they have been applied. We begin with the use of stars.

### **A brief history of the star: from Christgau to Q**

Robert Christgau introduced a version of the star into his Consumer Guides in the *Village Voice* in 1969. The irony was, of course, palpable. Christgau offered his pithy reviews as consumer guides, and then attached a grading scheme taken from college education (A+ to E). He was mimicking, not emulating, the systems he drew upon. As he wrote in explanation of what he called 'criticism in a pop form' (ie 'compact and digestible'): 'The most essential component of this form was also the most controversial—the grades... Of course, what people hate about grades, even more than their arbitrariness, is their appearance of objectivity, of absolute authority' (Christgau, 1982: 4-5). He only pretended to 'absolute authority', of course. In fact, the grades signalled 'a private aesthetic response', and one guided by a 'populism' that set itself against inaccessibility – hence a B for *Trout Mask Replica* (Christgau, 1982: 5).

The irony which accompanied Christgau's grading system was not apparent nearly two decades later when Q magazine was launched. The star system it adopted – 5\*: indispensable, 4\*: excellent .... – was functionality itself. As one of the founders of Q, David Hepworth, explained, the awarding of stars was meant as an independent statement of merit, not a whim of the reviewer, not Christgau's 'private aesthetic response.' Q was establishing the order of things. Hepworth illustrated the Q approach with this example:

*Another key thing happened when Dave Rimmer produced a review of a David Sylvian album. We'd told writers that the star-rating system meant that they had to stand aside from the music, because the review was not purely their opinion. Dave Rimmer's review came back with five stars and Mark [Ellen] and I said "No, sorry, David Sylvian does not rate five stars" ... It caused a bit of a to-do, but I think we were actually right, because we put ourselves on the side of the readers rather than the writers... So we docked a star. They got the hang of it. (quoted in Gorman, 2001: 324).*

For Q, the star system was seen to offer the same kind of service that was offered by *What Computer?* or any other consumer guide.<sup>1</sup>

### What stars mean

There is a sense in which both Christgau and Q were engaged in the same business.

Both were adherents of democracy, both were celebrating or serving the (relatively) free choice of consumers. They differed, though, in the conceptions of democracy they operated. Where Q wanted simply to *reflect* the consumer, Christgau wanted to *educate* them. This difference be mapped onto the criteria they deployed (or at least that they publicly represent themselves as deploying).

For Christgau these have varied over time. In the 1970s an A+ record was 'an organically conceived masterpiece that repays prolonged listening with new excitement and insight' (1982: 21). By the 1990s, it was 'a record of sustained beauty, power, insight, groove and/or googlefritz that has invited and repaid repeated listenings in the daily life of someone with 500 other CDs to get to.' (2000: xvi). Either way, the value was to be found in the music. By contrast, for Q the quality was measured by the market. In the first edition of Q (October 1986), it was announced that a 5\* was to be awarded to 'a record likely to be enthused-over by 99% of sane humans.'

While both laid claim to populism, Q and Christgau had very different takes on the concept. Christgau is a public service populist, seeking to educate his readers in a

particular aesthetic, whereas Q's approach (because it too is imposing an aesthetic) is to reflect what it perceives as popular (ie Q readers') taste. This shift in the meaning of stars might be seen to reflect wider social, economic and political trends.

### Explaining stars

The emergence of stars as indicators of quality are, of course, not confined to music. Some of us, I suspect, are familiar – if not as familiar as we'd like to be - with their use in ranking restaurants (the Michelin star) and hotels. In the UK, more recently, hospital trusts are accorded stars<sup>2</sup>, and in the next round of research assessment of university departments they will be profiled and awarded stars too.

The use of stars, then, might seem to form part of a general process, one that is often captured in the term 'audit culture' or 'audit society' (Power, 1997). Such societies are seen as the logical and material consequence of the breakdown of traditional value structures and hierarchies. Systems based on trust or authority have been replaced by ones that demand 'transparency' and 'evidence'; they must be 'auditable'. There is a democratic element to these trends, but there are also anti-democratic ones. They are about increasing popular control and increasing central control.

They can also be linked to even more widespread processes. Max Graf (1947: 30), for example, linked

the emergence of music criticism to the emergence of reason itself: 'Musical criticism is one of the forces that have molded the modern world, a tributary to the mighty stream of criticism that began to flow through Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century. Since then, criticism has participated in every phase of the formation of modern ideas. It has grown in strength along with the rising tide of the scientific, philosophical, and social ideas of the "Age of Reason".' More prosaically, in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Jurgen Habermas (1989: 159-65) describes how, with the emergence of capitalism and instrumental rationality, cultural *debate* gives way to cultural *consumption*, and with this the celebration of 'free choice' in culture.

This logic is incorporated into contemporary accounts of the role of the review and the critic in the cultural economy. The economist Richard Caves (2000), for example, sees criticism primarily as a way of conveying market information to consumers. From this perspective, the awarding of stars might be seen as the logical extension of this process: it is about simplifying (economising) the information. The further assumption is that the medium through which the information is conveyed is itself prone to the same incentives. After all, it does not automatically follow that if the industry and consumers need a means for conveying information that this is provided. The intermediary – the press, the critic – has to adapt too. This is part of Caves' argument in that he sees the 'critic' as a device for attracting readers (Caves, 2000: 191).

There is, though, a tension at work, represented by a reluctance to embrace the logic of the market. This was apparent in the criticism provoked by the *Guardian's* decision to introduce a star system for its reviews. The decision was described by the playwright David Hare as a 'militantly philistine policy' and as a sign of 'vulgarity' (*Guardian*, G2, 20/1/04). Three things are worth noting. First, perhaps because of the tension, stars are not applied universally. Not all newspapers, for example, use it, and those who do, do not apply it to all cultural forms. The *Guardian*, for instance, while applying stars to films, music, theatre, dance etc, does not apply it to books. Secondly, the effect of the star rating varies with cultural form. This has to do with whether consumers have alternative sources of information. Few can see a play before the critics, whereas access to records is - relatively - easier. The power of the theatre critic is, therefore, marginally greater than that of the record reviewer. And finally, it might be contended that the explanation for the adoption of the star device might work for Q, but not necessarily for Christgau, insofar as the latter positioned himself at an ironic distance from the process of auditing culture.

### **Distributing stars**

But if there are different stories to tell about the origins of the stars and about the criteria for their application, does this mean that there are also different stories to

be told about their use? This question is considered - if not answered - by two routes: first, by comparing the awarding of plaudits by Q and Christgau; and second, by looking at the particular case of *Uncut* magazine (which like Q awards stars for records, films and books).

### **1. Christgau vs Q**

Taking a year at random (1994) (and allowing for the fact that US and UK release dates may vary), we can compare the albums awarded A by Christgau (73) and those deemed the 50 best records of the year by Q. Of the 123 records listed, only 8 (6.5%) appeared on both lists: Beck (*Mellow Gold*), Nirvana (*Unplugged*), Hole (*Living Through This*), Green Day (*Dookie*), REM (*Monster*), Neil Young (*Sleep with Angels*), Soundgarden (*Superunknown*), Beastie Boys (*Ill Communications*). Apart from the fact that they were all US artists, this result would seem to suggest a radical disjunction between the criteria being applied by Christgau and Q. What this disjunction might signify (and indeed whether it is true for other years and other outlets) requires, of course, much more detailed examination.

### **2. The case of *Uncut* (and Christgau)**

An example of more detailed study is provided by a survey of *Uncut* over a six month period, January-May 2005. Founded in 1997, *Uncut* is one among several



Albums reviewed in *Uncut*, January-May 2005

	5* new/old	4* new/old	3* new/old	2* new/old	1* new/old
January	0/3	24/31	35/18	6/7	1/1
February	2/4	21/19	33/28	6/7	1/0
March	1/5	36/39	33/36	7/12	0/1
April	3/7	25/37	37/25	12/9	0/1
May	1/5	30/34	38/24	7/6	0/1
June	2/6	31/40	33/31	9/4	0/0
Total	9/30	167/200	209/162	47/45	2/4

monthly magazines offering interviews and reviews. Although devoting much space to music, it is unusual in that it gives substantial attention to film too. The point of the survey was to reveal patterns in the awarding of stars, and to explore the distribution of stars across the range, and variations between various categories – in particular, debuts, new vs re-releases, and music vs other cultural forms. The first table examines the distribution of stars given to records, comparing those awarded to new releases and those to re-releases.

Of the 434 new releases reviewed, 2% received a 5\*; of the 441 re-released albums reviewed 7% received a 5\*. The comparison for 4\* is: 38% (new)/45% (old); and for 3\*: 48% (new)/37% (old). This suggests that, generally, re-released albums receive more positive assessment than new releases. This is not altogether surprising, given that the records chosen for re-release will tend

to be those that have already 'proved' themselves. What is perhaps more significant is the concentration of assessment in the 3\*/4\* categories: 87% of all new releases received 3\* or 4\*, and 82% of all re-released records were given 3 or 4 stars. (By way of contrast, consider Christgau's distribution of top grades. Between 1969 and early 2005, Christgau reviewed 12682 records, of which 2859 (22%) received an A, and 4003 (31%) a B. While there is no easy translation between the two systems of grading, it would suggest that Christgau is a 'harder marker' than *Uncut* and less inclined to provide endorsement for the industry's products.)

A similar pattern of positive endorsement in *Uncut* can be detected for books and films. 87% of films received 3\* or better and 91% of books received 3\* or better, albeit with a significantly higher proportion of films receiving a 5\* (14%) than were awarded to records. Books were similarly favoured; 13% received 5\*. There

### Films and books reviewed in *Uncut*, January-June 2005

	5*	4*	3*	2*	1*
<b>Films</b>	17	53	33	12	3
<b>Books</b>	18	65	40	9	2
<b>Total (%)</b>	35 (14)	118 (47)	73 (31)	21 (8)	5 (2)

may, of course, be a simple explanation for the latter: fewer books are reviewed, and the pre-selection may involved a pre-judgement. The same, though, would not be true for films (given relatively small number released each month). Nonetheless, the impression created is of a hierarchy of cultural quality with films and books at the top and music below them.

The other issue that was investigated was the treatment of debuts. Of the 9 records receiving a 5\*, 4 (44%) were debut records. Taking the case of a single month, 6/24 (25%) of 4\* records were debuts and 11/35 (31%) of 3\* records were debuts. Put another way: of the records getting 3\*-5\* (68), 21 were debut records, and of these 4 (19%) got 5\*, whereas only 11% of other records got 5\*. There is no such distinction for 4\* records, of which 28% of debuts, and 26% second or later releases. While we cannot use this to claim that any given debut record will do better than a second album (because we do not have the global figures for both), we can say that there appears to be a bias towards debut records in the

awarding of 5\*. By way of further comparison, taking a single year of Christgau's A+ records, 13/92 (14%) were debut records. Christgau, it seems, is less impressed by debut records.

### Implications

If we assume that the awarding of stars matter, and if we note the divergences between the signals transmitted by Christgau and Q and *Uncut*, then we should, at the very least, give further attention to the particular processes, actors and institutions that deliver these messages. It does appear that there are indeed radically different aesthetics at work. What the survey of *Uncut* seems to reveal is that – generally – the message being conveyed is of the 'high quality' of product: over 80% of products are 'good' or better, and that this is a consistent monthly result. In other words, the attribution of quality would seem to serve the self-image of the industry. In respect of debut records, there is also the suggestion that the best is often embodied in the 'new'. Although, paradoxically, the distribution of stars also gives the impression that the past is more glorious than the present. In short, the biases displayed by *Uncut* might display both a commitment to market liberalism and to conservatism.

Does that other mediator of quality, the prize, tell the same story?

### A brief history of the Mercury Music Prize

The Mercury Music Prize (MMP) was first awarded in 1992. It was modelled on the Booker Prize for literature. Its formal purpose was to identify the British or Irish album of the year. Its underlying agenda, which inspired its creation, was to celebrate British and Irish music and to draw it to the attention what the industry identified as 'lapsed' customers, people with disposable income who used to buy records but who were no longer doing so.

The initiative for the prize came from the record industry, with the strong backing of retailers. But importantly, it was not designed simply to produce a populist outcome like that delivered by awards like the Brits or the Grammys. It was important to the strategy for the prize that it have credibility and authority, that it be ostensibly independent of the industry. This strategy was delivered, in part, by the appointment of Simon Frith as chair of the panel (a role he has occupied since the beginning). Frith, while have close industry connections, was also independent of it in his role as an academic. The judges too have been selected to represent different aspects of the industry, but their role and the integrity of the prize has been couched in terms of their independence. They are charged with choosing the record of the year without reference to media hype, the previous career of the artists, chart placings and so on. The suggestion is that the prize is just about the music. The distinction between the MMP and

the Brits or Grammys parallels that between Christgau and Q. They both offer a form of democracy, but not the same form.

The detailed reality is, of course, much more complicated. The MMP is the product of a number of different stakeholders. These include the prize's formal sponsors (which have, over the years, included Mercury Communications, Technics, Panasonic, Nationwide); the music industry, both record companies and retailers; the television company that covers the final ceremony; and finally the judging panel itself, who also have an investment in the outcome. How these interests interact with each other, and thereby influence the character of the prize, have important consequences for the ways in which it operates. Both the shortlist and final winner are products of this (political) process (for more detail, see Street, 2005a & 2005b).

But whatever the details, the crucial point is that the MMP represents a distinctive way of attributing quality to music, one that differentiates it from the Brits and the Grammys, but which, like them, influences the market and the industry. If anything, it has a more profound impact on the latter. Where the Brits and the Grammys reward *past* sales, the MMP creates *future* sales and strategies.

### Explaining the MMP

The proximate causes of the MMP lie, as we have seen, in the initiatives taken by record industry executives,

### Mercury Music Prize – debut records in shortlist and as winners, 1992-2004

Year (shortlist)	Debuts	Winner	Debut?
1992 (10)	3	Primal Scream	No
1993 (10)	4	Suede	Yes
1994 (10)	1	M People	No
1995 (10)	7	Portishead	Yes
1996 (10)	3	Pulp	No
1997 (10)	2	Roni Size	Yes
1998 (12)	5	Gomez	Yes
1999 (12)	2	Talvin Singh	Yes
2000 (12)	7	Badly Drawn Boy	Yes
2001 (12)	7	PJ Harvey	No
2002 (12)	6	Ms Dynamite	Yes
2003 (12)	9	Dizzee Rascal	Yes
2004 (12)	5	Franz Ferdinand	Yes
	<b>61/144 (42%)</b>		<b>9/13 (69%)</b>

drawing on the model forged by another cultural sector, and in response to a perceived market problem. But these local causal connections are themselves a product of wider changes, ones that make the 'prize' a solution to the 'problem'. The prize represents another of those devices for signalling 'quality to consumers and thereby bring pecuniary gain to producers' (Caves, 2000: 196). Like the starred review, the prize provides a way of conveying information to consumers in a crowded market. More broadly, the prize can be attributed to those same processes that account for star-ratings: the

emergence of an audit culture and the crisis in traditional forms of critical authority and professional judgement (see Marquand, 2004).

#### Awarding prizes

There are many ways in which the decisions of the MMP might be analysed – in terms of, for example, the representation of women musicians, the distribution between independent and major labels, the geographical location of artists, the range genres etc. Analysis of each

would be revealing, but for the purposes of this paper the focus here is upon a single issue: the treatment of debut records. The reason for this choice is, first, that it allows for comparison with the distribution of star reviews, and second, that it allows for reflection on the aesthetic values being applied by the MMP. The table below records the number of debuts included in the shortlist and which of those that were eventual winners. It needs to be noted that the length of the short list increased from 10 to 12 in 1998.

It is noticeable that debuts feature prominently in both lists. The shortlist, particularly in the latter years, includes a high proportion of debuts, with debut records more often than not winning the prize.

In comparison with the stars awarded in the print media (see above), the MMP is much better disposed towards debut releases than either Christgau or *Uncut*.

### Implications

It might be tempting to conclude, on the basis of what we have seen, that the MMP represents a radical aesthetic compared to conservatism of the print media – whether Christgau, *Q* or *Uncut*. This may be true, but it is not proven by the statistics. This is because it rests on an assumption that what is new (ie a debut) is also innovative (ie radical). Clearly, this is not necessarily true. The new might equal the innovative or it might conform to the market's need for the appearance of

innovation. Equally, those debuts awarded 5\* or A+ may be innovative in ways that the debuts which win the MMP are not. No amount of statistical data will, in itself, resolve these questions. They depend on more detailed, qualitative (literally) analysis of the records involved. For what it is worth, it does seem that the MMP has succeeded in identifying innovation, if by that we mean the highlighting of new musical trends. The awards to Portishead, Roni Size and Dizzee Rascal would serve to support this contention.

What we can conclude, however, is that there are different patterns in the way in which quality is attributed to music, and that these patterns are themselves products of the particular institutional devices that have emerged to distribute 'quality'. They have, in turn, been the product of larger political-economic trends in the music industry and the music press, and indeed of trends in society at large. But while these trends form the background to the prizes and the star-ratings, they do not account for the micro-behaviour of the judging panels and the journalists. As Stanley Lieberman (2000: 273) reminds us in his study of cultural change, shifts in taste are rarely, if ever, the result of external forces. Rather, it is the 'internal mechanisms' which operate independently of society that are responsible. If he is right, and if we wish to account for the way in which quality in music is mediated, then we would do well to pay more attention to the behaviour of prize juries and

reviewers (and their editors). We might also note the comment of other analyst (Ginsburgh, 2003) of these processes who observes that while prizes and reviews may predict or cause success, they do not necessarily reward talent, at least as this is measured by the longevity of careers.

## Endnotes

1. For example, as one computer magazine explained: 'PC World launched its Star Rating system with the September 2001 issue. It's designed to give our readers an easy-to-find, quick-to-interpret assessment of a product's overall quality and performance.'
2. The NHS performance ratings system places NHS trusts in England into one of four categories:
  - trusts with the highest levels of performance are awarded a performance rating of three stars
  - trusts that are performing well overall, but have not quite reached the same consistently high standards, are awarded a performance rating of two stars
  - trusts where there is some cause for concern regarding particular areas of performance are awarded a performance rating of one star
  - trusts that have shown the poorest levels of performance against the indicators or little progress in implementing clinical governance are awarded a performance rating of zero stars.

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## The Mediation Of Memory: 'Grunge' Remembered And Reconstructed

Catherine Strong

On April 5th 1994, Kurt Cobain, lead singer and songwriter for Nirvana, at the time one of the bands most closely associated with the 'grunge' label, shot himself in his Seattle home. In April 2004, Cobain's face again filled the magazine racks as special editions marking the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event were released. One such magazine, Spin, printed an article titled "The Ghost of Saint Kurt"(Norris). After describing Cobain as "a ghost" and drawing analogies between Nirvana (both the group and the concept) and various religions such as Shintoism, Buddhism and Christianity, the author, Chris Norris, discusses how people listening to the music today supposedly react:

"Nirvana may sound somewhat like today's modern-rock playlist, but their music *feels* very strange. The songs elicit perplexing emotions. For one thing, it's hard to headbang to a saint. And this guy's image pushes some hard-wired buttons. I mean, look at him. The striking clear-blue eyes. The sharp, nobly set features. The thousand-yard smirk coming out of the photos and videos. The unkemptness almost makes him more dusty-prophet biblical. And listen to the oblique, electrifying lyrics and airy vocal lines, the way they waft of surprising harmonies over a neo-

heavy-metal roar, leaving melodic vapour trails. In a way, the cynicism you feel you *should* have about all the grunge mythologizing smacks of a naysayer's denial." (56)

In this paper I will be examining the ways in which Kurt Cobain is remembered differently in the mass media and among fans, but also how these accounts intersect and engage with each other. The different narratives of fans and journalists will be presented, with the accounts of fans being theorised as a form of collective memory, itself inherently shaped, but not dominated by, the media. Theories will also be put forward as to why these narratives developed the way they did and what functions they serve for these groups, examining how "both *memory* and *media* constitute intermediaries between individual and society, and between past and present"(van Dijck 263). The empirical evidence I will be using as the basis for my arguments here is the result of 43 interviews conducted over the last year with Australians who identified themselves as fans of grunge during the early 90s. One of the questions asked was how they felt about the death of Kurt Cobain, and most of the data presented here are answers to that question.

## Collective Memory

Collective memory refers to memories that are shared by a group of people and help to shape their identities as a part of that group. The study of this field is generally considered to have originated with Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Durkheim, in the 1930s. Halbwachs went against previous studies of memory which treated it as an entirely individual creation, arguing instead that “the greatest number of memories come back to us when our parent, our friends, or other persons recall them to us...it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize and localize their memories.” (Halbwachs 38). He also theorised the ways in which memories are not immutable truths, or exact reproductions of the past, by looking at how their meanings, and indeed content, can change over time depending on what is important to remember for our social identities at any given point. Collective memories are ‘shared’ memories which help to create group membership and collective identity by making people feel they are linked to a common past. “By definition, collective memory thereby presumes activities of sharing, discussion, negotiation, and, often, contestation.” (Zelizer 214). This work is relevant to my current study in that I am not looking at a current phenomenon – grunge has been considered ‘dead’ by most people since the mid-90s. The question that

therefore needs to be asked is how memories of grunge may have changed over time and why, to what ends and via which intervening forces?

The memories of respondents in regards to grunge can be considered ‘collective’ in that by responding to a call for ‘grunge fans’ to be interviewed they are identifying themselves as members of this group, and the basic details of what ‘grunge’ is and the important events associated with it are in many respects uniform across this group. The reason for this is that respondents would have gained most of their knowledge of grunge from the same sources, the music press, radio, television and other mass media, as only three respondents had any direct contact with the people or places central to grunge. However, this knowledge is not simply that of historical facts, as it has been interwoven with the autobiographical memories of the fans, and is connected to emotions and lived experience – the respondents *feel* grunge was something they were a *part* of, and this involvement is a part of their identity formation. To these people grunge is neither dead history (Radstone 84) nor individual autobiographical memory – it is a meaningful experience with shared meanings. Occasions marked by commemoration serve an important role in maintaining and reinforcing the symbolic elements of collective identity (Fentress and Wickham; Schwartz), and this anniversary was such an occasion. The status

of this group membership – whether it is current or itself more based in memory – is a point that can't be covered here.

It should be remembered that neither journalists nor respondents are developing their conceptualisation of Cobain from nothing, or from scratch. As much as memories are constantly reshaped by their use and meaning for the present, they are also constrained by certain 'base lines' of factual events, and frames of remembering which limit what can and cannot be remembered on any given topic (Irwin-Zarecka; Schwartz)

### The Media accounts

The commemorative anniversary journalism dealing with the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cobain's death took four basic article forms. Firstly, there were **reprints**, of interviews, articles and photos from the time, republished in relatively untouched form without additional commentary. Secondly, there were articles which consisted of **quotes** from non-journalists, either 'people who were there' or people such as current musicians saying how their lives had been affected by Cobain. Thirdly, there were **historical** articles, relatively straightforward accounts of what happened when. Finally, there were articles discussing the **legacy** of Cobain, and it is these which I will be concentrating on here, for while all four types

of article perform important commemorative functions, these give the most explicit representations of how the media portrays Cobain. (The use of the other 3 types is also relevant, especially in examining what is included and what is left out in such articles, and who is deemed to be authoritative or interesting, but there this paper does not have the scope to cover these in depth.) The anniversary editions are useful to concentrate on here in that they were published within a year of any of my interviews taking place, making the perspectives of the media and the respondents more comparable.

The description of Cobain found in these articles is that of an exceptional, extraordinary human being – in some cases, as in the Spin article quoted at the beginning of this paper, he is portrayed as having a status beyond that of human, becoming a more supernatural or godlike figure. For example, in the Record Collector's commemorative edition, which otherwise deals mainly with the price of rare Nirvana stuff, they say "Nirvana have become an industry which, ten years to the month after the suicide of their frontman, still seems to be gaining the sort of momentum from which religions start." (Kennedy 82). Uncut magazine devoted an entire edition of its 'Legends' series to Cobain, leaving no doubt as to their position on his status. In here can be found examples of a different construction of Cobain's exceptional status – instead of simple assertion, examples are found from

his lifetime which illustrate how special he was. One article traces his life, seemingly to work out how he became so “abnormal”, concluding with “It all pointed to a bad end – his family history, his initial high and free spirit suppressed by Ritalin, leaving him a profoundly disaffected, morbidly weird anti-boy.” (Stubbs 25) – that is, not like one of us. He is portrayed as a moody ‘artist’, who could not be comprehended by even those close to him – from the Uncut Legends - “You could be sitting next to him, but he still seemed a million miles away.” (Lamacq), or from Revolver - “Even to those who knew him best, Cobain was almost spectral” (Cross 52). The impression given is of someone beyond comprehension by ‘normal’ people, inevitably destined for greatness and eventual tragedy, on a trajectory unavailable to mere mortals. The ‘reluctant icon/generational spokesperson’ tag surfaces often, with the idea of his reluctance never negating the veracity of his apparent iconicity, and in fact usually enhancing it through the impression of humility, an important element of the grunge working class anti-commercial ethos, and, for that matter, a trait of most religious figures.

### **The account of respondents**

In a huge contrast to the media accounts, the respondents in my study portray Cobain as profoundly *unexceptional*. The respondents for the most part feel positively towards him, and more than half reported

experiencing strong feelings at the time of his death, with two still clearly finding the subject a difficult one to talk about. However, despite acknowledging the influence he had on them in various ways, respondents rejected attempts to construct Cobain as anything other than human, and a flawed human at that.

Uma, 34, said “I just remember feeling really shocked, and just feeling a bit empty, not because he was a big hero of mine, I thought he was cute and a good musician, and all that stuff, but, basically I just thought the circumstances were sad you know,” while Lily, 26, said “I just felt this sadness, it wasn’t like, oh my god the grunge hero is dead kind of thing, it was just sad.” Many people related their sorrow at his passing not to the loss of a great individual, but directly to the loss of future musical releases – Claud, 30, said “it was a shock to think that, oh, he’s not going to put out any more music than he’s actually dead...it’s more that he’s not going to write any more songs.”,

Importantly, though, respondents explicitly reject the ‘Cobain as religious figure’ concept – Dean, 32 – “But I didn’t become disillusioned or anything, I didn’t shed tears over him or anything, have a little shrine set up in the back yard or anything like that”, Trevor, 22 – “Nirvana wasn’t the religious experience for me, they were just a band I thought was good...I heard about people who

were just, took it as, it's just like the death of Jesus or something", or Janie, 28 – "I didn't kind of go out and build a shrine or take a pilgrimage anywhere, but, yeah, it was really sad."

## Discussion

Having established that the way Cobain is remembered by fans stands in opposition to his construction in the music press, the question remains as to why this is. What functions do these accounts serve for the groups involved?

Schudson (1990) shows how journalists can portray their own world-view as being universal, especially when embedded in a culture that reinforces this view. Once certain views are put into print as fact this then becomes a point of reference for other writers. As well as this, the portrayal of Cobain as super-human fits in with a well-established narrative in rock journalism, that of the tragic artist who dies young. However, Jones, in his paper "Covering Cobain: Narrative patterns in Journalism and Rock Criticism", notes that Cobain's death initially represented a challenge to this normalising narrative due to the unusual manner of his death, but was eventually subsumed into a stereotype of "youth gone wrong" and moral decay which were used to explain so many other rock deaths. Jones says "(a)s Simon Firth notes, the music press and music critics (and, I would add, the

mainstream press when it reports on popular music) have a "general image of the world" and a "general interpretation of rock" (173) that provides space only for particular narratives. When circumstances fall outside the parameter of those narratives, reporters and critics make sense of them in ways that essentially recapitulate the dominance of those narratives." . This process is described by Zerubavel as "emplotment", creating a logically structured story with "essentially conventional structures" out of past events (14), or could also be seen as "mnemonic typification", whereby historical figures becoming exchangeable for one another ( 20). I would argue that an important part of such narratives is the mythologizing that creates gods and saints, as demonstrated in the articles quoted earlier. I would also argue that Jones has perhaps understated a particular narrative associated with the suicide of artists, one that can be traced historically back to 19<sup>th</sup> century romantic traditions - that of the artist as tragic other-worldly figure who never fits in. This can be found in accounts of other musicians who committed suicide, such as Ian Curtis, Nick Drake or Elliott Smith (see Stubbs 41), and artists such as Van Gogh – to quote Don Mclean, the idea that "this world was never meant for one as beautiful as you". It is also worth remembering that such accounts play into effective marketing strategies – 'tragic rock god genius who forever changed the world' must be easier to sell than 'ordinary bloke who's really just like you'.



On the other hand, identification was central to the accounts of respondents. Of great importance to their positive feelings towards Cobain was an impression that, as Gordon, 29, put it “he was on our level, he was really no different to us except 50 million times more talented possibly, but he was one of us and he died”, someone who could be related to in his anger and suffering and *humanity*. Respondents often gave examples of the places Cobain’s biography fitted in with their own. They felt that the only thing that set him apart from them was his musical talent and ability to express these shared emotions in a recognisable way, but even here the lack of musical prowess he displayed made being like him an attainable goal, and made him more mundane and less exceptional. A number of my respondents who are themselves musicians were actually quite disparaging about Cobain’s musical *abilities* (while still not denying his *talent*). The whole grunge scene was based around egalitarian ideals, and during his life Cobain was portrayed in line with the accounts respondents still give – an *authentic*, ordinary, flawed person struggling with a difficult situation. While the media has shifted its emphasis to stay in line with its own narrative forms, it is still vital to fans that their idol (I use the term advisedly in this context) is someone close to them, that they could talk to, be friends with, or even *be*. Few people feel they can aspire to be a genius, or a saint, and the media account presented in the anniversary magazines thus fails to gain a hold in the collective memory of fans.

The question of contestation is important here as it appears to show the creation of an alternative truth to the accounts of the powerful, those in control of the means of mass communication, and therefore one of the means of creating memories. Thus we see, at this time, conflict between ‘official’ and private/collective accounts of the meaning of Cobain’s life. However, a pivotal point to bear in mind is that the respondent’s account are not completely removed from media accounts; instead, they continue to align with an *earlier* account of Cobain, that used by the media during his lifetime, when there was less call for his sanctification and he was, indeed, still just a man. This perception is central to their ability to identify with him, and as a result still maintains a strong hold. Thus, respondents are not creating something new; rather, they are *preserving* an earlier set of symbols that retain importance to them.

An interesting question to raise is whether one of these accounts will eventually oust the other. Will the image of Cobain as merely one of us fade as the people who lived through the time of his popularity and death lose their feeling of group membership in regards to this time and do not tell this story anymore, and as new fans who ‘discover’ Nirvana take on the media’s contemporary account as the only one available to them? Or, will the marginal account cross into the media and become the dominant narrative? Interestingly, Rolling Stone’s

commemorative issue makes no mythologizing statements, and says of its attempts to gather quotes on people's current feelings on Cobain – “Some are dismissive, and the reverence afforded Cobain does invite some retrospective scepticism” (Wooldridge). Similarly, a letter printed in NME notes “over the last decade the man has been transformed into something beyond human...Let us all try to remember him as a real human being. Not as a dead rock star. Not as a god.” (Marsh 17). The latter draws out quite a sarcastic response from the editor; but these voices are being given some space, showing the interaction between dominant and marginal accounts, and that the hegemonic dominance of the mass media is perhaps not as solid as we are sometimes lead to believe. However, as I have attempted to show in this paper, the relationship between what people remember and how they are *told* to remember is hardly straightforward, with dominant and marginal account playing off each other and those involved retaining or discarding what they need to in order to maintain their own sense of continuation and identity.

To conclude, I would like to offer the following quote from Dylan, 30, as a counterpoint to the St Kurt article quoted at the beginning – “there was all this stuff about him being this new sort of super-duper dude and the saviour of everything and it's just like ‘yeah, bah!’ He's a skinny

little guy from a place that rains a lot and he's written some bloody great rock, but he's, you know, (laughs) he's not the messiah, he's just a naughty boy !”

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## The Cover Story: Mapping Regional Alliances through Albanian Commercial Musics

Jane C. Sugarman

*Vjersha e parë  
nga Turqi*

*The first verse is  
from Turkey,*

*vjersha e dytë  
nga Sërbi*

*the second verse  
is from Serbia,*

*vjersha e tretë  
magjupi*

*the third verse is  
in Gypsy style,*

*dhe refreni  
nga Greqi*

*and the refrain is  
from Greece,*

*por në vend  
të buzukit*

*only instead of  
a bouzoukee [a  
Greek plucked  
string instrument]*

*futën çifteli.*

*they've put a çifteli  
[the Albanian  
counterpart].*

In the summer of 2002, an announcer on a radio station in Kosova began her program with a humorous verse describing an imaginary Albanian hit song: 1 The announcer was referring to a phenomenon that has been prevalent in Albanian commercial music production from the former Yugoslavia, and indeed in production throughout southeastern Europe, since the fall of socialism: the covering of a hit song from one country by a singer in a neighboring one. Over the past fifteen years, as best as I can ascertain, Albanian singers

have covered pop songs from Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia; and in return, Albanian songs have been covered by performers in Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, and possibly elsewhere. Whereas in U.S. pop music, songs are generally covered in the original language but with a novel musical arrangement, most covers from southeastern Europe reproduce virtually all the details of the original arrangement but with new lyrics in the singer's own language.

The phenomenon of covering might suggest that musicians in the region are in the process of constituting a cosmopolitan "Balkan" cultural realm in which national identities and political animosities are subordinated to a recognition of regional commonalities. In the face of the bitter animosities that have developed among certain national groups in the region, such a trend would be a particularly welcome development. In the case of Albanians, however, the situation as I see it is much more complicated, and in fact paradoxical. In terms of consumption, covering relies on listenerships that rarely cross national borders and are generally not aware of the originals on which covers are based. Its prominence thus alerts us to the continuing salience of nationalist sentiments among a majority of listeners. In terms of production, however, genuine collaboration has begun

to take place among musicians across specific national borders. Such efforts suggest that a new and unusual type of regional popular music circuit may be developing within the region.

### **An Overview of Covering**

Among Albanians from the former Yugoslavia, the first phase in the post-socialist “covering” of songs began in the late 1980s within the realm of *muzika popullore* or commercial “folk music.” Most of these covers were produced in Macedonia, where many Albanians have retained close ties to Turkey (see Ellis), and involved primarily the covering of Turkish and, secondarily, Greek, songs. One singer who became known for such covers is Mentor Kurtishi, whose high, clear voice enables him to imitate the singing of both male and female Turkish singers. As one example, his song “Unazë, moj unazë e artë” (Ring, oh ring of gold), recorded in 1999, is a cover of the song “Yalan” (Lies), as recorded in 1997 by the Turkish singer Candan Erçetin. Kurtishi’s version reproduces virtually every aspect of Erçetin’s arrangement, although the content of the text is completely different. An interesting aspect of this particular example is that Erçetin’s performance is in fact a cover of a song by Uzbek singer-songwriter Yulduz Usmanova (“Yoglan” (Lies, 1996)). Erçetin, however, acknowledges the original in the notes to her album, whereas Kurtishi does not.<sup>2</sup>

Since the Kosova war, a new phase of covering has begun among Albanians, one that both fits within, and helps to define, an emerging genre that people within the industry are currently calling *etnopop*. This is primarily dance music, produced for use in youth clubs, that mixes Western dance rhythms with elements that Albanian listeners hear as “Albanian,” “Balkan,” or more generally “Oriental” or “Mediterranean.” As with the earlier period of covering, Turkey and Greece are still source countries, but now Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Serbia have been added. The most likely singers to record a cover are novice ones, who use a song that was a hit in a nearby country to break into the Albanian market. One good example is Genta Ismajli, whose first album contained several covers, two from the Bulgarian singer Anelia (Anelia, “Prosti” (Forgive me); and Genta, “Kthehu” (Come back)).<sup>3</sup> It is notable that Anelia’s song “Prosti” seems to be one of only two songs on her album, also her first, that is not a cover. In each case, the singer probably saved a great deal of money by covering preexisting songs rather than paying a composer to write original ones for her.

### **Patterns of Covering**

The pattern of covering that I have described can be understood as having come about through a convergence of several factors that have gained prominence in southeastern Europe since the late



1980s. First is the transfer of most or all musical production from the state media to private firms, and the concomitant commodification of all styles of popular music (cf. Kurkela). Second is the introduction of transnational technologies such as satellite television and the Internet that enable the rapid dissemination of newly recorded songs to neighboring countries. Last is the necessity and desire on the part of each national group to renegotiate its sense of national identity and to resituate itself within new geopolitical configurations in the wake of the fall of socialism. This last factor has been particularly important for national groups in the former Yugoslavia, and probably most acute for Albanians, who now find themselves partitioned among five contiguous states.<sup>4</sup> For all groups within the region, the challenge has been to reimagine themselves through musical styles that are heard simultaneously as local in sound and yet “modern” in their production techniques: ones that also appeal to the broadest base of consumers. In the early 1990s, musicians in post-socialist countries turned for inspiration to musics that had, in more peaceful times, long been objects of cross-border listening: ones from countries that already had highly developed private industries. These included the region’s two non-socialist countries, Turkey and Greece, as well as Yugoslavia, where music production had been increasingly privatized in the late socialist period. Each of these countries had developed populist

music genres mixing features regarded as local with elements from the transnational popular music industry: *arabesk* in Turkey, *laika* in Greece, and newly composed folk music (*novokomponovana narodna muzika*) in Yugoslavia.<sup>5</sup> While marginalized by or excluded entirely from their respective state media, each of these genres had nevertheless sold enormous numbers of recordings domestically and in their respective diasporas. For the most part, the “local” elements in the musical styles of these genres, such as melodic modes, rhythmic cycles, textures, and vocal and instrumental timbres, were heard as national by their domestic audiences, but they also spoke directly to the tastes of neighboring listeners, largely because of the region’s common Ottoman legacy.<sup>6</sup> These genres thus became regional models of musical modernity, comparable to Hindi film music in South Asia or Egyptian music in the Arab world (see especially Danielson). In this period, Albanians in Kosova and Macedonia borrowed from Turkish and Greek musics while avoiding Slavic genres from the former Yugoslavia for political reasons, whereas Bulgarian pop musics, for example, also drew heavily on Serbian and Macedonian styles. In Albania, by contrast, the most important model in this period was the music of another non-socialist neighbor: Italy. It was not only individual hit songs, or national styles, that were copied: singers at times modeled their dress, poses, performance demeanor, album titles, and cover art after those in neighboring countries.

For Albanians, I suspect there was also a strong element of apprenticeship in this stage of covering. In the early days of private studios, arrangers were just learning their craft and imitating the techniques of a neighboring country was one way to do that. This was especially true when some of them acquired synthesizers from Turkey that could reproduce many of the timbres, scales, and rhythmic cycles of Turkish and Arabic music (see Sugarman, “Criminals”). Once they had mastered the basics, Albanian arrangers were able to produce dozens of completely new songs that nevertheless sounded as if they were Turkish covers.

By the late 1990s, industries in post-socialist countries had raised their level of production to such an extent that their songs too could be deemed worthy of being covered, with the result that covering now seems to be taking place in all directions. As musicians have borrowed continually from their colleagues across the border and even further afield, national styles of popular music that even a decade ago sounded fairly distinctive are now sounding more and more alike.<sup>7</sup>

### Assessing Reception

Should these phenomena be taken as evidence that the individual, national music industries of southeastern Europe are gradually consolidating a common “Balkan” music market? And should similarities in musical style and production be read as indicators that nationalist

animosities are giving way to more tolerant views and to regionally based feelings of a “Balkan” identity? In the realm of consumption, the answer for Albanians is—at least publicly—largely no. In multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Macedonia, Albanians are somewhat likely to have heard the originals of covered songs, be they Macedonian, Serbian, Bulgarian, or Turkish, because these are marketed to other national groups in their territory. Elsewhere, however, Albanian listeners are often not aware that a given song is a cover; indeed, there have evidently been instances when singers did not know that the songs they were recording were not original Albanian compositions. Once a cover version is released, it often becomes a subject of tremendous controversy both in the media and in Internet discussion lists. Two common criticisms are that covers betray a lack of creativity on the part of Albanians, and that they are dishonest, a sentiment reinforced by the most common term for a cover, which is *këngë e vjedhur* or “stolen song.” Indeed, the original song is never acknowledged on an album: either the cover is labeled “reworked” (*e përpunuar*), or an arranger is listed but without a composer, or the Albanian arranger is himself listed as the composer.<sup>8</sup>

The great majority of responses, however, concern the threat that covering poses to Albanian national identity. Excerpts from a posting on an Internet discussion list cover several aspects of this argument:

*We, as the ancient people that we are, have our inherited language and, besides that, we have our beautiful music.*

*The virus of Turkish, Slavic, and Greek music has entered the spirit of Albanians so deeply that we will extricate ourselves with difficulty. ...*

*Are we all going to be ashamed that we allowed the assimilation of our music, or only those individuals who made those copies?*

*I believe that not one of us would wish his child[ren] to be entertained with non-Albanian music, so that they could say to us later: "We have a legacy from our parents"!!*

*If we continue in this manner to listen to borrowed songs it will mean that we have a desire that our children, our grandchildren, will not have a national identity ...*<sup>9</sup>

It is also important where covered songs come from. Because of the events of the 1990s, the strongest condemnation is reserved for those who cover, or even listen to, Serbian songs, which for many Albanians is tantamount to treason. As one discussion list posting states, not incorrectly:

*... These singers have ... sung songs against us. And when the Serbs committed crimes, they were accompanied by these songs.*

*Do they [Serbs] listen to Albanian music? These are the by-products of occupation, violence and cultural coercion.*<sup>10</sup>

A posting on another list, while expressing a more tolerant attitude toward other types of covers, exclaims:

*... The point isn't whether [a singer] is the first or the last to have [covered a song] but that they steal from the Serbs! In my opinion, you can take from Arabic music, Turkish (there are many instances of this), English, Chinese if it pleases you, but not Serbian.*<sup>11</sup>

Although many singers have been criticized for covering Serbian songs, there are very few if any instances of this. Rather, accusations that it is Serbian songs that are being copied has become a way to condemn the entire practice of covering in the strongest of terms.

One argument that is sometimes advanced in such discussions is that neighboring musics are acceptable so long as they are performed in their original language, but in fact it is also risky for a singer to sing in a regional language other than Albanian. When, in the early 1990s, a prominent folk singer from Albania recorded two songs in Romani (Gypsy) language, there was widespread uneasiness over her performance and speculation that she was herself Romani. Similarly, a

young Albanian singer from Macedonia who began her career performing in both Albanian and Macedonian was severely castigated for not singing solely in Albanian, and has now agreed to do so. Recently, a project that would have featured a Kosovar singer in a duet with a Bosnian Muslim singer as a gesture toward inter-ethnic tolerance was scrapped for fear of audience disapproval.

For those Albanians who regard vocal performance as an expression of a singer's innate national identity, performing in the style of a neighboring nation--whether in the original language or in translation--may be viewed as a violation of that person's physical being. As one Internet posting expressed it, it is "like adding poison to one's own blood"<sup>12</sup>; or, in the words of Kosova ethnomusicologist Rexhep Munishi, singing "with a foreign soul in one's own body" (290). Clearly covering challenges the fundamental tenet of romantic nationalism that cultural forms bear the essence of national identity: a belief that still has tremendous resonance not only for Albanians, but also for all other national groups in the region.<sup>13</sup>

A common scenario emerges from such controversies. A cover may thrive so long as the public is unaware of it. Once it is exposed, reports in the media can exert a powerful pressure on performers. One particularly effective tactic has been the airing on radio or television of a covered song alongside its original, with no comment necessary. In response, singers generally choose to record only original songs on subsequent

albums. Covering may be tolerated as a way for a fledgling singer to get a "leg up" in the industry. Once established, however, a singer is expected to uphold the originality of Albanian production.

### **From Covering to Collaboration**

Despite such negative attitudes, two recent developments in the Albanian industry provide evidence that musicians, working behind the scenes, have in fact been establishing substantive professional ties across specific national borders. First, many pop singers in Kosova are now commissioning songs from ethnic Macedonian composer-arrangers, as well as filming their music videos in Macedonia. The trend was initiated by Kosova's top female singer Adelina Ismajli, who shortly after the war issued two songs composed by a musician known in the Albanian industry simply as "Mak" or "Maki." Maki's Albanian productions highlight pulsing dance rhythms mixed with timbres and textures drawn from local folklore, elements he has not included in his tracks for Macedonians. While Albanians hear the melody-and-drone texture of Adelina's song "Mos ma ndal" (Don't stop me) as characteristic of their folklore, it is also very common in Macedonian and Bulgarian folk musics.<sup>14</sup> In terms of national production, a song like this is hard to categorize. Strictly speaking, it is not "Albanian," since it was composed and arranged by a Macedonian. But it is not "Macedonian" either, because

such styles are created purely for the Albanian market. Whereas Maki creates most of his arrangements for Albanians, two arrangers central to the Macedonian industry have also arranged for Albanian singers: Darko Dimitrov and Robert Bilbilov. The reception of these Macedonian productions provides an interesting contrast with the practice of covering. When Albanian singers began to record songs by Macedonian arrangers, the border-crossing was perceived as potentially so controversial that it was disguised in the album notes. Maki was listed only as “Maki” and Darko Dimitrov as “D.D.,” while Robert Bilbilov’s surname was Albanianized to “Bilbili.” At present, however, the names of Dimitrov and Bilbilov have become so well-known to Albanian audiences that the two men are credited by their proper names.<sup>15</sup>

It is not entirely clear to me why these productions have become so much more acceptable to Albanian consumers than are covers. I suspect that there are two reasons. First, Macedonians are not viewed with the same distaste that Serbs are, who are widely regarded as having been the direct oppressors of Kosova Albanians. Second, the Macedonian arrangements either allude directly to folklore perceived as Albanian (Maki) or, on the other hand, do not in any way allude to a musical style that could be considered characteristic of a neighboring national group (Dimitrov and Bilbilov). Because these latter arrangements are squarely in a

Western style, they do not seem to cast the singer under the same suspicion that many covers do.

A second type of border-crossing has been facilitated by changes in the production of pop songs that have led to a wrinkle in the covering phenomenon. In contrast to older procedures, where song texts were written first and then assigned to a specific composer-arranger, computer-based arrangements of pop songs are now created first in instrumental-only versions and then farmed out to appropriate lyricists. As a result, pop composers have begun to license a single arrangement to singers in two or more different countries. Such was the case in 2003 with a young Turkish musician known as Kaan, who commissioned Kosova composer Enis Presheva Jr. to arrange and record one of his songs in Istanbul. The resulting arrangement, which combines Western dance grooves with Spanish and Middle Eastern elements, could really be from anywhere in the circum-Mediterranean region. It was eventually licensed to Kosova singer Leonora Jakupi as [“Ti nuk ekziston”](#) (You don’t exist) and was simultaneously recorded in Serbia by another singer. Kaan has evidently released a Turkish-language version himself.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, Enis Presheva Jr. has recorded additional tracks in Turkey in collaboration with other artists there.

Why have these particular types of cross-border collaboration come about? In the case of Macedonia, the Albanian pop music industry has grown so quickly



that there are too few Albanian arrangers for the large number of aspiring singers. Macedonians, in contrast, have a much smaller industry and favor a more limited range of genres. By composing for Albanian singers, Macedonian arrangers can expand their output, and, encouraged to experiment more stylistically, they can also charge Albanians higher fees. The political situation facilitates such dynamics: Macedonians and local Albanians are making sincere efforts to forge a multiethnic society, and travel restrictions between Macedonia and Kosova have largely been lifted. Such conditions do not prevail, for example, with neighboring Serbia. The reason for the small size of the Macedonian industry is also instructive. Macedonian audiences are major consumers of pop music from neighboring Slavic-speaking countries such as Serbia, Bosnia, and, more recently, Bulgaria, much of which is readily available through local media and retail outlets. The presence of all these musics in the Macedonian media is in fact the principal way that Albanian musicians hear Slavic productions that they then might cover.

Ironically, the Turkish connection is also to a great extent a Macedonian one. The Turkish composer Kaan was born in the western Macedonian town of Gostivar to a Turkish-speaking family, probably of Albanian background, which, like many other such families over the years, migrated to Turkey. There he has access to Albanian pop musics through the network of “Albano-

Turks” living in and around Istanbul. Turkish singer Candan Erçetin is also evidently from a Macedonian Turkish-speaking family, and has herself recorded at least one cover of a song from Macedonia.<sup>17</sup>

From the vantage point of production, then, substantial collaboration is now taking place across borders, although this does not mean that a single, pan-Balkan musical domain is being consolidated. Rather, Macedonia currently functions as a pivot point linking several smaller circuits: a south Slavic one, a Macedo-Albanian one, and a Turko-Albanian one.

### **Toward a “Balkan” Music Zone?**

In recent years, scholars who have studied the globalization of media by examining television programming have drawn attention to regional circuits that they have dubbed “geolinguistic zones”: world areas in which countries are united by language and often religion, as well as by a wealth of social practices (see Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham). Examples include the Arab world, South Asia, Chinese-speaking regions, and of course Latin America. In southeastern Europe, the development of such a zone is hindered by the multiplicity of languages and religions, as well as by political antagonisms that are still very raw. At present, a rather large south Slavic circuit is developing, but this excludes both small non-Slavic groups like Albanians and Romanians, and the biggest players in the region,



Greece and Turkey. Given this situation, covering has been a way for Albanian musicians to participate in a larger regional circuit and to benefit from stylistic innovations in neighboring countries, without having to come into direct contact with members of other national groups and without having to deal with the barrier that their language presents. Covering has thrived precisely *because* of the lack of a larger circuit, which has kept audiences from being aware of the original productions.

What covering has not granted to musicians is the advantage of a larger consumer base that participation in a true “geolinguistic zone” would offer. It is in this respect that recent instances of cross-border collaboration--Macedonians arranging for Albanians, Albanians arranging for Turks--can be seen as marking a new and innovative stage in the development of the region's music industry. If such collaborations continue, and particularly if musicians of each national group have equal access to such opportunities, then southeastern Europe could be one site in which a new type of zone is constituted, one in which several smaller circuits interact and overlap.

At present, the greatest hindrances to the healthy operation of such a zone are the political antagonisms that remain and the nationalist patterns of thinking on all sides that have created those antagonisms. Musicians who cross national lines are indeed enacting through

their productions constructive means of overcoming such hindrances, but they alone cannot accomplish such things. Ultimately, only genuine political change, coupled with a rethinking of the basis of national identity on all sides, will convince audiences that it is indeed permissible, and even enjoyable, to listen more ecumenically.

## Endnotes

This paper developed from ethnographic field research on Albanian commercial musics carried out since 1997 in North America, western Europe, Kosova, and Macedonia. For this paper, I benefitted particularly from conversations with Marion Filipovski-"Maki," Xhevdet Gashi, Adelina Ismajli, Memli Krasniqi, Enis Presheva Jr., Avni Qahili, Agim Rama, Fitnete Tuda, and Astrit Stafaj and Jehona Demaku. Many thanks to the Shuku, Gjakova, and Bejtullahu families, my hosts in Skopje and Prishtina.

1. Radio Dukagjini in Peja, Kosova, 13 July 2002. Kosova is the Albanian name for the territory known in Serbian as Kosovo or Kosovo-Metohija.

2. Mentor Kurtishi, "Unazë, moj unazë e artë," selection B4 on the cassette *Teuta, Teuta*; Candan Erçetin, "Yalan," selection 10 on the CD *Çapkın*; Yulduz Usmanova, "Yoglan," selection 4 on the CD *Binafscha*. For more information on Albanian commercial folk music, see Sugarman ("Criminals"); more general information on Albanian commercial musics is provided in Sugarman ("Albania" and "Mediated").

3. Anelia, "Prosti," selection 5 on the CD *Pogledni me v ochite*; Genta [Ismajli], "Kthetu," selection 6 on the CD *Mos më shiko*.

4. The area in which Albanians form a compact population group includes territory in Albania, Kosova, Serbia-Montenegro (in both entities), Macedonia, and Greece.

5. See, for Turkish *arabesk*, Stokes; for Greek *laika*, Papageorgiou; and for Yugoslav "newly composed folk music," Kos and Rasmussen.

6. The exception here is *arabesk*, which has elements widely recognized as having been adapted from Arab music; see Stokes.

7. I am excluding from this discussion two other types of covering that have taken place within the region during this period. One is the occasional covering of well-known hits from the transnational music industry: anything from American rock songs to hits by singers such as Khaled (Algeria) or 'Amr Diab (Egypt). In these instances, covering serves as a way to display a singer's cosmopolitanism for audiences who are already acquainted with the original recording. Second is the phenomenon of Goran Bregovic, the Bosnian songwriter and film score composer whose compositions or arrangements have been covered, in collaboration with him, by singers in Greece (Alkistis Protopsalti, Giorgos Dalaras), Turkey (Sezen Aksu), and Poland (Kaya, Krzysztof Krawczyk). Singers

Merita Halili from Albania and Candan Erçetin from Turkey (see note 16 below) have also recorded songs popularized by Bregovic. The widespread and fervent interest in Bregovic's music throughout the region, particularly among elite audiences (albeit very little among Albanians from the former Yugoslavia), is the stuff of another paper.

8. The situation is abetted, of course, by the fact that most post-socialist countries have yet to enact intellectual property laws.

9. From a posting by "Not too shy to talk" on 20 April 2005, in a thread on foreign elements in Albanian music, <[http://www.tetova.de/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?post\\_id=1232&topic\\_id=117](http://www.tetova.de/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?post_id=1232&topic_id=117)>.

10. From a posting by "Xhavo" on 15 June 2005, in a thread on a concert given in Skopje, Macedonia by the Serbian singer Ceca, <<http://www.forumi.zeriyt.com/index.php/topic,14028.0.html>>. The posting refers to the fact that, during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, Serbian soldiers often sang nationalistic songs as a way of preparing themselves for military actions (see Martin Cloonan's paper for this conference), and also to the perception, widespread among Albanians, that Serbian cultural forms were imposed on Albanian audiences throughout the history of Yugoslavia.

11. From a posting by "Shiggaz" on 5 May 2004, in a thread on Genta Ismajli, <<http://forum.kosova.de/forum/viewtopic.php?topic=10621&forum=2&56>>.

12. From a second posting by "Not too shy to talk" on 20 April 2005, <[http://www.tetova.de/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?post\\_id=1232&topic\\_id=117](http://www.tetova.de/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?post_id=1232&topic_id=117)>.

13. Several Kosovar friends have reported to me that, in fact, a number of Kosova Albanians do listen to singers from former Yugoslav areas in the privacy of their homes. Bosnian Muslim singer Dino Merlin is one popular artist, and even Ceca--the Serbian superstar who is the widow of the prominent paramilitary leader Arkan--has a wide listenership. No one, however, wishes to admit to such listening habits in any public forum. As a result, pronouncements against such singers in the media or in chatrooms should be read in part as the presentation of a public face so as to preserve a cherished national ideology, with much left unsaid.

14. Adelina Ismajli, "Mos ma ndal," selection 1 on the compilation CD *16 mega hite--Vetëm për shpirtin tuaj*.

15. "Maki" is the childhood nickname of composer-arranger Marion Filipovski, rather than a pseudonym developed for use in the Albanian industry (personal communication, December 2004). Filipovski has also

issued some of his Macedonian arrangements under that name, although for others he has listed his full name.

16. Leonora Jakupi, "Ti nuk ekziston," selection 1 on the CD *Krejt ndryshe*. I have not been able to obtain information on the Serbian or Turkish versions.

17. The information on Kaan comes from conversations with Enis Presheva Jr. and with Astrit Stafaj in November-December 2004. For Erçetin, see the biographies posted on the Internet at the Topkapı Müzik site <<http://www.topkapitr.com/Muzik/Local/Candan/CandanBioE.htm>> and at <[http://www.turkish-music.net/candan\\_ercetin.htm](http://www.turkish-music.net/candan_ercetin.htm)>; thanks to Tom Solomon for the references and to Sonia Seeman for alerting me to the possibility. In 1996, Erçetin recorded "Sevdim Sevilmedim" (selections 1 and 6 on the CD *Sevdim Sevilmedim*), a Turkish-language version of the Macedonian Romani song "Chaje sukarije," recorded originally by Esma Redzhepova and later popularized by Goran Bregovic. For an excellent study of Turkish-speaking families in Macedonia, see Ellis.

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## Reading Queerly, Rejecting Normativity

Jodie Taylor

### Introducing Musical and Sexual Hybridity

I would like to begin with the words of an interdisciplinary writer and performance artist, Guillermo Gomez-Pena who says,

*The work of the artist is to force open the matrix of reality to introduce unsuspected possibilities . . . I wish to propose a third alternative: the hybrid – a cultural, political, aesthetic, and sexual hybrid . . . From a disadvantaged position, the hybrid expropriates elements from all sides to create more open and fluid systems. Hybrid culture is community based yet experimental, radical but not static or dogmatic . . . The artist who understands and practices hybridity can be at the same time an insider and an outsider, an expert in border crossings, a temporary member of multiple communities . . . S/he performs multiple roles in multiple contexts . . . At times s/he assume the role of nomadic chronicler, intercultural translator, or political trickster. S/he speaks from more than one perspective, to more than one community, about more than one reality.*

*His/her job is to trespass, bridge, interconnect, reinterpret, remap, and redefine; to find the outer limits of his/her culture and cross them (Gomez-Pena, 1996, p. 11-12).*

Both creators and interpreters of cultural meaning are today, challenged with communicating and deciphering the complexities of a postmodern world. As new hybridity in artistic creation emerges, a new methodological hybridity must develop to give meaning to these creations. Deviant sexualities and genders are slowly gaining an honest visibility within popular music, making way for a new fusion between expression of the artistic and sexual self. Gender dysmorphic singer, Antony Hegarty, from New York based cabaret group, *Antony and the Johnsons* provides an example of an amalgamation between one's musical and sexual identity. In a recent interview Antony says in reference to queer pop icon, Boy George that "George was really the first reflection I saw of myself in the world, I saw him and thought, okay, that's what we do when we're like this: We become singers" (as cited in Smith, 2005, p. 19). Antony found meaning in the music, visual and lyrical narratives of Boy George that gave meaning to his/her deviant understanding of the self. Antony now composes



and performs music that speaks of his/her own gender dysmorphia. Queer identified musicians are appearing more frequently within popular music cultures and they are composing music that specifically embodies their own queer identities. As musicologists, we must now adjust our discourse to give appropriate meaning to this new music, a task simultaneously enriched and complicated by new identificatory possibilities.

### **The Difficulties of Meaning**

Although traditional musicologists have historically contested the truthfulness of a meaning, popular musicologists rightly propose that meaning cannot deduct a singular truth, for there are many meanings and many truths (Blum, 1993, p. 43). If there is no singular truth, then consequently there is no correct interpretation of meaning, but many correct and co-existing interpretations. Richard Kuhns suggests that “each interpretation draws a boundary around the variables that can be considered in making an interpretation” (Kuhns, 1983, p. 80), thus interpretation is limited and offers a reading based on a singular system of variables and consequently should never suppose absolute and rightful comprehension. These intangible interpretive boundaries may also be explained as “mechanisms of interpretive enforcement” (Solie, 1993, p.7), that limit interpretation to a singular sensibility and explain the modes of identification within the sensibility

(Morris, 1993, p. 193). Awareness of our interpretive freedom removes the egocentric struggle for singular rightfulness thus encouraging variety and diversity within systems of analysis. The canons of aesthetic autonomy once limiting the visibility of alternative truths have been deconstructed by postmodern thought allowing us to employ interdisciplinary theoretical systems upon the reading of all musical and para-musical devices. The result is a more colourful and accurate representation of humanity, which goes further towards highlighting our differences and the expressive ways in which we allow human difference to manifest. Ruth A. Solie, editor of *Musicology and Difference*, clarifies the importance of alternative readings as devices able to:

*. . . locate these issues of difference in the musicological sites where they come into play: that is, in the formulation of the most basic questions about what a piece of music can express or reflect of the people who make and use them, and thus of the differences between and among those people. (Solie, 1993, p. 3)*

The differences I am concerned with are that which society has pejoratively labelled queer, thus my suggested model for reading meaning makes no hesitation in ‘limiting its intertextual boundaries’ to those outlined by queer theory and popular musicology in the

effort to uncover queer expressions within composition, performance and reception.

It is necessary to acknowledge that musicologists and cultural theorists have been working toward a queer discourse since the early 1990s. Philip Brett, positioned within the more sexually localised field of gay and lesbian musicology offers two methodologies with reference to homosexual readings, however the argument transposes well into queer theory. Brett suggests that,

*One strategy would be to assert (or exert) the right to propose meanings that are grounded in an inside awareness of the cultural conditions under which homosexual composers in this century and before have functioned. Another is to insist on going beyond the text: what people perform or hear, what meaning they invest in it, and within what framework they place it will be a valid interest for gay inquiry; it will also put into question the fixation on the composer and his intentions which have dominated historical musicology for so long. (Brett, 1993, p. 259 italics mine)*

It is the second of Brett's proposed assertions of meaning that I believe most valuable to queer inquiry, that is going beyond the text in search of performed, heard,

invested and contextual meanings. However, when conducting a queer reading of a text or performance we must always remain mindful that "all aesthetic choices inevitably involve ideological choices" (Morris, 1993, p. 186) thus, the musical expressions become unavoidably saturated with the queerness of its producer just as interpretation is bent towards the leanings of the interpreter.

As a participant in queer culture, I believe that we are simultaneously struggling for ways to express queer desire artistically and methods to read queer desires outside the limitations of normative culture. Richard Dyer suggests in his book *Culture of Queers*, that "queer cultural production - like queers - can only exist in the society and culture in which it finds itself" (Dyer, 2002, p. 9) and if so, does this suppose that queerness can only be read by queers themselves? New musicologies have thus far encouraged us to excavate the sites of human difference, as Solie suggests, "energy may be gleaned from the insistence upon difference, an energy that may prompt insights and readings unavailable to those whose lives take the "normal" course" (Solie, 1993, p. 7), thus Solie tends to agree with Dyer. However, to fully answer this question, we as readers of meaning, must consider the affect normativity has had upon the construction of our own gaze, positioning ourselves within the debate at a personal level.

### The Limitations of Normativity

Modern society has been very successful in the propagation of the normative in its struggle to maintain power. According to Foucault, power “is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation within a particular society” (Foucault, 1998, p. 93), and normativity dictates the values, identities, desires and similar qualities of humanity that the powerful have deemed normal, acceptable and advantageous to possess. Those who construct the centre of normativity offer a tangible understanding of its paradigms and morality and can be aptly described as “white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian and financially secure” (Ferguson, 1990, p. 9). These qualities have thus become the normal ideal and assumed desirable by the marginalised. However many of us who live within the margins choose to do so, practicing active disidentification in protest of normativity. Within the scope of sexuality, the normative assumption supposes compulsory heterosexuality which only exists in recognition of its binary partnership with homosexuality. Similarly, gender is constructed around two legitimate and exclusive categories of male and female restricting any movement between, or integration of the two. This specific application of normative values upon the construction of sex and gender is recognised within

queer theory as heteronormativity. Heteronormativity perceives sexuality and gender as biologically determined and anatomically limited, however queer theorists know this to be untrue. Instead, queer theory suggest that categories of sex, sexuality and gender are social constructions woven into the fabric of social knowledge and that homosexuality as a category exists only as a counterpoint to normalise heterosexuality (Corber & Valocchi, 2003, p. 3). Judith Butler argues that gender binaries normalise and confine the male and female to limited social practices, these practices construct our gender identity, thus gendered identity is a performance of socially constructed norms rather than an expression of the biological self (Butler, 1990, p. viii).

If our intention as music practitioners is to conduct a reading in search of a queer meaning, we must not be ignorant to these social constructions and our own normalised predispositions. For example: to discuss that which is feminine without consideration that femininity is a performed social construction and is by no means inherently female, we are advocating our own ignorance. This is not an easy task as most of us have had a lifetime of ‘normative programming’ but we must actively question ourselves and the systems by which we construct our knowledge and understanding to successfully queer our practices. To articulate this

I would like to draw on the work of Nancy Tuana's *Epistemologies of Ignorance* in which she suggests,

*Ignorance, far from being a simple lack of knowledge that good science aims to banish, is better understood as a practice with supporting social causes as complex as those involved in knowledge practices... Ignorance is frequently constructed and actively preserved, and is linked to issues of cognitive authority, doubt, trust, silencing and uncertainty. (Tuana, 2004 p. 195)*

Tuana suggests that for reasons of authority, ignorance contributes to the maintenance of social norms in a similar fashion as knowledge, therefore by reading meanings based on the dominant 'heteronormative knowledge' of sexuality and gender we are ignoring the fluidity of sexual and gendered identities that exist in the margins of society.

Queer theory offers a collective understanding of marginal identities and constructs "an unfixed site of engagement and contention" (Jagose, 1996, p. 129) where marginality gains visibility and where social deviances of a sexual and gendered nature achieve legitimate understanding based on knowledge as opposed to ignorance. Queer meaning is therefore located in someone or something that is dynamic,

that is in the process of constructing itself rather than something that presents itself as whole and static, and because the body represents the primary site of sexual and gendered difference upon which queer identity is constructed, queer meaning is also located in matters of the body.

Queer is not a term interchangeable with gay, lesbian or homosexual, queer literally describes that which is unusual or strange, the queer subject exhibits difference perceived threatening to norms and normative practices. The process of reading queer meaning is understood within queer theory as 'queering' a text or performance and requires the application of queer judgement to what is already exhibited. A queer consciousness provides an alternative to the more established lesbian, gay and feminist identity politics which often contribute to the limiting of identificatory differences stabilising the subject within existing hegemonic powers. Queering remains concerned with the cultural production of homosexuality (and others), but values aesthetic representations as opposed to the political motivations that encouraged the early gay and lesbian theorists to seek visibility (Altman, 1996). Likewise, queer cultural products often represent the fringes of sexualised deviance such as sadomasochism, gender dysmorphia and pansexualities rather than exclusively describing the monolithic identities of gay and lesbian (Corber

& Valocchi, 2003, p. 1). The definitional ambiguity of a queer politic makes the mapping of queer analysis somewhat vague, however this ambiguity creates a space for identifactory fluidity that is necessary if queering is to avoid replicating normative readings and to draw our attention to sites where difference is expressed musically. Difference of the queer kind, that is, musical evidence of gender and sexual deviance will always be unreadable to those ignorant of their own normative predisposition, agreeing in part with the prior suppositions by Dyer and Solie. What remains to be added to this argument is that successful queer reading does not wholly rely on the reader's participation in deviant sexual or gender practices. In other words, the reader may practice heterosexual sex and/or perform their gender as biologically determined but they must maintain awareness that their own practices do not dictate a norm upon which others may be judged as abnormal as opposed to different. As musicologists, this means we must not only employ the traditional tools of musicology such as textual and contextual analysis, but we must also understand the intertextual sociological discourse of queer theory and acknowledge the sites of normative assumption that have been socially inscribed within our thinking. Once we consciously identify normative assumptions, we must then acknowledge the systems that constructed them rejecting both the system and the logic of its values. In effect, queer

reading requires rejection of normativity coupled with a queer empathy, and an understanding of normativity is essential to a successful rejection of normative values.

### **Making the Meaning Queer**

Queer theoretical fundamentals share popular music's fascination with human desires and libidinal energies. Just as queer theory seeks to conceive new fluidities between sex, sexuality and gender, popular music has long operated as a form of sexual expression which has at times, contested normative practices as well as stabilising them (Whiteley, 1997, p. xvii). During the 1970s popular musicologists were challenged with theorising nonnormative performances of androgyny inherent in the musical identity of artists such as Mick Jagger and David Bowie, however the challenge posed to 'queer conscious' popular musicologists today is far more complex. We are now working within borderless terrains as queer theory has dissolved the binary dualisms that regulate and categorise identity. Although we are free from the mutually exclusive limitations of femininity, masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality, we must resist the tertiary application of androgyny and bisexuality as an easy explanation for the performance of marginal identities and instead search for other meanings to explain these differences.

Recent musicological inquiries surrounding sexual

identity have focused primarily on pigeonholing gay musical sensibilities such as the 'opera queen' or 'disco queen'. This has been revolutionary in terms of theorising the confluences between one's sexual and musical identity but does not translate to the broader queer community because queers lack a universal aesthetic sensibility. Instead, queers share what I believe to be a singular unifying commonality which is: that every self identified queer has experienced difference that places them outside sexual and gendered hegemony therefore our aesthetic appreciation values the performance of difference over a particular musical style. Communities claim difference through tastes, languages and behaviour, and discussion of these differences form the scaffolding of an alternative reading (Solie, 1996, p. 7). The fundamental sites where difference is most evident and from which we construct popular musical meanings are musical sounds, lyrics and visual narratives of the live performance, publicity photos or music video. While each site offers valuable meaning independently, it is at the intersections of these sites where we locate our most meaningful perspectives (Whiteley, 1997, p. xiv) and it is when these sites disturb normative sexual identity, practice and gender that they become of most interest to readers in search of queer meaning. The location of sexual and gendered difference is at first, most likely to be superficial or obvious, usually present in the lyrical narrative or a performance aesthetic

such as drag or genderfuck. Once we have identified sympathetic differences we then attribute a meaning to them reliant upon our individual experiences. These subjective experiences of difference and their individual meanings are then order into a hierarchy lead by the meaning most comforting and valuable to the listener. A listener who has experienced gender ambiguity may identify with the gender-bending costume of the 'cock rock' tradition but less so with its misogynistic lyrics, therefore placing greater meaning in the visual narrative as opposed to the lyrical narrative. Lawrence Grossberg conceptualises this ordering of meaning using the term 'mattering maps' suggesting that, for the fan, popular culture becomes a crucial ground on which he or she can construct mattering maps. Within these mattering maps, investments are enabled which empower individuals in a variety of ways. They may construct relatively stable moments of identity, or they may identify places which, because they matter, take on an authority...through the mobilizations and organization of affective investments. By making certain things or practices matter, the fan 'authorizes' them to speak for him or her, not only as a spokesperson but also as a surrogate voice. (Grossberg, 1992, p. 59)

Grossberg's surrogate voice speaks of that which a listener may identify with, yet are often unable to exhibit due to social or moral constraints.



Music has the ability to exhibit social deviance that would otherwise remain suppressed. This phenomenon is known as the 'musical closet', which provides a space for both performers and listeners to 'come out' under the guise of frivolity or entertainment (Brett, 1994, p. 17). For the listener specifically, the musical closet provides a space where sexuality and gender can be performed via the act of listening. Simon Frith acknowledges that " 'listening' itself is a performance: to understand how musical pleasure, meaning and evaluation work, we have to understand how, as listeners we perform the music for ourselves" (Frith, 1996, p. 203-204). Therefore, if we perform the music for ourselves with queer intention, queer meaning can be extracted from music for self-gratification, whether or not the composer or performer initially intended a queer meaning in the first place. The 2004 publication of *The Queer Encyclopaedia of Music, Dance & Musical Theatre* illustrates this via its entry on Judy Garland, who, although not queer herself, is idolised by factions within queer culture. Furthermore, Garland's signature song *Over the Rainbow*, has been saturated with queer meaning and is considered an unofficial "gay national anthem" (Gianoulis, 2004, p. 107), thus representative of nonnormative sexual identity. Most evident in *The Queer Encyclopaedia of Music, Dance & Musical Theatre* is the lack of a unifying queer aesthetic authority, in other words, there is no entry that describes the sound of 'queer music'. This is

because queer music itself is not a specific genre, and therefore a single queer reading must not be considered indicative of queer identities or queer cultural products. Instead, at its most representative, a queer reading offers a meaningful example of disidentification with heteronormativity, explaining the appreciation of an aesthetic rather than the aesthetic itself.

### General Considerations for Queer Reading

This paper has attempted to explain the general concepts of normativity and queer theory as they pertain to our understanding of sexuality and gender, and by extension, to our understanding of sexuality and gender evident in popular music. The limitations and applications of a methodological hybridity between queer theory and popular musicology outlined in this paper suggest that; queer meaning can be located in any musical or para-musical site that disturbs normative sexual identity, practice and gender (heteronormativity). However, the application of queer theories to music products, performance and reception should not be about excavating a queer music history, but rather providing a space for new meanings to immerse. Queer theory is a new discipline thus the construction of a queer music history preceding its theoretical origins would not provide any understanding of a collective queer meaning in music. Instead, queer meaning can be located in music composed and performed pre-queer

theory through investigating what matters to a queer listener and in most instances, reading beyond the text in search of performed, heard, invested and contextual meanings will be of most value when locating new queer meaning.

The body represents the site of sexual and gender differences upon which queer identities are constructed, suggesting that queer meaning is located in matters of the body. According to Richard Middleton “popular music has stayed especially close to ‘the body’ . . . [and] popular music, like popular culture in general, is seen as physically orientated” (Middleton, 1990, p.258). To read the queer body we must consider the affect normativity has had upon the construction of our own gaze, because when reading meaning based on the dominant ‘heteronormative knowledge’ of sexuality and gender we are ignoring the fluidity of sexual and gendered identities that exist in the margins of society. Queer theory suggests that sexual and gender identities are a performance of socially constructed norms rather than expressions of a ‘natural’ biological self where as heteronormativity perceives sexuality and gender as biologically determined and anatomically limited. Queer identities are free from the mutually exclusive limitations of binary femininity, masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality encouraging a reading of the queer body to equally consider the performance of gender

dysmorphia, transgenderism, androgyny, polygamy, hermaphroditism, bisexuality intersexuality, asexuality, pansexuality, transsexuality and sadomasochism.

Queer meaning is authenticated by the reader and what may be perceived as representative of a single readers queerness may be non-representative of another. The perception of what constitutes queer music is thus ambiguous and not able to be limited to a sound, style, genre or singular aesthetic. Instead, queer theory values the aesthetic representation of nonnormative identities and is less concerned with the political implications the performance of these identities might incur. Queer aesthetic value lies in the ability of the aesthetic to disrupt normativity as opposed to value being placed in the technicalities of the aesthetic itself.

In closing, I would like to propose a possibility for further investigation, demonstrating the need for a dialogue between queer theory and musicology. Previously I suggested that queer theories of gender and sexual identity advocate fluidity thus queer meaning is located in someone or something that is dynamic, that is in the process of constructing itself rather than something that presents itself as whole and static. While conducting research for this paper, I came across the following description of musical sound suggesting that “the sonic world . . . is intangible, constantly in motion, and

multidimensional” (Shepherd, 1999, p. 163). Traditional musicology which favours textual analysis has been critical of popular musicology’s use of cultural theory to give meaning to music. However, I believe that queer theory has potential application for interpreting the purely sonic qualities of music, especially when discussing the unfixed and multidimensional qualities of sound. Sexuality and gender are proven to be social constructions attached to matters of the physical body giving explanation to certain human behaviour which leads me to suggest the potential application of queer theory to the organisation of a body of sound, thus explaining musical behaviour at a purely sonic level?

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## Clustering the Pop Music Audience: Music and Taste Groups

Tom ter Bogt, Quinten Raaijmakers, Wilma Vollebergh, Frits van Wel and Paul Sikkema

### Introduction

While musicologists and music historians have described the history of pop music as a history of genres and have attempted to identify the key musical elements of certain styles, sociologists often started with the perception of these genres by audiences and tried to structure the large number of perceived genres and subgenres by using multidimensional scaling techniques and factor analysis. Fink, Robinson and Dowden (1985) assessed the structure of musical taste by performing multidimensional scaling on the preference for 13 genres. They found a seven-dimensional structure with two main dimensions. Musical genres can be labeled according to their 'formality' or 'complexity', and their 'geographical base'. Fink et al. distinguish music that requires greater social organization, for instance, opera and big band music, from genres that require fewer performers, for instance, rock and soul. Their second dimension refers to the roots of genres, country and bluegrass being typical rural genres and jazz and rock more city-based.

Factor analysis was used in other studies to reduce a greater number of genres into fewer, more encompassing styles of pop music (Christenson, 1994; Christenson &

Peterson, 1988; Hakanen & Wells, 1993). In a review of this type of research, Christenson and Roberts (1998) distinguish first and foremost the 'easy access, mainstream, chart music' from other more generic styles. Besides this style, which is always at the heart of popular music, a more 'elitist' style can be distinguished subsuming genres such as classical music, jazz, and blues. A number of other styles can be distinguished that share some internal consistency of instrumentation, singing style, or content themes, for instance, 'guitar-driven/rock' music' in various hard or soft variants, or 'romantic, ballad-like' pop. The last structuring principle is ethnicity. In particular in the U.S., music is always more or less directly associated with the Afro-American tradition of popular music.

Similar studies of the structuring of musical preferences have been conducted in the Netherlands and the Flemish part of Belgium (Janssen & Prins, 1991; Rutten, 1992; Stevens & Elchardus, 2001; Tillekens, 1993; Van Wel, 1993). These Dutch and Flemish authors have generally confirmed a four-factor structure of popular styles. Common to their work is that, first, a 'popular, chart-based, girlish' style is detected next to, second, a 'boyish, rock' style. Third, an 'elitist' preference is identified next to, fourth, 'black, rhythmic dance'. The

results of these analyses of the Dutch and Flemish audiences resemble the structure found in the Anglo-American world of pop musical taste. Hence, there seems to be a certain commonality in the structuring of pop musical preferences in Europe and North America.

### **The present study**

Pop music is an important medium to adolescents, and musical preferences are constituents of group identity. Past research has revealed that genre preference acts as a bordering device for social groups and that the multitude of genres itself may be reduced to a small number of metagenres or styles. However, these lines of research did not address the basic question of the structure of the audience itself. Analyses with multidimensional scaling techniques and factor analysis empirically tested the structure of genres, but structuring preferences of audiences is not the same as identifying the structure of the audience itself. The analysis of pop culture is dominated by factor analytical designs that are valuable for revealing the latent structure of genre preferences, but unsuitable for identifying taste groups. In the present study we attempted to determine the composition of the pop audience. We tried to uncover associated sets of preferences and dislikes, and to show how these patterns of attraction and rejection define groups within the audience. Therefore, we tried to answer a basic and straightforward question: what

is the structure of the audience of contemporary pop music? In a consecutive analysis, differences in the composition of these groups were tested regarding gender, age, socio-economic status, educational level, and youth centrism. Thus, groups within the current pop music audience were not only identified, but also qualified. In addition to the classic background variables of gender, age, social class, and education, youth centrism (Zinnecker, 1982; Meeus, 1988) was added in order to check the extent to which these groups define themselves as opposed to the word of adults and live in a 'youthful' symbolic universe.

### **Method**

*Sample.* The sample was derived from the Jongeren '99 (Youth '99) survey, a biannual cross-sectional study of Dutch adolescents and young adults. The 1999 measurement of this study was carried out among a representative sample of 2136 adolescents and young adults; 1236 filled in questions on musical preference (Sikkema, 1999).

*Measures.* Music is an evolving cultural field. Therefore part of the biannual Jongeren surveys is a pilot in which a number of representatives of the music industry, music journalist, D.J.'s and a panel group of young people are interviewed in order to check the list of genres of popular music. The updated 1999 list consisted of 20 popular genres (see Table 1). Respondents were asked



to rate each of these genres on a five-point Likert scale with answering categories varying from 'dislike this very much' to 'like this very much'. The respondent also had the opportunity to indicate that they were unfamiliar with certain types of music: 'don't know this genre'.

The Youth Centrist scale, originally designed by Zinnecker (1982), assesses an extreme orientation on peers and distrust of adults and adult institutions; 16 items, for instance 'Adults and youngsters: two different worlds', 'Adults interfere too much with us, young people', 'Hardly any adult is able to understand the problems that young people face' (5 point Likert scale, answering categories 1 'disagree totally' to 5 'agree totally',  $\alpha=.77$ ).

*Strategy for analysis.* We selected the group of respondents that completely filled out the questionnaire. Because only well known and popular genres were part of the questionnaire, the majority of respondents (74,3%) fell into this category. Their responses were factor analyzed with the aim of identifying latent musical styles. Next, the factor scores for these styles formed the basis of the analysis meant to identify the audience groups. In order to differentiate within the pop audience we conducted a hierarchical cluster analysis.

## Results

Factor Analysis of Musical Preferences: The Emergence of Musical Styles Principal component analysis of

the 20 musical preferences revealed a clear, well-interpretable five components structure explaining 64% of the variance in preferences (see Table 1). The five components referred to the musical styles of 'Pop/Dutch pop', 'Afro-American', 'Elite', 'Rock', and 'Dance'. Both individual factor scores and individual scale scores were calculated, indicating the participants' preferences for each musical style. Each musical style scale scores was computed as the mean value of those musical preferences that loaded .50 or more on the component representing that style. This procedure resulted in quite reliable musical style scale scores (see also Table 1).

Three musical preference scores did not substantially contribute to the identification of the five musical styles. Preference scores for 'Funk' did not reach factor loadings of .35 or higher. The preference scores for 'Reggae' loaded moderately on both 'Elite' (.44) and 'Afro-American' (.43), while the preference scores for 'Rock 'n' roll' added only moderately to the identification of both 'Elite' (.42) and 'Rock' (.42).

## Cluster Analysis of Musical Style Scores: The Identification of Musical Tastes

The factor analysis described in the previous section dealt with latent musical styles, underlying the various separate musical preferences (i.e., the grouping of variables based on their mutual correlations). In this

**Table 1. Principal Component Analysis of Musical Preferences.**

<b>Components (Musical Styles)</b>					
<b>Musical Preferences</b>	<b>1 Pop/Dutch Pop</b>	<b>2 Afro-American</b>	<b>3 Elite</b>	<b>4 Rock</b>	<b>5 Dance</b>
Dutch Pop	.81				
Dutch	.68				
tearjerker	.57				
Golden Oldies	.56				
Top-40 charts		.86			
Soul / R&B		.81			
Rap					
Funk			.84		
Jazz			.79		
Blues			.71		
Classical Music			.67		
World Music				.84	
Reggae				.84	
Alternative				.80	
Hardrock / Metal					.91
Rock					.87
Rock 'n' Roll					.80
House					.75
Trance					
Hardcore					
Drum & Bass					
Reliability of summated scale scores ( $\alpha$ )	.86	.79	.82	.61	.73

Note: Only factor loadings with values of .50 or higher (after varimax rotation) are presented.

Decline of eigenvalues: 4.54, 3.29, 2.07, 1.66, 1.33, 0.85, 0.79 and 0.71, etcetera.

section, we are primarily interested in the typology of musical tastes (i.e., the grouping of participants on the basis of the individual patterning of musical style appreciation in terms of the strength of the participants' attraction to and/or rejection of these styles).

For this purpose several consecutive hierarchical cluster analyses were performed on the five factor scores of the 908 participants, with each factor score representing the individual participant's overall evaluation of a specific musical style. The method of clustering participants was based on intragroup similarity in the pattern of evaluation of the five musical styles, rather than intergroup differences in these evaluations. Analysis of the results of eight different clusteranalyses revealed that a six cluster solution was most meaningful and technically superior (Ter Bogt et al., 2003)

### **Characterization of Musical Tastes**

To interpret and characterize the musical taste of the participants belonging to one of the six clusters, the means of the five musical scale scores were computed for each of the six clusters, separately. The results are presented in Table 2.

The first cluster, labeled as 'Pop/Dutch pop' taste, had a clear preference for Pop/Dutch pop music. This preference was related to a strong aversion to Dance music, a common dislike for Elite music, and a neutral

attitude towards both Rock and Afro-American music.

The second cluster, labeled as 'Afro-American' taste, had a strong liking for Afro-American pop music together with a relatively moderate liking for Dance music and a dislike for the Rock and Elite styles.

The third cluster, labeled as 'Rock' taste, disapproved strongly of both Afro-American pop music and Dance music. Rock is associated with a dislike for Elite music and a neutral attitude towards Pop/Dutch pop music and, of course, a strong liking for Rock music.

The fourth cluster was labeled as 'Dance', because of its strong approval of this kind of music connected with a strong disapproval of Elite music and a dislike of Rock and Afro-American music. Taking into account its negative appreciation of Afro-American music, this group may be labeled more specifically as 'white' Dance.

The fifth cluster had a relative positive attitude towards Elite music and an outspoken liking of Pop/Dutch pop, Dance, and Afro-American music while holding a neutral opinion on Rock. Having positive attitudes to most musical styles, this cluster was, therefore, labeled as 'Omnivore'. Finally, members of the last cluster, labeled as 'Anti' taste, disliked every musical style, except to a certain extent Pop/Dutch pop, and detested Dance and Rock music in particular. Overall, Pop/Dutch pop music emerges as the most popular music with the Afro-American style nearly tipping that status. Rock is less popular and so is Dance, while the Elite style may be labeled as unpopular music. These

Table 2. Mean Musical Style Scale Scores of the Six Clusters of Musical Tastes

Mean score (and standard deviation) on musical style scale					
Cluster: Taste N (%)	Pop/Dutch Pop	Afro-American	Elite	Rock	Dance
1. <b>Pop/D.Pop</b> 265 (29)	<b>3.60</b> (0.56)	2.95 (0.92)	2.37 (0.83)	2.94 (0.97)	<i>1.67</i> (0.70)
2. <b>Afro-Am.</b> 193 (21)	2.56 (0.59)	<b>4.09</b> (0.84)	1.89 (0.71)	2.29 (0.99)	2.78 (0.99)
3. <b>Rock</b> 111 (12)	2.63 (0.59)	<i>1.71</i> (0.68)	2.20 (0.83)	<b>3.84</b> (0.82)	1.82 (0.72)
4. <b>Dance</b> 55 (6)	2.99 (0.92)	1.86 (0.80)	1.30 (0.41)	2.01 (0.78)	<b>3.68</b> (0.77)
5. <b>Omnivore</b> 153 (17)	<b>3.61</b> (0.60)	<b>3.43</b> (0.94)	2.85 (0.69)	3.10 (0.91)	<b>3.57</b> (0.69)
6. <b>Anti</b> 131 (14)	2.82 (0.71)	2.55 (1.01)	<i>1.77</i> (0.65)	<i>1.46</i> (0.51)	<i>1.65</i> (0.72)
Total 908	3.11 (0.78)	3.00 (1.17)	2.18 (0.85)	2.67 (1.12)	2.36 (1.11)

Note: In bold, scores above 3.4 indicating preference (with scale values ranging from 1 to 5). In italics, scores below 1.8 indicating strong dislike.

preferences are reflected in the size of the audience groups. The Pop/Dutch pop group is the largest group within the audience, and the Afro-American group the second largest. The group of Omnivores ranks third; the Antis fourth. The Rock group, ranked fifth, comprises a relatively small part of the total audience and the same holds for the smallest group, that of the Dance fans (Table 2).

In Table 3 (unavailable at time of publication), the six clusters of musical taste are portrayed in terms of some social background characteristics and the youth centrism orientation. From the results reported in the table, it is clear that differences between the six clusters in gender, age, socio-economic background, educational attainment, and youth centrism are statistically significant. The differentiating effects of age, educational attainment, and the youth centrist orientation not only reach the level of significance but may be qualified as moderate to large in terms of effect size.

The results show that, relatively to the expected count, females are under-represented in the Rock and Dance clusters and that they are over-represented in the Pop/Dutch pop and especially the Anti groups. The Afro-American and Anti clusters are composed of relatively young fans while Rock and Pop/Dutch pop fans and Omnivores tend to be older. The highest educated youngsters were over-represented in the Pop/ Dutch

pop musical cluster, while the lower educated were strongly over-represented in the Afro-American, the Dance, and the Anti clusters. The people in the Dance group also tend to have a lower socio-economic status. The Dance cluster also shows a relatively strong youth centrist orientation compared with the other clusters, which do not differ from each other in this respect. The Dance group may, therefore, be qualified as the only group representing true youth culture with its relatively strong identification with peers and dislike of the world of adults.

## Discussion

The first step in our analysis was to identify the structure of music preferences and we found a five-factor structure that to a large extent corroborates the results of earlier analyses of the same kind (Christenson & Roberts, 1998). Four factors were more or less the same. At the heart of popular music lies the most popular, chart-based style identified as pop music. During the last two decennia, pop music of Dutch origin, i.e., music within the Anglo-American pop format with either Dutch or English lyrics, composed by Dutch artists, has become a more integral part of this style and for that reason we named it 'Pop/Dutch pop music'.

Pop, rock, Afro-American, and elite styles were identified before, but our fifth factor is indicative of major changes in the pop field during late eighties and the nineties: the

emergence of rave culture and in its wake, new genres of electronic dance music. During the seventies and eighties, the prevailing dance music of the moment, disco, was subsumed under the broad category of Afro-American music (Sikkema, 1989). Genres like house, trance, techno, and drum & bass form the basis of a distinct style of electronic dance music, no longer intrinsically associated with the Afro-American tradition of danceable music. During the nineties 'Dance' became disconnected from 'black, rhythmic' pop music to appear as a distinct fifth factor.

The appearance of a fifth style in our data can hardly be seen as a local, Dutch, phenomenon. Since the late eighties, electronic dance music attracted large crowds in the Netherlands and some of the best-known producers and D.J.s in the field originate from this country. In this respect, the Netherlands has been at the forefront of the emergence and popularization of a new popular style of pop music, however, dance is an international phenomenon and rave parties a youth cultural phenomenon with cross-national appeal (Mutsaers, 1998; Reynolds, 1998). The identification of a distinct fifth style, Dance, in our results may be interpreted as an outcome that will be confirmed by analyses in other countries should they depart from the same genres.

Reducing the multitude of genres to five musical styles provided the input for the second part of our research.

The results of a set of eight analyses showed that a six-cluster solution proved to be optimal.

The largest of the audience groups is the 'Pop/Dutch pop' cluster comprising 29% of our sample. This part of the audience clearly likes 'pop' music, in itself a mixture of genres from which the catchiest tunes are the most likely to end up in the charts. This cluster of people reports neutral attitudes towards the Afro-American style, another type of music that is heavily present in the charts as rap or R&B music, and rock music. Pop fans dislike the older and more serious forms of elite music and, surprisingly, disapprove strongly of dance music. This last result may be an artifact of the date of the research project, 1999. In particular, the genre of trance has had mass appeal during the last few years and the negative attitude of pop fans to dance music may have been mitigated by this fact. An alternative explanation may be that pop fans adore the traditional pop format of songs in which the performer and his/her voice is the central element. With its stress on booming rhythm, most electronic dance music reduces the role of the voice to simple repetitive melodic statements, thereby eliminating the human voice as the most essential part in a pop song, and this may be what pop fans object to. Earlier research qualified pop music as music for a predominantly female audience, with pop carrying qualifications like feminine, superficial, and commercial, and rock standing out as masculine, arty,



and underground (Frith, 1981; Thornton, 1995). Our results confirm that female fans outnumber male fans within this group, but Pop/Dutch pop is by no means an all-female affair. Our results further point to the fact that chart-based music is not only popular with lower-class/lower educated teenagers, as was the case in the early days of rock 'n' roll in the Netherlands (Ter Bogt, 1997). The pop audience group is relatively old and especially within the highest educational range pop seems to be the music of choice.

Traditionally, 'Rock' was conceived of as the opposite to pop, and qualified as progressive, arty, and vital music (Frith, 1981). Pop fans are more positive towards rock music than vice versa, but it is not especially pop music that bothers rock fans. Aficionados of guitar-driven music, an estimated 12% of the total audience, loathe Afro-American music and dance, so the prime opposition in popular music is no longer that between pop and rock, but seems to have been redirected to the opposition between danceable music with a strong rhythmic base, ultimately rooted in the black musical tradition (Afro-American music and dance music), and music not made especially for dancing (rock). The disapproval of Afro-American music by rock fans may reflect ethnic boundaries as well. Rock music is a genre predominantly played by white musicians and its audience is also predominantly white (Arnett, 1991, 1996; Ter Bogt, 1997). For this rock audience, the difference between

danceable and non-danceable music, between black and white music, may symbolically mark the distinction between themselves and the members of non-white ethnic groups. Females are still underrepresented in the Rock group. Interestingly, no educational or social class differences were found for this group, suggesting that a fan base once comprising nearly entirely lower-class, lower educated males (Arnett, 1991, 1996; Weinstein, 1991) has changed substantially over the last two decades, at least in the Netherlands.

Fans of 'Afro-American' music, 21% of the total audience, do not dislike rock music as much as the rock group dislikes Afro-American music. This greater tolerance may be attributed to the fact that, in the Netherlands, the audience for this type of music is multi-ethnic. However, the tolerance assumption is supported by the fact that this part of the audience shows a broader preference than rock and dance fans. There is not a single genre they strongly dislike, they view dance neutrally and their judgment of pop verges on the edge of neutral and negative. With their enthusiasm for Afro-American music, consisting of the popular rap and R&B genres, this group of people seems to be, next to the group of pop/Dutch pop fans, the second cluster of fans of music that is often chart bound and mainstream. It is remarkable that they dislike the elite style even though older black music is part of this style. The Afro-American cluster is generally younger than the other groups and

its members have a lower educational level.

The 'Dance' cluster likes genres like house, trance, techno and, drum & bass. Members of this group, 6% of the audience, have a neutral attitude to pop/Dutch pop music, but dislike Afro-American and rock music. This relatively small group is interesting for the fact that its members dislike two forms of popular music which have been part of the mainstream from the fifties on. For this part of the audience, the development of electronic dance music has been a true revolution in the sense that they perceive it as a whole new type of music, in no way associated with older traditions and genres in popular music. This cluster seems to be the most radical in embracing truly contemporary music and, in the same process, debasing older forms. This interpretation is supported by the fact that they strongly despise the elite tradition in (popular) music. To some extent, their preferences may not only reflect musical judgments but also class- and race-based preoccupations. While it is evident that they are no fans of white rock music, they also dislike the Afro-American style and, loathing the elite style of music, they show disapproval of the mainly black genres of blues, jazz, and world music. Cutting themselves off from the black tradition in popular music and being oriented towards on types of music predominantly produced by white musicians, D.J.s, and producers, this part of the audience may be typified as 'white Dance' fans. In their severe rejection of the

elitist style, they may also show a social economic-based distaste for any genre with a hint of 'high', non-working-class culture. The dance cluster comprises predominantly males with a lower educational level and socio-economic status. Interestingly, especially this crowd is awed by the prospect of having to become adult with all the duties implied. As youth centrists, on the one hand, they crave for 'adult' rights - drinking, sex, independence- on the other hand they would like to stay with their friends in a youthful subculture, never crossing the border to that despised grown-up status.

The rave party scene is not limited to what has been labeled the white dance cluster with their relatively narrow taste. The cluster of people defined as 'Omnivore' also shows a passion for dance music, however, they do not limit their preferences to one kind of (rhythmic) music. They distinguish themselves from the white dance group by their enthusiasm for Afro-American pop, and they like pop/Dutch pop as well. They have a neutral attitude to rock and, on the generally unpopular elite type of music, they score highest. Omnivores, 17% of the audience, show by far the broadest taste and with their approval of elite music they also show a keen sense of the history of music. While they like the music qualified as elite, they do not have an especially high socio-economic status or high education. With their broad taste and tolerance, they may be qualified as an elitist group distinguishing itself from other less tolerant

groups. This social categorization may be self-approved, but, interestingly, this kind of elite position is an effect of personal cultural taste rather than class-based or educational sensibilities, typical of the higher strata.

The 14% of adolescents and young adults who belong to the 'Anti' cluster form the exact opposite of the omnivore group. They are more or less neutral regarding pop/Dutch pop, but they dislike the Afro-American style and show a strong distaste for dance, elite, and rock music. Though pop music is thought to be the pre-eminently youthful medium, about one in seven adolescents and young adults shows a common dislike of pop music and, in debasing the elite style representing important older musical forms, they in fact demonstrate a general distaste for nearly all kinds of music. Antis tend to belong to the lower ranks of the educational system and the typical anti is more likely to be female than male.

By using preference scores on music genres we limited our sample to those respondents actually familiar with these genres. Our cluster analysis, therefore, seems only to account for the choices made by young people well acquainted with popular music. A further limitation may be that it is not precisely known what even these connoisseurs of pop music have in mind when confronted with the task of evaluating the 20 genres. For instance, rock is a broad category and so is top 40 music, and people may refer to very different artists and bands when they rate their preferences of these

genres. However, first, the prevalence of knowledge of music is high in the researched group, with 74.3% of all respondents indicating that they know all genres, and second, the clear pattern of styles emerging from factor analysis indicates that respondents, no matter what they think of individual genres and artists, structure the field of popular music in much the same way.

Furthermore, our results show that the audience of pop music can be divided in only six groups of people whose taste is more or less the same. This may not stroke with the image people who like music, have of themselves. Fans tend to think that their taste is a special, unique affair. Simon Frith (1996) argues that debating the intricacies of the music of bands and artists is part of the pleasure of liking pop music. Even people with roughly the same taste may argue passionately over differences within a certain style, and why some artists are better performers than others. Fans may have the idea that their taste is a highly individual matter, but they almost certainly overestimate differences between them, as is indicated by the fact that it is possible to identify a limited number of clusters within the audience.

## Endnotes

1. This presentation is a short version of an article appearing in the *Netherlands Journal of Social Science* (Ter Bogt et al., 2003)

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## The Four Dimensions of Popular Music: Mapping the Continental Drift of Pop and Rock Music Preferences

Ger Tillekens, Juul Mulder and Tom ter Bogt

Since its explosive materialization in the mid-1950's, the field of pop and rock music has almost constantly been changing, driven by the continuous interaction between what the music industry had to offer and, the other way around, the changing preferences of the pop music audience. New songs, new artists and, now and again, whole new styles and genres have emerged, each attracting their own following. However, as research over the years shows, by and large the field itself and its constituting dimensions seem to be relatively constant. The stability of these dimensions, here, is shown once again by a series of data on musical preferences of Dutch secondary and primary school pupils. Next to a reconstruction of some 1970's material, the authors offer a secondary analysis of data collected at the end of the 1980's and present the outcomes of data collected in school year 2001-02 among almost six thousand secondary school pupils along with a data set of nearly nineteen thousand primary school pupils in the Netherlands collected a year before. Over the years, the results reveal some massive shifts of preferences within a rather stable field of popular music.

### Looking behind the charts

As the hit charts so clearly suggest, the preferences of the pop audience seem to be in constant flux. The history of pop artists and their songs, indeed, has been written many times with the hit charts serving as an indication of the twists and turns in their careers; see for instance Anderson et al. By now, popular music research has also produced many studies on specific groups of fans, ranging in time from Frith's study (*Sociology of Rock*) of the Keighly teenagers and Willis' analysis of the British Motor-bikers and Hippies to Arnett's penetrating discussion of Heavy Metal fans with a host of other instructive studies in-between. Hit charts and fan analyses, though, will tell us little about the changing preferences of the pop audience at large (Parker; Hakanen). Moreover, while theorists like Grossberg have provided some astute reflections on the evolution of pop and rock music, there are hardly any empirical investigations into the changing preferences of the pop audience spanning more than a few years.

Here, we try to fill this gap somewhat by taking an empirical look at the overall popular music audience



and its internal divisions over a span of about fifteen years. We will do so by assembling the outcomes on music preferences of three Dutch data sets in a cross-sectional overview. The first one concerns the Groningen data set: a small cohort of 4th grade secondary school pupils dating back to yearend 1986 ( $n = 712$ ; mean age: 16.2). The second one is the HBSC data set: a large school-based survey of 12-to-18-year old pupils ( $n = 5,730$ ; mean age: 13.9) collected in school year 2001-02, also in secondary education. The third one is the Prima-4 data set: a still larger set of data consisting of a cohort of fourth grade primary school pupils ( $n = 4,263$ ; mean age: 10.0) and a cohort of sixth grade primary school pupils ( $n = 14,594$ ; mean age: 12.0) collected a year before.\* By comparing the outcomes of these data sets, we will try to forge an impression of the main shifts within the field of popular music over the last decades. But, to constitute a starting point, we first take a tentative look at the changing field of popular music at the turn of the 1960's towards the 1970's, when Murdock and Phelps tried their hand at locating the main coordinates of the field of rock music preferences in the UK.

### **Diverging tastes**

At the time of the mid-1960's' beat-explosion, new forms of popular music were rapidly evolving into what we now know as rock music. Appropriated by a rising tide of middle-class youth, at that time this music clearly

constituted a cultural unity. The music as well as its practices, at least momentarily, seemed able to bridge the existing social divisions of class, gender and ethnicity. While these divisions, of course, did not disappear, they did not crystallize in clear subgenres. They rather showed up in more subtle preferences for specific artists, groups and their songs, as demonstrated for instance by the antagonisms between the fan-bases of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. The 1970's in turn are for most analysts special by themselves for the budding of new genres within the field of rock music. During this decade rock turned into, as Christenson and Roberts declare, "fragmented rock" (73 ff.). Underground or Psychedelics on the one hand and Hard Rock and Heavy Metal on the other were the first genres to be labeled as subgenres of rock music, followed by a whole array of dance-oriented genres like Disco, Soul and Funk. Later on in the decade also Punk arose, expelling Underground from its privileged position among higher educated youngsters. It would take some time, though, for these genres, spawned by what Matza once called "subterranean traditions of youth," to break the surface and reach the larger audience.

The first traces of this process of internal differentiation can be found in the British landmark study of Murdock and Phelps (Mass Media). Judging by the chart-oriented kids' favorite record title, Marc Bolan's T. Rex' hit single 'Ride A White Swan,' Murdock and Phelps (159) must have collected their data shortly before or after the yearend

of 1970. By that time, fresh genres as Underground, Reggae, and what the authors tentatively call “Heavy Rock” had started to make themselves known. Being new on the stage, of course, they were not yet all unequivocally labeled. In this respect it is a telling fact, that the authors, next to song fragments, used group names and song titles for their research. Already by that time, though, it seemed evident that the growing differentiation of rock music had social roots. In their study, Murdock and Phelps devote ample space to discussing the adoption of Underground music by more intellectual youngsters as well as the rise of Reggae, which they perceive as a reaction among lower class Skinheads. Murdock and Phelps even motivate their study with this observation: “The average Reggae record is as far away from many of the songs of Bob Dylan as it is from the poetry of Keats” (Mass Media 9).

The stepwise analysis of Murdock and Phelps reveals all of the usual difficulties of handling data on music preferences. For one thing, the differences in musical taste between social categories of young people prove not to be completely divisive. Evidently, in modern societies rock music first and for all constitutes a field of shared preferences and meanings. Rock and pop songs are easily accessible to all and only a small percentage of the audience exclusively adheres to one single genre. Therefore, most of the time, it not easy to draw clear boundaries between different taste groups. It is as difficult to find the system of coordinates spanning the

field of musical taste. To this end Murdock and Phelps performed three subsequent analyses. The first step involved a questionnaire relating to sound fragments of twelve carefully selected hit songs. These sound bytes were rated according to the principles of the ‘semantic differential’ by a small sample of 211 boys and girls in the fourth grade of secondary education. The analysis resulted in two dimensions indicating the preferred type of pop music, labeled ‘activity’ and ‘intelligibility.’ The second step consisted of an exploratory factor analysis on a small sub-sample of 55 of these respondents. The outcomes of this analysis urged Murdock and Phelps to comprise and broaden both dimensions into a single one: the opposition between ‘intelligibility’ and ‘potency,’ and to add yet another one: the opposition between mainstream music and a broadly defined category of Underground, covering the likes of Leonard Cohen as well as the heavy, blues-oriented rock of the Rolling Stones and Johnny Winter.

The third and final step involved a larger sample of secondary school pupils of grade 2 and 4 to investigate the impact of relevant background variables. This analysis added yet another category of more conventional or non-pop-oriented youth, inclined towards more conventional styles of music or to actual chart hits. Taking these groups together along the lines resulting out of the subsequent analytical steps, the pattern emerged that is being presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: A reconstruction of the dimensions of Murdock and Phelps (1972; 1973); data collected at yearend 1970**

Style:	Conventional		<< versus >>		Non conventional
Orientation:	Non-pop oriented		<< versus >>		Pop oriented
Culture:	Parent culture	<< versus >>		Youth Culture	
Type of pop:		Mainstream pop	<< versus >>	Underground	
Intelligibility		<b>A.</b> Beatles / Simon and Garfunkel			<b>B.</b> Leonard Cohen
Activity			<b>E.</b> Aretha Franklin / Jackson Five		
Potence		<b>D.</b> Top Ten			<b>C.</b> Rolling Stones / Johnny Winter

The diagram describes the variation within the field of music preferences as delineated by two dimensions. The first one differentiates a predilection for more conventional, or at least by then accepted pop music (Clusters A and D) from the preference for more unconventional, or at least actual and new forms of music (Clusters B and C); the second one contrasts

intellectual, highbrow forms of music (Clusters A and B), now including pop and rock, with lowbrow ones (Clusters C and D). The middle field is constituted by a cluster (Cluster E) of 'black' dance music, or as we now would call it Soul, represented at that time by the songs of Aretha Franklin and the Jackson Five. More than their peers, youngsters belonging to this cluster were leaning

towards shopping and partying, following fashion and exuberantly buying and showing the attributes of their taste as a leisure activity. Because of their sociable manners and outgoing behavior, Murdock and Phelps mark this category as “activity,” though in fact this label more often refers to an attitude than to real conduct, as the authors themselves conclude. This cluster mainly recruited middle-class youth, so Murdock and Phelps conjecture, who contrary to their lower class counterparts didn’t had easy access to the existing street-culture and therefore adopted pop culture to stamp their own mark on public space.

The data, moreover, show a shift along the line of conventional, non-pop-oriented towards unconventional or at least rather new, pop-oriented song types from grade 2 to grade 4, which according to Murdock and Phelps testifies to the rise to cultural dominance of the middle classes. A dominant opposition, dubbed by the authors as their most important outcome, was found to exist between early school-leavers with a middle-class background and their lower class counterparts - represented by a diagonal line from the upper right (Cluster B) to the bottom left (Cluster D) in Figure 1 in the striking criss-cross pattern constituted by the model. The former category proved to be more deviant from their parent cultures and also more oriented towards the Underground style of rock music, while the latter category did deviate less from their parent culture and

restricted their listening behavior largely to the Top-Ten. This polarization, by the way, seemed to manifest itself mostly in lower class schools, thereby showing the growing importance of school as a social divider.

### **The turn towards the 1980’s**

Geographically the Netherlands are not that far apart from the British Isles. Economic and social conditions being rather similar, in time the cultural developments on the youth front tended to converge. At the time the Beatles were playing Hamburg, Dutch Rock and Roll bands were successfully competing in the clubs at the Reeperbahn (Mutsaers). As soon as Beatlemania had arrived, British and American pop music stormed the hit charts. Countless Dutch bands in the major cities appropriated the sound and spread it over the country. The subsequent youth revolt equated rock music with being young. At the end of the 1960’s Amsterdam even became known as the magical centre of the counter culture. Conditions being rather equal and seen the global character of rock music, by and large, one would expect a pattern similar to the one found by Murdock and Phelps. Indeed, like in Britain, the situation in the Netherlands changed from the start of the 1970’s. As anticipated by the findings of Murdock and Phelps, Hard Rock and Underground developed into fully-fledged genres within the corpus of rock music. Next to that, several new genres made their presence known,

notably Punk, Funk, and Disco. At the turn of the 1970's towards the 1980's the differentiation crystallized even further, as a new generation of youngsters that had fully grown up with pop and rock music, entered the scene. For them rock music, including its fragmentation into separate genres, was not something radically new but a factual matter of everyday life.

Already by 1976, the book of Murdock and Phelps had been translated and published in Dutch. It had to wait, though, for seven long years for a follow-up. In 1983 Van Bork and Jacobs took to this job. By that time the fragmentation of rock music had steadily been progressing and in their analysis the whole range of new genres does show up. There even had been a significant rise in Dutch Pop, especially in the age group of 12 to 14 years-old, mainly due to the successes of a single band by the name of 'Doe Maar.' However, the genre preferences, collected during April-March, 1983 (n = 302; age: 12-23 years), could be allocated to five clusters closely conforming, as Van Bork and Jacobs (147) themselves admit, with those of Murdock and Phelps. Their first cluster of genres, comprising MOR (Middle of the Road), Country and Western, Rock and Roll and Dutch language Schlagers, coincides conceptually with Cluster D. Their second category, by and large, corresponds to Cluster E and comprises Disco, Funk and Reggae. The third one, covering Blues and Symphonic Rock, coincides with Cluster A, while the

fourth one, uniting Ska, Punk and New Wave, conforms to Cluster B. Finally, Hard Rock, coinciding with Cluster C, constitutes a separate and exclusive genre, with a relatively small following of youngsters that admitted to not liking or even knowing any of the other genres (Van Bork and Jacobs 88). This clearly signals the early start of, what by now we can call, the enduring Heavy Metal isolation (Bryson, *Anything But*).

Next to the crystallization of genres within the domain of pop music itself, the most remarkable facts are the new additions of Punk and Disco (Lopes 65). Disco is clearly present but still rather elusive, while Punk instead of Underground now is serving as the great divider on the diagonal line B-D. By 1983, so this shows, Punk and its softer variant New Wave had successfully driven out Underground and Psychedelics from the immediate awareness of the younger audience. Van Bork and Jacobs add some information confirming the identity match of their findings with those of Murdock and Phelps. Just like their earlier counterparts, the young people preferring the left-hand clusters A and D consume their music mainly passively from radio and television and use it as a conversation topic with their local peers with whom they share their preferences, while those on the right-hand clusters B and C are visiting concerts, making friends at these occasions and even venturing into the production of pop music themselves. The inhabitants of the centre, Cluster E, on average counting more

girls than boys so the data of Van Bork and Jacobs indicate, cultivate a more active attitude: they choose their own records to listen to, are out-going and not only sit down to listen but also like to dance to the music of their choice. Corroborating the findings of Murdock and Phelps, this aura of 'activity' first and for all is a kind of attitude and does not result in excessive outgoing or partying behavior. The vertical dimension appears to be related to the level of education. Symphonic Rock and Blues represent highbrow tastes, while Dutch Schlager, Rock and Roll, Country and Western, MOR and Hard Rock stand for lowbrow tastes. Just like Murdock and Phelps, Van Bork and Jacobs (90) mark the diagonal opposition between Cluster B and Cluster D as the dominant opposition, which according to them is highly reducible to differences between levels of education.

Not all results of this study correspond so closely with those of Murdock and Phelps. The street culture to which Murdock and Phelps lay so much weight, for example, does not seem to play such an important role. Music consumption instead is strongly mediatized as most youngsters enjoy their music by listening to the radio or playing records. This may be partly due to national differences, as Van Bork and Jacobs (96) themselves argue. On the other hand, it can also be attributed to the growing acceptance of pop and rock by parents, of whom many by now had actively lived through rock's formative years. This acceptance, however, does not

implicate that parents and their children by then shared the same appreciation of songs and genres. On the contrary, the available data show a growing divergence, to which the newly arriving genres of Punk and Disco may have paid their share. During the 1980's, as Van Eijck, De Haan and Knulst recently showed, the older generations – the cohorts born before 1954 - relatively turned more towards conventional patterns, while the younger ones more fully and exclusively adopted popular culture (161). This shift, by itself, proves not to be an age effect, but is first and for all due to differences between birth cohorts. The authors argue that the parental acceptance of children listening at home to their own music is related to the emergence of a new permissive socialization regime fostered by the social upward mobile post-war generations that, during the 1950's and more so during the 1960's, parted from conventional culture. Which, we may add, by itself also was an effect of the successful cultural revolution of pop music in the 1960's. This growing acceptance by parents of their children's deviating music tastes is also emerging from Van Bork and Jacobs' (108-9) data. By 1983, almost 60% of the Dutch parents themselves had quite different tastes, but accepted that their children cultivated their own taste of music, be it not played too loud within the confines of the home. Mainstream pop music, by then, was forming a middle ground between parents and children (De Meyer 69).



## Mapping the 1980's

After Van Bork and Jacobs had set the example, soon more studies followed in its wake. In the mean time, the first generation of social scientists that had fully grown up with rock music had acquired academic positions and they now stood ready to apply the tools of their trade to the object of their liking. This even caused a modest Big Bang in Dutch popular music studies (Sikkema; Van Wel and Van der Gouwe; Janssen and Prins; Tillekens). These studies, by and large, produced almost identical results. The results even conform strongly to the outcomes of similar studies in other countries like the one of Roe among Swedish pupils ( $n = 1,334$ ; age 15-16; data collected in 1984), thereby confirming the international character of pop music. By the mid-1980's popular music, indeed, had become a global phenomenon, even in its internal differentiations.

The Groningen data set, collected at yearend 1986 ( $n = 712$ ; mean age: 16.2), offers a good example (Tillekens). This research project looked into the preferences of a sample of 16-year-old youngsters for nineteen different musical genres, encompassing some older and some new ones, which could be reduced into five categories by means of a factor analysis explaining 56.8% of variance (see Table 1). For the total variance to be explained almost each and every genre would have to be taken as a separate factor. Luckily many genres

**Table 1: Five factors emerging from the Groningen data set**

Label	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5
Classical Music	.74	.00	-.09	.00	.05
Jazz	.71	.38	.12	.10	.02
Chanson / Cabaret	.66	.04	.13	.14	-.09
Blues	.66	.36	.18	.07	.09
Jazz Pop	.55	.53	.15	.13	.06
Soul	.22	.78	.09	.01	-.06
Funk	.03	.65	.25	-.19	.36
Easy Listening	.33	.49	-.04	.15	-.06
New Wave	.12	-.02	.79	.02	.17
Ska	.15	.28	.70	.03	-.04
Punk	.06	-.12	.60	.01	.46
Reggae	-.10	.39	.57	.13	-.28
Dutch Pop	.04	.02	.13	.75	-.15
Dutch Schlager	-.05	.01	-.15	.67	.15
Rock and Roll	.36	.02	.23	.58	.12
Country	.23	.04	.03	.48	.20
Hard Rock	-.31	.05	.05	.11	.76
Symphonic Rock	.27	.07	.08	.22	.58
Disco	-.32	.39	-.02	.40	-.41

Data collected at yearend 1986;  $n = 712$ ; mean age: 16.2; rotated factor matrix (Varimax; iterations: 17; explained variance: 56.8%).

converge in clusters, proving that most people prefer combinations of related or adjacent genres. The five factors found in the Groningen data set, are quite similar to those unearthed by Van Bork and Jacobs and thus can be equated with the clusters of Murdock and Phelps. The first factor can be identified as their conventional highbrow Cluster A, the second one with their centre Cluster E, the third one with their pop-oriented highbrow Cluster B, the fourth one with their conventional lowbrow Cluster D, and the fifth one with their lowbrow Cluster C. Again, outcomes like these are surprisingly stable. Most subsequent analyses result in the same number of four to five dimensions with analogous interpretations (see for instance Dheil, Schneider and Petress; Fink, Robinson and Dowden; Hakanen and Wells, Music Preference; Mizell,

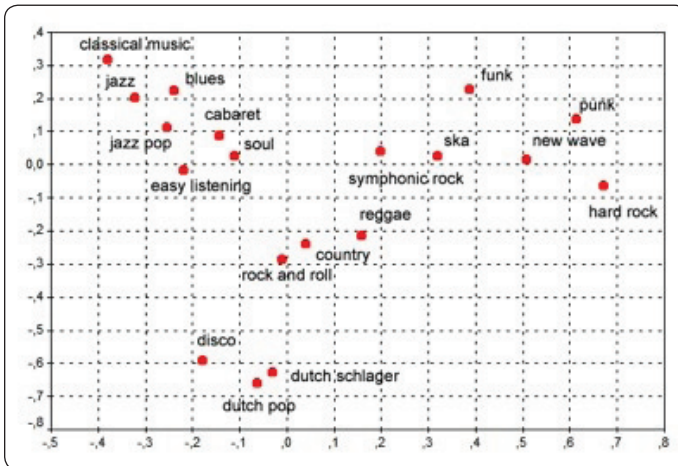
Crawford and Anderson; Rentfrow and Gosling; and even the outcomes of the two-factor solution of Finnas; and the replication of the latter by Schwartz and Fouts).

The orthogonal character of the factor solution indicates that the respondents seem to treat the factors as independent dimensions along which to measure their likings. So for each and every individual, the final outcome can be a mixture of quite unlikely partners. Indeed, as revealed by a closer investigation into the individual ratings, there clearly were groups of respondents who combined likings for genres usually thought to be incompatible, as for instance highbrow Classical Music with the lowbrow Dutch Schlager. In the same vein, individual combinations were found to exist of strong preferences for Classical Music and Hard Rock. This fact, though, will not surprise those who know that many a Hard Rock and Heavy Metal guitarist in those days was inspired by Classical Music, just like highbrow New Wave groups like Blondie rediscovered Rock and Roll and the Girl Group sound. Ostensibly, also their fans sometimes seemed to share this predilection. This mutual fascination of musical opposites, indeed, may be an important and innovating driving force in the history of popular music. Another element adding to the independency of the factors is the presence of at least some hard core fans, or “adolescent music marginals”

(Hakanen and Wells, Adolescent Music) or “univores” (Bryson, What About), who don’t like any other cluster of genres but their own. Statistically these groups may comprise only a small percentage of the total population, but their existence will have an effect on the factor solution.

The most confusing element of all, probably, is the independency of traditional highbrow forms of music - Classical Music, Cabaret, Jazz and Blues - and traditional lowbrow forms of music - the Dutch Schlager as well as Country and Western. For some researchers the orthogonality of factor solutions like these even provided sufficient empirical evidence to declare the old class-based opposition between high culture and low culture to be completely outdated (Van Wel and Van der Gouwe). However - because of the reasons mentioned above - the dimensions emerging from factor analyses like these tend to represent clusters of genres rather than the coordinates of the cultural arena in which musical tastes are formed. Moreover, for technical reasons relating to the scalability of musical preferences, an ordinal principal component analysis may be more fit to order and visualize the patterns between clusters of genres (Tillekens; Stevens). The diagram of Figure 2 just does that by presenting the preferences for pop and rock genres along two dimensions that closely conform to the reconstructed model of Murdock and Phelps.

**Figure 2: Two out of four dimensions from the Groningen data set, 1986**



( $n = 712$ ; mean age: 16.2); Princals; dimension 2: conventional vs. non-conventional (x-axis; variance explained: 10.0%) and dimension 3: lowbrow vs. highbrow (y-axis; variance explained: 8.7%).

Figure 2 shows the matrix of pop music preferences, delineated by two dimensions resulting from an ordinal principal component analysis (Princals) on the Groningen data set, explaining 53.5% of variance. Comparing these outcomes with the model of Murdock and Phelps, again the crystallization of genres within the domain of pop music and the new additions of Punk and Disco seem to be the most striking deviations. The field itself, showing the familiar criss-cross pattern, seems to unfold along the same coordinates. The labels, though, do not always apply. Indeed, at the end of the 1970's, 'Heavy Rock' as Murdock and Phelps called it, was potent and Hard Rock and Heavy Metal were to become even more so. Taking the place of Underground, Punk however seemed set on equaling or even surpassing Heavy Metal in loudness and potency. Lowbrow versus highbrow thus seem to offer a better definition for this dimension, presented here

as the vertical dimension. The horizontal dimension can be interpreted as constituting Murdock and Phelps' dimension of conventional and established genres versus unconventional, more recent appearing genres. Combined, both dimensions offer a comprehensible picture of pair-wise oppositions, marking the genres as well as their adherents.

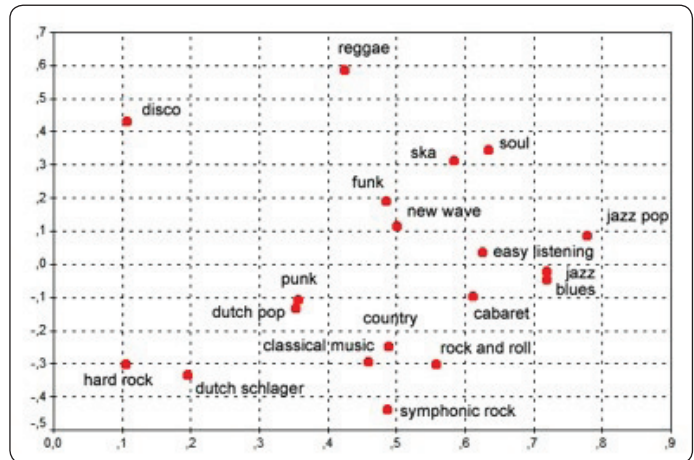
The youngsters preferring the genres at the left-hand, conventional side of the matrix, so the data show, are also more conforming to the tastes of their parents and less taken in by the flow of youth culture. At the opposite end we find marginal groups, at the time said to constitute categories of 'extreme youth-centrists,' fully, some of them even exclusively engulfed in their own pop-oriented way of life, notably Punk and Hard Rock. As can be expected this dimension shows a gender-effect as boys are scoring higher on this dimension than girls, which fits in with other descriptions of the fan-base of Punk and Hard Rock. The favorite clothing style, accordingly, ranges from more to less conventional. Correlations, moreover, show these youngsters to experience more problems at school and to report more conflicts with their parents. These findings coincide with those reported by Roe. The identification of the vertical dimension with the lowbrow-highbrow divide is affirmed by its correlation with back ground variables indicating social class - the work level of the father in particular - and the respondent's school level.

As for the genres themselves, the matrix indicates a shift over time. The x-axis, horizontally, shows the effects of a traditionalization and contraction of genres. Traditionalization occurs when genres fall from the grace of the younger generations and are mainly kept alive by the remaining attention of older age-groups and therefore cease to be 'youth music.' Consequently, they will shift from left to right on the dimension of conventional versus non-conventional genres, contracting in the end with the genres that are already located there to become part of the parent culture. This interpretation is supported by an age effect: how younger the respondents, the higher they are rating on this dimension. At the same time, their adoption of new genres makes this dimension into a time-axis for the genres themselves. Older genres become conventional and, losing their edges, they finally merge with the existing corpus of established genres. This contraction effect, that is made visible by Figure 2, may be an important indication, or even explanation for the merging of formerly opposite styles.

### Introducing two additional dimensions

Most research projects on music preferences using factor analysis arrive at a solution of five dimensions. Such a number may seem too much to fathom. It doesn't mean, though, that we have to trade

**Figure 3: Two out of four dimensions from the Groningen data set, 1986**



n = 12; mean age: 16.2; Princals; dimension 1: univormism vs. omnivormism (x-axis; variance explained: 27.0%), and dimension 4: receptiveness vs. activity (y-axis; variance explained: 7.8%).

comprehensible Euclidean space for inconceivable Einsteinian relativity. Principal component analysis is not quite as exotic as string theory and four to five of these dimensions still can be represented in two-dimensional space. The model of Murdock and Phelps, reconstructed in Figure 1, for instance shows a pair-wise grouping of four clusters - A and B versus C and D; A and D versus B and C. These oppositions are covered by the above discussed dimensions. To this, respondents with an exclusive preference for only one cluster at the cost of the remaining three - for instance A versus B, D and C - will define dimensions that constitute diagonal lines in the same matrix. If we add a central cluster of genres (E), yet another dimension arises: the middle against both sides. Both these dimensions also emerge from our ordinal principal component analysis. Figure 3 presents both these remaining dimensions.

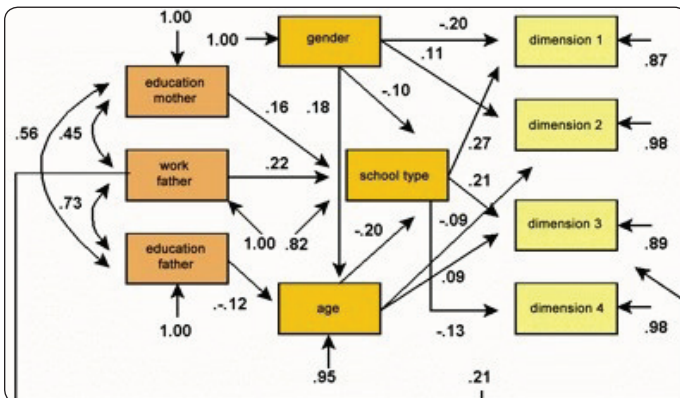
A closer inspection of the first of these dimensions, presented on the x-axis of the diagram of Figure 3, reveals it to be a combination of the diagonal lines of which one is dominant. Projected in the matrix of Figure 2, the individual scores on this dimension follow an erratic path stressing the diagonal lines, in this case accentuating a dominant opposition between softer and more intellectual genres like Blues and Jazz at one hand and the louder counter image of Hard Rock on the other. A supplementary analysis (Mudfold; see Tillekens) showed that these diagonal lines can be treated as unfolded scales, confirming that the preferences for genres can be ranked in order according to their relative distances from the position of each individual within the matrix of the genres. This dimension correlates with the first factor of the factor analysis to the point of being identical and is also responsible for the majority of the explained variance. Moreover, this particular dimension seems to coincide with the dividing line Peterson and Kern found and labeled as a new elitist form of 'omnivorism,' though one can question their interpretation (Van Eijck, Socialization, Education; Social Differentiation). Indeed, the category of the omnivores is only slightly more open to other genres than the majority of the respondents. This 'new' omnivorism, as Van Eijck, De Haan and Knulst argue, therefore should be interpreted not as much as 'snobbery' as well as an effect of the growing cultural heterogeneity of the more conventional part of

the upward mobile new middle classes. Besides, as one should keep in mind, this dividing line is also constituted by the disliking of their favorite genres by their antipodes, mainly the fan-base of Hard Rock and Heavy Metal.

Comparing the matrices of Figure 2 and Figure 3, one can easily identify the final dimension, presented on the y-axis of the diagram of Figure 3, with the 'activity' factor of Murdock and Phelps. The genres rating high on this dimension, indeed, constitute the middle field of Figure 2. This fourth dimension incorporates 'black dance,' but added to genres like Reggae, Soul, Ska and Funk we now also find Disco and even New Wave. It proves to be the cluster to which the overwhelming majority of the sample by its ratings confesses to belong. Where those residing at the extremes of the dimensions of lowbrow versus highbrow culture and conventional versus non-conventional genres, taken together, only cover about twenty percent of the population, the remainder can be found in the middle field - which may be a special feature of the mid-1980's. Projected in Figure 2, this dimension can be shown to be centripetal, as it seemingly acts as a force joining these genres together and gravitating them towards a common centre of danceable music. The scores on this dimension correlate with spending time on window shopping and, if available, money to buy the trendy attributes of youth culture. Again, these activities point towards an attitude rather than excessive behavior. It is indeed the middle ground of the pop music arena,



**Figure 4: A causal model for the Groningen data set (SEM)**



Chi-square = 41.39; DF = 34; p-value = 0.179;  
RMSEA = 0.018.

organized around the peer group and the attitudes of youth-centrism, though the latter is not to be confused with the more intense forms of youth-centrism we find in the marginal clusters of Hard Rock and Punk.

The most relevant, i.e. significant, relations of the four dimensions with exogenous and intermediate variables are summarized in Figure 4 by means of a simple structural equation model (SEM). The model displays some important background variables indicating social class, together with some relevant characteristics of the respondents like gender, age and type of school. Some of those, mainly gender, do interact with each other. At that time girls no longer were lagging behind boys in their school careers. In fact, at least till the fourth grade of secondary education, they were even doing better by reaching higher levels and - on top of that - on a younger age, as the path coefficients in question in the model do confirm. The relations, though significant,

between the background variables and the dimensions are rather weak. Homology may exist for the groups of hardcore fans, but can not convincingly be shown to exist for the audience at large. Rock music, however, clearly, is not immune to the experiences of social class. The position taken by respondents on the lowbrow-highbrow dimension is directly and indirectly influenced by father's social position as well as the youngsters' own educational achievements. The impact of family background even may be highly underestimated and education overestimated, as it is on attitudes on and participation in highbrow culture (Sieben; Van Eijck, The Impact). Most important, though, is the finding that both social class and school-based selection contribute in explaining the diversity of taste in respect to the adoption of lowbrow and highbrow variants of pop and rock music.

The dimension of conventional versus non-conventional genres is affected by gender and age. The latter may be the reason why Christenson and Roberts typify age as the "elemental predictor" of musical preferences. Age, though, is not affecting the dimension that, there and then, explained most of the variance in music preferences. In effect, the dimension we baptized 'omnivorousness,' mainly coincides with school level and gender. Differences between school types manifest themselves most strongly in the degree of 'omnivorousness' and - girls scoring far higher than boys - at least for



16-year-olds this dimension proved also to be the main gender divider. Being attracted to the centre, as indicated by a high score on the fourth dimension is only related to school level. The finding that the occupants of the lower reaches of secondary education in this respect surpass their peers at the upper levels deviates from Murdock and Phelps and Van Bork and Jacobs, which may be due to the upsurge of Disco music in the 1980's. Another remarkable and possibly related difference is the diagonal shift from an opposition between lowbrow, conventional tastes and highbrow modern tastes to an antagonism between highbrow conventional and lowbrow unconventional preferences. This finding may be ascribed to the peculiarities of the questionnaire or reflect a real turn towards highbrow conservatism.

### **The rise of new genres**

Music preferences usually are being researched by asking respondents to rate their likings on a preformatted list with genre names. That is one reason why this kind of research tends to miss new developing and not yet fully labeled genres and that is exactly what was happening by the end of the 1980's. Publishing the results of their studies at that time, many researchers of this first wave of Dutch popular music studies saw their outcomes being overtaken by the flow of time. At the end of the decade, and more so in the first half of the 1990's, Dance culture closely entwined with House

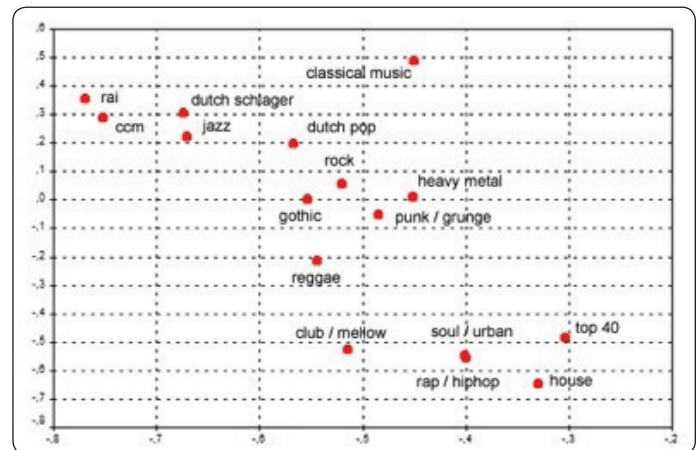
music, together with Hip-Hop culture relating to Rap and Urban, did change the landscape of pop and rock music considerably, even up to a point of breaking the basic conventions of rock music itself and turning Rock into a genre of its own. Added to this, and as if in response, some conventional genres like Cabaret were updating their relevance, while more traditional audiences were adapting religious music to the idiom of rock and labeling the result as Contemporary Christian Music (CCM). Many authors also signaled a new attitude among the young, being less exclusive to one genre and thereby creating an inextricable mishmash of fads and fashions (Ter Bogt and Hibbel; De Leeuw et al.). The confusion brought about by these changes, made Frith (The Centre) confide that he did not think the popular music world still worked in the ways which rock discourse assumed, and seems also to have paralyzed research on youth music preferences as there are no data available yet for this decade - at least in respect to the Netherlands.

The situation at the middle of the 1990's, though, can be derived from the study of Stevens, who analyzed the preferences of Flemish youngsters ( $n = 4,722$ ; age: 17-18) for eighteen different genres during the school year of 1996-97. Though the outcomes show some notable deviations from the situation in the 1980's they still, as Stevens argues, can be interpreted along the lines of the Groningen model. A remarkable difference was found

in the number of factors or clusters of genres arising from the exploratory factor analysis, which seemed to have been reduced from five to four. The first one appeared to comprise 'univore' and formerly opposite genres like Hard Rock, Heavy Metal, Punk, Grunge and even Rock. The second one ranged Classical Music, Folk, Reggae and by now also Sixties, World Music and Sound Tracks side by side. The third factor comprised next to Disco the new coming genres of Techno, House, Rap and New Age. Finally the fourth factor merged Top-Ten music with Dutch Schlagers. Sound Tracks, House, Rock Techno, Disco and Rap proved to be the most popular genres, while Dutch Schlagers, Heavy Metal and Punk - in that order - were counted as the least popular. Nurturing other research questions, Stevens refrained from analyzing the mutual relations between these dimensions. To that end we will have to skip a few years by stepping to a Dutch data set, collected shortly after the Millennium change.

Figure 5 shows two dimensions, derived by means of an ordinal principal component analysis over fifteen genres from the Dutch HBSC data set (data collected in 2001-02;  $n = 5,730$ ; mean age: 13.9) - the Dutch part of the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children project. Over four dimensions, the variance explained totals to an impressive 71.0%, affirming their discriminatory power. The data set covers the whole range of

**Figure 5: Two out of four dimensions from the HBSC data set, 2001-02**



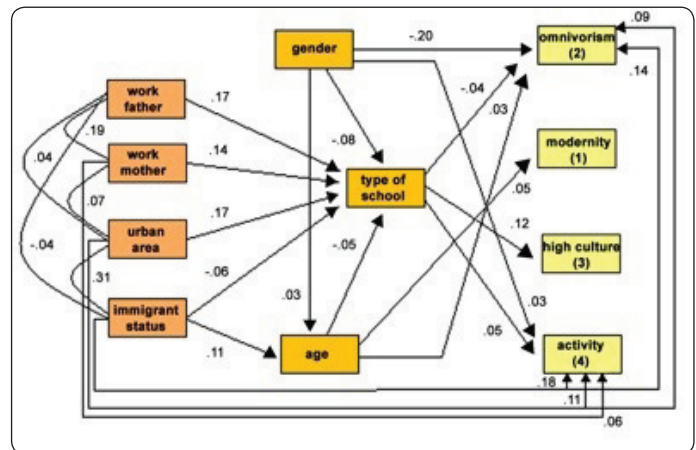
$n = 5,730$ ; mean age: 13.9; Princals; dimension 1: conventional vs. non-conventional (x-axis; variance explained: 30.4%) and dimension 3: lowbrow vs. highbrow (y-axis; variance explained: 14.2%).

secondary education. The coordinates of the diagram, shown in Figure 5, can be identified as the lowbrow-highbrow dimension (x-axis) and the conventional-non-conventional dimension (y-axis) we already encountered in Figure 2. Comparing both figures, we find some strong confirmation for Stevens' outcomes. Many things appear to have changed over the interval of fifteen years, the most obvious being the emergence of a whole new array of genres at the upper, respectively the lower end of these dimensions - forcing previous opposite genres like Dutch Pop and Jazz to contract at the other ends, almost to the point of a convergence of their audiences. As a consequence the earlier criss-cross pattern has been replaced by a just one diagonal line, leaving empty gaps at the lowbrow conventional and highbrow non-conventional ends. Moreover, the dimension separating conventional from non-conventional genres and now explaining most of the variance, has clearly

narrowed down and here Classical Music seems to have slightly recovered. Indeed, according to Nagel, the attraction of established and traditional highbrow culture among Dutch youngsters had been slowly rising again after nearing an all-time-low by the end of the 1980's. This, of course, may also be attributed to the changes taking place within the institutions of high culture themselves. At the time of the Millennium change, symphony orchestras were happily performing jointly with pop artists, while theatre groups were freely making use of the pop idiom in their performances.

More impressive deviations even can be found in the locations of the genres along the two remaining dimensions as shown in Figure 6. On the dimension of univormism versus omnivorism (x-axis) we now find a complete split between the univore genres of

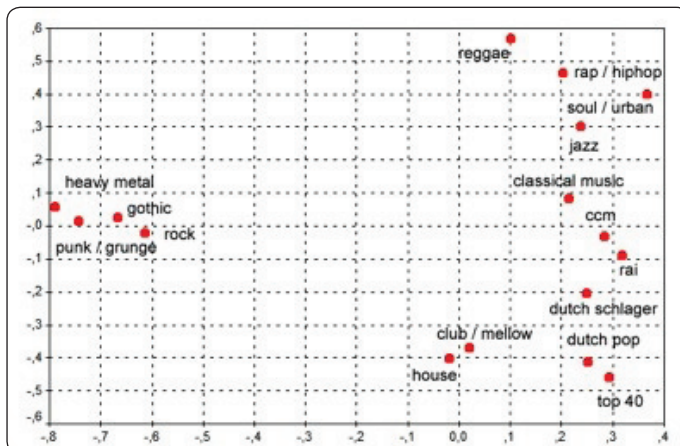
**Figure 7: A causal model for the HBSC data set (SEM)**



Chi-square = 51.16; DF = 39; p-value = 0.092; RMSEA = 0.007; error variance for 'age' = 0.99, 'type of school' = 0.90, 'dimension 2' = 0.92, 'dimension 3' = 0.98, 'dimension 4' = 0.93.

Punk and (Alternative) Rock and Heavy Metal and their dark offspring of Goth Rock and Goth Metal on one hand and all the other genres at the other hand. As the main body of the respondents do not show themselves to be very fond of Punk and Heavy Metal, this opposition offers an indication of a common, silent revolt against these former marginal genres and accordingly a more open attitude towards the remaining ones. 'Black dance' genres still scoring high, at first sight the distribution of the genres along the vertical dimension appears to deviate less from the situation in the 1980's. However, the prominent position of competitive 'white dance' genres like House and Club at the other end of the continuum certainly questions it being labeled as 'receptiveness' versus 'activity.' As could be expected, correlations with background variables show this dimension to be related to immigrant status.

**Figure 6: Two out of four dimensions from the HBSC data set, 2001-02**



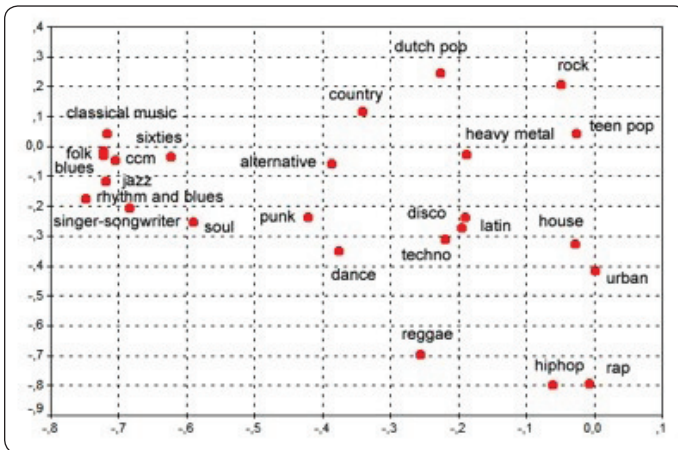
n = 5,730; mean age: 13.9; Princials; dimension 2: univormism vs. omnivorism (x-axis; variance explained: 16.9%) and dimension 4: receptiveness vs. activity (y-axis; variance explained: 9.5%).

Despite the changing landscape of pop and rock music, the overall relations between the individual dimensions and relevant background variables presented in Figure 7, by and large, show the same patterns. Omnivorism still proves to be more of a girl thing than a male inclination. Due to the now almost all-encompassing character of omnivorism, the formerly strong impact of school level on this dimension, however, has disappeared and even been inverted. The opposition between conventional and non-conventional genres, still only is influenced by age. The effect of age, however, is quite small certainly if we consider the fact that the HBSC dataset spans a rather large age group. The narrowing down of this dimension here may play its role. The lowbrow-highbrow dimension still draws a large impact of differences in school level, though the direct influence from family status indicators has disappeared which may be an effect of the ongoing meritocratization of Dutch society. In respect to differences of social class, Stevens found a strong and widened cultural split in music preferences and media use cutting right through the midst of the levels of secondary education. This finding is affirmed here for the Netherlands by the large overall percentage of explained variance, the clear markings of different genres on the lowbrow-highbrow dimension as well as the direct influence of school type on this dimension. The fourth dimension, here still labeled 'activity,' is positively related to school, with girls showing a slightly higher rating than boys.

The data set adds two other relevant variables to the analysis: immigrant status and level of urbanization. Both these variables are related, because the number of immigrants in the inner cities has grown to become a majority. As Figure 7 shows, immigrant minority status has a relevant positive effect on omnivorism as well as on activity. The level of urbanization already proved to be important in the 1983 data set of Van Bork and Jacobs (90). At that time notably Country and Western and Rock and Roll were preferred by young people living in small villages, while larger city dwellers seemed to have more of a knack on Funk. The role of the latter genre now seems to be taken by Rap and the aptly named genre of Urban. Summarizing our findings so far, by and large, we find the four dimensions resulting from the analysis themselves to be comparable to those of the 1980's. However, the distinctive diagonal criss-cross pattern constituted by the lowbrow-highbrow and conventional-non-conventional dimensions in the 1970's and the 1980's has vanished completely by the rise of new genres. Add to this the isolation of marginalized genres on the lowbrow-highbrow dimension and the split between 'black' and 'white' dance music in respect to 'activity' and we can safely conclude that, all in all, the field of pop music has changed considerably. Looking at Figure 5, it even seems as if, by the end the 1990's, a whole new genre distribution was in effect slowly replacing the older genres, bottom-upwards on the lowbrow-highbrow dimension.



**Figure 8: Two out of four dimensions from the Prima data set, 2000-01**



n = 18,857; mean age: 11.6; Princals (rotated); dimension 1: conventional vs. non-conventional (x-axis; variance explained: 20.8%) and dimension 3: lowbrow vs. highbrow (y-axis; variance explained: 10.9).

### The coming of the tweeners

The birth rates may be declining in Western countries, but the teenager, apparently, still is an expanding social category. In the 1930's and 1940's people used to define the young as those who between the age of 18 and 24 had entered and not yet left the matrimonial market. By the 1950's, in the wake of the expansion of schooling and the rising importance of the "adolescent society" (Coleman), the starting age of adolescence had gone down to the age of 16 to dwindle downwards to the age of 12 since. The expansion of youth at the lower end of the age barrier has not halted yet. Transgressing the social boundary between secondary and primary education, the audience of pop music now definitely seems to incorporate the higher reaches of primary education. Moreover, these 'tweeners,' as

they have been branded by marketers, not only adapt to the tastes of their older brothers and sisters but also develop their own preferences. Over the last ten years, their impact clearly has risen, as can be derived from the chart successes of Teen Pop. In this respect, discussing the activity factor of pop music preferences Van Eijck (Social Differentiation 1180) concludes about the importance of age: "We expect this variable to have become even more important as of the 1990's, given the rapid emergence of bands gainfully tapping into the Teen Pop market (e.g., \*NSYNC, Britney Spears, Boyzone, Spice Girls)."

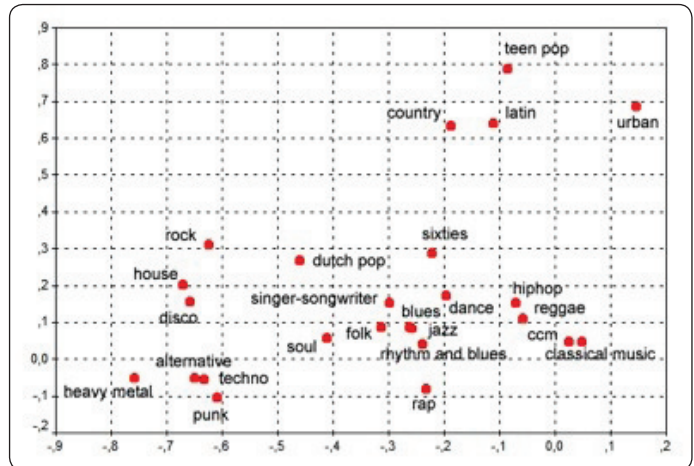
In school year 2000-01, during the fourth study of the Dutch biennial longitudinal research project (Prima-4) into the achievements of primary school pupils, a questionnaire concerning preferences for 25 music genres was completed by a cohort of fourth grade primary school pupils (n = 4,263; mean age: 10.0) and a cohort of sixth grade primary school pupils (n = 14,594; mean age: 12.0). Application of principal component analysis on these data at first produced graphs that could not easily be interpreted, possibly because of the intricate effects of social class and gender on this young age group. After being rotated (Konig), the results however again revealed coordinates comparable to those we found earlier on in the Groningen and HBSC data sets, now explaining 57.2% of variance. The outcomes testify to the rise of new genres like Urban, Latin and Teen

Pop and the adaptation to their success of some older genres as visible in the transformation of Country into Alternative Country - implying yet another shift in the locus of this genre (Peterson and Di Maggio) and of Rock into Alternative Rock.

In graphical form, Figure 8 presents the dimensions that can be interpreted as conventional versus non-conventional (x-axis) and lowbrow versus highbrow (y-axis) genres. Most conspicuously, the new genres shown to be developing in older age group of secondary education, now cover the whole range of lowbrow versus highbrow. Actually it is all chart music, as the pupils confess to get most of their song knowledge and pleasure from MTV or its Dutch counterpart TMF. On this dimension, moreover, there are strong differences between 'black'-oriented genres, like Rap and Urban, at the lower and their 'white'-oriented variants - like Teen Pop - at the upper end with Latin playing an intermediating role (Cepeda). Rock, here taking its place next to Teen Pop to fill the space that had been left open in the outcomes of the HBSC data set, must be seen Alternative Rock.

On the dimension of conventional versus non-conventional genres, there proves to be a massive shift from the fourth grade to the sixth grade, and as a consequence the age between 10 and 12 year proves to be rather critical in this respect. Whereas only about one third of fourth grade pupils indicated to enjoy the

**Figure 9: Two out of four dimensions from the Prima data set, 2000-01**



n = 18,857; mean age: 11.6; Princals (rotated); dimension 2: univormism vs. omnivormism (x-axis; variance explained: 16.1%) and dimension 4: receptiveness vs. activity (y-axis; variance explained: 9.4%).

new genres of pop music next to older genres, the mass of sixth grade pupils restrict themselves almost exclusively to the new genres. Discussing the "open-earedness" of young children to all kinds of music, Hargreaves and North conclude that children in the latter stage of primary education seem to become deaf at the one ear they use listen to their parents' music. Christenson, by the way, already traced this effect back to the mid-1980's, concluding that the attraction to genres of their parent likings proves to be the highest in third and fourth grade to collapse afterwards. Using high culture participation indices at the age of 10, Nagel (226) arrives at similar conclusions. In contrast with the variation of the new genres, we see a strong contraction of the older genres that are being traditionalized and thereby stripped from their class-based connotations. Sixties Music, of course, by itself is a category in which former divisions have been dissolved. And, despite the

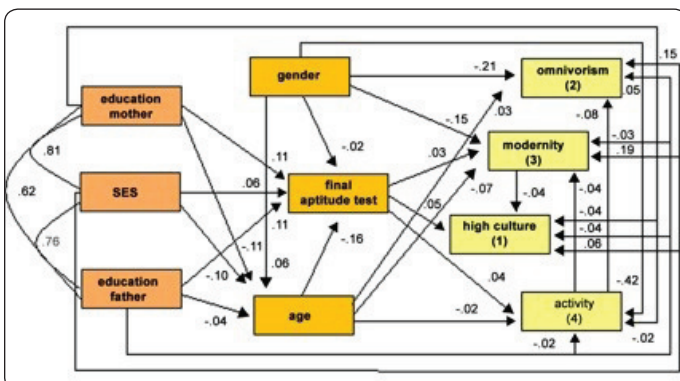


success of groups like Slipknot, Heavy Metal - by now perhaps the longest surviving genre of pop music - at last seems to be crumbling and suffering the fate of traditionalization and contraction.

Figure 9 shows the two remaining dimensions: univormism versus omnivorism (x-axis) and receptiveness versus activity (y-axis). The range of genres on the omnivorism dimension shows a strong resemblance with the outcomes of the other data sets with low ratings for Heavy Metal and Punk and high ratings for Classical Music. Added to the high rating genres, however, are the new genres of (Alternative) Country, Latin, Teen Pop and Urban, indicating the open attitude of most pupils towards these genres. These genres also converge on top of the receptiveness versus activity dimension.

Figure 10 again summarizes the relations between the four dimensions and some relevant background variables,

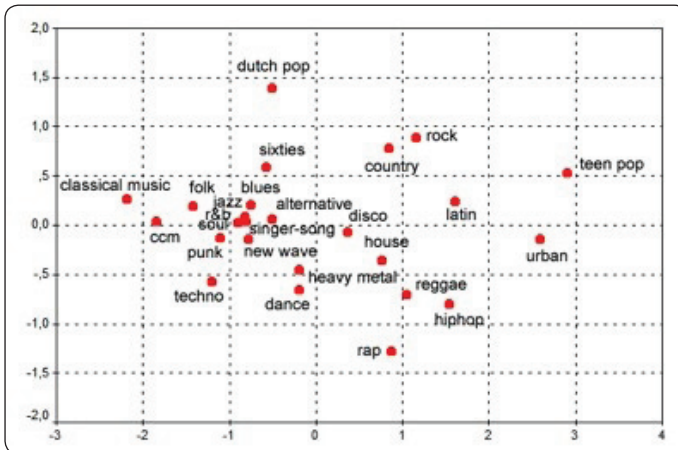
**Figure 10: A causal model for the Prima data set**



SEM; final class; n = 14,594; mean age = 12.0; chi-square = 20.06; DF = 18; p-value = 0.329; RMSEA = 0.003; error variance for 'age' = 0.94, 'final aptitude test' = 0.90, 'dimension 2' = 0.95, 'dimension 3' = 0.94, 'dimension 4' = 0.84.

restricted to the grade six cohort because of the availability of the final aptitude test. Compared to the equivalent models of the Groningen data set and the HBSC data set, the picture is more complex. The overall relations, though, by and large show the pattern we already encountered in both the other data sets. The effects of background variables indicating social class are stronger and the effects of school, respectively the scores on the final aptitude test are weaker, which probably can be attributed to the stronger cultural attachment of young children to their parents as well as to the external differentiation of secondary education. Most remarkable and intriguing for the Prima-4 data set is the strong relationship between gender and activity, confirming the feminization and "Divafication" of the new genres (Lister).

Comparing the genres' positions on the dimensions, there is yet another interesting observation to make. Whereas the new genres of Alternative Rock, Teen Pop, Latin, Urban and Rap so clearly diverge on the lowbrow-highbrow dimension, they closely converge on the dimension of receptiveness versus activity. It seems as if these dimensions, in fact often representing latent rather than manifest opinions, feelings and attitudes of the audience, can be treated as counteracting forces. As such, their combined effect may be highly informative about the fate of genres. The diagram shown in Figure 11, resulting from an analysis compressing the variance in preference ratings in just two dimensions makes some of these combined effects visible.

**Figure 11: The convergence of the new genres**

Prima data set, 2000-01;  $n = 18,857$ ; mean age: 11.6;  
 Alsca: analysis forced to two dimensions.

Will the primary school pupils keep to their preferences when entering secondary education or even later on? Actually, it is difficult to say if the differences between both data sets of primary and secondary education reflect an age effect, a period effect or a generation effect. A powerful argument for an age effect can be derived from the strong gender effect in the Prima-4 data set on the 'activity' dimension. One may easily expect that, sooner or later, most boys will catch up with the girls at the time of going through the first years of secondary education. There may be other things that will disappear by growing-up - the one-ear-deafness for older genres, for instance. However, the new genres in question kept dominating the charts since 2001 which, of course, points to a period effect and even strengthens the idea that we may be witnessing a generational shift with the youngest part of the audience, the girls in front, regrouping around genres like Rap, Urban, Latin and Teen Pop and even finding a common interest in these

genres. In this respect it is interesting to note that these genres, over the last years, not only raised their chart positions considerably but also have been merging on the production side by interchanging producers as well as artists.

### The changing parameters of pop music preferences

The history of pop music is a multi-layered process. One side is taken by the artistic process of creating songs, the opposite by the process of their adoption by the audience, with the charts validating the winning matches in-between. Though well-documented and preserved, the charts will disclose little information about the changing tastes of the audience at large. Delving deeper and looking at the outcomes of empirical research, we've walked by some of these changes among pop music's primary audience of adolescents. Neglecting the question of national and regional differences (Wells and Tokinoya), we have been taking long steps over the past decennia with our data sets restricted to the Dutch situation and their dates arbitrarily set by their availability. Apart from the inevitable problem of the varying genre pools, the presented data sets, admittedly, are quite dissimilar. The technique of principal component analysis too seems to have its shortcomings. For instance, the dimensions accounting for the largest part of explained variance in each analysis, clearly, attract some superfluous air that

can be attributed to differences in the attitude towards music in general, be it distaste or critical distance. We left it in for technical reasons and to keep close to the original data. More important, genre labels always lag behind the development of the songs that, of course, constitute the real currency of the field (Ennis).

Despite all these shortcomings, but helped by the amazing stability of the factors of pop music preferences over time and place, we think to have located some important and comprehensible coordinates of the field of pop music along which artists, songs, genres and their audiences keeps moving. The songs, artists and genres of pop music may change, but over time their movements seems to remain within the framework of the same oppositions, delineated by the same four dimensions. This may be seen as the main conclusion of our argument. Regardless of all that is changing, the struggle on taste still takes place within the same arena. Our search to map the continental drift of pop music preferences along these coordinates may raise more questions than answers. Still, the outcomes largely confirm what is already known about pop music's course over generations of youth within the last fifty years: the fragmentation of the field in the 1970's constituting the typical criss-cross pattern of Murdock and Phelps; the assumed shift between the weight of the diagonals by the mid-1980's and the simultaneous filling up and expansion of the centre field; the budding

of new competitive genres in the 1990's, ultimately destroying the criss-cross pattern and replacing it by a diagonal one – while at the same time the youngest part of the pop audience, girls in front, seems to restore some balance by adopting Teen Pop and its likes.

Only a small percentage of variance in music preferences actually is explained by the dimensions - though more so by the end of the 1990's than in the mid-1980's and at the Millennium change more within the older age groups in secondary education than within the younger age groups in primary education. Social class, schooling and gender, in turn, only explain the dimensions to a small degree. This clearly testifies to pop music's open and democratic character. For the main body of young people the genres serve as marking points in an accessible musical space they freely walk through rather than being exclusive sanctuaries of total identification. This openness, though, is not to be equated with the withering away of the effects of social class in the cultural domain. In respect to omnivorism Van Eijck, De Haan and Knulst rightfully point to the expansion of the professional middle class. High culture forms of old, like Classical Music, may have lost much of their distinctive power by the process of traditionalization and contraction. Their place and function, however, seem to be taken by highbrow variants of pop music, mediated by level of schooling and constituting the cultural split Stevens observed within the middle class itself. Gender,

ethnicity and the level of urbanization also situate specific positions on the map of popular music preferences.

The four dimensions we have been discussing, not only make up coordinates but also act like forces joining genres together or dividing them. In this respect the dimension of 'activity,' despite being badly labeled, clearly deserves renewed theoretical attention as it seems capable of joining genres that are being kept apart by the social dividers of social class, gender and ethnicity. Undoubtedly, this dimension points towards the shared conditions, problems and practices that tend to unite youth as a social category and to which they apply most of their leisure and music. As has some have argued, the social forms in which these common interests of youth manifest themselves seem to have changed over time - from subcultures into styles and then again into the new voluntary and temporary forms of sociality of neo-tribes (Hebdige; Maffesoli; Bennett). If so, this may offer some explanation, not only for the rise and fall, but also for the divergence and convergence of pop music's genres.

## Endnotes

\* The Groningen data set was collected during a small-scale research project on school and leisure in the North of the Netherlands and reported by Tillekens. The second data set is based on a questionnaire on music preferences collected during the Dutch part of the Health Behavior in School-Aged Children project (HBSC) as reported by Ter Bogt, Van Dorsselaer and Vollebergh and by Mulder et al. The third project (Prima-4) regards a survey of music preferences, inserted as an additional module in the fourth round of a regular biennial longitudinal research project - the Longitudinal Data Collection Primary Education - in the Netherlands. The basic outcomes of this project were reported by Driessen, Van Langen and Vierke and by Van der Veen, Van der Meijden and Ledoux.

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## Johnny Hallyday: Mediated Masculinities

Chris Tinker

For more than forty years, Johnny Hallyday has remained one of the most prolific, enduring and visible features of popular music and the mass media in France. The sheer volume of his output, record sales and concert attendance is often cited as evidence of his popularity and commercial success. What is interesting about his appeal today is that it appears to cut across generational and socio-economic divisions, and several of his songs have attained classic status in France within the collective consciousness. More recently, Hallyday has achieved critical and commercial success as a film actor, particularly in his last feature, Patrice Leconte's *The Man on the Train* (2002). He also received official state recognition in 1997 when he was presented with France's highest decoration, the *Légion d'honneur* by President Jacques Chirac, who is a fan as well as a personal friend. Hallyday's special star status has been maintained through a fairly consistent stream of media coverage dedicated to his work, as well as to the ups and downs in his private life and business affairs. This coverage reached a peak during the period around his sixtieth birthday in June 2003. Hallyday's very public birthday celebrations culminated in a series of concerts in the Parc des Princes, in Paris, followed by a tour of major French concert venues. Although it would appear

that much of Hallyday's media representation is often highly consensual, like many media personalities he is also the target of a more satirical brand of coverage. For example, television programmes such as the puppet show *Les Guignols de l'info* (Canal +) have caricatured Hallyday as something of an ageing rocker (see *French-TV* website). Although Johnny Hallyday is a highly significant figure within contemporary French culture, he has been largely neglected in academic accounts of popular music in France. Many of the books on Hallyday to date are biographical, if not hagiographical. Most work on the 1950s and 60s has tended so far to focus on canonical figures of the male-dominated French literary *chanson* tradition, especially Léo Ferré, Georges Brassens, and Jacques Brel (e.g. Hawkins, 2000). As singer-songwriters, or, to use the fuller, more precise French term, *auteurs-compositeurs-interprètes* (author-composer-performers), they are of particular interest as they have contributed to building the myth of *chanson* as an authentic and specifically French popular cultural form (see Looseley, 63-86). Given its literary associations, *chanson* has also been widely perceived as a quality product which is worthy of academic study, all the more since the singer-songwriter figure is identified as the main originator of the writing, composing

and performing processes. Although Johnny Hallyday has become increasingly involved over the years in songwriting, he still tends more often to be identified as the singer of other people's songs, and therefore as lacking the supposed authenticity and skill of the singer-songwriter. Although it cannot be denied that Hallyday is still a prominent figure in contemporary French popular culture, there has been to date little academic discussion on his individual significance.

So far, the various stages of Hallyday's early career have been mapped out and described by cultural commentators in fairly general terms, from his *blouson noir* (1) rock 'n' roll rebel image during the late 1950s, to his mainstream success during the early-mid 1960s as a pop star singing what were known as *yéyé* songs,(2) and his relative decline during the late 1960s. This paper will attempt to view Hallyday's career during the 1960s from an alternative perspective, focusing on his media representations, which contributed enormously to his overall impact. In doing so, it will attempt to situate him in terms of the social and cultural changes affecting France during the 1960s, particularly the shift from the modern to the postmodern. Indeed, Martin Irvine's 1998/2003 overview of the differences between modernity and postmodernity, which he articulates in *The Postmodernism Node*, provides us with a useful set of working definitions. Two heavily mediatized episodes in Hallyday's career during the early-mid 1960s are

particularly symptomatic of modernity: i) his relationship with the pop star Sylvie Vartan, which markets the traditional 'middle-class, nuclear family'; ii) his period of military service, which maintains 'master narratives of history, culture and national identity', and reasserts 'myths of cultural and ethnic origins' as well as 'social and cultural unity' (Irvine's terms).

As a successful pop artist performing *yéyé* pop songs, Hallyday developed an increasingly idealized wholesome traditional family image and a softer, romantic persona aimed at teenage girls, epitomized by his relationship with Sylvie Vartan, which effectively replayed the story of Elvis Presley and Priscilla Beaulieu. The celebrity relationship of Hallyday and Vartan culminated in a traditional Catholic church wedding in April 1965 in Loconville, which was shown on French television news, in French cinema newsreels and in the May 1965 edition of the highly successful youth magazine *Salut les Copains!* (*Hi mates!*). (3) This special edition featured a wedding album along with the headline 'the wedding of the century' ('le mariage du siècle'). In November following the wedding, Hallyday, in his regular *Salut les copains!* youth magazine column, announced the setting up of the *Sylvie and Johnny Club* which would provide readers with a membership card and a magazine which contained news, photos of the wedding, coupons so that readers could obtain discounts on clothes and records (44-47). A competition to win a holiday with Johnny and

Sylvie while they were on tour was held. Other glossy magazines carried photo spreads of the couple living a life of domestic bliss, Sylvie cooking in the kitchen and extolling the joys of marriage (*Télérama hors série*, 31). In the following year 1966, the couple had their first and only child David, whose birth was covered, for example, in a TV programme called *The Son of Johnny Hallyday* (*Le fils de Johnny Hallyday*, 15 August 1966).

Although there were to be difficulties in Hallyday's marriage as well as in his professional life by Autumn 1966, these were not covered in *Salut les copains* or at most, they were alluded euphemistically to in the October 1966 edition as 'the difficult times which I've lived through' (40-41). In August 1969, the magazine, protective of its main attraction, led a campaign against certain sectors of the 'gutter press' ('journaux à scandale') which predicted the end of Hallyday's marriage and career.

Hallyday and Vartan effectively joined the ranks of other high-profile celebrity couples, including the writers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, the political couple Pierre and Yvette Poujade, the journalists Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber and Françoise Giroud, and the film stars Yves Montand and Simone Signoret. In France, the 'couple' assumed a particular significance during the 1950s and 60s, as Kristin Ross observes: 'French happiness was immortalized in the number of boy-meets-girl films of the era and in the public images of various prominent couples'. According to Ross, the

'couple' effectively became the 'standard bearer of the state-led modernisation efforts and bearer of all affective values'. Not only would it provide France with the next generation of workers, as well as consumers, but it would also hopefully bring to the French the kind of 'happiness' which American and Soviet models could not provide. (see Ross, 121-133). Together, Hallyday and Vartan embodied a certain notion of the couple as both traditional and incorporating modernity. While marketing the middle-class, nuclear family, they contributed as a celebrity couple to the commodification of youth culture and popular music within the developing consumer society. Certain commentators asked whether Hallyday had effectively betrayed his rock 'n' roll credentials, becoming instead a mainstream *variétés* artist who had fallen prey to the bourgeois institution of marriage. Indeed, in a piece in *L'Express* news magazine humorously entitled 'Adieu les copains' (rather than *Salut les copains!*) Danièle Heymann asked, 'Won't their fans feel betrayed and abandoned, given the way in which this romance has been made to conform to bourgeois standards?' (Grosdemouge, 66).

While modernity is represented via the Hallyday/Vartan couple, it is also apparent in coverage of Hallyday's military service which promotes a unified sense of French national identity. In 1964, when young men had already been drafted as conscripts to serve in the Algerian War, Hallyday was called up, along with



other singers of his generation, echoing Elvis Presley's earlier period of military service. Stationed in Germany, Hallyday was not allowed to perform but he was able to record so long as any publicity photos and record sleeves featured him wearing army uniform.<sup>(4)</sup> Although he had dual nationality (French and Belgian), he felt that he should undertake military service as he had been born in France (Brierre, 115). While frustrated by his absence from the limelight, he continued to make hit records such as 'Le Pénitencier' (a French cover of 'The House of the Rising Sun'), a song which alluded to his real-life incarceration, and which featured him on the cover dressed in uniform. Much of the coverage of Hallyday's period of military service represents him as the star-as-ordinary (to use Richard Dyer's term in *Stars*, 1979), fulfilling his social duty like most French men. However, the media coverage of this 'ordinary' soldier served effectively to underline his distinct, special status. Indeed, readers and viewers soon learned that Hallyday would not be confined to the barracks, and that he would still be allowed visit the studio to make recordings as seen in 1964 fly-on-the wall TV documentary *A day in the life of Soldier Smet* (*La journée du soldat Smet*), Smet being Hallyday's real name.

Hallyday's experience as a conscript not only provided the French military with a useful propaganda tool, but also cast him as a physically virile and psychologically healthy youth role model, an exemplary citizen of the

French Republic. It was reported, for example, on the main evening news bulletin on French state-run television in August 1965, that Hallyday had received a 'certificate for good behaviour'. Indeed, Hallyday himself speaks at great length in his *Salut les copains* magazine column about what he has learnt from his military service, taking a strong moral stance against youth violence, citing the conflict between mods and rockers in the UK as an example. In the September 1964 edition of *Salut les copains!* he argues rather paternalistically in favour of social cohesion rather than disintegration: 'Military life has made me realize more than ever that in a mixed society made up of people who haven't chosen to live together, all people can get along as long as they don't isolate themselves from others' (89). His discourse even takes on an overtly patriotic Gaullist independentist tone. *Salut les copains!* was indeed published within the context of De Gaulle's presidency, which stressed the importance of France's great and exceptional character especially when confronted by the USA. Although a fan of the US popular culture, Hallyday's enthusiasm for the country is not unquestioning. In the May 1965 edition of *Salut les copains!* he comments: 'I really like the Americans, but that doesn't mean I agree with everything they do, for example, in Vietnam' (137).

Clearly then, much of the media coverage of Hallyday's military service is symptomatic of modernity in the way it contributes both to maintaining master narratives

of French history, culture and national identity, and reasserts within a French context what Irvine terms 'myths of cultural and ethnic origins' as well as 'social and cultural unity'. More generally, the media coverage of Hallyday's military service and his relationship with Sylvie Vartan tend to maintain what Irvine refers to as 'the phallic ordering of sexual difference', along with the patriarchal norms in France that went largely unchallenged until the late 1960s and early 70s. These norms insisted especially on the stereotypes of 'l'homme viril' (virile man) and 'la femme féminine' (feminine woman), fetishized the male-female 'couple', and served generally to uphold *le pouvoir marital* (marital power), terms used by Elisabeth Badinter (315, 321).

While Hallyday cultivated a rebellious rock 'n' roll image at the start of his career, inspired by his screen heroes Marlon Brando in *The Wild One* (Looseley, 24) and James Dean in *Rebel without a Cause*, once he achieved mainstream success as a recording artist and media star with the help of his manager Johnny Stark and his record company, the Dutch international Philips, his persona incorporated more conventional role models, such as the adoring husband and the patriotic and dutiful soldier, images strongly reminiscent of Elvis Presley. In a sense, his fate mirrors that of the heroes of *The Wild One* and, in particular, *Rebel without a Cause* who also both, to some extent, outgrow their rebelliousness as they become more interested in the opposite sex.

The end of Hallyday's military service marks something of a turning point in the construction of his media representations, as his career saw a relative decline and his domination of the mediatized popular music field in France was challenged. By 1963 the decline of *yéyé* had already begun while the world of French *chanson* received a boost with the blossoming careers of artists such as Brel and Brassens (Brierre, 110-111). Moreover, while Hallyday was away on military service, new groups such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and the Animals were coming to the fore. The folk song tradition was also being revived in France by Bob Dylan and Hugues Aufray. Furthermore, as Grosdemouge comments, folk influenced French *yéyé*, especially the work of Antoine, Jacques Dutronc, and Michel Polnareff who had not taken American-sounding pseudonyms (Grosdemouge, 76-77). As Looseley (32) observes, by 1968, a year of enormous social upheaval culminating in the 'events' of May, *yéyé* was definitely no longer homogenous if it ever was, and musical definitions not watertight.

Brierre comments that Hallyday, somewhat in disarray, was unsure how he fitted into the popular music landscape, as his fans had moved on to new musical styles. Hallyday was no longer the emblem of the youth in France who were more concerned by personal and social questions as diverse as Vietnam, the Cold War, the nuclear threat, drugs, racism, and sexuality (Brierre, 125-130). Hallyday was even mocked by the singer,

Antoine, who joked about putting 'Johnny in a circus cage' in his song 'Les Elucubrations' ('Wild imaginings').

(5) The object of ridicule retaliated by releasing the single, 'Cheveux longs, idées courtes' ('Long hair, short on ideas'). Hallyday entered something of a downward spiral as the sensational end of the press reported his excesses in drink and drugs, his depression, declining record sales, a growing tax bill, and domestic problems which culminated on September 10<sup>th</sup> 1966 in a suicide attempt (*Télérama hors serie*, 18.)

Within a month, however, Hallyday was back on stage at the Olympia music hall by October 1966, and went on to try out new musical styles and images influenced by West Coast hippy and psychedelic fashions (Brierre, 139-143). Indeed, his concerts emphasized the spectacular in terms of bright costumes, decors and his own dazzling performances. For example, his performances at the Olympia in Paris during May 1967, which were covered that month in *Salut les copains!*, featured no less than eighteen costume changes. Hallyday also began to play large-scale venues such as the Palais des sports with audiences of up to 6000. However, as the end of the 1960s approached, Hallyday also reasserted his rock 'n' roll roots in terms of music and clothing (6) in the same way as his idol Elvis Presley, who, having moved from being a rebel rocker to a family entertainer in his musical films, re-emphasized his rock 'n' roll credentials in his famous 1968 US television come-back. Both Hallyday

and Presley revived the black leather biker look which had been associated with angry young men such as Marlon Brando. Thus, by the late 1960s, Hallyday's media representations began to exhibit features of postmodernity, particularly a 'sense of fragmentation and decentered self; multiple, conflicting identities' as well as an 'attention to the play of surfaces, images, signifiers without concern for depth' (Irvine's terms).

In sum, this paper has begun to situate the meanings generated by Hallyday's media representations during the 1960s within the context of the important social and cultural transformations taking place in France. It is hoped that my discussion will contribute to stimulating a deeper and more extensive evaluation of his individual significance over the course of a long and still-evolving career.

## Endnotes

1) Just as the advent of rock 'n' roll was associated with social disturbances in the US and the UK during the 1950s, in France it was originally connected with *blousons noirs* (black jackets), groups of disaffected working-class youths, particularly from the suburbs of Paris.

2) The term *yéyé* was derived from the word 'yeah' which often figured in the choruses of many British and American pop songs. See Looseley, 27, 35, n.23.

3) See the magazine front cover of *Salut les copains!* that feature Hallyday and Sylvie Vartan at SLC. 1 September 2005. <<http://pageperso.aol.fr/moijh/page1.html>> (May and December 1963 issues). See also pictures from their wedding at SLC. 1 September 2005. <<http://pageperso.aol.fr/moijh/page19.html>> (SLC May 1965 issue).

4) See Hallyday adopting a military pose, for example, on the front cover of *Salut les copains!*, May 1964, as well as various photo spreads in other issues at SLC. 1 September 2005. <<http://pageperso.aol.fr/moijh/page3.html>>

5) Médrano was a French circus founded in 1873 by the Belgian Ferdinand Beert Initially known as the Cirque

Fernando it was later named after the clown and acrobat Jérôme Médrano.

6) See, for example, the January 1968 issue of *Salut les copains!*

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## All Cut Up? Unwrapping Genesis P-Orridge's Beatnik Past

Simon Warner

*"I have known CONTACT\_Con-42B9C7197A  
lc ls ll Genesis P-Orridge over a period of years  
and I consider him a devoted a serious artist in  
the Dada tradition. He instructs by pointing out  
banality through startling juxtapositions"*

William Burroughs, author Naked Lunch  
(quoted in P-Orridge, Painful But Fabulous<sup>1</sup>)

*"Genesis has the same spirit of humanism as  
the Beats in the fifties, and there's a great sense  
of humour there as was true of the Beatles and  
Rolling Stones as well. That sense of irony and  
fun"*

Timothy Leary, Harvard  
professor/author (quoted in ibid 5)

**G**enesis P-Orridge, the British-born, New York-based poet and performance artist, rock'n'roll renegade and art terrorist, has spent most of the last four decades expressing his transgressive codes through an extraordinary range of artforms and media. As writer, painter, sculptor, choreographer, actor, installation artist,

director of happenings, video producer and recording engineer, he has assumed a multitude of roles in the hinterland of radical creativity. Few performers have attempted so many practices and personae: as master/mistress of masquerade, as purveyor of subversive outrage, his output may not be equalled.

But his most significant mark, in terms of public profile, has been left through his two rock bands – Throbbing Gristle, also referred to as TG, a group who dissolved in 1981 but actually played a final farewell gig in the UK in 2004<sup>1</sup>, and Psychic TV, his ongoing ensemble, who first emerged in 1982. His inspiration to the contemporary industrial music scene is widely acknowledged. Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson are just two prominent figures who have paid tribute to P-Orridge's rock legacy. More left-field activists – Ministry, Coil and others – are almost direct beneficiaries of his artistic inheritance, keeping the TG flame burning bright. In 2004, his production work with cutting edge New Yorkers the Yeah Yeah Yeahs continues to place P-Orridge at the heart of rock's avant garde.

In 2002, Painful But Fabulous: The Lives & Art of Genesis P-Orridge, a book that was neither autobiography nor



biography rather “the equivalent of a retrospective catalogue” (P-Orridge, interview with author), a volume that certainly crossed all those terrains but carried the distinct mark of its subject’s creative hand, was published. It provided a potent reminder – in text and visuals, interviews and commentary – of P-Orridge’s eclectic portfolio, drawing on his writings, ideology, artworks and music to support a series of essays by Douglas Rushkoff, Carl Abrahamsson and Richard Metzger among others. Although, in essence, a celebration of P-Orridge’s many and varied manifestations, it was not mere hagiography. The quotations carried in the preface to the volume balanced high praise with utter condemnation, a pattern of reception that has followed in the musician/artist’s wake.

Yet if P-Orridge’s reception has been often entangled in headline-grabbing controversy and frequently searing antipathy, his determination to break new ground, test the bounds of convention, has never dimmed, not since, as an adolescent, he took slips of paper each featuring single words onto the streets of his respectable, boyhood town and invited passers by to re-assemble them as haikus, drawing the mystified attentions of his local newspaper (Ford 1.2), right up to his present pursuits at the pioneering boundary of the visual and performing avant garde.

This paper is concerned with a number of entwined strands in the P-Orridge extravaganza – his own influences, specifically the Beat Generation and the friendships and collaborations he forged with William Burroughs and fellow cut-up pioneer Brion Gysin, and how experimental literature and innovative approaches to creating text have shaped his own rock and spoken word output. But it will also consider his latest project as artist, involving cut-up of a more extraordinary variety - a project to pursue a state he refers to as pandrogyny. His body art concept, pursued through surgical reconstruction and re-shaping, will see him and his wife and partner, collaborator and fellow Psychic TV member Jackie Breyer, aka Lady Jaye, both adopt a shared and ambivalent fe/male identity.

It seems as if the notion of cut-up is an enduring pulse in much of what this performer does. He takes words and re-constructs them in his own semi-mystical language; he takes sound textures and samples and re-orders them in manners that are often dissonant, disorientating and disturbing; he takes his own life, his own flesh more accurately, and re-sculpts it in a fashion that almost satirises the contemporary Western obsession with plastic surgery – the quest for youth – but subverts it by adopting the sexual characteristics of the female – swollen breasts and narrowed waist - without claiming the slightest tendency towards transexuality. Rather

P-Orridge (and Breyer, his wife of nine years) are playing games with their own physical identities in the name of art alone. Pandrogyny, sometimes P-androgyny - an obvious play on androgyny, a melding of pan, as in the Greek for all, but surely in the mischievous puckish sense, too, and also aner, Greek for man, gunē for woman (see Hanks 53) – is the manifesto he has penned and subscribes to, at times becoming pandrogeny in his own lexicon as he inserts a reference to himself in this adapted, corrupted version of the term<sup>2</sup>.

At the heart of this academic enquiry are two further threads – one personal, the other professional. In summer 2004, I met Genesis P-Orridge, a boyhood neighbour in an English suburb of Birmingham, for the first time in nearly 40 years. The interview I conducted with him for my book in progress, *Text and Drugs and Rock'n'Roll: The Beats and Rock from Kerouac and Ginsberg to Dylan and Cobain*, raises questions about the connection between different modes of creative expression – the interplay of music and written texts, the ambiguity of sexual identity in a rock context – but also about the relationship between objective research and intimate association with a subject.

In the middle 1960s, at height of the UK's domination of the global rock scene, Neil Megson and I were at very different stages in our development. Megson was

a loner teenager with existential tendencies, on the cusp of adulthood; I was a child, a pre-pubescent, 8 year old primary school kid only just awakening to the power and possibility of pop music. In the same suburban street in Solihull, a dormitory town on the edge of England's second city Birmingham, Megson and I lived one house apart.

Divided by a family of Christian Scientists (who one day informed me, casually yet quite callously, that my innocent use of the quaint English phrase “blimey” was a call on God to “blind me”), this unlikely pairing, teen and child, made some contact with each other in the years between 1964 and 1966. My parents knew the Megsons – we were all from Manchester, refugees from our North West England homes, pulled to the Midlands by the father's work in each case. But why should a small boy find connection with an adolescent, dark-eyed, mysterious and distant? The answer was a train-set, a miniaturised, magical, electrified world housed in Neil's parents' loft.

In there, on a few isolated occasions, Neil would show me this transfixing little world of rails and papier mâché mountains, tiny figures on train platforms, fir trees on mountain-sides, rolling stock and passenger carriages. “Whether my teenage host saw this as an unwarranted intrusion I can't remember, but he seemed polite and welcoming enough” (Warner).

By this time the Beatles and the Rolling Stones had begun to carve up the pop kingdom. I knew the Beatles, of course, and had been bought my first single in 1963, 'She Loves You', a gift from my mother for accepting, without complaint, the fact I needed to wear spectacles. On the day I was to receive my reward (I must have asked for a 45rpm record), my Mum and I stood together in the cramped listening booth in the store. First the assistant put on 'Not Fade Away' by the Stones, then the Beatles song. Then my mother asked me which one I preferred but definitely, if gently, pressing me to choose the Fab Four, which I did.

Around this period, I also temporarily broke rank from the media-inspired Beatles versus Stones fracas. I briefly followed a much less fashionable, far more transient, fad, genuflecting not to Lennon and McCartney but to the drummer-led Londoners, the Dave Clark Five, also trail-blazing America on the wave of the British Invasion, ahead, it should be said, of the Stones in 1964. But it was, undoubtedly, the Beatles who would ultimately capture my favour, not to mention that of the broader constituency, as Beatlemania grew from a whisper to a ear-tearing scream. Even my parents – modest, Christian, respectable, conservative – liked the Fab Four: their vibrant pop and Merseyside manner – quick-witted, bright-eyed, jocular boys-next-door - combined traits in the great tradition of northern English entertainment, a

sub-music hall manifestation of melody, on record and on-stage, and mirth, off-stage, talented music-makers with a comic touch.

Meanwhile, the Rolling Stones were seen as the bêtes noires of the new British scene, the dishevelled disreputables fathers would instinctively protect daughters from, or so the mainstream press would have it. Longer of hair, rougher of dress, coarser of music, the Stones took American amplified blues and R&B and re-shaped it in a gutterish and urchin fashion, their cockney vowels emphasised and exaggerated, a working class assault on the English language, all the stranger as lead vocalist Mick Jagger had enjoyed a middle class upbringing and endured a period of study at the prestigious London School of Economics.

I doubt my parents had the slightest knowledge of the group's sources – Muddy Waters, Willie Dixon, Bobby Womack and Bo Diddley covers featured in a repertoire that was virtually all borrowed in the early years – but they had every suspicion of their output. Sexual, salacious, sordid, I recall disapproving tuts if Jagger and co appeared on the minute, black and white TV that sat quite inconspicuously in the corner of the sitting room, on new UK teen shows like Top of the Pops and Ready Steady Go, which celebrated a rampant, fertile surge in British popular culture. While the Stones' meanings were

quite unrecognised to this young boy, I now assume that it was Jagger's long-haired coiffure, voluminous lipped-pouting and its feminised ambiguity, that was particularly challenging to the values of the day.

So when we heard that the Megsons, father Ron and mother Muriel, daughter Cynthia and son Neil were heading off to see the Stones play live, I recall that the whole matter utterly surprised and confused me. If my Mum and Dad saw something so demonic about the group, why would a similar parental pair be joining their two teens at such a performance. I couldn't work it out but never explored the matter beyond my own mind.

But for Neil Megson, an outsider who had earlier left his secondary school in Stockport, Greater Manchester in 1964 to enrol at Solihull's minor public school<sup>3</sup> and had quickly become the target of ostracism and bullying because of his northern accent (Ford 1.2), the live sighting of the Stones would be transformational. At the Redifusion TV studios in Birmingham where *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, then a widely-viewed rival to *Top of the Pops* screened on Independent Television the BBC's commercial challenger, was taped, Megson not only saw his favourite band play on stage; he also had the good fortune to meet the group in person in the studio café between takes. The experience, possible because his Dad had a cleaning contract with the TV

operation, would have a Damascene impact on the 16 year old in that month of March, 1966. The teenager was drawn to the rebel rowdiness of the Stones, to their music and their attitude, but he found one member of the band totally magnetic. Brian Jones, who would die in 1969, became his beacon, his model, his inspiration for subsequent decades to come. Sitting drinking coffee in the canteen with his heroes, he recalls the moment in the extended liner notes to his *Psychic TV* album *Godstar: Thee Director's Cut*:

*"What E do remember very, very clearly is how Brian Jones looked and how he looked at me. He seemed translucent, not fully materialised as if in an unguarded momeant when he wasn't fully focussed on being present, your hand might pass through him. It was as if thee particles that were intended to give him substance and represent thee physical body known as Brian Jones were dancing too freely, making it hard for him to maintain a human form. He was more apparition than person. Neither male nor female" (P-Orridge, liner notes to Godstar 11).*

*"E made a promise to my SELF there and then, speaking to thee still forming person inside my head, and E locked it down with purity ov intent by using Brian Jones as thee hieroglyph to*

*represent my dream with form. Why Brian Jones and not thee others? Intuition told me he was thee source, thee reckless explorer innovating with new instruments, new arrangements and most ov all perhaps new identities that transgressed taboos with abandon. Rightly or wrongly, E saw Brian Jones as a Romantic, flawed but daring, thee soul of thee group. He was thee first PANDROGYNE to enter my personal cosmology” (ibid).*

It was an auspicious encounter, one that would shape his artistic and psychological future. The fact that the 2004 album, from which these remarks are drawn, was subtitled “A film soundtrack based on thee life and times ov Brian Jones”, tells its own tale of tribute, even if the movie, planned during the 1980s, was never made for lack of finance.

To these revelations, I will return, in due course, but my own personal connections with the evolving Megson would be cut short, not long after he enjoyed that highly affecting meeting with Brian Jones. On FA Cup Final day, the annual soccer showcase in the British calendar, May 20th, 1966, my family uprooted and left Solihull to return to Manchester for my father’s new job. It would be some time before I would become aware of Neil again. In fact, the author recalls the re-discovery in his PopMatters “Anglo Visions” column of March, 2003:

*“More than a decade later as I was completing my university studies, my mother contacted me to say that her friend Muriel Megson had been in touch and that Neil was now making a success in the rock world. As someone who, by now, was avidly consuming column miles of the music press each month, I was a bit shocked that I couldn’t immediately place this new, young star. It soon transpired, however, that the adolescent Megson had taken on a fresh persona, and that the individual dubbed Genesis P-Orridge, and leader of a band called Throbbing Gristle, was the adopted alter ego of the teen who had long before offered me a guided tour of his model railway” (Warner).*

Since then I have shared a curious, distant association with Genesis P-Orridge, or Gen, as he is known informally, or even Djin, a more recent signature on his e-mails, one that would not be re-kindled in any real sense for another 20 years after that, through letters and faxes in the later-1990s when an undergraduate popular music student of mine chose him as his final year dissertation topic, and then again not in person until 2004 when the book project I was working on would lead to our belated reunion in New York City that summer. Yet this account straddles a difficult path. My intrigue in P-Orridge is born of a slight childhood connection but it

is, today, stimulated by a concern with his long-running links to members of the Beat Generation caucus and their value to Text and Drugs and Rock'n'Roll, my book in preparation. His collaborations with William Burroughs and Brion Gysin have become a key element in his journey, best represented in print by the special edition of San Francisco-based radical arts journal RE/Search which, not insignificantly, devoted itself to the triumvirate in 1984.

My paper is not meant to be, in any way, a phoney celebration of friendship – I am a fleeting figure in P-Orridge's past, he in mine. We may have belatedly restored our connection in quite surprising circumstances, but I am not feigning an intimate relationship. Nor is it a testimony of fandom – I am much more interested by P-Orridge's oeuvre than I am enamoured of it. But the fact that we have a history makes my enquiry into his achievement less straightforward than the kind of research we might pursue as journalist or academic into the life and times of a popular musician from whom we are essentially detached. I cannot write a completely objective survey of this artist and the baggage he carries but I hope I can, to compensate, consider what occurs when that kind of personal interaction is part of a factual overview you are attempting to compile.

What this account certainly reflects on is the private and

public, personal, psychological and artistic rollercoaster that P-Orridge has relentlessly ridden since his teens, when he determinedly embarked on a life that placed art at its heart and almost inevitably embraced the role of outsider, a part he has portrayed with a mixture of stoicism and perverse celebration since the mid-1960s. In his taking on the persona of "a scapegoat" like his hero Brian Jones (P-Orridge, interview with the author), he feels he is experiencing first-hand some of the trials and tribulations replicated in the lives of other subversive creatives who refused to toe the conventional line.

There is little doubt that a key catalyst in shaping Megson, the P-Orridge to be, was an experience in school when he was 14, one that had a strong bearing on his future activities but also on lies at the heart of the arguments laid out in this thesis: that this artist owes much of his creative vision to the spirit of the Beat Generation writers. When we re-established our face-to-face connection in July 2004 he described an encounter with a teacher who had opened his eyes to a new body of literature.

*"There was an English teacher at Solihull School who's nickname was Bogbrush because he had a moustache that stuck out, that was all bristly under his nose," he explained. "I'd have to look in an old school magazine to check his name*



*what his real name was. And I handed him an essay for homework one day and got it back with....I got a good mark, I got a good, mark but the thing was it said 'See me!' and I thought, 'O-oh I'm in trouble again'. So I had to wait till after the class, went to see him and he said "I really, really liked what you were writing and I think that you've got a very unusual perspective on life and I'd like to recommend some writers that you should read'. So he wrote down for me...he said you should try to find anything you can by Jack Kerouac and you should look for books by William Burroughs, no Jack Kerouac was the main one, it wasn't Burroughs..." (P-Orridge, interview with the author).*

*He continued: "So I told my Dad that I'd been told I should try to get these books, On the Road in particular by Jack Kerouac. because he used to travel a lot with his work. He came back not long afterwards with a paperback copy of On the Road, Jack Kerouac, which I read straight through...I loved it and I asked the teacher about it and what else was there and I started to seek out the other beatnik<sup>6</sup> writers because of that; I gave my father this list of names and I also realised that the Jack Kerouac books mentioned other people as fictional characters but they were*

*actually really based upon other beatniks and that's how I got into the beatniks, through that. I was already writing my own poetry and my own creative writing but that's the very specific sort of signifier of when I actually became consciously aware of the beatniks and started to look for them" (ibid).*

I wondered how did that writing and reading that material had affected him? Did it influence the way he wrote poetry or wrote creatively? How in the years that followed did it affect his artistic consciousness?

*"There's no question that it affected the way I was writing. One of the things that most young artists do is they begin by mimicking the things they really like, same with rock bands, too. They'll start out trying to sound something like their favourite and so because I didn't have a lot of support from my environment...it wasn't a good thing to do, to write poetry and want to be writer and an artist. The social environment was very much against that, so I was kind of on my own, so I would improvise and I had a couple of friends, [...] just two or three people I knew, and we would spend the weekends trying to write our own beatnik poetry, and exchanging it with each other, reading out loud, basically being our own*

*schoolboy version of the beatniks, the best we could. We'd drink wine and go in the park and fantasise that we were the beatniks. But what it did was, through doing that and immersing myself in the writing to that degree and especially the acting out in the theatrical way...the characters, the first thing I know that it did for me was it really made me aware of the sound of the poetry when it was spoken out loud" (ibid).*

While P-Orridge recalls that he and his proto-beatnik associates experimented with tape and did record some of their own poetry, I asked him if he actually heard anything of the Beats maybe reading their work?

*"No. I'd never heard anything of that but the big impact upon me was definitely was learning to hear what I was writing, hear it as poetry and sound and song at the same time as I was writing it, instead of it being much more of an intellectual, academic exercise assembling words with meter and so on. I started to feel the actual natural rhythms of the words and the way that they were phrased and the sort of the pausing and the breaths, in a way not just the words, but also the non-words, the breath and the pacing and the slight hesitation and then all those sonic gestures, if you like, that one uses when you are doing things out loud,*

*are not just another language of editing, which is one thing that they are, but it's also a whole extra language of connection between space and sound, the rhythmic aspect and, in a way, the emotional connections that come with hesitation or with loudness. All of that was suddenly made very real and very vivid for me" (ibid).*

Did that notion of the power of an oral style start to inform his work once he became involved in performance and theatre and song at the end of the 60s and the start of the 70s?

*"I'm a great believer that everything you experience, everything you hear, everything you see, everything that you touch, that you have any interaction with mentally or physically, all of it influences what you create and people who kind of imply they have divine inspiration and what they make is unique and what they create, write or play or paint, that anything that they make is disconnected and a sign of their own personal genius, disconnected from things around it, I just think that's not true. I think that the great joy of creating art in any form is that the artist is the voice for the sum total of connections at any given moment, all their emotions which all resonate with those of everything around them.*

*That's why people can enjoy and be inspired by art is that they recognise themselves in it. So I've always felt that what you try to achieve is to build and project a voice which speaks for a person that doesn't exist in the usual sense, that person is the audience, which may be two or three or two thousand or two million, that you are actually just building a temporary fictional character that represents a common experience. So that was what I got from it on that level but the other really important thing was just the idea that when you were writing poetry, everything, again everything, could be included that there was a journalistic, anecdotal aspect that I hadn't really understood before because growing up with Eng Lit where it's all about the classics and form..." (ibid).*

So on the one hand there was a dominating, repressed, controlled form of expression while the Beats showed him he could talk about personal experience and there was value to it.

*"Personal experience, anecdotes, experiments, social and political things that are going on around you; they could all be included and referred to in the poetry and it was completely valid and in fact it gave us much more confidence....it validates the experience of being an outsider in a way..."*

Did he already feel like an outsider in the Midlands in England in the mid-1960s?

*"Totally, I totally felt isolated and an alienated outsider and so when you read those books by the beatniks you see another possibility which is optimistic which is that somewhere out there in the wider world, there are others who may not be exactly the same as you, but they are enough like you or they perceive the world or they are experiencing life in a similar way, and that you can find them, so instead of having to accept your given family and your given social group, you can choose your own social group and your own extended family and that was very important for me as well, the idea that I could travel and go and seek out and find other people whose voices and whose experiences were more like my own and instead of being the outsider I could become at least affiliated with other people I could recognise my kind that something else was in there in the expression of life that would enable me to know when there were others who were more like me..." (ibid).*

Eventually, in 1968, he would escape the clutches of Solihull – his home, his family, his hated school – and head off to the University of Hull, in Yorkshire, to study, ostensibly, Social Administration, Economics

and Philosophy. But the odyssey would quickly switch track as “he became connected with a group of kinetic/mixed media performers in 1969 known as Transmedia Exploration in Islington, England” (P-Orridge, full length bio) Not long after, Megson, already beginning to function under the guise of Genesis (see Ford 2.4) became “the Founding Artist and Theorist of seminal British Performance Art group COUM Transmissions in Shrewsbury, England...[which]...created and performed more than 200 art actions, installations, video work and street actions in Art Festivals and Galleries all over Europe and in America. The project was terminated in September 1976 with a final but now infamous show called ‘Prostitution’ at the I.C.A. Gallery in London” (P-Orridge, full length bio).

Such controversy would never stray far from the P-Orridge doorstep in the years that followed: his courting, indeed shaping, of the insurrectionary fringe – in music, literature, art and philosophy – has frequently left him vulnerable to mainstream attack. On several occasions he has felt the forces of authority bring their powers to bear against him. Even before “Prostitution”, that notorious live/art show at the renowned Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA), featuring exhibits and a debut Throbbing Gristle performance incorporating a striptease contribution from P-Orridge’s lover/collaborator of the time Cosey Fanni Tutti<sup>6</sup>, a production that would lead

to heated Parliamentary debate and a suggestion by British MP Nicholas Fairbairn that these performers represented “the wreckers of civilisation” (Ford 6.22), P-Orridge’s activities had drawn the attention of the law in 1975.

The phenomenon known as mailart, centred around the exchange of postcards, was at the core of P-Orridge’s brush with the British courts. Mailart’s roots lay in the activities of the New York-based art group Fluxus, a crucial gathering of artists who strove to make the ordinary iconic and included Yoko Ono among its roll, which, for a number of years, encouraged its members and others to exchange communications by post – sending and sharing visual images of their own making through their letter-boxes, a pre-internet ritual that was cheap and also subversive as it relied on post office services across the globe to deliver its bounty. The products of this cottage art with a wider vision were sometimes eventually shown in galleries.

*“Mailart contained no curator. Even during the height of the movement’s popularity [in the 1970s], mailart galleries had an all-inclusive policy. Famous artist such as Ray Johnson and Fluxus-ian Ken Friedman were shown alongside obscure sendings from joe schmoe and his overseas pals. Mailart wasn’t even about being an*

*artist, stressing instead creative communication”*  
(Bengala 111).

As for P-Orridge, “while his work both within and without the postal medium has often dealt with erotic material, in the mid-Seventies, he’d been combining images of pornography and royalty in his queen postcard series, citing ‘kitsch and the national sense of taboo’, as his inspiration” (ibid, pp111-112). Charged with indecency for his incorporation of Queen Elizabeth II’s portrait into a series of juxtapositions, including one with a naked woman, the artist was prosecuted. He was fined a large sum (at the time) £400 (\$750, in current values) and given minimum time to pay under the threat of a twelve month gaol sentence.

It is interesting that the collage or cut-up art should feature early in his history. Not long before, as a consequence of P-Orridge’s involvement with mailart and the publications *File* and *Vile* (the titles each lampooned mainstream news magazine *Life*) which celebrated the form, he would first make contact with one of the principal figures linked to the writing of the Beat Generation, William Burroughs, whose cut-up approach to writing novels had become widely discussed and critically admired by the start of the 1970s. Although his debut work, *Junkie* (1953), had been built on a representational narrative, a thinly veiled autobiographical novel, his books *Naked*

*Lunch* (1959) and *The Soft Machine* (1961) were much more innovative in their approach. In these titles, he had experimented with the idea that texts could be written, taken apart and re-ordered to produce a new literary work. This form of deconstruction – and re-assembling – would pre-empt structuralist and poststructuralist theories of art and literature, developed and explored by French philosopher Jacques Derrida and others, which emerged in the 1960s and over the years that followed.

P-Orridge met Burroughs, based in London in 1972, as a result of an item the writer had placed in *File*. As part of the mailart network, Burroughs had invited correspondents to send items that evoked “camouflage for 1984,” the musician recalled (P-Orridge, interview with author) to his home address.

*“I just thought, that can’t really be William Burroughs’ address but, just in case it was, I thought I’d write. So I wrote a very cheeky letter to the address which began with ‘I’m tired of you and Brion Gysin and Allen Ginsberg and everybody saying that you know me and please stop...you’re just trying to be hip by saying that you know me’. And, lo and behold, a few wks later I got a postcard back from William Burroughs, a friendly postcard, so I began a correspondence with Burroughs. He just said whenever you’re in London, cause then*



*I was still living in Hull, just call me and come over and let's have dinner. I hitch-hiked to London one weekend in and rang the number and...(gravelly Burroughs impression) 'Get in a taxi and come over' and I said, 'I can't afford a taxi' and he just said, 'I'll pay for it, just come over'. So I went to Duke Street and there he was - Uncle Bill, William Burroughs. And he was ready for me - he had a bottle of Jack Daniels and his television with a remote so we could do cut ups while we were talking. That's when we became friends. We drank the bottle of whiskey, he took me for dinner at the steak-house, Angus Steak-house, and we stayed friends until he passed away" (ibid).*

It was the start of an association that would extend to the end of the novelist's life in 1997.

The link forged with one of his beloved "beatnik writers", P-Orridge's interest in cut-up intensified and also drew him to the man whom Burroughs was quite willing to credit with devising the process - Brion Gysin. As Burroughs himself wrote in RE/Search #4/5:

*"At a surrealist rally in the 1920s Tristan Tzara the man from nowhere proposed to create a poem on the spot by pulling words from a hat. A riot ensued and wrecked the theatre. Andre Breton expelled*

*Tristan Tsara from the movement and grounded the cut-ups on the Freudian couch" (35).*

*"In the summer of 1959 Brion Gysin painter and writer cut newspaper articles into sections and rearranged the sections at random. 'Minutes to Go' resulted from this initial cut-up experiment. 'Minutes to Go' contains unedited unchanged cut-ups emerging as quite coherent and meaningful prose. The cut-up method brings to writers the collage, which has been used by painters for fifty years. And used by the moving and still camera. In fact all street shots from movie or still cameras are the unpredictable factors of passersby and juxtaposition cut-ups" (ibid).*

In the same issue of RE/Search, Gysin was interviewed by prominent UK rock journalist and P-Orridge associate Jon Savage, and also by P-Orridge with fellow Throbbing Gristle member Peter Christopherson. The conversations were part of a sequence that P-Orridge would edit into a collection of interviews, clearly making explicit the artistic alliance between the old guard of cut-up theory and the young Turks who were appropriating it. Gysin told Savage that the concept of cut-up had been "an accident...but which I recognised immediately as it happened, because of knowing of all the other past things - I knew about the history of the arts, let's say.



And it seemed a marvellous thing to give to William [Burroughs] who had a huge body of work to which it could immediately be applied” (Gysin quoted in Vale and Juno, RE/Search #4/5 55).

By the time P-Orridge and Christopherson’s interview with Gysin took place in 1980, the band Throbbing Gristle were in their final throes and would actually play their last concert the following year. Yet TG, formed in 1975 as an extension of the art group COUM and a band who played their premiere set at the “Prostitution” event, had, by then, left a significant mark on the fringes of the new music which erupted in the UK from the middle to the end of the 1970s. In fact, P-Orridge claims a vital part in launching the tide of punk, most usually linked, in Britain at least, to the rise of the Sex Pistols in late 1976, and tied in to the release of their first single ‘Anarchy in the UK’, the “Anarchy in the UK” tour and their expletive-charged appearance on the capital’s regional ITV news show, *Today*, with presenter Bill Grundy, on December 1st, which won the group nationwide tabloid front page coverage the following day and with it ongoing notoriety (see Savage 257-275).

P-Orridge points out that TG had already appeared on Grundy’s TV show six weeks earlier when “Prostitution” had been the controversial topic under the early evening spotlight. He states, too, that he was already immersed

in TG activities a year before these two television items were aired. P-Orridge was rehearsing in the same building while Malcolm McLaren was attempting to forge a New York Dolls-like band in London. McLaren, who had managed the Dolls in their dying phases, tried, then failed, to lure Television refugee Richard Hell to England to front the new act (Savage 92). Instead, he turned to a spiky-haired hanger-on who loitered in Sex, the clothes shop the entrepreneur/rock manager and his designer partner Vivienne Westwood ran in the West End. In place of Hell, therefore, Johnny Rotten would become vocalist.

Yet there was more than just a rehearsal space to connect TG and the Pistols and the nascent style of punk. P-Orridge also temporarily became drummer in a band that would well reflect the possibilities that the new musical form was providing for creative, untrained musicians. Mark Perry’s *Alternative TV* were a minor moment in the punk chronology but their leader performed a more important role in the dissemination of the movement’s aesthetic. Perry had, in addition, founded the fanzine *Sniffin’ Glue* (see Savage 210-202) a rough and ready, roneo-ed comic which incorporated hastily written text, photo-copied images the cut-out, ransom note-style headlines, a publication that would influence punk culture throughout Britain, encouraging followers to launch their own determinedly slapdash

accounts of the new scene in cities like Manchester (City Fun), Edinburgh (Hangin' Around) and Bradford (Wool City Rocker).

Throbbing Gristle, however, the project to which P-Orridge was to speedily return after his passing sojourn with ATV, were never going to produce the digestible soundbites that the Pistols ('God Save the Queen' and 'Pretty Vacant') and the Clash ('White Riot' and 'London's Burning') utilised to induce slavish adherence in the burgeoning weekly music press of the time and generate mass hysteria among the safety-pinned, ripped T-shirted fans who idolised them. Instead, P-Orridge's band

*"created/explored an aural aesthetic frequently (although not exclusively) defined via extreme noise, and jarring splices of sound, randomly selected and presented, using the theories espoused by William Burroughs, Brion Gysin, and Ian Sommerville [another Burroughs associate] of the cut-up, tape viruses and infra-sound. The 'musical' results of these sonic experiments range from the tranquil to the confrontational. Throbbing Gristle also utilised Gysin's adaptation of Hassan I Sabbah's credo: 'Nothing is true. Everything is permitted'"<sup>7</sup> (Sargeant 184).*

The group appeared to combine intensely applied art theory—a fierce loyalty to the principles of the cut-up—with a parallel devotion to a version of anti-art incompetence which owed much to the Dada influence that P-Orridge has certainly been happy to credit as significant in his own creative development. At the same time, the quartet also laid down their anti-rock position: they appeared to despise punk's mere simplification of the rock sound, a cornerstone of the stripped down do-it-yourself ethic that McLaren had enthusiastically championed. That said, there are other arguments outlined in Savage and Marcus which reference the theories of Situationism, a later and more political outgrowth of Dada, speculating that these ideas had also been familiar to McLaren and these had been applied to the band by the Sex Pistols' commercially shrewd, tactically astute and media savvy manager. So the presence of Dada sub-texts in both TG and the Pistols has been constructed by some well-regarded commentators on both sides of the Atlantic.

P-Orridge succinctly described the template of TG in my interview with him in 2004.

*"Throbbing Gristle, like all good bands when it works well, when the chemistry works, can only exist as the sum total of all of the four people involved – Sleazy<sup>8</sup> wanted, quite consciously... he wanted to find a way to incorporate the William*

*Burroughs/Brion Gysin cut up techniques, so he used six cassette decks or Walkmans, when they first came out, and that was his instrument and later on he actually built his own hand-made sequencers so that he could play sequences. They would come though in rhythms (suggests the beat of random electronic sounds) but it was actually from cassette tapes, so his raw material was cassette tapes and he was able to use them so both sides of the cassette could be played at the same time - and stereo - so each tape had four sound sources. Those sound sources could be just him walking down the street or anything, so the six decks he had, 24 different sound sources, and you could sequence them or play them on a little keyboard one at a time or just run them, so that was his contribution. The sound began as a result of what we could do. I got a bass guitar because somebody had left it behind when they'd hitch-hiked and stayed with us for a while and they had an old broken bass guitar which they left. I got Chris to fix it, he put humbucker picks ups in it, in a bass, two of those, and because I had grown up playing drums I wanted to do something rhythmic, so I played bass, and I basically started out hitting on rhythm. Chris made home-made synthesisers. His favourite band was Tangerine Dream, Kraftwerk, all that*

*German stuff, so he built those old, big analog synths and so he brought his big, huge analog synths and then we just said, 'Well that means Cosey should play the lead guitar', cause the one thing we knew we didn't want, we didn't want a drummer because we thought that if you have a drummer it becomes rock music. You can't stop it, somehow they can't help themselves; they do 4/4 and they just do rock drumming. So we cut that - no drummer. One thing we were sure of was to resist the rock formula and that's how industrial music began...it was the result of what we did have available and what we refused to do"*

*(P-Orridge, interview with author).*

In Simon Ford's *Wreckers of Civilisation*, several contemporary reviews confirm a general inability to recognise TG's value as music-makers. Tony Parsons of *New Musical Express*, one of the main voices employed to write about punk on a paper that was enthusiastically backing the new sounds, was withering in his critique of the group's contribution to the "Prostitution" show:

*After Genesis finished his opening speech of doom and destruction, the band went into their, uh, music, which consisted of lots of weird, psychedelic taped sounds rolling around random keyboards played plink plonk style, lead guitar*

*that Patti Smith would have been ashamed of and moronic bass on a superb Rickenbacker by old CONTACT \_Con-42B9C7197A lc ls ll Genesis P-Orridge himself [...] Genesis seemed to be really enjoying himself but most of the audience were bored [...] I went back to the audience to check out why so many kids decked out in punk outfits had come along to the ICA tonight. Surely they weren't interested in this, uh, culture? 'NAH, MATE,' one of them told me while adjusting the safety-pin his carefully ripped tee-shirt. 'We've come along to see Chelsea [Note: A more conventional punk band of the day]. They're on after the stripper [Cosey Fanni Tutti] (Parsons cited in Ford 6.29-6.30)*

It was by no means all negative and dismissive, however. Important critical voices did pin their colours to the TG flag, in the US and the UK. Richard Meltzer told Village Voice readers in 1978 that they were “the Velvets of a ‘new age’” (cited in Ford 0.3) and Paul Morley, writing in NME in 1981, commented: “One day TG’s music will sound rich and sweet. For now everything you feel about TG – septic, morbid, incomprehensible, gimmicky – think the opposite and wake up” (ibid).

But for Genesis P-Orridge positive reaction wasn’t perhaps that crucial. The band were more about gesture

and the use of a rock format to criticise the system; punk was a useful platform to climb on to. “We didn’t take punk massively seriously. It was just something we thought was interesting and went along with it,” he told journalist Jon Savage. “Because it was rebellious and was antagonistic to the status quo” (cited in Ford 6.29). The ICA show would gain P-Orridge that slot on the same Today programme that would host the Sex Pistols several weeks later but his interest in punk was already waning. “We hadn’t thought of becoming part of the music business; we were a comment on culture, and hypocrisy and double values,” said P-Orridge (Savage 423).

Yet if TG, whose album releases included 20 Jazz Funk Greats (1978) and Heathen Earth (1981), had assumed a prominent place in the mythology of indie rock and were capable of drawing crowds of many thousands to their US shows, P-Orridge decided, at one of those concerts, that it was time to pull the plug. He felt his anti-rock band were becoming part of a musical establishment, his own Industrial Records, which named the musical genre, an influential, if small-scale, operation. The death of Throbbing Gristle suggested that the rock’n’roll culture that had served his propaganda purposes well for five years would now be jettisoned, although this assumption would actually prove misplaced. Within two years, his musical persona would find a fresh outlet in

a new band Psychic TV, whose 1987 single 'Godstar', a celebration of late hero Brian Jones, would become P-Orridge's most commercially successful 45 release.

However, during the early 1980s, P-Orridge's relationship with William Burroughs strengthened and was underpinned by some important developments which allowed him to explore other aspects of his creative output. Although he had known the American writer professionally for nearly a decade and had received his personal backing when seeking Arts Council<sup>9</sup> support for COUM Transmissions in the early 1970s and a testimonial by the author in his favour when facing his mailart prosecution in 1976 (see Sargeant 184), from 1980 the connection was bolstered in a number of significant ways.

Burroughs and Gysin had compiled a body of films during the 1960s and 1970s which recorded their lives and art in Tangier, at the so-called "Beat Hotel" in Paris and in London. In fact, the celluloid documents, shot under the direction of another member of the circle Antony Balch, had been conceived as "an epic 'beatnik' movie" (P-Orridge 184). These three, plus Sommerville, were "in all kind of cahoots together. Re-inventing and exploring with their constantly deepening experiments in deconstruction; writing; painting; sexuality; scientology; film; collage; audio tape; and, of course, neurobiology and pharmacology" (ibid).

P-Orridge says that "[t]he result and legacy, with hindsight, is an incredibly significant and monumental celluloid archive. A body of documentary portraits that is truly unique. We have nothing that is so revealing, so experimental, so influential or so critically vital in preserving such important 'Beat' figures and their unfolding, most radical ideas on film" (ibid 185).

In 1980, Balch died of cancer, prompting Gysin to make an emergency call to P-Orridge from Paris. Gysin explained that the rent on Balch's Soho office had gone unpaid during an absence caused by his terminal illness. As a result the principal tenant of the rented space had decided to clear out all his effects. Among these were items from the filmed Burroughs/Gysin archive. P-Orridge explains that Gysin and his collaborators had agreed that, if he was able to save the materials from the dump, he could have them. Catching a taxi, P-Orridge arrived at the scene with little time to spare, but just managed to salvage the cans containing the film. There were 28 cans of reels of 35mm film which P-Orridge, with the help of a friendly taxi driver, was able to carry away. "I called Brion when I got home," he recalls, "to give him the good news. He told me William [Burroughs] had been pleased I was saving what I could and fully supported my being the new proactive custodian of these films" (ibid 188).

In the coming months, P-Orridge began a process of documenting the film materials in his possession. The important British film-maker Derek Jarman, who had directed the cult punk classic movie *Jubilee* (1977), was instrumental in helping him find the resources to study the footage. "Then came the archaeological process. I sat for days [...] and laboriously wrote a meticulous list of every single scene, every single edit section, in every single decaying can by noting as best I could a verbal description of what seemed to be happening visually" (ibid).

These efforts bore fruit in 1982 when P-Orridge became further involved in a significant project with Burroughs. The Final Academy brought the two together in a live event involving readings, spoken word and musical ingredients. Commented P-Orridge: "I told William that there were a lot of people who were inspired by Brion and William's idea of the cut up and it would be a really great idea to put on an event and I'd already come up with the title, the Final Academy, because he mentions an academy in one of his books, it kind of comes into [the novel] *The Wild Boys*. And he basically said. 'Fine if you can organise it, I'll take part'. And so I got David Dawson, a friend of mine, and he then knew someone called Roger Ely, but basically David and I...somehow we pulled every string we could and we basically got it to happen....the nice part was that because it was one of

those wonderful upward spirals because of the attention the Final Academy drew to Burroughs and Gysin and their ideas, all of his books got re-published" (P-Orridge, interview with author).

The production was seen at the renowned Hacienda club in Manchester during that winter. Out of this grew a major television documentary on the writer. Shown on BBC2<sup>10</sup> in the prestigious "Arena" strand, *Burroughs: The Movie* drew heavily on the very films that P-Orridge had saved and catalogued. But this fascinating episode – important for P-Orridge but also crucial in the telling of the Beat Generation history – had a disappointing conclusion. In 1991, P-Orridge's Brighton home was raided by the police after newspaper allegations that the musician had been central to a Satanist cult (see P-Orridge, *Painful But Fabulous* 40). Although P-Orridge was in Tibet at the time, filmed material was seized, among it footage from the Burroughs/Gysin collection and items that Derek Jarman had produced while documenting the Final Academy proceedings. These films have never been recovered and are now thought lost or destroyed. The raid on P-Orridge's premises was a key factor in his decision to leave the UK and move to the US.

Yet that incident and the subsequent move to the States has, in no way, dented his desire to operate as an



innovative and versatile artist – musician, writer, director, performer – ever pushing at the boundaries. All of those avenues he has continued to pursue, but arguably his boldest statement, in a life of bold statements, has seen him, in the early years of the new century, embark on a life-changing project. His interest in the concept of body art – the use of the artist's own physical being as artwork – has seen him join forces with his wife Jackie Breyer as his essential collaborator in the project. The pair now operate this creative coupling under the name Breyer P-Orridge.

Body art or body modification has a long and involved history stretching back to ancient times and lost cultures. Tattooing, piercing, branding and scarification have been a feature of cultures from all eras and all continents. But the more recent rise of a movement that has been dubbed “modern primitive” has changed the emphasis of a practice that has been, in the past, linked to a cultural mainstream – the tribal, the ritual – to a contemporary one that marks the practitioner or form of display as outside the cultural mainstream. The book “Modern Primitives”, also published in the RE/Search series, focuses on individuals who draw on a range of body art forms to express their identity to the wider world. The volume examines “a vivid contemporary enigma: the growing revival of highly visual (and sometimes shocking) body modification practices” (Vale and Juno,

RE/Search #12 4). CONTACT \_Con-42B9C7197A \c \s \l Genesis P-Orridge was one of the figures given attention in the publication.

*Says Victoria Pitts: “Modern Primitives describes how individuals can create some form of social change [...] through creating visible bodily changes, while also asserting a radical message of self-invention [...] Modern primitivism does not replace, then, but rather displaces Western cultural identity and creates a subversive cultural style [...] the gestures of modern primitivism call into question the fixity of identity as such” (133).*

She also draws attention to Hebdige's theories of subculture which have “much in common with the radical collage aesthetics of surrealism” (ibid). Hebdige remarks that “the radical aesthetic practices of Dada and Surrealism are [...] the classic modes of ‘anarchic discourse’. Breton's manifestos (1924 and 1929) established the basic premise of surrealism: that a new surreality would emerge through the subversion of common sense, the collapse of prevalent logical categories and oppositions [...] and the celebration of the abnormal and forbidden” (Hebdige 105). This makes, and emphasises that interesting link, as P-Orridge's interest in the Dadaists and Surrealists has been widely documented. He has claimed those

artistic revolutionaries as influences and revealed his debt in his own creations. For example, in 1973, his work *Copyright Breeches* – a book which featured photographs signed by the artist with the copyright sign – referenced Marcel Duchamp's pioneering work with ready-mades (Ford 2.21). The same Dadaist would then inspire a 1974 performance piece called *Marcel Duchamp's Next Work*, in which bicycle wheels, an item Duchamp famously employed in an art-piece of 1913, were transformed into a musical instrument (Ford 4.5-4.8). P-Orridge commented:

*"When I was still at Solihull School the only things that excited me in art history [...] the two things that excited me were Surrealism and Dada, definitely, and of those two Dada I found the more satisfying, in the same way that Jack Kerouac and the beatniks excited me in the end, first of all, because their lives became integral to their art - it's pointless to try and separate them. In the same way with Dada and Surrealism, I enjoyed reading about their lives and their anecdotes about what they did as much as looking at the pieces they made [...] with Dada there was a certain realisation in the Dada movement that life, that their lives ultimately were as valid as a piece of art, a material item" (P-Orridge, interview with author).*

The separation of those who utilise body modification as a sign of personal identity, however, and those who adopt the practice as a mode of artistic expression – like the performance artists Orlan (see [www.orlan.net](http://www.orlan.net)), from France, and the Australian Stelarc (see [www.stelarc.va.com.au/index2.html](http://www.stelarc.va.com.au/index2.html)) (see Featherstone 129-207) – is a subtle one, raising more questions about the role and status of art in society, not to mention that of the individual and the use of the body as canvas. But P-Orridge seems to have made an early decision to include his own body in a holistic pursuit of his artistic oeuvre: for him, it could be argued, the subversive power of identity distortion was and is the artform.

During his time with COUM Transmissions tattooing took on a talismanic quality – for instance, both he and Cosey Fanni Tutti had tattoos out of loyalty to a gaol associate (Vale and Juno, RE/Search #12 165) – and tattooing and piercing have become ongoing emblems of transgression in his résumé. Tattoos on the right shoulder, arms and lower abdomen – a snarling wolf's head on his right groin, providing a bestial emblem which echoes the sexual power of the penis – and body piercing – including genital decoration – have formed an intrinsic feature of P-Orridge's look for many years (see Vale and Juno, RE/Search #12 177; P-Orridge, *Painful But Fabulous* 22).

P-Orridge talked in *Modern Primitives* about the concepts behind pandrogyny, while he was still involved in a earlier relationship with his then wife Paula. He said: "Paula and I function as a symbiotic team when we do rituals and that is the Third Mind. We become fused as an androgynous being, or as we call it, a Pandrogynous being: P for power, Potency, and also for the Positive aspects of being blended male-female. And also because it then makes Pan, and Pan is also a good concept. Pandrogyny is one of my on-going investigations, and the other one is the idea that we're not an occult group, we're an occulture. Because my interest is in culture, but I approach it through occult means, if you like" (Vale and Juno, *RE/Search* #12 171).

In 2002, P-Orridge and Lady Jaye, a photographer and also performer as member of *Psychic TV*, the woman to whom he has been married since 1996, embarked on their experiment in pandrogyny, each pursuing, not a sex change, but a movement towards, what they describe, as a hermaphrodite state. This creative concept raises many issues about sex, gender, sexuality, identity and the part that art might play in annotating or obscuring those characteristics and their relationship to each other. So far, P-Orridge has undergone a number of surgical procedures – implanted breasts, a shrinking of the waist, work to cheekbones and lips - not to mention the installation of an impressive, and expensive, set of gold teeth.

We might also add that the tradition of gender play or gender bending or sexual ambivalence has a potent history within the field of entertainment – from boys playing women in original Shakespearean dramas, the castrati of the Catholic choirs, the principal boys and dames of the *Comedia dell'Arte*-inspired pantomime. These theatrical antecedents have been particularly replicated in the field of post-war popular music – from Little Richard's outrageously camp stage style of the 1950s to the long-haired, feminised affectations of the hippie 1960s (the Stones have already been mentioned in this context) and onward to David Bowie, the New York Dolls, Boy George, Prince, Marilyn Manson and a large number of others (most often men, but sometimes women like Patti Smith, Annie Lennox and k.d.lang) who have resisted accepted notions of the masculine and feminine and turned those expectations on their head. It is important, I believe, that Genesis P-Orridge's transgressive patterns are also recognised against that particular history.

Sheila Whiteley touches upon such ambiguities when she speaks of Mick Jagger as "the king bitch of rock' [...] with a performing style derived largely from a careful scrutiny of Rudolph Nureyev and Tina Turner" and how he "promised fantasy gratification of both the heterosexual and the homosexual" (67). We have also already seen how P-Orridge's homoerotic celebration of

Jagger's band rival Brian Jones – with his “new identities that transgressed taboos with abandon” in the Godstar sleeve notes (P-Orridge 11) - was a crucial juncture in his own artistic coming out.

Yet P-Orridge feels that for all these recent physical re-orderings, the bodily aspect of his art-making is not a stand-alone strategy, rather part of a pattern of creativity, reconstructing by reassembling texts, in the very widest sense, that stretches back to “Beautiful Litter”, his spontaneous haiku games on his own high street in 1968. “My whole life before,” he tells Bob Bert in BB Gun magazine, “as an individual artist and musician was about experimenting with cut-ups in music, art, collaging in every possible way. Now I can see that I have always included my body in all of that as well in some form [...] Consciousness, body, sexual identity, perceptions, senses, and all those things that in some way add up to one thing that is called ME in one's head. All of that is now contributed as raw material to this new Breyer P-Orridge entity [...] It makes sense that we collaborated in the past with Burroughs and Gysin, that the invention of Industrial music grew from a desire to find a way to apply cut-ups to contemporary music in a way that talked about modern times” (Bert 64).

It seems that Genesis P-Orridge has spent the last forty years constructing an alternative reality – an art-

inspired parallel universe which challenges all notions of conventional organisation, whether musical, literary, visual or ethical, or the sexual categorising of the human being. However, at the end of it all, this programme of body modification, while it may be a dramatic course of action and a life-altering process, it is, for him, primarily an art project or art process, one that has attracted attention among the cognoscenti of cutting edge art – whether that be makers or followers of performance art, installation art or body art – and will be seen as just that, with a documented record, compiled in photographs and film, mapping the evolution of the piece, to be exhibited in the future.

In fact, the very venture is also serving to stress P-Orridge's credentials as a maker of art, challenging his reputation as a renegade rocker. As he told writer/researcher Jayne Sheridan in an interview in England in 2004:

*“Painful But Fabulous [...] was very much concerned with me as an artist and not a musician and I really wanted to redress that balance, not be categorised as a musician because I don't feel that's what I am I feel I am – I'm a multi-media artist. Everything I do I approach with the aesthetics of an artist, very much. I conceive an idea. I then explore and do research around the concept and if it seems valid to explore it and basically test it on the public then I will. But I never do anything that I*

*am not prepared to do to or for myself" (P-Orridge, filmed interview).*

*He also explained that as Lady Jaye "edited all the photographs for the book, it became more and more apparent to us both – and for me it was quite a surprise - that within all the conscious projects that I've done in performance art, music, collage, painting, sculpture that what was really central to all of them was an exploration of identity; it wasn't even just gender but it was identity itself. Who creates the person that we say we are and it became more and more apparent, too, to me in fact everyone's identity is fictional and most of it is written by other people, that this is a narrative that we live and it can be re-written and we can actually usurp the outside world's control over our character, our identity, and we can begin to write the story for ourselves and be whomever we want to be" (ibid).*

But what happens when the investigator re-discovers the subject of this piece having known him in another time, another space? When the subject is Genesis P-Orridge, the question takes on extra pertinence especially when change of all kinds is a credo underpinning his activity, his life-long adventure. I had changed too, naturally – the 8 year old boy had become the 48 year old man – so

the dislocation occurs on both sides of the fence but his pursuit of transformation seems to have been endemic; for me, ageing alone could be blamed.

For me, meeting P-Orridge four decades after my initial encounters with him as Neil Megson was strange for many reasons. When I called him from close to the Brooklyn subway station – he had proposed meeting me there when I arrived - to let him know I was nearby, I asked how I would recognise him. "I'll be wearing a white shirt and a blue, denim mini-skirt," he replied (P-Orridge, interview with author). That was disorientating but, when we met up just minutes after, we quickly connected. With a bob of peroxided hair, full lips and petite, he looked younger than his 54 years. He mocked me gently for my hippie-ish appearance. I was wearing a bandana and he suggested my stay in San Francisco in recent days had affected me. It broke the ice for both of us.

The afternoon and evening we passed together – my own partner Jayne Sheridan, who looked superficially, though still surprisingly, like P-Orridge, speedily befriended him, too, and later Lady Jaye joined us as we headed for a meal at Sea, one of the fashionable Williamsburg eateries – was comfortable and rewarding. I interviewed him on tape, was shown the only known sculpture, a self-portrait, that William Burroughs had created sitting close to the space where the Breyer

P-Orridge have been planning a basement gallery, and shared our thoughts on a whole range of topics, an interview (P-Orridge, interview with author) which forms a primary source of this article.

Genesis P-Orridge has pursued his personal metamorphosis for many years but it seems that his association with Lady Jaye has given the quest for physical re-orientation a renewed and powerful momentum. He may be chasing this outcome in response to the sexual ambiguities he recognised in Brian Jones, and was so attracted to, when he met him in 1966. He may, as Pitts and Hebdige have proposed, be pursuing this extreme form of body modification for the same reasons he drew on tattoos and scarification in previous periods, as a subversive cultural displacement activity. He may also have decided, in part, to strive to retain his Peter Pan-ish appearance for reasons of vanity, too – P-Orridge would not deny here the power and place of his own ego. But it seems that the intensity of the latest project has less to do with gender distortion or gender reassignment and more to do with sheer playfulness with the notions of identity – he refuses to be bound by his name, his culture, his own body and sees this refusal to comply, this disobedience, as the absolute moral obligation of his art and his artistry.

There are other issues and paradoxes that we could

explore, too. P-Orridge's fall from an ablaze, LA studio window in 1995 (see Kramer; Mitchell & Landman), when he suffered such serious injuries including multiple fractures, might be regarded as the ultimate, if unplanned, cut-up. At the same time, his surgical procedures, conducted with planning and precision, could be regarded as the antithesis of cut-up: although the surgeon's knife literally slices the human tissue and re-constructs the body, the random laws of chance, seemingly central to the aesthetics of cut-up, appear to be removed from the equation. But those are speculations for further and future consideration.

For P-Orridge in 2005, while rock music and his spoken word pursuits – via Thee Majesty, a smaller ensemble also featuring Psychic TV personnel including Lady Jaye – will continue to feature in his portfolio of activities, it is his life as a maker of art, as an artist, as expressed through his bodily and identity alterations, that seems set to dominate his agenda now and in the years to come. His personal masquerade, as shared with his wife, will become the performance, the artwork, the process at the very centre of what he does. Yet there is also, at the heart, literally and metaphorically, of this pursuit an oddly old-fashioned commitment to his partner – the ritual they are enacting also has a strong under-current of a Romantic love pact. In the midst of these cut-ups, there is a older, healing, spiritual dimension which lends



a mystical, almost anachronistic, quality to the avant garde anarchy of their modus operandi.

As Genesis P-Orridge remarks:

*"You know the old phrase that's my other half. Well we've taken it very literally and we are each other's other half and so we want to use the available resources of surgery and cosmetics to become more and more, at least on a basic gestural level, like each other physically. So it's a cut-up literally – we are not just cutting up information, we are cutting up ourselves both our internalised consciousness self and our physical self in order to become mirrors of ourselves in order to see what happens, what unusual and remarkable things might happen when difference is removed and similarity becomes the objective."*

*(P-Orridge, filmed interview)*

As for the enduring influence of the Beats, there is no question that William Burroughs and his artistic strategies remain central to P-Orridge's activities. He is unequivocal on this. "My entire life is dedicated to quite literally my belief in my faith in the cut up; even my body's a cut-up now quite literally and so I can't imagine anything that I do not being influenced by the cut-up. It's always there; I do collages, almost every week,

certainly, I'm making collages. When I keep notebooks I always write them non-chronologically. I'll open them at whatever page is open - if that was my diary I'd just go 'Okay, woops' and then I'd write on that page and then tomorrow I might write on that page and then sometimes I'll turn them the other way up and write back the other direction so all my diaries are cut-ups. Those are what I refer to when I'm writing lyrics" (P-Orridge, interview with author).

But his interest in Burroughs' principal colleagues, Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, intense in his formative teenage period, has declined significantly. Of Ginsberg he told me:

*"When you remove the bohemian trimmings, he is a very traditionalist, pretty much academic poet that was very self-conscious about placing himself in the Walt Whitman, American literary tradition and that that was his real ambition to be seen as an academic and established poet even though his path to that was based on sensationalist, bohemian happenings and publicity. So I saw him as being innately conservative. His primary contribution I would say, apart from the fact that he wrote some okay poetry, was his championing of gay rights which I think one has to admire and give credit for. He did do an awful lot of important*

*publicity for tolerance, tolerance of the gay life lifestyle and trying to get middle America to stop and think about the legal and social implications of and need for gay rights. For that, I think, he gets full marks. His poetry...I think 'Howl' is a great poem, it's a really wonderful spontaneous outpouring that still stands up today. If you read it out loud it's fantastic and his other poetry is good poetry but for me it's not poetry...his work isn't something that I can take and apply to rock music or theatre or collage or a fine art gallery or streetlife/popular culture and have it constantly reveal and re-value creativity. It's a frozen moment, it's a historical, specific, traditional piece of literary work, whereas Ginsberg and Burroughs cut up and the ideas and the attitude that everything can be taken and re-worked and re-shape and is malleable and forever, potentially life-changing. Culture is malleable and thought is just an incredible energised gift that can contribute to the evolution of the species. All of that I see in Burroughs and Ginsberg which just isn't in Ginsberg in the same way" (ibid).*

For Kerouac he has also revised his adolescent opinions, too.

*"It seems that Kerouac was this wonderful inspirational manifestation for the adolescent and*

*most people that I meet that have been inspired by Kerouac, it was when they were teenagers. By the same token most people when they return to Kerouac find him a lot less satisfying when they are older and more mature so it seems that Kerouac captures an incredibly, vivid raw adolescence and in that capturing of adolescence, he also captured the utopian, idealistic, devotional love of the universe and potential which still happens when people first come across it and that's an amazing thing to have achieved, somehow encapsulating that adolescent love of potential but in terms of its true literary worth, I know that it's studied at universities everywhere and they do all these books about it, he's the most written about of all of them in academia but he just doesn't do it for me now, the magic event doesn't happen when I re-read it" (ibid).*

## Endnotes

1. Throbbing Gristle were dissolved in 1981 but they would take to the stage once again, more than two decades later, in December 2004 when a farewell performance saw them second on the bill to Mercury Rev at “The Nightmare Before Christmas”, a festival held at a UK holiday camp in Rye, Sussex, and curated by the controversial Britart brothers Jake and Dinos Chapman.

2. Androgynous can be regarded as a synonym for hermaphrodite – “having male and female characteristics”. Note also gynandrous which also describes the hermaphroditic. In addition, with reference to pandrogeny, androgenous means “producing only male offspring” (see Hanks, 1980).

3. The public school in English parlance would be private school within the US system.

4. Genesis P-Orridge has used a language of his creation since the early days of his artistic emergence which draws attention to the sliding signifiers within words – for example, L-if-E, b-earthday, y-eras, movemeant – and also avoids the application of familiar pronouns like “I” and “me” replacing them with E and SELF. Called COUM speak or TOPI talk (P-Orridge,

2005), the construction owes its inspiration to William Burroughs and issues of control related to language but also a system called E-Prime or English Prime which dispensed with the verb “to be” (Louv).

5. The term beatnik was coined by a writer on the San Francisco Chronicle in 1958. Herb Caen attempted to denigrate Beat Generation members or followers, often abbreviated to Beats, by adding the Russian suffix “nik”. In a climate of Cold War when the Russians were seen as the Communist enemy and at a time when the space race had witnessed the USSR’s launch of their Earth-orbiting satellite Sputnik, Caen’s device was a way of marking the Beats as a dangerous and subversive force, infiltrating American society. In our July 2004 interview, P-Orridge interestingly only used the more pejorative term beatnik, rather than Beat.

6. Note that Cosey Fanni Tutti’s real name is Christine Newby.

7. Hassan I Sabbah was an influential Middle East leader of the Ismalis from the 11th C. His followers, the Assassins, derived from hachachin (smokers of hashish), played a significant political role in the region for around 200 years. See [http://home.ca.inter.net/~giskhan/Hassan\\_Ibn\\_Sabbah.html](http://home.ca.inter.net/~giskhan/Hassan_Ibn_Sabbah.html) and “The Last Words of Hassan Sabbah” by William S. Burroughs (<http://www>.

[interpc.fr/mapage/westernlands/Derniersmots.html](http://interpc.fr/mapage/westernlands/Derniersmots.html))

8. The nickname of Peter Christopherson called thus because of “he was interested in the ‘sex’ side of us” (Ford, 1999, p4.9).

9. The Arts Council of Great Britain, founded in 1946, was the UK’s public funding body for the arts (see Hewison, 1997, p29). It has been re-constituted since 1994 with the various member nations – England, Scotland, etc – granted their own funding authority.

10. BBC2 was the second channel of the UK’s principal public broadcaster. Launched in 1964, it became the outlet for more specialised programmes and documentaries, complementing BBC1’s more mainstream broadcasts.

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## Reluctantly Virtual: Reflections on the Current Music Industry Dynamics

Patrik Wikström

### Introduction

During the first decades of the previous century, the gramophone, the radio and a set of other technical inventions established the industry of recorded music. Before those inventions, the music industry was focused on sheet music and performances, and the most important players in the industry were the publishers. The publishers controlled the intellectual properties, actively seeking both new songwriters and outlets where their songs could be displayed.

The world has changed in many ways since this time, and so has the music industry. Today, sheet music is almost considered as a curiosity, and recorded music is since long established as the core product of this industry. Every other activity, be it stage performances, radio airplay, music videos, etc, is primarily intended to boost the sales of the recording. The publisher is no longer in the driver's seat but is since many years quietly sleeping in the back.

This paper will explore how new technologies and media deregulation are changing the industry once

again. Two trends which in concert create a new and very different music business are in focus:

One is the changing mental models among the executives in the music industry. Instead of understanding the industry as a chain, where the sole purpose of the business is to sell physical records, they are starting to picture the business as a network where all activities are revenue generators at the same time as they are awareness builders.

The other is the renaissance of the music publisher. The music publisher is taking on a more active role in the industry and in some instances is even making the record company superfluous.

After a short note on the methodology used in this study, the paper will describe a classic model which explains the traditional workings of the industry of popular music. Next, the relationship between radio stations and record companies is discussed, and the impact of a new gatekeeper structure on music industry logic is explored. Finally evidence of how music companies adapt to the new logic are presented.

### **A note on methodology**

The conclusions made by this paper are based on the preliminary findings from a dissertation project focused on music industry dynamics. The purpose of the project is to understand how the major players in the popular music industry are affected by the changing media landscape, and how the players are revising their business strategies to be able to cope with the new conditions.

Various data establish the empirical foundation of the project, but the findings presented in this paper are based on 29 semi-structured interviews with industry leaders and experts from three music markets; Sweden, UK and the US. Most interviews were conducted with people on vice president level or above which enabled me to discuss strategic issues on a rather abstract level. The interviewees were from different types of organisations (music publishing, music recording, radio, trade organisations, regulatory authorities, technology companies and promotion consultants) and held different positions in those organisations (A&R, marketing, R&D, legal, general).

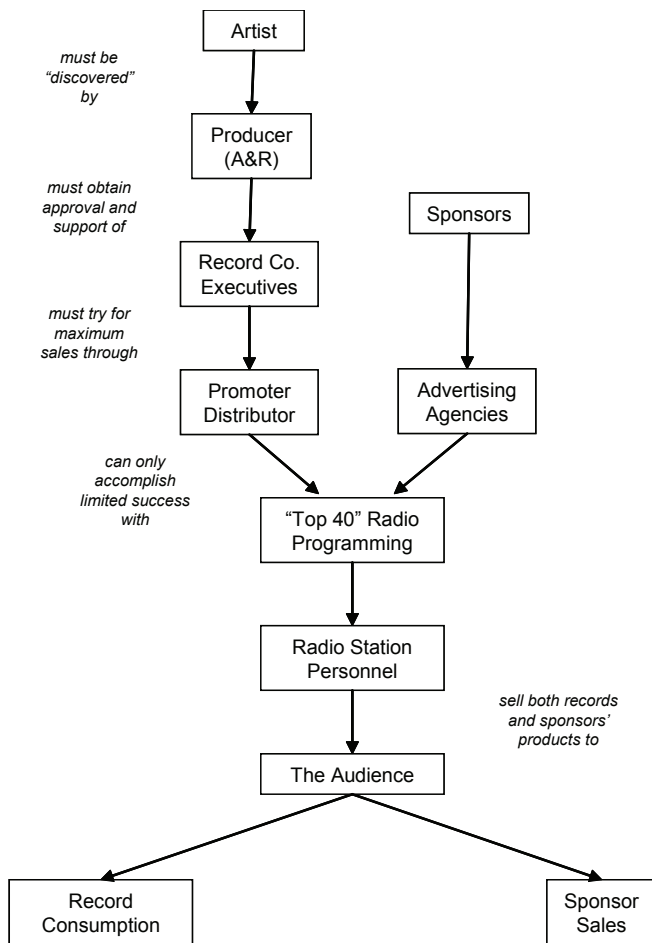
The interviews were structured in five themes: “Radio and promotion”, “Licensing”, “Digital distribution”, “A&R strategies” and “The music company of the future”.

Within these themes the questions were focused on issues found in academic literature and journalistic articles, my own hypotheses and thoughts, and ideas brought up by the interviewees.

### **A linear music industry model**

The music industry is traditionally modelled as a linear value chain which brings music from the creatives via record company decision makers and radio stations, and finally to the audience. In 1970, Paul Hirsch, modelled this structure and proposed the concept of a ‘preselection system’ where music is ‘filtered’ on its way from the artist to the audience (Hirsch 1970). Hirsch stated that ‘preselection systems have developed in those industries for which conventional market research are unreliable and advanced planning is difficult.’ (ibid, p.4) Industries such as clothing, book publishing, theatres, movies and music all fit into this category. ‘In all such “culture” industries, the number of already available goods far exceeds the number that can be successfully marketed. More goods are produced and available than actually reach the consumer.’ (ibid, p.5)

Hirsch mapped the music industry to the framework of the preselection system (illustrated by the figure below). The model explains how artists, when discovered by an A&R (Artist & Repertoire) agent, meet the record company policymakers. These men and women



**Figure 1: The Organization of the Pop Music Industry (Hirsch 1970)**

have the task to select from the output of the creative subsystem the records which are to be released (Hirsch 1970, p.31).

The purpose of the 'regional promoters and distributors' (Hirsch 1970) is to filter the output from the record companies to the radio stations. Today, most music markets are dominated by a few large companies, who themselves are able to communicate directly with the gatekeepers. Consequently, the importance of the independent promoter has diminished. Instead, the

promoter (a.k.a. a plugger) often is a full-time employee at the record company's marketing department.

Further down in Hirsch's model are the radio stations and radio station personnel which are the last steps before the music reaches the audience. Hirsch reflects on the interdependence between gatekeepers (e.g. radio stations) and record companies:

*'Radio station managements demand high audience ratings, for the rates charged advertising sponsors [...] are based solely on the number of listeners the station can "deliver". Advertising agencies place ads with radio stations according to the "cost per thousand" listeners. The fierce competition between stations requires that the program director successfully select a group of records that will appeal to the widest possible audience.'* (ibid, p.61)

Hirsch's model is a fair description of the mental model which was observed among many of the record company executives who participated in the study. The executives expressed how the physical record is the core product of the industry and how radio is the main tool for marketing those records.

It is interesting to note the absence of the music publisher

in Hirsch's model. This absence may be interpreted as a valid representation of how far back music publishing has been pushed since its glory days of Tin Pan Alley. The record companies are calling the shots and the publishers are passively collecting royalties from record sales, performances, and administrating occasional licensing requests.

### **The ungrateful radio station**

Hirsch pointed at the close relationship between radio stations and the music industry. Except for a small number of talk radio stations, most stations, commercial as well as public service, need music. For the commercial radio station, the purpose of the music is usually to keep a certain audience listening while waiting for the next commercial. The radio station's programmers are able to choose which segment of the audience should be delivered to the advertisers by adding and deleting songs from the station's playlist. This convention has been the standard for most music based radio stations since the birth of Top 40 radio in the US during the 1950's (Hirsch 1970). The '40' indicates the length of the playlist which is repeated over and over again. With a 24 hour service, songs with 3 minutes duration, and maybe 45 minutes effective music playing every hour, the top 40 playlist will be repeated at least nine times per day. Now, the playlists usually are split into more and less popular songs, which mean that some songs

will be played more than nine times per day while others will be played less.

"Top 40" is a specific *radio format* today often termed Contemporary Hit Radio (CHR) since the number '40' is not as relevant any more. A format is a way of labelling the content which is being aired by the station. Today, CHR is but one of many different formats, e.g.: Classic Rock, Urban, Adult Contemporary, News/Talk, Oldies, Modern Rock, Classical, Smooth Jazz, etc. The format is commonly used by different players related to the radio industry including the stations themselves, advertisers and regulators. The advertiser "knows" that their consumers "are Classic Rock" and consequently choose to put their advertising monies in Classic Rock radio channels. In some countries (e.g. UK) regulators also use the format as a regulatory tool, to ensure diversity within a certain area. The license awarded to a radio station is conditioned that the station is delivering content which follows a specified format.

Regardless of format, it is very good news, from the music company's point of view, to have a song played on radio (Hirsch 1970). First, though the traditions differ between different nations, the publisher and, in most cases also the record company will receive performance royalties from the radio station. However, what is more important, the song will be heard, and hopefully a subset of the listeners will



**Figure 2: Terrestrial radio and the CD offers different option value to the consumer**

appreciate the music and develop a desire to hear more of that song, or artist, or genre. They want to be able to listen to the song and the artist whenever and wherever they want, not when the radio station decides to put the record on air. The difference between listening to a song on the radio and listening to the song on a Walkman is that the *option value* of the latter is considerably higher than in the first case (Shapiro & Varian 1996). This difference in option values is extremely important to the logic of the music industry since it is that discrepancy which is motivating music listeners to pay a premium for the record, though they probably are able to listen to the same song on the radio, many times during the day, for free (Figure 2).

Consequently, in theory, while the majority of the radio listeners are happy with the music they hear from the radio, some listeners after having heard the song a couple of times on radio, take a walk down to the local record store and buy the record, thereby completing the music industry value chain.

The reasoning above shows the pivotal role of the radio medium in the traditional marketing of music. Those songs which are able to get added to a major radio station's playlist will most likely be commercially successful, and vice versa. Radio stations are the most important tools for raising the audience's awareness of a song or an artist. Due to the importance of radio airplay, record companies go to great extent to increase the probability of getting their songs added to playlists. They give away their music, develop the best possible personal relationships to the radio station's programmer, create more or less ethical incentives for the programmers to play their music, and even let the radio station's musical demands affect the creative process. For instance, if a song with a certain structure is more likely to be added to radio playlists, then A&R professionals will ensure that their artists will choose songs with that particular structure. Further, if the most influential radio station in the market is formatted as Modern Rock, then artists that fit that particular format are definitely more likely

to get a contract and promotion support by a record company compared to artists that doesn't fit as well in the Modern Rock format. (Interviews)

The conclusion is that radio stations need music and the music industry needs the radio. The relationship may seem to be harmonic, but the conflicts between the two are frequent. Radio companies consider music companies to be run by unsuccessful drummers without any understanding of how to run a profitable business. Music companies, on the other hand, consider radio stations to be evil corporate lackeys with no understanding for good quality music. (Interviews)

The reason for this clash is that though radio companies and music companies indeed are dependent on each other, they are working according to two very different business models. The music companies consider the radio to be an important marketing tool for raising the awareness of their new products. By having a song played on the radio, the music company expects to boost record sales. The radio companies on the other hand have no incentive to increase the sales of a record. A commercial music radio station plays music in order to retain a certain defined audience which hopefully is of value to the station's advertisers. If the format followed by the radio station includes new, innovative music, the station will add new, innovative music to their playlist. But if the radio

station's format caters towards an audience which is not interested in new, innovative music, but rather in easy-listening "Oldies" from the 70' and 80's, that is what will be played by the station. The loyalty of the radio station is always towards its advertisers and its listeners, never towards the record company or their artists. (Interviews)

### **The effects of a "light touch regulation"**

The transformation of the media landscape incited by digital technologies and regulatory changes has been analysed and described by numerous scholars. Most aspects of entertainment and media production and consumption have been affected, including those parts of the industry which is dependent on recorded sound.

Considering the importance of the radio medium in the marketing of music it is important to scrutinize the impact of the deregulation of radio markets on the music industry. In general, the regulators in the US (FCC), the UK (Ofcom) and Sweden (PTS) all strive to be "light touch regulators". As this term implies the regulators try to keep the restrictions of the market to a minimum. The regulations cover many different areas, but two aspects are particularly important to the reasoning presented by this paper. First, the regulation of barriers of entry which in Sweden and UK have been strict since the 1920's. Both countries started the radio days with a single public service operator



(SR and BBC respectively) operating a limited set of nation-wide services. In the aftermath of Thatcherism and Reaganomics, this changed dramatically in both these markets and a number of new commercial radio services were allowed to enter. The barriers of entry are still strictly regulated in both UK and Sweden, but the result of the new regulations are far more radio outlets available to the audience compared to the original situation (Interviews).

Second, the regulation of ownership. Traditionally, the ownership of media organisations has been regulated to ensure that no owner should be able to achieve a too dominating position within a certain area. The mechanisms of measuring the level of domination and the level of competition within a certain area differ from country to country, but on average the regulatory pressure has been considerably relaxed in all markets included in this study. The new liberalised market conditions have enabled commercial radio companies in all three markets to acquire other stations and to connect the local stations to nation-wide radio networks. As an effect, the radio markets in UK, US and Sweden are all dominated by a few national media companies, making the concentration of ownership higher than ever. (Interviews)

Originally, commercial radio was indeed a local medium, operating close to the city or area where it

was based. Though the individual DJ's had to adhere to the station's overall format they had some level of freedom to decide which songs should be played during the show. In other words, the programming decision were decentralized which resulted in a relatively high diversity of the station's musical output. This diversity and unpredictability did provide the audience with cultural value but it also constituted a great risk to the owners of the commercial radio stations. Due to the fierce competition, the radio station's ability to put their ratings at risk was limited. It was very important to the radio stations to keep their ratings steady on a high level. If the DJ happened to play a song which the audience did not appreciate, it could result in the radio station losing listeners to competitor. To deal with this volatile situation, radio stations took advantage of their greater size and moved the programming decision making from the local DJ's to a central committee which made the programming decisions on network basis, based on tactical audience research. By carefully measuring what kind of music a particular segment of the audience likes, the station is able to satisfy their musical demands and keep them loyally listening to the station. It should be noted though that very few radio stations depend exclusively on the result from this kind of research. It is usually combined with input from the music companies' pluggers and the programmer's own intuition and experience.

However, the effect of the centralized programming of the station's playlist decreased the number of new songs added per week and minimized the number of songs that did not fit perfectly with the station's format. Well-known, established artists with songs that fit well with the formats have minor problems to cope with this situation, but less established artists or artists whose songs fall between the different formats have great difficulties to raise audience awareness through traditional radio. (Lee 2004; Wikström 2005; Interviews)

To summarize the effects of the relaxed regulations, there are now more outlets than ever but on the other hand these outlets are controlled by a limited number of investors. Using Hirsch's model, the radio station filter has been tightened, and from the music companies point of view, it is more difficult than ever to get through to the audience. (e.g.: Lee 2004; Wikström 2005)

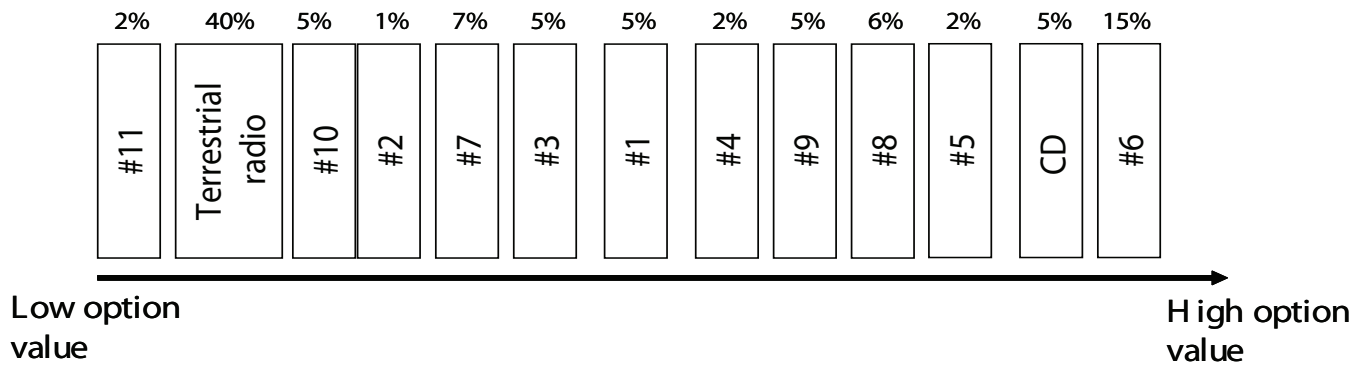
### **New outlets enforce a new business logic**

Terrestrial radio is still the most powerful tool for raising consumer's awareness (Interviews). However, since it has become so difficult to get a place at the table, some music companies have thrown in the towel and declared terrestrial radio as dead. Fortunately, from the music companies' point of view, though traditional mass media such as terrestrial radio and music television

are powerful, they are not the only way to raise the audience's attention.

Since the birth of the music industry there has been several other ways besides radio to raise consumer's awareness. During the Tin Pan Alley era, "street marketing" was the most important way to market a song. "Street marketing", "underground marketing" or "word-of-mouth" is still an important marketing technique, especially for some niche artists and genres, but for mainstream artists, the dynamics of street marketing is often considered to be too slow and difficult to control.

Other awareness building techniques that have been used during many years are e.g. touring, promotion through various kinds of mass media, traditional advertising or licensing the music to moving images. With the development of digital technologies, yet additional ways of getting music to the audience have evolved. For instance, legal and illegal Internet based outlets allow consumers to download music to their computers or portable music players (iTunes, LimeWire, emusic, BitTorrent, etc). Other Internet outlets may rather be explained as niche radio services, or personalised music streaming services, which allow consumers to listen to a flow of sound which is tuned to their individual tastes (Yahoo Launch, AOL, etc). There are many other additional outlets which allow the consumer access to



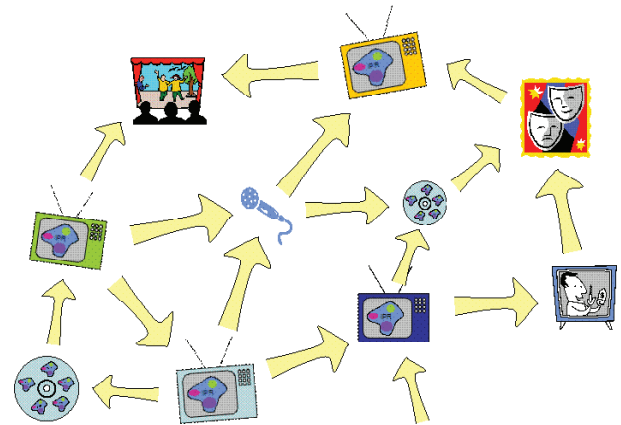
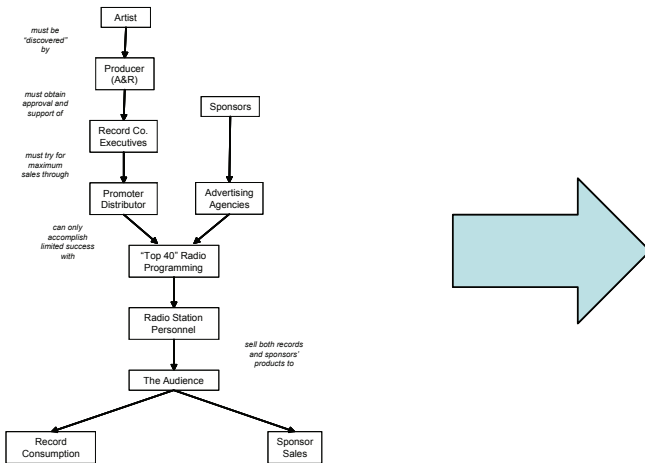
**Figure 3: A multitude of outlets with varying option value**

music, but these lie beyond the scope of this paper. The only important conclusion which shall be made here is that these new outlets can be understood by using the concept of the “option value”. The different outlets have varying option value which can be illustrated by using the “spectrum” that was introduced earlier in the text (Figure 3). Some services, e.g. the niche radio stations have relatively low option value while other services, e.g. various download services, have very high option value. Depending on the consumer’s attitude towards music, different outlets will appeal to different consumers.

All these new music outlets, with varying option value, have enabled music listeners to appreciate music in more ways than previously, when the mainstream music listener was restricted to either radio or physical recordings. However, the traditional logic of the music industry is focused on how to make largest share possible of the music audience to buy a record. Every music listener, who has satisfied her/his musical

demands without purchasing a record, is lost revenue. With the plethora of new music outlets, more music listeners than previously are able to satisfy their music needs without buying a physical record. To be able to survive in this new environment, music companies have to change their mental models of their industry, abandon the assumption that the record is what consumers are interested in and accept that it is all about the music, regardless of how it is distributed. Different listeners will appreciate music using different outlets and fewer listeners will choose to use the physical method of distribution.

From a marketing point of view, this new logic entails new challenges and new opportunities. The new business model is more complex than the previous linear model which had many similarities to other industries of fast moving consumer goods, where a product was developed, a set of marketing activities were launched and hopefully a few items were sold. In the new logic,



**Figure 4: From value chain to value network**

every marketing activity is also a revenue opportunity, and every revenue opportunity is a marketing activity. There are no differences between the two. Choose to consider it as an industry without marketing or an industry without a product.

Instead of describing the industry using a linear chain of activities, the logic of the industry should be described as a network where a large set of marketing/revenue activities all influence each other. License the song to a commercial and it will lead to more people stealing the music on a file-sharing network, which will lead to a bigger audience at the next live gig which will lead to more interest from the radio channels which will lead to more legal downloads and possibly also someone buying the CD in the local record store (Figure 4).

### Conclusions, implications, reflections

The new logic will change the industry in many ways. One very interesting process which has just started is the need to update the agreements between media outlets (broadcasters in particular) and copyright owners. To increase the revenue from the usage of music in broadcasting and other media, the agreements have to be renegotiated and the licensing fees paid by the media outlets to copyright owners have to be increased. This will not be an easy process since the relationship between media outlets and music companies were defined many decades ago, and because the financial situation among many commercial media outlets is already strained. It is easier to set new standards than to change old ones, and music companies have ascertained that they will not make the same mistake when entering agreements

with the Internet based media outlets as they did with the traditional broadcasters.

The new logic is also affecting the music companies internally. During some years, it has been very trendy among music companies to say that “we are not a record company anymore, we are a music company”. However, few music companies have actually made any radical internal changes to reflect their claim. Some of the multinational music companies have divested their stakes in physical distribution and have made investments in Internet based distribution. However, the change will have to go deeper than that. The marketing apparatuses in the music companies are still more focused on how many units should be distributed to a certain territory and what kind of sleeve is best geared towards the target audience than how to master an intellectual asset in an intertwined network of media outlets.

Maybe it is too difficult to adapt the record company to the new logic. Instead, the music company of the future may be found among the music publishers. Managing intellectual property rights is what music publishing is all about and some publishers have already created very fruitful businesses where the intellectual asset is in the centre and the publisher actively licenses the asset to new outlets. Some of these publishers are

not only in control of the rights of the song but also the rights of the recording. In those cases, the traditional record company has been made superfluous since the publisher can take on the role of a record company if so is required. The physical record is but one of a multitude of options to distribute a song to an audience. If this development continues, the music industry of tomorrow may be an industry with many parallels with the music industry before Berliner’s invention. Perhaps the music industry of tomorrow is turning back to Tin Pan Alley...

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## Sounds A Bit Like Dido: The British Music Press and The Female Singer Songwriter

Paula Wolfe

### Introduction

In promoting the release of any artist, the music press review or interview or feature form essential components of a record label's PR marketing strategy designed to boost album sales and raise the profile of the artist, even if the label has been successful in getting the album onto the radio playlists or the promo/live performance onto TV or MTV.

Feminist music theory has long questioned the significance of this mediation process and the body of work produced has clearly shown that whilst appearing to offer women in popular music the much needed publicity for their work, there has been a disparity between how women view themselves working as artists in popular music and how the music press has represented them. In the introduction to the first edition of her book, *She Bop. The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop and Soul*, Lucy O'Brien wrote in 1995 about the reactions of the women she had interviewed for the book, 'To each of them I put the question, 'How do you express yourself?' The response was startling...all would blink, take a pause and think. Some cried. And I realised

how much women have been written about in terms of what the film maker Penelope Sheeris has dubbed, the 'Marilyn Monroe Damage' - that is primarily as men-pleasing angels, victims or problem personalities - rather than in terms of their body of work.' <sup>1</sup>

In the light of such work, I hope to examine what I think is an interesting development in the current media representation of the female singer songwriter in the British music press in that there appears to be a growing acknowledgment of the way in which the industry has attempted to stereotype the female singer songwriter in the manner outlined by O'Brien et al. This is potentially reassuring, from a feminist standpoint, given that it is taking place in a context that has been described by one British music journalist as, '...the most sexualised era in pop history'<sup>2</sup> and poses the question as to whether we are seeing a shift in the representation of the female singer songwriter, in which her work might precede her gender?

From the press that I have been researching, in the last few years, increasingly it seems that those album reviews that favour a particular singer songwriter, highlight in their assessment of that artist's work, her

ability/success in having broken the mould of what they explicitly describe as a 'typical' female singer songwriter. Rejection of 'type' might seem as progress but without any accompanying recognition that the stereotype they are rejecting has in fact been a construct created by the industry and the accompanying media in order to pigeon hole, market and contain women who write and perform their own music, it may conversely be nothing more than reinforcement of what Coates has described as, '....the invisible yet potent rules of power in rock to keep women firmly in their marginal place' ?<sup>3</sup>

What adds further interest, though, is the increasing opportunity in sections of the music press, for the contemporary artist to respond to her representation in that section of the media.

In considering current representation, then, there will be some assessment of these responses including those of the growing numbers of British independent female singer songwriters, in order to examine whether increasing levels of independent status has had any bearing on such developments.

### **Stereotype and formula**

In April of this year a small feature called On Music from the Arts Review of a British broadsheet, is an example of an open acknowledgement and implied criticism of

dominant industry practices. With reference to Martha Wainwright's recent debut release, the journalist writes,

*'If Wainwright escapes all the assumptions bound up with her surname, however, another trap awaits her: the iron rule whereby nine-tenths of solo females are accorded the dread description 'singer-songwriter', and thus boxed into a stereotype from which there is no escape. From Tori Amos, through Norah Jones and Beth Orton, and onto such left field talents as Laura Veirs, dozens of women have been subject to exactly that kind of treatment, and swiftly reduced to a cartoon melange of flowing skirts, pre-Raphaelite hairdos, wicker chairs, eternal comparisons with Joni Mitchell, and the recurrent and very sexist suggestion that they might be slightly nuts.'*<sup>4</sup>

Use of the phrase 'cartoon melange', which highlights and criticises restrictive techniques of categorisation might well be seen as an attempt to move away from a patriarchal status quo in the music press in which, 'a hegemonic masculine view tends to predominate... Women, who are not presented as artists in the way that men are or to be taken seriously as musicians, are often viewed as just puppets, moulded by record companies, rarely asked about playing their instruments and often presented in sexual terms rather than as craftswomen

serious about their work.’<sup>5</sup>

In the following extracts from a feature on the independent artist, Thea Gilmore, there is on the one hand, again an open acknowledgment of the industry’s tendency to define, judge and market a female artist by her sexuality above all else. Yet, at the same time, the article adheres to a formula, and uses language in such a way, that ultimately serves to endorse the very values it might purport to criticise.

The thrust of the article, based on an interview with the artist, is that she refuses to be controlled, moulded and sexualised by the industry and that she has turned down numerous offers by major labels on these principles. However, in the course of the article, the notion of Gilmore’s potential sexuality precedes and even supersedes any discussion of her work. Even here when the journalist herself is female, industry defined parameters are still very much in evidence in the formulaic approach familiar in many music press interviews with female artists. It opens with direct reference to the artist’s appearance and body, followed by some background on her career, only brief mention of the actual music, inappropriate comparisons with other female artists, and a closing emphasis on what the artist looks like rather than what she sounds like. It opens with,

*“Thea Gilmore is a head turner. Money can’t buy that sort of long, leggy figure, or those angular, Liv Tylerish Features.”*

As the article progresses it is clear that although the representation of Gilmore demonstrates an attempt at challenging the stereotype, that challenge is taking place in a context that is so bound by the industry’s values, that it seems impossible for it to move beyond the patriarchal status quo. On the one hand the article makes statements which would indicate a support for non-sexist or sexualised representation,

*“Of course - current thinking is that even the most attractive gonnabes need styling, preferably into something sexualised and Pop-Idol pliant. Except this one. Without being at all right on about it, Gilmore has no truck whatever with image. Yes, it’s easy to yap about integrity when you’re pretty anyway, but her stance makes her unique among rising pop turns.”*

And

*“Gilmore...is up against the most sexualised era in pop history. That perversely is why the industry fancies her.....She’s exactly the the long-term*

*prospect they are frantically seeking after reaping the world wind of Pop Idol short-termism."*

Yet these comments are juxtaposed and contradicted by the statements that follow,

*"...though half hidden in the corner of a King's Road lunch joint, she is still given the once-over by every passing male, including Xavier the waiter, who plops a bread roll on her plate with distinctly more zing than he did mine."*

Although the article makes some reference to her work, it closes, as it opened, with a reference to the physical, leaving the reader at the end of the piece, with a lasting image of her body rather than an enduring idea about her music,

*"As she rises from the table, all 5ft 11in of her, people openly stare."*

In other words the whole article focuses on the very thing that it is saying the artist is trying to avoid and limitations are imposed. Containment is then reinforced by comparisons to other artists who may have little in common with her musically,

*"Gilmore is from the Dido school of bookish middle-*

*class girls" and "Her only current equivalent, US singer Ani Di Franco, is so brown breadedly earnest that she puts off more people than she converts, whereas Gilmore beguiles."*<sup>6</sup>

This same pattern is repeated elsewhere,

*'She wonders if she's been too busy working on her albums...to transform herself into a sex kitten? "The trouble is you walk into a record shop and most of the pictures of women are these coquettish fuck-me poses. Just what is that about?"*

*So Ian Brown, the veteran label boss who has created Hungry Dog Records especially for Gilmore, hasn't tried to sex her up? "Ian Brown wouldn't be alive if he tried to do that to me.' Gilmore repostes with the kind of throaty growl that's far sexier than any photoshop-ed album sleeve.'*<sup>7</sup>

Both articles are clearly struggling here with wanting to acknowledge the artist's rejection of the major music industry as an independent and the desire to be judged on the strength of her music rather than what she looks like, but in both cases, interestingly both written by female journalists, they cannot quite let go of the security blanket of the artist's sexuality in their representation

of her. This approach might be given two readings. On the one hand, the text might be seen as having been influenced by the 'hegemonic masculine view' outlined by Bayton<sup>8</sup>, or by representing Gilmore's sexuality as somehow separate from major industry manipulation, it might also be read as supporting a challenge to patriarchal objectification. Either way, what is tempting to suggest is that the current representation of the female singer songwriter finds itself in a transitional space, whereby familiar techniques of categorisation are employed alongside some recognition or knowingness from sections of the press of their redundancy.

#### **'Oh stop moaning'<sup>9</sup>**

The almost vitriolic reception that some female singer songwriters have received in the past from the press when they have unapologetically used their personal experiences as subject matter for their songs, is something that many contemporary artists are acutely aware of. Alanis Morissette inspires particular vitriol. A review of a newly released acoustic version of *Jagged Little pill* was met with the following response,

*'...the opportunity Jagged Little Pill Acoustic offers to closely examine the album's lyrics is one that you take at your own risk...every song features at least one line so clumsy it make you want to chew your knuckles off.....There is something tiring*

*about the constant haranguing: of her ex-lovers, her parents, rivals, friends who fail to measure up, her childhood priest. «Is she perverted like me?» asks the album's most famous lyric, «would she go down on you in a theatre?» You start to wonder if the line stands out not because of its shock value...but because the image it conjures up involves Alanis Morissette having to shut up for five minutes.'*<sup>10</sup>

This may go some way to explaining why when speaking to many female singer songwriters, they are always at pains to stress that they are not a 'typical' female singer songwriter. In the Gilmore interview cited above she also felt the need to stress, "...I don't write love songs."<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that an artist of either gender wanting to explore issues, themes, characters outside of this most widely written about human emotion is not to be applauded, but what it does indicate is the contemporary artist's awareness of the meanings mediated in the media of the female singer songwriter who explores what O'Brien refers to as the 'intensely personal' in her work.

In the publicity for a gig at the Cork Opera House in southern Ireland in May of this year, Gilmore's work was described in the following way, ' Her last album *Avalanche* was an exploration of contemporary issues

notably lacking the 'naval gazing' territory occupied by the singer songwriter stereotype.' <sup>12</sup>

This information will not have come from the marketing department of the Cork Opera House having studiously analysed the lyric content on the album inserts, it will have come in the press pack from her label. The contemporary artist, especially the independent artist, knows that the press has to be fed maximum information if they are to avoid being dismissed as second rate by virtue of being seen to occupy such 'naval gazing territory'.

Gemma Hayes, an Irish singer songwriter who was tipped in a feature that appeared in October 2003, as one of '50 Women To Watch in 2004', also voices this awareness of how she is likely to be represented,

*'People have this preconception that a female in the music industry is either going to be a sex kitten, or sing other people's songs, or if they do write their own music, that it's always going to be about some boy. It is stamped on women's heads that they have nothing to offer except how they look, or songs about being dumped.'* <sup>13</sup>

Ironically, in an interview for The Fly Magazine the previous year, following her nomination for the Mercury

prize, what she had to offer based on how she looked was the overriding focus of the feature rather than on the music that won her the nomination,

*'There's something about Gemma Hayes. A quality which makes it impossible not to fall immediately, deeply in love with her. It's not about physical beauty (though she is undeniably stunning). Nor is it the perfect-as-a-rose-petal, honeysoaked exquisiteness of her voice....It's just...something.'* <sup>14</sup>

Even though Hayes was at pains to point out in the course of the interview: "On the day of the Mercury nominations, one of the first things I got asked when I went...'so do you think you're just the token female songwriter? I just went Jesus! Is David Bowie the token male songwriter? Are you going to ask him that? No, you're not, you're going to ask me because I'm fucking female', <sup>15</sup> which can be seen as a positive in that these comments were included in the feature. They were, however, as with the Gilmore interview, contained within a structure that ensured that the journalist's ending comments determined that the artist's work came very definitely second place to what she looked like, 'I, for one am in love.' <sup>16</sup>

Lucy O'Brien reminded us in 1995 that women have turned and excelled at singer songwriting because



of the accessibility of the form.<sup>17</sup> In the last ten years, increasing numbers of female singer songwriters have turned to independence, partly because of the accessibility of technology but significantly I would suggest because of what they have seen happen to the women that came before them. The room of one's own has become a studio of one's own but they still perceive the world outside as being fraught with difficulties.

Kathryn Williams, perhaps one of the most prominent independent British female artists, first came to media attention when her second album *Little Black Number*, released on her own label, Caw Records, was nominated for the Mercury Prize in 2000. Following her success she worked in conjunction with a major to release the next two albums. Interestingly, though, her most recent release, *Over Fly Over*, has seen her return to her own label to re-claim complete independent status after a fall out with the major she had signed to.

Williams has been lauded by the British music press and deservedly so. Even NME, the unapologetic boys locker room of the music press, (in whose music awards this year, of the 23 categories a British female artist was nominated in only one: World's Sexiest Woman) have focused on her songwriting craft and her singing voice.<sup>18</sup> What still occurs, however, and which Williams is fully aware of and has commented on,<sup>19</sup> is the use

of the comparison with other artists in which the female singer songwriter, in particular, is portrayed as taking part in some kind of musical catfight for the delectation and ultimate manipulation of the industry. Little wonder that she has retreated back to her own label,

*'Whilst many female songwriters are relying on their 'quirkiness' in order to get noticed, Williams proves that complex song craftsmanship and poignant vocals win out in the end.'*<sup>20</sup>

### **New spaces, familiar faces**

In what has been dubbed in the last ten years or so the 'new acoustic movement', the contemporary female singer songwriter inhabits a space, along with the network of new acoustic venues in the UK, between the worlds of indie, rock, pop and folk and in that space she has inherited the restrictive categorisations that have plagued women working on *those* rock stages as well as the restrictions imposed by the latter folk image. Recent comments from Louise Wener (ex front woman of 90s indie rock band *Sleeper*) therefore bare some relevance here,

*'The truth is, the world of indie rock was then, and still is, a doggedly macho environment, notoriously unforgiving of female interlopers. It's rare for women to be acclaimed as musical*

*collaborators and difficult for them to co-exist as part of a band. Inevitably they will be singled out and presented as solo artists by proxy. When I was lead singer of Sleeper, I was regularly pressed into doing interviews without my male bandmates and rarely asked questions about making music. When I sang explicitly sexual lyrics I was accused of courting attention or merely being sordid. It was the classic double standard...My experience was not unusual among my female contemporaries. Journalists muttered that their boyfriends wrote their songs. Marketing executives pressured them to pose for men's magazines. The industry's reaction was to neuter and sanitise them rather than to celebrate them.'*<sup>21</sup>

Turn the clock forward ten years and Wener's words resonate into the present day, demonstrated in a review of the band Rilo Kiley that appeared last month,

*'From Sleeper to Echobelly to Drugstore, the formula of charismatic frontwoman taking attention away from the essentially pretty prosaic indie guitar rock on offer was a real winner... Rilo Kiley, a band in which you'll take notice of the fairly pleasant emoting of Jenny Lewis rather than the well-practised hackwork delivered by her anonymous thirtysomethng schleppers....the*

*band's third album has been applauded for its great feistiness...but this in the main sounds like Sheryl Crow with a Strokes record, only arguably not as good.'*<sup>22</sup>

It would seem then that despite the steps women have and are taking to be more in control of their careers and their representation when they place themselves and their work in the public arena, the patriarchal ideologies that form the backbone to the industry contexts in which they must operate, even on the sidelines as an independent, have not changed. If the British music press is a representation of what is happening in the industry then the overwhelming evidence is, that if anything, gendered notions of what define men and women as creators and performers of popular music seem to be constantly reinforced.

### **Male as creator**

In a feature in April of this year, entitled, *The Ten Great Muses*,<sup>23</sup> the familiar roles of the male as creator, the female as nurterer were presented. Of the top ten musicians and their muses cited, the number one slot was filled by Chris Martin from Coldplay and his wife and muse, Gwyneth Paltrow. Not only is the notion of a similar feature being run the other way round highly unlikely but the meanings mediated here are quite clear. When a male artist is inspired by his 'muse' to write about the nature of love, an example of the 'intensely personal', he

is applauded. If a female artist writes in this way, she runs the risk of being dismissed as creating inferior art, which brings to mind O'Brien's observations when she said,

*'Although the word 'genius' has been used unreservedly to describe male artists such as Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen, women have turned out consistent quality writing in far greater quantity than male solo singer songwriters... within rock music male singer/songwriters are the revered canon of (nearly) Dead White Males whereas women, despite their prodigious output, are rarely granted that status.'* <sup>24</sup>

The accompanying text not only acknowledged but accepted and celebrated the stereotype,

'The expected predominance of women is testimony to the caring nature of the fairer sex. Don't underestimate the importance of the selfless collaborator who chooses to nurture their other half.' Again this was written by a female journalist. What does this say about the pressures of working in the music media to conform to patriarchal values?

### **Sexuality First**

Annie Lennox, who herself used 'masquerade and mystery' <sup>25</sup> to confront head on her own representation during the 80s, was recently interviewed in the run up

to the Live 8 concerts and her comments highlight how women in popular music are still overwhelmingly judged on their sexuality,

*'...the consensus is that you whore it. That's what it looks like to me. You have to become a sex object. I'm all for erotica, I love it, but the values I see on pop videos are like soft porn.....I despair of the women I see in music. I wouldn't even call it shallow - the values are ignorant, materialistic. I don't think we've gone forwards at all. In fact, I think we've gone backwards.'* <sup>26</sup>

### **Comparison as containment**

Suzanne Vega said in the 1980s, "The media has insisted on putting women together....We have to stop being defined in terms of each other." <sup>27</sup> Ani di Franco said in the early 90s that she got compared to, 'whatever girl's hot this year.' <sup>28</sup> In 2005, the attempt to contain through the comparison is still very much alive and the current benchmarks are Dido, Katie Melua, Norah Jones and still in there Joni Mitchell.

And what of those artists who are being held up as representing all women artists? In a recent review of a live performance, Dido was described as being, '...just too nice, too unassuming to command your attention.' <sup>29</sup> Does this mean that the considerable number of female

singer songwriters in 2004 and 2005 who have been compared in the British music press to Dido are also just too nice, too unassuming to command your attention?

And what happens when women do command attention? In the world of rock 'the rebel fantasy of living on the edge'<sup>30</sup> only applies to men. The press's love affair with ex-Libertines and now Babyshambles frontman, Pete Doherty, (even before his relationship with supermodel Kate Moss) is the most recent example of a familiar scenario described by Reynolds and Press in which, 'The male artist who plays with madness...is impressive, a voyager into the dark underworld or outer worlds of consciousness; female artists who appear to put their sanity in jeopardy, on the other hand run the risk of being dismissed as merely mad.'<sup>31</sup>

In a special listings feature for last year's Glastonbury Festival, Carina Round was described in the following terms,

*'If PJ Harvey on the Pyramid Stage isn't enough, here's a younger, arguably more disturbed version.'*<sup>32</sup>

Nehring reminds us that anger is an emotion only acceptable in men.<sup>33</sup> Ten years ago such emotions displayed by women in rock were contained under the

'angry young woman' label. In recent reviews even displays of strength or muscularity in the work of female artists have been contained by being described as 'feisty'. This description doggedly pursues KT Tunstall, a singer songwriter of current prominence in the UK who has admitted that the music she listens to is very different to the music she creates as if she has recognised that only a *little* feistiness is acceptable,

*"I'll never go home and listen to that kind of thing that would sit next to my record in the shop....I'll listen to Can or Smog, and I love subversive, experimental music but that's not my own style."*

34

Louise Wener makes a similar observation,

*"...it doesn't matter what style of music women choose to make, only that they do it on their own terms. I hope they are but it was interesting to hear Katie Tunstall say in a recent interview that the music she makes is not necessarily the music she wants to listen to."*<sup>35</sup>

### **In the minority**

Finally what clearly emerges is that in the last 2 - 3 years, despite the claims from a number of reviews in which the 'marketplace' has been described as 'crowded' because

there has been more than one woman attempting to sell her craft rather than her body, women in popular music are still in the minority. As part of a feature based on live interviews of artists performing at last year's Glastonbury festival, Alison Goldfrapp's reaction to being told that she was the first woman to be interviewed was,

*"Really! They've all been blokes? Bloody typical! That's British rock for you. Britain is obsessed with boy-guitar bands.' she says rolling a fag, 'and that means things get overlooked sometimes, and y'know...If you're female and you sing there's this idea that you don't have anything to do with the running and working of it, that you just stand there and sing, and then you knit while someone else is doing the work,'" 36*

In the line up for this year's festival, on the main Pyramid stage, of the 28 acts, there were two female artists, Kelis and Lauren Hill. On the Other stage, there were again two, KT Turnstall and Martha Wainwright, on the John Peel stage there was the singer songwriter Jem, "the trip-pop Dido", <sup>37</sup> '...feisty, Sri Lankan rapper..', MIA, and the female fronted indie rock band, Rilo Kiley. On the Acoustic Stage, the one place where you would expect the so called 'crowded marketplace' to be most fully represented, there were again two female artists, Martha Wainwright again and Tori Amos. <sup>38</sup>. At the

Live 8 concert in London, although it was more equally weighted, of the 17 main acts on the stage in Hyde Park, 4 were women, Dido, Madonna, Annie Lennox and Miss Dynamite.<sup>39</sup>

## Conclusion

Despite the protestations from one Radio 2 producer with whom I had a conversation last year in which he bemoaned the influx of cds from female singer songwriters and begged, where are all the boys, 'the whole rock 'n' roll world remains overwhelmingly male', <sup>40</sup> and the only term that exists to describe a woman who writes and performs her own work has become a dirty word so much so that the young women that I speak to are as reluctant to call themselves a female singer songwriter as they are to call themselves a feminist,

*'Now is not a great time to be British, a woman and a pop star. Female Brit purveyors of popular music are required to fill one of three moulds to secure themselves any kind of success. They can either: doll themselves up in seven shades of slapper, get themselves some Cathy Dennis songs...or they can they doll themselves up in seven shades of slapper, affiliate their mediocrity vocals and their well bronzed abs to a faceless DJ ..or- if they're brunette, take themselves a touch seriously musically and are determined to piss*

*me, personally off - they can acquire an acoustic guitar, some whimsy, some mindless rhetoric as lyrics and launch themselves as the latest spawn of Dido/Melua/Norah Jones.*'<sup>41</sup>

Bayton wrote in 1998, '...women are rarely discussed as musicians in their own right...They are not expected to be able to play an instrument and if they do, it is not mentioned.'<sup>42</sup> Even less so are they expected, in 2005, to run their own studios and their own labels and promote their own work manipulating industry practices to control, as much as they can, their representation when placing the work and themselves in the public arena, knowing that any control ends once the press pack arrives on the desk of the reviews editor. It is a sobering thought, therefore, that as Nehring suggests, "The best feminist artists are full aware at all times that they are parodying conventions of female representation and the process by which various media propagate them, whether the audience gets the joke, of course, is always a sickening point.'<sup>43</sup>

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*'What I disliked about those comparisons is that people don't seem to think that there is room for more than two or three female artists at any one time. It's almost as if they're trying to create a rivalry between the two of us, but musically we're*

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## Regulate? Or, Admit?: An investigation of Street Music early modern Japan

Aki Yamasaki

Since 1639 to 1853, Japan had been avoided to have any contact to Western country. When the age of 'samurai' ended, new government 'Meiji' introduced Western culture rapidly.

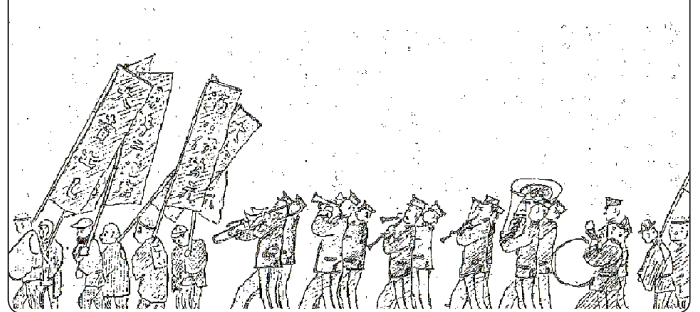
By Edo period(1637-1865),there were many musicians on the street. However, there are little musicians in recent days. Even we compared with the Western country, there are very few people who are performing music on the road now. How the musician's environment changed from the Edo period to the present?

This paper explores about how Japanese street musicians did change by Westernization. Then, it investigates what Japanese government thought about music.

### 1. Introduction

In 1853, Western culture came into Japan. Before then, Japanese government in those days had broken with Westerns for a fear of invasion. However, the U.S. navy Perry took the fleet, and demanded Japan to open the country. Consequently, the government at the time Tokugawa shogunate decided to finish the national isolation over 200 years, and opened a country to foreigner. At the time of the opening country, Western

Picture 1: Jinta (Hosokawa 1989-1990)



culture was very advanced for Japan. In order to give up a national isolation policy and to prevent colonization, the Meiji government aimed at catching up with West European countries and passing as soon as possible. Introduction of Western music was immediately performed at the army after the opening a country. The army which formed the Western style was founded for national defense introduced a march into training. For Japanese, that was a completely new experience marching with a regular rhythm. The performance technique of the brass imported at that time was soon circulated to the private sector, and produced a new music form.

### 2. The history of street musician in Japan

So, how did the musician change for Western culture go into Japanese society? Before Meiji era, the people who was called "Kadotsuke" was a typical street musician till

Meiji era. They performed in front of the gate of houses, and had received remuneration. Since it was connected with private Shinto-and-Buddhist, Kadotsuke has been supported by people as a thankful thing. Music consisted of a samisen and vocal. It was quite traditional style. During Edo period, there were four classes in Japan called samurai, peasant, engineer, and merchant. The most of musicians were not able to belong with any of them. They were outcasts.

When the time becomes Meiji era and Western culture enters, a musician's figure will change in this way. The musician who called Jinta occurred. Jinta originated in the brass band which administration started. It was the Western music which JINTA performed. However it was a Japanese style Western music, consisting mainly of melody and a rhythm. It can be said that was accepted just because people had knowledge to some extent to Western music by the school of the musical education. Kadotsuke put traditional cloths on and play samisens .On the other hand, Jinta put Western cloth like a military uniforms and play brasses. Since Meiji Era restricted extremely, neither local movement of people nor change of an occupation like the Edo period, it can limit neither a class nor a hometown about these musicians. In addition, since they were advertising business, remuneration had been obtained from the client. Therefore, it is able to say that they did not sell the performance as "art" to the audience.



**Picture 2 (Above Top): Ching Dong**

**Picture 3 (Above): Street Musician in recent Osaka**

### 3 Considerations

Why did the traditional style go out of fashion , and why did the thing of the Western style remain? I explore from "social recognition to a musician", and "musical positioning in society."

First, it is about the point of "social recognition of a statesman." As for Japan, by the Edo period, law was

set up to each class. For this reason, it did not become a problem whatever it might carry out, when not offensive to the eye to the person above the status which belongs. The life of people was out of concern for the statesman. However by the opening country, the interchange between the Western countries has increased. It brought Japanese statesman to realize the existence of a foreign country and men who belongs different class were also same Japanese. The samurai who went out for inspection in the Netherlands has left record that it was shameful as the same Japanese the spectacle in which their attendants rolled up kimono to the hips and walks has invited laughter of people. In once Japan, it was a popular custom to become half-nakedness in the road, in order to give priority to the ease of moving. It prohibited by Meiji government the reason that brings uncivilized image from Western countries.

In respect that the images of inferior, the musicians who earn daily income on the road were not reflected in a statesman's eyes desirable, either. The occupation musician without regards to the economic activity for making a country rich is because it was regarded as the mere beggar. Therefore, the style of a traditional performance on the street was treated as a symbol of a thing "inferior" and "barbarous", and has been driven into discontinuance of business. Jinta which happened after Meiji era is recognized from society rather than the musician as an exaggerator who performs. It was

different from a governmental "street performance = beggar" image, because they didn't get money from the audience of a street directly. However, since it was activity on the road seemed goes back and forth to Westerner, the Meiji government prepared the detailed regulation to street musician about clothes or the style of advertisement. For surviving, a player on the street makes themselves to Westernized.

The next is about "positioning of the music in society." As I mentioned previously, people who were performing on the street were removed from social structure. It means that they were outside the existence which was not regarded as outsiders of law.

Many visually impaired persons were contained in the musician on the street by the Edo period. They were accepted to perform on the street and were equipped with sufficient environment for living on their own such as being exempted from a tax. However, when maintenance of the social order by Tokugawa shogunate becomes difficult and the movement toward government demolition prospers, some antigovernment elements will put the body on such an occupation, and it will begin to hide out in a city. This pattern continued to Meiji era. Meiji government considered peoples who engaged in secondhand store and entertaining was dangerous. Because it was possible to lurk people who wants to destroy the government. For this reason, the



government abolishes a class system so that law may be adapted also for people who were outside of law. In this way, police power came to attain to all that live in Japan.

To the reason regarded as an entertainer being dangerous, the statesmen's consciousness of music was also related. Till the Edo period the culture formed for each class. The music which was listened to, also completely differs from the social classes. The statesman had the image which was inferior to other art at music. For this reason, it was considered that the sound in which a Kadotsuke plucks a samisen in front of a house was a very inferior thing. It seems that it is recognized as that in which any traditional music was inferior for the statesmen who tried to Westernize rapidly in respect of culture.

#### 4 Conclusions

As mentioned above, I considered about change of the street musician by Westernization. For statesmen, the street music was inferior. For this reason, the government was considered that on the street is a hotbed of criminal, and put them under management. It can be concluded, the Japanese government of those days tried to eliminate the culture of his country and leave Western culture. However, even the thing contains a Western element is severely controlled from a rise of the rebel campaign at the beginning of the 1900s.

Printing media, such as a newspaper and a poster, increased their needs more than JINTA. Moreover, it shifted to orchestra accompaniment of a silent movie also as musicians' place of work.

At last, I talk to Japanese street music scene after that. This is the present street musician's photograph. This is called Ching Dong. Now, it is regarded as one of the traditional performing. The Ching Dong is also advertisement business. It is supposed that those who was a candy seller began in 1845 which are the last stage of Edo period. They walked town by pair, with the flag in which the brand name and described about the brand by humor. The Ching Dong takes in the musicians who lost the job by talkie movie. By taking the form of JINTA, Ching Dong became the musical band. It seldom had the Ching Dong and JINTA performs sings a song like Kadotsuke. The Ching Dong is replaced with a TV commercial after the WWII, and makes a number decrease sharply. However, it will enter in the 1990s and revives gradually.

Moreover, the young man who stands on a street, gaining not only Ching Don but one guitar has been conspicuous since the second half of the 1990s. While it tends to be regarded as occupation of a road and the police is going to control them, a street musician contest is called and there is also a case which supports them as a part of town revitalization.

Like New York City, the government is gave a license



to a street musician. I consider that it is a sign of that the statesman accepts a street musician's activity. That is, a street is public space for Western countries. The street musician is controlled in Japan. It is expression of that the Japanese government considers on the street to be the place where a crime happens. The street in Japan does not become precocious although it is public space.

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## Appendix: Chronology

1639 Started a policy of seclusion

1845 A candy seller Amekatsu (飴勝) started chin-don

1853 American navy Calbraith Perry asked for quitting seclusion

1855 Japanese navy learned the army music from Dutch at Nagasaki

(1861 The Civil War)

1867 Tokugawa shogunate had closed.

1868 Formed Meiji Government

1871 Abolished a social class.

1872 Reformed the educational system. The law about behavior on the road has started

1873 Permitted the teaching of Christ.

1884 Started the lesson of ball room dancing at Rokumeikan(first ball room in Japan)

1886 Prohibited street performer

1887 Established Tokyo Music School

1894 The Sino-Japanese War(~1895) Starting Jinta?

1902 Started the control to Ching-Dong

1904 The Russian-Japanese War (~05)