

Introduction

‘Be not Afeard; the Isle is Full of Noises’:¹ Reflections on the Synergies of Music in the Creative Knowledge Economy

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Syn-er-gy: The interaction of two or more agents or forces so that their combined effect is greater than the sum of their individual effects. A songwriter’s royalty cheque comes from a number of areas: the performance income via the live circuit, mechanical fees from CD sales and the lucrative income stream of synchronisation, where music is reproduced and broadcast via film, TV productions and commercials and so on. One television commercial can keep a writer in good spirits for months, possibly years if the client extends the term. (Seeger 2006: 214)²

Music, Media and Meanings

This book is about the centrality and the synergies of music, so frequently the ‘attractant and the glue’ of our social activities, the entertainment industries and, indeed, the whole of the creative knowledge economy; that which can make ‘the entire project possible’ (Hartley 2005: 110). We define the creative knowledge economy as the marketplace of ideas generated and disseminated not just at the level of formal industries and government, but also through other ways of knowing and acting upon knowledge, aesthetics and affect. While these spheres of activity are certainly not mutually exclusive – indeed such things as grassroots production are fundamental in the value chain of creative industries – moving beyond economic discourse, ‘creative knowledge economy’ broadens out our understanding of the creative industries into everyday potentially copywritable acts. Music and sound cultures are an integral part of this process.

As Gary Seeger explains above, music threads through a number of significant areas from live performance and sales of recorded music to ‘the lucrative income stream of synchronisation’ into films, television programs, video games and advertising. From here it disseminates further as part of the rapidly converging new creative digital content servicing the next generation of hand-held musical and gaming devices and mobile phones. In the words of ABC journalist, Gerald Tooth,

1 Caliban in Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Act 3: 1.

2 Gary Seeger is the head of music licensing at Mushroom Records.

The new generation of mobile phones that are just over the horizon are set to meet all our communication needs and play our favourite songs, even if they're from Bollywood musicals. (Tooth 2006)

In the various chapters and international perspectives that follow, the contributors to this volume highlight the particular ways in which they see the synergistic embedding of popular music cultures and industries into the various facets of our everyday lives. The writers reflect on the variety of ways music is integrated into new communication technologies; how it travels effortlessly across various cultural activities and through the various spaces and places that inform our membership of the familial and social networks that make up our myriad experiential communities. Music and sound is vital to what Deborah Battaglia (1995) calls the 'rhetorics of self-making'. It is articulated not only in the ways we create and consume our music but is also reflected in our broader 'identity work' (Wexler 1992), the ways in which we dress, or decorate our homes; the ways in which we 'carve out' and appropriate private spaces, and indeed in all of our social activities. For Simon Frith (1996) music is the perfect vehicle for negotiating an idealized sense of personal identity, depending as it does upon shades of difference within similarities to express a sense of individuality. Furthermore, our myriad musical 'tastes' and musical activities themselves actively work to reflect and maintain these differences, emphasising both distinction (Bourdieu 1984) and the spaces between or, to borrow from Derrida's (1978) grammatical conception, 'différance'.

Yet, beyond our own personal experiences, music is a fundamental element of all cultures, an essential component of all human life (Storr 1992). For example, as several of the following chapters illustrate, musical allegiances and expressions of fandom demonstrate the hard work of play (see contributions by Kellner, Stratton, Bloustien, Luckman and Whiteley), the ways in which music informs our sense of space and place, (Bennett, Collinson, Fu and Liew, Hosokawa and Matsuoka, Henriques, Cohen and Maxwell) and our relationship to our idealized selves and, by its very fluidity, allows for a dialogic, often political, engagement with others (Flew, Berland, Peters and Bruns). Of course these divisions are arbitrary for just as music itself crosses borders so the synergies of music that the authors are exploring also shift and flow between these categories and make links between them.

Much of the pleasure and power of music comes from its ability to produce emotions and affective states of mind, affecting the body at an unconscious level before any other, more intellectual awareness has been reached (Levi-Strauss 1972; Willis 1990; Toop 2004). Indeed, despite commonsense and academic assumptions that musical aesthetics are culturally specific, one of the most interesting aspects of recent sociological, anthropological and musicological research has been to point to the way certain pieces of music can arouse similar kinds of emotional states in the listeners without the listeners knowing a great deal about the context of the music or its original purpose (Storr 1992: 24). Many aspects of music seem to be common to all cultures, even when the listeners are not familiar with the type of music and its usual social context (Storr 1992; Blacking 1976, 1987). And of course not all states of arousal by music are equally pleasant: they can be disturbing emotions such as intense grief, melancholy, fear, rage, sexual excitement or they can be gentler emotions that

induce peace, sleep or relaxation. All music invokes some emotional reaction in the listener and this emotional arousal manifests itself in various physiological changes (Berland this volume; Harrer and Harrer 1977; Toop 2004).

For many people existing simultaneously in a local, regional and a global cultural post-industrial context, music permeates and shapes everyday experiences. It is, in fact, a defining social context and often the 'social glue' through which almost all of us communicate, socialize, exercise, shop and relax (DeNora 2000; Storr 1992). Particular music is used to define specific experiential cultures and social groupings, even when to an outsider the same music seems common to several groupings. It is now common practice for advertisers to appropriate particular songs associated with original ideologies of rock music – freedom, rebellion, youthful exuberance, anti-materialism – and to re-associate them with commodities from multinationals, such as denim jeans, Coca Cola and cigarettes. This is only possible because of the arbitrary nature of the sign, underscoring observations that, despite the insistence on identifiable differences and distinctions between the diverse social groupings by insiders, the same music is often appropriated by different groups for their own use.

Particular pieces of music continue to be associated with particular societies and come to represent them in the same way as a national flag. 'They are playing our tune' is a phrase which can have a much wider significance than our habitual reference of it to the courtship memories of a mated couple. (Storr 1992: 22)

Anthony Storr's words also point to the mnemonic power of music, still very much used in contemporary societies. The rhymes and the repeated rhythms are an invaluable aid to memory and could explain another aspect of musical pleasure, its nostalgic quality. Birthdays, anniversaries and ritual events are almost always associated with particular pieces or forms of music. It habitually accompanies religious ceremonies and other rituals and has a collective importance in many cultures, underpinning and linking so many disparate activities so that sometimes, as in ancient Greece, 'there is no separate word for music as such' (Storr 1992: 17; see also Middleton 1990; Shepherd and Wicke 1997).

Music, Cultural Identity and Embodiment

If music is central to our emotions and embedded in our cultures, it is also central to the materiality of our social contexts and the symbolism of the self. This is so for a number of related reasons. Firstly, music is universally tied tightly into concepts of cultural identities and communities. Musical appreciation, the critical and aesthetic response, is one part of the whole experience of music for 'a way of being in the world' (Frith 1996: 272). Implicit in this, as seen in this volume, music not only lives existing values but also contests and disrupts them. Secondly, music is an intensely personal bodily experience, a reflexive awareness of being sociable. As our senses engage in song, dance, and performance, 'we absorb songs into our own lives and rhythm into our own bodies' (Frith 1996: 273). Music is powerful because it brings together both the experience of the intensely subjective and personal with the external, cultural and collective. That is, despite music's ability to cross cultures, it is also concerned with feelings that are primarily individual and rooted in the body; its structural and

sensuous elements resonate more with individuals' cognitive and emotional sets than with their cultural sentiments, although its external manner and expression are rooted in historical circumstances (Blacking 1987: 129; see also DeNora 2000).

The physicality that can be expressed through music is not simply through dance, although that is clearly one of its most common manifestations. In the processes of musical production and consumption – listening, singing, instrument playing or dance – the body becomes not only a way of experiencing, but also a way of knowing, a 'site of somatic knowledge' (Willis 1990: 11). What is manifested as 'taste' is also, in fact, physical capital (Bourdieu 1992), not just an intellectual way of asserting who one is, but also a way of asserting ways of knowing, constituting and 'proving' who one is or who one would like to be through bodily praxis. Referring to indigenous hip hop, reggae and country music, Dunbar-Hall and Gibson also perceive the same creation of experiential and affective cultural communities, arguing that globalized media formats provide transnational spaces 'within which cultural exchanges and borrowings occur' (2004: 120). Similarly, John Castles writes of the Australian Indigenous band No Fixed Address that they embrace reggae 'as an expression of solidarity with black people everywhere' (1998: 16), while Stuart Ewings argues: 'Reggae doesn't sound like rock, it's not usually laced with country and western sentiment, nor does it sound like rockabilly – CS (Coloured Stone) do' (1989: 12, cited in Castles 1998: 15–16).

Music and Space

But if music is concerned with the boundaries of the local, material body, it is also concerned with the mobile, moving 'out of body' to blur historical and geographical boundaries. Music transcends the local to be in several places at the same time, simultaneously transforming physical and social space; it becomes a way of appropriating and distinguishing space. Undoubtedly, on one level, that is why music is so central to most religious rituals in all cultures. It explains the ways the music of one culture can be appropriated by another to express a powerful political affinity. On another level, it explains the ubiquitous popularity of radios, the walkman and personal radio, tape and CD players in contemporary life (Hosokawa 1984 and this volume; Thornton 1995). As each new technology develops, new ways of creating, consuming and marketing music produce marked effects on the meanings understood to emanate from all of its forms, one of the first issues to emerge being the ways of knowing of the particular style and its attendant cultural forms and meanings.

Music and Technology

The advent of electronic media and new technologies has other implications for concepts of musical *épistèmes* and therefore also the perceived 'authenticity' of the performer and consumer of that music. It means that the performance and consumption of music can be undertaken far from the original place of origin and endlessly repeated. As Jody Berland reminds us, 'Music is now heard mainly in technologically communicated form, not live, and its circulation through these

spaces (in connection with that of its listeners), along with its assimilation to and appropriation of previous contexts for musical performance, is part of the elaboration of its forms and meanings' (Berland 1992: 39 and this volume). Music, in other words, has become completely mobile, moving with us from room to room, country to country, from work to leisure. It can also move us emotionally, as from depression to elation. In these ways, contemporary practices of engaging with music particularly through new technologies, through ever-evolving 'mimetic machinery' (Taussig 1993: 20), can blur our sense of time and space.

Music connects the private experience with the public. It blurs the self and other; the song we listen to expresses our feelings even though we did not write it. Performing someone else's music allows us to express our feelings although we are different people. So music is indeed a powerful, 'magical' vehicle of mimesis. In Sarah Thornton's (1995) study of British club cultures, referenced in Susan Luckman's chapter, she states that 'the cultural form closest to the lives of the majority of British youth is in fact music. Youth subcultures tend to be music subcultures' (1995: 19). In the separate research of the three editors of this volume, while not necessarily agreeing with Thornton that music is always the central organizing tenet of (sub)cultural practices, we have discovered a similarly perceived centrality of music. This signals the ubiquitous nature of music which comes to represent different aspects of everyday practice, knowledge and experience and the ways young people in particular situate themselves within wider cultural contexts.

However, these cultural contexts have become even more complex with the advent of new ways of performing, producing and listening to music; indeed the very categories of 'producer' and 'consumer' are collapsing in on one another as digital content travels rapidly around the globe (see Bloustien, Flew, Luckman and Peters this volume). New technologies, for example, have brought about particular changes in the way we engage with music. The music we hear is affected by the choices we make on the turntable, the dial, the mixer. In the dance clubs and rave scenes, the DJ and MC who skilfully mix and sample the pre-recorded sounds to create new music have become revered artists since the 1990s. As the advent of the VCR affected television watching, so also have the CD players and burners, the walkman, MP3 players and iPods and the computer terminals affected music audiences. Consumers can now produce, rearrange and recreate the kind of music they listen to. The lines between consumption and production, between the original and the copy, become blurred. In other words, like those ephemeral self-identities that we struggle to 'fix', music itself has become a process of becoming, something we now experience as fragmented and unstable (Hosokawa 1990; Berland 1992 and this volume).

MP3 devices mean the end of the set order list of the album; each user becomes more and more his/her own DJ, customising aural space and experience. File-sharing culture has emerged out of the shadows of underground computer know-how and into the mainstream of global music distribution, driven from grass-roots up. Though slow to respond positively to the market demand for MP3 music downloads, the major labels have been forced to accept they need to fundamentally re-configure their preferred business models in order to keep pace with the future of music consumption technologies, especially mobile MP3 devices (both stand-alone like iPods, and MP3 players as part of convergent technologies,

especially those embedded in mobile telephones). The savvy market success of Apple's iPod has, in the early years of the twenty-first century, led the way in the marketplace. But as MP3 technology becomes embedded in all sorts of consumer items, it remains to be seen how long this market leadership will continue, and what may emerge to take its place as the music accessory *de jure*.

Examples such as those above point to the connection between ongoing, popular concepts of 'self' and musical forms of knowing, the nexus between the 'real' and representation in the enormity (some would say the impossibility) of the search for 'the real me'. Walter Benjamin (1969) believed that in 'the age of mechanical reproduction' uniqueness or 'aura' would cease to be considered the most important quality of a work of art. New technologies, he hoped, would bring about a new democratization of cultural goods. Yet, as he suspected, the desire for uniqueness would be difficult to dismiss and indeed the magical 'aura' has not disappeared with the diffusing of what was previously thought of as high culture. It has not even been demystified but has disseminated and dispersed into other cultural forms (Thornton 1995). Now the 'authentic' has switched from the original to the copy. For example, the new technological methods of producing music from the 1970s means that original music is created in the studio not on the stage: the authentic is now the recorded.

Music and the Creative Knowledge Economy

So where does this leave music now, intricately entwined as it is in the heart of new creative industries and knowledge economy? Many would argue that music underpins the formation of new business ventures in the creative industries where 'personal and consumer tastes have led to new publics' (Hartley 2005: 108). Music is certainly the central common factor behind the night-time economy (Hartley 2005; Flew this volume) and potentially underpins the ways in which cities and regions become branded as creative hubs (Brown, O'Connor and Cohen 2000; Connell and Gibson 2003).

Here we particularly focus on the concept of sonic synergy: the interaction of music with and on other cultural forces, particularly technology, identity and community – all catalysts of change within the new creative knowledge economy, which together create an entity that is bigger than the sum of the parts.

While the central role of creativity and innovation within the new economy has been recognized as its most valued currency, little work has focused on the nature of that creativity in terms of everyday experience. In this collection we meet this challenge by drawing attention specifically to the centrality of music in this 'creative knowledge economy', the post-industrial, increasingly globalized system of wealth production that depends upon complex, often informal networks within which music-related artefacts are inspired, produced, circulated and consumed. Within such a dynamic environment, small-scale local production takes on a new importance, often leading to the development of fresh initiatives by the young, working by necessity from the margins of their societies. On these margins, with their blurring of production and consumption, problems arise too over issues of ownership of copyright and intellectual property (see Bloustien, Bruns and Luckman this volume). Negotiating

these initiatives in turn generates and re-imagines new communities of practice that tap into broader international networks. In so doing, such do-it-yourself creativity lies at the forefront of creative industries' discourses about innovation, but therefore also points to some of the tensions implicit in 'top-down' approaches to innovation as they intersect with grassroots synergies of production and consumption.

In attempting to mobilize cultural production as a cornerstone of the twenty-first century creative knowledge economy, issues of respecting the place of creativity and the conditions of its production come to the fore. For example, as Sheila Whiteley explores in this volume, shifting commercial and policy environments impact upon how individual producers themselves can be exploited and abused – especially in the case of very young performers. The work practices underpinning creativity is a theme also taken up by Susan Luckman (this volume). Similarly, we need to protect the sustainability of local cultures in a globalized creative marketplace; for example, by ensuring access to affordable rental premises while simultaneously encouraging critical mass and the synergistic development of creative clusters. In encouraging potential economic 'winners', care needs to be taken to ensure that the 'second tier' (grassroots or more informal parts of the cultural industries) continue to have space to grow and innovate.

Sonic Synergies: Music, Technology, Community, Identity

This collection of sixteen essays documents and analyses the diverse musical forms and practices that have emerged and continue to evolve as important reflexive shapers of identity and community in the lives of global citizens. With most of the contributors taking actual grassroots practices and debates as their starting points, the papers here acknowledge the messiness of the real world, recognizing the need for fresh ways of seeing and knowing. New perspectives require us to seek out different frameworks of understanding. Collectively the contributors bring together their innovative insights, synergistically drawing upon anthropology, cultural studies, education, musicology, socio-political studies, and organizational and communication studies.

The inspiration for the collection emerged from debates at a conference on popular culture, identities, technologies and communities, hosted by the University of South Australia and the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) and held in Adelaide, Australia in 2003. This conference brought together key international scholars both face to face and through an interactive video link up. It was here that many of the debates presented in this volume were initially articulated and developed. Several key issues that arose were explored in *Playing for Life*, an innovative international ethnographic project, drawn upon here in Cohen, Peters and Bloustien's papers. The scope of this project covers many of the debates about identity, place and community across four continents. The background information and context about this project and its contributors is outlined in Cohen's chapter (this volume).

This edited collection, which includes both leading and newly emerging academics, many of whom are also practitioners, reflects these multi-faceted perspectives and represents an interdisciplinary exploration of the current synergies between music, identity, technology and community. The central aim of the book is to add to these

debates and explore some of the tensions arising from the ongoing convergence of music, popular culture and digital and emerging technologies in the global marketplace.

The material has been placed into three overarching themed sections: shifting contexts, placing music and creating agency. These segments should not be seen as mutually exclusive; rather these three themes capture the ways in which in this new form of creative knowledge economy the processes of production and consumption are increasingly blurred and fluid, with audiences moving with ease and expertise between consumerism, entrepreneurship and musical practices.