Politics, gender and popular music in the 1960s:

'Queens of the Mods-singing and styling in Swinging Britain'. New roles emerged for female solo singers in the 1960s. Mod went from male elite to female street.
This paper re-views Dusty Springfield, Sandie Shaw, Lulu and Cilla Black as popularisers of street style. It looks at how mod style was marketed by women, through women and to women

? **Jobs for the Girls. Singers and Stylists.**

New roles emerged for female solo singers in Britain in the early to mid sixties. They were not band vocalists and not old-style family entertainers in the established sense. Alma Cogan epitomised the female singing star of 1950s television in her Dior-derived boned-bodice, nipped waist, full skirts covered in beads, sequins and/or feathers; she actually looked *older* back then than when she appeared on '*Ready Steady Go*' several years *later*. Cogan certainly attempted to make a televisual statement and her *gowns*, for gowns they were rather than simply dresses, are remembered; but she was working and dressing within the existing, grown-up, Paris-inspired fashion framework.

Helen Shapiro's selling point had been the contrast of her deep voice with her school age, in a similar way to Brenda Lee. Both were certainly 'girl singers' but their age was publicised for its own sake. And both were dressed as grown-ups in those stiff, tiny-waisted full-skirted frocks, just one step away from the Cogan gowns.

Dusty, Sandie, Cilla and Lulu were of a new generation: the 'girl' singers whose image – and a very powerful image at that-was the issue. Even Lulu at her bounciest was considered 'ballsy' rather than cute. None of them could be described as coy. That they were called "girl singers" was symptomatic of the recognised importance by the early sixties of the youth market as an economic force, both male and female. But also of a specific phenomenon in the entertainment industry. 'Girl' emphasised gender as much as age. These British female singers sang to their own age group-and looked like them. Or rather made their audience want to emulate *their* style. Style was as much their communication medium as song. They provided their young audiences with visual stylistic role models. Dusty Springfield may have been the

oldest in years and experience; but it was this experience, particularly of black music and black style which made her literally the first among equals here.

In terms of age perceptions, Dusty, Sandie, Cilla and Lulu provide the transition between the 'womanliness' of the singers of the preceding era and the subsequent evolution from fifties female vocalist into baby doll danger into the dolly bird vapidity which followed. Visually the subsequent sixties dolly bird borrowed from all four.

The blonde hair and dark smudgy long-lashed eyes came from Dusty; the cheekbones, legs and swinging shining hair from Sandie; the gawkiness and alleged quirkiness (or 'kinkiness' in sixties parlance) and cheekiness from Cilla; and the big eyes, bounce and extreme youth from Lulu. But put them all together and, according to George Melly, they became one stereotype: "All had long clean hair, preferably blonde, interchangeable pretty faces, interchangeable long legs. They represented girls as objects to an extraordinary degree. They produced a kind of generalized, rather half-hearted lust triggered off by their ever-shortening mini-skirts." (Melly, 1989, p.172)

Later on in 'Revolt Into Style' Melly described photographer David Bailey as "the Pygmalion of the walking-talking dolly" (Melly, 1989, p.160). While I have described Brian Epstein as 'styling' Cilla he was keen to point out that her personality and voice were already fully formed. She, like her three contemporaries discussed here, was not a 'dolly' with all its implications of inanimate toy or puppet which needed teaching to walk and talk.

Dusty, Sandie, Cilla and Lulu all possessed a strength of personality as performers which translated into a highly televisual strength. All four made both a visual and musical statement. "The new singers also presented a more sophisticated image to their audience – grown-up yet hip, giving the impression of independence, unlike the "little girl" dependence of the girl groups."(Gaar, 1993, p.56)

Gillian Gaar wrote about girl singers replacing girl groups in the American charts, the lead coming from England.(Gaar, 1993, p.56) While the British Invasion of the US was led in 1964 by the Beatles, Gillian Gaar's comment means that the female solo singers, the 'girl singers' were also having an influence Stateside.

During the pop period of 1963-6 a number of women did congregate in the charts-not unusual now or since but notable in a period otherwise dominated by male singers and groups. Female fans obviously wanted to watch and listen to the boys but at this time there was clearly also a major audience for the girl performers.

There was a prominence of women in management and production as well as performance. Vicki Wickham was the producer of *Ready Steady Go*. Sandie Shaw was managed by Eve Taylor, Lulu by Marian Massey, both of whom were considered formidable. While it is said that Brian Epstein used his 'feminine side' in his management of Cilla Black. It should be noted that pop star management was in its infancy compared to now with Colonel Parker as hardly the best example to follow, his own style acknowledged to be that of a fairground hustler.

Showbiz management was essentially the basis in England, so this would inevitably be the background for any women in this field. How much these women helped create the vital images of their clients it is difficult to say. It is certainly acknowledged that Dusty Springfield was her own creation and that Brian Epstein took a keen interest in the styling of his clients, male and female.

While all these managers promoted their clients' careers in terms of music, performance, appearances, tours and publicity, all four had an innate ability to impact on the small screen. In this, considering the discussions of morality, youth and what would become known as 'the permissive society', these four fell into neither the good or bad girl stereotypes prevalent on stage and screen at the time. Were the British 'girls' simply too cool, too stylish to be good or bad reflecting the amorality of Swinging London mod-ernism? They all had a certain *style* of class in the supposed classless society. Could female management have influenced this? Were they all presenting a package fusing image, dress, gesture and song? Did they use their songs as vehicles for their visual style? They may have ostensibly been selling records –and sell they did- but they sold a whole lot more besides.
In terms of 'jobs for the girls' had they indeed created a 'third way' in terms of career potential as noted by George Melly at the time.

"For singers like Sandy(sic) Shaw, Lulu and in particular Cilla Black, pop is the most convenient route into show business proper now that the music-halls have gone; but what has changed in the last few years is that there is now a choice. Whereas before there were only two alternatives: show business or obscurity, there is now a third.

Given sufficient determination and talent of the right kind it's possible to develop within pop." (Melly,1989,p.51)

Rise of the new role for the solo singer explicitly linked with the rise of British female fashion designers

"Most young women in this country saw the UK acts (Supremes, Ronettes, Lesley Gore, Aretha Franklin, Dionne Warwicke (sic)) alongside the home products (Lulu, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw, Dusty Springfield, Marianne Faithfull) on the weekly pop TV show, *Ready Steady Go! (READY STEADY GO)* and on package tours. These women, along with Mary Quant, transformed the wardrobes of British girls.Satin and tulle were discarded in favour of the new style-shockingly casual, definitely not dressed-up in the accepted meaning of the words." (Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.24)

The female fashion designers who came to prominence at the same time as Dusty, Sandie, Cilla and Lulu were again young, similar in both age and lifestyle to the people for whom they designed. The aim was fashion that was instant, accessible, immediate. There were certainly historic precedents for female fashion designers emphasising youth. Coco Chanel is the obvious example, popularising the short skirt and short hair in the nineteen-twenties. Coincidentally, the twenties was the first decade this century when youth, stylised dancing, and popular music were high profile, increasingly through the new mass entertainment medium, the cinema. Indeed, the sixties began with a twenties revival in fashion culminating in the American TV series 'The Roaring Twenties' showing in Britain at the start of the decade. Chanel herself was still in business and Britain's Wallis shops were selling their high street version of her famous suit at this time.

Yet Mary Quant's importance cannot be overlooked. She opened her Chelsea boutique Bazaar as early as 1955 and, according to Melly "Mary Quant's genius was to stylize the clothes of the poor but imaginative art students…Quant's clothes received an extraordinary amount of publicity. She was seen and rightly as a concrete expression of something new. The Chelsea Set carried on in the classic smart upper-class way reminiscent of the 'Bright Young Things' of the 20s."(Melly, 1989,pp163-4).

So 'girls' as opposed to 'women' meaning older females became fashion designers. The term 'girl' in the 1960s was used in a positive way of distinguishing the female

teenager from her male counterpart. The British male youth already had a series of style labels: Ted, Rocker, Mod.

Mary Quant was a female who went into fashion because she could not buy clothes for someone of her own and her friends' age. Before Quant, with the brief exception of the 1920s. fashion took youth, particularly young females, directly from child into grown-up meaning responsible adult. The only teenage clothes in Britain were, significantly, casual styles imported from the US. However, it is worth noting the impact of Quant's visit to the US with her models in 1965. "Mary Quant made a fortune there the same year when she took 30 outfits on a whistle-stop tour of 12 cities in 14 days, the models showing the clothes to a non-stop dance routine and pop music.(Howell, 1977,p.257)

1962-5 can be considered the years of cool. Quant wanted to create clothes which celebrated youth and were exciting. So too did the other young female designers, among them Barbara Hulanicki's Biba label and boutiques, Jean Muir's Jane and Jane label, Tuffin and Foale, Kiki Byrne, Laura Ashley, all in London; Emanuelle Khanh in Paris and Betsey Johnson in New York.

With hindsight feminist writers have questioned how truly liberating these clothes were. After all, the baby, doll and child-like imagery of fashion immediately post 1965 is now regarded as having infantilist/paedophile connotations. But freedom to enjoy being young in a fashion sense was certainly the *intention.* The *intention* of the designers of these clothes was independence, freedom (of movement), freedom from tiny waists, stockings and suspenders, structured (upholstered) bras, restrictive tailoring, spindly heels. Fashion can anticipate wider social trends and in this sense, the liberating intentions of the sixties female designers, can be seen as anticipating the Womens Liberation movement highlighted by the 1970 publication of Germaine Greer's 'The Female Eunuch'.

Democratisation of fashion.

Mary Quant commenting on Andre Courreges' claim to have 'invented the mini skirt stated: "It wasn't me or Courreges who invented the miniskirt anyway-*it was the girls in the street who did it."* Like Quant, Yves St. Laurent, Dior's successor who had then opened his own couture house, began using Paris street inspiration for his 'Left Bank' beatnik-inspired looks. Indeed, when he opened the first of his ready-to-wear

boutiques which he called 'Rive Gauche' meaning Left Bank, intended these shops "to combine the fun of Biba with his own brand of bohemian glamour." (Rawsthorn, 1996, p.86).

Barbara Hulanicki opened her first Biba boutique in 1964, selling whole accessorised outfits for the cost of one Bazaar dress. Quant herself also went wholesale that year with her Ginger Group range to make her designs more widely available.
This was very much fashion that 'bubbled up' from street level as opposed to the 'trickle down' nature of fashion from Paris couture originals to British high street copies which was the established way of buying fashion after World War II. Designers like Quant and Biba operated at street level in terms of seeing their customers at first hand. Their age attuned them to what those customers wanted, as well as picking up ideas originated by the customers themselves, like Quant's fellow art students. So they were able to provide a form of 'classless' and immediately available fashion not seen before.

Mod goes from male elite to female street.

The males who regarded themselves as the true Mods, meaning Modernists, were narcissistic, purist, and, wiithout realising it, the natural descendents of Beau Brummel in their style obsessions. They had their suits made by bespoke tailores, ironically following on from the Teds with their made-to-measure drape jackets. They paid meticulous attention to detail, adopting what they considered the coolness of. Italian male dressing at a time when the British were just beginning to go to the Mediterranean for holidays.

Mod male dress spoke to other Mod males. This was a street elite, the sophisticated, detached version of the male gang. Mod males distinguished themselves by demonstration, through their dress, of their affluence – bespoke suits cost money – and their taste. They were self-regarding with a working-class male vanity that smacked of arrogance. Their was an interior style with clubs as their habitat, dance as the vehicle for parading their style. The Mods' women were simply drab appendages, their uniform comprising, at various times, mid-calf skirts, Hush Puppy shoes, long dark blue nylon raincoats and female versions of the sweaters the males wore in when they were in casual mode. Mod women were anything but modernist compared to their male counterparts.

The Mod males who considered themselves the true Mods hated the appropriation and commercialisation of their own private style by vehicles like *Ready Steady Go*. When Mod style went out of the clubs and on to the beaches in 1964, for the Mod purists their style had died.

Yet 1964, the year Mod died for the males, was in hindsight a phenomenal year for the modern style of thte sixties. It was the year Lulu began her career, and saw chart toppers for Sandie and Cilla. Painter Bridget Riley's Op Art show-black/white prints were used for fashion garments, to the artist's own disgust admittedly. The first Habitat store opened, reflecting home style for the young who were moving out of the parental home and into their own flats. Biba opened her first boutique, selling fashion to a pop music soundtrack and Courreges staged his celebrated space age collection, used pop music as catwalk soundtrack; a first in Paris but following the earlier example of Quant in London. In fact Quant happily declared her links with pop music. As Queen magazine stated "…any girl who wants to get herself noticed by the boys in the limelight like the Rolling Stones had better get herself the super aid of that phenomenal stealer of limelight Mary Quant" (Steele, 1997,p.56) In that same year the Ronettes, black wigs and black eyeliner, toured with the Stones: girls screamed at the Stones, boys at the Ronettes.

Even just one year later, in 'The Year Book 1965- a record of the events, developments, and personalities of 1964' (Editor: Robert H. Hill,The Grolier Society Limited, 1965) Betty Hale, Assistant Editor of "Fabulous" entitled her contribution "New Fashions for-and by-the Young". According to Hale (ed. Hill, 1965, p.189) "The mark of fashion in 1964 was made by a handful of young new-wave designers…"With it" young ladies, especially pop-singer Cilla Black, helped to spread each new trend which the originators dreamed up."

Television as catwalk.

Ready Steady Go was *the* fashion show.

Vicki Wickham, producer and programmer for*Ready Steady Go*, remembered Patti LaBelle and the Blue Belles coming to the show "Luckily, when the girls came to *Ready Steady Go*, they'd all been to Biba's that day, and looked so good in their new clothes that we said "Don't change, *please!" "*(Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.25) This anecdote contains all the ingredients for this potent mix of music, style, credibility, boutique fashion and the importance of *Ready Steady Go*. The show was pioneering in its featuring of black American girl groups, the girl groups cited by the Beatles as

inspiration. Patti and the Blue Belles had gone to Biba because it was the hot London place to shop for the kind of clothes they liked. They liked and they bought –for their own offstage dressing-and Vicki ensured that that was how they appeared onscreen.

Valerie Steele, an eminent American fashion historian writing in the second half of the 1990s said "Back in the 1960s designers all over London and even in Paris hoped their clothes would be worn by television hostess Cathy McGowan, whose program (sic) *Ready Steady Go* was as much a weekly fashion show as a venue for music." (Steele,1997,p.59) Long before the term 'product placement' came into general usage this is precisely what was happening with pop, fashion and television. Fashion that originated in London boutiques and on London streets was promoted nationwide on Friday evenings. "As the 1960s progressed, street fashion was led *from* the stage. The lucrative marriage between the rag trade and the pop industry was celebrated on *Ready Steady Go,…"* (Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.26)

'*Ready Steady Go*' was timed to be part of the Friday going-out ritual (i.e. preparation) ' The Weekend Starts Here' was its catchphrase *and its leitmotif.* But ' '*Ready Steady Go*' was not just for Friday nights out. It was also preparation for the Saturday clothes and cosmetic shopping ritual. Both Mary Quant and Biba designed accessories, underwear and cosmetics so that the *'Ready Steady Go'* audience could buy the whole look 'as seen on TV'. The carrier bag became the tote bag, as important for its pattern as its name. This was the carrier bag as young status symbol-but status meant something new. Not how much you spent, but how much fun you had doing it.

Television was, in the sixties an all-pervading youth medium. Television, *'Ready Steady Go'* and therefore fashion, male and female, was in everyone's front room. TV was an immediate medium. It put fashion literally 'in your face' to use a 90s US phrase . Of course the word 'Face' was appropriated as a term of admiration by the male mods. Image was vitally important to the 60s, hence the celebrity achieved by the image-makers such as photographers David Bailey and the late Terence Donovan. Photography was combined with Pop Art motifs like the heart and the target in the celebrated *'Ready Steady Go'* credits.

The small screen meant intense emphasis on faces, effectively projecting portraits of the performers –heads, shoulders, upper body. The places where all the movement took place in ballad singing. Faces meant people, personalities, presence. Powerful

ballads for Dusty, Sandie and Cilla and Lulu's shouter numbers gave them all a powerful presence on the small screen. The big voices and gestures for Dusty and Cilla, Sandie's mere presence and that dancing for Lulu filled the small screen and dominated it. They were all big in that small *'Ready Steady Go'* studio space.

Dusty, Sandie, Cilla and Lulu all projected their individualism through this powerful medium, powerful because it was the mass medium which was also internsely personal to the viewer. Just before the mass-produced and ultimately two-dimensional image of the stereotypical dolly bird emerged-all blonde hair and legs/Twiggy and the paedophile dream- these were four individual women. Even Lulu as potentially the most 'girly', the youngest and the performer most filmed full-length and in action was sufficiently strong in voice to punch her personality through the screen. These women had presence in a way which attracted audiences of both genders. Sandie may have looked coolly detached but she was a singer who looked like a model, contrasty enough in black and white and strong enough in her minimalist stance to again make her presence felt.

The Britishness of the show cannot be underestimated. Although British television had previously had its rock and pop music shows, *'Ready Steady Go'* was its first real style magazine. Op-art was black and white and so was television. Cinema, the traditional entertainment medium was big, colour and American –and you had to go out to go there. TV was small, monochrome and immediate. In your face and in your place i.e. where you lived – or where you returned from work to get **ready** (ready, steady, go!) to **go** out. Even the language was action-packed, created though much of it was by journalist. It showed itself in record labels like 'Immediate'. **Swinging** London, **Swinging** chicks. Dance was a big deal on *'Ready Steady Go'*. However little real impact Patrick's weekly 'new' dances may have had on the bigger picture, this was an audience in motion, dancing in their favourite hip club.

Cathy McGowan, the original Mod Queen.

Cathy McGowan was described as the Queen of the Mods. A term somewhat at odds with the sixties vision of a meritocrasy. But how did you describe a woman who was a style leader? A truly cool mod male was a 'face' but this was a female fashion face.

On '*Ready Steady Go*!' Cathy McGowan clearly gave women the advantage simply by being younger, cooler and hipper than co-presenter Keith Fordyce. The only mod

male equivalent would be the dance leader, Patrick, and his was very much a secondary role. After all, what were these dances but ways of showcasing the clothes? Remembering that *Ready Steady Go* dances immediately followed the Twist, these dances were the precursors of the postwar dances separating male and female, just as the Charleston and the Black Bottom had done in the 1920s.
The '*Ready Steady Go'* dances brought the narcissistic element of male Mod on the dance floor to the TV screen, establishing detachment, distance and stylistic display on the dance floor.

Of Cathy McGowan George Melly said "Her clothes, her *jolie-laide* sex appeal, totally transformed the girls of Britain. She was the prototype dolly. She destroyed the class basis of fashion, gesture and speech." (Melly, 1989, p.189) Cathy McGowan designed (or rather, endorsed) a range of clothes for casual wear manufacturer Lee Cooper – and of course wore them on *'Ready Steady Go'*, accepted as the showcase for fashion. Casual clothing meant off-duty and therefore cool clothing. With further terms appropriated from the jazz world, Cathy's Lee Cooper range featured ' hipster' trousers and skirts. The hand-picked audience comprised fashionable girls and fashionable guys as the 'scenery' in this pop theatre, the moving backdrop to the hip performers.
As Valerie Steele had noted, Cathy McGowan's wearing an outfit on TV would be a deciding factor in selling it. A dress was more likely to sell if a pop girl wore it than if a film star wore it. Popular singers became the popularisers of street style which Quant, Biba et al had translated into boutique fashion. This was product placement long before the current widespread use of the phrase Cathy McGowan gave direct to camera endorsements of designers especially Biba, whose designs Twiggy talked of as McGowan wearing every week.

Where George Melly talked of Cathy McGowan as destroyer of "the class base of fashion", fashion democratisation was very much in action on the small screen through the sheer variety of dressing. From the end of World War II onwards Paris had dictated every detail of fashion, particularly that of womens hemlines. While this did not entirely change overnight, the fact that skirt lengths both long and short were sufficiently fashionable to be seen at the same time on the small screen, this was, for its time, striking a major blow to an established fashion system.

Dusty Springfield was the first of the TV pop divas: big hair, big eyes, big ballads.

Big on glamour and big on emotion. She brought big screen (Hollywood) style performance in pop singing to the small black and white screen. In this respect she was very much show biz meets soul. George Melly recognised this combination:"Dusty Springfield got by too. Among the girls she got nearest to a coloured sound and her neurosis, camp make-up, and outspokenness helped her to preserve her legend. Most girls in pop went show biz as soon as they got the chance and were prepared to come down strong against permissive behaviour as part of the deal. Dusty went show biz all right but in an older tradition. Tantrums, breakdowns, the lot. She was the Judy Garland of the 'in' set. "(Melly, 1989,p.100)

In a pop annual article entitled 'The ABC of Dusty', the singer herself stated: "My ambition is to be an actress now, to make films. I've always wanted to act…"(Ferguson, K & S (eds.), 1966) It could be said that Dusty did her acting on the small screen, movie-starring/drama queening her way through her material. Dusty's cinema style on the small screen ensured that she was big in the confined space that was *'Ready Steady Go'*. Dusty, as a 'Queen of the Mods' brought a glamour that the Mod's girls-as opposed to the Mod Girls – never had.

The camp quality identified by Melly in her makeup was Dusty's synthesis of bad girl/Bardot/Ronette/Shangri-La eye makeup with Bardot's street- to-Paris catwalk blonde hair/wigs. A feature of many of Dusty's obituaries was Dusty's naming her wigs after her rivals, Sandie, Cilla, Lulu-though she was the only blonde among them! As a strong blonde who was neither sexy, nor coy she presented an image very subtly different from the prevailing stereotypes.

Another pop annual quoted Dusty as loving 'vivid dresses' and her ambition to achieve "world-wide acclaim as an entertainer." (Buckle, P (ed), 1967). While this ambition to be globally acclaimed as an entertainer is similar to the conventional stated ambition of many earlier pop stars to be an all-round entertainer, it is the global scale of this ambition that tallies with her earlier quoted acting ambition.

Dusty was both a fashion insider and outsider.
Paris-inspired fashion fused with black-inspired style in the way Dusty put her look together. Much of the writing about her talks of Dusty Springfield as being the 'creation' of Mary O'Brien, the name she was born with. The combination of 'big' blonde hair, sooty black eyes and pale mouth caught on from cinema through Bardot but caught on from television through Dusty. Yves St. Laurent had promoted black

eyes, pale faces and lips through his Left Bank collection, the important postwar example of French couture a look taking from the street/subculture and promoting it into the mainstream. So Dusty was creating Dusty for public consumption from her own sources, the cinema and black singing style, where wigs were already a mainstay and the growing fashion for artifice with both wigs and false eyelashes becoming fashion items in their own right. In 1961-62 Vogue reported wigs as the fashionable way to replace back-combing and "…lips begin to pale down as eye make up gets heavier" (Howell, 1977,p.276)

Dusty opted to wear long skirts-not to be girl-y. (Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.25) on Dusty. "She was never girlish; her costumes were formal; her sings like Sandie's and Cilla's, were mostly cover versions of US hits, which she interpreted with the complicated jerky sign-language gestures copied from the Motown groups." Combination of this formality of dress with Motown gesture produced another of Dusty's stylistic innovations to sit alongside those in hair and makeup mentioned above.

Dusty's style could be taken as disturbance. The black eyes may have been called 'panda' but no-one could describe Dusty as cuddly. She was too glamorous for that. Nor was she a 'kitten' in the Bardot sense despite the Bardot eyes and influence on the hair. The hair meant wigs anyway. These could be interpreted as helmets, both in the sense of protection and of assertiveness. Just as Dusty's creation of Dusty ha been interpreted as a form of self-protection.

Dusty's gay following of both genders has in part been attributed to her 'drag queen' style of dressing up. Certainly the formality of her gowns can be read as wearing costume:, glamorous occasion-based dressing-up which is part of a long-established British tradition. While Britain had to import its first ready to wear 'leisure dressing', this country had always prided itself on creating tailoring and evening wear. Dusty, though, was not Alma Cogan. For *Ready Steady Go* she had to both stand out from and blend with that cool dancing audience. Monochrome both helped that blending and at the same time, through the wig, the makeup and the gestures ensured that Dusty as performer stood out and made the required impact. Black and white made Dusty's look cool *and* glamorous.

Sandie can be viewed as the cool minimalist, the Op-Art girl and the model Mod, both **w**orking class and classless.. Sandie Shaw's model girl looks , complementing those of Cathy McGowan, gave her a strong visual presence on *Ready Steady Go*.

The black and white accentuated her black shiny, swinging hair, pale face and model cheekbones.
In George Melly's opinion "She looked marvellous, she didn't turn pi, but she did sing increasingly dreadful songs." (Melly, 1989, p.101). According to Charlotte Greig "True to the mod code, Sandie didn't actually do much. But she looked great. She was the epitome of the singing fashion plate, all big eyes, shiny hair and long, bony legs. In a gesture that preceded hippiedom, she went barefoot."(Greig, 1989, p.96)

While, chronologically, this gesture did precede hippiedom it is highly unlikely that Sandie's manager, the formidable Eve Taylor, would have wanted her client to be associated with the then highly suspect 'beatniks', suspect to Taylor's own generation that is. No, Sandie's bare feet were her 'gimmick' at a time when showbiz management still regarded a 'gimmick' as a necessary selling proposition.
Sandie's slenderness also had to be excused. So, according to a contemporary pop annual article entitled 'Sandie's Dream Came True', "With a smash-hit behind her, she was a star. She did tours, television and radio shows, and became famous as the bare-footed pop singer! Explaining this gimmick to friends, she confessed to being nervous before a performance and finds that taking off her shoes relaxes her." "Sandie practically lives on salad, fruit and fruit-juices-good for that figure and so much easier to live on when travelling about or on tour!" (Ferguson, K. and S. (eds.),1966.)

Sandie Shaw had three number one hits in the sixties beginning in November 1964 with the Bacharach/David "(There's) Always Something There to Remind Me." Two of these reached the top before the longer-established Dusty Springfield had her first number one. This could well have been down to her looks at a time when image was everything. "Sandie Shaw became a star at the right time" says Sharon Davis. "She had the looks, the model figure; painfully thin with long arms and legs, and a face that appeared to be stretched over her high cheekbones….Indeed, such was the impact of the look, that Sandie Shaw clones could be seen on every street. At one point this was more popular than her records." (Davis, 1997, p.141).

It was almost inevitable that Sandie would design a shoe collection; and interesting that her first husband was a London fashion designer, Jeff Banks first label 'Clobber'

Cilla and Lulu were the red-haired regionals. The working-class regional settings of the British films of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and, of course, the success of the

Beatles, had begun to change the attitudes of a British listening and viewing public reared on the 'received pronunciation' of BBC announcers and the American accents of film and television.

The timing was right. Cilla and Lulu were girls next door for the Pop Art age. Style was expected of them and style they had – demonstrated in the stylish setting of *Ready Steady Go.* Theirs were certainly wholesome images, reassuring in some quarters, against the permissiveness which was already being written about in the wake of the Profumo scandal**.** But Cilla and Lulu were neither coy nor sexy. Their style gave them a level of cool.

Sandie, Cilla and Lulu, from Dagenham, Liverpool and Glasgow respectively, represented the supposedly classless meritocrasy that was allegedly a hallmark of the 60s. This accessibility came more through Cilla and Lulu than Sandie with her model detachment and paralleled that of fashion that was immediate, fun, designed by their generation for their generation and accessible because it was affordable. All four had copiable style which was as good for the cosmetic and hair industries as for the fashion industries. Hair sculpting (Dusty) i.e. backcombing and hairpieces; hair cutting (Sandie and Cathy); hair colouring (Lulu and Cilla). If Quant and Biba were selling a whole new image for makeup including the advertising and the packaging, then these four singers were selling it through the television closeups on their faces and hair.

"Lulu and Cilla were clearly destined to move on from singing into the broader pastures of 'variety'". (Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.24) "Then there were Cilla and Lulu, the pop stars, but they were never all that trendy and soon became co-opted into that very same British tradition of cheerful, cheeky lasses loved by the lower orders that the Beverley Sisters had been trying to escape in the 50s."(Greig, 1989,p.96) While these statements were made with the benefit of hindsight, what Cilla and Lulu's regionality did achieve was to successfully take London mod fashion into the national mainstream.

Lulu went on to put her name to a range for the Freemans mail order company and in doing so took these singer-endorsed 'swinging' fashions beyond the boutique and beyond London. Lulu covered 'Shout' and was very much a shouter. She was energetic and both her voice and her movement filled that small screen. As the

youngest of the four she may have looked 'girly' but coy she was not. Lively and upfront but not cute.

"Lulu *bounced,* exuded great confidence and joy at dancing on the little (*Ready Steady Go)* stage in her matelot top and tight hipster pants…" (Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.24) Her moving on the small screen, on a show where the audience always danced, showed that you could really dance in these clothes.

A regional herself Lulu could sell fashion in the regions. The red hair, the dancing, all gave new life to a mainstream mail order catalogue in a selling medium considered far from hip. This was instant fashion – or as near instant as the postal system would allow - for the boutique boomers who did not or could not go to boutiques. When Lulu did Freemans she added a pop touch to a traditional catalogue. Catalogues were a local family-oriented form of shopping in many parts of Britain. Lulu wore, and sold, the clothes to her fans. And the catalogues helped to further the marketing of Lulu.

Boutiques certainly opened all over the country, opening up a different way of shopping with atmospheric lighting and props and a constant pop soundtrack. Freemans tried to capture the boutique atmosphere but within their accepted format. To approximate the immediacy and accessibility of these young new looks.

Biba had opened her London-based boutiques on the success of the single garments she sold mail order through newspapers. Then, when her London boutiques took off she tried to capture them in mail order form for her provincial fans.She had the radical photography, the sepia colouring and moody drugged-out looking models. Edgy, detached, wraith-like and fragile.

The Biba models' emaciated edginess was not what Freemans wanted. Lulu's brightness and bounce were the selling points for their young fashion. This was showbiz boutiquerie for the regions-nothing instant here but at least somehow accessible in parts where boutiques had not reached. It was a traditional context for pop style. It spreading the fashion word in a safe way. You couldn't (maybe shouldn't) look like a Biba girl but Lulu was alright.

Brian styles Cilla.

"As for Cilla Black, another of Epstein's protegees, she has become the Gracie Fields of our day, the Queen of the Common Touch, the Toast of the Golden Mile,

and yet she too came out of the Liverpool boom, had been a cloak-room girl at the Cavern. She even wore black leather at one time." (Melly, 1989, p.81)
It is often said that Brian Epstein 'tamed' the Beatles, taking them out of their Hamburg black leather and putting them into 'acceptable' suits. It is also said that Brian Epstein used his 'feminine' side in his management and promotion of Cilla Brian certainly wanted her to be a fashion icon, an innovator even - and an all-round entertainer.

One of the pop annuals of the time, probably repeating word for word an Epstein press release, proclaimed in an article entitled 'Cilla Black The Trend Setter':
"She is just the right type to model some of the way-out fashions, being 5 feet 5 inches tall and very slim….She was one of the first girls to appear on TV wearing a knee-length transparent shift over black long-john pants."
"She set a new style with her long, auburn hair. In no time at all the fashionable young ladies were asking for the Cilla Black look, long swinging hair with peep-through fringe. Her female followers even painted their fingernails silver to match hers!" (Ferguson, K & S (eds.),1966) However, earlier in this same feature the point was made that "Her loyal fans are not only teenagers; she is also very popular with the mums and dads. She is the sort of girl they would like their daughters to be."

Brian may have wanted Cilla to appear innovative and trend-setting but his long-term planning for her was clearly based in the then still traditional mould for female singers. Yet he clearly recognised the marketable elements of her appeal, both present and future. In a 1967 pop annual feature 'The Girl Who Nearly Gave Up' her success is confirmed. "She has become a favourite with adults as well as in the teenage market… Her strong voice is very much one of our times, and a perfect mirror of the Liverpool way of life-hard, uncompromising and yet at times fragile and extremely tender." (Buckle, 1967,p.52)

Cilla's *Ready Steady Go* appearances gave her the chance to establish her fashion image, and that Northern honesty as in her description of her red hair coming " from a bottle". She had a presence and knew how to enhance it with what she wore. "Cilla Black always wore dresses, quite demure, often with ruffles at the neck and cutaway sleeves to exaggerate her bony shoulders. She looked gawky and angular and quite ordinary, but her confidence as a singer as she unselfconsciously wove through her fans looking straight to camera- revealed her as a natural entertainer." (Steward and Garratt, 1984, p.24)

These 'quite demure' dresses would be the work of one of the hip, usually female, designers. Quant, for one, gave girly ruffles a look which was both modern and young, but decidedly not 'frilly' in the traditional sense. At the neck ruffles would frame and emphasise Cilla's face and hair, emphasising the portrait filling the small screen. The same was true of the shoulder emphasis, 'bony shoulders' being very much part of the contemporary look.

Biba made clothes for Cilla and for Cathy McGowan – "I was run off my feet between my work room which was making patterns and clothes for Cilla Black and Cathy McGowan" said Barbara Hulanicki (Hulanicki, 1983, p.83). When Biba moved premises in 1966 both Cilla and Cathy were photographed helping with the move. So both clearly and publicly endorsed Biba fashion. This would, of course, help countrywide with Biba's mail order operation, Cilla's regional appeal helping to sell Biba to a wider audience and taking the edge of those edgy Biba model pictures in her catalogue.

Barbara Hulanicki's comment about making clothes for Cilla and Cathy could either have meant that she made special one-offs for Cilla's television wear i.e. something a bit special for showbiz, or that they wore the prototypes for designs which were then available in the Biba boutique and/or through the mail order operation.

Conclusion

"Politics, gender and popular music in the 1960s" was the theme for this conference under which I presented this paper. As Angela McRobbie (McRobbie, 1998, p.36)has also noted, Richard Hamilton's definition of pop in general can be taken to apply directly to fashion in the sixties. Dusty, Sandie, Lulu and Cilla, particularly through their appearances on *Ready Steady Go* all had a clear hand in marketing to other women, fashion which was "popular, transient, expendable, low cost, mass-produced, young, witty, sexy, glamorous, and last, but not least, Big Business."

(Richard Hamilton quoted in Melly, 1989, p.160)

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