Bangor University

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Explorations in the accessibility of music : an interdisciplinary study

Eisentraut, Jochen

Award date:
2006

Awarding institution:
University of Wales, Bangor

[Link to publication](#)

Explorations in the Accessibility of Music:

an Interdisciplinary Study

Revised

Jochen Eisentraut

Ph.D. thesis, University of Wales, Bangor, 2006

Abstract

This thesis explores the concept of musical accessibility. The term is viewed from a number of perspectives with the intention of investigating relevant ideas from a range of disciplines. The main methodology consists of the deployment of three case studies as examples to bring issues into focus. These are: the rise of punk rock, Vaughan Williams' tract *National Music* and street samba in Brazil and Wales. By way of definition, musical accessibility is split into three levels: physical access, (individual) reception, and participation. These are not designed to correspond to the three case studies but are used to investigate them and to apply the term 'accessibility' more precisely. It is discovered that while the levels can be clearly differentiated, they also interact with each other.

The research introduces pertinent psychological theories and sociological perspectives. The aesthetics of modernism and postmodernism are discussed as well as notions of art music and vernacular music. The study of samba allows an examination of audience participation, performance style and the functioning of adopted music. 'Receptual' accessibility is found to be linked to cultural and social factors, and also diachronically in flux, particularly at times of 'culture shift'. Nevertheless, there appears to be a field of interpretation opened up by musical structures and practices, which carries a constrained range of possibilities. Furthermore, the review of empirical work reveals human tendencies due to psychological perception processes, and individual variation linked to personality factors.

The exploratory nature of this study means that it would be inappropriate to offer an all encompassing conclusion. Instead an integration of the main issues is attempted. This establishes that musical accessibility has to be viewed as a combination of musical, individual human and social factors in a dynamic process of articulation.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Aims, Methodology and Overview

The aim of this study is to explore possible meanings of the word 'accessible' as applied to music and, by examining the issues arising from those meanings, to open up the concept of musical accessibility as a field of discourse. Since the term itself has not been the subject of extensive and direct academic scrutiny, but is implicitly discussed in aesthetics, cultural studies, sociology of music, music psychology and other areas, it is accepted and intended that this exploration will be of an interdisciplinary nature. Such an approach represents a 'growing intellectual movement', indeed; 'Critical musicology has revealed what it means to regard musicology as an *intertextual field* and why this, rather than the notions of a *discipline*, offers a more productive epistemological framework for research' (Scott 2003: 4).

The methodology employed in the present work is to undertake an initial exploration of background issues and definitions (Chapters 1 and 2). There then follow three case studies which represent the main core of the thesis. Each of these has the purpose of raising particular issues of musical accessibility. They are deliberately drawn from disparate areas of the musical field: popular music, Western art music and 'ethnic' music. This is in order to be able to gain a genuine overview of how musical accessibility can be conceived, rather than become enmeshed in purely 'local' concerns. It is hoped that sufficient focus is ensured by the determined pursuit of the concept of accessibility itself. Furthermore, the three case studies are intended to furnish specific and coherent examples of music, practices and ideas which are explored in depth. Other instances are drawn on from time to time, but the case studies are the recurring reference points and accessibility is the guiding star.

The three case studies are presented as pairs of chapters. In Case Studies 1 and 2, the first

of each pair examines the research material and places it in context. The second then discusses the relevant issues revealed by the example. The pair of chapters on Bahia and samba in Wales is slightly different in that both present a particular field study and work through its theoretical implications. They are nevertheless linked. Thus there are three pairs of chapters relating to the three case studies.

Chapter 3 looks at the 'cultural shift' brought about by the rise of punk rock in the UK, analysing it as a fashion and taste change that turned against progressive rock. The following chapter takes up the question of how accessibility changes over time, particularly in relation to musical genres and subcultures. It also discusses the accessibility of shock.

Chapter 5 examines a series of lectures by Vaughan Williams published under the title *National Music.* In it he makes a case for building an accessible English art music by using and extrapolating from folk-song, of which he was a notable collector. The companion chapter concerns itself with notions of art and vernacular music and asks how these relate to accessibility. An attempt is also made to apply Vaughan Williams' ideas to the present situation by asking: could new art music be revitalised, and made more accessible, by a rapprochement with popular music?

Chapter 7 introduces musical culture in Salvador da Bahia, Brazil and particularly the institution of *Carnaval* in that city. Attention is drawn to attitudes to, and practices concerning physical access, performance and participation in various musical situations in Salvador. Uses and meanings of Bahian music relating to exclusivity, identity and resistance are covered and there is a theoretical discussion of accessibility and *Carnaval.* The following chapter is about the adoption of Brazilian street samba percussion by a group in North Wales and asks how this music from an alien culture can be accessible, meaningful and useful in a completely new context.

Running through the thesis there are a considerable number of references to and several

extended sections devoted to modernist Western art music and contemporary art music in the UK. These partly arise from the cases studies. Vaughan Williams' use of folk idiom was anachronistically in opposition to mainstream modernist ideas but his approach suggested another way forward for British art music. Chapter 6 develops this into an examination of accessibility in modernist and vernacular music. Case Study 1 is concerned with popular music, but there are points of contact with modernist aesthetics and ethics. It appears from this research that musical modernism, and the ideas that lead to it, have widely influenced attitudes and practices concerning musical accessibility in the developed world. Therefore a study of this area needs to keep this music and its theoretical underpinnings in view.

Since the thesis does not set out to answer a question or to test an hypothesis, there is no attempt at a single conclusion. It is rather hoped that the exploration will lead to a fuller and more complete picture of why accessibility is a useful and current term in relation to music, what may be meant by it, and what questions and issues are relevant. With reference to pertinent literatures, important ideas about these questions and issues are identified and discussed throughout. The last chapter recounts the main themes and definitions that have been discovered or proposed, as well as building on these to offer further insights. A postlogue; 'Possible Schemas, Integrations and Future Directions', asks what can be said in summary about the areas explored and how the suggested conceptualisations might be combined.

Chapter 1

Raising the Issues

Introduction

This chapter sets the scene for the subsequent explorations. The issues introduced here are either fundamental to the entire project, and/or will be specifically addressed later. Because of the expositional nature of the chapter the individual themes are not dealt with in great detail at this point, but rather their connection with musical accessibility is established and they are proposed as largely interconnected areas in the context of which the following enquiry will be conducted.

Initially the term 'accessibility' itself is discussed and some parameters for dealing with it are established. A broad preliminary definition of the word as it relates to music is offered. The concept is then situated historically as particularly pertinent to late modernity. The importance of culture and subculture to the intelligibility of musical meaning is introduced and acknowledged. Class and status are also recognised as fundamental to the use and functioning of musical accessibility and inaccessibility.

Another important aspect of accessibility raised is that of its mutation over time. Taste changes as indeed do musical styles. This diachronic dimension is given a preliminary delineation. Although culture, subculture, class and fashion are important factors, the choice of music according to one's taste, or what appears accessible, is partly an individual decision which defines the person vis-à-vis herself and others. Increasing social fragmentation and individualisation have lead to this kind of choice, and the role that musical accessibility plays in it, gaining importance. Commodification and

globalisation further mean that there is an ever wider range of musical options and this raises the question of how unfamiliar music is accessible, sometimes in the absence of a cultural context, or at least in the absence of its intended context. These aspects of accessibility are also raised here and more fully explored later in the thesis.

A documentary illustration of a situation in which accessibility was explicitly at issue and intentionally manipulated is provided by an account of the attitudes towards performance and audience of the early musical modernism of Schoenberg's circle in Vienna. This is posited as an important moment in the development of attitudes towards accessibility, especially for art music but also for other creative spheres. These attitudes often revolve around notions of moral worth. This idea is introduced with reference to the work of Bourdieu and Kant. Related to these issues is the question of political correlations. Accessibility in music is variously viewed as 'democratic' and 'reactionary' and has been espoused by and associated with a number of movements and regimes. This is described and discussed.

The final section of this chapter addresses the issue of essential features of music and of the human perception of music, in the process referring to essentialism as a concept in the study of culture. The increasing influence of new advances in genetics on all branches of the humanities is noted and its significance for the present enquiry discussed. Various psychological theories and research findings are then recounted with reference to their bearing on musical accessibility. These phenomena are described here in order to signal that an awareness of psycho-physiological aspects of musical perception is crucial to this exploration.

In the beginning was the word

The word 'accessible' is not one widely used in academic writing in relation to music, although its attendant issues are frequently discussed under various guises. It is however

in common use in a wide variety of contexts in which it communicates a number of meanings relatively clearly.[1] The present study seeks to explore important meanings of the term in relation to musical contact, choice and participation, and to discover their implications and backgrounds. This opens up a number of areas of enquiry. One is to determine what the word may be used to indicate in relation to music. Another is to examine the developments, circumstances and attitudes from which it derives sense and relevance. Yet another is to explore how attitudes towards accessibility vary. Also, comparisons can be made between what is deemed accessible by different people in different situations. Finally it is hoped that some insights can be gained into what can make music accessible or inaccessible. It is not the intention here only to deconstruct, but also to study why calling music 'accessible' is meaningful in everyday language, and how the present field of music allows and indeed seems to require such a category.

On a very fundamental level the concept of musical accessibility is concerned with who can understand, enjoy, use, participate in, or create music. What is meant by the term in general (and it is not the intention here to propose a specialised academic usage) is that accessible music is relatively easy to appreciate, enjoy and understand. It does not require specialised prior knowledge, training or experience, and it does not repulse the listener. When we ask whether a genre is accessible, we are partly enquiring into whether it includes or excludes; whether it welcomes or repels; whether it communicates or is opaque.

As soon as one considers particular examples, it becomes clear that most music can operate at both poles. In other words most music both includes and excludes, welcomes and repels, communicates and obfuscates. It has these effects on different groups of listeners to different extents, partly due to differing intentions on the part of the creators of the music. We need to be mindful of the fact that behind every music are people and that they cast their creations in a way that serves their purposes, beliefs and tastes. These

---

[1] Appendix 1 gives a selection of examples from the internet.

in turn will be related to the culture or subculture in which those people operate. One question which arises here is whether we need to gain an understanding of a socio-cultural group in order to grasp music associated with it or whether, conversely, the music can tell us something about their culture and values. In terms of the music makers and creators it is also relevant to ask; is this music *intended* to be inclusive or exclusive? *Who* is it supposed to include or exclude, and why? Does it actually function in this way? *Who* does it repel or attract and does this change over time?

Culture and Society

The concept of accessibility as a product of (late) modernity

A necessity for the notion of accessibility of music has only fully developed in the context of a consumerist, socially mobile, technologised, moderately well educated, globalised world. It presupposes a measure of 'choice offered' (or *Angebot*), allowing us to select or reject music of varying levels of 'difficulty'. Adorno describes this as the '*Konsumentengewohnheit*' (Adorno 1997 [1963]: 189) or the 'habit of the consumer'. In other words accessibility as an issue is opened up by capitalism to some extent, and only fully by late capitalism (or postmodern society) which Jameson recognises as belonging to 'a new type of social life and a new economic order – what is often euphemistically called modernization, post-industrial or consumer society, the society of the media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism' (1993: 193). This is a world marked by extensive affluence in some regions, widespread leisure time, multiple mass-media, widely available interpersonal communications and physical and social mobility.

In historical situations where the individual was deeply integrated in a tribe, class, trade, religion and/or locality and had limited opportunity for contact outside that level of identity, the question of accessibility hardly arose. Usually the socio-cultural location had its built-in musical practice and tradition, such as that of a church, or an aristocracy. A

member of such a group or institution would be surrounded by, and at least to some extent educated in, her own musical world. To reject the music of her surroundings would be nigh on impossible and to adopt or espouse another equally difficult. A similarly deterministic case has been made for a society predominantly stratified according to class (Bourdieu 1984) although the relaxation of social boundaries begins to some extent with industrialisation. Talcott Parsons posits that with the advent of industrial society, status is achieved meritocratically whereas in traditional society it would be ascribed at birth (Abbott 1998: 22-3). A parallel can be drawn here with cultural expression and consumption which is more flexible in industrial society or 'modernity':

...tradition or established habit orders life within relatively set channels. Modernity confronts the individual with a complex diversity of choices and, because it is non-foundational, at the same time offers little help as to which options should be selected.

(Giddens 1991: 80)

This is the situation in which we find ourselves every day to an even greater extent in the post-industrial epoch. Rather than being 'assigned' a musical culture, we choose or reject musics of different classes, ages and cultures. In fact this is not merely an option but a problematic *necessity*.[2] Like the American sandwich shop where you cannot eat unless you can say which of the dozen types of cheese you want, our world necessitates choice just as the pre-modern world largely precluded it. In the words of Leonard B. Meyer: 'the price of freedom is the imperative of choice' (1989: 89).

---

[2] Something akin to the changing identification with and availability of different musics is delineated, in relation to Britain's folk music, by Middleton referring initially to A.L. Lloyd's position:' "Primitive" song had spoken for the whole of society but when social differentiation made this impossible, folk song split away to express the specific situation of the lower class. This view has run into trouble in recent years, when increased social mobility and the effects of the mass media have resulted in a multiplicity of new hybrids and audiences, and made the old boundaries difficult to police, and when, within historical analysis, the problems with isolating lower-class culture from "high" and commercial "popular" cultures have become clear.'

The amount to choice in an environment is negatively correlated with the level of cultural coherence as discussed by Smelser (1992). Some theorists (Tylor and to some extent Durkheim) claim that culture is essentially fragmentary or 'normless'. Others, like Morgan and Engels can be found at the 'coherence end of the spectrum' (Smelser 1992: 5). Benedict (1934) is situated between these positions. Whereas she thought that a culture could be found to be dominated by a particular idea (such as the Dionysian or Apollonian) she also differentiated between cultures which manifest a large measure of incoherence and those which appear more coherent. Incoherence according to Benedict is often associated with peoples situated in liminal regions between cultural clusters and subject to influences from divergent traditions. Alternatively they may have been impinged on by an intrusive group. Western civilisation, according to her appraisal, consists of subgroups such as classes which may have a dominant cultural engine. It is also marked by the changes of orientation over time.

Subcultures and scenes

More 'subgroups' have become recognised since the 1930s when Benedict was writing and contribute to what became perceived as a patchwork of subcultures through the work of the Chicago School of sociologists in the 1950s and '60s and the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in the '70s and '80s (Jenks 2005), within which, different groups are associated with certain musics. This has been theorised extensively in the contexts of class, race, gender and subcultural identities (Willis 1977; Gilroy 1993; Gottlieb & Wald 1994; Hebdige 1979). There has been an emphasis, particularly latterly, on avoiding essentialist interpretations which would imply for instance that rock is inherently 'male' and thus appeals to males. Rather than proposing a straightforward link, writers such as Negus (1996) and Middleton (1990) have favoured the notion of 'articulation' between music and social grouping:

By adopting this concept of articulation along with a non-essentialist approach to identity, critical questions can be raised about the way that particular cultural forms become connected to specific political agendas and social identities without assuming a necessary link between someone's social labels (black, Latin, lesbian or working class) and a particular type of music.

(Negus 1996: 135)

In this way we are encouraged to explain the association with a musical genre in a more fine-grained way than as a straight correspondence. The approach also leaves more room to explain the adoption of music which goes against expectations. If we take goths, lorry drivers and male homosexuals as random examples, it becomes immediately apparent that whereas we may well be able to think of appropriate musical genres for each group (e.g. death metal, country, opera), these will not be exclusive to, or appeal to every member of each group. There will be subdivisions within groups and indeed the groups can overlap, as can the musical predilections. The non-exclusive nature of subcultures has been indicated by the use of the term 'scene' to indicate a more porous socio-musical entity (Bennett, and Peterson 2004).

Subculture or scene and musical preference are partly chosen (if one allows for a measure of human agency) and partly related to one's generation, sex and class, as well as one's social, ethnic, cultural and religious background. Furthermore, 'inequalities in education are linked to differences in tastes' (Gracyk 1996: 213). To some extent subcultures are 'made' to receive certain individuals who then tend to gravitate towards them and perpetuate the group, which often has its particular associated musical genres and practices. An individual who becomes integrated into the group will become heavily exposed to these which is likely to result in a preference developing for them. In some cases a subculture may be defined by an activity or proclivity which has nothing to do with music, but there can still be associated musical genres and practices (e.g. motorcyclists have had a preference for heavy metal and particular dance moves). In the case of punks, or salsa dancers, the music is the central defining aspect of the subculture,

which nevertheless incorporates a wide range of extra- and paramusical phenomena.

Musics have a wide variety of social applications and the relationships of subcultures to their music may vary as widely as between different tribal societies. Salsa, for instance, is a partner dance and in urban situations a vehicle for meeting members of the opposite sex for liaisons. Samba, on the other hand, is a group activity and functions more as a generator of group cohesion. Musics may be generated within a particular social setting (hip hop) or adopted and adapted to serve or even create a social sub-group (e.g. samba in Europe). The accessibility of a particular music to its potential participants or consumers is partly a function of its *usefulness* to that group of people. Understanding music is much to with knowing what to do with it, with having a use for its 'affordances' (Gibson 1979). Paradoxically the *in*accessibility of a music to other groups or individuals may be one of these uses. This is particularly true of new youth musics, which may at first confound older listeners and thus create an exclusive cultural space for sections of the younger population:

> It is the nature of 'youth' music to articulate, for each generation in its own way, values and issues specific to the time, and it is subject to genre-specific production styles... And every time older generations complain about 'unlistenable' noise.
>
> Mike Howlett [3]

This expresses clearly the value of inaccessibility to members of the new generation or the section of it that makes up a subculture or scene. It is the fact that such music excludes outsiders that is a facet of accessibility to insiders which functions as a point of identification and orientation. Paul Willis made the following pertinent observation about progressive rock:

---

[3] *The Guardian*, 29/8/2006. Mike Howlett (chairman of the Music Producers Guild), "Young bands should be respected - and paid - for their music." P. 27.

The elements of surprise, contradiction and uncertainty in their music - the elements which made it almost threatening to the 'straight' listener - were precisely the elements that were prized by the hippies .

<div align="right">Willis (1978: 160)</div>

Class

Belonging to a musical subculture or scene with a measure of exclusiveness ensures a certain status for young people vis-à-vis peers and other age groups. Inaccessibility can function in other ways to reinforce the status of an audience, confirming it as possessing the wherewithal (money, time, education, taste etc.) to appreciate what others do not. Such views have been proposed notably by Veblen (2005[1899])[4] and Bourdieu (1984). They have also been latterly adapted and developed by Heath and Potter (2004) who have related them to fashion and style, and Peterson and Simkus (1992) who found higher status represented by people being versed in a wider range of cultural product, rather that just a particular, less accessible genre.

Class will be a recurring issue in this thesis because it intersects with musical accessibility in a number of ways. There is the abovementioned relationship between inaccessibility and social status. Another aspect is class as an element of social structure which can have a bearing on the use and consumption of culture. Closely associated with this is the idea of a class as a cultural grouping with its particular practices, habits and predilections. The notion of youth subculture has also frequently been discussed in the context of class (Hebdige 1979; Willis 1977; Hall & Jefferson 1976). Lastly there is the relation of class to political power, struggle and discourse, which will be further dealt with in this chapter. Clearly all these facets of class are interrelated, yet they will make their presence felt at different points of this exploration in their various forms. It is

---

[4] See also Veblen, Thorstein (2004[1899]) *The Theory of the Leisure Class.*
<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext97/totlc11.txt>

impossible to deal with class and musical accessibility in a single unified way because of its multiple implications, yet neither can it be neatly dissected into a number of discrete concepts. Despite this all-pervasiveness of the issue of class, some readings of (late) modernity have drawn attention to processes of fragmentation and individualisation which have appeared to weaken the importance of class structures and identities (Giddens 1991, Beck 2002).

Individualisation

Such approaches, through a recognition of the effects of rapid and far reaching changes in technology and social structures, have lead to an acknowledgement that individual life-style choice has to some extent taken the place of class identification. This does not imply that equality has been achieved but that:

> ...persisting or intensifying inequalities coincide with elements of a no longer traditional, individualized post-class society...If this assessment is correct, a variant of social structure which neither Marx nor Weber foresaw will gain in importance. Class society will pale into insignificance beside an *individualized society of employees*.
>
> (Beck 2002: 39)

The apparent contradiction between 'persisting or intensifying' inequality and the dissolution of class boundaries can be explained by a greater extent of shared culture through media technology. Choice of lifestyle elements such as music becomes at once liberated, more difficult and important, since it is not implied by social position but defines personal identity.

Despite the loosening grip of social strata on individuals and their musical practices in the contemporary developed world, we may ask whether there is not some overarching

'motivation' as Benedict would call it, or ideology, in the non-Marxist sense. One candidate would be the 'choice posture', the aforementioned *Konsumentengewohnheit* itself. This perspective has the levelling effect of reducing every act of musical engagement to a market transaction. However, just as social mobility is not guaranteed, so even the superficial freedom of consumerism is constrained by social factors. One does not necessarily choose to be a lorry driver or single, and while being a member of one of these groups still leaves considerable scope for free choice of music, the relevance of certain aspects of country music and salsa to one's circumstances makes those genres more likely to be accessible, and hence more likely to be chosen. The apparent free choice of music is relativated by the appropriateness of a particular musical genre to one's situation - probably not many grunge fans born before 1950; probably not many scaffolders listen to Schoenberg - and that social situation is not entirely a matter of choice. But within a framework for the operation of musical accessibility consisting of culture, class and subculture, the individual stands not just as a passive entity, but as someone with particular sensibilities, with a project of individuation and of constructing a personal 'role' (Goffman 1971) and with the agency to select and interpret musics in response to their own circumstances and their subjective posture towards them.

Time and fashion

In imagining such a framework of individuals, musics, cultural contexts, options and social structures it must be remembered that the whole is also in motion through time. Tastes change, music changes, cultures change. Generations come and go, as do eras in the arts. An obvious and easily observable manifestation of such diachronicity is fashion change in popular music culture. However similar phenomena exist in other cultural and social spheres (Smelser 1962).

The fashionable is desired because it grants access to a particular part of society. To have 'the look', 'the sound' or the ideas of the time - to belong to the *Zeitgeist* - also makes us

part of the living socio-cultural moment, 'in touch' with current developments of our time and place. Fashion is firmly associated with the popular, accessible and ephemeral as opposed to high culture and art. But how accessible is the fashionable? In terms of the youth culture of developed countries, fashion is not (supposed to be) particularly accessible to the comparatively old. As has already been observed, one of its primary functions is to provide a way for the young to assert and individuate themselves. But even within the 'target' age group, there are formidable barriers to accessibility. Spending power may be one, as fashionable clothes and other items may involve considerable expense. On a physical level, fashionable clothes are by no means always comfortable. Female wearers of pointy-toed stilettos in the 1960s and the first decade of the twentyfirst century would undergo considerable pain in order to look like other fashionably dressed women.

Similarly, in the realm of popular music, we find sounds which are abrasive, abstract, atonal and innovative (e.g. punk, techno), lyrics which are heavily encoded and not easily intelligible for many outside the immediate originating culture (hip hop), packaging which is obscure and arcane (*White Album*) with user-hostile liner notes. All these suggest that neither the fashionable nor the popular are always universally accessible, but that there is often an 'entry fee' to belonging. This may take the form of expense, discomfort, and learning to read, understand, and indeed to like, particular texts. In other words, a young person may have to 'work' to belong to his or her fashion group. Meanings have to be deciphered, negotiated and arrived at in a way which may ironically remind us of Adorno's view that listening to ('serious') 'new music' assumes certain '*Kräfte im Empfangenden*'[5] (strengths in the recipient). Fashionable popular music is accessible in the sense that in its time, people desperately want to access it. It is intelligible to many because it is born of the moment; the audience wants to be part of that moment and will spend the requisite time, money and effort to understand and belong to the movement, the fashion. This is part of the meaning of every fashion: belonging; to the group, to the time

---

[5] Adorno (1997[1963]: 189).

and place, being part of the *new* or the *now* 'thing'. Beyond that there are other meanings which appear obvious in the early days of a movement, but which become more and more diffuse as it progresses and becomes more widely accessed. Long hair in men for instance, seemed to many in the 1960s to be an outrageous affront to the socio-sexual order, eliding important gender distinctions and refusing the posture of the disciplined and disciplining militaristic male. As it became more widely worn by men in all walks of life, its power to communicate resistance, change and hippy values (peace and love) waned and eventually disappeared altogether. In this sense it appears that the more widely used a cultural gesture is, the more denatured its meaning becomes. This may help to explain the cornucopia of ever new fashions and movements. They arrive to forge new meaning when the old significances have become diluted, superannuated tropes. The *passé* fashion is overused, cheapened and, to use the classic elitist pejorative, banal. It is *over*accessible and therefore no longer confers any special or desirable status (Heath & Potter 2004).

Accessibility of music from other places and times

While new fashions present us with one kind of novel experience, the marketing and distribution of music from many parts of the world by the global record industry has made that music accessible, in the physical sense, to many consumers in the developed world. What is intriguing is why that music should also be aesthetically accessible, particularly from the point of view of ethnomusicological discourse, which emphasises the embeddedness of music in culture and the derivation of musical meaning from its cultural sphere. I have previously discussed this issue in a paper on the adoption of samba by groups in Wales (Eisentraut 2001).

There are a number of points which go some way towards explaining the phenomenon of people being drawn to and using music which has no immediate connection with their cultural background:

a) The type of music available as 'world music', is often combined with western pop elements.

b) The proximity of some of this music to the Afro-American styles so dominant in western culture.

c) Certain preconceptions about the origins and uses of those musics (e.g. perceived authenticity).

However this is not sufficient to explain why some Americans want to sing Bulgarian folk song, or why Mongolian throat singing should draw significant European audiences. Is it possible that there is some unmediated communication between musical sound and human being? If not, how do we understand and respond to alien music? Why is it sometimes 'accessible'? The same questions may be asked of our responses to music from the distant past, yet the unearthing and performing of ancient music is a strong current in western art music. Do we 'construct' our own meanings for such alien sounds? If so are these meanings entirely unrelated the original ones?

The interest in music from different cultures demonstrates that listeners are sometimes attracted to what they do not know. Music is not accessible only through familiarity, but also because it engages and interests the recipient. This it sometimes does by incorporating novelty of some kind, which can derive from fashion change, formal innovation or extraneous, or exotic elements. A further point of access is finding some subjective or objective use for a musical style. A foreign music may lend itself to uses and interpretations not readily available in local genres and thus appear accessible to people who are receptive to the resulting meanings and applications.

Early Modernism, Politics and Ethics

Accessibility and early modernism

In the spheres of art and art music the early twentieth century marked the beginning of a series of revolutionary changes, which have made accessibility a contentious and loaded issue. The necessity of the concept was ultimately obviated by the inception of its converse; inaccessibility. The advent of artistic products which were beyond the comprehension of large sections of society came about with the rise of modernism. At a time when social barriers became more porous, and mass culture, transport and education enabled the majority to access books, galleries and music, the creators of cutting edge high culture such as Joyce, Stravinsky and Picasso moved their art beyond the conceptual reach of those who might now have found it within their economic means and social radius:

> In response to the revolt of the masses, intellectuals generated the idea of a natural aristocracy, consisting of intellectuals.
>
> (Carey 1992: 71)

Thus, as the old elite was losing much of its particular power and exclusivity due to social and political changes, a new marker was being forged for a new select group. Carey quotes Pound from 1916 claiming that his new kind of drama would be: 'distinguished, indirect, and symbolic, and having no need of mob or press to pay its way…'.[6] Charles Rosen views the period more from the point of view of the artists, but the trajectory of decreasing accessibility is clearly delineated:

> It must be remembered that the artists of that time knew in advance that each step they took, however small, in the only direction they were convinced did not

---

[6] Loc. cit.

betray their art, would inevitably bring them a still greater distance away from their public.

<div align="right">(Rosen 1975: 15)</div>

Of particular interest from this crucial period in art music is Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances. Active between 1918 and 1921, it was intended to allow the new music good performances and a fair hearing. The hope was to 'give artists and music lovers a real and exact knowledge of modern music'.[7] This is clearly educational and paternalistic in a way that would not be unfamiliar to many other twentieth-century composers who became involved in activities meant to bring the public closer to their own perspective of musical development. Paternalism is confirmed by the assertion that 'specially lacking in lucidity is the public's consciousness of its own needs and wishes'.[8] We might surmise a desire to include and emancipate people but as the name of the Society suggests: '...the performances shall be in all respects private...guests (foreign visitors excepted) shall not be admitted'.[9] This gives us inaccessibility in its purest, most literal form. In the sense in which it is used in Geography and attendant disciplines; meaning physically difficult or impossible to reach.

Alban Berg, the author of the Society's 'prospectus' is clearly acutely aware of the issue of accessibility as he discusses its converse, given as 'obscurity' :

> The attitude of the public toward modern music is affected to an immense degree
> by the circumstance that the impression it receives from that music is inevitably
> one of obscurity. Aim, tendency, intention, scope and manner of expression,
> value, essence, and goal, all are obscure...[10]

---

[7] From the prospectus of the Society for Private Musical Performances, written by Alban Berg given in Auner, Joseph (2003) *A Schoenberg Reader* Yale University Press, New Haven pp. 150-153.
[8] Loc. cit.
[9] Loc. cit.
[10] Loc. cit.

A key strategy in combating this obscurity for the select few who were members of the Society[11] was repetition of performances, and secret programmes, so that hearing works repeatedly could not be avoided by the audience.[12] Repetition makes the strange familiar and can render the obscure accessible. This process is engagingly portrayed by von Kralik, reporting on a series of rehearsals open to Society members:

> Along with Schoenberg and fifteen valiant musicians, a no less valiant adventurous flock of listeners tackled the vile beast. One cacophonous passage after another was tackled, and the muscular power of one's aural apparatus was steeled by the struggle with its sharp points, its hard surfaces, and its asperities. And, even before the day of the tenth and final rehearsal, the players were played-in, the listeners listened-in. The worst had been overcome. The terrifying apparitions looked less full of menace, their appearance had taken on a new mildness, their way of living a new accessibility. One began to feel thoroughly at home and cheerful in their company. [13]

The issue of resistance to new work is also reflected in another, earlier, 'prospectus'; that for the Society of Creative Musicians which mounted concerts in 1904-5. The authorship of this manifesto is uncertain[14] but with Schoenberg as one of the founders and coming as it does at a time of great artistic innovation it is illuminating nevertheless. Much is made of the resistance that 'anything new' in musical life has had to overcome and it is stated that; 'All progress, all development, leads from the simple to the complex'. (Both these assertions will be addressed in later chapters). We again find a belief in the need for familiarisation with new work and the 'prospectus' closes with the following plea:

---

[11] 320 members in 1919. Ibid.

[12] In the early to mid 1970s progressive rock was extremely popular amongst British grammar school boys. Many would lend vinyl L.P.s to their friends, often with the advice that repeated auditions would be necessary to appreciate the music. There is also the German expression: *Schönhören* a verb which means 'to make beautiful by [repeated] listening'.

[13] In Auner's preface to his extract from the 'prospectus'. Ibid.

[14] Ibid.: p. 42, possibly written by composer and conductor Oskar Posa. The society was founded by Schoenberg and Zemlinsky and was a forerunner of the Society for Private Musical Performances.

As for the public, let them judge the works presented to them, not by whether they are easier or harder to comprehend, nor by how suave, or otherwise, their language is, but solely and simply *by the degree of artistry manifest in them; by the magnitude of the artistic achievement these works record.* [15]

This places the onus firmly on the listener to appreciate the greatness of the composer rather than expecting the work to be amenable in any way. Even the obvious desire to communicate to the elite audience inherent in the Society for Private Musical Performances was on condition that such communication was strictly one-way. All applause, 'demonstrations of disapproval' and even thanks, were banned (Auner 2003: 151-2).

The reaction of the musical avant-garde to the highly critical and yet attentive concert going public of early twentieth-century Vienna, was to withdraw into a protected environment. In many ways new western 'serious' music has been in such a greenhouse ever since, in the form of the academy and public subsidy. Rather than being faced with howls of criticism as were many early performances of modernist work, the heirs of this tradition are now more usually met with a wall of indifference. Certainly discussion of new work in the UK is highly marginal outside academic circles. This is particularly marked in music, visual art having retained its ability to provoke reactions, positive and negative, in the public arena to a much greater extent, as media coverage of the work of British artists such as Tracy Emin, Damien Hirst and Antony Gormley shows.

Accessibility and political discourse

If creative expressions are to contribute to public discourse, and influence the cultural

---

[15] Ibid.: 45, my italics.

climate, having an impact outside a small circle of devotees clearly matters greatly, and accessibility will have a bearing on this. The analyses of the Frankfurt School insist that artistic work has political significance and again accessibility is at issue. Let us examine the relationship between musical accessibility and some of the main political currents of the twentieth century. This is an area shot through with remarkable paradoxes. In western Europe and the United States, progressive modernist art was associated with the intellectual left (most notably the Frankfurt School itself). This makes sense in so far as the Nazi regime, which was implacably opposed to the left in all its shades, supported retrogressive, figurative, 'volksy' art and tonal music (Potter 2001).[16] Furthermore, older high art, which fell into these categories, was regarded as bourgeois and Marxists are sworn to oppose the bourgeoisie, which could be done by shocking it with provocative and inaccessible works of art.

So far there is a certain amount of logic in these oppositions. However, contradictions soon become apparent. In the West it was evident that the working class, on whose side the left supposedly stood, found the modernist avant-gardes even more impenetrable than their bourgeois 'betters'. In fact it was a particular educated segment of the middle class which appreciated new work (as emphasised by Bourdieu 1984). When we come to look beyond the Iron Curtain, we find that after an initial flirtation with progressive artists in the years after the soviet revolution, the eastern bloc despots, particularly Stalin, favoured a conservative and unchallenging mode of propagandist creativity (socialist realism) not dissimilar to that promoted by Nazi Germany. Thus the apparent disparity between far right and far left approaches to art disappears when we look at the actual regimes and their policies.

From the middle of the twentieth century left wing intellectuals in the West became more and more careful to differentiate themselves from the 'actual existing socialism' of the Soviet Bloc. However such a position became largely untenable after the collapse of the

---

[16] What the regime did not appreciate was shown in the famous exhibition: '*Entartete Kunst*' consisting of modernist work.

Soviet system, partly because the whole project seemed somehow bankrupt and also because the full horror and cynicism of the communist regimes emerged (e.g. Figes 1996). The recent study of Mao by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday (2005) confirms that in China during the cultural revolution all art except for the most sycophantic, obvious (i.e. largely accessible at the level of perception) and politically 'pure' was banned on pain of torture and even death.

Many of the great creative iconoclasts of the last century such as Stravinsky or Picasso, resisted political categorisation and are not easily grouped together under any ideological umbrella. Nor are their less experimental colleagues for that matter; Vaughan Williams, to whom a later chapter is dedicated, has been regarded as a rather conservative composer, but was left leaning in his political attitude (Harrington 1989). What emerges then is a confusing picture. Difficult and experimental art has been associated with and supported by those on the intellectual left, but has been shunned by the proletariat which the left idealises. The supposedly diametrically opposed ideologies of extreme right and left had, in their actual incarnations, quite similar policies; supporting the conservative, tonal, and figurative.[17] The avant-garde has had as one of its aims the intention of shocking the bourgeoisie, but its supporters and apologists are almost entirely educated and middle class. Prime amongst these have been critical theorists such as Adorno and Horkheimer, who condemn accessible popular culture for abetting capitalist exploitation and the instrumentalisation of the individual. Bourdieu (1984), no less of the left, takes the view that knowledge of high culture, including the avant-gardes, represents 'cultural capital' with which the upper classes confirm their status and keep the proletariat in its place. In fact it is easily possible to portray (experimental) modernist art and music as elitist (Carey 1992) and this is in no small part due to its perceived inaccessibility.

It is the widely espoused aim of public arts bodies and funders in the UK to make culture accessible, and frequently funding is made dependent on an effort in this direction. While

---

[17] Both also tried to suppress jazz and supported particular kinds of folk art.

such an attitude has its roots partly in the reforming ideas of democratic socialists such as R.H. Tawney, it is the political right, with a Thatcherist determination to see proof of a return on public money spent, which has pushed arts policy further in this direction. It is clear then that the correlation between musical accessibility and political *couleur* is all but clear.

One last perspective on the issue deserves attention at this point. There is a less literal correlation between Marxism and modernism (and inaccessibility) based on a shared meta-narrative of historical progress. The idea that humanity is destined to strive for improvement through continual revolution contains within it also a disdain for traditional forms which may appear natural but are perceived as the chains of ideology. Thus old social and family structures are as much candidates for liquidation as melody and harmony. Here perhaps there is a parallel between politics and accessibility that can be sustained, but this is to take the argument into a purely conceptual realm. In practice all the above qualifications and contradictions apply.

Accessibility, aesthetics and moral judgements

While the connection with politics turns out to be complex, there are other frequently implied relationships to be found between accessibility and inaccessibility in music and oppositions such as 'art - popular', 'high - low', 'pure - vulgar', 'demanding - facile' and so on. Bourdieu's analysis (1979: 486-7) uses the work of Kant and Schopenhauer to demonstrate how disgust at art which 'offers pleasures that are too immediately accessible' is juxtaposed with that which denies or at least delays pleasure, giving a higher value that implies freedom (from blindly seeking sensory satisfaction), distance and disinterestedness. The mind – body opposition is not far from this, with links to religious asceticism and denial of the body for the sake of a more spiritual existence. Insofar as art has replaced religion in secular society, as a repository of higher ideals and a meditative life, this is a cogent connection.

It is a small step then to an absolute moral judgement that condemns the accessible as sensual and venal, while valorising the difficult as good and edifying. Denial of the body, as corrupt and prone to the vagaries of desire is as much a part of this ethical position as the protestant work ethic with its suspicion of anything gained without the requisite effort. The reception of 'pure' art thus becomes a recurring re-run of the Fall, where we resist the temptation of the apple in a way Eve would not. In a more worldly context the refusal of easy sensual satisfaction in the consumption of expressions which pander to our base desires, places us in the realm of the 'civilised' as opposed to the 'barbaric'. Bourdieu expresses clearly the position which he also criticises, when he says that:

Pure pleasure - ascetic, empty pleasure which implies the renunciation of pleasure, pleasure purified of pleasure – is predisposed to become a symbol of moral excellence, and the work of art is a test of ethical superiority, an indisputable measure of the capacity for sublimation which defines the truly human man.

(Bourdieu 1979: 491)

Whereas such attitudes remained dominant during the initial growth of social democracy as a global political and intellectual movement, and even received ideological reinforcement from thinkers working in the Marxist tradition, it was inevitable that some would question the dismissal of the accessible, which was aligned with the popular:

Indeed, even if one assumes the worst about popular culture, the attention and affection it receives merit explanation, which is why labor historians were among the first to explore the popular arts in any detail. So were more theoretically minded writers keenly attuned to the gaps in the visions of preceding generations of intellectuals. At its best, such work testified to the democratic spirit that has animated U.S. scholarship since the 1960s.

(Cullen 1996: 12)

This 'democratic spirit', together with a desire on the part of thinkers of the emerging new left of the 1960s to be identified with working class interests, has underpinned an egalitarian readjustment of aesthetics, the repercussions of which are still working themselves out. At this point it is relevant to recognise that this change of attitude towards popular art suggests an inversion of the value system which equates high art with moral superiority. The popular now becomes that which is neglected (by the establishment) and deserves to be rehabilitated. Its humble roots are its virtue, they contain the goodness, the 'authenticity' hallmarked by poverty and oppression.[18] It is not difficult to discern this slant in much ethnographic writing. The social democratic concern with universal education, and the attendant desire to bring (high) culture to the masses, at once acknowledges the received ethical hierarchies of the arts, but in the same breath dedicates itself to enabling access to art for the (often unwilling) masses. Thus we arrive at a point where the accessible, with all the possible seduction, corporeality and baseness it may contain, becomes the domain to strive for.

The authority of 'high' culture is further undermined by the emergence of the 'postmodern condition' both as way of life and as a system of ideas:

> If popular cultural signs and media images are taking over in defining our sense of reality for us, and if this means that style takes precedence over content, then it becomes more difficult to maintain a meaningful distinction between art and popular culture. There are no longer any agreed and inviolable criteria which can serve to differentiate art from popular culture.
>
> (Strinati 1995: 225)

Through the postmodern refusal of moral authority, meta-narratives and single centre systems, the 'rehabilitation of the vernacular' (Matthews 1989: 240) has been integrated

---

[18] This could apply both from a Christian and socialist perspective.

into the great landscape of equivalence and the refusal of value judgements. Whether in anthropology when studying other cultures, or in art when looking at the popular, the default position is now that all is equal and equally valid. Everything has to be judged from inside its own context. This is in conscious contrast to the colonial ethnocentric attitudes of previous generations. However, Islamist terrorism is facilitating the work of the new right in promoting a 'refusal to refuse' judgement. The multicultural approach is no longer tenable when difference is seen as fermenting deadly malcontents. Whether this will lead to a pushing back of the cultural equivalence position on a broader front remains to be seen. For now we can recognise that alongside the traditional hierarchical view of art there exists an egalitarian one and even a grass roots perspective which valorises the popular above the high-brow and refined. Thus inaccessibility and accessibility, insofar as they are commensurate with such categories, cannot simply be placed in a high – low ethical relation, as this – in true relativistic style – will depend on the position from which such a judgement is made.

In terms of the present work, notions of cultural and moral superiority attached to musics and their relative accessibility will recur in a number of different contexts. In Brazil, as in British arts policy, accessibility is valued positively because it is seen to further social inclusion. Vaughan Williams championed the espousal of an arguably moribund (but 'virtuous') folk idiom to grant access to sophisticated music to the English populace. Punk rockers saw progressive rock as the decadent and indefensible outgrowth of cosy middle class hippydom. Inevitably the web of connections is complex, but it is hoped that the juxtaposition of different contexts will provide useful insights into this contentious area. If the objection is raised that one cannot compare the value derived from 'pure' art music and that of Brazilian *Carnaval*, the riposte would be that music, and the (moral) worth of music comes in a myriad of forms and yet issues of accessibility transect them all. Looking at one situation may further refine or indeed (usefully) call into question the conclusions drawn from another.

Nature, Nurture and Psychology

The blank slate and the empty signifier

At the heart of the 'art is new art'[19] vs. 'new art isn't art' debate is a dialectic that juxtaposes certain traditional forms of expression (harmony, representation) with modernist values of progress. The conservative and often non-specialist side of this dichotomy has long been out of favour in the humanities partly because it usually contains more than a hint of essentialism. The kind of essentialism meant here supposes that art has to have certain elements in order to be art, that it is not entirely free to be or become whatever an artist desires and that it is bound by certain limits. This position may be viewed in relation to the use of the term essentialism in aesthetics, where it frames the discussion of whether it is possible to formulate defining (or essential) features of art. Philosophical discourse differentiates between the 'essential and accidental' properties of things, where the former are those without which things would cease to exist or be what they are. Accidental properties on the other hand can be temporary attributes, or ones which only appertain in certain situations. In philosophy a distinction is also made between 'quiddity' and 'haecceity' - 'whatness' and 'thisness'. Quiddity refers to the quality that defines a category, whereas haecceity is the quality essential to an individual thing that sets it apart from the category it belongs to.[20] The use (or avoidance) of the concept of essences in cultural studies has been referred to earlier in this chapter. Here questions of quiddity regarding groups of people belonging to a sex, race, culture or class are at issue and the question of whether certain attributes necessarily appertain to (all) members of a particular group. At this level it is clear that there is a thin line between essentialism and prejudice, although at the most literal (and perhaps tautological) level it is difficult to avoid conceding that males have male physical and genetic characteristics, or that French people have a connection with France.

---

[19] Schoenberg wrote: 'Art means New Art' (Schoenberg 1975: 115).
[20] *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* (1996) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

One can discern a thread running through these different concerns with essence and they arise in the present study in several guises. At this point two manifestations of essentialism of particular interest to us must be introduced. One concerns musical material, the other human beings. In the former, the essentialist tendency is most clearly represented by a defence of triadic harmony with reference to the harmonic series as proposed by Rameau and later supported by Hindemith and even Webern.[21] Hindemith describes the major triad as:

…to the trained and the naive listener alike one of the most impressive phenomena of nature, simple and elemental as rain, snow and wind. Music, as long as it exists, will always take its departure from the major triad and return to it. The musician cannot escape it any more than the painter his primary colors, or the architect his three dimensions. In composition the triad can never be avoided for more than a short time without completely confusing the listener...In the world of tones, the triad corresponds to the force of gravity. It serves as our constant guiding point, our unit of measure, and our goal, even in those sections of compositions which avoid it.

(Hindemith 1945: 22)

Essentialism in this context suggests that there is something inherently musical, appealing and communicative to humans in triadic harmony, because it is natural. Schoenberg expresses a view directly opposed to this:

Tonality has been revealed as no postulate of natural conditions, but as a utilization of natural possibilities; it is a product of art, a product of the technique of art. Since tonality is no condition imposed by nature, it is meaningless to insist

---

[21] In Webern's thinking the twelve-note system was a natural system in the same precise sense as tonality had been for the theorists of the eighteenth century, and the difference was merely that music based on twelve notes utilized a greater number of overtones.

on preserving it because of natural law.[22]

<div align="right">(Schoenberg 1975: 284)</div>

Thus he claims the link between the harmonic series and tonality is no more than what Johnson calls 'the traditional association of the natural with the conventional' (1999: 42). This corresponds to the semiotic view of language as a system of empty signs. A word (or signifier) has no meaning until it is given such by being related by learning or convention to a signified idea. A similar approach has long prevailed in music, as far as extramusical meaning was acknowledged at all. Where a contrary argument was mounted, such as by Deryck Cooke (1959), it was used by other authors mainly as a cautionary example of how far one can go astray (e.g. Budd 185: 122-3, Nattiez 1990: 18). There are manifold reasons for the predominance of the 'empty signifier' position regarding music. Reference to linguistics and semiotics is one. Scott, while not claiming that music is a language, argues that 'music and language are both signifying practices that make use of arbitrary signifiers' (2003: 9). (Scott's circumspect formulation 'make use of' means that there is strictly speaking no disagreement with this here. The contention is simply that there are also other processes in operation where music is concerned.) The underwriting of the modernist project is another, since the idea that eventually its music will reach a wider public is helped by the notion that the sounds are fundamentally a matter of interpretation and familiarity. It also supports a relativist argument which deems all sounds equal until they are invested with significance by a cultural system. This is convenient for ethnomusicologists and popular music scholars, who usually research *extra*musical phenomena in great detail and have to implicitly defend their musical subject matter from unfavourable comparisons with art music.

Returning to the musical material, we must further differentiate between measurable

---

[22] Schoenberg's position on this was not always so dogmatic. Elsewhere he concedes the natural power of tonality but insisted that it could be overcome. For instance: 'The appeal to (tonality's) origin in nature can be refuted if one recalls that just as tones pull toward triads, and triads toward tonality, gravity pulls us down toward the earth; yet an airplane carries us up and away from it' (1975: 262). Interestingly both he and Hindemith use gravity as an analogy.

essential qualities and those which can only be humanly perceived. Thus a major triad's relatedness to the harmonic series is easily demonstrated, and the volume of a sound, or the attack and decay of a note, can be recorded and graphically represented. However, to claim that 'minor chords are sad' is to ascribe emotion to vibrations of the air and is only reasonable if it is taken to mean that it makes one *feel* sad. Yet both the measurable and perceivable qualities point to the human component of the essentialist view, which would claim that we are predisposed to responding to certain sounds in particular ways. Whereas Blacking (1973) allows for a general musicality as part of the human condition, an extrapolation of such essentialism raises the question of particular hardwired elements in the reception of music and indeed in musical ability. (The acknowledgement of different individual levels of musical talent is commonplace in music education). Here we are approaching one of the difficulties of this argument because if this is the case, the hard wiring may vary between individuals, social and ethnic groups, and ultimately between races. If musicality is partly racially determined, so might other things be, such as intelligence. This is clearly dangerous territory and the laudable mainstay underlying much theory in social anthropology and the arts has been an unshakeable faith in ultimate human equivalence and adaptability, with nurture having the upper hand over nature and culture over genetics. In the study of popular music there has also been a consistent move against related forms of essentialism:

This concerns a shift from *essentialist* ideas about cultural identity - the notion that individuals of a particular social type possess certain essential characteristics and that these are found expressed in particular cultural practices - towards the idea that cultural identities are not fixed in any essential way...

(Negus: 1996: 100)

It is *not* the intention here to take issue with such a position as the concern is rather with essential *human* and *musical* attributes, it does however help to illustrate how essentialism became anathema. The human starts out as a *tabula rasa*, before being acculturated and moulded, the opposite view is dangerous because it is ultimately linked

to racism, sexism and a raft of discredited, misconceived and repulsive theories and practices from phrenology to eugenics.

However there are two strong reasons for holding one's nose and admitting the pariah to the debate. One is that, as any open-minded examination of the nature/nurture question soon discovers, much in human life is the result of a combination of both, rather than a one-sided product of one or the other. The second reason is that while the humanities have promoted what Halton refers to as 'the etherialized view of culture or mind as subjectivistic and set apart from nature' (1992: 62), sceptical of physical determinants and preferring to concentrate on what is learned in culture, advances in genetics have been so monumental in recent years, that in the biological sciences genetic explanations have made major inroads into areas formerly at the intersection of the humanities and science, such as psychology and psychiatry. A chasm has long existed between cultural theory that avails itself freely of Freudian ideas and empirical psychologists who toe a strict line of logical positivism. Keen to protect their scientific credentials the latter frequently dismiss Freud's theories as so much hocus-pocus. The mapping of the human genome has done more than aggravate this division. It has made it insupportable. Cross assures us that an 'evolutionary perspective' allows for 'a more rounded account [which] interprets mature adult behaviours as shaped by both biology and culture' (2003: 24). A polemic on this point is provided in Pinker (2002) who also emphasises that individual differences are often found to be more marked than those between groups. Cross concurs with this view:

> ...contemporary evolutionary thinking offers comfort neither to genetic determinists nor to racists. Evolution is currently seen as impacting on human mind and behaviour not by shaping or determining complex behaviours directly but by providing general constraints on how minds interact with their environments.
>
> (Cross 2003 : 21)

This lessens the risk of supplying ammunition to racism or sexism. It is clear that whereas

musics are strongly associated with particular groups of people, including races, preferences cut across most categories. Thus jazz has been identified as rooted in the *Afro*-American experience, and this is a well supported historical reading. However it is incontrovertible that individuals from most backgrounds are attracted to various forms of jazz and come to understand, compose and perform it at the highest level.

The importance of developments in genetics for a discussion of the accessibility of music is to open up the field of analysis beyond the collision of the empty signifier with the blank slate. The foregone conclusion of such an approach would be that people understand and like the music that they have learned to ascribe certain meanings to. The intention is not to ignore such processes, but to extend the discussion by allowing for further possibilities in music reception. One might be what Barthes called 'motivated' signs(1990[1967]: 216-7). A motivated sign (or signifier) has physical characteristics which mimic or suggest a signified and may therefore be meaningful to the uninitiated. Thus a lullaby may be structurally analogous to a physiological state of sleep. Other options are human predispositions, such as for being able to better remember certain kinds of musical structure, such as short phrases as opposed to long ones. Further, one might allow for Gibson's already mentioned 'affordances', which are aspects of the (in this case musical) environment which by their structural properties lend themselves to certain uses or interpretations, in a similar way to a chair being the right shape for sitting on. Uses might be dancing, meditating or making love, interpretations may be 'aggressive' or 'soothing'.

An essentialist approach would assume that there is music which is more accessible than other music on an absolute scale, one independent of experience or training. Hindemith would probably claim such accessibility for music containing major triads. This exploration does not subscribe to such a position uncritically, but is determined to explore what Nattiez refers to as 'the great diversity of possible dimensions of musical meaning [which] links music to other human facts - biological, social, and cultural' (1987: 102). The aim then is to examine the web of possible attraction, repulsion, seduction,

predisposition, culture and education that may be involved in making humans choose to access one music rather than another.

Musical universals?

Middleton (1990: 172-5) discusses levels of communicative musical code such as 'norms', 'dialects' and 'styles'. He also describes Stefani's musical code hierarchy as 'perhaps the best available' and the ideas and research quoted in this section include and operate in conjunction with Stefani's *General Codes* level of musical competence which:

> ...covers all basic categorisation schemas, applying to music and other modes of symbolization: sensorial-perceptual schemas (high/low, and so on); logical schemas (same/different and so on); formal/textural schemas (rounded/pointed; smooth/rough, and so on). This 'anthropological' level is theoretically open to all members of the human species.
>
> (Middleton 1990: 175)

Some of the processes explored take place at an even more physiological level, but most are at the interface of biological and psychological functioning.

Gestalt psychology

The study of perception, psychoacoustics and musical perception in particular can add to an understanding of possible constraints and features of musical accessibility in terms of listening, understanding and engaging. One of the formative perception theories is Gestalt psychology, founded by Max Wertheimer, which demonstrates a human tendency to organise sensory information in certain interpretative ways; grouping, completing,

continuing and selecting stimuli in the brain.[23] Jay Dowling (1994) points out the relevance of Gestalt theory to melodic perception, using such concepts as proximity, good continuation, and similarity. The case is made by demonstrating that melody recognition is made more difficult by displacing pitches into different octaves, thus breaking up the contour.

> To perceive a melody, we must perceive a coherence within the sequence of pitches that make up the melody. We group sounds according to various perceptual and cognitive organisational mechanisms.
>
> (Dowling 1994: 175)

These mechanisms contribute to how we perceive features such as contour, timbre, tempo, rhythm and dynamics, and involve a two-way process. Firstly we are inclined to impose organisational structure on what we perceive and secondly understanding is facilitated if the perceived stimuli lend themselves to being thus organised; if they display at least suggestions of structural organisation which the brain can complete. This clearly has a bearing on perceptual musical accessibility since stimuli which evade mental bunching and binding will be more difficult to remember and interpret. While there is in Gestalt theory a clear implication of an inherent tendency to mentally group and organise sensory information, the actual form of the structures the brain uses are likely to have a learned component:

> A key defines a set of more or less expected pitches within the range of possibilities. When a melody follows those expectations, it is easier to follow and to remember.
>
> (Dowling 1994: 181)

---

[23] Boree, George (2000) *Gestalt Psychology.* <http://www.ship.edu/~cgboeree/gestalt.html>

Memory

The close association between 'following', and remembering in this explanation brings us to another pertinent psychological sub-discipline; the study of memory. Cognitive psychologists separate memory into:

1. Echoic memory and early processing

2. Short-term memory

3. Long-term memory

Echoic memory is the immediate trace of raw stimuli in physiological systems. It is on this that early processing can act in the initial 'perceptual categorisation' processes of 'feature extraction' and 'perceptual binding' which display some of the fundamental Gestalt principles (Snyder 2000: 4). Short-term memory overlaps with momentary conscious awareness and constitutes what was contained in that awareness a few seconds earlier. Capacity here is small. Around seven units can usually be retained, such as a six figure phone number, or perhaps a longer string of numbers which can be mentally broken up into a smaller number of groups, such as dates. What passes through short-term memory is soon forgotten unless it is a) particularly salient, b) related to items held in long-term memory, c) rehearsed or repeated. Repetition obviously relates closely to issues of musical form and structure, which are usually defined around reiterative sequences (ABA, AABA, ABABCABB). The connection with long-term memory arises by a process of comparison with remembered constellations known as 'pattern recognition'. Here the connection is more likely one with cultural experience and learned expectations. Long-term memory does not only foreground patterns previously remembered when we encounter them in an unusual context (e.g. a familiar word in a foreign language), but can move mundane experiences to the background of awareness through the process of habituation (such as ceasing to hear traffic outside one's window). The process of habituation (more fully discussed in Chapter 4) suggests that unchanging stimuli may lead

to a preference, or at least a heightened perception of novel patterns.

Even though these memory categories are universal in human brain functioning, their precise action is not therefore identical in everyone, nor are all the processes described pre-hardwired in every detail. Snyder differentiates between unconscious 'primitive grouping' occurring at the early processing stage, and 'top-down grouping' which 'involves long term memory and is dependent on experience, learning and musical culture' (2000: 33). The former, primitive, grouping effects however, appear to be 'remarkably consistent across different individuals, which suggests that they are not learned, but are innate, the result of evolution' (p. 32). The two levels are highly interdependent as Snyder points out:

> All learned groupings are formed from features that were originally primitively grouped, This makes primitive groupings especially important when dealing with materials that are unfamiliar because it enables long-term memory schemas to be built up out of basic features.
>
> (2000: 33)

Memory employs the grouping and structuring processes described by Gestalt theory to construct hierarchical systems which allow the small amount of information we are able to retain in short term memory (often referred to as 7+/-2 items) to be integrated into pyramidal networks of around 3000 items (Snyder 2000: 55). Thus it would appear that the intelligibility of unfamiliar music is partly a function of how readily it lends itself to being organised or grouped by innate brain processes.

Evolutionary psychology

McDermott and Hauser (2005: 29) refer to much speculation in the literature regarding the adaptive value of human musicality which appears to have 'no obvious benefits for those who partake of it'. Musical functions with survival (and therefore evolutionary)

value have been postulated in areas such as social cohesion, courtship, religion and war. Darwin (1988[1871]) saw the value of music for courtship and founded this on the observation that many animals use vocalisations in this way. Indeed if musical activity is instinctive in humans, then one would expect to find evidence of its appropriate application as much in the present as in the speculative mists of our origins. Today, the importance of music and attendant dance in romance and sex (and vice versa) is compellingly all-pervasive, from hip-hop dance moves, to song lyrics of most genres. Furthermore procreation provides the nexus where evolutionary adaptations act most directly. Being able to charm a mate by singing and consequently producing offspring is a more direct way of ensuring the passing on of genes than many a more 'practical' ability. In the same way that the extravagant plumage of birds of paradise is the direct result of reproductive competition, so it is equally possible that musicality evolved for similar ends.[24]

Within the theoretical ambit of innate musical abilities lies the possibility that capacities and constraints which determine our musical predilections and activities evolved to serve different ends, such as language, and that music is thus a by-product or 'exaptation' of such capabilities. This concept has only a partial bearing on perceptual accessibility since constraints are constraints and preferences are preferences, whether they evolved musically or for other purposes. Of more particular interest here is what such constraints and preferences might be. In order to winnow out cultural and learned aspects researchers have had recourse to infant and cross-cultural studies to determine which, if any, features of human interaction with music are universal and inherited.

Summarising such research Justus and Hustler (2005: 11) have identified a number of key areas in music recognition which are likely to have an innate component. One of these is the 'perceived similarity of pitches separated by octaves and other simple ratios'. The ability to privilege both consecutive and simultaneous pitch relationships of fifths, fourths

---

[24] See also: Miller, G.F. (2000) *The Mating Mind: How Sexual Choice Shaped the Evolution of Human Nature.* New York: Doubleday.

and octaves develops in the early months of life and appears to be consistent across cultures. McDermott and Hauser (2005: 45) also cite research which suggests that infants more easily remember melodies made up of simple intervals than 'atonal' ones not based on a key and including dissonant intervals. In the area of rhythm infant listeners perceive and remember groupings and are sensitive to tempo changes from as early as 2 months. The abilities to group events and to 'extract' temporal regularity have been posited as possible universals (Drake 1998).

Another likely innate ability is that of registering melodic contour rather than specific pitches. In other words the *shape* is remembered even if a sequence is transposed or individual notes changed. When this is done but the contour is preserved, infants are still able to recognise it. This concurs with findings which suggest that scale and contour processing are distinct (Justus and Hustler 2005: 11). Related to this is the universal tendency to hear pitch as relative rather than absolute:

> ...the centrality of relative pitch suggests a role for an innately specified auditory mechanism for encoding stimuli in terms of the distances between pitches.
>
> (McDermott and Hauser 2005: 33).

Theoretically different musical systems have differing numbers of subdivisions of the octave. The Western tradition now recognises 12 in equal temperament, but there are more if the view is taken into account that the 'same note' can, and arguably should, be pitched differently by singers and string players when functioning as a minor third rather than a leading note. However in practice, in any one particular piece, heptatonic and pentatonic scales tend to be used in most cultures, with unequal interval sizes giving each note a unique position in the sequence of pitches. While tuning systems vary, there tends to be a tonal hierarchy, privileging certain tones in the scale over others (frequently the fourth and fifth) with experimental subjects across different cultures preferring tones within the scale to those outside it once the scale is established in memory. The tendency

towards five or seven note modes interestingly coincides with the 7+/-2 constraint of short-term memory.

Justus and Hustler summarise that:

> The currently available research in these areas suggests that the strongest candidates [for evolved innate constraints] include the special status of the octave and perfect fifth, pitch processing relative to scales and contours, basic principles of grouping and meter and unequal interval sizes in scales and the tonal hierarchies that result from them.
>
> (2005: 15)

McDermott and Hauser broadly concur with this view, concluding that:

> In our view there is suggestive evidence that, at least to some extent the structure of music is constrained by innate features of the brain.
>
> (2005: 51)

Deep structure

A classic opposition between nature and nurture approaches to human abilities has existed between the strict behaviourism of B. F. Skinner and Noam Chomsky's concept of generative grammar. The former's position was broadly that everything is learned through experience, particularly by way of punishment and reward. Chomsky, who is a linguist, claims that underneath the surface variation in language, and between different languages, there is a 'universal grammar'. Emphasising the existence of similar parts of speech in the world's languages rather than their syntactical variations, Chomsky argues that the brain is not only predisposed to learn language, but that it is hard wired to learn language within particular parameters (Pinker 2002: 37-8). A connection could be made between this

approach and cultural variation in music, which also exhibits fundamental commonalities. The idea of deep and surface structure is clearly related to structuralist concepts of culture and a relationship has also been noted between this approach and Schenkerian analysis of tonal music, which reduces surface expressions to a simplified underlying skeleton (Aiello 1994, Lerdahl & Jackendoff 1983, and Bernstein 1976).

Lullabies

An intriguing example of research that is both developmental and inter-cultural into a concrete musical form is the work of Sandra Trehub, Anna Unyk and their associates in the area of lullabies.[25] These have a number of universal features such as slow tempo, considerable repetition and a preponderance of descending intervals to which infants respond favourably, particularly when performed in an 'infant-directed' manner. 'Infant-directed' singing differs from normal performance by being higher in pitch and slower with a particular timbre and vibrato. Listeners can differentiate (blindly) between two performances of the same lullaby when one has been sung to a child and the other has not.

This is a compelling example of a musical practice which, according to such research, appears to be universal in and unique to humans. Yet if we classed this as a utilitarian music (for soothing infants) with certain apt textural, melodic and rhythmic features which mimic the desired physical and psychological state in musical form, then it could perhaps stand alongside others, such as 'dance music', 'war music' and 'love music' all of which might be found to display equivalent features across different cultures.

Identification of such commonalities would support notions of the 'naturalness' of music as opposed to culturalist approaches which emphasise learned aspects which are particular to a specific context. Clearly in the 'natural' scenario, accessibility would

---

[25] Various papers cited in McDermott & Hauser 2005: 33-34.

depend on the extent to which music conformed to the inherited preponderances of human perception, whereas in the 'cultural' one, prior experience would be crucial. It should be reiterated however that it is not the intention of the present study to present a partisan case. In the light of the evidence referred to above it appears highly plausible that there are both innate and learned components involved in the perception of music. It follows that some music may be more natural than other music and that this 'naturalness' may be akin to accessibility.

Summary

This chapter has raised a number of issues in the cultural and social sphere which have a bearing on how music is accessed, understood and used. It has been emphasised that these issues impinge on each other in complex ways, but that they also have to be seen in conjunction with the individualised and individuating self, which in the context of modern and late modern trends appears to be gaining in relative importance. The latter part of the chapter has reviewed a number of well documented phenomena of human perception and information processing which point to the existence of a range of hardwired psycho-physiological parameters which are likely to have constraining effects on music perception.

The term essentialism has arisen in relation first to subcultural identities, and second to questions of 'naturalness' in musical perception. The exploration of this thesis deals specifically with processes involved in adopting (or rejecting) new or 'alien' musical genres and it is not proposed that these are determined by racial or gender characteristics. However, a somewhat different sense of essentialism is inherent in the notion of human limitations and preponderances in musical perception, and the acceptance of the possibility that these may to some extent be genetically determined. In this sense it is argued that a measure of essentialism is permissible. Some reasons for the circumspection in the humanities concerning essentialism have been traced and set against progress in the

biological sciences and psychology, which has demonstrated genetic components in many aspects of human development and behaviour.

The main documentary example of the chapter involved attitudes to performance and the audience of the early musical modernists in Vienna. Interestingly they reacted to the problems of audience reception of their music by staging concerts which were physically inaccessible due to the restrictive approach to admissions. The artistic trajectory of increasing romantic chromaticism eventually denaturing tonality to the point where it had to be abandoned is part of the musicological narrative of that historical moment. The changing social circumstances that lead to art and music furnishing a new kind of exclusivity have been referred to. But why was modernist music inaccessible; simply because it was new? Would ordinary people eventually catch up and learn to love the emancipation of dissonance? These questions will arise again in the course of this enquiry, but in the context of this chapter it may pointed out that the twelve tone method that was the culmination of early musical modernism breaks with a number of the perceptual musical constraints discovered by music psychologists: perceptible melodic contours; the memory parameter of 7 +/- 2 units; easily groupable rhythmic figures; a scale of 7+/-2 pitches with varying distances between them; a hierarchy amongst the pitches; privileging of octave, fourth and/or fifth. All of these are specifically banned in tone row serialism by way of liberating humanity and music from archaic limitations. Looked at from this perspective it is not surprising that accessibility suffered and that music in this tradition struggles to find an audience to this day. One pertinent question is whether the inaccessibility of the new music was a by-product of artistic developments or whether, as Carey (1992) suggests, it was actually an intended effect which enabled and encouraged the identification of an intellectual elite. Such a reading would be compatible with the ideas of Veblen (2005) and Bourdieu (1984), which posit the use of arcane cultural goods to declare or maintain special status.

Chapter 2

Three Levels of Accessibility

Introduction

A preliminary examination of issues raised by the term accessibility has demonstrated that these are manifold and that its meanings require classification in order to allow further analysis and the use of specific examples. To break down the possible meanings of accessibility three levels are proposed in Table 1: physical access, reception and participation. An aspect of the first of these; disabled access, which represents a common usage of the word 'accessibility', will be excluded from the current work as this most frequently refers to access to buildings or parts of buildings. Music may be performed in these places but accessibility in this case is concerned primarily with access to the space and only indirectly with access to the music and its meanings.

The three levels proposed are taxonomical categories which are emphatically *not* discrete. Thus music which allows for the recognition or construction of personal meaning by a listener may equally, and by virtue of the same tropes, enable that listener to participate in the music in a social context. Both of these levels of engagement are necessarily dependent on physical access, because without first hearing the sounds the listener cannot engage in any direct way. The categorisation will nevertheless be helpful when discussing accessibility, in identifying a particular aspect of the ease or difficulty of encounters with musical sound. A brief outline of what is included in each level will be followed by a wider discussion.

Table 1: Three Levels of Musical Accessibility

Level I - Physical access (LI)	Level II - Reception (LII)	Level III - Participation (LIII)
Means being able to:	Means being able to:	Means being able to:
a) Find	*a*) Tolerate	*a*) Participate
b) Hear	*b*) Understand	*b*) Create
c) Afford	*c*) Interpret	*c*) Perform
d) Gain physical access	*d*) Gain meaning from	*d*) Compose
	e) Learn about	*e*) Be part of
	f) Find relevance in	*f*) Have a use for (socially)
	g) Enjoy	*g*) Learn to do
	h) Engage with	
	i) Mentally process	
	j) Respond emotionally to	
	k) Have a use for (personally)	
	l) Remember	

Taxonomy, Use and Music as Action

Three Levels[1] of accessibility

In order to be able to address particular issues more precisely, three Levels of musical accessibility are proposed. What is included at each of these is outlined in Table 1 and further elaborated below.

1) Level I is concerned with the necessary physical contact between music and audience. Accessibility here means being able to listen to a piece or type of music. Sounds produced only by an isolated tribe of Pygmies would be inaccessible to most of the rest of humanity, most of the time. The experience of hearing an opera performed live may be inaccessible to many people because of prohibitively priced tickets and particular performance locations. However, for those in the 'developed' world, true physical inaccessibility of types of music (rather than particular performances) is rare. Through published field recordings of ethnomusicologists such as Arom and Turnbull we can hear Pygmy music if we so desire and even if attendance at a full priced opera is impossible, approximations in the shape of television broadcasts, DVDs and cheaper, small scale performances are widely available. In fact, anyone with a computer and internet connection can potentially hear a vast variety of music for nothing, albeit illegally. Let us not forget however that those with computers are in a minority in global terms. Therefore this Level of physical access to music is a function of wealth and an indicator of unequal development.

Whereas the internet and a position of (consumer) choice marks the current state of economically enabled techno-culture for many, what is more common globally is the wide dissemination of musics via broadcast media with a much more limited range of

---

[1] Henceforth in the text these *Levels* will be capitalised to emphasise that they refer to this exposition of their definitions.

choice presented to listeners.[2] In fact the extensive reach of television and radio and the heavy dependence of these media on music, albeit frequently a truncated range of standardised product, means that there is much involuntary contact with music. Access, however, implies choice. To have access means one *can* engage with music. Quasi enforced contact is rather different, as it may be denying access to other music, thereby actually narrowing potential choice.[3]

2) Level II deals with reception[4] in the sense of the personal, subjective response of the listener. Much of this is in the realm of what is dealt with in music aesthetics, semiotics and the psychology of perception: can we discern something meaningful in the music? Does it affect us emotionally? Can we follow structure to some extent? Would we choose to, or feel a need to, listen to it either as a primary focus, or to accompany some other activity? Can we find some purchase from which to gather knowledge of the piece and thence the repertoire of which it forms a part, or does it 'all sound the same'? This Level clearly encompasses a wide range of types of engagement; for instance:

a) Being able to recognise and contemplate intramusical structures, relationships and events such as phrases, harmonic progressions and timbral contrasts. Recognising this as a rewarding process.

b) Using music as a background to an activity such as housework, in the hope it will engender and sustain one's energy.

c) Listening to music in order to illuminate, reinforce, accompany or counteract experiences or emotions.

---

[2] See Chapter 7.
[3] The predominance of a narrow range of popular music amongst free digital television music channels in the UK at the time of writing, is a good example of limited, one-dimensional choice being offered on a segment of a particular medium.
[4] 'Reception' is used in a sense rather different from that in 'reception studies', where reaction to music on a more public, social level is studied.

All of these examples are mainly about the personal. They involve solitary choice, often solitary listening and individual motivations and benefits, even if there are social implications.

3) Level III is concerned with participation and the social. In crossing the boundary between (apparently) passive and active, we join a musical dialogue of some kind; we interact with musicians. These may have been dead for several hundred years, or they may reside on the opposite side of the planet, but in learning to sing or play, or dance to their music we are responding to what is being communicated to us on more than an introspective or consumerist level. Participation does not necessarily mean performing music. It can mean moving to it, or wearing the clothes of a pop movement or belonging in some way to a community which is musically defined. Regularly attending a concert series or jazz club can be seen as forms of participation in musically delineated social subgroups. Accessibility of such events presupposes Levels I and II (LI - the listener can reach and enter the venues; LII - the listener potentially understands or enjoys the music) and opens up accessibility at Level III. This could take the form of simply being part of a group of people who listen to the music together and respond to it socially in various ways, such as applauding or discussing the performance afterwards. It can also involve behaviours more integrated with the music such as singing, dancing along, or learning to perform oneself.

Interrelatedness of Levels and '*Gebrauchsmusik*'

The interdependent overlapping nature of the three Levels of accessibility, and the facets within them, can be illustrated by a closer examination of II *k* in Table 1: having a personal use for music. This is an area incisively examined by DeNora (2000) who refers to music as a 'prosthetic technology of the body' (p. 102) and 'as a technology of the self' (p. 46). She also describes respondents as 'musically reconfiguring agency' (p. 53), drawing attention to the importance of music in emotional self-management. Many of the

examples she offers are of people having a subjective use for music, be it to set a mood for solitary work or for a romantic encounter, or to musically map the energy levels during an aerobic workout. Music appears to be useful to direct human concentration and activity and we actively and selectively seek out particular musical accompaniments to facilitate a huge range of activity. We could use the term *Gebrauchsmusik,* associated with the *Neue Sachlichkeit* of the Weimar Republic, in its literal sense here. We have a use for the music, it is therefore useful and thus we use (*gebrauchen*) it.

It is possible at this point to draw a distinction between music which is used as a means to an end (relaxation, seduction, exercise) and that which is used for contemplation in its own right. However, apart from the fact that this may well apply to identical pieces, there is the additional problem that even in attending specifically to music, it can still be *used* instrumentally by the listener; for instance to engender mental states and ideas. Merriam asks; 'is program music really divorced from "application" in the sense that it is supposed to impart specific emotions and impressions?' (1964: 212). Resistance to utilitarian functionality is one of the defining facets of 'pure' art in the Kantian aesthetic system, in which appreciation should be an end (in itself) and not a means (to and end). Yet 'ends' come in many guises. Bourdieu's '"vulgar" critique of "pure" critiques' (1984: 485) identifies, expressed also in Kant's work, a social basis for the opposition between the two poles, leading us to the recognition of the possibility of social instrumentality. It is not just that those with discriminating tastes choose 'pure' art, but this choice can aid social discrimination against 'vulgar' sections of society who are identified with and by 'vulgar' tastes. This is a potential use of the 'purest' of artistic expressions and their reception.

If music is 'merely' listened to for pleasure, it is certainly being *used* for that end. An all too ready enjoyment is what primarily defines the vulgar in the 'classic' taste dichotomy. Ultimately though, if we were to limit ourselves only to contemplation of musical structures and their interrelationships, we would still be *using* the music as an object for a kind of (high) cultural mental exercise. We can see therefore that at Level II, aspects *b* to *j*

can be seen as instances of *k*. Each aspect has an important role to play in musical accessibility, but again they are not discrete. As the layers of engagement are peeled away it becomes difficult to conceptually differentiate reception modes of *Gebrauchsmusik* from autonomous *art pour l'art* music. If this argument is followed through there is precious little music left which is not *Gebrauchsmusik*. The driest academic musical exercise, be it in baroque harmony or an esoteric avant-garde style, has the merit (in addition to its educational value) of being useful for survival and advancement in that particular social environment – the academic musical institution. In a sense, music which has a use is also accessible because there are people who will want to engage with it as a means to an end. This is true even if that end is personal, subjective or related to deeply ingrained notions of socio-cultural status.

It has already been mentioned that the 'lower' Levels are largely a prerequisite of subsequent ones. Clearly, under normal circumstances, in order to be able to enjoy music (Level II) we have to first hear it (Level I). In order to voluntarily participate in music (Level III) we would need to be able to at least tolerate it (Level II). To further examine the connections between these Levels, let us again consider the example of LII k (to have a [personal] use for). In some instances such a use may be *purely* personal, as in using music as an accompaniment to going to sleep. Even here we would have to interject that obviously for this to be entirely true one would have to be going to sleep alone (or at least using headphones). An example of using music given above, and proffered by DeNora, is of playing a recording to accompany a romantic encounter. Obviously this has to do with setting a mood for oneself *and* the other person. DeNora gives this as an example of 'music and intimate culture' but in a chapter entitled 'Music as a device of social ordering'. Listening can be used to 'configure the self', but it has to be added that frequently the self is configured in relation to others or (as with an aerobics session) in concert with others, or in opposition to others. What is going on is often both subjective *and* social. Thus Levels II and III can be seen as conflated, although at the extremes it is easy to see the distinction between using music (personally) to meditate by, and using it (socially) to march to.

Use of music and Weber's types of social action

When asking questions about accessibility we are inevitably inquiring into why people choose to listen to which music. It is their listening behaviour that gives public expression to their private responses. In this sense we are attempting to uncover motivations for behaviour or action. It is instructive in this context to relate the discussion of uses[5] of music to Weber's four fundamental kinds of social action (1971: 80), which he identifies as:

1. Action for a purpose (*Zweckrational*)

2. Action for (moral) values (*Wertrational*)

3. Affectually orientated

4. Traditionally orientated

These can be explained as follows:

1. 'Action for a purpose' would be that which is carried out for a particular rational goal, such as saving money in order to buy something.

2. Action which is *Wertrational* would be behaviour such as giving to charity, or phoning the emergency services if one had witnessed an accident.

3. Weber illustrates 'affectually orientated action' with the following examples:

---

[5] Merrian (1964) distinguishes between 'use' and 'function' of music, the former being the time and place of musical application while the latter is the intra-cultural significance and purpose. It is impractical to distinguish these terms in the present text and they are conflated in the noun 'use'. To separate the use of music while driving a car from the function of it being conducive to driving, would introduce an unnecessary distinction as it is the functionality of its use in that situation that contributes to accessibility.

'satisfaction of a direct impulse to revenge, to sensual gratification, to devote oneself to a person or ideal, to contemplative bliss, or, finally to the working off of emotional tensions' (Weber 1971: 80).

4. Traditionally orientated action is that which is engaged in because of the customs of the society in which one is at home.

Weber makes the point that it would be unusual to find cases of social action motivated in only one of these ways (1971: 81). This mirrors the permeability of our three Levels of musical accessibility. Musical use(fulness) can be explored further by interposing the musical case into each of the four points, giving us:

1m.	Music used for a purpose (*Zweckrational*)
2m.	Music used for (moral) values (*Wertrational*)
3m.	Affectually orientated use of music
4m.	Traditionally orientated use of music

To elaborate:

1m. Music is used in a way that is *zweckrational* in the case of a music student listening to repertoire for an exam, or a teenager who wants to gain acceptance to a social clique by listening to the music that they talk about.

2m. Music use is *wertrational* where the individual believes in the values the music represents. An example would be the protagonist in the film *School of Rock* who says rock is about wanting to 'stick it to the man' or someone who listens to modernist serious music because they deem it progressive and edifying.

3m. Music use is affectually orientated where it has an immanent appeal, or satisfies a

56

direct impulse or desire. This may play an important role in accessibility, as emotional manipulation or reinforcement is perceived in many contexts as an important function of music, for instance in film music.[6] Other readings of the affectual attraction of music would be that it affords 'contemplative bliss' in a conflation of detachment and desire, or that it is emotionally attractive or satisfying by virtue of its associations and connotative meanings.

4m. Traditional orientation would be where one uses music because it is usually done in that way; singing carols at Christmas, or using the bridal chorus from Wagner's *Lohengrin* for entering the church at a wedding.

All of these can be perceived as uses of music, therefore making the music concerned accessible by virtue of its utility. However, these types of use contrast with each other in their relation to the self and the social body. They also interconnect with each other and the Levels of accessibility dealt with here in many different ways. Use and usefulness are indicators of accessibility and have been employed here to demonstrate the Web of connections between its various aspects. It is important however to recognise that utility is not the master parameter of musical accessibility, but merely one of the processes involved. This is particularly pertinent in relation to 3m above. The 'immanent' appeal of music, which may reveal itself because one finds that music beautiful, interesting or because it engenders a desirable emotion, often precedes usefulness. Music can become useful because it has the power to engage us in one or several of these ways and in such cases it is accessible before it is useful. The previous proposition that II *b* to *j* can be seen as instances of *k* has to be qualified by noting that II *b* to *j* are in fact examples of precursors of *k*. One could say that usefulness is the fruit of accessibility, but its roots may be the immanent appeal of the music.

---

[6] This is of course not an uncontroversial position in musicology, Stravinsky and Hanslick being frequently presented as those on the 'formalist' rather than the 'expressionist' side of the argument. This has already been touched on in Chapter 1. In the realm of television music composition, where the author has considerable experience, the emotional communication and impact of music is taken very much for granted as a tool of the trade. The work of DeNora, cited elsewhere in this chapter, gives numerous real-life examples of music being used to mould emotional orientation.

Level I: Physical Access

Object status: from 'cult value' to 'hyperreality'

Walter Benjamin differentiates between the 'cult value' and 'exhibition value' of works of art (Benjamin 1977, 18-20). This distinction explicitly addresses accessibility at Level I. Benjamin mentions works such as cave paintings, images of the Virgin and statues of gods which are only viewable by a limited number of people, and in some cases only unveiled for wider access once a year, as having cult value. A further example are sculptures high up in the masonry of cathedrals which would not normally be seen at all. All these objects serve a 'cult', meaning that they have a spiritual significance which is not dependent on their accessibility. In fact, the status of such works may be enhanced by their inaccessibility.

Benjamin describes the increasing exhibitability of artworks as having gone hand in hand with their secularisation, as he contrasts statues with busts and frescoes with canvases. In his account, exhibition value appears to be almost synonymous with transportability. With the increase in the latter came the predominance of art value over cult value, even in works originally dedicated to religion. Ultimate exhibitability and transportability are clearly made possible by mass reproduction and broadcast mediation. Benjamin suspects that with these quantitative changes there probably comes a qualitative shift, transmuting the supposed art value of mass produced cultural items into another kind of value of which we may as yet be unaware, in a similar way to cult value having turned into art value. He cites Brecht who casts doubt on whether an art work which has become a commodity should still be described as art.[7] This confirms that the kind of value emanating from cultural products may be perceived to change with increasing physical accessibility. By way of exploring the nature of reproduced work with reference to exhibitability and accessibility at Level I, it is possible to discern close links between the

---

[7] In a footnote (p. 20).

following facets in the modern situation:

1. extent of reproduction and dissemination by various media

2. extent of mediated exhibition or performance

3. accessibility (Level I)

4. economic value

Here we are on entirely different territory to the domain of the cult object which would often barely register on any of these points. The social status conferred on consumers of 'pure' art has arisen above, but here the status of the work itself is at issue. This is obviously paramount in the case of the sacred object by virtue of association with the divinity served. At the other (exhibition) pole as proposed by Benjamin, i.e. that of the mass duplicated object, the status of that object is clearly limited, irrespective of its content, as it is only a copy. This shift goes hand in hand with a change in the significance of the artist. In sacred art before the enlightenment, artists and composers frequently remained anonymous, being regarded as craftsmen (indeed musicians and painters were often regarded as little better than servants by the aristocracy in secular contexts). Sacred work was for the glory of God, not man, however gifted. Thus an anonymous sculptor might carve a Madonna which was then highly revered, but mainly for what it represented, rather than how it was represented, or by whom. According to Benjamin the 'cult-value' of objects correlates inversely with their exhibitability. At the point of mass reproduction the objects' 'cult value' or 'aura'[8] disappears. However, in this process the power of such objects, which originally served the cult, has become transferred to their creators. If previously they were often anonymous, in modernity they tend towards holding celebrity status.

It is possible to suggest a link between the 'cult value' of inaccessible sacred works as

---

[8] A related term Benjamin also uses (1977: 13).

described by Benjamin and the 'cultural capital' that association with less popular art bestows in Bourdieu's (1979) account, and therefore to reinforce a link between lower accessibility and status value. The modern meaning of 'cult' as used in 'cult film' or 'youth cult' makes the suggestion even more compelling. This entails a transfer of status-enhancing inaccessibility from Level I to Level II; from physical access to the reception Level. It is also compatible with Carey's (1992) reading in relation to inaccessibility and status, and makes sense in the context of historical developments: In the pre-industrial world art works, particularly examples of high art, were rare; the privilege of urban cathedrals and aristocratic houses, and therefore relatively inaccessible to the majority, who were rural and poor. The very scarcity of such works and the wealth required to own them meant that they conveyed their status partly by virtue of their inaccessibility. In the industrial era most people had access to mass produced copies of art and special status was therefore to be found in the production and consumption of work which was perceptually inaccessible.

In late modernity the copy of the art work, the recording of the performance in musical terms, has undergone further change. The digital recording is in many ways superior to a live performance; microphone placement simulating listening to a multitude of instruments at close quarters; an impossible feat. Music recorded using over-dubs, sequencing, sampling, and extensive digital editing and signal processing may be difficult to replicate live. Indeed a live performance of such work will tend to attempt to reproduce the recording rather than the other way about. Here we are in the realm of the what Baudrillard calls 'the hyperreal'.[9] Meanwhile the copy is no longer even an object, but a trace, a silicon chip memory amongst thousands which can be sent around the world in a second and appear in several places at once, effortlessly duplicating itself a hundred fold if required. Here the copy not only ceases to represent an original, but becomes virtual and yet has to stand in for reality:

---

[9] Poster, Mark (ed) (1988) *Jean Baudrillard, Selected Writings.*
<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Baudrillard/Baudrillard_Simulacra.html>

The real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices, memory banks and command models - and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times. It no longer has to be rational, since it is no longer measured against some ideal or negative instance. It is nothing more than operational. In fact, since it is no longer enveloped by an imaginary, it is no longer real at all. It is a hyperreal: the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace without atmosphere.

(Baudrillard 1988)[10]

Thus the art object is at once liquidated and yet becomes the only world we know, because, in this reading, it is preferable to reality which by comparison has become banal. Hyperreality serves to hide the absence of reality itself. In a way the cultural product has regained an aspect of cult status: its magic. Its appearance may be commonplace but because of its ephemeral existence it is nevertheless miraculous. It is too omnipresent, too accessible and cheap to hold or confer special status simply by being a cultural artefact, but in Baudrillard's conceptualisation such phenomena form the 'sign values' which 'take precedence over the real and reconstruct human life'.[11] This appears to be an extreme view but one discernibly analogue with current developments. The next section will trace these in more detail, beginning with an historical overview of technology and musical accessibility at Level I in the modern era.

Level I, accessibility, music and media

Since the first sound carriers became generally available a century ago, technology has made it easier for many people to hear and 'own' music. After the initial purchase of

---

[10] Loc. cit.
[11] Kellner, Douglas (2005) *Jean Baudrillard.* <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/baudrillard/>

player and sound carriers, all that is required to hear items in one's collection is to choose the recording and start the machine. This was a revolution in accessibility at Level I. To hear a particular piece in the classical repertoire for instance, before the advent of recording and duplicating technology, meant finding out where (within a reasonable distance) and when that work was going to be performed, travelling to the appointed venue, paying the entry fee and hearing the entire concert. For someone living outside the great cosmopolitan centres this opportunity might *never* occur although they might be able to hear an approximation of that piece in an amateur and possibly domestic performance. Whereas in the early days of recorded music the sound quality was poor and vastly inferior to live sound, this is no longer the case with hi-fi equipment and CDs. New audio and visual technologies often begin only able to offer poor fidelity but providing increased Level I accessibility, which allows them to gain a foothold. In this way TV overtook cinema and computer downloading and streaming are gaining on other forms of dissemination, despite their initially dreadful quality compared to previously existing media.

A further significant increase in Level I accessibility was made possible by the advent of consumer recordable carriers, most notably audio cassettes. These enabled most people in the developed world, and a significant proportion globally, to make and pass on cheap copies of music recorded from broadcasts, commercially available records, or live performances. Such activity became extremely widespread in the 1970s and was mostly illegal due to the copyright infringement it usually entailed. The music industry, while making music more accessible through duplication, distribution and marketing, is keen to ensure that this access is controlled (and profited from), hence the attempts to curtail, prosecute and stamp out independent copying and, more recently, downloading.

Widespread duplicating was given a further boost by the advent of consumer digital recording media such as recordable CDs and mini discs in the 1990s. In addition to giving higher fidelity, this technology allowed the making of copies of copies without the deterioration in quality this had entailed in the analogue domain. Obtaining a consumer

copy is different from purchasing an industrially produced carrier. The cost is significantly lower and access to the music is usually through some personal contact or recommendation. In most cases there will be no cover art work and minimal information with the copy. Contact with the music is less mediated in terms of marketing but there tends to be stronger social mediation.[12] This largely falls away with the more recent development of downloading which developed most rapidly as peer-to-peer file sharing over the Internet from 1999.[13] Although initially file sharing began as interpersonal communication which could include comments and recommendations (Burnett & Marshall 2003: 194) it soon grew into a mass activity anonymously passing millions of undifferentiated tracks. The interpersonal dimension may return if file transmission coupled to instant messaging becomes successful (ibid.: 197).

Potentially downloading gave access to the music collections stored on other people's computers throughout the world, for no charge at the point of access (although computers obviously cost money), using software provided by entities such as Napster or Kazaa. Unsurprisingly downloading music became hugely popular. The music industry was sent into convulsions of panic,[14] especially as there seemed to be a measurable negative impact on the purchase of legitimate recordings. Pietz and Waelbroek[15] report a 10% reduction of CD sales worldwide for 2001 although the causality has been convincingly disputed.[16] The heightened Level I accessibility provided by the downloading revolution is undeniable. Not only can many people now find numerous new recordings without leaving their homes, and own them at will, but they are further able to build collections,

---

[12] In Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity* (1996) the main characters make compilation cassettes containing favourite and personally significant songs for each other. This used to be a common practice.

[13] For a brief history of file sharing site Napster, see Sean McManus:
<http://www.sean.co.uk/a/musicjournalism/var/historyoffilesharing.shtm>

[14] Within two years of its launch, Napster had been forced to shut down by legal action initiated by the Record Industry Association of America. 'Clone' operations were available although these too were being pursued by the RIAA.

[15] CESifo working paper no. 1122.:
<http://www.cesifogroup.de/pls/guestci/download/CESifo%20Working%20Papers%202004/CESifo%20 Working%20Papers%20January%202004/cesifo1_wp1122.pdf.>

[16] Even Pietz & Waelbroek do not detect a causal link between peer-to-peer sharing and falls in CD sales for subsequent years while Oberholzer-Gee & Strumpf use extensive statistical analysis to demonstrate that the effect is negligible overall: <http://www.unc.edu/~cigar/papers/FileSharing_June2005_final.pdf>

and make compilations, structuring them entirely according to their own preferences. Perhaps the level of accessibility gained by peer-peer can be overstated however. Apart from needing a computer with Internet access, the illegality of file sharing is a barrier, one made more threatening by reported prosecutions of sharers. Furthermore, the most readily available pieces through this process are the most popular products of the music industry. An attempt to find something even slightly obscure, such as a lesser known recording by Miles Davis, or a concert piece, is likely to end in frustration. Slower download speeds (which are improving generally) make it less attractive to access longer pieces which mitigates against 'classical' music.

It has taken the American recording industry five years to rise to this challenge and collaborate in a solution. Had they been able to make an arrangement whereby they raised only a few pennies for each peer to peer download, they would have vastly increased their revenues. Such a solution however might have smacked of collusion and, like the much discussed option of a cassette levy in the 1980s, was not to be, even though Napster offered a 1 billion dollar settlement before closing down.[17] The preferred option was pursuing illegal file sharing operations while trying to profit from the new technology with pay-for-download sites. The most successful of these has been the iTunes Music Store which has made major inroads into music sourcing behaviour in conjunction with the iPod, with competitors trying their best to follow suit. Together this technological configuration and the associated business model represent the perhaps greatest revolution in LI accessibility ever. The range of music available from iTunes is as wide or wider than in the world's largest record shops. Furthermore most tracks available can be subjected to a 'sniff test'; the customer can listen to a few seconds free of charge. Pieces of music may be downloaded for a cost of 79 pence at the time of writing, movements of concert pieces being sold singly.[18] The range exceeds that typically available with peer-to-peer technology and while not being exhaustive, it is constantly expanding as deals are

---

[17] Financed by the German company Bertelsmann AG which had stepped in and made a deal with Napster.
[18] There are much cheaper legal sites available, including ones based in Russia, such as AllofMP3 and those charging a one-off fee for unlimited downloads. ($25 US at MP3 Share-safe for instance).

struck with content providers.

In 2001 the Apple iPod followed the portability concept introduced with the Sony Walkman portable cassette player in 1979 (and later portable CD and mini disc players) but it combines that portability with the ability to contain thousands of pieces. Thus the great array of music available online remains accessible while one is mobile in the world. Stockfelt points out that:

> The sound of big opera ensembles can be fitted onto a windsurfing board, and the sound of a nylon stringed guitar can fill a football stadium.
>
> (Stockfelt 1997: 135)

Any kind of music can be heard anywhere and obtained via the same media. This has a levelling effect, turning music into a unified abstract commodity which may be patterned in various ways. The standardisation brought about by earlier technologies, limiting pieces of music to certain lengths and differentially favouring suitable genres, composition and production techniques, such as those Nettl (1985: 63) mentions in relation to non-Western music, will inevitably be modified and continued by current developments. Notably, downloading has further decontextualised music which is frequently taken possession of denuded of sleeve notes, album cover or other information. This may change again if downloading music video becomes more widespread as broadband becomes the norm. For the time being however, the lack of context is ironically a constraint on LII (reception) accessibility because, as will be argued in Chapter 7, multi-modal presentation aids reception. If music is accompanied by other forms of information and stimulation, access is facilitated as it offers multiple channels of engagement. Thus downloading in its present condition has greatly increased LI accessibility but compromised LII. In contrast to hearing music live, or even in a record shop with listening facilities, initial contact at a downloading site presents an undifferentiated interface of lists and sounds. Interestingly, on legal sites the 'sniff test' option means that contact with the music itself is immediate, providing an instance where

accessibility and choice of sounds are necessarily involved. The word 'choice' conflates the range of options available with the act of choosing; the decision. Indeed one necessitates the other; many possibilities mean inevitable decision making which will be partly based on LII accessibility. Looked at another way, increased LI access to music brings processes of LII accessibility into play to a greater extent than where physical access is limited. Where the variety of music physically available is small there is likely to be repeated exposure, leading involuntarily to familiarity and acceptance. In the iTunes Music Store situation LII accessibility has to be immediate, repeated listening to an entire track being impossible prior to purchase on this site.

This exposition has to be relativated by recognition of the individual as active and having certain predilections, as well as options for contextualising music by searching for information. Thus iTunes enables one to search the catalogue by genre, sub-genre,[19] artist, album or song title, and recent releases. Although sleeve notes are not available during browsing, there are sometimes album reviews and biographies, although these are 'hidden' and have to be sought out. Apart from following their predilections searchers also avail themselves of other Web resources. One obvious strategy is to 'Google' an artist's name to find further information. Another reported to the author is to use the retailing site Amazon which has reviews and lists such as 'Customers who bought music by [this artist] also bought music by these artists...'. These and similar strategies give direction to otherwise aimless meanderings though an undifferentiated musical landscape.

Astronaut, city dweller and hunter-gatherer: theorising the Web

Descriptions such as the above can only give a snap-shot of the current state of Web mediated music and accessibility. McChesney observes that:

---

[19] Although what comes up under certain genres is frequently surprising and bizarre. The rubric 'classical-avant-garde' for instance contains mainly jazz and includes Cassandra Wilson, Bill Evans and Evelyn Glennie.

Any attempt at prediction during such tumultuous times is nearly impossible; something written about the Web as recently as 1992 or 1993 has about as much currency in 2000 as discourses on the War of the Roses do for understanding contemporary European military policy.

<div align="right">(2000: 6)</div>

What may appear to be defining attributes of Web-mediated music today can turn out to have been mere teething problems of the medium. In the same way that McLuhan (1964) theorised television as a 'cool' medium partly on the basis of its sketchy black and white images (which no longer appertain) we might be led to make pronouncements by some temporary characteristic. Nevertheless it would be timid not to consider the paramount question in this (again thinking of McLuhan): what is the message of this medium? What are its implications for the way we live and the way we relate to music?

There is no doubt that the Web explodes LI access and forces LII accessibility to the fore in an unprecedented way. The post-war generation that ironically cried like spoilt children: '...what do we want? Everything! When do we want it? Now!' have had their wish, but the incontinent tantrum of the infant has brought us into a situation that requires discipline. The acts of choosing, of deciding, of selecting, of judging, of discarding, of focusing in and blanking out are constantly required. We need to limit ourselves in this world. No one has time to listen to all the music on the Web; not even to all the music one likes. But strangely we do not in this situation remain with the known - we browse for decontextualised music as deracinate beings, both sound and human disembodied, yet like floating virtual bodies, attracting or repelling:

Private 'telematics': each person sees himself at the controls of a hypothetical machine, isolated in a position of perfect and remote sovereignty, at an infinite distance from his universe of origin. Which is to say, in the exact position of an astronaut in his capsule, in a state of weightlessness that necessitates a perpetual

orbital flight and a speed sufficient to keep him from crashing back to his planet of origin.

<div align="right">(Baudrillard 1992: 152)</div>

Another conceptualisation of the Internet is not so much as 'global village' but global city. The site-complex MySpace is a virtual location where people can place their own standardised Website with biography, pictures, blog and list of 'friends' who also have a presence on the site. Membership has grown into the millions.[20] A popular section of the site is MySpace Music, where in addition to the above facilities one can provide musical 'details' and four pieces to be listened to by 'visitors'. This highlights the fact that Level III accessibility is also expanded, particularly when taken in conjunction with the vastly increased affordability of sampling, sequencing and recording technology. Sampling means being able to create music without owning instruments or having access to musicians. Sequencing means being able to perform without being able to play. Home recording enables one to turn music into product which can be copied and disseminated. Thus participating in the sense of providing content has become facilitated for ambitious musicians and hobbyists alike; '...the Internet and its tributaries reverse the trajectory of a handful of messages to a legion of passive users that has typified all technological media since the printing press' (Levinson 2001: 38-9).

Due to the size of the Web population, or even a section of it such as MySpace, talk of cosy 'communities' is misplaced. As the danger of paedophiles approaching children online has shown, other Web users are to be treated with caution, just as the Londoner treats a fellow traveller on the Underground. Someone making contact on MySpace could be a company looking for business, or a potential immigrant looking for a marriage of convenience. Even the lists of 'friends' cannot be entirely what they seem since on some people's pages they run into thousands. 'My space' turns out to be everyone's space.

---

[20] Going on for 40 million at the time or writing. See <http://www.eduinsight.com/articles/myspace.html>

Established artists have their presence on the site thanks to the activities of their PR companies rather than through personal engagement. Tracking down previous genuine acquaintances on the site can be tricky since most names appear many times. Thus we are truly in a virtual city, where there is always too much to take in, where being blinkered is a survival strategy, where to be cordial to strangers is naïve and where one's (true) friends are an ad hoc family, an island refuge from the sea of humanity beyond.

Yet from another perspective the Internet is not so alienating, not so far removed from essential humanity. Viewed as a tool it mimics the body just like other tools. We listen with multiple oversized ears to the music of the world, we flick through the options with nimble electronic fingers, and the whole Web becomes an extension of neural networks. Even the endless selecting and browsing is not so new. Have we created a virtual world in our own image and in the image of our most long-lived *modus operandi*? Levinson talks about media determinism and the tendency for McLuhan to 'see humans as the "effect" of the technology rather than vice versa' (2001: 40). We are the creators of this monster and it would not be surprising if it resembled us in our *ur*-world, our *Urwald* (jungle). Like hunter-gatherers we browse and search and lie in wait. We are born to choose; other animals are tied to particular environments, limited foodstuffs. Our main strength is flexibility. The range of options - which is now expanding exponentially, albeit virtually - is exercising this capacity to an unprecedented extent. In this context the question 'what is accessible' (at LII) is our constant companion.

Level I: accessibility and the market

Giddens (1991: 196) notes that: 'Modernity opens up the project of the self, but under conditions strongly influenced by standardising effects of commodity capitalism'. This pinpoints the inherent contradiction not just of modernity, but particularly in capitalist structures between choice and standardisation; liberty and control. McChesney (2000) predicts that despite hopes of a large measure of freedom and pluralism on the Internet, it

will eventually come to be dominated by a small number of powerful media concerns. The purchase of MySpace parent company Intermix Media by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp in 2005 seems to support McChesney's reading, according to which most of the new masters of the virtual universe will be the same conglomerates that dominate the old media. Entrepreneurs have the opportunity to try innovative ideas and, if they are effective, they usually sell out to a large concern later for a considerable sum, much like the dynamic between small and major record labels.

The music industry, with the energy of its 'web of major and minor companies' (Negus 1996: 43) and the creativity of its many striving musicians, should be a source of virtually unlimited musical variety and supply, and to some extent this is the case. Compared to what was available for listening in pre-industrial societies, or in the Eastern Bloc under communism, there is enormous serendipity. However, a closer look at one of the chain CD retailers reveals a propensity for quantity rather than variety. Most of the CDs on offer are in the genres of mainstream popular music: hip hop, rock, pop, dance etc. and their various subgenres. It is not difficult to think of music which is conspicuous by its miniscule presence: contemporary 'serious' music and contemporary instrumental jazz for instance. This is even more striking when the available palette of music on UK radio and free television is considered. It is dominated by Anglo-American popular music to a enormous extent and appears to be constantly gravitating towards homogeneity.

The recent transformation of Jazz FM into Smooth FM is a case in point. Jazz is a marginal genre in market terms accounting for around 2% of album sales in the UK[21], and while it is almost entirely absent from British television, it does have a toehold on BBC Radio 2 and 3 with several well established weekly slots. Jazz has a devoted following of listeners and participant musicians of all ages in Britain, as witnessed by the plethora of festivals and performing groups. Jazz FM, which had existed since 1990 in London and 1994 in Manchester, initially played a wide range of instrumental and vocal jazz but

---

[21] Côté, Michel (2002) *Statistics on Canadian Music in the UK.*
<http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs/ac-ca/progs/rc-tr/progs/eccc-ttcc/market/mus2002_e.cfm>

moved towards a more anodyne diet of jazz funk, soul and r 'n' b (in both senses of the term) during the later 1990s, particularly at peak times; more like most stations in other words.

It seems that even that diluted mix was too *risqué* for commercial radio however, and soon after the station was bought by Guardian Media Group in 2002, plans to re-brand were underway. It appears the very word 'jazz' was a difficulty. The name changed to Smooth FM in Manchester in 2004. Pleased with the results of the change GMG Radio Chief Executive John Myers said:

> As sorry as we are to say goodbye to JAZZFM [sic] it's a sad fact of life that it has never made a profit in its 15 years of existence. We are caught between not playing enough jazz to please the purist and having the name Jazz FM which inhibits trial from other listeners. There are not enough people who like jazz music to make it a viable proposition...This new brand and direction will allow us to really grab the opportunities that lie ahead – there is a wider gap in the market for what we will do. The success of and appetite for Smooth FM has already been proven in the north west and we're looking forward to replicating its achievements in London.[22]

In 2005 London followed suit and the jazz content was further reduced. However the results of the re-branding of Jazz FM have been by no means unequivocal. According to RAJAR figures, audience reach for the Manchester based station has indeed grown from 7% to 11% since the change in 2004. But it had already been showing an upward trend from 4% in 1999 so the causality has to be questionable. Furthermore the London station has seen its reach fall from a mean of 7% to 4% since the changeover,[23] despite a huge initial advertising campaign for Smooth FM. Whereas common sense would suggest that

---

[22] "JazzFM becomes London 102.2 Smooth FM"
<http://www.radiotoday.co.uk/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=143>
[23] <http://www.rajar.co.uk/INDEX2.CFM?menuid=9>

a lively British jazz scene would be enough to support a commercial station, what *appeared* economically viable was to compete more directly with all the other popular music stations by favouring a particular version of the dominant genre, rather than differentiating oneself clearly and embracing a niche market.[24] This neatly exposes one of the ideological myths about market economies. Whereas we are frequently told that the market thrives on competition and provides choice (notwithstanding that this is undoubtedly true when comparing it with Stalinist economics) it is difficult to avoid being surrounded by items which are variations on a theme. It can be argued that in practice capitalism has a propensity to standardise product and shift volume. McChesney claims; 'The truth is that for those atop our economy the key to success is based in large part on eliminating competition' (2000: 9). It seems that unfortunately the vast majority of consumers collude with this to the extent that minority interests and producers are expendable.

Standardisation is a fundamental component of rationalisation as conceptualised by Weber, and whereas he used bureaucracies as his prime example, Ritzer (1993) has indicated fast food eateries which lead him to coin the term 'McDonaldization'.[25] He argues that the products of mass production are often unremarkable, but their presentation is overdramatised. This could be applied to much of what the music industry offers and it also strongly supports Adorno's view that popular music and culture is innovative only in its surface attributes, whereas structurally it repeats endlessly (Witkin 1998). Althusser uses the term 'ideology' to mean 'an imaginary relation to the real relations' of existence (1984: 41). Similarly we might be led to believe that we are being offered incredible choice and constant innovation by the market, whereas in reality we are being 'fed' standardised, unchanging fare.[26] Ritzer refers to: 'Many...aspects of a McDonaldized

---

[24] Classic FM has done rather better in terms of holding its niche, which might be described oxymoronically as 'light serious' music, achieving an audience reach of around 13%. Radio 3 is typically on 4%. See <http://www.rajar.co.uk/INDEX2.CFM?menuid=9>

[25] The term 'McDonaldization' first appears in Ritzer's essay "The McDonaldization of Society." *Journal of American Culture* 6, 1983: 100-7.

[26] In this reading Althusser's view of ideology is seen as pejorative, being delusional and exposing the subject to a kind of fraud. However, Jameson's interpretation of the same source is that it is a 'positive

society [that] may be thought of as false and deceptive events and situations...'. In terms of Level I accessibility this could mean that we are inexorably directed towards a limited range of product disguised under a cloak of sham choice, while other musics are actually quite *in*accessible. Level II accessibility of the music that is commonly available is thus increased due to familiarity. However, for those with a predilection for genuine innovation and variety, rather than the mere repackaging of the same tired structures, this is likely to tend towards *over*accessibility, lacking in stimulating interest. The difficulty in making accurate predictions about the development of new technologies relating to the Internet has been mentioned. It remains to be seen whether the promise of genuinely widened accessibility is fulfilled or whether the capitalist tendency to standardise continues to be (re-) imposed on the new medium.

Level II: Reception

Globalisation, familiarity and exoticism

A connection between the standardisation of food and other aspects of contemporary life criticised by Ritzer, and the standardisation of popular music addressed by Adorno is predictability. In the first instance, a rationalised system produces predictable outcomes because once the 'One Best Way' for a process has been arrived at, efficiency dictates that

---

conception of ideology as a necessary function in any form of social life' having the 'great merit of stressing the gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated.' (1991: 415) His is a rather different position to the widespread Marxist position which holds ideology responsible for perpetuating the acceptance of prevailing conditions due to the 'false consciousness' of ideological explanations.

it should be repeated as uniformly as possible, leading to uniform products. A maximisation of profits is then ensured by rolling out (or franchising) the process globally. As a result a similar or even identical experience is available world wide. This is clearly the case with global chains such as McDonalds and with the products of the music industry. The consumer who 'knows what he likes' need never be disappointed, or indeed surprised, or challenged in any way. An important component of accessibility is inevitably familiarity. Particularly if we take a semiotic view of musical meaning, signifiers have meanings which are tied to context and have to be learned. Once that path has been opened the most efficient thing to do is to always follow it. The consumer or listener has learned what to expect and the market is only too happy to provide it.

For the American travelling abroad, the presence of familiar eateries makes life uncomplicated and predictable. For the citizens of other countries a McDonalds hamburger, or an Anglo-American pop song, may at first be strange and even exotically glamorous. Whereas that could be the initial attraction, within a few decades the economic power of the multinationals and the resulting globalised homogenisation of culture has made these phenomena as much a part of ordinary urban life in the Far East as in the West. Similarly, from a western standpoint, 'exotic' food, music or clothes may be of interest because they offer a new or unusual experience, until they become commonplace, at which point the attraction of the exotic may be replaced by the comfort of the familiar. Paradoxically there is accessibility both in the familiar and the exotic and they exist in a kind of dialectic. Faced with an entirely unfamiliar environment one may become disorientated and seek refuge in the familiar, whereas an unchanging set of stimuli will eventually send us in search of something different. We might call this the exoticism-familiarity dichotomy. This tension is ever-present in 'world music' which offers us the exotic, but often with a large amount of globalised standardisation already in the package. Frequently, as with the orientalism of the classical and romantic eras, exotic 'otherness' is employed to increase attraction, and therefore accessibility, by virtue of its novelty, without requiring a fundamental readjustment of the recipient's aesthetic. In more economic terms we are; 'according market value to this difference in the form of an

appeal to exoticism while keeping the conventions of [our] own world intact' (Marcus 1995: 218).

Genre, predictability and challenge

Another way in which predictability, and therefore one kind of accessibility, can be furthered is by the establishment of genre boundaries. A listener can familiarise herself with the conventions and tropes typical of a musical style. In the absence of a lived history with that music, the establishment of extramusical signification can be aided by material on CD covers, in the music press and other sources of information such as books, peer groups and the wider mass media. A bond between listener and a particular piece or CD is established leading to a position where one might say 'I enjoy this music, I understand something about it, it means something to me' (etc. see Table 1 Level II). The listener in her incarnation as customer can then be encouraged to try other music by the same artist and in the same genre without taking too much of a risk of not finding it accessible. Thus the identification of music by genre and subgenre increases predictability in a context of (apparently) enormous choice as represented by the many thousands of CDs in a CD shop such as a Virgin Megastore, Tower Records or FNAC.

As with the exoticism-familiarity pairing in 'world music', a similar tension exists here; that between challenge and predictability.[27] On entering one of the large stores mentioned, one is faced with a high measure of control, predictability and standardisation. It goes without saying that the vast majority of music on sale will be in one of the Anglo-American popular styles of the last 40 years. The medium is also highly predictable (CDs split into mostly pop-song length tracks) as is the layout of the store, the subdivision into different genre sections and what one is likely, and not likely, to find in them. There is a large measure in this of helping the customer find a recognisable structure in a confusing

---

[27] Scott (2003) examines British dance band music of the 1920s and '30s with reference to 'predictability' and 'incongruity', the former being due to repeated tropes and common formal structures, the latter to either intentional or unintentional clashes in stylistic codes (pp. 80-100).

and seemingly unbounded world of music. However, someone looking for something unusual, local, experimental or non-commercial will find a record store not particularly helpful. A proportion of people entering a record shop will want to be surprised and challenged, and look to music for exactly this rather than wanting to be channelled towards what they know and accept. What such adventurous clients are encouraged to content themselves with is repackaged, or revamped versions of what they already liked. The challenge-predictability pairing exposes the irony of the conflicting attractiveness of the new and the known and as such is closely related to exoticism-familiarity.

In *The McDonaldization of Society*, Ritzer (1993: 23) describes how activities which originally gave people a chance to escape their highly rationalised routines (such as camping in the countryside) have in many cases themselves become rationalised and predictable (through the availability of well-organised camp sites with all amenities). Ritzer borrows Weber's term 'the iron cage' to convey how there seems to be no escape from a fully rationalised life. Music and art are prime candidates for providing a means of breaking out, however. By allowing the imagination of artists, and by extension that of their audiences, to roam free and express anything whatsoever, including alienation from a McDonaldized existence, liberal societies give everyone the possibility of thinking outside the cage. This surely must be a powerful rationale for the pursuit of creative activity in the post-industrial world. It is ironic then to find the same rationalising, MacDonaldizing tendencies in the arts as in everything else. The problem of musical accessibility is at the heart of this. Music has the potential to allow a space for non-rationalised experience. If music is not accessible enough it restricts this potential because people are deterred from engagement. Increased accessibility however goes hand in hand with predictability and rationalisation – with the risk of putting us right back into the 'iron cage'.

Novelty and personality theory

Having highlighted the conflict between freedom and rationalisation it is evident that

there are advantages to both and this is admitted by both Weber and Ritzer (Ritzer 1993: 20). Furthermore, people do seek out both ends of the spectrum and to some extent we all live in a blend of the two. This problematic is crucial to accessibility in music because it further opens up questions of *who* finds *what* accessible, and *why*. Does the conflicting attraction of the two facets of our previously posited dichotomies (exoticism-familiarity; challenge-predictability) reflect two sides of society? Or are they two sides of human nature? Do all of us sometimes crave challenge, novelty or the exotic, while at other times we prefer to be cradled in what we know and like? Or are those who want one and the other different kinds of people? Ritzer quotes Henry Ford, writing self-servingly that many production line workers prefer simple and brainless work whereas others find it 'a terrifying prospect' (1993: 119). It would be naive to expect clear cut answers to these questions. We might say that the answer to all of them is bound to be a qualified 'yes'. Nevertheless, some aspects of personality theory are useful in examining this area more closely.

Although socioanalytic perspectives have sought to question the validity of stable personality traits (McCrae & Costa 1999) (in a way which relates to the resistance to essentialism raised in Chapter 1), work building on the exploration of such traits can now make 'full use of the empirical results of the last two decades' and is further underpinned by the growing evidence of heritability (ibid. p. 140). A widely used model in this discipline is the 'five factor model' where the traits are characterised as; neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. People are examined by sets of extensively calibrated questionnaires which determine the strength or weakness of each particular trait. Traits are known to be relatively stable over time within an individual. Of interest in the present context is 'openness to experience'. This exists on a dimension of 'openness versus closedness to experience' and incorporates descriptors such as 'curious', 'imaginative', 'artistic', 'wide interests', 'excitable' and 'unconventional' (John & Srivastava 1999: 110). Another component is given by McCrae & Costa as 'a need for variety, novelty and change' (1999: 143). Such an aspect of personality is clearly relevant to the question of whether and why people would seek predictable or

unpredictable musical experiences, and what kind of music they would consider accessible at Level II (reception Level).

Not all researchers in this field agree with the 'five factor model' and Hans Eysenck has adhered to the 'big three' personality dimensions of extraversion, psychoticism and neuroticism. A sub-factor of the psychoticism versus humaneness dimension is posited by Marvin Zuckerman. This is 'sensation seeking' which manifests itself in thrill and adventure seeking, experience seeking, disinhibition and susceptibility to boredom.[28] Men tend to be higher on this measure than women and it has been shown to decline with age.[29] This last point has a bearing on changing musical tastes with age, and differentials in choice and preference between different age groups. Although there is a lack of consensus on the demonstrated heritability of such traits (Winter & Barenbaum 1999: 14) twin studies suggest that they are about 60% genetically determined.[30] The sensation seeking construct is based on the idea of an optimal level of arousal (OLA) which was first proposed by early pioneers of psychology, Wundt and Freud. OLA is found to vary from one individual to another. Below the optimal level a subject will seek additional stimulation, whereas above it the arousal level is perceived as excessive and unpleasant, leading to avoidance behaviours. Zuckerman (1994) subdivides the sensation seeking trait into four subscales:

1. Thrill and adventure seeking – desire to engage in risky activity

2. Experience seeking – 'seeking of novel sensations through the mind and senses'

3. Disinhibition – disregard for unconventionality or illegality

4. Boredom susceptibility – 'intolerance for repetitive experience'

---

[28] Zuckerman's full definition is: 'Sensation seeking is a trait defined by the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience' (1994: 27).
[29] From a well referenced Website on this subject by David J. Llewellyn (psychologist at University of Leeds) at <www.risktaking.co.uk>
[30] David J. Llewellyn <www.risktaking.co.uk>

Although Zuckerman examines many aspects of sensation seeking, he does address art and music reception directly:

> Liking for designs, art and music shows the high sensation seekers' interests in complex and ambiguous (as in complex abstract art) and intense (as in rock music) stimuli, and the low sensation seekers' preferences for calming, low-tension art and music...The ES (experience seeking) subscale usually shows the strongest correlation with preference. ES seems to measure 'openness to experience' through the senses and is therefore most relevant to broad tastes in art and music.
>
> (1994: 223)

Apart from preferring more 'complex and ambiguous' stimuli, 'experience seekers' seem to have a broader range of musical likes, including folk and classical as well as rock, while 'disinhibitors' appear to be more concerned with intensity, which is expressed in their preference for rock (Zuckerman 1994: 217).[31]

It appears reasonable that a listener who is easily bored, tends to be curious and seeks adventure, will be more open to challenging and new musical experiences than one who is inclined to play safe. Here we are examining the subject (person) and emphasising that musical preference may be a co-variable of fundamental personality traits. Thus, being adventurous in listening could be an indication of a generally inquisitive and daring personality. This still implies a scala of musical difficulty or inaccessibility along which certain personality tendencies would aim their preferences. Such a gradation would not be absolute, since it would depend on the prior experience of the listener. For instance, someone raised in an environment saturated with music of the European romantic tradition might, if they had a tendency towards 'openness' or 'sensation seeking', turn to

---

[31] See also Litle & Zuckerman (1986).

Arabic popular music for fresh musical stimulation. On the other hand, someone not used to western art music at all might find the great romantic symphonies challenging and exciting.

Yet to take this argument to the extreme of relativism would be to go too far. There are musics which are widely accessible because they make use of easily grasped, remembered, felt and embodied tropes. Their melodies fall easily into the range of the human voice, their rhythms are regular like many aspects of our physical lives and their intervals mirror those of the harmonic series which we hear in every natural sound. Other genres resist these access points. Free jazz for instance gives few surfaces on which the unaccustomed mind can find purchase. Perhaps such music is made by and for individuals with a high rating for the personality traits discussed above. Perhaps they are the musical equivalents of mountaineers and racing drivers. For those who are highly susceptible to boredom one could posit a 'converse accessibility effect' which makes easily understood music difficult to stomach for extended periods, and generally less accessible music more attractive. This comes close to the paradoxical assertion that to the adventurous, *less* accessible music is *more* accessible, but this would be to forget that even someone open to new listening experience may have to 'work' at understanding and enjoying music which is initially challenging to them. They are simply more willing to take on the effort involved.

This appears to present a simplistic view of easy music and lazy listeners on the one hand, and exciting music and sensation seekers on the other, with an implicit value judgement in favour of the latter. However it is worth remembering that music fulfils many functions in human life and that a highly worthwhile function, such as building a social network, can be furnished by music which is deemed very accessible by its participants, such as *samba* percussion. At the reception Level there is also the phenomenon of simple and repetitive music, such minimalist work, or the blues, which can nevertheless have a powerful emotional impact, and require certain types of almost meditative mental discipline from the listener. Further complexity arises when one considers mood, which

will vary and entail inconsistencies in music choices. In terms of an over-all personality trait of 'sensation seeking', or even the factor of 'experience seeking', it may be objected that there are people whose choices tend to be adventurous in one area of life but conservative in another.

Accessibility and social status

We can see that it is problematic to correlate simplistic value judgements with gradations of accessibility. There may however be particular utilitarian values associated with both accessibility and inaccessibility. For instance the accessible communicates (and sells) more readily, whereas inaccessibility bestows special status to those who can access the music at whatever Level (I-III). The inaccessibility of an expensive opera performance confirms the financial status of those who can afford to attend. It also bolsters their cultural status as consumers of high art. The complexity and atonality of some twentieth-century orchestral works make them inaccessible to many, but confer the status of 'those who understand' the difficult and *recherché* on their devotees. Bourdieu's work effectively correlates social position with the kind of cultural products consumed. He describes how an easy relationship with high art represents valuable 'cultural capital', condemning others to a position of deference. Even those from the working class with a reasonable education and an understanding of social issues are subject to this effect according to Bourdieu:

> Thus, everything leads one to believe that the most politically conscious fraction of the working class remains profoundly subject, in culture and in language, to the dominant norms and values, and therefore deeply sensitive to the effects of authority imposition which every holder of cultural authority can exert...
>
> (1984: 396)

Moving on to Level III, performance itself is of course highly status related. Again it can confirm someone as part of a group, be it the ensemble itself, or a wider social entity. But

beyond that there is the question of skill which has its own implications. Thus it is clear that music that is more difficult to perform may convey a higher status because of the work and talent involved in becoming an expert performer. Members of European samba bands are empowered by joining a lively social group, but they do not thereby gain great status as musicians in the wider culture. Being a virtuoso classical violinist on the other hand may confer such status. Often the recognition gained for being a skilled performer is more important within the musical sphere than outside it. Thus a jazz performer of great technical ability may earn the respect of her peers, but this may not impress even other musicians outside her immediate musical subculture if the music is otherwise inaccessible (at Levels I and II). In other words the ability to overcome the inaccessibility of a type of music can confer special status on its followers and performers, but the recognition of this status is sometimes limited to a narrowly defined musico-social group.

Level III: Participation

Beyond the *Konsumentengewohnheit*

In the above discussion the terminology of critiques of consumer capitalism has been woven into the argument because today the process of locating, purchasing and consuming goods is often indistinguishable from locating, gaining access to and hearing music, no matter how much members of the Frankfurt School railed against this development. It was suggested in Chapter 1 that Adorno's *Konsumentengewohnheit* or consumer habit (Adorno 1997 [1963]: 189), can be seen as what Ruth Benedict might have described as one of the 'dominant traits of our civilisation' (1934: 250). It therefore requires a certain effort of the imagination to call to mind a time when for many, if not most, hearing music meant making it oneself. From cave dwellers chanting around the fire to bourgeois piano culture, people who wanted music would be people who sang or played. Increasing specialisation and professionalisation has made participation in many ways more difficult for non-specialists, while mass production of sound carriers and

broadcasting has made it less necessary. The modern music lover can largely forego participation (and Level III accessibility) because of the plethora of physically accessible music 'product' (Level I).

Yet if we disregard the small minority who can make a living by performing music, we are left, even today, with a large number of people who participate for personal and social reasons and thereby circumvent the 'consumer habit'. Ruth Finnegan (1998) has researched the extensive patchwork of amateur musical groups and scenes in an ordinary British town. People thus involved choose to make music which they could more easily buy. Furthermore the bought product would probably be of higher quality than the 'homemade'. We will look closely at why people choose to join a *samba* band in a later chapter. More broadly speaking we can see many reasons for wanting to make amateur music: for the challenge of mastering a skill, to gain the approval of others, to be part of a social group, to express oneself creatively and so on. The question of how accessible making music is also suggests a number of criteria: performance difficulty, tuition availability, equipment availability and cost, accessibility of information, and opportunity to join an ensemble.

Whereas the necessity to make music oneself has receded with the advent of globalised consumer capitalism, certain aspects of our era have facilitated some kinds of participation. Increased leisure time makes the possibility of joining a group such as a choir more feasible, as does having a smaller number of children. Disposable income brings purchasing instruments (and even recording equipment) into the reach of vast numbers of potential musicians. Widespread free education, which often contains a musical component, attempts to introduce music appreciation and performance to whole populations, with varying results as the *samba* study reported in Chapter 8 shows.[32] Despite such facilitation, and despite the fact that the market in musical accessories is

---

[32] Respondents often mentioned childhood instrumental lessons as having turned them against music. They were experienced as unpleasant and helped to bury any interest in participatory music until it was resurrected by *samba*.

also part of consumer capitalism, it is undeniable that 'joining in' is outside the cycle of earning – spending – consuming. Engagement in participation can lead to levels of understanding and involvement that mere consumption or reception cannot provide. This is particularly true because there is in making music a fluidity between the personal and the social, and between reproducing and creating.

It is in so far as a rupture has occurred between performing and hearing music that accessibility has become an issue at Level III (participation), particularly in 'art music'. The modern western orchestral model, of highly sophisticated professional ensembles and virtuosi, playing technically challenging music to passive audiences, has put the idea of performing such music in an amateur context beyond what is taken for granted. In an example of overlap between Levels of accessibility, it could also be argued that in view of the resistance of audiences to new 'serious' work from a reception perspective, it is not surprising that there is no great clamour for opportunities to learn to perform such music. Yet there are ample examples of composers attempting to draw amateurs in. Britten, Vaughan Williams, Elgar, Tippett, Maxwell Davies, Orff and Hindemith spring immediately to mind as having worked to include non-specialists in their music. They have done so by writing tonally, working with children or choirs, or engaging with vernacular music. This area will be dealt with more fully in Chapter 6. The work of raising the accessibility of orchestral music, and particularly contemporary orchestral music, has been continued by the outreach activities of many orchestras. Anthony Everitt (1997: 102-115) charts this trend in the UK since the 1980s. He sees these developments as a reaction to a perception that 'classical music' has been left 'marooned in an elitist Bermuda Triangle – with the orchestra as a Marie Celeste from which the ordinary evidences of human life are missing' (p. 102).

Orchestras have developed a range of activities which 'use players for a variety of participatory programmes'.[33] Not only does this work seek a *rapprochement* between

---

[33] Ibid.: 103 .

players and audiences, it also addresses the split between composer and performer, having widened the remit of orchestral musicians by requiring them to experiment and improvise, '...subverting the notion of the composer as a distinct specialist'.[34] The hierarchical structure of orchestral organisation (composer, conductor, ranked players), which mirrors capitalistic rationalisation in other spheres and even a military chain of command - Everitt draws attention to the use of the term 'rank and file' for orchestral players[35] - is challenged by projects which breach the established boundaries. Such an approach '...dissolves the distinction between professional and amateur, between provider and consumer. At its most radical, it promotes a new kind of music-making, almost...a new art form'.[36]

Accessibility as an established aim of British cultural policy

An approach that draws in participation from schools, audience and the wider community has been encouraged by UK funding bodies for some time. The following mission statement can be found on the Department for Culture, Media and Sport Web site:[37]

> Our aim is to maximise the contribution from the arts sector to the Secretary of State's four strategic priorities (Children and Young People; Communities; the Economy; and Delivery), and through this to improve the quality of life of all through the arts. We aim to:
>
> 1. Broaden access for all to a rich and varied artistic and cultural life
> 2. Ensure that the artistic activity we fund aspires to be world class in terms of standards and innovation
> 3. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to develop artistic talent and to achieve excellence in the arts

---

[34] Ibid.: 110.
[35] Ibid.: 104.
[36] Ibid.: 106.
[37] <http://www.culture.gov.uk/arts/> read in October 2005.

4. Develop the educational potential of all the nation's artistic and cultural resources

5. Raise standards of artistic and cultural education and training

6. Ensure an adequate skills supply for the arts and cultural sectors

7. Reduce the number of those who feel excluded from society by using the arts

8. To carry out our work using best management practice and reflecting and using the diversity of those who work here and those with whom we work outside the Department

What were originally bullet points have been numbered in order to be able to point out those that are concerned with accessibility. Number 1. clearly is, since it actually mentions 'access'. Number 2. seems to be juxtaposed with it in order to balance accessibility with quality, the two having an uneasy relationship. Number 3. is clearly back to avowing access. Number 4. is about using artistic and cultural resources for educational purposes, precisely the kind of activity Everitt describes in terms of UK orchestras. 5. talks of standards but for education and training, thus combining quality and access. Number 7. interestingly amalgamates access to the arts with social inclusion (which will be further dealt with below). In summary five out of eight of the points are concerned with accessibility. Furthermore four out of five of the strategic priorities (Children and Young People; Communities; the Economy; and Delivery) i.e. all except 'the Economy' clearly point to access when seen in this context.

The matter of the quality of music resulting from projects whose main motivation is 'process' rather than 'product' may of course be questioned as it was in the case of Maxwell Davies' *The Turn of The Tide* (Everitt 1997: 107). Nevertheless, the composer or orchestra hoping for financial support will frequently be looking to involve large numbers of people, as merely vouchsafing for the standard of the music will not be as likely to lead to a successful grant application:

There is a sense that artistic excellence is no longer allowed to be an end in itself, that funding deals have become increasingly geared towards making art relevant and accessible.[38]

Peter Jonas, former head of the ENO and the Bayerische Staatsoper, suspects that artists have 'fallen victim to the necessity of political justification'.[39] The argument is between those who feel that tax payers should find the products of arts funding accessible and those who think the arts should be free of such concerns. Another approach would be to say that without state funding the arts would have to consider accessibility in an even more immediate way. Truly accessible music does not depend on state funding for its survival; the *samba* band described in Chapter 8 operated for a number of years without any outside support. Nor does such music require special outreach projects, as people spontaneously want to participate without having to be cajoled. Commendable as it is for Richard McNicol to 'bring a fresh approach to concert-giving for children and to educate them for eventual concert-going',[40] it is difficult to evade the starchy whiff of paternalism in such activities.

The desire to widen (or 'extend' to use a term popular in earlier years) access to the arts in general had an early advocate in R.H. Tawney who 'had set the agenda for appropriating "culture" from the sole possession of a privileged elite and extending it to the masses' (McGuigan 2001: 128). The labour government of the second half of the 1960s tried to enact Tawney's ideals for the arts at a time when comprehensivisation in secondary education and increased funding for health and higher education meant that enabling wider access to key services and institutions was part of the *Zeitgeist*. McGuigan (2001: 128-9) describes how tension arose over whether access in the arts should mean enabling people to 'consume established art forms' or if it should extend to 'popular control over the means of cultural production...and participation for groups hitherto excluded'. In the

---

[38] *The Guardian*, 18/10/2002. Charlotte Higgins, "For a few pennies more."
<www.guardian.com.uk/arts/funding/story/0,12564,821594,00.html>
[39] Ibid.
[40] Quoted in Everitt (1997: 106).

terms established here this means aiming only for Levels I and II, or including Level III as well. In McGuigan's account the participatory argument became strong (although most funding still went to prestige projects) leading to devolution and decentralisation, which left the sector vulnerable to cuts under Thatcherism.

Level III accessibility, civil society and social capital

McGuigan also draws attention to the value of civil society as a 'vital safeguard of what little democracy we have in a world dominated by instrumental rationality' (2001: 136). In his discussion he draws on Habermas' idea of 'the lifeworld' as a space between state and market, where unmediated communication can flourish and to some extent process and criticise what is handed down by the more powerful institutional, market and social forces.

The arts, and music in particular, have a strong role to play in nurturing such a locus, as they provide opportunities for people to congregate and form connections between each other. This is particularly true of participatory music where co-operation and group bonding can lead to the establishment of musical communities.[41] What such communities provide for the participants is what sociologists term 'social capital', which is the value of the connectedness forged. Bourdieu, although better known for his discussion of 'cultural capital' points out that '...social capital is the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition'.[42] While in the upper strata of the polity this can mean 'old school tie' type privilege, John Coleman '...was able to show that social capital was not limited to the powerful, but could also convey real benefits to poor and marginalised communities' (Field 2003: 20). This

---

[41] See Chapter 8.
[42] Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992: 119), quoted in Field (2003: 15).

explains why accessibility of arts participation is often seen as a path to social inclusion (point 7. of the aims of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, as quoted above, was: 'Reduce the number of those who feel excluded from society by using the arts').[43] Field (2003: 29-40) also refers to the work of Putnam who describes contemporary US society as becoming increasingly fragmented and individualised due to people's unwillingness to participate in voluntary communal activities. Putnam makes the ubiquity of television responsible for this 'erosion of social capital'.[44] If such a trend can be generalised to the rest of the developed world, then ensemble music which is accessible for participation can be seen as having considerable social and personal value. The targeted use of participatory music to promote social inclusion in Brazil, a developing country, will be further discussed in Chapter 7.

Summary

This chapter began by proposing the differentiation of musical accessibility into three Levels; one for physical access, the second concerned with the individual's reception of music and a third dealing with participation. A preliminary exploration determined that these Levels, while indispensable for further analysis, are interlinked and interdependent. The relationship between utility and accessibility was then explored with reference to an expanded notion of *Gebrauchsmusik* and Weber's four types of social action.

The chapter then discussed historical developments concerning the Levels of accessibility, and the status of artist, work and audience. It was found that while the importance of the art object decreases with portability and duplication, the status accrued by the producer of creative work has been enhanced, although this is dependent on the nature of the content of the work as well as other factors such as the extent of dissemination. As physical access was facilitated, perceptual inaccessibility became a

---

[43] <http://www.culture.gov.uk/arts/> read in October 2005.
[44] Quoted in Field (2003: 35).

mark of status differentiation for the audience. The chapter further examined the importance of media and the market in Level I accessibility, attempting a theorisation of current developments but recognising that predictions are risky. Level II (reception) was discussed with reference to the rationalisation theories of Weber and Ritzer. The question of why there is an attraction both in predictability and novelty was illuminated by a consideration of personality theory, which posits a trait that, if present in a pronounced way, predisposes us to seek out new and challenging experiences to maintain our OLA, or optimal level of arousal. Finally, participation in music (Level III) was discussed with reference to theories of social inclusion. Examples from the British arts scene and UK arts policy were drawn on, demonstrating the widely held view that participatory accessibility in the arts is a laudable goal with positive social consequences. However, this attitude sits in an uneasy relationship with notions of excellence in the arts.

The definition, categorisation and discussion of musical accessibility in this chapter lays the foundation for the subsequent case studies and explorations. The Levels (I - III) proposed here will be referred to throughout, sometimes in the abbreviated forms: LI, LII and LIII. Although they will be supplemented by further categorisations and some neologisms to increase the precision with which we can address accessibility, the three Levels are the conceptual tool which will be consistently applied and all three, due to their interconnectedness, will inevitably be relevant throughout.

Chapter 3

Case Study 1

'Prog' Rock/Punk Rock:
Sophistication, Directness and Shock

'High' and 'Low', the sophisticated and the naive, are always present as cultural alternatives - in all societies, even 'primitive ones' - exerting opposite and equal thrusts in the history of human awareness and self-revelation. They may appear to exist, develop, and function independently, but in fact they are perennial alter egos, which at times interact directly. High and low art, like Beauty and the Beast, go hand in hand.

(Lavin 1990: 19)

Introduction

The case study presented here concerns punk rock, which has been a key subject of the cultural studies approach to the field of popular music since the late 1970s (Hebdige 1979, Laing 1997, Frith 1983). This broke significantly with the condemnatory tone of Adorno, allowing for the use of commodified popular culture by both producers and consumers in creative, constructive and oppositional ways. The reason for looking at punk again is to illuminate a number of issues important in the exploration of

accessibility, while using some of the work done by writers in this area as a basis for discussion. Punk is viewed not in isolation, but in relation to progressive rock, which preceded it as the dominant musical subculture outside main-stream pop in the UK.

On the most obvious level progressive rock is of interest because it can be seen as an example of a genre which had become less accessible at Levels I, II and III. Physical access was difficult because the music was performed at expensive sports stadium and festival gigs and was not featured on TV or radio because these media concentrated on singles, whereas progressive rock had espoused the LP format. LPs were obviously also more expensive than singles. In terms of Level II the music was challenging because of the length and complexity of pieces and the esoteric lyric content. Finally at Level III, progressive rock was difficult to play because it required high levels of musicianship. Punk on the other hand avoided all these problems. It had high media visibility, with moral panic type reporting in the tabloids. The less offensive songs could be played on the radio. Local punk gigs started to take place across the country and the records were cheap. Furthermore, anyone it seemed could be in a punk band or be a part of the movement. Viewed in this way 'prog'-to-punk was the jettisoning of an inaccessible genre for a more accessible one.

Reading the 'texts'

The problem of aesthetic value in popular music

There has been a clear emphasis on the socially, ideologically and culturally constructed nature of musical meaning in the study of popular music in the last quarter century or so. Middleton for instance tells us that: 'the very conditions of interpretation are not *etic* (that is, objective and autonomous) but *emic* (that is, the product of cultural knowldge)' (1990:

175).[1] Although occasional glimpses are given of other processes which might be in play (Middleton 1990: 288), ultimately we find a gravitation towards music as an essentially sign-based system which, like language, has to be learned to be understood:

> Musical effects are not biologically given, even if in any particular culture people communicate through music as naturally as they communicate through language.
>
> (Frith 1983: 162)

Partly engendered by this approach and partly nurtured by the materialist tradition, there is a concentration on production, consumption, ideology and political considerations, effectively eliding the *musical* material which is left adrift in a sea of relativism. Frequently such readings worry the intersection of artistic expression and issues of class and gender, searching popular culture for signs of 'resistance' (Hebdige 1979, Willis 1977, Fiske 1989, Bradley 1992). From this perspective punk has been accorded more respect than progressive rock and it is easy to grasp why: punk is identified as working class while progressive rock is seen as middle class. Furthermore 'prog' rock stands accused of being a product of the major record companies, while punk represents DIY production and small grass roots labels. What matters here is who makes music and who buys it; not what it is. Condemnation of progressive rock is harder to justify on the basis of the music, lyrics, style or even the ethical values espoused by its subculture. What seems more important than all these however is that a genre can be enlisted into the revolutionary project. Gracyk illustrates this with a pertinent example:

> Whether with blue jeans or Madonna videos, consumers retain a vestige of 'popular force' that can counter prevailing ideologies with a progressive, oppositional ideology at the level of living out 'everyday life'. John Lydon becomes Johnny Rotten by buying a Pink Floyd shirt and scrawling 'I hate' above the band's name.
>
> (1996: 210)

---

[1] Italics and brackets from the original.

Meanwhile the evacuated centre of popular music research is the music that we dare not allow its say, that we cannot engage with directly. Middleton pursues the issue thus:

> ...by what criteria can any musical values be legitimated, other than in terms of the participation of those involved?...Can we justify any musical evaluation? Is any position preferable, any message more progressive than competing messages? We recognize ourselves, our feelings, our bodies, our beliefs, our social positions, in popular songs; but are these simply interchangeable images in a gallery of optical illusions?
>
> <div align="right">(Middleton 1990: 253)</div>

In this area journalistic music criticism is much less squeamish and tendential value judgements abound, but their rationales tend to be implicit and neither ideologically reflexive nor musically observant, as quotes later in this chapter will demonstrate. In more considered writing, value accorded is perhaps more revealed by what is studied and what is neglected. Thus progressive rock has until recently received little attention whereas punk has been lavishly circumscribed (Savage 1991, Sabin 1999, Hebidge 1979, Laing 1997).[2] Meanwhile the former is still often referred to in passing as beyond the pale. Stump describes 'witnessing...the cultural exile of all such music' (1997: 4), while in the introduction to his 2002 collection of reappraisals of the genre Holm-Hudson writes of 'critical vilification' (p. 5) and that: 'Today progressive rock is relegated to a footnote in most rock histories and considered a symptom of 1970s excess rather than a genre worthy of closer examination' (p. 2). In this the music media and academic writing have been strangely concurrent.

Taking another look at the music of progressive and punk rock we may ask afresh: what is/was so bad about one and so good about the other? Were such judgements ever actually

---

[2] For a bibliography of punk which amongst many others specifically lists 22 academic books on the subject see <http://thslone.tripod.com/punk-bibliography.html#cacademia>

about the music? What is the role of accessibility in such judgements? Scott (2003: 80) asks in relation to a different historical style: 'Is it at all possible, then, to take any steps toward finding answers...in the current relativistic climate, or can we speak only of differences rather than aesthetic values?' Not only is the problem recognised but comprehensive models for the textual analysis of popular music have been proposed and descriptions of music are sometimes used (Tagg 2000, Middleton 2000, Hamm 2000, Toynbee 2000). However the primacy of constructionism and relativism make such engagement problematic. It matters here because, as has been noted in Chapter 1, from a strict contextual position, perceptual musical accessibility would be a matter of cultural literacy in a particular style. The 'musical experience' (Kramer 2002: 8) is ultimately where the discussion of musical values and aesthetics must begin and in the direct impact of music on human there are already capabilities, impressions and predispositions on which cultural conditioning works. Accessibility depends on both the direct musical experience and what has been culturally conditioned interacting in a way that makes the listener receptive.

It is hoped in what follows to allow evident aspects of music such as texture, scope and formal attributes to be recognised, compared and interrogated in terms of perceptual accessibility. In this it is not intended to neglect the construction and historical origins of meanings and these will be examined at length, addressing value systems in popular music which, while having parallels with those in high art aesthetics, are in other ways quite different. Another positional aspect - temporal location - will be further discussed in the next chapter. However the musical material, while not being exhaustively described, will be allowed an ontological force as far as meaning and accessibility are concerned.

It is important to differentiate between two kinds of value judgements. The first concerns subjective judgements of worth, such as 'this music is worthless'. The second is more descriptive, has an empirical element and includes such statements as 'this music is aggressive'. Let us call these types of judgement 'subjective' and 'descriptive' for the purposes of this argument. There is substantial overlap between the two types because

both will differ from person to person and from context to context. However, whereas *any* music might reasonably be described as 'worthless' by someone, the same is not necessarily true of 'aggressive'. 'Descriptive' judgements provide an opportunity to compare music and the qualities thus acknowledged have a bearing on accessibility.

Progressive rock

During the 1970s, in a development of 1960s psychedelia and following the impetus of The Beatles' *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*,[3] English rock music spread its creative wings with longer pieces, often extending to a whole side of the then predominant LP format. Compositions, concepts and production were involved and sophisticated, lyrics intricate, expansive and sometimes surreal. The following are from the Genesis album *Foxtrot*:

> iv.   HOW DARE I BE SO BEAUTIFUL:
>
>> Wandering in the chaos the battle has left,
>> We climb up the mountain of human flesh,
>> To a plateau of green grass, and green trees full of life.
>> A young figure sits still by her pool,
>> He's been stamped 'Human Bacon' by some butchery tool.
>>> (He is you)
>> Social Security took care of this lad,
>> We watch in reverence, as Narcissus is turned to a flower.
>>> A flower?
>
>> (Genesis: 'Supper's Ready')[4]

---

[3] (1967) EMI.
[4] *Foxtrott* (1972) Charisma.

The music of the piece from which this comes proceeds in seven sections of contrasting pace, timbre and style which follow one another without the silence one would expect between conventional 'tracks'. Even within these sections there is not the intra-song homogeneity typical of popular music. The work also modulates frequently. There are instrumental interludes, sudden contrasts in texture, orchestration and dynamics as well as *poco a poco crescendi*. At its most delicate, the instrumentation consists of one or two instruments. The prelude 'Horizons' for instance is a thoughtfully structured tonal instrumental piece, played by Steve Hackett in a technically accomplished fashion on plucked six string, steel strung acoustic guitar. It is melodic, with hints of baroque harmony and voice leading, and uses delicate harmonics as and integral effect for expressive contrast. As 'Supper's Ready' proper gets underway the texture is expanded with electric guitar and later mellotron and twelve string acoustic guitars.

There is relatively little melodic, harmonic or verbal repetition, certainly no hammered home hook line chorus, although the melody from the lyrics quoted above, with their jarring kaleidoscope of imagery from the Holocaust to Greek myth, their gender confusion ('her'/'he') and cannibalism, has been pre-viewed in a flute and guitar interlude. The love song lines from the first vocal section: 'And its hello babe, with your guardian eyes so blue...' also return with their original melody near the end, suggesting closure. This is musically thwarted however by a tutti finale of new material with lyrics referencing the second coming (ideas from Revelation having appeared before) as if through the prism of LSD hallucinations. The word '(continued)' is printed at the end of the lyrics on the inside of the folding double sleeve, implying that even the 25 minutes taken up by this piece including the prelude, filling a whole album side, are not enough to encompass the work. The lyrics consist of a sequence of surreal and fantastic fragments, sometimes in narrative form, sometimes addressed to the listener. The style ranges from nonsense poetry word-play ('To look for hidden doors, tidy floors, more applause') to science fiction, to apocalyptic and hallucinational. A dynamic climax is prepared and built towards on a 9/8 ostinato with the quaver beats divided into 4/3/2 ending in the full flight band with bass, drums, rhythm guitars, hammond organ, layered vocals and lead

guitar solo.

The whole is highly polished and extremely carefully performed and produced. There is a pervasive surrealism which connects not only with surrealist art, but also with various currents of modernist poetry. Progressive rock clearly aspired to art music levels of scope, formal organisation and technical mastery. Drug inspired phantasmagoria alternated with idealistic alternative visions to rationalised urban existence. Describing another piece in the style, 'Roundabout' from Yes' *Fragile* album, Sheinbaum writes:

> The nature imagery throughout the song, with its references to mountains, lakes and valleys, suggests (as in much progressive rock) the pastoral utopia of a time long ago, which stands in contrast to the dehumanising technology of modern society.
>
> (2002: 38)

Progressive rock matters partly because it represents an attempt by rock musicians to create, with 'extraordinary fecundity' (Stump 1997: 4), expressions which went beyond the simple formulae of rock 'n' roll and the popular love song, in the process addressing an audience outside the traditional pop and rock constituency of working class teenagers. Bands such as Yes, Deep Purple, Emerson Lake and Palmer, Pink Floyd and Genesis represented a coming of age of an art form, closing the circle so that 'high' and 'low' became represented within rock culture and not just between it and 'serious' music. The punk backlash set its face resolutely against this development, demonstrating not only a cultural pendulum swing of a kind that can be observed in many other spheres (see Chapter 4), but also putting an effective cap on where rock could credibly go for a considerable time. A comparison could be made with jazz in the immediate aftermath of World War II, when be-bop took the form into an ambitious, challenging and less accessible domain. This ultimately gave jazz an existence as a music of exploration and non-commercialised expression, but it may also have hastened its demise as a genuinely

popular form. Thus punk may have cut short rock's attempt to become a more expansive and sophisticated genre, but saved its future as a strand of truly popular music for another half a century at least.

The tide turns

On the paramusical level, the lancing of the boil, as punk ideology would have it, resulted in the wholesale rejection not just of the musical developments of progressive rock and the sartorial and tonsorial elements of long hair, paisley and flares, but also a whole cluster of late hippy values, such as tolerance, love, social liberalism, anti-materialism and pacifism. In Britain the short-lived punk heyday was followed by the advent of Thatcherism which did its best to deliver a *coup de grace* to those very same values, suggesting a very broad cultural and political about turn, encompassing apparently extremely diverse groups (i.e. punks and 'middle England').

In April 1976, on the eve of the punk revolution, elaborate, polished rock music was being lauded in the *New Musical Express* (*NME*), one of Europe's major music publications. When a new album by 'orchestral-rock band' The Enid, who fit '...into the area of Yes, Genesis...Vangelis and...Focus' was reviewed, it was described as an 'album of extraordinary sophistication and professionalism...complex and ambitious' and deserving of 'your serious consideration'.[5] During the sweltering summer of the same year, a youth movement took shape, centred around a fetish clothes shop called 'Sex' in London's King's Road, owned by Malcolm McLaren and Vivienne Westwood, which spawned music that was the antithesis of the elaborate work of Genesis and The Enid; short pieces, simple ideas, direct, provocative, preferably offensive lyrics and as little playing technique as possible:

---

[5] *New Musical Express,* 17/4/1976, p. 23.

Right now!

I am an antichrist,

I am an anarchist,

Don't know what I want,

But I know how to get it,

I wanna destroy,

The passerby,

Cause I want to be in,

Anarchy.

(The Sex Pistols: 'Anarchy in the UK')[6]

The vocal is aggressively shouted over a simple and repetitive harmonic sequence consisting mainly of major chords. These, in being moved with all notes in parallel, create a slightly surprising effect, in the harmonic context, by going from F major to the tonic C major via E major and D major, producing the non-diatonic notes G# and F#. There are two instrumental sections, one of which has a melodic riff, a kind of vestigial guitar solo. The instrumentation consists of voices, electric guitars, bass and drums and the piece begins with just single voice and guitar. The textures thicken as the song progresses however, including backing vocals and layered guitars, producing a good deal of textural richness. 'Anarchy in the UK' never looses its rough edge or feeling of rhythmic propulsion though. The guitar sounds are consistently distorted, the vocals always belligerent, the drums rush little tom fills between the vocal lines which are prominent in the mix. The piece ends abruptly on some feedback after just three and a half minutes.

Brevity and economy, as opposed to the lengthy and convoluted compositions of

---

[6] *Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols* (1977) Sex Pistols Residuals/Virgin Records. The line 'the passerby' is difficult to make out on the recording, but is given as here by Savage in *England's Dreaming* p. 253. The cover of the LP and the similar poster with the slogan: 'Never Mind the Bollocks here's the Sex Pistols', was the subject of police prosecution and a subsequent court case with echoes of the D.H. Lawrence (*Lady Chatterley's Lover*) obscenity trials in Britain and the USA in the early sixties. The band won the case on the basis that the 'B' word is a venerable ancient word with instances of its use in texts going back centuries and including the first translation of the Bible into English (Savage 1991).

progressive rock, were explicitly perceived as virtues of punk. These, along with the lack of concern for technique, opened it up to beginner musicians. The fanzine *Sideburns* encouraged enthusiasts:

This is a chord

This is another

This is a third

Now form a band [7]

There can be no clearer indication that Level III (participatory) accessibility was central to the movement. Progressive rock required virtuosic playing, elaborate compositional structures, lavish live presentation and extensive (and expensive) studio production. Punk, on the other hand, required none of these as the *Sideburns* quote emphasises. Energy and passion were seen as significantly more important than musical knowledge or skill. Popular music was being re-appropriated by the young and spontaneous. The encouragement of others to 'have a go' was an important element in the appeal of early punk. At the first Manchester concert by the Sex Pistols, the small audience contained a high proportion people who were later to be in successful bands themselves.[8] Amy Spencer emphasises that apart from the usual rock concomitants of rebellion and individuation:

...[punk] included...the idea that there should be no sense of elitism in music...making [the] statement that music should be accessible to all: that it can be easy to play and the audience should not just be stuck in the role of listener, of consumer, but should be empowered to create their own music.

(2005: 227)

---

[7] Quoted in: Savage (1991: 280). The legend was actually accompanied by the tablature of three guitar chords.
[8] *Where I live, Arts and Literature.* Interview with David Nolan.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/content/articles/2006/05/11/110506_sex_pistols_gig_feature.shtml>

This could give the impression that music was not actually the primary concern (recalling the conflict between quality and accessibility in UK arts funding). In their first interview the Sex Pistols proclaimed:

Actually we're not into music...we're into chaos. [9]

The collage effects of progressive rock also had their chaotic aspect, but were too carefully orchestrated (literally) to be out of control. The dicey side of punk contributed, as with early rock 'n' roll, to initial disinterest and incomprehension by the major record companies. But a single was relatively cheap to produce in short runs of 500 to a few thousand and music in the new punk style could be recorded at low cost. This was in obvious opposition to the lavishly produced LPs of the major bands of the time. Thus the mainstream music business could be bypassed. In Britain, punk became the new youth/subculture, which brought with it a network of small independent labels such as Stiff and Rough Trade. Before long the 'majors' saw that there were profits to be made and started to sign punk bands. There is a parallel here with acid house and trance music in the 1990s. It could be produced on new, cheaper recording equipment, distributed on vinyl and played in clubs, avoiding major companies and their gatekeeper A&R departments. Thus new styles and audiences can develop. The industry then realises that it is losing revenue and has to catch up, appropriating and profiting from the very trend it at first resisted, by imitating ideas, signing key bands and buying up successful small labels. In this way the major music companies reassert their control and virtual monopoly position without, one could argue, having taken the risk of supporting innovative young musicians. Another reading of this pattern would be as cycles of (LIII) accessibility. As established styles become codified and entrenched, the space for newcomers to intervene and make an impact, to participate in the music and style discourse, becomes marginal. A new subgenre with different production criteria can offer an opening for new music and ideas.

---

[9] Quoted in Savage (1991: 152).

The Sex Pistol's disdain for the pop establishment was expressed in their lyric 'I use the *NME*[10], and the song 'EMI Unlimited Edition'.[11] The *NME* obviously loved to be (ab)-'used', for it became instrumental in furthering the Pistol's cause and promoting the new aesthetic. In 1978 it published the following, rich with irony:

> It is, perhaps, inevitable that Foreigner are massively successful: this record contains an alarmingly high cliché count and is exceptionally slickly produced. How can fame and fortune possibly elude them?[12]

It is clear that sophisticated production and commercial success are *not* seen as virtues here. An oppositional stance towards the music industry, often while actually being at the heart of it, has long been cultivated by many musicians and journalists who see themselves as representing values beyond and outside those of mere commercialism (Frith 1983: 52-5). Such 'oppositional' values include artistic integrity (as it would also be recognised by those in non-popular sectors of culture), proximity to fans and the street, constituting a kind of youth grass roots 'authenticity', and a critical stance towards social norms and consumerism. There is a strong feeling amongst fans, musicians and commentators, that there is something genuine, honest and valuable in rock music's simplicity and directness; in an uncompromising, rebellious, anti-establishment stance. Gracyk refers to 'the ideals of truth and authenticity connecting fans to the music' (1996: 207). In other words this aspect of the music has a moral value.

---

[10] Also on 'Anarchy in the UK'.

[11] Track 8, *Never Mind the Bollocks Here's the Sex Pistols*. (1977) Sex Pistols Residuals/Virgin Records.

[12] *New Musical Express*, 7/8/1978. "Foreigner: 'Cold as Ice'." P.17.

Rock Values

Blues

'Blues...has been widely influential, indeed formative, on the development of rock,' (Middleton 1990: 43) and through its relationship to its blues precursor, rock is inextricably bound up with outsider values. It is identified with the accuser, the unsophisticated, the proletarian, the artless, the wronged, the challenger of the establishment. Middleton has argued that in blues 'the effects of this are apparent in the musical form itself – in disjunctive structures, an immanently contradictory musical language and a commitment to "authentic" self-expression'.[13] The perception amongst devotees, who included many successful early British rock musicians, was that a Delta blues singer, with tales of jail, poverty and betrayal in love, cannot *but* speak the truth. 'Blues...is commonly regarded as centrally to do with the expression of alienated subjectivity caught within oppressive social structures.'[14] Virtuosic playing technique or sophisticated equipment would undermine credibility, turn the musician into an operator, a manipulator, rather than a conduit for emotional reality. These words, compelling in their rhymeless beauty, may serve as an illustration of some of the crucial values of the form. They are accompanied by a single, slow acoustic guitar:

> Darling take me as I am,
> Or no way at all,
> I am poor,
> I don't have a nickel,
> No place to call my own,
> but if you love me,

---

[13] Loc. cit.
[14] Loc. cit.

That's all that matter,

And I love you.

I'm not rich darling,

I don't have fancy clothes,

But if you love me, every night,

That's all I care for.

I don't care for money,

Neither fancy clothes,

All I care for,

Is your love.

(John Lee Hooker: 'Take Me as I Am') [15]

In this recording Hooker does not usually sound any guitar notes while he is singing, leaving the lyrics only accompanied by his tapping foot. The guitar playing in between the lines is very relaxed, with plenty of notes which only half speak. The impression of the whole is that it is as unadulterated and unpolished as the narrator portrays himself to be in the words of the song.

One of the tensions within sophisticated European rock music arises from the credibility gap faced by white middle class young men appropriating an originally black proletarian form. A review of a Genesis single from the *NME* in July 1978 asks:

Anybody hate Mellotrons, well-modulated English art-rock voices and civilised sludge rock as much as I do? [16]

It is easy to see how punk was perceived to be implicitly closer to blues values than the

---

[15] *This is Hip* (1980) Charly Records Ltd.. This track recorded in 1960.
[16] *New Musical Express,* 8/7/1978. "Genesis, many too many." P.17.

rather involved and polished work being produced by Yes and Genesis under the banner of progressive rock. John J. Sheinbaum pinpoints the problem:

> Rock's roots are wrapped up in notions of the natural and simple, and a second stage of vital maturity occurs in the 1960s rock of the politically conscious counter culture. But progressive rock, which supposedly eschews those roots in favour of 'artistic' complexities, results in a 'hollow emptiness', in a degeneration of rock's former glory.
>
> (2002: 23)

The suspicion of technique and complexity has pre-echoes in art music criticism. Adorno, in a section entitled 'Fetishism of the Means' writes of Stravinsky's all too clever technical showmanship, that the overbearing effects 'no longer aim to elicit, but are performed and enjoyed in abstraction, like a somersault, for no aesthetic purpose' (1997 [1949]: 159).[17] Frith cites 'emptiness' as one of the faults seen by pop musicians in some pop music:

> Bad musicians indulge in form at the expense of content, make music that 'has nothing to say' but says it elaborately anyway. Their music is not made for any good reason but merely as a display of technical ability; such musicians play something only to show that they can.
>
> (Frith 1996: 257)

The implication is that virtuosity, while meant to impress, can hide a lack of something else. Sheinbaum describes the perception that it is not just a sign of an absence of meaning, but a barrier to communication:

> Self-consciousness is at issue here; 'authentic' artists engage their music intuitively, while these musicians highlight surface virtuosity simply because they

---

[17] Author's translation.

can. Their music is always mediated by technical display, which stands between artist and audience, and distances listeners from the music.

(2002: 22)

A single review from the post-'prog' *NME*, this time of the punk band the Buzzcocks' 'Love You More', extols the virtues of the direct aesthetic:

A short review for a short record (1 minute 43 seconds): 'Love You More' has a dance beat, a neat guitar hook, an air of breathless romance and a quality of sardonic innocence. It'd make a great hit.[18]

Directness, sophistication and authenticity

Thus a clear picture emerges of the valorisation of simplicity and brevity in rock music. Such qualities are associated with ideas of authenticity and can be subsumed under the term 'directness'. It is proposed that this may be juxtaposed with 'sophistication'. Table 2 attempts to represent some of the values, attributes and entities which are associated with the opposing poles of the direct and the sophisticated in rock.

---

[18] *New Musical Express*, 8/7/1978. "Buzzcocks: 'Love you More'." P.17

Table 2: Directness and Sophistication in Rock

Directness	Sophistication
Dionysian	*Apollonian*
Cheap	*Expensive*
Oppositional	*Establishment*
Revolution	*Status quo*
Independent label	*Big business*
Shocking	*Soothing*
Roots	*International*
Young/new	*Old*
Honest	*Manipulative*
Vulnerable	*Well established*
Innocent	*Calculating*
Rough	*Smooth*
Working class English	*Middle class English*
Visceral	*Cerebral*
Artless playing	*Flashy playing*
Short	*Long*
Simply produced	*Carefully produced*
Frugal	*Lavish*
Chaos	*Order*
Immediate	*Rehearsed*
Authentic	*Contrived*

The 'direct' versus 'sophisticated' dichotomy also runs through the technological aspects of popular music. On the side of sophistication we have the production of technically immaculate digital master tapes, made with every finesse available to the genius producer

108

in the modern music laboratory, or studio, which are then sold on the space age, shimmering CD. On the other side we find among pop fans and players much fetishising of old technology, such as valve amplifiers, vintage instruments, analogue equipment and sound carriers, and 'dirty' sampled sounds from old recordings.[19] Whatever the attractions of particular sounds and gadgets, it must be remembered that today's dirty old recording was yesterday's 'state of the art' wonder.

Often the difference is illusory and what appears to be rough and immediate is actually achieved with great care and effort. Chris Thomas produced 'Anarchy in the UK', one of the Sex Pistols' first singles, and the wild sound achieved needed twenty-one guitar over-dubs (Savage 1991: 245-246). The same producer had mixed Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*,[20] one of the smoothest, most sophisticated works of the pre-punk era. The interplay between directness and sophistication is one *between* and *within* rock genres. On the track 'Mother' on the 1979 album *Join Hands,* Siouxsie, part of the punk movement from the start, sings two similar texts 'simultaneously' (represented as mirroring each other on the inner sleeve).[21] One is a homage to 'Mother', the other subverts the message, one is clear, the other heavily effected. In the background is a musical box playing 'Oh Mein Papa', a German World War I popular song about 'Father', referencing the album's recurring theme of that war as well as the 'parent' issue. Here is an intricate and multilayered piece, three years into the punk revolution. The next track on the same album, 'Lord's Prayer' is an extended improvisation 14 minutes long. Although it does not stray far from the key centre of E major (the 'home' key for guitars) it explores different distorted guitar textures while Souxsie wails quotes from the eponymous prayer, as well as interposing lines from popular songs and nursery rhymes. No less self-indulgent than any progressive rock track it is even less accessible, combining as it does length and verbal disjuncture with abrasiveness and a lack of musical contrast which can easily result

---

[19] See also Thomas Leddy's paper on "Everyday Surface Aesthetic Qualities: 'Neat', 'Messy', 'Clean', 'Dirty'", particularly the long quotation of an e-mail from Stan Godlovitch giving musical examples for Leddy's thesis. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* 53:3 pp. 260-261.
[20] *Dark Side of the Moon* (2003[1973]) EMI.
[21] Siouxsie and the Banshees, *Join Hands* (1979) Polydor.

in boredom. It appears that principles of brevity and directness are difficult to sustain given the artistic impulse to explore. Frith (1983: 160) sees a split taking place in punk after 1977 between what he calls 'punk populism' and a 'punk vanguard'. The former stayed locked in the position of keeping the music rough and simple, while resisting commercialisation. The latter, Frith cites the Gang of Four as the prime example, became 'more interested in musical meaning itself, in the assumptions that bound subcultures together'.

Circumspection is called for, not just in taking the apparent simplicity of punk at face value, but also in evaluating its precursors and influences. The exposing of supposedly 'authentic' lineages, roots and meanings of musical styles as 'constructions' is a common strategy.[22] Here is Middleton (1990: 143) laying bare 'a familiar story of folkloristic distortion which brought with it predictable myths of 'authenticity' [which] insisted that *real* bluesmen were old illiterate, blind, toothless, and ideally had a colourful or criminal background':

> The evidence is now strong that blues was not born in the 'folk' mists of pre-history but developed at the same time as, and in interaction with, the songster repertories of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ragtime, early jazz, and the first major black successes in commercial entertainment; that it developed in an urban as much as a rural context; that professional performance, and dissemination and codification by records, played vital roles. It was necessary to ignore all this – to extract and privilege a part of the repertory, to idealize it, to write the history backwards, from the 'survivals' *to* the (reconstructed) origins, and to 'museumize' the music (for 'folk blues' was always about to die out).
>
> (Middleton 1990: 143)

Before pursuing the question of what the consequences of a constructed 'authentic' may be

---

[22] Hobsbawm and Ranger's (eds) 1983 *The Invention of Tradition* is seminal to this current of ideas. Harker's *Fakesong: the Manufacture of British 'Folksong'* (1985) is a relevant example.

for this enquiry, let us first ask how a perceived quality of 'actual' authenticity may affect the potential accessibility (particularly at Level II - reception) of a genre. In the authentic listeners feel they are hearing something real, or at least the representation of something 'real'; be it emotion, experience, history, tradition or ethnic identity. Clearly the real is valuable, who would have a fake ring rather than a gold one. Thus the quality of realness gives the attractiveness of value, which may be heightened by ideas of rarity (folk is dying out) and given yet further enhancement by the status of connoisseurship to be accrued by knowledge of it. Thus the 'real' and 'genuine' item has a number of attractive points which can make it desirable. A closely related property of an 'authentic' practice would be honesty. A salesman will make his pitch fit the customer in order to make the sale, not necessarily telling the whole truth in the process. The accessibility of the commodified may be seductive but is to be treated guardedly, with suspicion. 'Authentic' art is supposedly not made for commercial gain; it speaks 'from the heart'. As listeners then, we are not expecting to be deceived or mislead or seduced, but are party to a frank expression of human feeling; making us accepting and receptive.

One of the fundamentals of 'authenticity' in music is that it connects to a particular cultural hinterland. In the case of English folk-song this would be agricultural rural England, in the case of the blues it is the post-slavery, pre-civil rights Afro-American experience. Often the perceived origin of the music is thousands of miles and hundreds of years away from its actual birthplace as with reggae and samba which are frequently seen as African by their practitioners and listeners. Popular genres which are primarily located in the present may still have this sense of an idealised cultural origin, which in their case is the subcultural sphere; the cluster of values, styles, choreographies, drugs, fantasies and attitudes which defines each of them. What all these different 'origins' have in common is that they provide a kind of imagined home, a place of belonging, more ephemeral than the actual community of fans and musicians, but more significant in the imagination and reaching deeper into the mythically constructed identity of the subject, answering deep subjective needs. For listeners who do not have a perceived connection with the 'cultural hinterland' a musical genre represents, supposed 'authenticity' can be a bearer of exotic

fascination and/or a salient and attractive pole of identity, perhaps preferable to the one offered by their immediate situation.

Having allowed the assumption of 'authenticity' to lead us, it is now time to take the opposite tack and ask: if the genuineness of the blues and the extrapolated directness of punk are indeed 'constructions', what bearing does this have on their accessibility. Constructions are always constructed to a purpose. They answer a need. Thus for Afro-descendents in the New World reggae represents a link to Africa in an often alienating and difficult contemporary context. For Vaughan Williams English folk-song was the national musical wellspring he sought. In such cases, asking how the music is accessible is putting the cart before the horse. The musical culture is constructed to order, as it were, and not surprisingly is welcomed by those who felt the need for it initially, and those whom they represent and work to.

When a musical history or identity is deconstructed and the intertextual layers, ideologies and meanings are deciphered, one is sometimes left with the impression that the commonly held narrative was completely bogus, almost that there are no actual roots. If a careful reconstruction of style development were to be undertaken, taking into account every possible detail, some of the original 'authentic' components would have to be replaced; some English folk songs *are* modal and ancient and rural (Bearman 2000), some elements of contemporary New World black music *do* link with Africa (Kubik 1999, Fryer 2000), and many of the people involved with it are *really* of African descent. Some blues singers really *were* poor, blind or had been to jail. Frequently the 'constructions' have some basis in fact.

The Value of Shock

Punk, shock and the avant-gardes

Blues and rock simplicity, directness and perceived authenticity are not the only sources of punk ethics and aesthetics. Much has been made of the class based, politically charged anti-capitalist stance of the movement (Hebdige 1979, Frith 1983, Savage 1991). But there are also traces of romantic *Sturm und Drang* in its emphasis for genuine feeling and a yet stronger connection with the modernist avant-gardes, with their emphases on shock and resisting commodification. Punk can be seen as a revolt against smooth, sophisticated, 'safe' rock music, against complacency and hippy artiness, against both liberal laxness and ossified establishment values, but more than anything it was out to shock and to provoke with forceful stimuli, offensive behaviour, obscenity and the breaching of social taboos.[23]

Malcolm McLaren, mentor and manager of the Sex Pistols, spent much of the sixties in various London art schools including Chelsea and Goldsmiths, at times under pseudonyms in order to receive further grant money. At these institutions he was exposed to and participated in an explosive mixture of political radicalism and avant-garde art (Savage 1991: 24). Situationist International was one group of performance artists closely associated with the 1968 student revolt in Paris whose publications McLaren read, or looked at, because his French was not good.[24] Early Punk was linked with performance art and British art schools, which encouraged such experimentation from the 1960s, the latter having been the *alma mater* of many pop musicians (much more so than British music colleges and university music departments). Punk has in common with modernist

---

[23] A good example is the punk audience habit of spitting at performing bands. Spitting at another person is regarded as one of the most offensive social acts. In punk it briefly became subverted into a kind of applause. Bands would variously try in vain to stop the fans doing this, or they would protect themselves by wearing raincoats and sunglasses.
[24] Ibid.: 30.

avant-gardes, such as performance art, a love of shock.[25] This has a venerable tradition in popular music:

> It would not be difficult to construct a lineage of 'shock' within the history of jazz and rock, from the esoteric lyrics and quotations of some Harlem jazz in the 1920s and 1930s, through 'scat' and 'jive', and the 'noise' of rock 'n' roll, to the calculated unpredictabilities of punk.
>
> (Middleton 1990: 43)

Clearly there are different kinds of shock in representations and cultural expressions. Shock can be elicited by forceful colours or sounds, unusual combinations or all too literal representations of aspects of reality such as swearing (that peculiarly British concern) sex and violence. In these cases the shock may be a source of visceral excitement, or salience, which may heighten the attractiveness and therefore the accessibility of the art. On the other hand these powerful stimuli can be perceived as overbearing or repulsive. The reaction will depend largely on the relative social and cultural position of the recipient and their personality traits.

Peter Bürger states that in 'avant-garde movements, shocking the recipient becomes the dominant principle of artistic intent' (1984: 18). We only have to think of Damien Hirst's sawn off cows, or the music of any number of avant-garde composers from George Antheil to John Cage to illustrate this. One of Adorno's reservations about Berg's *Wozzeck* was that; 'The certainty of form turns out to be a medium for absorbing shock' (1997 [1949]: 37).[26] One source of shock frequently found in avant-garde works is the absence of completeness which would allow an integrated understanding:

---

[25] Writers such as Mark Sinker (1999) have also emphasised the irony of much punk iconography and expression appealing to multiple layers of double-think to excuse the lionisation of Myra Hindley and the wearing of swastikas. Whether such inversions of meaning were fully intentional from the point of view of youth at the time is debateable. More likely there was a play with symbols for the sake of shock.
[26] My translation.

The avant-gardiste work neither creates a total impression that would permit an interpretation of its meaning nor can whatever impression may be created be accounted for by recourse to the individual parts, for they are no longer subordinated to a pervasive intent. This refusal to provide meaning is experienced as shock by the recipient.

(Bürger 1984: 80)

Elided or refused meaning can have the attraction of intellectual intrigue, an interpretative game or even humour, all potentially aids to access at Level II. However, in many circumstances and for a wide section of the population avant-garde works of this nature simply engender indifference or rejection.

If in the modernist avant-gardes, shock is frequently the result of impenetrability, this is by no means always the case. Musical minimalism, for instance tends to use simple elements repetitively, which develop slowly. But this music is still infuriating for some because of its 'boringness'; its lack of contrast, modulation and cadence. There is no question of not understanding the elements, but an inability to gain perceptual purchase through structural grouping or variety. Another example of shock not dependent on difficulty in interpretation would be pornography. Here there is absolutely no ambiguity in what is being represented, and yet this type of image is often perceived as extremely shocking. Thus shocking content can range from the all-too-obvious to the not-obvious-enough and there is a ready opportunity to make the simplistic connection; between blatant and popular on the one hand, and elusive and art on the other. However, some of the images of photographer Robert Mapplethorpe, while firmly established in an art context, drew fervent criticism for their supposedly pornographic content (Vance 1995). On the other hand, punk clothes, with their eclectic *bricolage* of elements, were difficult to interpret for the contemporary public. Indeed the previously described song 'Mother', by Siouxsie and the Banshees, would be a musical example of a similar procedure, despite the clear identification of the punks with the low rather than high-brow, even within the pop field.

Dave Laing's seminal work on punk discusses its shock element with reference to, among others, Benjamin and Adorno, calling attention to the former's distinction between being able to neutralise the effect of shock by virtue of a 'shock defence', and exposing oneself more directly and integrating the shock into consciousness. Defence is seen as a kind of evasion of what the artwork is able to impart. It is a sign of the inability to digest shock, which produces trauma (Laing 1997: 414). This trauma is what Barthes calls 'a suspension of language, a blocking of meaning'.[27] Later Laing refers to Adorno's view that atonality was rejected by the masses because of their 'refusal to face up to the truth about their lives'.[28] Shock then, if it can be properly received, is seen as a bearer of truth, as a way of making the subject understand and learn about reality. Bürger explains that: 'Shock is aimed for as a stimulus to change one's conduct of life' (1984: 80). Following the argument in Chapter 2, which established the connection between accessibility and use, such shockingness will open the way to accessibility for those who are receptive to, or indeed in search of, such a personal growth or change outcome. It is opposed to art which lulls and seduces and makes us suspend our disbelief. Brecht's approach to drama is relevant here, 'critical distance' being the aim rather than identification with a character. In fact one of the major thrusts of the modern movement in the arts has been to seek out the startlingly new and combat any complacent enjoyment of the merely beautiful for its own sake. Beauty ceased to be a sufficient or even relevant criterion of artistic value, becoming instead suspect and largely replaced by shock as a positive value.

Thus shock can be a sign of truth but, insofar as there is a difference, it has also become a sign of true art. Applied art may want to attract our attention through shock, because at some level it usually wants to sell (either itself or some associated product). But it would not usually want to shock to the point of repelling an audience since to do so would be counterproductive. In the 'high' art sphere, there is value in repelling recipients as it apparently confirms the art's status as being outside the commercial realm and conveys

---

[27] Quoted in Laing (1997: 414).
[28] Loc. cit.

exclusivity on the artistic coterie. However, there is an analogous strategy observable in some popular music. This can be partly to similarly distance the music from overt commodification but also, as mentioned previously, because repelling certain listeners confirms the subcultural status of the in-group the music is aimed at:

> ...alignment with the musician's strategy of provocation must include a pleasure in the awareness of how the other, 'traumatized' listener will be discomforted...Punk is not alone here. Much 'youth' music or music of outrage depends on its fans not so much being outraged or scandalized themselves, but on their awareness of the results of unpleasant listening in other people.
>
> (Laing 1997: 419)

This clearly demonstrates two important features of musical accessibility at Level II, the reception level. Firstly, what is accessible to A may not be accessible to B. Some reasons for this have been alluded to, such as personality traits and relative (sub)cultural distance. But secondly, it may be the very *in*accessibility of the music to B which makes it interesting and useful to A. Again, this can work in several ways, such as the pleasure in another's discomfort mentioned by Laing, or the cultural 'superiority' demonstrated by Bourdieu. In punk the intention to be abrasive is certainly heightened beyond the normal shock of a new pop genre:

> ...there is the case of the voice which repels the listener's hope for identification by its 'unpleasing' character. Historically, this is always one effect of innovation in popular music – the introduction of material from a discourse outside the mainstream is recognised by many as 'unmistakable'. But some punk rock seems to re-double this effect by presenting itself as a challenge to the listener, as an act, not of a new version of the popular vocal tradition, but of defiance of that tradition's broadly ingratiating stance towards its audience. There is then a distinction between, say, early Elvis Presley, where the 'traumatizing' shock-effect was an unintended by-product of the novelty of the vocal style, and the Sex

117

Pistols, where the provocation of the 'boring old farts' among listeners was often built-in the lyrics, as the second-person addressees, as well as in the tone of the singing voice.

(Laing 1997: 418)

Many musics, particularly pop subculture genres such as punk, at least initially define themselves, and gain their validation through, who they offend as much as through who they attract, because their purpose is in part to define a new and young social group or subculture. In order to establish this it is important not just to know who is a member (those who wear the right clothes, like the music and share values and attitudes) but who is outside (and finds the music inaccessible).

The accessibility of pain

One form of shock inherent in punk was its celebration of pain and death. Words from Siouxsie and the Banshees' 'Premature Burial':

> Red and white carnations
> Can't intoxicate my brain
> This blissful suffocation
> It is driving me to pain[29]

In a similar vein, and from the same album:

> Can I?-stick skewers in my skin
> and whirl a dervish spin
> Can I ?-set myself on fire

---

[29] *Join Hands* (1979) Polydor.

to prove some kind of desire

<div align="right">(Siouxsie and the Banshees: 'Icon')</div>

The pleasure in violence and self-injury opens up the possibility of the enjoyment and therefore the accessibility of pain, destruction and death as themes in music and its performance. Jean-François Lyotard writes:

> Beauty gives a positive pleasure. But there is another kind of pleasure that is bound to a passion stronger than satisfaction, and that is pain and impending death. In pain the body affects the soul.

<div align="right">(1991: 99)</div>

Both everyday life and art furnish plentiful examples of the attractiveness of discomfort, pain and risk: eating very spicy food, or listening to extremely loud distorted music for instance. We are again reminded of sensation seeking as a personality trait that would make these kinds of behaviour seem attractive, therefore rendering them accessible. The enjoyment of frightening or violent images relates to this and has multiple precursors in western and non-western culture such as attendance at executions and Roman circuses, to which the popularity of horror films is an analogous contemporary phenomenon. Many children like being frightened by stories told in the comfort of bed. There is also a glamour in war which was more acknowledged in art before the full horror of modern global conflicts was documented in photographs and film. In literature acts generally condemned and regarded as sordid (particularly at the time) have been extolled as beautiful and desirable, notably by Jean Genet and the Marquis de Sade. It has been mentioned in Chapter 2 that the sensation seeking personality dimension is partly predicated on the notion of an optimal level of arousal. Optimal level of arousal (OLA) theories

> ...have been widely used to account for the interest in stimuli that can elicit anxiety, depression, anger and disgust. According to OLA theories, even arousal

<div align="right">119</div>

of negative emotions can be positively reinforcing because it takes us up to a level of arousal that is optimal or just a little beyond that level.

(Zuckerman 1994: 199)

So far the activities and stimuli mentioned do not immediately or directly threaten the subject. Injuring oneself however crosses this line. Rodham reports that 'Deliberate self-harm is common in adolescents with an estimated 25,000 presentations annually to general hospitals in England and Wales'.[30] One can only surmise that this must be the tip of an iceberg since 'delicate cutting' or 'parasuicide' are frequently furtive activities. In Rodham's survey 13.2% of school pupils reported committing self-injury. The imagery of self-harm is central to punk style with razor blades as accessories and safety pins poked through facial tissue being common, as well as slashed clothes with zips in inappropriate places which might open like a self-inflicted wound. This could be seen as homologous to the brutality conveyed by the distortion, aggression and careless force of the music itself. In performance punk bands would sometimes self-harm and spitting was part of an aggressive band-audience relationship which frequently spilled over into open violence. Furthermore the fetish wear which formed part of the style and which was purveyed by Westwood and McLaren's original 'Sex' shop, is obviously associated with sadomasochism. Like many facets of the punk revolution these features have had a lasting impact on popular culture. Piercings have since become widely used, as have tattoos which may be linked less directly but continue the theme of self-adornment involving pain. Many punk tropes have also found their way into the goth style, which remains popular and is associated with contemporary rock subgenres.[31] Goths use piercings and cultivate a corpse-like appearance which recalls the pallor also favoured by punks. Siouxsie's look was not far removed from that of present day goths.

---

[30] Rodham, K. and Hawton, K. et al. (2002) "Deliberate self-harm in adolescents: a self report survey in schools in England" <http://bmjjournals.com/cgi/content/full/325/7374/1207>
[31] Goths have other antecedents apart from punks, such as 1970s rock star Alice Cooper and Blues man Screamin' Jay Hawkins both of whom employed death references in their work.

There are many different situations which involve organisms putting themselves at risk, exposing themselves to discomfort or actually causing harm or injury to their bodies. The intention here is not to equate these with each other. Distinctions have to be made between, say, self-flagellation with religious intent of the kind that was practised among medieval Christians and which is also seen at Islamic festivals and demonstrations, and flagellation in a sexual sadomasochistic context. A teenager self-harming as a way of dealing with unbearable emotional tension would be yet another, different motivation. Even within each of these contexts there may be significant differences of intent. A monk torturing his own flesh may be doing so in order to punish himself for a sin committed. Alternatively it may be a way of suppressing sensual desire, a manifestation of corporality denied, or the intention can be ascesis for the sake of self-discipline and spiritual elevation. While we can split and split again motivations into category and sub-category, it would be ill-advised to ignore the converse possibility of tangential links. Is it impossible that someone using self-violence in a religious situation is also cathartically relieving emotional tensions? Would it not also be plausible that these might be linked to sexuality in some way and thus take on a kind of sublimated or perverted sexual significance?

The whole constellation of types of self-harm is important in the discussion of accessibility because it means we are reminded that people will not only seek out fundamentally pleasant experiences. Actions which are deleterious, or even potentially fatal, are sometimes deliberately engaged in. The multilayered nature of self-harm motivations is also instructive for framing the debate on the attractiveness, or at least acceptability, of 'aversive' elements in music as it suggests that reasons for this are likely to be multifarious.

What is Accessible in 'Prog' and Punk?

Contextualism revisited

At the beginning of this chapter the problem of judgments concerning music from a radical position of relativism and constructionism was discussed. In many ways the fall from grace of progressive rock in the columns of the *NME* and the historical explanation of notions of rock authenticity support the by now standard reading of positional, ideologically and culturally constructed meaning. Where the present argument departs somewhat from such readings is in the contention that despite the above explanations and demonstrations, late 'prog' rock and early punk differed radically in terms of scope, harmony, structure, texture and dynamics, and that for all the constructed components of their meaning they could not have stood in for each other. Although both styles are firmly anchored in a rock tradition the contrasts between them are striking. John Lydon's delivery on 'Anarchy in the UK' is aggressive in a way that retains a meaning beyond contextual readings because it relates to an expression of anger that most humans will have experience of. There are many possible reactions to the Sex Pistol's song, including nostalgia (such as Sandi Thom's 2006 hit that links punk with the 'revolution' of the late 1960s),[32] but would it be easy to find someone who would describe it as 'mellow', or who would play it as background to a family meal? Could it arouse similar or interchangeable reactions to the controlled Genesis Guitar prelude 'Horizons', even in those unfamiliar with rock and western music in general?

This point is being made forcefully not because it is proposed to return to a 'blunt acceptance of...the humanist notion of an inner expressive essence in music' (Scott 2003: 3), but because it is argued that when positional, contextual and ideological contingencies have been exhaustively argued out there may be a 'remainder' (Kramer 2002: 8). This remainder is where the musical structures connect with human beings and there are

---

[32] 'I wish I was a Punk Rocker (with Flowers in My Hair)' (2006) Sony BMG. The range of phenomena mentioned in her song suggest that, as much of the discussion about punk, it is not particularly about music.

fundamental resonances between some aspects of one and the other. Clearly it would be difficult to isolate this remainder; we would have to imagine decontextualised music finding a virgin ear. Music on the internet, and/or music from an alien culture may sometimes come close to this. What is proposed is that this more direct form of signification and connecting, while it may operate at what may be regarded as a basic level (e.g. psycho-physics, sexuality, memory ceiling effects, gestalt, echoes of mother-child interactions), and while it may be covered by layer upon layer of contextual meaning, is potentially always present.

High - low; 'prog' - punk?

The concept of high – low oppositions within all societies suggested by the opening quote of the chapter can usefully be extended to competing aesthetic paradigms within and between pop subcultures or scenes. It is not difficult to find other related pairings in this area; between maturing sophisticated forms and thrusting youthful re-definitions for instance. We might juxtapose soul and hip-hop in this way, crooners and rock 'n' roll,[33] techno and brit pop. Middleton points out that 'sociologists have noted the emergence of an Adornian distinction between "commercial manipulation" and avant-garde "authenticity" within the discourse of the jazz and rock communities themselves' (1990: 43). Fisher also refers to high/low divisions operating within popular music:

> Young consumers of rock music today distinguish many genres just within electronic pop music: jungle, rave, house, deep house, tech house, drum and bass, ambient, trip hop, big beat, bhangra, acid, and they do so to embrace some and reject others. They regard some forms of pop music as superior and ultra-sophisticated and other forms as beneath contempt.
>
> (2001: 412)

---

[33] See Cohn (1996: 61) for an account of pre-rock complacency in England.

As with examinations that attempt to find a clear dividing line between high and popular art of any kind, close analysis tends to smudge the distinction and relativate any unequivocal contrasts. One can usually find examples of the 'pure' amongst the 'impure', and vice versa. Sheinbaum warns against the risk of oversimplification stemming from an approach seeking to impose a high-low dichotomy;

> The different systems of musical value that are commonly used to evaluate 'high' and 'low' music may describe a sort of musical purity, but such descriptions are ultimately thin ones, for they either fail to capture the multiple currents in much of the music around us or lead us to conclude that this music is somehow lacking. Part of why progressive rock is intriguing and exciting is because the style brings these contradictions, inconsistencies and tensions among multiple value systems to the fore.
>
> (Sheinbaum 2002: 29)

Perhaps because these tensions became untenable, the history examined in this chapter suggests a readjustment in favour of accessibility in the form of directness. One way to read this process in the context of popular music is to call to mind the supposed locus of the genre as a whole as being *the popular* with accessibility as one of its defining attributes. From this point of view pieces lasting 25 minutes with esoteric lyrics had simply exceeded the boundaries of the accessible and were therefore inevitably discarded by the mainstream popular music media. The impression of pretentiousness is usually deadly in pop music, and yet, considering the highly eccentric stylised modes of dress and behaviour often displayed by performers and hard core fans, easily fallen into. When such eccentricity has the shock and novelty value of being fresh, it may be granted the kudos of cutting edge creativity, but once stale, the ridiculous aspects of such excesses are thrown into sharp relief.

In the early days of rock 'n' roll the music was associated with the young working class. Since generations have since grown up with the various rock waves and offshoots, it now represents a wide swathe if western culture. Different age and social groups, subcultures

and specialist interests form a patchwork of taste communities all under the banner of rock. If we draw the net wider and include everything which might be classed as popular music, from country 'n' western to electronica, we are faced with a huge panoply of styles. In academic music research, popular music is still discussed with a wary eye on serious music, which represents the majority pursuit here. However, amongst the many popular music subgenres, the field of reference is more likely the various bands and artists *within* a particular style and perhaps beyond that in the neighbouring idioms. Thus in jazz, players of contemporary instrumental jazz may be dismissive of the heavily marketed vocal jazz of Norah Jones and Jamie Cullum (dismissed partly for their accessibility) and the ever popular 'trad'. They may admire and even co-opt the work of singer song-writers such a Joni Mitchell, but many other styles such as indie rock and death metal would usually simply be outside their terms of reference. We can discern the operation of myriad fissures analogue to the 'classic' high art – low art[34] opposition, engaged in a highly complex interplay of balance and counterbalance within and between popular music genres and subgenres, with the accessibility – inaccessibility axis being one of the central paradigms of this intricate system.

Summary

It can be argued that 1970s rock music had become overly complex and sophisticated by 1976, had lost touch with the 'bluesy' roots of rock, no longer excited the 'kids in the street' and was swept away by something more exciting, relevant and accessible. There can be little doubt that at Level I punk was easier to hear live and cheaper to buy than progressive rock. At Level III, the participation level, access was also facilitated and many aspiring musicians took this opportunity to get involved.[35] At Level II (reception)

---

[34] Scott (2003: 88) describes an example with a racist component in relation to the UK dance band era. Edgar Jackson of *Melody Maker* 'was as committed to the idea of progress as any modernist of the concert hall and heard evidence of progress in recordings of white rather than black musicians, interpreting performances by the former as innovative and polished and by the latter as retrogressive and crude'.
[35] I remember talking to a band member at the time who told me that he was more experienced than his

the accessibility gradient is a little more difficult to ascertain. Both punk and progressive rock have accessible and inaccessible elements. The latter tends towards long, musically involved and varied pieces requiring sustained concentration from the listener. However, the dreamy aesthetic predilection of late hippydom, as well as sophisticated production, meant that by the mid 1970s progressive rock style was frequently luxuriant and seductive. Pink Floyd often used an almost subliminal high sustained Hammond organ sound to tie together the otherwise sparse sound stage, gently taking the listener forward and ironing out any disjunctures. The Roger Dean fantasy landscapes which appeared on Yes' album covers are a visual example of this sensibility which, with its rich smooth surfaces, offers pleasure, and hence a kind of accessibility. Punk on the other hand promoted perceptual accessibility by using short pieces with simple, striking delivery and lyrics. Sadomasochistic elements (not least the aggressive sounds) were prominent but the equivocal relationship these may have to attraction/repulsion has been discussed. There remains the juxtaposition of stylistic elements and the question of irony; were swastika wearers actually racist? Did the Sex Pistols really want to 'destroy the passerby'? This throws up *problems of interpretation* which echo those posed by much high art avant-garde work and can make LII access problematic.

It is thus clear that both styles have elements of accessibility and potential difficulty. Matters are further obscured if one takes into account Chester's (1990[1970]) theory of 'extensional' and 'intensional' musical extrapolation. In this reading of popular music, it tends to incorporate denser layers of information, variation and meaning in the detail of sound and rhythm rather in the extension and elaboration of themes. From this perspective the distorted and screamed punk performance may have greater 'intensional' detail than much of the highly produced progressive rock repertoire with its lengthy

---

colleagues, as he had been playing the guitar for three weeks! From there it need not have been long before they released their first single.

(extensional) instrumental solos (which the punks specifically abhorred).

An examination of the issue of quasi moral values which is implicit in much supposedly aesthetic discussion of this terrain also reveals an equivocal picture. Progressive rock retained much of the tolerance, pacifism and antimaterialism ('money; it's a crime')[36] of the 1960s counterculture, with high hopes for a more humane world. Punk followed this with violent nihilism but nevertheless occupied the moral-aesthetic high ground due to its perceived honesty and authenticity. One way in which morality can impinge on accessibility is by music confronting the listener with moral failings which she may not be prepared to face. It is usually easier for the young to be morally idealistic, since they are less likely to have been forced into compromises by real life choices. Perhaps the surrealist voice of progressive rock allowed for a moral ambiguity while punk was clearly uncompromising and therefore more accessible to the young. Despite the punk implication that progressive rock was decadent, it can hardly be accused of being value free, but perhaps the slightly maturer (and therefore more compromised) situation of its fans meant that its edifice crumbled easily before the punk onslaught, with many of the core beliefs by then so dissipated as to be undefendable. This is one of the ideas that will be further explored in the next chapter.

Coda

A year before punk made progressive rock unfashionable, Queen had an astounding success with the theoretically over-length (nearly 6 minute) single 'Bohemian Rhapsody'[37] which bore many of the hallmarks of the 'prog' genre as described in this chapter. Not only was it unique at this point to hear a hit single in this style, but the record climbed the charts again after singer Freddy Mercury died in 1991. Why was this piece more

---

[36] Lyric from 'Money' *Dark Side of the Moon* (2003[1973]) EMI.
[37] Queen, 'Bohemian Rhapsody' (1975) EMI. Released October 1975. Nine weeks at number one in the singles charts in 1975/6 and another five weeks in 1991/2.

accessible than other music of the genre, and why did it 'survive' punk?

One obvious answer would be that it was condensed into a single of unusual, but nevertheless reasonable length in terms of popular music consumption. Another reason is to be found in the way it was presented and marketed. This was the first single to be promoted specifically in conjunction with specially shot video. Thus the innovative and disjunctive musical structures were accompanied and given another 'surface' by the images. We will return to the importance of multimedia or multimodal presentation in Chapter 7. The charismatic persona of Mercury was more identifiable than perhaps any single 'prog' rock star. Progressive 'super-group' members tended to convey an egalitarian band ethic to the outside world and none were household names. Finally one must take into account the fact that Queen also made other kinds of single, which may have broadened their appeal, although it has to be admitted that none were as successful in the UK as 'Bohemian Rhapsody', which combined most of the elements of progressive rock with what we might call the accessibilisation features that enabled it to communicate beyond the subculture and its era.

Chapter 4

Zeitgeist:

Accessibility in Flux

...it is always the latest song that an audience applauds the most.

Homer[1]

...all that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned...

Marx[2]

Introduction

The contrast between progressive rock and punk has afforded the opportunity to examine various dimensions relevant to musical accessibility such as shock, complexity and abrasiveness. Another important aspect is diachronic change, as relative temporal position has a major bearing on musical accessibility and choice. We have a different relationship to the music of today, of last year, last decade, last century and that of five hundred years ago. In this sense accessibility is dependent on the relative temporal origin of music and listener, although it does not necessarily mean we will not enjoy old music. Accessibility is thus in flux because music changes; as does as the way in which it is perceived. This area has been discussed by Gadamer (1997[1966]) and Merleau-Ponty (1992), and also arises in musicological reception studies.

---

[1] Homer (1946) *The Odyssey.* E.V. Rieu (ed). Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 31.
[2] Marx and Engles (1848) *The Communist Manifesto.*
<http://www.meehawl.com/Asset/Manifesto%20of%20the%20Communist%20Party.htm>

The concept of *Zeitgeist*, which was used by Heinrich Wölfflin (1952[1899]) in relation to art history, suggests that a certain age will have a particular spirit, which may be discerned, examined and discussed. The clear implication here is that another age will have a different spirit, and that therefore there has to be a change from one to the other. How do such changes occur and why do they take place? Are they always sudden? Insofar as our particular example shares certain features with other cultural changes, it is pertinent to inquire into the extent to which the processes involved are inherent to the production of a cultural expression itself, are due to external factors, or can be explained as an interaction between the maturation of particular tropes and their social context. In the latter case, accessibility in relation to time can be expected to have a powerful influence on how the point at which style changes markedly is arrived at, and unfolds. The crucial question concerning that point is: how does accessibility change when one style becomes undesirable and its successor sought after? We also need to ask whether a transformation in perceived accessibility in such a situation is to be regarded as a cause or an effect of style change, or both. Meyer has drawn attention to the lack of research into processes of change in musicology:

> Indeed, most 'histories' of music consist of a series of synchronic style-frames ordered chronologically on some hierarchic level. On the highest level, for instance, the history of Western music is presented as a succession of relatively independent sets of constraints: Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, and so on, up to the present. Usually such large frames are subdivided, often into early, middle, and late style-frames. And these frames are customarily understood to be composed of the styles characteristic of the music of individual composers. In every case, on each level of the style-frame hierarchy, common characteristics (of form, harmony, texture, etc.) are described. But no matter what the hierarchic level, there is seldom an attempt to account for why the constraints of the style changed.
>
> (Meyer 1989: 101)

130

This chapter examines a number of approaches to style and culture change and relates them to issues of musical accessibility. Where there seem to be commonalities between the case study and wider social processes these may be referred to and the investigation is carried out in an interdisciplinary spirit, particularly referencing social theory.

Revolutions in music and culture

What was particularly striking about the English music press' jettisoning of the progressive rock aesthetic in favour of punk, was how sudden and total it appeared to be and how the associated ethics were equally comprehensively interchanged. George Melly (1970) describes popular music style changes of the pre punk era which share many of the processes examined in this Case Study. On the wider cultural, and indeed political, level the punk mini revolution shares the contour of such reversals as the fall of the Berlin wall and the election of the Tory party in Britain in 1979. A system is overturned; previously ubiquitous assumptions are no longer tenable; yesterday's taboos become today's commonplaces; an apparently strong consensus turns out to be paper thin, the supposedly iron grip of institutions is suddenly butterfingered.

Just as 'supergroups' became 'boring hippies' after 1976, so noblemen became enemies of the people after the French and Russian revolutions. The mighty are fallen and the previously precarious 'avant-garde' suddenly have their chance, and fit perfectly into the new situation. They almost instinctively understand the new language, agree with the revolutionary aims, find its tropes and structures *accessible*. The old guard meanwhile is caught unawares, it cannot see the need for change. It finds the new world that is foisted upon it ugly and awkward, counterintuitive and immoral. And indeed, although the new broom sweeps away something apparently unjust or decadent, the revolution inevitably

carries its own bag of horrors, and much that is worthwhile is thrown out or destroyed.[3] The purpose of this chapter is not to take sides in any particular process of change, labelling the 'after' as commendable and the 'before' as reprehensible, or vice versa, but to examine the process of *bouleversement* itself.

Background: Theories of Social Change

The question 'why and how does music change?' is related to why and how cultures and societies in general change and indeed, one may affect the other. Change in societies has been a major concern of many sociological theorists from the beginnings of the discipline. Compte was the first to set out a normative (and ultimately positive) view of human progress through recognisable stages, which were reached at different times by different cultures. Spengler describes a similarly predictive theory, but one which sees the rise and fall of societies like the growth and ageing of single organisms.[4] These approaches echo Plato's determinism and in Spengler's case, his pessimism as far as the ultimate trajectory of change is concerned. Plato believed that the (Greek) state had sprung from an ideal original and that revolutionary and emancipatory changes would inevitably lead to degeneration.[5] His resulting conservative attitude includes the negative view he expresses on musical change:

'They [the overseers] must reject any radical innovation in physical or musical[6] education, preserving them as far as they can unchanged...They should beware of new forms of music, which are likely to affect the whole system of education.

---

[3] Child care provision was excellent in East Germany before the fall of the Wall, whereas unemployment has been at crisis levels ever since. Punk nihilism discarded the humanist late hippy agenda and veered dangerously towards fascism (before being largely integrated into the 1980s anti-racist movement by a rapprochement with reggae, which was musically exemplified by such post-punk bands as The Police and Madness).

[4] See Etizioni (1964).

[5] See Popper (1962).

[6] Musical can also mean 'artistic' in Plato.

Changes in styles of music are always politically revolutionary...'

'Presumably this is where we think the guardians [Plato's idealised ruling class] should build their watchtower. In music.'

'It's certainly a place where breaking rules can easily become a habit without anyone realising,' he said.

'Yes, people don't see how breaking rules in the realm of entertainment can do any harm.'

'It can't,' he said. 'Except that once the idea of breaking rules has gradually established itself, it seeps imperceptibly into people's characters and habits. From there it brims over, increasing as it goes into their contracts with one another. And from contracts, Socrates, it extends its course of wanton disruption to laws and political institutions, until finally it destroys everything in private and public life.' [7]

This repressive stance contrasts sharply with the generally positive value attached to innovation in both the modernist narrative of the arts, and in the rationales of capitalism. In capitalist ideology innovation is closely related to increased productivity and ultimately 'growth'. Learning new skills and meanings is a question of survival in our world, it is seen as part of being able and adaptable, of being part of this change and 'growth', even though what is often involved is human exploitation and environmental destruction (now more frequently in the developing world). It is easy to see how constant musical renewal, and rising to the challenge of what initially appears inaccessible (at LII) is homologous with this situation.

The work of Talcott Parsons, by contrast to both the 'conservative' and 'optimistic' approaches to change, is in a functionalist tradition which does not presuppose inevitable change either for the worse or the better. For Parsons a certain amount of change is part of a system in equilibrium; there is a reaction to change which absorbs it and readjusts the

---

[7] Plato (2000) *The Republic.* Book 4, 424 b,c,d. pp. 116-117.

system without altering the fundamental structure. The adjustment to punk by the music industry and the mainstream media, after the initial moral panic, would be a good example of this. Parsons (1964) differentiates the personal and cultural sphere from the social, but emphasises that they are in dialogue and claims, like Plato, that social change is often initiated in the personal/cultural sphere. We can see that such a position is related to that of Weber who also believed that ideas (such as the protestant ethic) could precipitate major developments in social structure. For such structural changes to take place in Parsons' scheme, the functional adjustment required to accommodate new ideas would have to be beyond what the existing conditions can accommodate.

One kind of explanation for cultural change has been broadly evolutionary, identifying the human tendency to innovate, change and culturally proliferate as one of the hallmarks of the species and a major reason for its success. Murdoch points out that other animals do not vary their behaviour significantly over time or from place to place whereas:

> In less than one million years man, by contrast, has advanced from the rawest savagery to civilisation and has proliferated at least three thousand distinctive cultures.
>
> (Murdoch 1971: 319).

This view is echoed by Benedict (1971: 223), and Spier (1971: 296) who regards the amount and speed of innovation as the main difference between 'simpler societies' and 'great civilisations'.

As with biological evolution, the catalyst for change from this perspective is taken to be environmental. The process of natural selection which would follow such environmental changes on the physical level is mirrored by behaviouristic processes of differential reinforcement. Certain behaviours are favoured by the new situation and therefore strengthened. (We will discover similarities to this model in Vaughan Williams' reading of the development of 'folk-song'). Ideas may compete for a time undergoing a process of

selection given by Murdoch as: 'social acceptance', 'selective elimination', and 'integration' (1971: 330). Often these survival contests are fought out between social groups such as political parties. Murdoch's fundamental approach is both deterministic and optimistic, since he regards change as taking place in contingent response to environmental conditions but resulting in progress. In terms of music, accessibility would seem to be associated with 'acceptance'. Music for which people have no use and which they cannot understand or enjoy is unlikely to be accepted by a society and integrated; it is more likely to be eliminated according to this model.

Cultural Change I: Social and Economic Perspectives

Collective behaviour theory

Another way of approaching social and cultural change is through the analysis of collective behaviour. Building on the work of Bulmer and referring to a varied early twentieth-century literature on fashion and fashion cycles, Smelser (1962) describes a number of macro-categories of collective behaviour. Although his work shows elements of structuralism he is primarily concerned with society in flux, examining such phenomena as 'panic', 'craze', 'norm-' and 'value- orientated movements'. The most relevant in terms of musical preference would seem to be 'the craze', since the term suggests screaming teenagers mobbing the latest pop 'sensation'. However, Smelser is concerned with a wider variety of phenomena in the 'craze' category, including political bandwagons, market booms and religious revivals, as well as fashions in attire. The word 'fashion' in everyday discourse is primarily taken to mean the dynamics of change in clothes, hair and make-up. When it is applied to other areas, such as music, it tends to be used in a derogatory tone implying the ephemeral and unimportant. It is partly the intention of this chapter to examine fashion-like change in music and to explore possible dynamic processes which relate to accessibility. It is suggested that such processes have structural components which may apply not only to music, but be echoed in other spheres.

Smelser's work supports this view by bracketing together a number of types of collective behaviour changes, including clothes fashions. In the 'expressive sphere' of the 'craze' he includes 'clothes, architecture, vehicles, conversation, *the arts* and popular philosophy'.[8] Furthermore, the values and change in values associated with the movement towards punk rock described in the previous chapter, suggests such a development may also be akin to another prime category that Smelser establishes; that of the 'value-orientated movement'. In any case, Smelser uses similar key nodal points in tracing the development of many of his examples. These are 'structural conduciveness', 'strain', 'precipitating factor', 'crystallization and spread of belief', 'wish-fulfilment fantasy' and 'mobilization for action'.

The interconnectedness of categories and concepts in this field is further demonstrated by the relevance of Weber's 'charismatic authority' in popular music in particular and musical accessibility in general. Weber defines such authority as deriving from 'devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him'.[9] In a craze in the political sphere, such charisma is conferred on a new subject and the presence of such a person, along with the possibility to transfer one's allegiance, is one of Smelser's 'conditions of conduciveness'. In the realm of popular music, it is easy to think of possessors of such charismatic authority: John Lennon, Bob Dylan, James Brown, Johnny Rotten, but also beyond in the western art music tradition Beethoven, Wagner and Mozart come to mind. If the composer or performer is possessed of such charismatic authority his or her music's accessibility is greatly enhanced because a certain amount of familiarity is ensured; by being associated with a compelling persona this is constituted in the sense that the known character and values of the 'star' (as well as their charisma) can be read in, and read into the music. The pre-eminence of a political or musical figure can be central to the nature of a *Zeitgeist*, and the change of allegiance accompanying a craze or fashion will often precipitate and be symptomatic of a seismic cultural shift. Thus the rise of

---

[8] My italics. Smelser 1962: 172, quoting Young, K. (1945) *Social Psychology* New York.
[9] Quoted in Smelser 1962: 180.

Hitler would be an obvious example of such a revolution.

In terms of conduciveness for fashion crazes Smelser makes much of the possibility of symbolising status through what is worn. Here the flexibility of western society is emphasised and therefore the fluidity in how one signifies status through dress. This translates into youth subcultures as the status of being 'of the *Zeitgeist'* or the status of having a musically defined identity such as (being a) punk. Smelser touches on the former of these, but the latter is not particularly well served by his analysis. In his 1960s narrative the 'trickle-down effect' means Paris fashion is adopted by the elite social strata and later imitated more widely, with an elite back-lash when wide dissemination means loss of exclusivity. Whereas this may appear rather quaint, the question of exclusivity is at the heart of fashion change in popular music and it pays to look more closely at the reading offered:

> Many observers have noted the tendency for the upper classes to desert an item of fashion as soon as it ceases to differentiate the holder from others who have adopted it...this means that it has lost its distinctively fashionable character of being used 'at one time only by a portion of the given group'. At the 'high-fashion' levels the emphasis is on the daring and the unusual patterns, and on the theme of 'the elite are wearing it'. In contrast, the middle or lower-middle class advertisements shun the experimental and emphasize the theme of 'everybody's wearing it'...it is important to note only that this pattern continuously re-creates the conditions of diminishing returns on any given fashion pattern.[10]

Although there are (pre-)echoes of Bourdieu here in terms of cultural markers of status, it is difficult to apply these entirely to the particular field of interaction between popular music styles.[11] Whereas it would be possible to see progressive rock as signifying certain artistic aspirations and having a middle class fan base, it is certainly not the case that

---

[10] Smelser 1962: 196-7 partly quoting Simmel and Barber & Lobel.
[11] The work of Heath & Potter (2004) is relevant here, but is discussed later.

elements of this style were imitated by those who might be seen as being in a less privileged situation, such as Bay City Roller fans for instance (tending to be younger and working class), on the contrary; what seems to matter more is a clear identification with the in-group.[12] Although a good deal of criticism of 'prog' rock has been on the basis that it was 'middle class' (by implication more so than other styles). Martin (1998) sees this as problematically simplistic since:

All kinds of borders were transgressed in the late sixties, especially those along the lines of class, gender, and ethnicity. The 'establishment' ...and its definitions of class were exactly the sort of thing that young people were trying to drop out of.

(p. 87)

Smelser emphasises the fact that in clothes fashion, the cycles are structural and institutionalised as they are driven by marketing related to the seasons and regular events in the major fashion centres (more dominated by Paris then than now). The music industry does not have quite the same regularity, although there is the predictable annual drive to produce the Christmas number one in the charts and the summer hit. The picture of fashion 'trickle down' is more often inverted for popular music (and this process has for some time also made inroads into [clothes] fashion) in that grass roots innovations are initially missed and even resisted, but eventually taken up by the powerful concerns (major labels/fashion houses). In music the industry is often trying to catch up rather than driving change in the way Smelser describes in the fashion industry. Music companies invest heavily in recording and promoting an artist and it is more efficient for them to try and recoup the outlay by selling more of that artist's music rather than having to start the process all over again.

---

[12] Punk seems to have incorporated a central sartorial element of Bay City Roller fans; tartan, perhaps as an identification with a more working class ethic, perhaps ironically combining the cuteness of that look with punk S&M signifiers.

The tensions between *challenge* and predictability, and *exoticism* and predictability have been discussed in Chapter 2. Here there is another related pairing; that of *newness* and predictability. The issues of accessibility here may be structurally similar and relate to the extent to which the customer wants to hear what she knows on the one hand and something fresh on the other. From the industry's point of view however, standardisation and predictability would be more economical. Hence the well known phenomenon of imitation of successful acts and recordings. It would be over-simplistic to suggest that this is only due to the cynicism of the industry however. After all, true creative originality is never easy to come by, and not only businessmen find imitation easier, but musicians as well. In fact it is probable that once the conditions for a music fashion change are met, artists, audience and business are swept along by it in equal measure. The 'conditions' can be interpreted in terms of Smelser's 'structural conduciveness', 'strain', 'precipitating factor', 'crystallization and spread of belief', 'wish-fulfilment fantasy' and 'mobilization for action' (Smelser 1962: 175-210); where 'precipitating factor' could well be embodied by the creative impetus of new talent in form of a performer, band, producer, song-writer or manager, or a combination of several of these. Frequently the resulting change, as in our example in the last chapter, will take place at least initially at what may be regarded as the subcultural level. As questions of accessibility and musical choice are contested between subcultures, this area requires closer examination.

Subcultural theory

The culmination of subcultural theory in the 1970s an '80s saw the focus of much attention move from the 'centre' to the 'periphery', seeking to theorise the 'abnormal' rather than the 'system' shared by the majority. Having much in common with anthropological fieldwork and analysis (explaining the easy interchange between anthropological and subcultural ideas in ethnomusicology), subcultural theory seeks to interpret the values and practices of the 'other', or 'others', from within the context of their community.

Because the CCCS's pedigree is mainly Marxist, encompassing such figures as Gramsci and Althusser in its intellectual provenance, researchers in and around this group tended to see subcultures in terms of 'resistance' to the prevailing ideology. An earlier generation of cultural theorists, notably Adorno's circle, had regarded popular culture as implicit in the domination of the working class, making it pliable and amenable. Both Gramsci and Althusser see ways in which people are not necessarily coerced, but co-opted into a system of domination, or hegemony, by being seduced into approving, enjoying or co-operating with it.[13] The appearance of styles and practices which do not follow mainstream tastes, and even some mainstream popular proletarian tastes, can therefore be regarded as a refusal of this form of sugar coated domination. The wide accessibility of mainstream popular music and culture is thus easily deemed politically suspect, whereas the more problematic content of punk (for example), would demonstrate its anti-collaborationist credentials. This attitude is not only found amongst subcultural theorists, but would be recognisable *within* many musically defined subcultures.

Although Hebdige acknowledges the aetiology of punk in reaction to the preceding style he identifies as 'glam rock' (overlapping the progressive rock emphasised in the previous chapter) he underlines racial and class aspects of the movement:

> Punk thus represents a deliberately scrawled addendum to the 'text' of glam rock – an addendum designed to punctuate glam rock's extravagantly ornate style. Punk's guttersnipe rhetoric, its obsession with class and relevance were expressly designed to undercut the intellectual posturing of the previous generation of rock musicians. This reaction in its turn directed the new wave towards reggae and the associated styles which the glam rock cult had originally excluded. Reggae attracted those punks who wished to give tangible form to their alienation. It carried the necessary conviction, the political bite, so obviously missing in most contemporary white music.
>
> (Hebdige 1979: 63)

---

[13] Ibid. pp. 107-128.

Hebdige deliberately downplays aspects such as youth individuation in 'rites of passage' and the significance of teenagers as a particular category located at 'the weak points in the chain of socialization between the family/school nexus and integration in to the work process' (Willis 1977: 119), in order to offer a reading of youth styles as a eddies in the boarder current of class struggle. Other factors not fully taken into account are the role of the middle class in white UK youth movements since the 1970s and the musical text and intertext itself. Music itself is subjected to only cursory analysis by Hebdige. Much more is said on the subject of clothes, design and dance styles. This would appear insufficient for a style in which music is central. This approach is likely to miss not only some of the important signs within the subcultural discourse and between it and others, but also some of the aesthetic motivations that brought the style into being in the first place.

The class struggle value of these kinds of subcultures which is emphasised by Hebdige and others is compromised by an aspect recognised by the CCCS, informed by Althusser and Gramsci, namely that by providing an expressive safety valve, youth styles ultimately underline, rather than undermine the power of the dominant social system and ideology. This can also be seen in Parsonian terms. A youth 'revolution' challenges parts of the existing order, which reacts, adjusts and finally accommodates the new ideas; 'colonising', appropriating and commodifying the look, the sound and the attitude, thus depriving them of any power to effect any genuine change:

> ...they [subcultures] may be unaware of their potential challenge to the going order but also and equally unaware of their part in supporting and reproducing the going order by upholding the dominant normative structure precisely through that resistance.
>
> (Jenks 2005: 118)

Ultimately a world view in terms of subcultures has contributed to a postmodern one,

which denies any overarching narrative such as those couched in the discourses of social structure, class struggle, or progress to a more rational world. Instead we find a patchwork of cultural loci, each with their own values, sign systems and (internal) validity, from which the subject can to some extent choose. The significance for any notions of musical accessibility, value or progress is far-reaching. We arrive at a position where each music is intelligible within its subculture and is woven into a set of meanings of local significance. Each genre is therefore accessible and meaningful within its cultural context. Inter-musical comparisons, particularly ones with a tendency to the hierarchical, become inadmissible and likely to be condemned as elitist or colonialistic. In the music academy this process has been reflected in the increasing dilution of canonical study of western art music (with the avant-garde as its cutting edge), by an admixture of ethnomusicology, popular music studies, jazz, and on the applied side music technology and music therapy, as well as different theoretical approaches such as 'new' and feminist musicology.

A more postmodern reading of subcultures, twenty or so years after Hebdige, is provided by Muggleton:

> So in the wake of the collapse of emancipatory grand narratives, does it make sense to talk of style still being able to resist, but at a 'local' level? For a proponent of an 'optimistic' postmodernism, subcultures are just another form of depoliticised play in the postmodern pleasuredrome, where emphasis is placed on the surface qualities of the spectacle at the expense of any underlying ideologies of resistance. For post-subculturalists, the trappings of spectacular style are their right of admission to a costume party, a masquerade, a hedonistic escape into a Blitz Culture fantasy characterized by political indifference. But…would this landscape be fertile ground for the anarchistic, nihilistic and seditious legacy of punk or would cynicism breed a figure who neither embraces nor criticises, but beholds the world blankly with a knowingness that dissolves feeling and commitment into irony?

> Muggleton (1997: 200)

142

This suggests that there has been more than a change of perspective, but rather a transformation which has lead to a situation in which a punk new wave would not take place, or at least would not be engaged in with the same seriousness. Perhaps the power of popular music to mean and intervene politically has been overemphasised. However, as we have seen, the notion of musical innovations affecting the body politic can be traced back to Plato, particularly the possibility of change in music prefiguring and opening a path to political change. It would thus appear that processes of change are of particular interest. In the next section the discussion will turn to questions of diachronicity in musical subcultures.

Subcultural change and indiviualisation

Postmodern subculturalism in flux, with (life-)styles being created at a dizzying rate, to some extent surviving side by side and overlaid, and multiculturalism with different ethnicities demanding that their voices are heard, have together created another dimension of musical (in-)accessibility in addition to the modernist one discussed in Chapter 1. It asks to what extent the various points of the cultural patchwork (be it local, national or global) are mutually intelligible. This presupposes the looking over the kraal to other cultural spheres which is in a sense the postmodern condition. In fact the divisions are shifting, conditional and as suggested in Chapter 1, non-exclusive. This has lead some to prefer the idea of 'scenes' to that of subcultures, implying a larger measure of choice and *partial* engagement. The 'weekend punk' who partakes of a subculture part-time rather than whole-sale, but has other facets to her life-style which are foregrounded at different times is probably more common than the 'dyed in wool' diehard. In this sense subcultures or scenes become limited lifestyle-choices of the individual who *needs* to make such choices in order to form a personal identity which not only conforms with their sensibility, but is appropriate to how they want to see themselves and present themselves to others. Erving Goffman offered a 'dramaturgical' approach which is compatible with such a use of subcultural content. He quotes Ezra Park to good effect:

143

...everyone is always and everywhere, more or less playing a role...It is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves. [14]

The resulting ebb and flow of choice which, however individual, will inevitably display aggregate effects, is driven in part by the perceived accessibility of music and its change over time, insofar as one accepts music as a central form of identification and social positioning. Similarities between dynamics of the political and the ephemeral have been suggested in this chapter and are also made here by Ulrich Beck, referring to a new kind of social organisation:

> The resulting [individualised] so-called structure is susceptible to the latest social fashions (in issues and conflicts) which, pushed by the mass media, rule the public consciousness just as the spring, autumn and winter fashion shows do.
>
> (2002: 40)

It is important to emphasise this diachronic dimension, which does make an appearance in a number of authors on the subject, including those quoted, but rarely takes the prominence it deserves and is central to the rise and fall of styles such as punk. This dimension needs to be seen in conjunction with aesthetic discourses, musical accessibility chief among them.

> While the aesthetic remains largely unexamined in the modernist [subcultural] paradigm as a whole, a more complete analysis would necessitate a focus on the dynamic processes of stylistic and ideological transmission, transformation and fragmentation. A very different picture would then emerge to challenge the modernist paradigm's prevailing view of subcultures as 'static', 'ahistorical essences', captured in their first 'pure' moment of inception.
>
> (Muggleton 1997: 200)

---

[14] Cited in Goffman (1971[1959]: 30), originally from Ezra Park (1950) *Race and Culture.*

Muggleton further rejects a purely linear view of subcultural development and posits a cyclical motion,[15] driven by the 'movement towards commercialisation, diffusion and defusion',[16] in other words by a leeching out of new sign content into the wider culture where its significances are diluted, having initially been conceived within a tighter community where implicit meanings were obvious. Using the same wordplay before Muggleton, Hebdige asserts:

> Whichever item opens the amplifying sequence, it invariably ends with the simultaneous diffusion and defusion of the subcultural style.
>
> (1979: 93)

He also gives an excellent example from popular music history of loss of meaning over time:

> There is a well-documented tradition of miscegenation in jazz. Many white musicians have 'jammed' with black artists while others have borrowed (some would say stolen) the music, translated and transferred it to a different context. The structure and meaning of jazz has been modified in the process. As the music fed into mainstream popular culture during the 20s and 30s, it tended to become bowdlerized, drained of surplus eroticism, and any hint of anger or recrimination blown along the 'hot' lines was deliberately refined into the inoffensive night club sound. White swing represents the climax of this process: innocuous, generally unobtrusive, possessing a broad appeal, it was a laundered product which contained none of the subversive connotations of its original black sources.
>
> (Hebdige 1979: 46-7)

There are echoes of Smelser in this description of an entropy of subcultural meanings,

---

[15] C.f. Meyer (1967: 17) cited near the end of this chapter.
[16] Loc. Cit

whose short half-life we can see as proceeding in tandem with a *shock – habituation*[17] – *saturation* trajectory of the reception of stylistic elements, including those in music. For the latter we could interpose *inaccessible – accessible – overaccessible*. A related model akin to those of Plato and Spengler is applied to art movements by John Rockwell ending with the obligatory swipe at progressive rock:

...there is a morphology to artistic movements. They begin with a rude and innocent vigour, pass into a healthy adulthood and finally decline into an over wrought, feeble old age. Something of this process can be observed in the passage of rock and roll from the three-chord primitivism of the fifties through the bourgeoning vitality and experimentation of the Sixties to the hollow emptiness of much of the so-called progressive or 'art' rock of the Seventies.

(Cited in Sheinbaum 2002: 22-3)

Macan (1997) also applies a developmental paradigm to the growth of progressive rock. His is borrowed from another reading of jazz, by Collier, but this time it is less judgemental, describing how the music was eventually taken up by college educated musicians who instigated a process of 'classicisation' and 'intellectualisation';

...the subculture that surrounded [these] more complex jazz styles [of the 1950s] consisted mostly of educated white males who held more liberal than average social views, looked on the Establishment-approved pop culture with disdain, and rallied behind the hermetic, exclusionary element of their music as a symbol of resistance against the Establishment. The parallels here with the later hippie and post-hippie subcultures surrounding progressive rock are striking, and certainly not coincidental.

(Macan 1997: 151)

---

[17] 'Repetition of an arousing stimulus reduces arousal through the basic form of learning called *habituation*. When one is exposed repeatedly to a stimulus, that stimulus loses its arousal potential and ceases to interest or arouse. At that point a novel stimulus or a change in the familiar stimulus can result in *dishabituation*, the revival or arousal.' (Zuckerman 1994: 200)

Hebdige refers to these developments in 1950s jazz as having been preceded by a reaffirmation of meaning, involving a re-sharpening of the (less accessible) edges that he feels had been lost in the 'whitening' of swing:

> These suppressed meanings were, however, triumphantly reaffirmed in be-bop, and by the mid-50s a new, younger white audience began to see itself reflected darkly in the dangerous, uneven surfaces of the contemporary *avant-garde*, despite the fact that the musicians responsible for the New York sound deliberately sought to restrict white identification by producing a jazz which was difficult to listen to and even more difficult to imitate. None the less, the 'beat' and the hipster began to improvise their own exclusive styles around a less compromised form of jazz: a jazz of 'pure abstraction' which 'short-circuited' the obvious.
>
> (Hebdige 1979: 47)

A picture thus emerges of styles that have a youthful force and significance, becoming watered down as they become commonplace, to be rejuvenated by some new impetus. Although this cyclicality, which swallows and regurgitates stylistic elements in a series of recastings and borrowings by different generations, social groups and ethnicities (see the migration of many originally black music styles to white youth culture) can be analysed on aesthetic and social levels, which is what a discussion framed in terms of accessibility essentially does, there are unavoidable parallels with the economic processes involved. Hebdige is again incisive on this point:

> Thus as soon as the original innovations which signify 'subculture' are translated into commodities and made generally available, they become 'frozen'. Once removed from their private contexts by the small entrepreneurs and big fashion interests who produce them on a mass scale, they become codified, made

comprehensible, rendered at once public property and profitable merchandise.

(1979: 96)

McRobbie follows a similar line but links it directly to the notion of 'critique' (closely associated with that of 'resistance') which

...is almost instantly absorbed into style. Independent cultural production as opposition loses its momentum; instead it merely functions as a kind of out-sourcing location for commercial culture and the very existence of radical cultural politics begins to look naive or misplaced.

(2005: 160)

These various readings appear to confirm much of what was noted in the previous chapter. There is a sense of loss of grit and 'authenticity' as a style ages and becomes more sophisticated. At some point there may be a kind of re-invigoration. As has been pointed out, accessibility does not map simply onto such processes, as both directness and sophistication can have accessible and inaccessible elements. It is also important to recognise the interaction between style development and habituation. Neither the genre nor how it is perceived are static. Loss of meaning is due to a combination of tropes becoming overused, widely distributed and obfuscated by style elaboration and refinement.

Obsolescence

Taste change is useful to a capitalist system when it results in sales. In the case of hamburgers, there is automatic potential demand because everyone requires food; every day. A standardised perishable product can be sold million-fold indefinitely. In the case of other types of consumer good there is a saturation point where nearly all potential customers have acquired the product. Even a hugely successful pop album such as

Thriller reaches that point. The most ardent Michael Jackson fan would not usually require more than one copy. The question is then, how can the industry make these customers buy again? The answer closest to hand is by offering a (not identical) but similar item (say, the next Michael Jackson album). Unfortunately not many musicians produce more than one extremely successful album, and many fans may prefer just to carry on listening to *Thriller*. Capitalism depends on identifying (or creating) demand and then satisfying that demand. Crucially the process then has to be reproduced, demand has to be rejuvenated so that it can again be satisfied, so factories can continue producing and the shareholders can continue earning. It is possible to regenerate demand through 'planned obsolescence', in other words by ensuring the product becomes useless or unwanted at some point in the future.[18] One way to do this is to build to a lower quality, also known as 'adulteration'. Making car bodies from material that corrodes such as pressed steel means that they will eventually rust, whereas if they are made from glass fibre or aluminium alloy they will have a much longer life. The problem with making poorer quality products is that it is likely to encourage the customer to buy from the competition in future. If my Ford rusts away I may be inclined to buy an Audi next time. Another way that products become obsolete is through significant technical development. This has been amply demonstrated in the computer industry over the last 15 years. Computers have increased in processing power, storage and software capabilities so rapidly that most people are willing to replace their machines long before they fail mechanically in order to take advantage of the new possibilities. However, this involves the industry in enormous research and development costs (which are driven by competition as well as the need to stoke demand).[19]

A cheaper way of regenerating sales and producing obsolescence of otherwise durable and still useable products is by making sure that they become unfashionable. No need to sell poor quality items and alienate the customer, no need to invest heavily in achieving

---

[18] See Slade (2006).

[19] Technical innovation in sound carriers has lead to large-scale obsolescence and additional market activity. The advent of CDs, mini discs, and mp3 players has generated millions of additional purchases.

fundamental improvements. All that is needed is a styling and marketing exercise which convinces the consumer that the old is an embarrassment, while the new is enticing and desirable, and this can be done on the basis of purely surface adaptations. The American car industry followed this policy from the 1920s to the 1970s, variously changing the appearance of vehicles by adding flamboyant tail fins, lights and body shapes while making few improvements to the quality of engineering.

> The annual model change adopted by carmakers in an example of *psychological, progressive,* or *dynamic obsolescence.* All of these terms refer to the mechanism of changing product style as a way to manipulate consumers into repetitive buying.
>
> (Slade 2006: 4-5)

Changing *surface* rather than meaningful structure is of course precisely what Adorno (1997 [1953]: 123-137) accused the popular music industry of perpetrating and the similarities between the approach of the Detroit motor industry and the nearby Tamala Motown record company in the 1960s and '70s are striking.[20]

The question arises whether fashion orientated behaviour on the part of customers is purely driven by the 'demand demanding' business world, or whether it is a more fundamental human tendency which is being successfully harnessed by such marketing and design strategies. The situation of the music industry suggests that there is a will to change in the market beyond what the companies would like. It would be more efficient for them to be able to control and predict the market, but grass roots fashion changes make this difficult. If taste changes are not always instigated or even desired by capital, what is the motivation? Smelser gives 'prestige' as a primary reason and doubt about a simple hierarchical interpretation of this has already been voiced above, but he does give a more differentiated explanation:

---

[20] See George (1985).

A person can gain prestige by appropriate symbolization, lose it by being out of step, waste it by purchasing items which are out of fashion...

(1962: 186)

Heath and Potter combine a recognition of the acquisition of status through fashionable consumption with the need to constantly renew the definition of 'good taste':

When an artistic style becomes popular, as with the Group of Seven in Canada or Salvador Dali in the United States, it is simply demoted in the canons of aesthetic judgement. Precisely because of their popularity, an appreciation of these styles no longer serves as a source of distinction. Thus 'good taste' shifts toward more inaccessible, less familiar styles.

(2004: 125)

They describe a kind of engine for taste movement which is based on competitive consumption being a 'zero sum game' in which we all have to constantly move 'up' to preserve our social position. Since social position is by definition relative, people cannot all be at the top. If a previously exclusive mode of consumption becomes widely shared it no longer serves the purpose of marking one's special status;

Whenever goods serve as a source of distinction, it means that at least part of their value stems from their exclusivity. Because not everyone has them, these goods identify the owners as members of a small club (those who are in the know) and distinguishes them from the masses (those who do not have a clue).

(Heath & Potter 2004: 126)

As style innovations are spread in the culture there is a constant need to 'stay ahead of the game' otherwise the status achieved will be eroded. Smelser describes some of the subjective postures involved:

151

In the world of fashion, the anxieties about being 'passé' or 'outmoded' are counterbalanced by the hopes of being 'in fashion', 'in the swim', 'à la mode', 'with it', and so on.

(1962: 202)

It is worth repeating here that whereas such observations may appear somewhat trite, they become less so when one considers how wide a range of social and cultural phenomena appear to obey similar rules. 'Culture change' is a term now frequently used to refer to how an organisation can change the way it operates. Anyone working in academia, education or the National Health Service will certainly be able to point to 'culture changes' which have swept through their institutions. Often the fact that a new way of operating is 'the new way of operating' is enough for it to be almost universally adopted. Even without adequate rationales or convincing sanctions, the pressure not to be 'out of step' can be immense. Nevertheless, does this entirely explain our example in Chapter 3. Why an about turn in popular music taste and youth fashion at that point? And for hard core punks; why flock to a kind of music and dress regarded as extreme and shocking by mainstream society at the time?

The desire to be part of something initially exclusive described above is surely relevant. The concept of an optimal level of arousal, discussed in the previous chapter, may offer another partial explanation. It is possible that individuals are not optimally aroused by music and dress if these are too well known to them. Idiomatically 'familiarity breeds contempt'. As we have seen in Chapter 1, repetition can aid the accessibility of difficult music. But it can eventually make popular music predictable and overaccessible. Repeated predictable experience can bring about a kind of existential *ennui*. It signifies stasis and becomes a marker of passing time, counting down only to death. Novelty, even 'surface' novelty, can give the impression that something is happening, that life is 'going somewhere', that there is direction and purpose. Change and excitement mean tomorrow can be different from today; and therefore worth living.

Cultural Change II: Creation and Selection of Material

Memetics

Many models of culture and cultural change have been based on biological models. There is the conception of civilisations as organisms which are born, mature, age and die. The subcultural approach can be likened to an ecological view, with cultural spheres co-existing in a complex interdependent web. Murdoch's[21] evolutionary model, where cultural facets are tested in the social environment and consequently survive or die, could be regarded as a precursor of another very direct borrowing from biological science; the idea of memes, which draws on genetics. First mooted by Richard Dawkins[22] and having since spawned a motley collection of enthusiastic supporters,[23] it is based on Dawkins' concept of the 'selfish gene'. The gene does not actually 'care' about the individuals of a species or population, only about its own reproduction. Take the (genetic information for) tails of male peacocks, which also concerned Darwin. How could this preposterous appendage make the bird more suited to its environment? The fact that the tail display attracts females and leads to successful reproduction has been enough for its evolution and retention, despite the fact that it presumably makes the male peacock more vulnerable to predators.

In the cultural sphere the idea of memes functions in a similar way. A meme is a unit of behaviour or a trope, such as the style of an item of clothing, a way of painting or a melody, or a method of writing or performing a melody. This is then exposed to 'natural' selection in the social environment. If it is attractive and accessible and 'catches on' the meme is successful and spreads, sometimes globally. If not, it disappears quickly. Clearly

---

[21] Murdoch (1971). See earlier in this chapter for details.

[22] Dawkins, R. (1989) *The Selfish Gene.* Oxford: OUP. Subsequently quoted from: <http://www.rubinghscience.org/memetics/dawkinsmemes.html>

[23] See for example <www.susanblackmore.co.uk>, <www.churchofvirus.org.uk>, <www.memecentral.com> There is also a web-journal; the *Journal of Memetics* at <www.jom-emit.org>.

the comparison with genes is somewhat limited as the meme is not imprisoned within individuals. The concept is a way of emphasising the independence of the gene. Memes are a metaphor for genes as much as the other way round. The concept of 'selfishness' is similarly metaphorical:

> Just as we have found it convenient to think of genes as active agents, working purposefully for their own survival, perhaps it might be convenient to think of memes in the same way. In neither case must we get mystical about it. In both cases the idea of purpose is only a metaphor, but we have already seen what a fruitful metaphor it is in the case of genes. We have even used words like 'selfish' and `ruthless' of genes, knowing full well it is only a figure of speech. Can we, in exactly the same spirit, look for selfish or ruthless memes?
>
> (Dawkins 1989)

The theory offers no grand narrative except for the competition of memes in every cultural sphere, rendering a picture of a fragmented world with a level of arbitrariness that would not be out of place in existentialism. It could possibly accommodate the notion of broader cultural shifts in the form of meme clusters. One of the strengths of memes is that they give a simple and cogent rationale for the phenomenon of cultural change, which becomes a function of the competition of memes. Although examples of successful memes are often gleaned from ephemeral fashion (such as baseball caps worn backwards) there are clearly much more important instances, such as democracy, or the activity of revolution. Interestingly, memes easily cross otherwise formidable political, social and cultural boundaries. Thus Stalinist style paranoia infected the United States in the shape of the McCarthy hearings; market driven economics took over the Labour party post-Thatcher; and the territorial nation state became virtually ubiquitous at the end of the colonial period, continuing its spread after the cold war, displacing, or at least upstaging tribal and imperial structures.

In a world of competing memes the question arises; where do memes come from?

154

Obviously they are created by humans and ultimately it is humans that choose between them. This implicit privileging of choice is compatible with a postmodern 'cultural supermarket' view of the social world. It is also closely related to the question of accessibility. Before developing that connection however, we need to ask why we would create new memes. Perhaps in order to fully appreciate the reasons for human creativity we need to allow that it is not just memes which compete, but humans who compete through them. We do so by employing or conceiving successful memes, and by these processes memes are thrown up; and thrown out.

Music lends itself well to the application of such a theory. Whether in the popular domain where the commercial market vies for the ear of the potential customer with catchy melodies and striking sounds and rhythms, or in the academy and the concert hall, where some interest has to be quarried from the knowing employment of the latest incarnation of a thousand year old tradition. If ideas are memes, then music is a collection of them; old, borrowed or new. The way in which these memes then compete is clearly connected to their relative accessibility, balanced, on the same axis, against their interest and salience. Other, sometimes related factors such as timeliness, relevance and perceived beauty also form part of the group of attributes which would help a musical meme rise or fall. Steven Jan gives an account of such a process at the compositional level:

> In the evolution of musical style, a mutant meme appears in the work of a composer, at the level of intraopus style...Providing it possesses high longevity, fecundity, or copying-fidelity, it may then be copied in other works of that composer, thereby moving to the level of idiom. Further imitation might disseminate the meme among the composers in a community, taking it to the level of the dialect, the configuration of which is slowly and subtly changed.
>
> (Jan 2000)[24]

---

[24] Jan, S. (2000) "Replicating Sonorities: Towards a Memetics of Music." *Journal of Memetics*. 4. <http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/2000/vol4/jan_s.html>

Jan is following the lead of L.B. Meyer in approaching musical selection or choice from the point of view of the composer. This is clearly a musicological bias, starting from the individual work (intraopus), progressing to other works by the same composer and thence into the ('composers in a') community. A more (sub-)culturalist approach would emphasise the community, and perhaps place it at the start of the chain. A market-led approach would favour the audience or customer as prime mover. There is a risk in over-unifying the musical field. Somewhat different criteria apply in different cultures at different times, in different genres and in different social strata. Nevertheless, the composer (songwriter, band member) usually has a direct recipient (patron, A&R person, commissioning body, film director etc.) and a wider public (CD buyers, concert audience, music critics, broadcast audience, downloaders etc.). The selection and relative success of memes would have to be the result of interaction between these levels. The composer is both an innovator and a selector. Indeed he or she is the primary chooser, constantly generating ideas and selecting from amongst them. In doing so they are mediating the proclivities of their cultural environment; sometimes second guessing its preferences, at others going against its grain, acting as a sample audience, trying to please or confound, to shock or seduce. But beyond these processes, the input of the immediate funders, or direct recipients as they have been termed above, is extremely important. This is the individual or body with whom the composer, songwriter or band has the most direct contact. Therefore suggestions, feedback, or indeed rejection, from this level are likely to be keenly felt. Beyond that the wider public are crucial, although it is arguable to which extent they determine the development of styles or are led by what they are provided with. Again we are ultimately faced with an interaction rather than a one-way process in the way musical memes are produced, selected and promoted.

Lawful cyclicality

Another model of artistic development is suggested by Martindale (1990) who again approaches the question from a scientific, biological perspective, using historical analyses

and empirical research. Whereas he does take the audience into account, he heavily emphasises the internal dynamics of creative communities.

> If there is a constant pressure for change in art, there are also countervailing pressures against it...the rate of change in a poetic tradition is a function of the value placed upon novelty...and this value is a function of the [poetry producing] system's autonomy from its audience...There is really no external audience for high art. High art probably changes more rapidly than popular art. However, all art-producing systems are a lot more autonomous than is commonly thought...
>
> (p. 48)

He claims that much art exists more or less in a vacuum, with social influence acting only as 'friction', and that high art is frequently produced in 'small coteries':

> Painters really paint for each other. Modern American painting is a small closed system located in New York City. There is an external audience of consumers, which is very small, very rich, and completely powerless.
>
> (pp. 34-5)

Martindale essentially concentrates on the way the creative process itself stays one step ahead of habituation, which he recognises as the driving force of change:

> Novelty has been valued to differing degrees at different times; and even when not positively valued, it holds indirect sway. It does so because of *habituation,* the gradual loss of interest in repeated stimuli. Habituation is a universal property of all nervous tissue. We find it in sea slugs. We find it in rats. We find it, of course, in the human brain. It is never absent. It is the single force that has pushed art always in a consistent direction ever since the first work of art was made.
>
> (p. 11)

To counteract habituation artistic stimuli have to continually seek to enhance their salience. Matindale's ultimate intention is to demonstrate that the growth and mutation of artistic movements follows laws like everything in nature. He calls the primary law arising from habituation the 'law of novelty' (p. 20) which at its most basic level dictates that there is an intensification of stimuli. Thus pianos are louder than harpsichords, and p.a. systems and orchestras were growing in size and volume during much of their history. Clearly such developments will eventually reach certain ceiling effects, not only of perception, such as the auditory pain threshold, but also of expense and space. Arousal potential can also be increased by elaboration:

> Within any artistic style, there seems to be movement along this same continuum. Earlier works tend to be simpler or more classic. Later works tend to be more contorted or gothic...
>
> (p. 20)

Another way to boost salience according to Martindale would be to enhance the meaning content of works. However, forcefulness and clarity of meaning are more a feature of non-artistic communication, so he believes more appropriate developments are in the 'collative variables' of ambiguity, novelty and unpredictability (p. 46-7).

These effects are achieved through the periodic interaction of 'primordial' and 'conceptual' poles of consciousness which are explained as being isomorphic with the Freudian primary/secondary process, the Jungian eros and logos and Nietzsche's Dionysian and Apollonian. Martindale believes that an artist can either be original by being (more) regressive, i.e. delving into the subconscious or primordial, in which case the work will be more dreamlike and surreal. Or she can produce novelty by breaking style rules, i.e. going less deeply into the primordial but doing less 'conceptual ordering' or elaboration:

> Because increasing novelty by decreasing level of elaboration is more drastic than

increasing depth of regression during inspiration, artists may favour the latter method. If possible, successive artists should engage in deeper and deeper regression while maintaining the same level of elaboration. Each artist or poet must regress further in search of usable combinations of ideas or images not already used by...predecessors. We should expect the increasing remoteness or strangeness of similes, metaphors, images, and so on to be accompanied by *content* reflecting the increasingly deeper regression toward primordial cognition required to produce them. Across the time a given style is in effect, we should expect works of art to have content that becomes increasingly more and more dreamlike, unrealistic, and bizarre.

(1990: 60-1)

The latter part of this passage fits rather well the previously described development of progressive rock. Martindale attempts to demonstrate that eventually the possibilities of gaining more inspiration by primordial exploration are exhausted and it becomes easier to loosen the stylistic rules of the genre concerned, which may mean incorporating alien elements. At this point a major stylistic change takes place. This cannot entirely be said to fit the move to punk, which musically was more of a retrenchment, although, especially if we take it as a whole, with clothing and lyrics, it certainly involved the breaking and changing of rules. Eventually he formulates a predictive model for artistic change as follows:

...Measures of arousal potential such as novelty, complexity, and variability should increase monotonically over time. Measures of primordial content should exhibit cycles of increasing and decreasing density of words or images or sounds indicative of primordial thought.

(p. 69)

This is then demonstrated using a variety of historical examples which, predictably, confirm the model. In summary, the approach focusing on the creative artists themselves,

although not unusual, tends towards 'absolutism' and on consideration throws up certain problems. It posits the process of habituation in the artist or at least the artistic community. However it is clear that while some artists continue to innovate during their lives, such as Miles Davis for instance, others thrive by finding a particular style and not straying far from it subsequently, such as Louis Armstrong. Furthermore Martindale seems to undercut this aspect of his theory when he writes, referencing his own experimental research:

> *Avoiding* boredom is not necessarily the equivalent of *approaching* novelty. People who habituate quickly to stimuli do not necessarily have a high need for novelty. In fact, creative people like novelty but habituate more slowly than do uncreative people.
>
> (p. 45)

In any case the relationship of an artist to his or her own work, or the work of peers, is unique and bound up very much with their personality and the conditions under which the work was produced, as well as the relationship with fellow artists. Furthermore, Martindale discards social and historical context, and the reaction of audience and clients, as unimportant by calling on ideas of absolute, disinterested and non-utilitarian art. (These will be further discussed in Chapter 6). Such an approach takes the social dimension out of the picture and stops it complicating matters. Martindale wants to demonstrate that the shape of creative development follows natural laws, by taking it out of its natural (i.e. social) environment and placing it in a conceptual laboratory. There are clearly parallels to be drawn between his ideas of elaboration and regression, and dynamics of accessibility. However it is through accessibility that elaboration and regression are partly regulated, and accessibility cannot be addressed without reference to the social dimension.

Gradualism or revolution?

Meyer, who also examines style development from the creator's point of view, distinguishes between what he terms *trended* changes and *mutational* changes. The former are 'matters of amount, degree, or frequency' (Meyer 1989: 102), in other words they can be seen as microchanges within an epochal style. Trended changes are thus compatible with the growth and selection of memes, or with 'elaboration'. Mutational changes on the other hand Meyer regards as those which 'occur on the level of rules' (1989: 102) and he gives the example of the switch from modal counterpoint to tonal harmony. Martindale's theory obviously parallels this perception. Although the word 'mutation' is clearly borrowed from genetics, Meyer is careful to distinguish it from any strict modelling on biological theory. Jan, referring to Meyer and using his terminology, takes issue with the positing of a change in terms of a fundamental parameter shift, believing that such major changes are inevitably composed of a collection of minor memetic selections:

> A neo-Darwinian, meme-selectionist perspective would regard mutational changes as the inexorable outcome of cumulative trended changes, the latter acting not only as a necessary condition for the former but also as determinants of the configuration of the new higher-order system.
>
> (Jan 2000)[25]

The example of the advent of punk, a rather sudden event, involving a *reversal* of aesthetic sensibility, does not follow this neo-Darwinian model. Rather than a gradual and tendentious bulge of tropes pointing in a particular direction we find the vainglorious albums of 'supergroups' such as Yes, Led Zeppelin and Emerson, Lake and Palmer, often stretching over several vinyl discs, with long pieces, extensive instrumental solos, a high

---

[25] Jan, S. (2000) "Replicating Sonorities: Towards a Memetics of Music." *Journal of Memetics*. 4. <http://jom-emit.cfpm.org/2000/vol4/jan_s.html>

level of timbral innovation involving banks of analogue synthesizers,[26] oblivious to the distant rumbling of the punk tsunami which was about to sweep many of them away. Rather than a general movement towards a new *Zeitgeist*, it seems as if in a cartoon the older style appears to be walking happily in its inherent direction until it has taken several steps over the edge of a cliff before finally succumbing to the effects of gravity. The previous sub-genre only contains the seeds of the newer one in so far as it overextends itself; it overemphasises elements which the 'new wave' responds to by positioning itself in dialectic and diametric opposition.

Time, Change and Accessibility

Change or progress?

In the enlightenment narrative there is a strong sense of change as *progress* which is difficult to reconcile with the idea of a 'selfish' meme whose only purpose is to replicate. The meme does not want a better world, or better art or a better life for human beings, so a view of culture from this standpoint would seem to preclude optimism about the direction of change. Dawkins (1989) has struggled to find a place for altruism in his mechanistic vision whereas Kant, Hegel and Marx showed the world a future where increasing rationality brought improvements for humanity as a whole. Also, freedom from superstition and ideology enables scientific advances which turn into technological innovations, and these promise an earthly nirvana where every problem has a rational and often 'high tech' solution. This of course is also the narrative of modernism, shared by capitalism with its 'growth' imperative. Music and the other arts have been on this journey, too, attempting to leave the old behind with incessant innovation. With a belief in progress and a better future comes a strong endorsement of change as intrinsically good.

---

[26] Necessary because in those pre-MIDI days synthesis modules were monotimbral and in some cases monophonic, and each had to be physically played via its keyboard.

However there are also dissenting voices asking whether new models, be they of social or musical organisation, do not go beyond human propensities, whether there are not limits of nature, of what is humane and accessible which are being surpassed. The bloody experiments of communism and fascism, the dangers of nuclear weapons and the spectre of ecological melt-down are just some of the warnings that tell of the possibility of change for the (very much) worse. The ecological movement in particular has highlighted the risks of modern technology. Nuclear power, pollution, environmental over-exploitation and genetic engineering are all portrayed as harbingers of disaster for humanity and our planet, to be resisted at all costs. There is a sense of breaking natural boundaries and capacities. Many such supposed boundaries were swept away by the demonstration that much that was deemed *natural*, such as the subjugation of women and non-white races, was actually *cultural* and immoral at that. Their exclusion from education was the self fulfilling prophecy of their inferiority. However, there are clearly natural limits which we cannot easily overcome, such as our requirement for a bearable climate and the finite nature of the earth's resources. Our own body and the planet it inhabits are finely tuned and used to much slower rates of change than we have subjected them to. To return to the language of Dawkins; the meme is 'achieving evolutionary change at a rate that leaves the old gene panting far behind' (1989).

Music also has currents which mirror those delineated above. There is the worship of continual innovation in the form of the modernist avant-gardes and various currents that espouse a similar ethos, such as experimental jazz. On the other hand there are various conservatisms and neo-isms and there are the folk and ethnic music collectors and restorers. In a way the story of 'prog'-to-punk is one of a backlash, a counterrevolution. 'Things have gone too far; let's return to the simple, honest fare of our forefathers' one could almost hear the NME proclaim at the time, although the young punks will in most cases not have had the overview to realise that the 'new wave' was in many ways old. 'Prog' was not called 'progressive' for nothing. It was extending, quite literally, what rock music could be, but was stopped in its tracks by those who questioned whether such

progress was really progressive. A postmodern reading is appropriate here, allowing for borrowings from the past, cyclical rather than linear development, and many different simultaneous cultural situations rather than seeing the world as marching in step to a brighter future. In conclusion, just as a trajectory of industrial expansion can encounter limits of environmental sustainability, and social experimentation can find limits in intractable human behaviour patterns, it is also conceivable that musical 'progress' will reach a point at which the resulting forms are no longer appropriate for their context, or even fall outside the constraints and predispositions of musical perception, and hence of accessibility, recounted in Chapter 1.

Accessibility and *Zeitgeist*

The previous section, and to some extent the rest of this chapter, has moved towards a view of dynamic diachronic variations in accessibility factors leading to style turnover. From a synchronic perspective however, fashions or the memes constituting them appear to be taken up and replicated not just because of some self-perpetuating logic, but because they are especially effective and relevant at the particular time in which they come into existence. They are 'timely', they appear to express the moment and represent it at the time and later, in historical iconography. Music is clearly used in this way in film dramas and documentaries. A contemporary production may opt for an up to date sound track, but this will 'date' it very precisely in the future. It is tempting to try to delineate some kind of homological fit between an historical situation, the general *Zeitgeist* and specific musical style elements. This is common strategy in the writing of music history, and while individual links may be interesting, cogent and even compelling, the problem of establishing any kind of systematic relationship between musical expressions and their cultural context, particularly outside highly integrated and isolated traditional societies, is fraught with difficulty. This has been thoroughly discussed by Middleton (1990: 146-166) and Toynbee (2000: 114).

Nevertheless, it is possible to allow, or at least to discuss, the question of how and why particular styles appear and are taken up at a particular time, beyond the obvious reasons of marketing and media hype. If there is an element of homological fit with the contemporary situation, a kind of 'homology of now' this could help to explain why new ideas make sense, why they 'feel right'. This in turn would obviously aid LII accessibility because the relationships and structures being expressed musically would be recognisable through being familiar from other spheres. Consequently it would make sense for older music (from before one's living memory) to be less accessible, because it belongs to another era, with a partially alien culture, and therefore expresses alien values and structures. It seems reasonable that people would find the music of their formative years most meaningful and accessible, and that of later generations progressively alienating. A music most fully belongs to its first generation and later participants are condemned to be imitators.[27] By creating a new style the next generation claims its own musical space which bestows a social power otherwise lacking:

> Shared experiences make for shared needs: adolescents seek a stability to balance against their time of change, they seek a sense of autonomy and status and self-esteem to balance against their time of insignificance.
>
> <div align="right">(Frith 1983: 195)</div>

Such empowerment may be found by making their style more accessible to themselves and each other, by expressing their own experience and taste, and establishing their own rules. This not only ensures musical accessibility at LII but also at LIII, the participation level, as a new practice is established rather than an older one having to be acquired. This was particularly true of punk with its DIY aesthetic and ethic.

One way in which a kind of homological correspondence is identifiable is in the relationship between popular music styles and drug experience; different drugs being

---

[27] This is often the case for jazz players; note the many tribute concerts to deceased innovators and also the success of tribute bands in pop.

associated with certain epochs and subcultures.[28] Thus it is easy to see how the expanding boundaries of progressive rock and its surrealistic tropes might correspond to the effects of LSD while the frantic thrash of punk is more akin to those of amphetamine or 'speed'. Not through accident does 'psychedelic' describe drugs, music and design of considerable cultural proximity.[29] The connection between the drug ecstasy and 'club culture', particularly certain kinds of electronic dance music is similarly close at hand.[30] Tagg has made a connection between the widespread use of Prozac in the US of the late 1990s and the kind of distancing film music found in *American Beauty*.[31] Music which delineates drug experience and enhances its perceived recreational effects clearly has an additional point of accessibility for drug users and those sharing their lifestyle. If the drug is part of the subjective environment and consumed partly in reaction to living in the objective environment, then it could be a link between context and music which helps us conceive of how such articulations can operate.

The 'fit' of a new style for its contemporary culture can only ever be partial, particularly in a complex society, having a strong appeal to only a section (subculture?) of the population, usually of younger people. However, many popular music styles soon extend beyond these boundaries. The usual diffusion of subcultural style has been mentioned above but it needs emphasising that this can take place on a global scale, aided by the marketing activities of multinational companies, by interpersonal communication, the mass media and travel. In each culture where the style arrives it is likely to find somewhat different conditions and yet something like the early Beatles albums or punk clearly had a global impact, and can be seen as encapsulating a global moment; in the case of the Beatles, the end of post-war austerity and the expression of a generation which had not fought in the War, of how they were proposing to explore the freedoms that the outcome

---

[28] See Shapiro 2003.

[29] Sheila Whiteley (2000) examines 'psychedelic coding' in the music of Jimi Hendrix and cites Middleton and Muncie who invert the drugs-to-music link pointing out that: 'The meaning of drug-usage is affected by the meaning of the associated music' (p. 237).

[30] See Collin & Godfrey (1998).

[31] Tagg (2004) *Film Music, Anti-depressants and Anguish Management*
<www.tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/jochen0411.pdf> Music for the film by Thomas Newman.

of that conflict had supposedly guaranteed; in the case of punk, precisely the end of that post-war honeymoon, revealing the possibility of a darker future ('no future' as the punk slogan went) reflected in science fiction films like *Blade Runner* and *Mad Max* which showed not a shiny 'high tech' benign future, but one where dilapidation, anarchy and decay were equally prevalent.

Such global 'moments' are also discernable in event clusters such as the various uprisings of 1848 and 1968. There seems to be a transnational receptivity to change under certain conditions. In commodified popular culture this can now be partly explained by competing multinationals trying to shift ever more product in as many markets as possible. There is something structural about the need for change in global capitalism, something essential, summed up compellingly in by Marx:

> Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. [32]

Despite the fact that these words describe the world of 150 years ago, there is something all too recognisable in this. In fact the process described is more visible today because it has clearly accelerated. So perhaps here, if anywhere, there might be a fundamental homology of style change. Not so much between each moment and its music, although there are sure to be correspondences of sufficient interest to remark and debate, but between the whole self-devouring global market and the way it admits, expands and discards cultural expressions.

---

[32] Marx and Engles (1848) *The Communist Manifesto.*
<http://www.meehawl.com/Asset/Manifesto%20of%20the%20Communist%20Party.htm>

Accessibility and generational shift

In view of the continuously shifting cultural environment, every new generation is faced with not only a complex situation but with intricately layered historical substrata from which that situation has arisen. The substrata are only partially obvious and to a large extent only accessible through education. The problem with a modernist or enlightenment account in which society becomes more and more sophisticated, rational and humane, like some kind of maturing organism (c.f. Compte), is that it disregards the fact that each generation is initially inevitably naive. A new generation grows up with the previous generations' culture, but has not *lived* its aetiology. It has not experienced at first hand what the current *Zeitgeist* was a reaction *to*. In fact a previously superseded position may appear fresh and appealing to the young, especially if it has the added attraction of being anathema to their elders. This reveals another way in which cyclical cultural change can be generated.

A complex and expansive musical formulation which has grown out of much simpler structures will be seen to some extent as 'free standing', displaying its tropes for their own sake rather than as an extrapolation previous ones. Progressive rock was seen as self-indulgent without an awareness of much of the facile pop of the 1960s. Young women of the post-feminist age reject the condemnatory attitude of their liberators because, thanks to them, they have not experienced the kind of sexism that informed the latter. A 'homology of now' perspective suggests that musical accessibility can grow from an understanding of the cultural environment from which that music has sprung. If the original environment of an older music is hard to fathom, then its meanings will also be more obscure. A study of history, and a knowledge of an historical canon will help in the reading of older work (and of the present situation insofar as it is connected) but this is not always available and in any case, it is not the same as having experienced the prior epochs and having followed the emergence of the styles facing one in the present. Thus a new generation cannot altogether 'build on' what has been accessible and meaningful before, but has to ask its own questions, build its own network of meanings, reject and

select on the basis of new criteria. In this process, in a complex society in flux, not only are historical styles reinterpreted and highlighted or obscured, but new genres emerge.

Overview and Proposed Concepts

Metanarrative or local relevance

Boudon (1986: 180) warns of generalising from 'observations of *local* relevance'. His scepticism seems to imply that for a researcher to try and ascertain the deeper workings of a field and connections between situations, is somehow suspect and better left alone because of the idiosyncrasies which each particular case is bound to entail. Yet he admits that, in the biological sciences at least, such searches for regularities are absolutely permissible (p. 66). We might call this an anti- rather than post-structuralist position reminiscent of Clifford Geertz and his insistence on localised ethnography and interpretation. What is undoubtedly valid in Boudon's critique is that 'local' constellations have to be interrogated closely for any rationale of a sequence of events to be justifiable. This is true both for any initial study from which a 'theory' might be extrapolated, and for subsequent research which seeks to apply or rediscover it in another situation. Thus close attention needs to be paid in the present case to the conditions (Smelser's conduciveness) appertaining to and possibly precipitating the style change to punk. Much has been made of the political and social situation in England at the time by writers such as Savage and Hebdige. Indeed 1970s Britain can be portrayed as limping along with labour unrest, a dubious pop culture and middle class complacency as its primary attributes. However, unemployment at well under ten 10% in mid decade,[33] comprehensivisation of education continuing apace and full grants for working class youth wanting to go to university does not seem to fully warrant a violently nihilistic and iconoclastic movement. This leaves the

---

[33] Gazeley and Newell (1999) *Unemployment in Britain since 1945.*
<www.sussex.ac.uk/units/economics/dp/Newell3.pdf>

field of explanation open to the wider context of 'normal' capitalistic turmoil, generational change and a desire for novelty, as well as the more specific processes proposed below.

Accessibility and change

How does the accessibility of music relate to the various ideas of cultural change and musical innovation raised in this chapter? It has been noted by a number of authors that styles elaborate as they mature. At the same time recipients become habituated to familiar stimuli. These two processes are clearly in some kind of dialectic opposition. The increasing sophistication of the works counteracts the habituation of the audience, leading to an *equilibrium of accessibility*. If the elaboration of the work exceeds ceiling effects such as the abilities of the brain to remember or interpret its structures, or contextual constrains of the meta-genre or period, the equilibrium is lost and the work no longer sufficiently accessible. It has also been noted (Martindale 1990), in concurrence with our example, that as styles mature they tend to become more surreal (less direct), and this may also take them in the direction of inaccessibility. Burkhardt and associated art historians have used the word 'baroque...as a generic aesthetic concept meaning the decadent, grotesque late stage of a given style, without reference to a particular historical period' (Hollander 1998: 199). Meanwhile, semantically, the diffusion of a genre into a wider listenership will tend to denature the meanings associated with it precisely by the process of widening accessibility through physical access and repetition, and a growing incidence of associations, explanations, connotations and applications. There is thus a contradiction between greater semantic accessibility and greater formal inaccessibility.

In order to address this it will help to refer again to the second of our three Levels of accessibility as posited in Chapter 2. At the *reception* level (LII), which is the main area of inquiry at this point, we can discern a division between:

a) accessibility relating to structural scope and complexity (more complexity = less accessibility)

and:

b) accessibility relating to familiarity with the tropes and meanings of a style or genre (more familiarity = more accessibility).

In order to reference these concepts more succinctly let us use the term (a) *materiability* to refer to complexity and scope of the musical material and (b) *semiobility*[34] to refer to the meanings gleaned through music.

In the early stages of a genre, ideas are fresh and ad hoc. They have not had time to become elaborated and extended. As the style matures, practitioners become more experienced and skilled in working with the components involved. They tend to elaborate and extend what they have conceived previously in their later work. They also do this to maintain interest or, in other words, to counteract habituation. A style subject to these forces will tend to produce pieces which are more involved, longer, more sophisticated and complex. In the sense of materiability they therefore become less accessible, particularly to a novice listener.

Semiobility on the other hand takes a different path. At the inception of a genre, the meanings associated with it are shared by a small group of people closely allied with its generation (in both senses of the word). These meanings are consequently quite specific and precise, although they may well be implicit rather than explicit. They are also likely to be most accessible to that small circle who are involved in the birth and infancy of the style. As the genre matures however it is disseminated into the wider culture, perhaps

---

[34] Semiobility can be regarded as a counterpart to the notion of 'competence' as used in semiotics and semantics. A genre has semiobility to the extent that there is competence as to its meanings in the cultural environment.

even globally. As a result of being used in many different contexts by many different people, the meanings potentially gleaned from it become more generalised and imprecise. They may be expressed by commentators attempting to describe the phenomenon. However these will more often than not be outsiders rather than insiders, and their analysis will frequently be met with incomprehension by the insiders who 'really understand'.[35] This is the process of 'diffusion and defusion'. Thus the semiobility increases as the genre develops, but its usefulness in conveying particular (subcultural) meanings decays.

Such meanings vary considerably according to the style and this is where thinking in terms of a 'homology of now' may be appropriate as different tropes appear to speak to different dominant sensibilities. These sensibilities will tend to change. Progressive rock was associated with dreamy rural otherworldliness, punk with urban decay and aggression. Yet *both* served to set their followers apart from the mainstream, both in their heyday represented the height of sub-cultural cool. This has been recognised as a particular form of distinction by Heath & Potter:

> In the '80s, dressing like a punk or a goth was a way of showing that you were not one of the preppies or the yuppies. it was a way of visibly demonstrating one's rejection of mainstream society, but it was also a tacit affirmation of one's own superiority. It was a way of telegraphing the message that '*I* ,unlike *you*, have not been fooled by the system. I am not a mindless cog.'[36]
>
> (2004: 129)

The same logic which makes *disparate* subcultural styles *similarly* useful as markers of rebellious distinction also necessitates their turnover:

---

[35] See media interviews in Martin Scorsese's 2005 documentary, *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan.*
[36] Heath & Potter were writing in Canada and their observations may thus have local specificities.

The problem, of course, is that not everyone can be a rebel, for the same reason that not everyone can have class and not everyone can have good taste. If everyone joins the counterculture, the counterculture simply becomes the culture. Then the rebel has to invent a *new* counterculture, in order to re-establish distinction.

(Heath & Potter 2004: 129)

Summary

This chapter has focused on the roles of time and accessibility in change, particularly rapid, 'mutational', 'rule based' or 'revolutionary' change, with reference to the progressive rock - punk transition examined in Chapter 3. The strategy pursued has sought to examine the articulation of individual disposition, sociocultural context and the development of the cultural product, i.e. the music, over time. However there can be no simple meta-narrative here. Contradictions between the different approaches examined are many. Examples from the arts as well as from wider cultural and political events may display similar patterns, rhythms and outlines, but they do so in fragmentary ways that differ significantly in scale and formal detail. All one can say is that 'cultural shift' phenomena *may* arise under a favourable constellation of conducive conditions.

Habituation can be seen as in some ways driving accessibility change and style development. Between these latter two, a dynamic equilibrium of accessibility may appear and be sustained. When a style is superseded the equilibrium has faltered and can only be regained in the new style. This is also the point where further extrapolation of the established genre is simply perceived as 'more of the same'. The even longer Rick Wakeman keyboard solo, the *triple* album, the stranger costumes. Nothing going in the same direction surprises any more. Habituation produces a dazed recipient in whom another golden angel in a baroque cathedral, another neogothic Victorian turret or another late romantic modulation suddenly elicits not interest or delight, but nausea. We long for

173

the bracing cold shower of the *different* sound, the new dawn, the classical straight line; the three chord wonder. And while there will of course still be those who prefer the old style, the point at which its critics gain critical mass and define the new fashion, becomes one of the nodes of cultural history.

It is also the juncture at which a cultural form or expression (say the political system or the musical style) can no longer sustain the appearance of representing the culture as a whole, or even a creditable section of it.[37] There is a point of rupture, where enough people with a high enough profile 'invest' in a different set of concerns. This also helps explain the dizzying exhilaration of such moments. (The) people reclaim sovereignty for a moment and rather than being represented, represent themselves in their decision to *make* a new style rather than follow an old one. There is a taking control and a becoming, as the East German protesters realised in 1989 when they shouted '*we* are the people'. The new style will in many cases consist of a recasting of the more distant past, a 'back to basics' readjustment. Thus we may be dealing with forces that would suggest a cyclical development view of musical style change. L.B. Meyer writes prophetically in 1967 that: 'It is not unreasonable to suppose that our culture...is entering a period of fluctuating stasis, a sort of dynamic steady-state' (1967: 17). We now associate this kind of cyclical development with postmodernism.

The objection can of course be raised that punk did not destroy progressive rock, which continued in various guises despite having become unfashionable. An older style often continues in either a dialectic relationship with a newer one, or as a kind of relic which is lovingly looked after by enthusiasts, like an old steam engine. The newer style nevertheless inevitably and irrevocably impacts on the reading of the older one and contributes to its historicalisation, its inevitable ossification into an emblem of an earlier *Zeitgeist*.

---

[37] This can mean 'the whole part of the whole' i.e. for a popular music movement at this time it can mean NME readers.

Chapter 5

Case Study 2

Vaughan Williams' *National Music* in Context

Introduction

This chapter and the next will be concerned with ideas of class, cultural rootedness, identity and temporal continuity, as well as discourses about art and vernacular music. Certain notions such as authenticity, which have been previously discussed, will arise again, but to be viewed from a different perspective, so as to allow a fuller understanding of their relationship to accessibility. Case Study 2 is based on Vaughan Williams' book *National Music* in which he sets out his views on folk-song and the role of the composer in society. We begin by investigating a number of ideas and movements of Victorian and Edwardian England which informed Vaughan Williams' stance: the Folk Revival, Darwinism, the Arts and Crafts movement and Christian Socialism among others. Much of this first section also addresses attitudes to the working class. Another concern that arises in conjunction with this is the relationship between art and the vernacular. In the next section musical nationalism is examined with reference to accessibility and Vaughan Williams' own place in this approach to composition. The last section of the chapter looks more closely at *National Music* and details the main relevant points Vaughan Williams makes, examining in particular his stance on accessibility, vernacular musics and his motives for championing the use of folk-song.

Locating *National Music*

The publication which is the basis of this chapter and the next started out as a series of lectures, given in 1932 at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, and published (with slight alterations) two years later under the title *National Music* (henceforth in this chapter *NM*). Delivered when Vaughan Williams was sixty, these talks represent the mature thoughts of a composer who was crucial to the musical life of Britain in the twentieth century. The contents are not mere ruminations, but the culmination of a lifetime of active musical engagement. They include a description of English folk-song, an appraisal of its virtues and limitations and an avowal of the power in that music to express something of importance to the English people. He also emphasises the importance for a composer of a musical hinterland and of being connected with a community, both by drawing inspiration from it and by writing music of relevance to it. One who separates himself from his community is, in Vaughan Williams' view, not only failing in his duty to serve it, but also likely to write vacuous and irrelevant work. He bemoans the preference of the English cultural elite for German and Italian music, although he clearly holds some German composers in great veneration himself. He further expresses the hope that it might be possible to close the difference between art and popular music by following the strategies he outlines.

When Vaughan Williams gave his lectures the First World War, in which he had served as a non-combatant volunteer, lay fourteen years back, the Second was yet seven away, although Hitler was to take power in Germany the following year, 1933. The composer had begun collecting folk-songs thirty years earlier, three years after the turn of the century, although his interest in English music predated this and had manifested itself in the study of, and work with, music of the sixteenth century.[1] He worked as a composer in both the 19th and 20th centuries and through both world wars. Although his concern was to nurture and deepen the roots of native English music, he had studied both in Germany

---

[1] See for example his *3 Elizabethan Songs.*

with Bruch and in Paris with Ravel, who was actually three years his junior. His lifetime encompassed the musical moments of late romanticism, impressionism, expressionism, serialism, neoclassicism and the beginnings of the post-war avant-garde. Although Vaughan Williams bears the influence of most of these currents, he is also without doubt his own man and yet remains broadly accessible, indeed too accessible for many a modernist. *NM* can be seen on one level as a 'how to' guide for any composer wanting to achieve a similar combination of relevance, rootedness, openness and originality. On another level it is a polemic against modernist obscurity, with accessibility one of its central concerns. It is hoped that the examination of a text dealing with many of the important musical and cultural problems of the last century, and directly addressing the subject of the present work, albeit from a particular ideological standpoint, will help to further extend this discussion, and lead to useful insights and connections. Initially however it is important to note that Vaughan Williams' views, as expressed in *NM,* can be seen as integrated with a number of currents in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century England, with many of which he had close contact.

Victorian and Edwardian Intellectual Background

Music and the theory of evolution

The evolutionary theory of Darwin was highly influential in nineteenth century intellectual circles, leading to discussion on issues outside biology such as the theory of Social Darwinism which posited a kind of 'might is right' (a-)morality. In music, too, evolutionism had its echoes and most of these tended to describe the development of music in terms of increasing complexity and sophistication with ample conjecture about its origins. Interestingly Darwin himself weighed into the debate and one of his more provocative views was that language developed from music, because the latter, in his

view, was present in lower animals, whereas the former was not.[2] Vaughan Williams' teacher Hubert Parry published *The Evolution of the Art of Music* in 1893. Although Parry privileges the development of notation as the paramount step to creditable musical culture, he does see its development as more than simply residing in the composer's activities, acknowledging that:

> ...we can judge how and why men were driven in particular directions by the limits of their opportunities or the circumstances of their lives, and why certain forms of art were prosperous at certain times in history, and different ones at others. [3]

This suggests that the social environment has a role in shaping cultural expression. Both Vaughan Williams and Sharp emphasise the communal authorship of folk-song. Drawing attention to the evolutionary parallel Vaughan Williams tells us: 'So you see that the evolution of the folk song is a real process of natural selection and survival of the fittest' (*NM*: 59). (Vaughan Williams was related to Charles Darwin.) However, whereas (other) musicological writers who were borrowing ideas from Darwin saw folk-song as a lowly stage in the growth of music which progressed in tandem with humanity itself, Vaughan Williams' view was more akin to the memetic approach we have previously encountered. He believed that singers, by their preferences and the choices they made shaped the content of melodies so that they were ultimately a communal product, perfectly adapted to the community from which they sprang.

The Folk Revival

In *NM*, question, Vaughan Williams extols the virtues of 'folk-songs' as he likes to call them. He was initially part of a movement which rediscovered Elizabethan English music

---

[2] See Bennett Zon (2000) *Music in Nineteenth Century British Musicology,* pp. 115-178.
[3] Quoted in ibid. p. 151.

and he later became interested in collecting the songs of mostly elderly working people. At the same time Cecil Sharp, with whom Vaughan Williams collaborated, was also collecting and their energy and the subsequent growth of interest in folk music and dance lead to the establishment of the English Folk Dance Society (1911), later the English Folk Dance and Song Society (1932), with its base at Cecil Sharp House. Much has been written of the ideological underpinnings of folk-song collecting and revival in England (Harker 1985, MacKinnon 1993, Woods 1979, Brocken 2003). This will be more fully discussed in the following chapter.

The Folk Revival, with its roots in the time of the early industrial revolution, consisted initially of middle class amateur enthusiasts who, as well as carrying out some sporadic field work, cannibalised each others' collections and sometimes published often bowdlerised and imperfectly copied material. An important early collection, *Old English Songs as Now Sung by the Peasantry of the Weald of Surrey and Sussex*, was published by John Broadwood in 1843. By the late ninetenth century, John Colligwood Bruce, John Stokoe, Frank Kidson, Lucy Broardwood, John Alexander Fuller-Maitland and Sabine Baring-Gould formed the core of a group of collectors and editors who mostly had some formal musical training and were connected with education and/or the church. Their work led to the establishment of the Folk Song Society which predates the formation of the societies mentioned above, having been founded in 1898. This laid the groundwork for Sharp who collected prolifically in the run-up to the First World War and published his influencial *English Folk Song: Some Conclusions* in 1907, in which he writes:

> ...it is evident that the musical taste of every community must vary, and, as that taste is the controlling factor in the evolution of the folk song, national peculiarities must ultimately determine the specific characteristics of the folk songs of the different nations.
>
> (Sharp 1965: 38)

This view comes close to Vaughan Williams' own, seeing songs as the particular product

of a culture over time. Published folk songs were frequently presented like *Lieder*, in piano and voice form. Words were unselfconsciously adapted for contemporary middle class taste and intelligibility.[4] Vaughan Williams, who participated in this activity, was not the only art music composer to mine these sources for use in his own work. Percy Grainger, George Butterworth, and Gustav Holst, were keen to build on their reading of folk idiom to create and reinforce an English particularist musical language. Of these Grainger stands out as a collector who was especially careful to 'capture' the precise nature of performances by making phonograph recordings and transcribing them meticulously. The whole movement strongly influenced British art music and was the seedbed from which further Folk Revivals would spring until the present.[5] It also contributed to post-colonial notions of English identity and history.

The Arts and Crafts movement

The late nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement which grew up around the work of William Morris displays some notable points of contact with the ideas of the Folk Revival. Morris had absorbed the thought of Ruskin with alacrity in the 1850s taking from it 'the perception that the art of any epoch was the expression of its social coherence' (MacCarthy 1994: 70). We will recognise this search for artistically expressed coherence in Vaughan Williams' project. Bemoaning the 'art-lacking or unhappy'[6] working conditions of industrial Britain, Morris advocated a return to artisan production methods and a collapsing of the gap that had opened up between artist and craftsman since the coming of the factories. (In European art music a similar split is associated with the changing status of the composer in the romantic era.)[7] As with Vaughan Williams, there

---

[4] For unarranged folk-songs collected in this period see Maud Karpeles (ed) (1974) *Cecil Sharp's Collection of English Folk Songs.* London: Oxford University Press, and Roy Palmer (ed) (1983) *Folk Songs Collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams.* London: Dent.
[5] An article entitled "The Folk Revival: where to catch it live" appeared in *The Observer*, 'Escape' section, p. 8, 5/2/06.
[6] Morris quoted in Read (1979: 274).
[7] Beethoven no longer counted as part of an aristocrat's retinue in the way Haydn had, the latter having

was a desire for relevant and socially integrative cultural work, coupled with an abhorrence of the predominant production conditions and the cultural expressions encouraged by elitist and truly popular forms equally. In a lecture delivered in 1879 entitled *The Art of the Common People,* he denounced 'art for art's sake' as 'cultivated professedly by a few, and for a few, who would consider it necessary – a duty, if they could admit duties – to despise the common herd'.[8] He preferred to advocate 'an art made by the people and for the people, a joy to the maker and the user'. Morris' ideas on art and society took him into the thick of the origins of the English labour movement, becoming a leading light of the Socialist League and the Social Democratic Federation, both important early manifestations of left wing agitation. They not only had plenty of trouble with the police and connections with figures such as Friedrich Engels, but could boast a proportion of genuinely proletarian membership (whom Morris rather tip-toed around, not wanting to let his alter ego as minor capitalist spill over), as opposed to the Fabians who were mainly bourgeois. Despite this considerable political engagement (in 1887 he attended over 100 socialist and other radical meetings, often in a leading capacity),[9] in practical terms his solution, like Vaughan Williams', was ultimately not for the masses, but for a minority. In terms of products, because the items were by definition not mass-produced, and thus tended to be expensive, and in terms of workers, because his methods could not hope to employ enough people to have a serious social impact. Nevertheless, the intellectual effect can not be overestimated and clearly reaches to the leading lights of both the Folk Revival and the English Musical Renaissance. Harrington claims that the 'failure to note the influence of Morris on [Vaughan Williams and Holst] misled subsequent critics. In fact both of them were radicals from an early age' (1989: 108).

---

worn a livery marking his status.
[8] Quoted in Read (1979: 274).
[9] MacCarthy (1994: 555).

Christian Socialism and adult education

In the Church of England and nonconformist denominations, enlightened clergy had started to take an interest in social questions when Anglican F.D. Maurice advocated Christian Socialism in the 1850s and 1860s. The movement grew and gave rise to the Guild of St. Mathew (1877) dominated by the Rev. Stewart Headlam and the Christian Social Union (1989). The latter recognised that the Church had to engage with social problems beyond the window dressing of charitable work (Read 1979: 267). Many of the leading lights were 'High Church', paternalistic and ultimately anti-industrial, concerned with stemming what was perceived as a potential revolutionary tide:

> Any mass migration of workers into overcrowded living conditions threatened the political stability of the nation. Such a rootless proletariat was seen as the natural prey of radical politics. In this sense they were reactionary, harking back to the image of a Golden Age when social custom and religious practice were supervised by squire and parson.
>
> (Duffy 1992: ii)

The movement had its roots partly in an anti-urbanism that found its first explicit philosophical expression in the work of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl in the Germany of the 1850s. In his view mass migration to the cities was resulting in the formation of dangerous uncontrollable Molochs, with dire consequences. (Contemporary accounts of London 'rookeries' where criminals hid and lived go some way to justify such pessimism.) 'Urban development meant the loss of national character, and the growth of social, psychological and political instability' (Duffy 1992: 100). Christian Socialism was one of a number of interrelated social and intellectual initiatives that attempted to ameliorate the problems feared from the destabilising development of galloping urbanisation but, as Read points out, 'The Church of England still found it difficult to understand urban working-class culture and values' (1979: 267). The non-conformists and especially the salvation army did somewhat better but theirs was not the world in which Vaughan

Williams moved.

There was from the 1860s a movement to improve access to higher learning in the form of the University extension movement with lectures being given by Oxbridge academics in the provinces and the East End. As with the Christian Socialists; 'Fear of the spread of "socialism" spurred some dons to participate in an intellectual counter-attack' (Read 1979: 103). However in some cases lecturers, such as those of the Oxford Group in the 1880s, would have styled themselves as radicals, as did Vaughan Williams himself, particularly in his younger days. This included Arnold Toynbee and provided events for up to 47,000 people in its most active year. However only a minority were from the working class, partly because fees were charged.[10] R.H. Tawney (who believed in full educational provision for all) was associated with the Workers' Educational Association formed in 1903 by a 'diverse group of Bishops, dons and self-educated working men' (Read 1979: 473) which also began to offer tutorials to the public. University extra-mural classes also greatly increased in the Edwardian era until 50,000 students annually were benefiting.

'Victorian Sages' and E.M. Forster

These movements, and particularly their views about how art and knowledge should operate in a stratified society can be traced to some extent to Ruskin, and the critical attitude to industrialisation of Carlyle and Newman. From thence we can follow two streams in opposite directions. One concerned about the cultural division between the growing bourgeoisie and working class and the lack of national cohesion. This is broadly represented by the four movements outlined above, the Folk Revival, the Arts and Crafts movement, Christian Socialism and attempts to widen access to education. These can be further related to Victorian radicalism, the ethnographic work of writers who described working class conditions in detail, such as Engels and Mayhew, and the resulting reform

---

[10] Loc.cit.

agenda. Vaughan Williams can be seen as squarely in this tradition. The other stream goes via the aestheticism of Pater to the elitist modernism of the Bloomsbury group and writers such as D.H. Lawrence and H.G. Wells, who viewed urbanisation and the democratisation of culture with considerable abhorrence (see Carey 1992).

Although there existed in the late Victorian English establishment a broad movement in favour of widening access to (high) culture and learning and of reaching out to the lower social strata, the actual manual workers and poor were difficult to countenance. This is a failing encountered repeatedly in the history of those from the upper middle class who tried somehow to communicate with and help those less fortunate. Edwardian novelist E.M. Forster is very direct on this point in his novel *Howards End*:

> We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable, and only to be approached by the statistician or the poet. This story deals with gentlefolk, or with those who are obliged to pretend that they are gentlefolk. The boy, Leonard Bast, stood at the extreme verge of gentility. He was not in the abyss, but he could see it, and at times people whom he knew had dropped in, and counted no more. He knew that he was poor, and would admit it: he would have died sooner than confess any inferiority to the rich. This may be splendid of him. But he was inferior to most rich people, there is not the least doubt of it. He was not as courteous as the average rich man, nor as intelligent, nor as healthy, nor as loveable. His mind and his body had been alike underfed, because he was poor and because he was modern they were always craving better food.
>
> (1951 [1910]: 47-8)

So the gulf, the almost unbridgeable gulf, which is the subject of this novel is between the upper middle class and the lower middle class. This is the distance that the vast majority of Victorian and early twentieth-century reformers tended to actually travel culturally. In the novel it turns out to be a leap attempted at one's peril. The contact between these creatures of different worlds, or of opposite ends of the same world, throws their lives

into total disarray. Bast the clerk and the upper middle class Schlegel girls have met at one of the concerts which had become increasingly widely accessible during the Victorian era:

It will be generally admitted that Beethoven's Fifth symphony is the most sublime noise that has ever penetrated into the ear of man. All sorts and conditions are satisfied by it. Whether you are like Mrs. Munt, and tap surreptitiously when the tunes come - of course, not so as to disturb the others - or like Helen, who can see heroes and shipwrecks in the music's flood; or like Margaret, who can only see the music; or like Tibby who is profoundly versed in counterpoint, and holds the full score open on his knee; or like their cousin, Fräulein Mosebach, who remembers all the time that Beethoven is 'echt Deutsch'; or like Fräulein Mosebach's young man, who can remember nothing but Fräulein Mosebach: in any case, the passion of your life becomes more vivid, and you are bound to admit that such a noise is cheap at two shillings. It is cheap, even if you hear it in the Queens Hall, dreariest music-room in London, though not as dreary as the Free trade hall, Manchester; and even if you sit on the extreme left of that hall, so that the brass bumps at you before the rest of the orchestra arrives, it is still cheap. [11]

(Forster 1951 [1910]: 32-3)

By the end of the book Bast has been killed by a falling bookcase, an obvious symbol of the culture he was unable, in the last resort, to attain for all his aspirations. Although Forster is concerned with issues of class, and attempts to address them, as he did elsewhere matters of nationality and race, the actual working class are not even admitted to the debate. Hence the stunning lines, worth repeating for their sobering honesty: 'We are not concerned with the very poor. They are unthinkable...'.

---

[11] Read (1979: 402) reports that in 1911 almost one third of all adult men in UK were earning less than 25 shillings per week when in full employment. Thus the cost of the concert could have been 10% of a week's income for many. Not beyond reach, but not cheap by any means.

Victorian and Edwardian popular and accessible music

Howards End was written during the period when Vaughan Williams was composing *A Sea Symphony*, partly inspired by the folk material he was gathering in the hope that this grounding of his idiom in something of the music of the poor would make it accessible and relevant to the English in general. The actual majority however, that is the urban working class, were on a completely different track. Their entertainment had been largely that of the music halls for half a century, with their composed popular songs such as 'Any Old Iron' and 'Boiled Beef and Carrots'.[12] 'The Edwardians' own folk songs were being written for musical comedy and for the music hall' (Read 1979: 428). Music hall was not only within the financial and social ambit of ordinary people but included the fusion of a variety of modes of expression that we will later rediscover as a factor of musical accessibility in Brazil. Performances included comedy, dance and costume, and for much of the time during which they flourished, alcohol was freely available. Also, as in many Brazilian musical performance situations to be discussed later, the audiences would join in and sing the choruses of the songs. Attendance at London's West End halls was mixed, with aristocrats and students as part of the audience, but the provincial music hall was selfconsciously and almost entirely working class, and visited by people of all ages and both sexes (Bailey 1986). This latter fact exercised many Victorian moral guardians and they frequently assumed that the women in the audience were prostitutes. 'Memorability and an engaging performance was vital to the success of a music hall song', many being based around an 'appealing verbal phrase applied to a catchy musical one' (Lamb 2001: 484), what one would call, in the terminology of today's popular music, a 'hook'. Songs written for these venues also provided material for sheet music used with the upright pianos which were becoming common in aspiring working class and lower middle class households, and for brass bands who would perform them in public park bandstands on Sundays. These bands formed part of a movement that grew from the 1840s, particularly in industrial areas, with bands made up mainly of working class players, such as the

---

[12] Both composed by Charles Collins and performed by Harry Champion.

Black Dyke Mills Band and the Leeds Railway Band, regularly meeting for grand competitions. They are another aspect of the musical culture of the industrial working class which Vaughan Williams largely passed by.

Ragtime reached England in 1911 and represented the beginning of what would be the powerful influence of African-American styles on English popular music. In the 1920s and 30s jazz influenced dance band music held an 'enormous attraction...for a majority of people in the United Kingdom' (Scott 2003: 80). Although Vaughan Williams did not engage with this in any intensive way he did dedicate the third movement of his *Partita* for double string orchestra[13] to BBC Dance Orchestra conductor Henry Hall. In the absence of an obvious musical reference to dance band style in the movement, Day surmises that: 'The BBC Dance Orchestra...was noted for its gentle rhythmic bounce and lilt; and it seems that these are the characteristics that Vaughan Williams was aiming to bring out rather than any direct reference...' (Day 1998: 181). The dance band era would eventually give way to rock 'n' roll and later rock and pop in all their guises. This of course was where the future of true accessibility lay, and where England would indeed reassert her importance as a 'musical nation', being second only to the USA in terms of global influence in this field. 'Folk-music', although having experienced a series of revivals to the present day, remains a minority and middle class pursuit, while folk-influenced concert music has almost disappeared. In this sense Vaughan Williams can be said to have failed in his express aim of establishing an English national music. His attempt at generating a grounded, accessible and yet edifying idiom is genuine and well meant, and while being tainted connotatively by fascism through the careless use of terms such as 'blood' and 'race', it mainly fell into the same trap that caught many of those trying heal English culture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; the inability to countenance, understand or reach the actual majority of the population; the industrial and urban poor.

One aspect of late Victorian musical life and increasing (LIII) musical accessibility that

---

[13] Originally for scored as a double trio and first performed in 1939.

Vaughan Williams did integrate into his work is that of the healthy choral tradition which had been helped by the development of the tonic-sol-fa system of notation in the first half of the nineteenth century, which helped non-musically literate singers sightread.[14] Cantatas and oratorios were the most popular forms with Händel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* being widely performed. New works were constantly being added to the repertoire and this may have been a factor in the less vigorous output of symphonic composition, and indeed in the lack of a 'national school', as oratorio writing was hidebound by particular conventions (Read 1979: 87). Vaughan Williams himself produced an extensive output of Choral works, for instance his Mass in G Minor (1921), including those for orchestra and chorus, such as *A Sea Symphony* (1909), *Benedicite* (1929) and *In Windsor Forest* (1931), a cantata based on extracts from his opera *Sir John in Love*. The Leith Hill Festival, at which Vaughan Williams conducted for 48 years was also focused on competing choirs.

Indeed the competitive aspect, which is a feature of both the world of choirs and brass bands, seems to be common in participatory working class music to the present.[15] The idea of musical competition is clearly antithetical to that of music as a highly subjective experience, since it requires common criteria of judgement. In the 'classical' world of today competitions flourish where individual virtuosity is on display. There is a paradox in the concept of competing musically *vis-à-vis* accessibility at the participation level. It at once declares the openness of a medium through the invitation to measure up to the competitors, meaning that an elite can be toppled by all comers. On the other hand it emphases product rather than process, excluding the less able. From a reception point of view the fact that there is usually a panel of judges, rather than a popular audience vote, means that even though the competition may be mainly for amateurs, judgments are handed down by experts and do not necessarily concur with those of the audience. The 'fact of competition' is a *point of accessibility* in that we know what a competition is, even

---

[14] Tonic sol-fa was instigated in 1832 by D. Sower, elaborated by Sarah Ann Glover and brought to fruition by John Curwen in the 1840s (Kennedy 1996).
[15] It is also part of Brazilian *Carnaval* which will be discussed in later chapters.

if we do not understand or like the kind of music involved. Seeing which groups or individuals succeed could then aid us in learning and understanding the criteria which matter in the genre in question.

Gilbert and Sullivan

There was in the period of Vaughan Williams' growing up and education a kind of English musical pre-renaissance which foreshadowed many of the issues pursued by Vaughan Williams in the early decades of the twentieth century , although by taking an altogether different approach. The operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan were hugely successful in the last 25 years of Victoria's reign and aimed to found a 'school of native English opera' (Williams 1995: 221). Beyond their success at home the collaborations of the dilettante writer (Gilbert) and the formally trained composer (Sullivan) were performed abroad, and achieved some popularity in the US where they were even 'pirated' through unauthorised performances for which no royalties were paid (André 2001: 692). The closely observed presentations of Englishness in the work are shot through with irony and satire which is the antithesis of Wagnerian Germanic heaviness. Sullivan admired Wagner but could not accept him without considerable reservations, describing his work as a 'curious mixture of sublimity and absolutely puerile drivel'.[16]

Sir Arthur Sullivan's musical style was firmly rooted in the Germanic '*lingua franca*' of the time. He had had his first major success with his graduation exercise for the Leipzig Conservatory in 1861; a suite of incidental music to *The Tempest* stylistically akin to Mendelssohn, which it was hoped would 'mark an epoch in English music'.[17] However the stage works with Gilbert's libretti also reference music hall and minstrel conventions, and satirise English institutions (Williams 1995: 223/235). This not only reaches out across the class divide but anchors the operettas in the England of their time. In works such as

---

[16] Ibid. p. 694.
[17] Critic Henry F. Chorley quoted in Ibid. p. 691.

189

The Mikado, Iolanthe and *The Gondoliers*, the 'cod' instances of foreign languages and musical styles 'recreate and satirize the patchwork "culture" of a middlebrow cosmopolitanism' and 'enact and parody the bluff English confidence of global access', whereas *Utopia, Limited*, a lesser known work of 1893, 'explores the ways in which visions of national identity are vexed by corporate capitalism and colonialism' (Williams 1995: 224/222). Although the entrepreneurial gusto of Gilbert, Sullivan and their impresario D'Oyly Carte places them at the heart of the capitalist *modus operandi*, *Utopia, Limited* parodies the English establishment through a narrative of colonial Anglicanisation. The colonised in this operetta are eager to adopt the master's ways, but their outsider's experience of British 'civilisation' serves it up to the home audience in all its absurdity. *The Mikado*, took up the 'current metropolitan craze' for Japanese style (Williams 1995: 225). In this context the Folk Revival, which was not far off, can be seen as either just another fashion for ethnic content and/or a desire to discover what really belonged to and defined 'Englishness' in the flotsam and jetsam of colonial cosmopolitanism.

Another point of contact with the present study is the ample accessibility of Gilbert and Sullivan's work. The musical idiom was based on that widely dispersed diatonic 'classicism' which was extremely familiar to English ears. The combination of English texts, contemporary and local subject matter (albeit sometimes refracted through metaphorical diachronic or geographical displacement) humour and lavish productions all combined to make the experience relevant, seductive and enjoyable for the (middle class) theatre going public. Furthermore the demands of the music were moderate for players as well as listeners, and this has made these works a favourite with amateur performers until the present time. In the terms established in Chapter 2 this means this work also falls within the ambit of Level III (participatory) accessibility. There is no attempt to define Englishness musically in Gilbert and Sullivan but the latter, because of his training, was excellent at pastiching aspects of the international concert music idiom and he used this

ability satirically,[18] thus undercutting the awe in which the great Germanocentric tradition was held and opening the way for the composers of the English Musical Renaissance to jettison it in favour of a folklorically derived national style.

Although Sullivan wrote numerous serious works including oratorios, a symphony and an opera; *Ivanhoe*, it is for his light-hearted stage music that he is best known. He also furnished songs and hymns, in fact:

> There had never been a British composer so widely known for such a variety of music, one so capable of filling the needs of Victorian Britain with its universality of domestic pianos, its cheap vocal scores and song sheets, and its ubiquitous choral societies and bands.
>
> (André 2001: 697)

In other words he was of his time and he gave the people what they needed. It seems as if he did what Vaughan Williams thought a composer ought to do, before Vaughan Williams could do it himself. In fact Vaughan Williams 'showed distinct admiration for Sullivan, lamenting only the fact that light music was obliged to be trivial in the Victorian age and asserting that Sullivan was born out of his time' (Day 1998: 117). However, critics writing shortly after Sullivan's death were a good deal more scathing, accusing him of 'prostituting his talents' (André 2001: 697). It soon became apparent, as performances of Sullivan's non-operetta output steeply declined, that in the musical climate of the early twentieth century, squaring popularity with artistic stature was problematic. Vaughan Williams was negotiating a way through this problem by the adoption of folk-song in which he could credibly praise the anti-elitist virtues of simplicity and authenticity.

---

[18] For instance in *Trial by Jury* and *The Mikado* see André 2001: 695-6.

Musical Nationalism

In *NM* Vaughan Williams was not only calling for accessibility but for a musical language that had a specifically English origin and appeal. As such, and through his *modus operandi*, he falls within the swathe of composers and genres which are know as 'nationalist'. For instance his folk-song collecting connects him with Bartók, Janácek and de Falla, his modalism with The (Russian) Five[19] and he has in common the attempt to establish a national style in contrast to dominant German models with most nationalists in what is the most common musicological reading of the word. This is the reading which brings together those composers who, from around the middle of the nineteenth century and for the next hundered or so years, sought to define themselves as distinct from the Germanic mainstream by the more or less direct use of folk idiom and/or national programmatic themes, and the attempt to write in a style that marked out their music as particular to their nation:

> The new nationalism, in contrast to the old, flourished largely in countries that had no great or unbroken musical tradition of their own but had long been musically dependent on other nations, chiefly Germany. Nationalism was one of the weapons by which composers in those countries sought to free themselves from the domination of foreign music.
>
> (Grout 1960: 634)

A significant proportion of composers who fall into this category, such as Mussorgski, Ives and Elgar, were autodidacts and this in some cases aided them in formulating idiosyncratic compositional procedures. Others, such as Balakirev, Janácek and Vaughan Williams, consciously moved away from the mainstream style in trying to formulate a national musical idiom. Although many of them arranged, edited and published folk song

---

[19] Balakirev, Cui, Mussorgsky, Rimski-Korsakoff and Borodin, who were known as 'The Mighty Handful' in Russia.

collections, not all nationalist composers made extensive direct use of folk idiom or quotation. Sibelius and Borodin for instance foused on establishing their style more independently. Smetana and Dvořák were hampered by the fact that their homeland Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) was close to and had long been part of Austria-Hungary, and did not have a markedly 'different' folk idiom to draw on. Nationalism in their works manifests itself mainly in the choice of patriotic programmatic suggestions and titles, such as Smetana's *Má Vlast* (*My Country*), and an unconventional handling of melodic and rhythmic material which sometimes suggested folkloric models. In some cases, such as the work of Elgar and Janáček, the musical style appears to be influenced by national speech rhythms and inflections (Grout 1960: 641-2/647), recalling Herder's emphasis on language. Whether concrete connections with 'national' material are evident or not, the vast majority of nationalist composers developed a style that was *plausibly* representative of their national culture. If it did not immediately conjure up national identity and brotherhood by virtue of more or less clear connotational tropes, then it soon would by virtue of context, explication and habitual association.

German musical nationalism

What is sometimes ignored is the 'elephant in the room': German musical nationalism, which is obfuscated by being cast as 'universal'; a standard to which all must aspire and against which all are measured. The German musical establishment has been more than happy to embrace those who originated from its periphery (Liszt, Dvořák) and to borrow from the folk music styles of its neighbours (e.g. Brahms' Hungarian dances). Yet the dominance of German musicians and stylistic developments, sometimes self-consciously emphasised,[20] has given rise to a reaction by composers in many countries that was intended to create a valid position for themselves and their national art music culture.

---

[20] Schoenberg is reported to have said, on conceiving the 12-tone method: 'Today I have made a discovery that will ensure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years.' (Cited in Taruskin 2001: 702).

The universality claimed for the German 'classical' tradition is equivalent to the supposition of a kind of international accessibility. The music is supposedly 'unmarked' by ethnically determined particularities and is therefore intelligible to all. This is to ignore the proximity of baroque, classical and romantic German and Austrian music to 'its' vernacular. From Bach's chorale melodies, to Mozart's minuets to Schubert's many waltzes and Brahms' songs; folk idiom was never far away and influence went both ways. The distance between them was more social than musical and it is possible that the health and vigour of the German art music tradition during this epoch was in part due to this proximity to the vernacular and a resultant local accessibility. Vaughan Williams clearly thought so and hoped to establish a similarly rooted style for England. However, the Austro-German, one could even say Alpine vernacular that is so evident in many of the canonical composers was not a relic nostalgically refurbished, but the everyday music of the peasants and trades people who surrounded these composers.

The relationship between art and vernacular Germano-Austrian musics became particularly close and fecund in the last decade of the eighteenth century; the time of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte* and Haydn's *Creation*. Rosen (1976: 330) points out that the nature of folk style utilisation by Haydn is of a different order to that of Baroque composers, being at once more sympathetic and respectful in its approach. He further underlines the great achievement of this period and provides an explanation of its social context:

> For this achievement of the classical style…a new social situation had to coincide with a powerful stylistic development. The situation is easy enough to identify: it is the rising aspirations of the commercial class throughout the eighteenth century and their growing interest in the music as an element of aristocratic culture and a proof of social distinction; the increase in amateur musicians (and the increase in population) provided a new and affluent public. In short, secular high art became public.
>
> (Rosen 1976: 333)

What particularly impresses Rosen is the co-option of popular elements and into a high art style, achieving substantial accessibility, without 'dumbing down':

> Only for one brief historical period in the operas of Mozart, the late symphonies of Haydn, and some of the Schubert songs, has the utmost sophistication and complexity of musical technique existed alongside – or better, fused with – the virtues of the street song.
>
> (Rosen 1976: 332)

This was to be a rare moment since 'it was not to be expected that the synthesis of the Mozart piano concerto could occur again. Beethoven's Fourth and Fifth Concertos are something of a miracle; one should not underrate the difficulty of calculating the relation of social forces to individual genius' (Rosen 1976: 333). An obvious but nevertheless important observation on the fusion of art and popular achieved in this period is that much of its music is popular still, *and* still commands the respect of most parts of the musical establishment. In fact it is often with Mozart and Beethoven that distinctions between popular and art music begin to break down.

The *Volkston*

Gramit (2002) takes Rosen as one of the last of a long tradition of composers and critics who have lauded the accessibility of the classical and early romantic style through its proximity to the popular idiom. In a chapter entitled 'The Dilemma of the Popular: the *Volk*, the Composer and the Culture of Art Music', Gramit refers to the musicologically neglected tradition of the *Volkston*, a tendency with its roots in Northern Germany which in the latter part of the eighteenth century encouraged writing in an accessible style akin to folk song:

A *Lied im Volkston*[21], literally, a song in the tone of the people, might be understood to be an imitation of the singing of the people, but more often...it implied a song written by a cultivated poet or musician in a style thought to be simple enough for the people.

<div align="right">(Gramit 2002: 65)</div>

Schulz, one of the pioneers of the movement saw quasi-recognition of the music as one of the virtues that ensured accessibility.[22] Cramer in 1783 saw the origins of the *Volkston* in the vogue for folk song sparked by Herder ten years earlier:

The epidemic also spread to musicians; they copied down street songs, and wrote them themselves - and even lauded it as the non plus ultra of musical art. [23]

Ideas of nation-building were already concomitant with widening musical access through education. Schulz affirms the ability of music to make soldiers bravely die for their country (Gramit 2002: 70). As we will see in the case of Vaughan Williams, anxiety about changing social relations drove much of the agenda and this is foregrounded by Gramit. The rapprochement with folk music was a way of shoring up the status of art music, and that of its producers:

...creating and returning genuine *Volkslieder* to the people, thereby cultivating them to appreciate the high art that the same musicians created, having learned to be natural from genuine folk music – imagines a reuniting of the creative and the social that would overcome the specter of downward mobility...[24]

Even fear of disappearance of a tradition is already current and expressed by Ludwig

---

[21] See the seminal collection: Johann Abraham Peter Schulz (1785) *Lieder im Volkston* Berlin: Georg Jacob Decker. With preface by Schulz which is analysed by Gramit.
[22] Cited in Gramit (2002: 67).
[23] Cited in Gramit (2002: 68).
[24] Loc. cit.

Achim von Arnim, one of the editors of the best known nineteenth-century folk poetry collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, in its afterword. By the time of Schumann the use of folk song (-like) material 'could provide a bulwark against the merely fashionable, and thus a form of distinction through which the truly dedicated and cultivated could be recognized – but only if it could be understood [not to] challenge the hierarchy of value that culminated in high art' (Gramit 2002: 86).

This then is Gramit's theme: that despite attestations of democratisation, inclusivity and accessibility, what the German Folk Revival and the *Volkston* aimed at and largely achieved was the defence of privilege and superiority, all the way from small-fry editors and song-writers to the stars of the musical firmament who were having to establish themselves in a new world beyond aristocratic patronage, as petit-bourgeois artistic entrepreneurs. They were able to use their *use* of folk song gestures to both ensure a wider audience and to establish their position as arbiters of taste. Similarly, Gramit claims that musicologists such as Rosen and Kerman have something to gain from the analysis of folk influence since 'This placement of the critic within the small creative group sets [him] against the people and their simple music, now a raw material for both the compositional and the interpretive process' (Gramit 2002: 92).

Accessibility of the German idiom

By the early 1700s the vernacular style as exemplified by the first extant notated *Ländler*[25] appears to have been firmly diatonic, so there was no modal/chordal divide to bridge between Germanic art and folk music. It is possibly this centuries old kinship which gives the latter today a certain sickly overaccessibility, its gestures having been too often repeated and elaborated in expert hands to retain much charm in their simple form. However the verbal humour, breathing *rubato* and unexpected metre changes of many

---

[25] See *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1997) Sachteil vol.7 p. 1223. Kassel: Bärenreiter.

less mainstream examples of present Alpine music retain considerable interest, even to the contemporary jaded ear. Today the typicalities of Germano-Austrian folkloric idiom must be amongst the most widely disseminated musical ideas on the planet, and (thus) also amongst the most accessible (at Levels I, II and III). This is mainly thanks to the reach of the art music tradition with which it coexisted, but we must also consider the porous nature of vernacular style clusters. The melody shapes, rhythms and tonality of Germanic folk music are to be found in that of many parts of Europe, no doubt due to a mixture of folk borrowings, cultural kinship and trickle down from art music. This is where the particularist paradigm of discreet cultural cells breaks down, for as anyone acquainted with folk music knows; melodies reappear in different places and are not infrequently claimed as local. Here Vaughan Williams was rather partisan claiming that folk-song is 'an art which is indigenous and owes nothing to anything outside itself...'. Not all English folk melodies are modal and Vaughan Williams and Sharp have been accused of weeding out the diatonic ones (Harker 1985). The geographical position of Austria and Germany in the middle of Europe makes for a strong relationship with the other vernacular musics of the Continent. So the 'German idiom' in its art music guise had a path prepared for it as it was taken up in neighbouring realms by the concomitant and pre-existing intercommunication of vernacular to and from the 'centre'. Thus its accessibility was enhanced through familiarity with some of its tropes.

Some observations on the politics of nationalism

It could be argued that the idea of nationalism obscures a broader view of transnational social strata which is also present in Marxism. This has an affinity with the ideological situation before the rise of musical and political nationalism. If one regards Europe as a system of classes and groups such as the bourgeoisie, the cultured, the educated, the proletariat, the peasantry, depending on one's approach and epoch, then a music for the elite seems like an appropriate phenomenon. Accessibility and communication function horizontally, by class or stratum, rather than vertically, by national or ethnic identity. We

can see this reflected in the status of 'rustics' in art music, particular musical drama, before the spread of nationalistic ideas:

Volkstümlichkeit ('folksiness') can be found in much eighteenth-century art music especially in *opera buffa* and its French, English , German and (beginning in 1772) Russian vernacular imitations, where it was associated, like all local colour, with peasants or otherwise low-born characters. The use of various local styles for peasants but a musical *lingua franca* for other characters continued to reflect the old 'horizontal' view of society, in which class associations rather than national ones determined a sense of community among the cosmopolitan *gebildete Kreise* ('cultivated circles').

(Taruskin 2001: 692)

Johann Gottfried von Herder posited the value of the uniqueness of language and culture of a people in 1772.[26] He also collected vernacular material, including folk songs of many countries. The significance of Herder in the ideological debate is that with his intervention there comes into existence a particularist and by extension romantic and nationalist discourse dialectically opposed to enlightenment universality and class stratification. The unique cultural features of a people (supposedly) tie together individuals of all classes into a national community. From a critical vantage point we would say that such sense of community has to be imagined, invented and constructed and for this the romantic imagination was ideally suited. The national ideal speaks of a kind of vertical inclusivity by virtue of the deep seated understanding of cultural commonalities (and hence LII accessibility of tropes) which potentially unites the members of one particular people or *Volk*. These commonalities are sought in and extrapolated from rustic or folk culture, because elite culture is seen as less specific (true proletarian culture is only embryonically present during this time). Thus the short distance from folk to *Volk*.

---

[26] In his *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache.*

It is important to separate out various phases and strands of political and cultural nationalism, in order to evaluate the currents in musical nationalism and their intentions *vis-à-vis* accessibility. Initially, in the presence of continental French aggression and hegemony, as well as aristocratic, ecclesiastical and civil fragmentation in Germany and Italy, the national sentiment saw itself as liberal and democratic. It stood for the right of self-determination of peoples along ethnic lines, unencumbered by the dynastic or imperial ambitions or prerogatives of outsiders or groups with special privileges. In this guise the National Idea contributed to the unification of Italy and Germany in the nineteenth century, the post-imperial independence of eastern European states after WWI, the post-colonial independence of those in the Third World after WWII and the post-Soviet independence of yet more in eastern Europe and central Asia. In many of these cases however the democratic and liberal promise entailed in the Idea, which also connects it with French republicanism, has not been realised and the newly unified or independent states have fallen into authoritarian hands. On the negative side also is the essentialist and by extension racist potential in nationalistic ideology which has lead to discrimination, chauvinism, and genocide. Herder's work carries the seed of both postmodern social-anthropological relativism and of fascism. According to Potter, 'The scientific branch of Himmler's SS...funded large-scale field research in the folk music of Germanic populations' (2001: 723).

Nationalistic ideas and arguments have been, and still are, routinely employed in the name of both great and small nations and ethnic groupings, and although the methods employed may in some cases be similar, the power relations require us to distinguish between the weapon of defence and offence. Bohemian, Finnish or Polish nationalism in the nineteenth century was that of peripheral peoples who were subject to direct forms of foreign domination and dilution against which they were powerless. By contrast German, French, English or American nationalism since the later nineteenth century is that of powerful states, with large populations and a dominant language. The difference is between a weaker group which seeks emancipation and a powerful state that seeks to

dominate internally and externally even more than it does already. The universalist claim, from the point of view of the weak, can simply serve to ideologically hide what at heart is a nationalist and racist intention to impose hegemonic relations.

England

So how does the English Musical Renaissance fare in this conceptual landscape? England was by the time of Elgar and Vaughan Williams the most powerful nation on earth. English was spoken globally and gaining ground everywhere. The British state had dominion over vast colonies worldwide. In music however, there appeared to be a deficit. England needed less work on constructing a self-confident national identity than did some of the new states created after WWI. However, musically, the English very much felt themselves to be in the shadow of Germany. The *eminences grises* Stanford and Parry venerated German masters such as Beethoven and Brahms. We can hear an echo of this inferiority complex in Day's description of the premiere of the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis,* conducted by the composer in Gloucester Cathedral along with Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*:

> It probably did not occur to many of [the audience] that in *Gerontius* and the *Fantasia* they were listening to two of the finest manifestations of the English Musical Renaissance, works of which any country with a rich musical tradition could be proud.
>
> (1998: 36)

The majority of nineteenth-century musical institutions had taught the canon of important German works and as the great powers eyed each other and coveted each other's dominions and achievements, the 'land without music' had something to prove. There are a number of ways that Vaughan Williams could have faced in his search for a musical

201

identity. He might have looked to the industrial might of the country, and to the urban workers who constructed it. After all, these were largely the foundation of Britain's power. According to Lloyd 'the actual *creation* of folksong survived better in the mining and mill areas than in the rural districts' (1967: 31). Vaughan Williams might have looked to the colonies, in a triumphalist, orientalist or a multiculturalist way. Instead he looked inwards and backwards, to a rural way of life all but destroyed by England's early agricultural and industrial revolutions and to a countryside shaped by them, but no longer at the heart of national concerns. This was a foreign country, not just in terms of the past as a foreign country, but in terms of the class divisions which he had to cross and was attempting to heal. And also from the now predominantly *urban* English viewpoint. Vaughan Williams himself lived most of his life in London and not 'in the Fen country'.

However, the inclusive, socially uniting aspect of nationalism was very much within Vaughan Williams' ambit. Britain was the first country to experience the industrial revolution. The agricultural one, which fed the cities with cheap labour and made the industrial possible, had preceded it and made the peasant music which Sharp and Vaughan Williams collected appear vestigial by their time. Thus the industrial working class was relatively most numerous and well developed in Britain, which is why Marx believed that it was here or in Germany that revolution was most likely to break out. Even many Russian socialists were so convinced of their lack of ripeness for revolution that they felt a stage of further modernisation was first necessary.

It was this well formed working class, indeed the headlong development of Britain in the directions of democratisation, industrialisation and widening education that made musical accessibility an issue and that contributed to the timeliness of Vaughan Williams' project, even though the conventional narrative of musical nationalism would have to designate him a straggler. The culturally unificatory possibilities of musical nationalism were the bandage to heal the body politic which as a result of successful industrial and imperial expansion had jettisoned the old social structures and expectations, and was struggling to

find new cohesion. Elgar had been in the vanguard, with solid patriotic and romantic compositions of wide appeal. Stanford, Irish born, himself cosmopolitan and heavily Brahms influenced (although with an interest Irish folk material) taught the next wave including Vaughan Williams, Holst, Ireland, Bliss, Bridge, Howells and others who belatedly 'secured a romantic nationalism of idiom, largely by a Franco-Russian style alliance underneath the folky and Tudor trappings' (Banfield 2001: 222).

Vaughan Williams and *National Music*

In terms of art music, Vaughan Williams bypassed relatively recent German and harmonic music (as he called it), in favour of an earlier, English, modal past of Tallis, Gibbons and Byrd. His rejection of a luxuriant late romantic idiom, overripe with chromaticism, lead him away from functional harmony to attempts at building modal harmony from the melody down, rather than from the bass up. He cites the example of the Russian nationalist composers as precursors to his efforts (*NM*: 46). This enabled him to forge a fresh musical language without moving towards atonality. The English sixteenth-century repertoire was an aid to this because of its horizontal construction and modal language. There is the implication and sometimes, it has to be said, also the evidence, that some folk-songs and folk-song elements go back to similar roots and a similar period. It is not surprising therefore that Vaughan Williams found he had an affinity with both these bodies of music.

His first and well documented fieldwork came in 1903 when he was invited to a Brentwood vicar's parish tea. According to his wife he thought it unlikely that he would meet anyone there who knew any folk-songs, as he had been promised by the vicar's daughters. However as a result of meeting 70 year-old labourer Charles Pottipher at this social event, he notated 27 songs the following day from Mr. Pottipher and others. When Vaughan Williams heard the first song, 'Bushes and Briars' he 'experienced a deep sense of recognition, as though "he had known it all his life" ' (Palmer 1983: ix). It should be

noted however that he was familiar with published collections of folk songs.

The fact that a vicar was the conduit for this contact demonstrates the social gulf that needed to be bridged. Vaughan Williams the Charterhouse, RCM, Cambridge educated, seriously upper crust Gentleman of independent means, would make use of the clergy often to connect with working class singers. Francis James Child had used them extensively to collect ballad texts on his behalf in the nineteenth century. Vaughan Williams would later at times employ the more direct approach of walking into a promising looking pub, a technique that was envied by fellow collector Lucy Broadwood who, as a lady, felt that she could not possibly do such a thing.

Vaughan Williams' ideas on 'folk-song'

Vaughan Williams calls folk-song an 'individual flowering on a common stem' and claims that at its best it can be a 'supreme work of art' (*NM*: 60). It represented for him a kind of distillation of collective creativity. For Vaughan Williams one of the most valuable aspects of folk music is its relevance to the lives of ordinary people. He describes it as 'an art which grows straight out of the needs of a people and for which a fitting and perfect form, albeit on a small scale, has been found by those people' (*NM*: 41). In case we think that utilitarianism is the only virtue of folk songs, he assures us that 'there is in them...the spiritual lifeblood of a people' (*NM*: 42) and he further underlines their importance by claiming that; 'if we did not know...that there was such a thing as folk-song we should have to imagine it' (*NM*: 28). It has been claimed since that he and his fellow revivalists did just that (Harker 1985).

There is no question that Vaughan Williams raised up the music of ordinary people and, by extension, those people themselves and their disappearing culture, to the level of an ideal. However he was very much aware of the perceived and actual limitations of the music and its creators. Against the *perceived* limitations he mounts a spirited defence. He pours scorn on the suggestion that they are degenerate 'composed music' for instance.

204

The *actual* limitations he lists as follows:

Folk-song is limited because: [27]

1. It is purely intuitive, not calculated.

2. It is purely oral, and limited by the singer's memory.

3. It is applied music (either to words or dance).

4. It is purely melodic.

Vaughan Williams however sees certain compensations that arise from these: [28]

a) Rhythmic freedom.

b) It is concentrated into a short form....

c) ...which can stand and in fact benefits from repetition as a whole with the words.

d) Possibility of modal harmony, built from the melody down rather than from the bass up.

Furthermore we can ascertain that some of the 'limitations' have for Vaughan Williams inherent virtues. 'Folk music you must always remember is an applied art. The idea of art for art's sake has happily no place in the primitive consciousness' (*NM*: 40). The juxtaposition of 'happily' and 'primitive' surely signal the immediate proximity of Rousseau's 'noble savage' and not just attendant romantic ideals but also some of the abovementioned Victorian currents pessimistic about progress.

---

[27] *NM*: 42.
[28] *NM*: 42-6.

Vaughan Williams and accessibility

One of the main aims of Vaughan Williams' espousal of the folk-song is the accessibility of art music and on this subject he is unequivocal and uncompromising. He writes: 'In the ideal commonwealth of music the leaders will have their duty - to speak to the people in the language which they understand' (*NM*: 122). He believed that the onus is on the composer to try and communicate with his community. Conversely, in high modernism, the emphasis is on the effort the audience must make. New music demands 'an active posture in the listener instead of a culinary passive one' (Adorno 1997 [1963]: 189). Vaughan Williams is adamant that the community deserves consideration:

> It is not enough for music to come from the people, it must also be for the people. The people must not be written down to, they must be written up to.
>
> (*NM*: 119)

Here we can see the radical and the anti-modernist in one sentence. His interpretation of socialism is one of respect for the life of the people rather than the stern asceticism of Adorno which reprimands pandering to the masses as encouraging them to acquiesce in their exploitation as well as liquidating the subject. Vaughan Williams is promulgating a kind of unselfconscious unity between composer and society:

> ...the composer must not shut himself up and think about art: he must live with his fellows and make his art an expression of the whole life of the community. If we seek for art we shall not find it.
>
> (*NM*: 18)

The alacrity with which he took up film composing in his late sixties is attested by John Huntley (1998) who saw him at work. The fact that this popular form attracted him, and that he was more than happy to put his gifts in its service, shows that he was as good as his word when he talked about accessibility. In a passage that sounds very much like a

call for *Gebrauchsmusik* he asks:

> Why should not the musician be the servant of the state and build national
> monuments like the painter, the writer, or the architect.

<div align="right">(NM: 17)</div>

Whereas in much twentieth-century art music the development was towards increasing atonality, complexity and obscurity, with techniques such a serialism structuring works in ways that were neither of interest or pleasing to the ear of non-specialist listeners, Vaughan Williams is genuinely concerned with communication:

> ...a composer wishes to make himself intelligible. This surely is the prime
> motive of the act of artistic invention and to be intelligible he must clothe his
> inspiration in such forms as the circumstances of time, place and subject dictate.

<div align="right">(NM: 6)</div>

Such 'forms' were to be furnished by 'folk-song' in Vaughan Williams' argument and situation. The rich tradition of relatively simple tunes was to anchor the composer to a musical language that would remain accessible to the people of the country that had engendered it.

In view of the marginal social position this music held at the time it is difficult to concur precisely with this reasoning without employing a kind of mystical essentialism which would be the source of recognition by the audience. Vaughan Williams felt immediately at home with the music when he first heard it performed, and we can point to his knowledge of such folk-song collections as existed at the time as a reason for this. Indeed he was lecturing on folk-song on the day *before* he collected, and probably heard, his first one from a 'primary source'. There was also his love of English Renaissance music as a basis for recognising modal melodic construction as well as experience of church music, including plainchant. None of this would have pertained to the average city dweller at the

beginning of the twentieth century. Familiarity is an important element of LII accessibility and is usually gained through the cultural environment. Hence in the absence of these sources Vaughan Williams could only posit some vague ethnic memory as a rationale for how such songs, and music based on them, would connect with modern urban listeners.

Vaughan Williams' attitude to popular music

Since Vaughan Williams focused on folk-song for his engagement with a kind of vernacular, and this was already archaic, it is legitimate to ask what his attitude was to more widespread commercial popular music. He at times uses 'popular' and 'folk' interchangeably and at others differentiates between them. Some of his comments are equally applicable to both. A statement like: 'music is above all the art of the common man' (*NM*: 114) is a clear endorsement of the validity of everyday music, whether rural or urban, archaic or modern. When he states that; 'Surely each generation requires something different to satisfy its different ideals' (*NM*: 14), it appears to express an openness to a language in permanent revolution, which popular music can be seen as, rather than insistence on a slowly evolving (folk) tradition. Vaughan Williams thus emphasises the importance of contemporary applicability of cultural forms. Mellers writes of him that: 'however much he valued folk music as a way of life, he knew that it was too remote from the life emerging in industrial Britain for him to share it' (Mellers 1989: 27). Ultimately genuine expression was paramount, no matter in what context it occurred:

> What we want in England is *real* music, even if it be only a music-hall song. Provided it possesses real feeling and real life, it will be worth all the off-scourings of the classics in the world.
>
> (Vaughan Williams 1959: 28)

A clear differentiation between folk and popular art, and a mistrust of the latter, is discernible in other passages. For instance this:

In the English-speaking countries where our artistic impulses are so apt to be inarticulate and even stifled, there are thousands of men and women naturally musically inclined, whose only musical nourishment has been the banality of the ballad concert or the vulgarity of the music hall.

(*NM*: 69).

There is also a valuing of longevity over novelty, and while he is referring to art music here, the following comment could equally be judging the apparent disposability of pop:

A really original work remains original always. What is merely novel becomes stale when the novelty has worn off.

(*NM*: 79)

However, Vaughan Williams seems to accept that commodification is a necessary facet of music. He writes:

We are apt to look on art, and on music especially, as a commodity and a luxury commodity at that: but music is something more - it is a spiritual necessity.

(*NM*: 123)

Thus he does not perceive commodification and 'spiritual' value as mutually exclusive, which contrasts with Adorno's view, summarised by Witkin (1998: 179), that music divides between that which 'accepts commodity status and submits to the manipulative power of collective forces, and self-reflective music which resists those forces'.

The globalising effect of the popular music industry is something that one may expect Vaughan Williams to have problematised, just as he resisted modernist internationalism in music. Politically, globalisation seems to have been a desirable goal to him, but culturally he opposed it:

When the United States of the World becomes, as I hope it will, an established fact, those will serve that universal State best, who bring into the common fund something that they and they only can bring.

(*NM*: 127).

Vaughan Williams, art music and the vernacular

Wilfrid Mellers gives Vaughan Williams the sobriquet 'the double man', referring to his contradictory affiliations to city and country, agnosticism and Anglicanism, conservatism and social conscience. What concerns us here is another opposition with which he was intimately involved, that between art and the vernacular. He writes:

We are too apt to divide out music into popular and classical, the highbrow and the lowbrow. One day perhaps we shall find an ideal music which will be neither popular nor classical, highbrow or lowbrow, but an art in which all can take part.

(*NM*: 69)

Vaughan Williams believed this to be the only way to greatness:

Supreme art is not a solitary phenomenon, its great achievements are the crest of the wave...a supreme composer can only come out of a musical nation.

(*NM*: 89).

The cross-fertilisation, tension and interaction between the 'perennial alter egos' of high and low (Lavin 1990: 19), which was so fruitful in pre-modernist German art music, was something he needed for his own individuation. Byron Adams says of Vaughan Williams' love for Walt Whitman:

Whitman's ability to maintain a balance between the transcendent and the commonplace...must have seemed particularly attractive to a young composer in 1892, especially one just beginning a long struggle to reconcile style and authenticity in his own music.

<div align="right">(Adams 1996: 104).</div>

Vaughan Williams' motives and Harker's critique of the Revival

We can recognise in Vaughan Williams' endeavours a textbook case of constructing a cohesive, rural, national past, and a tendentious narrative of musical development. However, and as ever, this construction served the *present* and particularly his part in the English Musical Renaissance. It is not simply the development of his own musical idiom, but the ideological justification of it that is underpinned by his forays into country pubs. This has to do with relevance and accessibility as much as with particularism. Certainly there is here a resistance of the forces of modernism gathering on the continent as he collects his songs in the early 1900s. Vaughan Williams was ten years older than Stravinsky but only two years older than Schoenberg. There is something in his search for a past which is curiously out of kilter with much of the forward looking contemporary music around him. But in an England sure of its place in the world but very much divided against itself in class terms, he was more interested in communication than alienation.

Vaughan Williams' comments come dangerously close to a *Blut und Boden*[29] nationalism at times and in this he is a creature of his age and class, but ultimately his aim is not chauvinism but musical inclusiveness and accessibility. However, he is not prepared to embrace commercial proletarian culture. This would entail confronting potential class conflict. Instead he prefers a mystical and gentle national vision linked to a rural past generated through carefully selected and reconstructed musical 'folk' relics. Such an

---

[29] Nazi slogan: blood and earth.

approach is criticised by Harker (1985) because it perpetuates the bourgeois ascendancy. In his account, in which Vaughan Williams is implicated rather than extensively addressed, the Folk Revival was guilty of bias which caused it to misread what it was collecting by ignoring or obscuring urban, proletarian and commercial sources of the material (e.g. Vaughan Williams seeking out modal rather than diatonic melodies). The skewed, distorted and misrepresented collections were then used to entrench the bourgeoisie and enhance the wealth and status of the collectors. Cecil Sharp, with whom Vaughan Williams was associated and with whom he shares many of his views, comes in for particular criticism.

Both men's view of the tradition they were documenting and preserving may have been partly a nostalgic construction, but it was not nonexistent. And although the use they made of the material may have served certain ideological agenda, their legacy is not void as Harker (1985) suggests at the end of his book. Bearman (2000) identifies in Harker's reading, and that of similarly motivated authors, another ideological bias. He rejects their critique on the basis that Sharp's appraisal of his sources cannot be seriously faulted[30] and that to make folk music a pawn in the discourse of class struggle is to unjustifiably banish it from academic study, artistic use and our cultural heritage. This music does indeed have a particular flavour and the intermittent folk movement can be seen as contributing to the musical life of Britain, through the reinvention and continuation of the folk idiom itself and through the impetus it has given at various times to creativity in other genres.

Harker's obsessions with class and money are clear from the amount of attention he lavishes on the folk collector's social and family backgrounds, and on how exactly they came by exactly how much money, as if it were a crime for a musician to make a living from music. He even gives us an account of his own proletarian credentials as if he might come under the scrutiny of some Stalinist purge (Harker 1985: 256-7). Clearly Sharp and

---

[30] Bearman furnishes a detailed analysis of Sharp's sources and shows these to be more rural than Harker allows.

Vaughan Williams made use of the songs they collected. They employed them both in the service of their careers and for the sake of their ideological agenda as *NM* clearly shows. Is it therefore reasonable to suppose that Vaughan Williams went out and collected folk-songs with a cynical intent? An intent to misrepresent and exploit the music and its creators, and to shore up the capitalist system and his own class interest and position?

Reading *NM* does not confirm such a suspicion. The strong impression one is left with however is that Vaughan Williams genuinely *liked* and admired much of the folk-song he heard. That it spoke to him in a way that no other music did. In many of the ways outlined in Chapter 2 for Level II accessibility, this music was accessible to him; he could understand, gain meaning from, enjoy, engage with and respond emotionally to these songs. And as a bonus, he also had a use for them in his compositions. Many of the prerequisites of LII accessibility would thus have been satisfied. This scenario is not only plausible but coincides with Vaughan Williams' own comments about his experiences. A number of questions are raised by such an interpretation. One leads us to ask what the difference could be between finding something accessible and having a preference for it. Given his training and musical experience it is reasonable to suppose that Vaughan Williams also found music hall songs accessible. He would certainly have been able to understand, interpret, gain meaning from, and mentally process these songs, in fact in these facets they might have been *over*accessible. But he certainly did not like them as much as folk-song, nor did he respond to them emotionally in the same way. It can be deduced that accessibility at LII can be seen as an aspect of preference, but not commensurate with it. One can both dislike accessible music (where it is perceived as boring for instance) and be attracted by the challenge or the promise of music which is in some ways alien or difficult. We might call this the 'accessibility paradox'. For Vaughan Williams folk-song connected with many parts of his personality and experience, even though in 1903 it was still new to him in the flesh. It recalled the modalism of the Tudor music he knew. It had the strangeness that attracted an enquiring mind, the non-Germanic flavour that was refreshing for one trained in the 'classical' canon. It represented a gentlemanly adventure; a 'walk on the wild side', but not where Edwardian gentlemen

almost universally feared to tread; amongst the 'unthinkable'; the urban and industrial poor.

Summary

This chapter has recounted how Vaughan Williams described the virtues of English folk-song and justified using it in his work. His reasons for doing so were:

1. He wanted to contribute to the creation of a contemporary and particular English style of art music.

2. He wanted that art music to be accessible and unite a socially divided country.

3. He was finding an alternative way forward to what he saw as inaccessible and self-serving modernist internationalism.

4. He believed that composers generally should make use of their 'national' vernacular in order to write music that is close to their community.

These motives are related to the history of musical nationalism in several ways. Vaughan Williams shares with many other, and earlier, nationalist composers the desire to establish a local style, rather than imitating a dominant German or Italian model. He also owes a particular stylistic debt to Russian and French music. The examples he cites and follows however are not only those of composers defined in opposition to the dominant European art music culture of roughly the last three centuries, but also ones from that culture itself, as he explains that German composers achieved what they did because they were able to use and build on the rich musical life around them.

Closer to home Vaughan Williams was influenced by reformers, artists and thinkers.

Darwinism, radicalism, the Arts and Crafts movement and concerns about the consequences of industrialisation and urbanisation all find expression in *NM*. Shared with many bourgeois late Victorian and Edwardian social reformers and intellectuals, who were worried by the social distance between the main classes, was a commendable intention to address the problem, but also ultimately an inability to engage with the real social other: the urban working class. This is reflected in Vaughan Williams' choice of vernacular idiom.

From the point of view of our exploration into musical accessibility this chapter has addressed two further points of interest. Firstly, Vaughan Williams' reasons for thinking English folk-song generally accessible to English people, which are partly to do with the nature and scope of the musical material and practice, but also with notions of musical evolution, authenticity and identity. Secondly, reasons were offered as to why folk-song was accessible and attractive to Vaughan Williams himself, which led to a further insight into the dual nature of accessibility. For him, folk-song was both familiar and new, both comforting and exciting. This was described in terms of an 'accessibility paradox'.

Chapter 6

Art Music, Vernacular Music

and Accessibility

Music has always spread from below upwards, the spontaneous song of the people comes first.

(Vaughan Williams 1934: 91)

Introduction

This chapter explores the theme of possible relationships between art music and vernacular music, which has arisen from the examination of Vaughan Williams' aims in the previous one. The initial strategy is to examine ideas of art and vernacular music in turn and to ask how each relates to accessibility, especially at Level II (perception). Art music is approached with particular reference to the work of Kant[1] and Scruton (1997), in order to address some fundamental attitudes of Western aesthetics. A connection is made between these, and notions of 'absolute music' as delineated by Dahlhaus (1989). The modernist turn is discussed with recourse to Horkheimer (1968) whose approach is questioned in terms of how it specifically relates to the social conditions at different historical moments. The relationship between modernism and aristocratic leisure is

---

[1] Kant, Immanuel (1790) *Critique of Judgement.*
<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/part8b.html>

revealed and Carroll's (1998) critique of the development of Kantian ideas by modernist writers is referred to. The widely held belief that new and important work has always been 'difficult' is evaluated with reference to musicological and historical sources. The question is further posed: to what extent is art music necessarily associated with inaccessibility?

The chapter then attempts a working categorisation of vernacular musics, pointing out differences and similarities between what is understood by folk and popular music, as well as debating concepts such as 'ubiquitous music' and mass culture. Following the focus of the previous chapter some of the problems and features of folk music are pursued further. Connections are then made between vernacular musics in general and notions of community in a broad sense, which are proposed as important constituents of the perceived accessibility of these musics. The final part of the chapter looks at the situation of new art music, recognising its marginal position in contemporary culture as problematic and citing writers who believe it to be in crisis due to a lack of accessibility. Vernacular influences on art music in recent decades are reviewed and we ask whether such rapprochements are useful or necessary in order to bring a measure of accessibility to 'serious' music, in the way that Vaughan Williams proposed, and how this might be appropriately attempted today.

The high/low divide

The connection between high and low, so easy musically in the Classical and Romantic periods in the German speaking areas, has been severely tested by high art modernism and the development of mass popular culture, as has the kind of middle ground represented by Gilbert and Sullivan. Roger Scruton bemoans its apparent absence:

> ...the gradual sundering of 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow', 'classical' and 'popular' has
> left a gap between the language of serious music and the ears of the young – a

gap that was once filled with hymns, carols, and musicals, but which is now empty except for the works of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, whose popularity, however is a vivid reminder of the continuing need for melody and harmony, in a world suborned by rhythm.

(Scruton 1997: 500)

Scruton further identifies composers who connected with the popular in various ways: Debussy, Stravinsky, Gershwin, Milhaud, Lambert, Bernstein. He even recognises in the Beatles or Buddy Holly worthwhile melodic expression of a kind he deems absent from the work of Nirvana, REM, or indeed Schoenberg. But before discussing possible relationships between art music, vernacular music and accessibility, the terms of reference require clarification in the light of some of the key ideas that have informed this area, which lies on the limen between aesthetics and cultural criticism.

The distinction between 'low' and 'high' art itself is problematic, since it has commonalities, but is not entirely commensurate with, other possible oppositions, such as those between art and non-art (Cohen 1993), high and low culture (Gans 1974) and art and mass art (Carroll 1998).[2] An important distinction is whether high/low categories are discernible in the works themselves or reside in the (taste) communities made up by their consumers. Gans recognises not just two but five separate 'taste publics': high culture, upper-middle culture, lower-middle culture, low culture and quasi-folk publics (1974: 11). Hamm draws attention to the connection between judging works and their recipients:

...the most important agenda of the modernist narrative of mass culture is the privileging of some repertory or genre of music over allegedly inferior cultural products, and thus the privileging of those people who understand and respond to this 'superior' culture over those who produce and consume mass culture.

(1995: 10)

---

[2] See also the section 'Object status: from "cult value" to "hyperreality"' in Chapter 2 of this thesis for pertinent views from Benjamin and Brecht.

Carroll (1998), who attempts to define differences in the works themselves, addresses accessibility (at LII) directly as a mark of contemporary 'mass art':

> Obviously, mass consumption involves accessibility. As the case of the avant-garde indicates in a negative way, accessibility is partly a function of background knowledge. In order for mass art to be accessible in this sense, it must be designed for fast pickup by what I have called *untutored* audiences. That is, mass art has to be comprehensible for untrained audiences, virtually on the first go-around. So the modes of communication and the conventions of mass art have to meet certain design *considerations*, namely they have to be such that they can be grasped and understood almost on first contact. They must…be very, very user friendly.
>
> (Carroll 1998: 192)

Clear boundaries are difficult to draw however. Fisher (2001: 141) points out that 'Not only have plays and operas migrated from popular to high, but works by Mozart, Beethoven, Leonardo and Monet have moved out of concert halls and museums to movie soundtracks and T-shirts'. Levine (1988) suggests that in the US it was the situating of works in forbidding temple-like concert halls, opera houses and museums, where gatekeepers such as conductors demanded the appropriate reverence, that opened up what he refers to as the low/highbrow divide. This is a clear example of the interrelationship between LI and LII accessibility where the placement and presentation of artworks impacts on their reception.

Art Music

Genre definitions are notoriously difficult and unstable. 'Classical', 'serious' and 'art music'; 'new music' or 'free composition' for contemporary work, while superficially

unproblematic, do not stand up to close examination as accurate delineations of this macro-genre. All are imprecise and fail to differentiate between their intended target and other musics. The more American 'formal music' seems to refer to the setting rather than the music itself. The French *musique savant* and Portuguese *música erudita* (both meaning learned or scholarly) are perhaps more helpful since they point to the formal instruction usually involved in learning to write or play such music. This suggests reduced participatory accessibility (LIII), but does it also apply to reception? Is education necessary to appreciate 'educated music'? If so, would this be specifically musical education or education in general? In either case the chances of instantaneous understanding would be impaired. Further exploration in this direction would inevitably lead to the area of class, which is discussed elsewhere in this work.

A crucial question is whether there is something fundamentally different about art music. Is it possible to discern a quality or an intention which sets it apart from folk, popular or other vernacular music? And where are we to look for such a difference? Is it to be sought in the social class of the participants, the musical material, or the subjective standpoint of the composer? Tagg (2000) offers a succinct taxonomy of folk, art and popular music in terms of categories such as: production, transmission, storage, social location, written theory and composer. This is given in form of a table where a yes/no indication is given, for instance of whether composers are known or anonymous. We will begin by discussing differences in musical construction before moving on to aesthetic considerations.

The musical material categories which might be used to distinguish art music, such as length, sophistication and complexity, while they relate directly to accessibility, are difficult to sustain as criteria because they may be found in many different genres and in different aspects of music. The rhythmic freedom, phrasing and portamento of singers from whom Vaughan Williams collected folk-songs was difficult to capture in conventional notation, suggesting complexities beyond the usual grasp of music notation at the time. Similarly harmonic simplicity is found in concert music, minimalism being an obvious example, as is brevity, for example in Webern's *Five Pieces for String Orchestra.*

Such unusual examples can be taken as invalidating boundary demarcations, or as simply exceptions which confirm the rule. The more widespread use of notation in art music makes the construction and elaboration of longer works more practical than in a mainly oral and aural genre. However, the coming into use of the computer as a common compositional tool for creative musicians has tended to erase many of the limitations of scale of non-notated music. The new possibilities in this area have not been widely made use of in popular music however, with the exception of longer dance remixes. Perhaps a ceiling effect of length vis-à-vis attention span means that the 'design consideration' aimed at accessibility militates against longer 'popular' pieces even where these are entirely notated, such as in 'light music'.

Kant and fine art

Much of the discussion in aesthetics about what constitutes art derives from Kant. In the *Critique of Judgement* Kant sets out what became some of the fundamental tenets of western aesthetics as follows:

> Fine art...is a mode of representation which is intrinsically final, and which, although devoid of an end, has the effect of advancing the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication.

> The universal communicability of a pleasure involves in its very concept that the pleasure is not one of enjoyment arising out of mere sensation, but must be one of reflection. Hence aesthetic art, as art which is beautiful, is one having for its standard the reflective judgement and not organic sensation. [3]

These lines open up a plethora of relevant ideas. Very clear is the emphasis on reflection

---

[3] Kant, Immanuel (1790) *Critique of Judgement.* SS 44. Fine Art.
<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/part8b.html>

over sensation as the mark of 'fine art'. Communication however is also at stake and therefore inaccessible work is problematic, not just because it fails to communicate, but also because it does not present readily the entity to be reflected upon. The only contemplation it allows is that of the question 'why?' which may be useful as a starting point but should not be a dead end for the interested recipient. Kant recognises enjoyment derived from both contemplation and sensation and whereas the latter may not usually be an object of reflection, it can open the field for contemplation of aspects of the work. We may note that in the kind of reception that concerns him the 'pleasure is not one of enjoyment arising out of '*mere* sensation', implying that sensual pleasure is permissible so long as 'the pleasing form imparted to the work is only the vehicle of communication and a mode, as it were, of execution...'.[4]

But what may constitute the required contemplative material? Contemplation implies a kind of internalised discourse which may be imagined as quasi verbal. Music appears to pose an additional problem in this connection as the form expressed is frequently beyond verbal description. Kant sees this as a paradox intrinsic to aesthetic understanding:

> But, by an aesthetic idea I mean that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e., concept, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible. It is easily seen that an aesthetic idea is the counterpart (pendant) of a rational idea, which, conversely, is a concept, to which no intuition (representation of the imagination) can be adequate... [5]

Hence an element of irrationality should inhabit the truly aesthetic, yet tempered by judgement and understanding, particularly on the part of the artist; 'For, in lawless freedom, imagination, with all its wealth, produces nothing but nonsense; the power of

---

[4] Ibid. SS 48. The relation of genius to taste. My italics.
[5] Ibid. SS 49. The faculties of the mind which constitute genius.

judgment, on the other hand, is the faculty that makes it consonant with understanding'.[6] Finally, fine art for Kant is constituted in the combination of partly contradictory elements which can exist without some or all of the others, but which coincide in work of genius:

> The requisites for fine art are, therefore, imagination, understanding, soul, and taste. [7]

Play and intrinsic value

Scruton rehearses the argument which makes the distinction between means and ends:

> If every activity is a means to an end, then nothing has intrinsic value. The world is then deprived of its *sense* - it becomes a system of means without meaning, in which we are caught up and enslaved by the accident of birth. If, however, there are activities that are engaged in for their own sakes, the world is restored to us, and we to it. Of these activities, we do not ask what they are *for*, they are sufficient in themselves.
>
> (Scruton 1997: 457)

This idea is clearly traceable to Kant:

> For fine art must be free art in a double sense: i.e., not alone in a sense opposed to contract work, as not being a work the magnitude of which may be estimated, exacted, or paid for, according to a definite standard, but free also in the sense that, while the mind, no doubt, occupies itself, still it does so without ulterior

---

[6] Ibid. SS 50. The combination of taste and genius in products of fine art.
[7] Loc cit.

regard to any other end, and yet with a feeling of satisfaction and stimulation (independent of reward). [8]

Scruton (1997: 458) is careful to separate purpose from function; play (as an end itself) may have the function of exploration and building skills, but that is not *why* we play, that is not its purpose. On the face of it, and from a 'protestant work ethic' point of view, one might suppose that it is actually easier to discern meaning in work (means to and end) rather than play (end in itself). The purpose and therefore the meaning of work is survival, improvement, civilisation, but the meaning of play? Scruton however finds it precisely here:

> Meaning lies in intrinsic value; we possess it by finding the thing that interests us for its own sake; and such an interest must be disinterested, in the manner of every activity where we are 'not merely in earnest'. At the same time, intrinsic value, and the pursuit of it, are means to the highest human end: namely happiness - that elusive but abundant thing which we obtain only so long as we do not pursue it.
>
> (1997: 458)

It needs to be pointed out that the word 'meaning' is used rather differently in this instance than when it is used to describe symbolic or social meaning, both of which Scruton examines earlier in his work on the aesthetics of music. Here he is writing about something which grants a kind of 'spiritual', or subjective satisfaction. It does so partly by confirming that we are something beyond functioning components in a system. It frees us from instrumentality. Scruton's claim is that this is at its highest in art and is closely connected to happiness. The worth of *Gebrauchsmusik* of any kind is immediately

---

[8] Kant, Immanuel (1790) *Critique of Judgement*. SS 51. The division of the fine arts.
<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/part8b.html>

undermined by this position; any music which serves a purpose has a lower 'art value' than that which does not.[9]

The problem with this as a starting point for a distinction between art music and the vernacular is that it immediately disqualifies much of what is routinely considered art music: Opera (because it tells a story), religious music (because it serves worship), requiems (because their purpose is to remember, or rest, the souls of the dead) etc.. Admittedly these uses have in many cases become secondary to the presentation of the music. The charge that much composition serves the purpose of furthering the career of the composer is more difficult to refute. However, a more fundamental problem with pure play 'purposelessness' as a defining feature of art music, is that this may surely be found in all musical genres. Insofar as play is a general human need and characteristic, and insofar as particular individuals have a tendency to think abstractly (which is a kind of mental play), it would be surprising if this only manifested itself in particular types of musical culture, particularly since many individuals in history will have found themselves confined to a limited range of music. It would follow that when they (and we could take Vaughan Williams' 'peasants' as an example), found the need to 'play' musically, they did so in their musical language of folk-song. Thus whereas their genre was workaday music for entertainment, spreading news, telling (hi-)stories, dancing and so on, it would not be surprising to find amongst it some 'intrinsic play-value', the result of a peasant needing to give free reign to a musical imagination unfettered by 'purpose'.

Thus the meaning found in intrinsic value, which has primacy in Scruton's account, is difficult to connect with a particular genre. But how can one ascertain whether it is present in a piece of music? Is the test the motive of the composer; did they write to order? Was that the *purpose* of their work, or just the *function*? The intrinsic value meaning should surely communicate itself in some way to the listener (even though that should not be its purpose in this scheme). We know of course that listeners find their

---

[9] It was noted in Chapter 2 that it is difficult to find music which does not serve a purpose for someone.

profound experiences in very different musics, and may be prepared to argue forcefully for the worth of a piece in which others find no value at all. We also know of situations where work is presented with great pomp and gravity but still leaves many unmoved, while leaving itself open to later ridicule ('prog' rock or Wagner for instance). Not surprisingly the value under discussion appears to share the elusiveness of that to which it is a means, according to Scruton: happiness – 'which we obtain only so long as we do not pursue it' (1997: 458). To produce art in this sense is indeed difficult. That is why we hold the people who are able to do so in high esteem, even though we cannot always agree on who they are, nor in what genre of music they are active. However if one accepts the requisite of intrinsic value; that it is created in 'play', in activity which is an 'end in itself', then trying to create 'art' is to work as a 'means to an end', resulting in immediate self-disqualification.

Leisure

'Art', Scruton tells us, 'is a product of leisure' (1997: 458). This would certainly explain why so much cultural activity which is unquestioningly accepted as art has arisen from an aristocratic milieu. However, very few of the great artists who made 'aristocratic' art were aristocrats themselves, the latter preferring 'total' leisure to the hard graft of turning out symphonies and landscapes, which they considered *infra dignitatem*. Although this complicates the issue, the connection with 'nobility' does perhaps throw some light on why autonomous art, created in leisured play, is accorded such high value; it retains the aristocratic kudos. Money and status seem to have a role in the creation and evaluation of art, since working class estates with high unemployment are not necessarily the hotbeds of creative activity that the ample (enforced) leisure might suggest. Where they do produce cultural expressions (rap music, graffiti) they are likely to be regarded as a danger or a nuisance rather than as art. When art is used as a way of overcoming social exclusion and marginalisation, such as in British arts policy as already mentioned, or in the activities of grass roots arts organisations in Brazilian *favelas,* to be dealt with later,

226

its (hoped for) instrumentality would seem to compromise it, as does the emphasis on 'process' rather than 'product'; on accessibility (particularly LIII) rather than excellence. The aristocratic ideal is ultimately about exclusivity and this theme has been echoed by Bourdieu (1984) and Carey (1992).

Sacred community and purity

Scruton also makes a connection between art and religion, emphasising in particular the creation of a subjective community through ritual in religion and through meaning: 'The meaning that I find in the object is the meaning that it has for all who live like me' (1997: 460). Members of the group are tied together and implicitly defined against those who do not share the faith, do not understand the meaning. The understanding thus defines both the *in* and the *out* group. This need not be hierarchical as is witnessed by the previous discussion of sub-cultural approaches. But the other aspect that art, especially musical art, takes from religion is the notion of purity.

Purity, however, is difficult. It requires that the body is held still, denied; that we are quiet and concentrate, as in meditation or prayer. Even *within* religion this is one side of a dialectic. Catholic or Orthodox cathedrals with all their colour, richness and incense are a kind of assault on the senses, a medieval *Gesamtkunstwerk* designed to stun the faithful into awe and reverence, or to seduce them into compliance. The other side of the religious divide on this is found in strict control, in the ascetic. Fasting, autoflagellation, the starkness of Calvinist architecture and décor, the (theoretical) banning of music in Moslem worship;[10] all are manifestations of an asceticism which at the extreme banishes music altogether to the worldly, but at best approaches it with suspicion and

---

[10] Chanting and the call to prayer are not strictly speaking recognised as music in Islam. Other forms of music related to the faith have at best semi-official status. At the extreme end of the spectrum the Taliban banned *all* music while in power in Afghanistan.

censoriousness. Even the Catholic church tried to expurgate 'impure or lascivious'[11] musical content in the rulings of the Council of Trent (1563) and Puritans stipulated church music without instruments or polyphony. What such strictures deny apart from sensuous seductiveness, is access through recognition; for instance of secular (vernacular) melodies. The members of communities thus defined may feel they have special status because of the asceticism that unites them.

Vaughan Williams, as has been demonstrated in the previous chapter, grew up in bourgeois Victorian England and derived many of his concerns and aims from the intellectual currents of that time. However, *National Music* was written in the 1930s when issues of purity (modernist and neo-classical) of art music were to the fore in Europe. In this context Vaughan Williams seeks out the peasant, the 'earthy'. He feels that he not only wants to address a wider community than could be achieved with atonality and serialism,[12] but that he has to consciously resist purity in favour of inclusivity. Like the high-church Christian Socialists with whom he shares many of his attitudes, he wants to 'have his cake and eat it'; they are protestants but want the mystery of Catholic ritual; he is a twentieth-century art music composer but he wants to be able to evoke the vernacular and communicate with the 'people'.

In this he is anachronistic in both senses of the word. He is out of step with his own time, and 'old-fashioned', since the converse of the above narrative of the quest for purity is to be found in the old tradition of quotation, borrowing and 'common practice' between art music and the 'vernacular'. Frequently this took the form of using everyday melodies for chorales, *cantus firmi* or other themes, but also extended to the co-option of dance forms and rhythms (waltz, minuet, gavotte), the sharing of modes, harmonic language and instruments. The valorisation of purity on the other hand found its clearest articulation in the concept of 'absolute music'.

---

[11] Quoted in Grout (1960: 262).

[12] Although paradoxically he did experiment with atonality in his 4th Symphony, finished in the same year as the publication of *National Music* and according to Mellers (1989) the musical working out of a psychological battle between 'God' and 'Satan'.

Absolute music

This concept began to crystallise around 1800 according to Dahlhaus (1989), to justify and emancipate the traditions of instrumental concert music which had grown during the baroque and classical eras. The previously prevalent view, that music was validated and given meaning by sung words, was brought into question and overturned, as indicated by Dahlhaus:

> Now instrumental music, previously viewed as a deficient form of vocal music, a mere shadow of the real thing, was exalted as a music-esthetic paradigm in the name of autonomy - made into the epitome of music, its essence. The lack of a concept or a concrete topic, hitherto seen as a deficiency of instrumental music, was now deemed an advantage.
>
> (1989: 7)

The acceptance that music was primarily addressed to the emotions was also revised:

> ...when an independent theory of instrumental music developed, there was a tendency to contradict the sentimental characterization of music as the 'language of the heart', or at least to reinterpret the tangible affects as ephemeral, abstract feelings divorced from the world.
>
> (Dahlhaus 1989: 6)

The idea of art 'divorced from the world' separates it not only from the sensual realm in the manner of ascetic religion, but also from the world of the utilitarian bourgeoisie and its work ethic. Dahlhaus cites Karl Philipp Moritz who contributed crucially to the formulation of the absolute music position. Moritz insisted that such music must *not* be useful. Only in that case did it not need to be *used* to be completed, but was already perfect. All that was required was for it to be recognised as such. Furthermore it need not

give pleasure for, as Dahlhaus writes, 'the recognition art demands, not the pleasure it provides, is decisive' (1989: 5). Thus music was relieved of the requirement to please or to serve any worldly purpose. The recognition of perfection signalled the new paramount value: the ability of the work to make us forget ourselves and the world, in a word, transcendence:

> Now since I enjoy a beautiful object more on its own account and a useful one only on my account, the beautiful affords me a higher and less self-centred pleasure that the merely useful.
>
> (Moritz 1981 [1785]: 186)

As philosophical atheism gained force, art, and instrumental music in particular, promised an alternative way to make contact with the ultimate:

> By the turn of the nineteenth century, music was a cult...It was the central ritual of an art religion in which artists functioned as priests...their task was to mediate the finite and the infinite through the production of their work.
>
> (Chua 1999: 174-5)

But this ritual was one of mysticism and ascetic denial; not the populist street procession following a gaudy Madonna but the lonely pilgrimage of the sage. Accessibility is far from its concerns as eventually 'only the initiates of Romanticism can unravel the mystery of music' (Chua 1999: 176). Such an aesthetic attitude enabled modernist developments in the twentieth century. The lack of concern for intelligibility and the primacy of 'the material' (which had become quasi-spiritual since contextual meaning had been downgraded) hastened the onset of the 'emancipation of dissonance'. Recordings reified and commodified tonal art music in a way that could make it appear as use-object, in contravention of the 'absolute aesthetic'. The eschewing of verbal explication was no longer enough. Intrinsic-only value could however be ensured by inaccessibility (at all Levels), which was consequently pursued with vigour, as described in Chapter 1. Thus

the assault of the pinnacle, or the cul-de-sac (depending on one's point of view) was underway, which had its concomitant in the abandonment of figurative painting catalysed by the availability of photography. What followed logically from Kant, Moritz and Beethoven acquired extra layers of aesthetic and political reasoning as discussed in the following section.

Horkheimer and resistance

A very clear and powerful rationale for modernist 'high' art inaccessibility is given by Max Horkheimer of the 'critical theory' tradition. His essay 'New Art and Mass Culture' was written in exile from Nazi Germany in 1941, but issued in a revised version in 1968. In it he sees the art work as a crucial factor in how the subject positions herself vis-à-vis society:

> In aesthetic behaviour a person at once renounces their function as a member of society and reacts like the isolated individual they have become.
>
> (Horkheimer 1968: 313)[13]

Thus alienation is fundamental to the role of new (high) art, but this is a function that relates directly to 'current' social conditions; the 'ruling economic system' and the 'general levelling'[14] of culture.[15] Rationalisation of all the conditions of life, such as work, habitat and, through the 'manipulated fun' of mass culture, leisure as well, destroys *Innerlichkeit* (introspectivity or inwardness) with the consequence of total dehumanisation and savagery.[16] *Innerlichkeit* can only be salvaged by and through true art which, under these conditions should 'without compromise express the gulf between the monadic individual

---

[13] My translation, as are all subsequent quotes from this source.
[14] C.f. recent concerns in the British media about 'dumbing down'.
[15] Loc. cit.
[16] Ibid.: 318.

and his barbaric environment' (Horkheimer 1968: 318).[17]

The nature of true art works must therefore lie not in some intrinsic unchanging aesthetic principles, but in how they relate the individual to current social conditions. Whereas there is here an explanation of a need for historical change, the modernist turn towards the inaccessible is not explained by referring to the logical internal development of art styles, nor by the falling behind of a populous not advanced or educated enough to understand new work. Rather the connection between earlier great art such as 'Raphael's Madonnas or Mozart's operas', and that of today is their 'authentic content'. This makes the classical closer to today's difficult art than any kitsch pastiche, because in our time 'the happy gesture became a mask of insanity and the sad faces of insanity the only sign of hope'.[18]

In several passages Horkheimer explicitly propounds the incompatibility of accessibility, and in particular one of its important components; communicability, with truth in modern art. In fact he claims: 'Today art is not intended to communicate any more' (p. 319). Against Dewey's[19] insistence that communication is the purpose and result of artistic work, he holds that the artist has to be indifferent to the reaction of his immediate audience if he has anything new to say (p. 331). Indeed, popularity is no guarantee of value, since 'error has not united people less often than truth' (p. 324). In Horkheimer's view the demand for clarity and usefulness is employed by the enemies of inwardness to attack work of imagination. Thus if, as he states, 'values are only (re-)claimed by exposing the historical practice which destroys them' (p. 327), the demand for accessibility has to be exposed as destroying the imagination in order to reclaim it (presumably by making work inaccessible).

In Horkheimer's work we find the hope, common in Marxist-influenced cultural theory,

---

[17] At this point Horkheimer cites Picasso's *Guernica* and the Joyce's prose as examples of work which fulfil his requirements.
[18] Ibid.: 319.
[19] Horkheimer quotes from John Dewey's *Art As Experience* (1934).

that an art work which elides comprehension, which resists access, thereby demonstrates its value by symbolising a kind of political resistance to existing socio-economic conditions:

> There are times in which a belief in the future of mankind can only be sustained through an uncompromising resistance to people's reactions. The present is such a time.
>
> (Horkheimer 1968: 321)

There is a recognition of the paradox of communicating concepts like resistance by avoiding communication, but this is justified at the end of the essay by the rather desperate idea that the ignorant are in some coma-like state where they *do* understand, but are unable to acknowledge it and 'Therefore it may not be totally pointless to continue in this incomprehensible speech' (p. 332). Having established that antipathy to the prevailing conditions is a prerequisite of true art in his time, he does accept that such sentiments may be discovered in popular culture, but 'only from the outside, by the use of psychological theory' (p. 319). Thus he believes that even accessible work does not readily reveal any worthwhile meaning it might carry.

Horkheimer: discussion

The reaction to the contemporary situation is described as fundamental by Horkheimer, and the resulting influence on the meaning of the works total:

> Elements which may appear as similar as drops of water when isolated from their historical context, are nevertheless as different as heaven and hell.
>
> (1968: 322)

It appears inexplicable that since the context is so crucial, its delineation is made with such very broad brush strokes. Although Nazism is sometimes given as an extreme

233

example of the evils of which popular culture forms a part, it is presented as the extreme end of a continuum of modern Western culture generally, and is in fact barely distinguished from liberal democracy.[20] It is not the intention here to overlook the need for critical discourse. There existed, and continue to exist, oppression and exploitation in democratic and non-democratic capitalism. But how can a system which installs Auschwitz require precisely the same artistic reaction as one which allows a large measure of free speech and human rights, and is at least based on democratic values?

Just as the societies condemned and deserving of 'inhospitable' (Horkheimer 1968: 318) artworks appear as an indistinct amalgam, so the alternative does not find any clear conceptualisation, but rather remains in the realm of the ethereal:

> With the ability to escape [into inwardness]...disappears the power of the subject to create a World other than the one inhabited. This other world was that of art.
>
> (Horkheimer 1968: 318)

The sense of escapism is underlined by a relationship with religion:

> Since art became autonomous it rescued the utopia that had escaped religion.
>
> (Ibid.: 315)

Thus what is condemned by Marxists in popular culture and religion - that is, their offer of escape into a non-material realm - is here praised as a true purpose of pure art.

But what of our situation at present, do the same artistic imperatives apply? Today's society has doubtless changed compared to the late 1960s, but it surely differs less from that era than the 1960s did from life under the Nazi regime. Rationalisation has continued apace as established in Chapter 2 and one could construe developments over the last 40

---

[20] Stalinism (very current in 1941 when Horkeimer's essay was first published) is hardly touched upon and Maoism (very current in 1968, for when it was revised) not dealt with.

years as having gone further in the direction feared by Horkheimer. Yet his pessimistic expectations (forgivable in consideration of his witnessing of the growth of fascism) have not entirely been vindicated since liberal democracies have moved away from, rather than towards, totalitarian characteristics and totalitarian regimes themselves are now fewer in number. Within western democracies emancipatory movements have brought much improved conditions for blacks, women and gays and we take for granted a measure of health, wealth, freedom of expression and social mobility unknown by previous generations of every known society in the history of the planet.

In order to relate this to Horkheimer's central concern in art, the preservation of inwardness, we need to determine how the measure of space for the subject has been affected by recent developments. Difficult as such a variable is to estimate, we might point to an increase in mass cultural production via different media; advertising, music, film, websites and so on, which bombard us with largely redundant stimuli, thus crowding out scope for critical or genuinely imaginative contemplation. Furthermore, postmodern cultural eclecticism and equivalence attracts the charge of shallowness of engagement. Against these negative indicators we can however posit that respect for individual choice and rights lie at the heart of the dominant contemporary political and moral order. Since inwardness has to be an individualistic pursuit (how would Horkheimer react to the suggestion of mass inwardness?), a society with the individual as one of its central concerns cannot be entirely inimical to a subjective sensibility. Unusual though it may be, it is possible to turn off mobile phones, computers, TVs, radios and music players; to put aside pressures of work and family and to sit and contemplate a (perhaps difficult) work of art. Works which repay such attention are available in large numbers, most people have some leisure time which they can devote to such an activity if they so choose (and some do).

We may legitimately ask then whether our current situation requires art to be inaccessible in order to be truthful, genuine and pure as Horkheimer demands of that of *his* time. Political critique, discussion and resistance are certainly called for in the face of war,

exploitative globalisation and environmental destruction, and this may or may not be more problematic in the absence of a credible communist alternative. However, as we have seen, Horkheimer's concern is not as literal or as concrete as this. An answer to whether 'the subject' is under attack and requires refuge in inaccessible artworks would have to be equivocal at best. In fact, such refuge has been claimed for genres rather distant from those championed by implication in Horkheimer's essay:

> Artistic activity is offered as a strategy for surviving in a commodified culture...Rock authenticity posits an absolute dichotomy between the inner and the outer, between the true self and the socially constructed mask.
>
> (Gracyk 1996: 226)

As already noted in Chapter 3, we find that high art aesthetic principles are found in readings of vernacular expressions.

Carroll's critique of Horkheimer's vein of art criticism traces the link with Kantian aesthetics but claims that a distortion and over-extention of the latter has taken place. It appears that from Kant's view - that the *recipient* should be disinterested - has been extrapolated, not unreasonably but ultimately misguidedly, the idea that 'the work of art itself is autonomous, i.e., independent of ulterior cognitive and/or utilitarian purposes' (Carroll 1998: 92). Carroll further believes that the connection made by Greenberg, Ortega y Gasset and Clive Bell between disinterested appreciation of art and abstraction is spurious, because it is easily possible to disinterestedly appreciate a landscape (p. 95):

> Somewhere along the line historically, theorists...transferred the notion of disinterestedness from the spectator to the art object.
>
> (Carroll 1998: 96)

In a similar way, the idea that the recipient should be engaged and active, turned into the

idea that the art object should be difficult (inaccessible):

> ...I think that Greenberg reveals his revisionist version of Kant by identifying the value in genuine art with its capacity to elicit reflection from the spectator [and] correlates genuine art with difficult art.
>
> (Carroll 1998: 97)

Carroll's main thesis is that what in Kant were ideas about how it is that one responds to beauty or should respond to it, have been transformed into quasi-normative standards for works of art. Thus the implication is that in order for the Kantian philosophy to be observed, a particular approach is required in the recipient, while no particular requirements are made of the work of art. Mass, or figurative or tonal art can be as easily appreciated in a disinterested way as abstract, atonal avant-garde work. Certainly, according to this critique, accessibility appears not to be a barrier to such appreciation, but the origins of the suspicions that accessibility arouses are somewhat clarified.

One final aspect of Horkheimer's tract requires discussion in the context of this enquiry. It has been demonstrated that he regards inaccessibility in modern art works as a mark of resistance to oppressive and anti-subjective social, political and economic forces. Looking to history however, he credits great canonical works, such as those by Raphael and Mozart with 'authentic content' (p. 318) and their permissible harmony and clarity presumably reflects some virtues in their societies. After all, Horkheimer does not claim that modernist work carries a hidden beauty and accessibility that the broarder public is missing, but that its truth and value lies in its very abrasiveness and unintelligibility, which is justified by the dehumanising current conditions. Yet at the time of Raphael, Europeans were using war as a legitimate tactic of power politics, particularly in the New World, and the majority of the population were unfree peasants whose situation was lamentable. Social status, particular in the higher strata, was extremely rigid, formalised and largely hereditary, with intricate etiquette (including the consumption of art) reinforcing the prevailing order. To a large extent these phenomena still existed at the

time of Mozart and in neither time did the main continental European powers display policies approaching what we would today recognise as humane, democratic or equitable. Why then did these societies merit harmony and clarity in a way that we do not?

If 'the subject' in the Renaissance and the musical Classical period had ample opportunity for leisure and purely aesthetic pursuits then it must be remembered that this applied only to the aristocratic subject and was at the expense of the brutal repression and exploitation of the lower orders, particularly the peasants. Even aesthetically it must be recognised that these conditions gave rise to considerable ostentatious vulgarity; in fact ostentation could be seen as an aristocratic *raison d'être*. It seems strange that at the heart of Marxism there has always been this nostalgia for feudalism, originally based on the perception that in this social order people were not to be hired and fired (and exploited) at will, but had more stable commitments and relations. In Horkheimer's aesthetic then, this transmutes into a longing for quasi-aristocratic individualism and leisured introspection. Scruton has his own aristo-nostalgia but nevertheless recognises that:

> Modernism, with its priesthood of the avant-garde, was the last gasp of the aristocratic world-view. Such a view is no longer tenable, not because it is false, but because the conditions are no longer in place, which would enable us to live it.
>
> (Scruton 1997: 496)

He thus confirms the link between modernism (and its predilection for difficulty in music) and a pre-modernist, elitist way of life.

The Van Gogh myth

When composers such as Boulez and Birtwistle justify the unpopularity of their work, they are fond of doing so by claiming membership of a great tradition of innovation

238

which apparently always encountered resistance:

Is there really only lack of attention, indifference on the part of the listener toward contemporary music? Might not the complaints so often articulated be due to laziness, to inertia, to the pleasant sensation of remaining in known territory? ...Would they always have been the same? Probably, all novelty bruises the sensibilities of those unaccustomed to it.

(Boulez 1994: 87)

Thus responsibility for the problem is placed firmly with the audience, which is simply behaving in the 'lazy' way it always has. Such views are widely held and frequently stated. In another instance Gwendolyn Freed asks (and states):

Don't you feel that new music has always been difficult? In his own time Beethoven was difficult, Brahms was difficult. [21]

This may be summed up as the 'Van Gogh myth'; the idea that a lack of immediate recognition is a sure sign of eventual stature. Accounts of the contemporary reception of some major composers' work tells a somewhat different story however. Of course every artist will have his or her critics. Even Tchaikovsky, later censured by modernists for his accessibility, was not universally applauded in his time. Nevertheless, Kerman & Tyson assure us that:

Beethoven's music enjoyed an almost immediate appeal among the growing class of bourgeois music lovers, and its popularity has never wavered.

(2001: 110)

---

[21] Gwendolyn Freed in 'The State of Classical Music', panel discussion:
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/najp/publications/or2.pdf>

Furthermore composers of the canon did not always share their (apparent) twentieth-century successors' indifference towards audience reaction, nor were they necessarily averse to commercial rewards. In 1797 Beethoven writes to his brother Johann:

> I am well, very well. My art is winning me friends and respect, and what more do I want? And this time I shall make a good deal of money. [22]
>
> (Ibid.: 78)

If one suspects that favourable reactions would only have accompanied Beethoven's early, less revolutionary work, Kerman & Tyson do not confirm this. At a time when all but the last symphony had already been performed we find that:

> From the point of view of Viennese popular acclaim and fame the year 1814 must be regarded as the high water mark in Beethoven's life. Not only were his compositions applauded by large audiences, but he also received in person the commendations of royal dignitaries.
>
> (Ibid.: 88)

Perhaps concern with the audience and musical accessibility is less surprising from a composer with a less fiery reputation, from what might be perceived as a more genteel age:

> Haydn seems to have been acutely sensitive to the principal rhetorical claim of a piece of music: that it must communicate persuasively with an audience through the medium of performance. In eighteenth-century terms, filtered through Haydn's own words, this claim might be rendered: that to instruct, please, and move the passions in the manner appropriate to occasion and venue so that what originated in his own spirit and sensibility would remain in the listener's heart.
>
> (Sisman 2005: 5)

---

[22] Compare Boulez (1994: 85): 'There are musics which bring in money and exist for commercial profit; there are musics that cost something, whose very concept has nothing to do with profit.'

Yet even at the height of romanticism we find that the assumption of the unpopularity of new art is not borne out:

> Although there have been a few dips along the way, the four symphonies of Brahms entered the standard concert repertory soon after their premieres and have remained strong presences ever since.
>
> <div align="right">(Frisch 2003: 142)</div>

Judging by these authorities it seems that the narrative of incomprehension and hostility that has apparently always greeted new work in the canon, is an oft-repeated myth used as an ideological fig leaf to justify modernist disdain for the contemporary audience. Such was certainly not the attitude of Mozart, who delights in the enjoyment and appropriation of his work, which clearly demonstrates its compatibility with, and relatedness to, the vernacular of its time:

> ...it was such fun to see all these people merrily dancing to the music of my *Figaro*, which had been transformed into lots of *Contretänze* and *Teutsche*. They talk of nothing here but - *Figaro*! Nothing is played, blown, sung or whistled but - *Figaro*! No opera is attended but - *Figaro* and for ever *Figaro*! It really is a great honour for me. [23]

There could be no clearer indication of the ample accessibility (at Levels I, II and III) of this new work, and of the composer's approval. It would be difficult to find an example of such popular uptake of modernist music precisely because of its inaccessibility. However the following interview with visual artist Bridget Riley demonstrates the change in attitudes that was precipitated by the modernist shift in the twentieth century. Mozart had

---

[23] Prague 15/1/1787. In Ludwig Pohl (1865) (ed). *Mozarts Briefe.* p. 434, my translation. *Contretänze* and *Teutsche* were clearly popular dances of the time and could be more familiarly given as contredanses and *Ländler*, although Emily Anderson prefers 'quadrilles and waltzes' (1990: 196).

just arrived in Prague when he wrote the above letter. Riley describes her arrival in New York in January 1965:

> ...it was an extraordinary experience...to my amazement I saw windows full of versions of my paintings on dresses, in window displays, everywhere.[24] My heart sank...It was astonishing, about half the people [at the exhibition] were wearing clothes based on my paintings and I tried to avoid having to talk to the people which were the most completely covered in 'me'...I fought it in every way that I could...but it was too late...My work had been falsified. I remember coming back on the plane thinking that it would take twenty years before anybody could look at my paintings again. [25]

The adoption of elements by the vernacular sphere due to their attractiveness, usefulness and attendant accessibility, so obviously seen as a mark of success by Mozart, is here perceived as a disaster, devaluing the work and depriving it of its 'high' art aura and kudos, by unintentionally breaching the inaccessibility thought necessary for the possession of those attributes. In conclusion, it is clear that inaccessibility is not inevitably an essential quality of art or art music, even when it is new. It has certainly not always been considered to be so, even by highly innovative composers. The belief that audience indifference, incomprehension and even hostility are bound to greet important new works is a product of the twentieth-century idealisation of alienating art, which has lead to an ideological projection onto history of the contemporary situation.

---

[24] The trope taken up in this way consisted of multiple black and white parallel wavy lines.
[25] Riley (2003: 75-6), interview with Andrew Graham-Dixon.

Vernacular Music

Having attempted to delineate certain ideas about what constitutes art music and to what extent these relate to accessibility, we now address the equally problematic area of the vernacular. In the first instance there are a number of terms in use which refer to this general area: popular and folk music for example. In German *ernste Musik* (serious music) is frequently contrasted with *Unterhaltungsmusik* (music for entertainment) or the rather pejorative *Trivialmusik*. Vernacular is another term which implies the presence of its opposite other. Originally used to describe languages other than Latin, the medium of learning, religion and literature in the middle ages and beyond, it is used to mean the 'every day', the ordinary. It was applied to music in the US by Wiley Hitchcock, who contrasts it with 'cultivated' music:

> I mean by the term *cultivated tradition* a body of music that America had to cultivate consciously, music faintly exotic, to be approached with some effort, and appreciated for its edification - its moral, spiritual, or aesthetic values. By *vernacular tradition* I mean a body of music more plebeian, native, not approached self-consciously but simply grown into as one grows into one's vernacular tongue, music understood simply for its utilitarian or entertainment value.
>
> (Hitchcock 1988 [1969]: 54)

Vernacular might be opposed to the 'special' the 'Sunday best'; in musical terms, *art* music. Scruton's privileging of free play comes into view again here. Vernacular implies everyday utility whereas art occupies a more unfettered position. But what is vernacular music today, really? Radio 1 playing on a building site perhaps, pumping dance music used for an aerobic work-out? The title music of the television news? These are examples that would usually include music that people are familiar with, and that they use to structure their days (DeNora 2000). They may seek it out, but more often are unintentionally exposed to it. It may be used for a specific purpose, but often listening is

indirect, some other activity is being engaged in at the same time. Kassabian (1999: 113) uses the term 'ubiquitous' to describe musics that 'wash our everyday lives in sound'. She draws attention to the lack of conscious choice while emphasising that different reception contexts require different 'modes of listening' (p. 120). Ultimately a wide variety of styles fall into the 'ubiquitus' category, including much 'classical' music, which is frequently used in shops or as background to social situations (for which it would in some cases originally have been used, too). Films use art music tropes frequently and to some extent this is where modernist music has found its vernacular voice (particularly in horror films). Its accessibility in this context is furnished by the multimedia presentation (this will be expanded on in the next chapter), by utility and by meaning implicit through images and narrative.

Popular music as vernacular

Kassabian (1999: 116-7) divides readings of popular music into four categories:

1. Popular as populist

2. Popular as counterculture

3. Popular as folk

4. Popular as mass

'Popular music as populist' carries connotations of expressiveness and liberation. 'Popular as folk' means regarding the music as 'of the people', simply made by them, for their own needs. This echoes some of Vaughan Williams' attitudes, and insofar as it relates to the cultural identity of social formations in the broadest sense, it is further developed in this chapter. 'Popular as counterculture' is the approach which credits popular music with enabling people to resist oppressive structures. Authors such as Willis, Hebdige, and Frith have contributed to this mode of discourse. In this they have grappled with the 'popular as

mass' position identified with the more negative view of Adorno, which sees such music as being part of an apparatus of oppression. It is in this sense that popular music is analysed in association with commodification and the music industry, as discussed in Chapter 2, which facilitate LI accessibility for the products promoted. To some extent commodification and marketing now encompass most music genres, and so are difficult to apply as taxonomical criteria. Caroll discusses the term 'mass art' and argues that although avant-garde forms may be subject to mass media production and distribution techniques, mass art is made with a clearly different intent, which relates to its accessibility:

> ...clearly avant-garde artworks, when produced by means of mass media, are not mass art works proper. For they are not designed for easy consumption by mass...audiences.

> (1998: 189)

It is reasonable to suppose that aspects of such accessible design would be structural simplicity, repetition and a measure of familiarity, as well as points of potential identification and utility. The term 'popular music' also implies a dichotomy with its opposite: 'unpopular music'. It becomes clear on reflection however that 'popular' is usually used more as an extremely wide genre category, since the rock music some friends play in a garage is not necessarily popular, whereas Mozart's work is extremely so but would not be thus described. Shuker (1994: 5-7) ends a useful survey of definitions of popular music with this summary:

> It seems that a satisfactory definition of popular music must encompass both musical and socio-economic characteristics. Essentially, all popular music consists of a hybrid of musical traditions, styles, and influences, and is also an economic product which is invested with ideological significance by many of its consumers. At the heart of the majority of various forms of popular music is a fundamental tension between the essential creativity of the act of 'making music'

245

and the commercial nature of the bulk of its production and dissemination.

(1994: 7)

Middleton ends his historical overview and analysis of definitions with the following thoughts:

> All the approaches mentioned…are engaged in dividing up the musical field in a particular way - between this and that, better and worse, elite and mass, higher and lower, aristocratic and plebeian, and so on. …'Popular music'…can only be properly viewed within the context of *the whole musical field,* within which it is an active tendency; and this field, together with its internal relationships, is never still - it is always *in movement.*

(Middleton 1990: 6-7)

Folk music as vernacular

'Folk music' is another term that has been used in its several variants (*Volksmusik,* traditional music, folk-song) to denote 'low' music, or an 'other' to art music. It has fulfilled this function in terms of self-conscious dichotomous categorisation at least since Herder's impetus. Its perceived virtues of simplicity and honesty, clearly present in Vaughan Williams' account, are traceable to the German folk-song movement referred to in the previous chapter. These virtues are closely allied to the notion of accessibility. A folk-song is understandable and performable by the uneducated and unsophisticated folk. It's co-option into an art music style thus connects the composer and his or her music not only to that social group, but also to that accessible way of handling music.

For the time before the advent of mass urban culture, it is reasonable to see folk culture as the most common form, juxtaposed with high (then aristocratic), and church culture. For

the later industrial context A.L. Lloyd identifies folk-song in class terms, in relation to social superiors; the aristocracy and, more likely, the bourgeoisie:

> The folk songs are lower-class songs specifically in so far as they arise from the common experience of labouring people and express the identity of interest of those people, very often in opposition to the interests of the masters.
>
> <div align="right">(Lloyd 1967: 179)</div>

In relation to urban popular culture, folk music has been conceived in a triangular constellation with art music and commercial popular music. This view has however been criticised by Harker and others, pointing out that so-called folk culture was more part of the urban and commercial working class world than was initially acknowledged:

> It seems never to have occurred to Sharp that to ask for old songs from old people in the early 1900s would necessarily result in the collection of items widely popular in a *commercial* context before 1850. [26]
>
> <div align="right">(Harker 1985: 193)</div>

Nevertheless, now as well as a century ago, popular and folk music are distinct and recognisable categories with differing musical tropes, histories and performance practice. As with most musical genres, they have very porous boundaries. In their squeamish attitude to working class culture, Vaughan Williams' contemporary revivalists overemphasised the distinction and underlined the opposition between folk and the 'popular'. While Sir Hubert Parry in his inaugural address of the Folk Song Society poured scorn on the 'unregenerate public', with its 'common popular songs of the day', constructed 'with commercial intention out of snippets of musical slang' and 'the most false ideas, or none at all', he praised the collection of folk songs as a 'wholesome and seasonable enterprise'. Folk-songs he believed were 'treasures' with 'no sham, no got-up glitter, and no vulgarity'.[27]

---

[26] Italics in the original.
[27] Quoted in Harker (1985: 170).

As seen in the examination of punk aesthetics, claims made for art music are often applied outside the realm of high culture. Here, the idea of non-commercial (end-in-itself) purity, familiar to thinkers from Kant to Horkheimer and Scruton, is conferred on folk music at the expense of the popular.

> In the folk-song we find music which is unpremeditated and therefore of necessity sincere, music which has stood the test of time, music which must be representative of our race as no other music can.
>
> (Vaughan Williams 1934: 73)

Indeed the concept of purity, derived from the supposed simplicity of the peasant, has been one of the enticing ideas attaching to folk music. Purity in this context takes on the mantle of authenticity. This has inevitably been questioned and indeed the entire concept of folk music has been extensively criticised (Pickering & Green 1987, Harker 1985), the idea of 'the folk' being seen as constructed and condescending in such accounts:

> For us the folk have never existed. There have only ever been people who have been called the folk by others existing socially and culturally outside of those groups so designated.
>
> (Pickering & Green 1987: 13)

Just as the folk may be hard to locate, the purity of their music is difficult to sustain. Evidence of commercially produced and distributed 'broadsides' being the source of many so called 'folk-songs' abounds according to these authors, as do indications that there were professional and urban origins for much of the material collected. The critics doubtless have a point, but as was argued in the previous chapter, it has been overstated and should not make us disregard the work of folklorists such as Sharp and Vaughan Williams.

Folk and accessibility

To what extent then can folk music be generally said to be accessible? Because of the melodic nature of the style it can always revert to a singable tune. The ideal of orality means also that such tunes should be memorable enough to be learnable by ear. This sets particular limits to how far folk music is likely to move towards harmonic or chromatic complexity, longer pieces or virtuosity. The archaic, rural and poverty associations militate against excessive technologisation. In Vaughan Williams' day pianos were frequently used to accompany folk-songs when performed in bourgeois homes. Since then we have seen folk-rock bands such as Steeleye Span as well as the techno fusion of the Afro-Celt Sound System. But the image of the solitary unaccompanied working class singer, as actually encountered by Vaughan Williams and his contemporaries, remains strong and ensures that the music retains an intimate, accessible format at its heart. Level II accessibility today however is partly compromised by the lack of relevance to modern life, although this may be alleviated by contemporary lyrics. On the other hand it is aided by brevity and intelligibility. This is accompanied by the Level III (participatory) accessibility of ease of learning and performing such material.

For all the claims that have been made for folk-song from the late Victorian revival to the present, and despite the (de)construction of its history, English folk music has become another genre among many, no more, no less. Its special claim on the national psyche is not widely evoked outside its fan base; it has become another life-style choice, mediated like any other by CD, radio, television and print. Tossed into the postmodern stew-pot it has not lived up to the promise of uniting the English musically that Vaughan Williams and Sharp hoped for, although perhaps for some of its devotees the connection with the vision of an ancient, rough and honest Anglo-Saxon rural world is still compelling.

Vernacular, accessibility and community

One concept which could be seen as uniting vernacular, popular and folk is that of accessibility to a community. Pieces described using these terms are usually fairly easy to understand in terms of the purpose they serve, at least by their target audience. Music coming under these three categories is either chosen *by* people for listening or performance, or it is chosen *for* them in order to be useful in some way in everyday life, or simply to please or sell. The music can often be interpreted as being built into a collective cultural and economic situation. Perhaps something that all three terms have in common is that these kinds of music are usually made (played, performed, recorded, broadcast) and referred to with a group of people in mind. That group of people could be a pop sub-culture such as the punks, it could be the rural workers of an historical period, or a film audience. There is always a *community* which represents, or is represented by, the music and although Scruton makes a similar claim for art music, it may be argued that western art music and its study has foregrounded the *composer* and the *work*, rather than any community they might represent, or to which the music is intended to be intelligible and accessible. This was something that irked Vaughan Williams. To him it was a failing of some art music.

What Chance a Re-engagement?

Contemporary art music and the vernacular?

David Matthews, in an essay entitled 'The Rehabilitation of the Vernacular' reviews the relationship between art music and the vernacular in the last century and pleads for the reinstatement of a closer link. He notes that:

> …Webern's or Boulez's music…is likely to remain a minority interest, because there is no immediately accessible surface layer in Webern or Boulez as there is,

for instance in a Mozart symphony.

<div align="right">(1989: 244)</div>

The surface layer Matthews is referring to is melody, which he is unwilling to underrate however:

> But is the surface layer - the melodic line - of a Mozart symphony superficial? Hardly; Mozart's melodies are the keys that give access to the deeper levels in his music.
>
> <div align="right">(1989: 244)</div>

The bridge to the deeper levels is part of the 'surface'. The lack of such a conduit is considered a dead end:

> Today modernism can be seen in perspective as a historical movement whose apex has passed, and whose most notable achievements, such as Webern's late works, Boulez's *Le Marteau sans Maître*, Ligeti's *Atmosphères*, can be objectively judged as attempts to pursue particular areas of experiment to their limits.
>
> <div align="right">(Matthews 1989: 250)</div>

Such experiments are not in themselves invalid, they continue to exist both as a genre of orchestral music and are testing further limits in the area of electroacoustic work. Indeed they have provided the clear possibility of 'disinterested play' for some composers. The call for strict abstraction and its colonisation of composition in the academy in the middle and later twentieth century has however also led to the institutionalisation of such approaches. This has had the consequence that their tropes have become prematurely fossilised and have been anything but a medium of 'free' expression for subsequent generations, even though such work is sometimes known as 'free composition'. The protected academic environment has also contributed to the wilful disregard of wider audience interest and accessibility. Two contributing factors to this have been the circular

argument that mass incomprehension is a guarantee of artistic value and the inclination in an educational environment to create music requiring study rather than offering enjoyment. McClary takes issue with this situation:

> Ironically, the avant-garde no longer identifies with the new: institutionalized as it is in the universities, it has become the conservative stronghold of the current music scene, as it holds stringently to difficulty and inaccessibility as the principal signs of its integrity and moral superiority.
>
> (1997: 61)

She finds in Schoenberg the idea that 'a piece is worthless if it is not so difficult as to be incomprehensible and that acceptance on the part of the audience indicates failure' (p. 55). Tracing this attitude to nineteenth century notions of autonomous and absolute music, she allows it short shrift in the present claiming that 'Proud declarations of uselessness can be and are now beginning to be seen as admissions of uselessness' (p. 58). Koehne concurs with the view that lack of interest either from an appreciable audience or from significant numbers of musicians has resulted in impotence:

> In contemporary music, the remnant forces of the once fearsome avant-garde wander an undulating landscape, devoid of landmarks, indulging here and there in harmless and negligible skirmishes. Recalling the military origins of the term, one might say that the main forces this vanguard was meant to presage have forgotten them - indeed have even forgotten that some kind of revolutionary war is supposed to going on at all.
>
> (Koehne 2004: 148)

Not all composers have subjected themselves to a strict regime of abstraction and experimentalism though. Matthews (1989) outlines the approach of a significant number who resisted, including late nationalists such as Bartók and Janáček, those attracted by

'the new vernacular language of jazz' (p. 242), including Stravinsky, Hindemith and Tippett, and those like Britten who found ways of developing without jettisoning tonality and melodicism altogether. Often the same composers, in different phases of their creative output, were hard-line modernists and those looking for an arrangement with accessible and vernacular elements.

In the later twentieth century there have been renewed reachings out to vernacular and tonal musical languages of the past and present. Matthews refers to the minimalists (there are parallels with rock in the tonal stasis of minimalism), as well as to David Del Tredici, Robin Holloway, Goehr, Maw, Schwertsik, Gruber and Schnittke in this connection. The attraction of many later twentieth, and twenty-first-century composers to fusions with jazz is in some ways comparable to Vaughan Williams' use of folk-song, in that they are dealing with an *ex*-vernacular, thus eliding genuine rapprochement with the masses. Mark-Anthony Turnage's work attempts to integrate not just jazz sounds but also improvisation into his work, as well as experimenting with the more contemporaneously vernacular form of football chants.[28] Matthews gives some space to the various uses of vernacular music made by Tippett, who not only continued in Vaughan Williams' tradition of working with folk-song but also employed jazz, blues and rock. Matthews is unconvinced by Tippett's use of electric guitar in *The Knot Garden* and *Songs for Dov*, putting the problem down to the fact that Tippett did not grow up with rock. However there is a difficulty with combining amplified with unamplified instruments. The use of similar instrumental resources (voice, fiddle, percussion) had been a factor easing the transition of ideas from the tavern to the concert hall in earlier times. Today most music which is not concert music is amplified (sometimes quite unnecessarily so, even in poorer countries) leading to kinds of voice production appropriate to singing with a microphone and the use of electric and electronic instruments. One result is that the habit of silence, or at least quiet, in order to listen to music is lost, because amplified music *makes* itself heard. Another is that kinds of voice production required to attain sufficient volume

---

[28] Football chants have also inspired work by Michael Nyman and Benedict Mason.

acoustically, such as operatic vocal technique and some piercing nasal traditional styles, appear alien and (ironically) unnatural.

The electroacoustic movement begun by Pierre Schaeffer in France and Herbert Eimert in Germany, developed by composers such as Karl-Heinz Stockhausen and Luigi Nono and continued at IRCAM as well as various universities, now uses similar electronic resources as contemporary pop electronica and dance music, namely computer sampling, digital recording and sound manipulation, opening the way (at least technologically) for an interchange of ideas between experimental art music and the contemporary popular sphere.[29] Whether this would be regarded as desirable or polluting by 'serious' musicians is another matter, and it appears that melody and regular rhythm - the mainstays of the popular idiom - are still handled with great circumspection by many academic composers.

Ultimately Matthews' plea is for a return to melody for which he enlists the support (rather uncritically) of the ideas on musical emotional expression of Deryck Cooke. However, he acknowledges that it is in rock music that 'mankind's fundamental urges' (Matthews 1989: 250) are finding their expression. Scruton identifies rhythm to be now the driving force of rock, at the expense of the expressive melody which he values in The Beatles' work. Yet surely the success of rock and contemporary popular music generally lies in the fact that it often combines regular rhythm and *cantabile* melody effectively, whereas art music has come close to abandoning both. Rhythm and melody, always coming before harmony, are the musical fundamentals found in most traditional musics. Rhythm often associated with dance; melody with words to which it can lend an emotional charge above that attained through mere recitation. Both are frequently patternings of sound which are easily remembered and imitated. Thus their centrality to accessibility is demonstrated by both their potential usefulness (for dancing and communicating the emotional import of words) and by their imitability.

---

[29] There are notable examples of electroacoustic influence in the art-to-popular direction in the work of Amon Tobim, Aphex Twin and Squarepusher.

Barriers to art music accessibility

One modernist rationale for an anti-vernacular trajectory has been that familiar material, as found in traditional, popular and older 'classical' music, has been somehow depleted through over-use. It has become 'banal', to use a favourite term. We have already dealt with the concepts of overaccessibility and style cycles, and have discussed the search for novelty and unpredictable stimuli. However there is a western art-music meta-narrative which sees unrelenting change as necessary for the health and worth of its endeavour, regarding the power of old tropes as spent and pushing at boundaries as essential. This attitude combines several historical ideologies. One is a version of the evolutionary one[30] which was taken up by nineteenth-century English musicology, seeing music as inevitably becoming more sophisticated over time (Zon 2000). Another is a modernist belief in progress and change; and change as progress. The problem that as arisen however is that rather than becoming an important part of a national culture as Vaughan Williams hoped it could, contemporary serious music has become extremely peripheral, to the point where its very existence appears threatened. This is not only signalled by low CD sales compared to popular music and a lack of coverage in the arts reviews of print and broadcast media, but attention has also been drawn to it by insiders such as Serge Dorny.[31] The problem may be partly due to limitations in human perceptual capacity, the lack of a social role for new music as well as the distancing from vernacular styles.

It is perhaps not surprising that new 'serious' music which has made some wider impact is akin to popular music in its harmonic language, repetitiveness and simplicity (Arvo Pärt, Henryk Górecki),[32] anachronistic in its inspiration (John Taverner) or neo-romantic. The

---

[30] This is different to Vaughan Williams' evolutionary view of folk song. The version referred to here, proposed by Parry and others took an overview of evolution from simpler to more complex organisms as a model (Zon 2000). Vaughan Williams on the other hand used the concept of adaptation to show how folk-song could be perfectly suited to a particular people, with no need for complexity.

[31] See *The Daily Telegraph*, October 2000. Serge Dorny (Artistic Director of the London Philharmonic Orchestra), "We must act now to adapt live classical music—or it's going to die". <http://www.calus.org/articles/arts/0001.htm>

[32] Scruton criticises it for that very reason.

latter applies to the work of Welshman Karl Jenkins, although interestingly he also uses voice production and intervallic singing styles culled from 'world music' such as the internationally successful state-sponsored folk troupe The Mystery of Bulgarian Voices. Thus he is using folk-song but not his native folk-song, and indeed today it is easy to be more familiar with the 'traditional' idioms of countries far away than those closer to home.

Despite avant-garde explorations into the abstract, the atonal, the serial, the stochastic, the conceptual, the dangerous, the electronic and other realms, there have been innumerable borrowings and connections with vernacular musics over the past century as well and these have gathered momentum with the rise of postmodernism. If we count conservative uses of tonal idiom as using a vernacular musical language, as Matthews does, then there are even more. Yet this has not, over all, rescued western art music from increasing obscurity. Perhaps the lack of the accessibility factor of 'usefulness', which is in direct contravention of some of the avowed aims of pure art, plays an important role. The common contemporary listening practice of driving and listening to the radio is badly suited to 'classical' genres, as the background sound of the vehicle conflicts with their wide dynamic range. The use of music as lifestyle accessory, and as a 'technology of the self' (DeNora 2000: 46), also militates against the longer pieces which are one of the particular specialties of the tradition, particularly where they take one through a whole gamut of dynamics and (potentially) emotions. The use of music for structuring time during activities often requires a specific and predictable tempo, dynamic and texture. Also, in a world overloaded with media and stimuli, the concentration required by the pared down environment of a conventional classical concert scenario is perceived as rather stark. The comparable time span taken up by some feature films is easier to deal with because of the multimodal sensory nature of the experience.[33] It seems that to a large extent serious music has become detached from contemporary life, with other styles providing more appropriate music, which is therefore also more accessible.

---

[33] Sensory multimodality and accessibility will be dealt with in a later chapter.

Does art music need accessibility?

Ultimately is it important for art music to be accessible at all, whether through rapprochement with the vernacular or by other means? Obviously musicians who make their life in a particular area of the musical ecosystem will tend to be concerned about its long term viability. Both hard-line avant-gardists and neo-conservatives share the avowed hope of attracting (bigger) audiences to their music, the former pinning their hopes on education, while the latter are prepared to use more accessible style elements. If one views the whole field of music in a non-elitist and relativistic way, it is still evident that different musics excel at different effects. Samba is good for dancing in the street, Chopin for domestic reverie. From this perspective it is the sheer variety of music that is valuable, because it is an expression of the unfathomable richness and variety of human attitude, culture, creativeness and endeavour. Thus for avant-garde serious music to delve into regions of sound devoid of the commonplaces of most other genres in search of freedom, purity and innovation is entirely laudable, interesting and, one could even argue, necessary. To claim for this musical language a particular focus on the abstract would be equally acceptable. It would even be logical to justify the need for particular financial support on this basis, if this kind of work could not exist without it.

Let us accept for the moment that new serious music explores particular musical possibilities in a unique way. Concentration on these concerns may contribute to its inaccessibility, which could be ameliorated by a rapprochement with 'the' vernacular. So far the many attempts there have been over the last century appear frequently to have elided the actual 'live' vernacular of the time and (thus) not had a significant popularising effect. However, if it *were* possible to connect with the truly popular, it could be argued that the significant specificity of new western art music would be lost. It would necessarily become more like everything else, and in the process its *raison d'être* could be undermined. On the other hand, left to its present trajectory, it might simply become so peripheral as to disappear. If, as Matthews claims (1989: 250), it represents a series of experiments which have been interesting but are ultimately 'marginal to human

257

experience' and of 'marginal interest' and have in any case passed their apex, then it would be natural enough for it to fade away and become simply an historical genre.

Here there arises a crucial question: would it then be the closing epoch in the history of western art music? The period during which it devoured itself, became less and less relevant, more and more obscure and finally went from being of mainly academic interest, to mainly *historical* academic interest? Kramer reluctantly entertains this possibility:

> The result of...residual modernism is that audiences still cannot hear the music, no matter how eager it is to be heard...There is little value in changing the picture without also changing the frame. But that change, too may come too late. The thought is unpleasant, worthy of the people whom the musical mentors of my youth taught me to think of as the enemies of progress, but it may nonetheless be true that high modernism was the death knell of classical music.
>
> (2002: 271)

If this is indeed what is looming then appropriating elements of a vernacular, in a more contemporary way than Vaughan Williams was able to do, does offer the redemptive possibility of rejuvenating a fading culture, of galvanising the imagination of composers and putting them in touch with their mainstream contemporaries. Even to return to the situation a century ago, when 'classical' music was a bourgeois concern, would be progress, since *new* serious music today passes by the middle classes almost as completely as it does the rest of society, as minimal coverage in the UK broadsheet press demonstrates.

Postmodernism and an art-pop connection?

Many of the concerns of this chapter are implied in postmodernism. Collins (1992: 105) states that there has been a 'determination on the part of the Post-Modernists to develop a

"neo-vernacular" '. He also describes the possibility in postmodern style to use 'double-coding' (p. 106), through addressing different audiences - elite, popular and ethnic for instance - in the same work by integrating and layering tropes from various sign systems. This clearly opens the possibility of a high-low rapprochement in music which is the theme of this pair of chapters. The postmodern fragmentation of unitary notions of identity complicates the way in which music can achieve accessibility through being socially representative however. These issues are explored below.

Postmodern ideas, which have become more explicit since the 1980s but have been variously traced to the 1960s and even earlier (Jencks 1992: 16-17), have undermined some of the central tenets of the modernist aesthetic and of the rationales of 'high' art. In fact the very distinction between 'high' and 'low', so important to thinkers from Kant to Horkheimer, has been diluted by vernacular art appropriations into 'high' art contexts such as are manifestly crucial to the pop art of Lichtenstein and Warhol. Whereas these are wholesale placements of common images in the hallowed space of the gallery, it is quotation that is emblematic of postmodern style and it tends to be in the form of that early *modernist* technique from the visual arts: collage. Not the organic integration of folk melody into a well wrought style such as we find in Vaughan Williams' *Norfolk Rhapsody*, but the crashing juxtaposition of disparate elements as in John Zorn's *Cat O'Nine Tails*.[34]

Concerns of contemplation and *Innerlichkeit* which search for depth in the work in order to reflect inner, subjective space, are swept to one side by an embracing of surface for the playfulness and multiple readings it affords. Whether this represents the final capitulation of the subject in the face of the deafening noise of bourgeoning commercial culture, or rather a liberation, with licence to use freely the full range of cultural reference, is a matter of legitimate discussion. Certainly the 'emancipation of the vernacular' can be regarded as a democratising movement which has brought voices from the periphery of

---

[34] *Cat O'Nine Tails (Tex Avery Directs the Marquis de Sade).* Kronos Quartet *Short Stories.* (1993) Electra Nonesuch.

high cultural discourse to the heart of its debates. Idealistically we might see all of humankind at the table, communicating without prejudice. Inevitably such a multitude of voices leads to an eclecticism which can be attacked as shallow and incohenernt, but has also been interpreted as a legitimate reaction to current conditions (calling to mind Horkheimer's emphasis of contemporary critique):

> Its detractors have considered this eclecticism 'casual' or 'schizophrenic', a veritable 'non-style' devoid of personal artistry or authentic judgement. Its defenders, on the other hand, have argued that it is a style and an ideology which 'builds in' the fragmentation and conflicted nature of contemporary culture...

> (Collins 1992: 110)

The postmodern vision provides for equal access to the expressions of different cultures and social strata. LI (physical) access is facilitated by the explosion of means of communication, production and distribution as well as greater mobility. LII (reception) access is promoted through greater familiarity with different styles and a lessening of social and cultural barriers, whereas LIII (participatory) access is part of the greater choice of lifestyle and expression. The postmodern situation tends to increase musical accessibility in a broad range of ways which suits people who read culture in terms of metonymic signs, who are used to fast editing, channel zapping and multi-tasking. Bursts of images and music in quick succession are read and understood as a stream of cultural signifiers; collage in the filmic sense, where not just the 'shot' carries a certain cursory meaning, but makes new meaning through that which comes before and after and through the choice of contiguous sound. Frequently, such media presentations are consumed in situations where they are not the only stimulus, where the attention is divided further by being required to read yet more signs and to interact with the real world or other mediated content. Watching television while making breakfast, and surfing the web while talking on the 'phone are examples found commonly enough. In this situation even 'difficult' art-work becomes palatable as it is reduced to a label of itself and, as with everything else in this bit-world, we are not subjected to it for long.

Theorists of the postmodern such as David Harvey claim for it not only the collapsing of social, cultural and geographical distance, but also of time. Modernism tried to make us attend to the present by making high culture uniquely relevant to, and critical of it. The isolation (through inaccessibility) of art music has compromised this part of its mission, since in can no longer claim to stand in a direct relationship to the current social context. Latterly, being of the present has been made even more problematic by the time compression precipitated by the postmodern paradigm shift. One element of this has been a by-product of increased mobility and spatial proximity, in that cultures at different stages of technological development have been brought into more immediate contact, thus mimicking the coming together of different historical periods, and this effect has been heightened by anthropological relativism. Furthermore, through more widely available education, images and publications there is more access to knowledge of historical periods and the postmodern aesthetic encourages their quotational use. We are also surrounded by recreated historical styles (folk music, early music) and fossilised styles of more recent provenance ('trad' jazz, northern soul) which still have their devotees. All these then become part of the patchwork of available consumer, lifestyle and subject position choices in the postmodern era.

Harvey emphasises a general acceleration of change precipitated by developments in capitalist production and trade:

> Of the innumerable consequences that have flowed from this general speed-up in
> the turnover times of capital...the first major consequence has been to accentuate
> volatility and ephemerality of fashions, products, production techniques, labour
> processes, ideas and ideologies, values and established practices.
>
> (Harvey 1990: 285)

Despite this acceleration, popular music can perhaps still define a present social moment, facilitated by globalisation and the fractured multiple identities which are becoming more

widespread, since these give rise to a need for the forging of new social identities that transcend and become added to those that have been compromised. Pop, being integral to the ever changing world of capitalist production, is perhaps better placed to represent and keep pace with cultural developments reacting to, and brought forth by that world. Is this therefore the vernacular with which art music could enter into a dialogue in order to gain some kind of contemporary cultural leverage? Postmodern culture makes engagement difficult because of the very fragmentation already mentioned. There is no longer *one* contemporary style, even for one social group in one location, because so many people have access to multiple sources of cultural output, and to art from many places and periods. Yet there are recognisable fashions and although they are often condemned as pure ephemerality, fashion works in many spheres, including the 'high' arts (as was discussed in Chapter 4). The possibility exists of not slavishly aping vernacular fashions, but of doing something extrapolatory and contemplative, of reflecting and discussing in a more involved, critical and reflective way the gestures and ideas proposed by the street and the culture industries. In this way art music might gain accessibility by being recognisably of the present and by speaking to a widespread contemporary community that understands the vernacular musical language, while at the same time exploiting, and living up to, its particular cultural position and history.

Folk - popular - art; time and space

It has been established that Vaughan Williams sought to ensure the accessibility of his music by rooting it firmly in a vernacular and that this had not only been the strategy of preceding self-consciously nationalist composers, but also of many of those in the Germano-Austrian tradition post Herder. As the twentieth century progressed however, the question: 'which vernacular?', which was already pressing in Vaughan Williams' case, became ever more inevitable. In a sense the enterprise was bound to fail if the idiom chosen to connect with (folk-song) was already as marginal and alien to the majority of the population as modernist art music was fast becoming. Here Vaughan Williams'

paternalism becomes clear. Although he genuinely wanted to ensure the accessibility of his music, he was determined to do it by feeding the people *what was good for them*, rather than what they found genuinely palatable. For all his protestations that they should 'not be written down to' but 'up to' (Vaughan Williams 1934: 119), he was not prepared to be as populist as this suggests.

One reason why he chose his particular path was because his idea of accessibility was bound up with place and identity. For this folk-song was particularly well suited. The negotiation of ethnic and national identity through music has not only been a central issue in the study of musical nationalism, but also in ethnomusicological examinations of how musical styles are used and fused to forge national and ethnic consciousness. Such studies, taking their lead from social anthropology, have tended to stress the way in which such identities are 'constructed'[35] and, if needs be, re-negotiated according to the various social, political and cultural imperatives of the time:

> Music does not then simply provide a marker in a prestructured social space, but the means by which this space can be transformed.
>
> (Stokes 1994: 4)[36]

Vaughan Williams felt that his space needed to be transformed with reference to time and history. Music hall song, or rag time for that matter, did not conjure up an English past in the same way that folk-song could. In this sense there is again a direct opposition between perceptions of folk and 'pop'. Folk encapsulates a particular place across time, whereas pop represents a particular moment through (terrestrial) space. Folk or *traditional* music emphasises tradition, whereas popular music looks to the ever new and now. One reaches for local diachronicity, the other for potentially global synchronicity. One claims to connect us with an ethnic group and their place, the other with a generation and their

---

[35] See Jackson & Penrose (1993) for a summary of views.
[36] See also several other essays in this volume including Reily, Mach, Baily and Chapman.

time. Of course we can point to histories of the popular[37] and fashions in folk re-constructions, and to how they interconnect[38] but that does not obfuscate the fundamental focus of each.

Western art music on the other hand tries to emphasise *both* the present and the past. The past through invocation of the canon and its hallowed lineage of masters, the present through the fetishisation of innovation. If 'art is new art', then timeliness is of the essence, but it is not the timeliness of the popular which everyone recognises as such. Rather, cultural critics are needed to interpret the contemporary relevance of the work (as Horkheimer claimed is the case for popular culture), although they appear to be rather uninterested in new serious music at present. If such music claims its place in the canon however, then one would expect an affinity with some of the aesthetic concerns of earlier work. This appears frequently absent to the extent that even music academics fail to recognise new work as music at all, let alone art music. Thus a musical genre that is claimed as representing a great tradition *and* the latest cultural development, in the eyes of many fails to do either.

This cultural unconnectedness with a plausible past, or with a recognisable present, compromises the accessibility of contemporary serious music and contributes to its social marginality. Both the global present and the local past offer crucial identifications in people's lives and by engaging with a vernacular musical language, art music can tap into such identifications, although it is legitimate to argue that it has its own, less parochial, past and it's own, less ephemeral, present to attend to. The question remains as to *whose* past and whose present these might be. Writing of new American composers Vaughan Williams rails:

---

[37] These however are used frequently to illuminate and situate past moments rather than to follow the development of a style over time. Examples would be television and radio programmes focusing on a particular year with the aid of songs that were in the charts at that time.
[38] For instance, modern folk fiddlers tend to play Irish reels with an emphasised back beat as in rock, whereas earlier generations accented the downbeats.

...I am justified in asking at whom [this music] is addressed. Is it merely the music of a clique, or has it a genuine message to young America? All great music has an element of popular appeal, it must penetrate beyond the walls of the studio into the world outside.[39]

(Vaughan Williams 1934: 121)

Here Vaughan Williams is concerned with youth and the popular, elsewhere he complains that:

It is a question how far the modern Russian school has not uprooted itself; possibly Stravinsky is too intent on shocking the bourgeois to have time to think about making his own people 'feel at home'. Cosmopolitanism has to a certain extent ousted nationalism.

(Vaughan Williams 1934: 101)

It is clear from this that he recognised both the synchronic and spatial rupture that was taking place in early modernist music, and his project was to heal this by addressing himself to the construction of an English musical present out of a re-constructed English vernacular musical past.

Despite extensive exposure during the years of The Third Programme,[40] and the confidence a composer of his output and stature conferred on the English art music establishment, hope of building a unifying musical language that breached social boundaries has hardly survived him. If at all, such an achievement could be said to have come close to fulfilment from the other direction, from post rock 'n' roll popular music, which *as a whole* now touches almost everyone, although one could argue about its internal divisions (high - low; hard - soft; mainstream - indie etc.). Since England, home of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, progressive and punk rock etc., can claim to be a

---

[39] Italics from the original.
[40] Predecessor of Radio 3, broadcast in the UK from 1946 to 1970.

crucial generator of that music, Vaughan Williams might be gratified that at least the English people are now revelling in their own musical culture. For serious composers of the present this would seem to be the obvious vernacular to look to for engagement in search of greater reach and accessibility.

Summary

This chapter has looked at certain aspects of the opposition between art music and vernacular music in terms of perceptual accessibility. Kantian aesthetics were examined for relevant attitudes and it was noted that one of the fundamental concepts promoted in that system is one of ('fine') art being primarily for 'reflective judgement' rather than 'organic sensation'.[41] This calls into question the role of sensual pleasure (an undoubted aid to [LII] accessibility) in art. However, Kant allows for 'pleasing form' as long as it is a way of communicating the true content of the work.[42] Another important idea in Kant is that the work of art should be 'intrinsically final', in other words it should not primarily serve another purpose.[43] This apparently contravenes one of the overarching modes of Level II accessibility as proposed in Chapter two: utility. In that argument usefulness was broadly interpreted however, and Kant's desired *effects* - thought and communication - could be included.[44] Thus, on the basis of our criteria, there is no fundamental conflict between these aspects of Kant's theory and accessibility, including use-value in the sense given. The problem with utility is one of distinguishing between purpose, effect and usefulness. Writing music for a purpose seems to disqualify it from being art, yet art is expected to produce certain results, such as communication and reflective judgement. Despite Scruton's (1997) differentiation between purpose and function, it is not easy to discount the possibility of work being composed successfully with the ends of

---

[41] Kant, Immanuel (1790) *Critique of Judgement.* SS 44. Fine art.
<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/k/kant/immanuel/k16j/part8b.html>
[42] Ibid. SS 48. The relation of genius to taste.
[43] Ibid. SS 44. Fine art.
[44] Loc. cit.

communication and reflective judgement in mind. It is therefore difficult to imagine work assuredly free of instrumentality, even if it otherwise meets the criteria of art discussed.

The particular contribution of modern and postmodern serious music to the field of musical creativity is not questioned by this thesis, however its marginalisation in the discourse of the arts is seen as problematic and the possibility of further rapprochements with current vernaculars, particularly popular music, was discussed as a strategy with the possible effect of revitalising the genre. Engaging more intensely with current popular styles could aid accessibility by enabling synchronic identification; in other words more people might again come to regard new art music as an important aspect of contemporary culture. If therein lie risks of shallowness and ephemerality it may be suggested that even temporary relevance is better than none. Despite the romantic/modern 'Van Gogh myth'; that great art is at first misunderstood (inaccessible) and posthumously recognised, Mozart, Beethoven and Brahms were widely appreciated (accessible) in their lifetimes. Perhaps (con)temporary impact should be seen more as a possible first step to long-term importance, rather than a barrier to it.

Chapter 7

Case Study 3a

Salvador da Bahia,

Brazil

Andando só na corda bamba

Não temo o futuro da nação

A gente que sempre dançou samba

Enfrenta qualquer divisão

A gente canta

A gente canta [1]

Introduction

This case study examines Brazilian musical practices *in situ* in this chapter, while dealing with a sub-genre of these, street samba percussion, as an adopted form in Wales in the

---

[1] Walking the tight-rope alone; I don't fear for the future of the Nation; We who always danced samba; Will confront any division. We are singing, We are singing. 'Ciranda', Márcio Faraco, *Ciranda* (2000) Verve.

next. The choice of Salvador da Bahia[2] and its music culture affords a view from, and of, the developing world; from, and of, another cultural perspective. Much of the musical activity of Bahia offers important insights into wider aspects of musical accessibility: firstly because it provides examples of extraordinary levels of accessibility, particularly at Levels I and III, and secondly because in Bahian culture the issue itself is frequently discussed and contested. A different perspective here incorporates a different methodology. The study of the 'prog'-punk transition started with pieces of music and media appraisals of music. Vaughan Williams was approached via his own manifesto, *National Music.* The examination of Bahian music includes field study, ethnography and reflexive observer participation.[3]

This chapter falls into three main sections. The first provides some background on the location and proceeds to describe the main musical genres observed. Performance contexts and venues, as well as musician and audience behaviour are explored with particular attention to physical access and participation although at this point the account remains mainly descriptive. The following section then interprets and argues out specifically how aspects of the observed performances facilitate accessibility in particular ways. The previously encountered issue of cultural identity arises again in this context in terms of juxtapositions of Brazilian nationalism, Bahian localism, Afro-Brazilian culture, tourism and globalisation. The tension between the assertion of particularisms and inclusivity is addressed in some depth. In the final part of the chapter there is a theoretical discussion of issues arising from the material presented.

This case study considers music which is more communal and participatory than either the rock genres examined in Case Study 1, or the music discussed in relation to Vaughan Williams in Case Study 2. Much Bahian and Brazilian music is performed by sizeable groups of people (numbering up to about 100) in essentially public spaces, often for even

---

[2] Salvador is the capital of the state of Bahia which is located in the Northeast of Brazil.
[3] The 'prog'-punk transition was experienced at first hand as well, but at the time not with a view to formal evaluation.

larger groups of people who usually actively participate in some way. The styles that form the main subject of fieldwork are disseminated primarily through live performance rather than recording or broadcast. In a number of senses then this is music that would normally attract the attention of the ethnomusicologist, despite the fact that in Salvador we are dealing with a modern cosmopolitan city. Ethnomusicologists attempt to understand musical practice from the 'insider's' point of view, although reflexive research requires that an awareness of the researcher's 'outsider' status and viewpoint is borne in mind. In our case, the intention is more consciously comparative. Up to now this thesis has concerned itself mostly with England, widening the discussion to encompass Europe and the US at times. Brazil is included partly to provide a point of comparison with these.

About the fieldwork

This chapter is based on three months spent in Salvador, Bahia at the beginning of 2005. The aim of the fieldwork was to gain as much experience as possible of the most widespread musical activities in the city. During the period of my stay several major festivals including *Iemanjá*[4] and *Carnaval*[5] took place and I[6] was able to observe hundreds of musical performances at these events. At other times I heard music at formal concerts, a '*choro*[7] club', Ilê Aiyê's *Beleza Negra*[8] contest, large staged 'popular music' style gigs, in restaurants, cafés, bars and in streets and squares. I attended regularly at church services where music played an integral part and participated in two groups. One

---

[4] Iemanjá is the water/sea goddess in the Afro-Brazilian *candomblé* cult, whose festival is celebrated in Salvador on February 2nd.

[5] In Brazilian usage the word for carnival is usually capitalised. Despite its proximity to the English term it is here given italicised and capitalised to emphasise that it is specifically Brazilian, Bahian carnival that is being referred to, and to emphasise its importance.

[6] Whereas the first person singular has been avoided up to now, passages dealing with field work observations will use it to convey immediacy.

[7] Style of Brazilian popular instrumental music that evolved in Rio do Janeiro in the early 20th century.

[8] Ilê Aiyê are one of Salvador's best know samba-reggae bands. *Beleza Negra* is their carnival queen contest and concert.

was a *samba da roda*[9] band, Encontro do Samba, which had several regular weekly engagements ('residencies') in café bars; two in the centre of Salvador and one in a *bairro* (suburb). I also performed with them on a *trio elétrico*[10] during *Carnaval* and in two staged concerts in public squares, as well as in a live radio studio broadcast. The other group in which I participated was a reggae band which played once a week at its own small venue amongst the roughly built shacks just outside the historic centre of Salvador. My initial contact with both bands was by invitation from band members, who had heard through mutual acquaintances that I played. Once I had 'sat in' they asked me to return for, as far as I can tell, all of their appearances. Apart from a couple of gigs with Encontro do Samba where we were joined by a Scottish percussionist who was a pupil and friend of one of the band, I was the only foreigner playing with these bands at this time. Encontro do Samba offered to give me a due share of their pay but I refused. There were no inducements offered or given on my part for my participation.

Apart from discussing music with Brazilians at length, I read a daily local paper and particularly noted reports, reviews and discussions of musical events. During the period of fieldwork I kept a journal and shot video of music performance and teaching. Video material focused on *Carnaval* and three groups that work with young people's music; a capoeira group, a *favela* (shanty town) music and theatre youth group, and a community primary school choir. I have also been in close contact with European percussionists who participated in one of the major percussion *blocos*[11] during *Carnaval*.

My contact with visitors to Salvador was an important part of the research, since Bahian musical accessibility emphatically extends to them, and is all the more remarkable for doing so. Europeans, north Americans and Japanese who visit Bahia, some for extended

---

[9] Traditional style of samba in the round from the area around Salvador. More detail is given in the section on Encontro do Samba.

[10] Large articulated lorry with trailer consisting of large public address system and stage on top.

[11] Literally 'block', used as a term for a group of percussionists with portable instruments able to parade. A band made up of such players. A group of carnival dancers. The term also extends to the whole group of people following a band during *Carnaval*, which includes those who have paid to wear the costume of the *bloco* and parade within its rope.

271

periods, frequently take classes in percussion, capoeira or dancing which they frequently continue to practice in their home countries. In many cases it is contact with such art forms that has brought them to Brazil. I regarded these foreigners not as compromising any perceived purity or authenticity of the situation, but as an important indicator of how musical accessibility operates in Salvador, particularly in relation to identity and globalisation.

Salvador da Bahia

Salvador is the capital of the Brazilian state of Bahia which lies in the Northeast of the country. The name Bahia is frequently also used to refer to the city of Salvador itself, which was established by the Portuguese in 1549 and served as the capital of the colony of Brazil until 1763. Bahia, the state, was a major sugar growing area and this was exploited with the extensive use of slave labour which was imported from Africa, and Salvador was the main slave market of Latin America. Slavery was not abolished in Brazil until 1888 and the population of Salvador, which stands at around 2.7 million is predominantly of African descent. The city has an old colonial quarter known as the Centro Histórico which has been restored into a tourist showpiece. This is where the main slave market used to be and also where many musical performances take place. These are typically attended by a majority of Salvadorians but with substantial numbers of tourists both from inside and outside Brazil. Other parts of the city include smart beachfront districts, huge shopping malls as well as extensive *favelas* or shanty towns. Around 350 000 of the working population earn £70 a month or less.[12] Even when the lower cost of living is taken into account this does not amount to more than the equivalent, in UK terms, of about £300. The average income for those in work is around twice that figure. There is also considerable wealth and a yawning gap between rich and poor. Although there is a Brazilian ideology of racial mixing as a positive national trait going back to the

---

[12] <http://www.ibge.gov.br/cidadesat/default.php> and <http://www.portalbrasil.net/salariominimo.htm>

writings of Gilberto Freyre (1964) in the 1930s, there is a clear predominance of white skin amongst the better off and of poverty amongst blacks. Racial politics are explicitly addressed, both politically and culturally, with public incentives for blacks and native Brazilians to study at university for instance and musical groups emphasising their predominant racial background, such as the *blocos afro*.

Music in Salvador

This section gives an account of musical activity witnessed, participated in and recorded during the field-work. Attitudes and opinions of Salvadoreans, where given, were gleaned from conversations, interviews and local newspaper reports. Bahia is in many ways the musical wellspring of Brazil. Not only does it boast important living traditions like *candomblé*[13] and *capoeira*[14] which grew out of the experience of slavery and reach back to an African heritage, but also innovations such as the *trio elétrico*.[15] There are Salvadorian musical genres such as *afoxé,*[16] *axé*[17] and *samba-reggae*[18] as well as a number of world famous groups such as Olodum, Filhos de Ghandi and Ilê Aiyê. In addition the city boasts an improbable number of star singer-songwriters such as Gilberto Gil, Caetano Veloso, João Gilberto, Gal Costa, Maria Bethânia and Carlinhos Brown. There is even a musical instrument unique to Bahia, the *berimbau*.[19] The city is rivalled musically only by Rio de Janeiro, which became the capital city after Salvador, with its claims to the inception of samba and bossa nova, and yet even Rio pays tribute to Bahia

---

[13] Afro-Brazilian religious cult.

[14] Martial art closely allied with music and dance.

[15] Developed in Salvador da Bahia in the 1940s.

[16] *Afoxé* is the processional use of music derived from the Afro-Brazilian *candmoblé* cult. Employs conga-like drums, singing and agogo bells.

[17] *Axé* is sometimes used as a term for all Bahian popular music, but locally denotes a style of up-tempo pop.

[18] *Samba-reggae* is the dominant Bahian street samba style using large groups of drummers and accompanying an amplified singer. Played by *blocos afro*. More description given later in this chapter.

[19] *Berimbau*, a bow with metal string and gourd resonator, played with a stone to vary pitch and a thin stick to strike the string resulting in a buzzing dual pitch rhythm.

273

with processions of *'Baianas'*[20] calling to mind the Bahian background of many of the blacks who migrated to Rio after abolition. In some ways musical creativity here has what we might call a healthy 'balance of payments'; it is inspired from the outside by such styles as reggae and hip hop, but it contributes considerably to the musical life of Brazil and the world beyond. As one might expect in such a place there is considerable 'internal trade'; music made locally by locals for locals and those who come from abroad to partake of Bahia's various interrelated musical cultures. Furthermore many notable musicians from Europe and the US have made the trip and collaborated with local musicians, among them The Rolling Stones, Paul Simon and John Coltrane.

Carnaval

The Carnaval celebrations in Salvador last about a week and are reputed to be the world's biggest street festival attracting 2 million people including 800,000 tourists.[21] There are three different circuits, a central one (Campo Grande) which goes around wide roads which are usually the most important town centre traffic routes, another which takes in the beach front at Barra and a smaller one around the cobbled streets and squares of the historic centre. All of the presentations, processions and floats observed featured live music. For the two large circuits most of the performing groups have a *trio elétrico*, a kind of stage-on-a-truck incorporating a large public address system with mixing desk, fold back speakers and lights; even a toilet and a tarpaulin in case of rain in some cases. Some of the bands fit on top of their truck entirely,[22] including some dancers and up to a dozen drummers. Larger ensembles have only the singers and a few key players actually on the truck, the rest (especially large percussion blocos and troupes of dancers) follow behind on foot. The music offered on and around these truck-stages varies considerably

---

[20] Black women in traditional white dresses and headscarves.
[21] <http://www.brazilmax.com/news4.cfm/tborigem/fe_weirdbr/id/5>
[22] Some *Trios* are shared by several bands who take it in turns to use them. Famous acts have a *Trio* especially decorated for them.

and falls in (and between) the genres of samba, samba-reggae, *axé*, *afoxé*, *pagodge*,[23] *samba da roda*, funk, hip hop, reggae and *MPB*.[24] The larger samba-reggae bands have an internal process leading up to *Carnaval* including competitions to choose the main songs, dancers and singers to represent the group. There is also an overall rating system for *Carnaval* and winning bands and *blocos* are chosen in several categories. However, the competitive aspect is not central to the concerns of either the musicians or the populace at large. Serious competition, along with huge fantasy floats and glamorous flamboyant costumes, is more a feature of *Carnaval* in Rio de Janeiro.

On the two major circuits there is for the more famous acts a long rope which surrounds a band's truck and many meters of road behind it. The rope is held by dozens of poorly paid *cordeiros* and surrounds walking band members and official dancers as well as hundreds or even thousands of paying band followers in matching dress. These followers are more than mere spectators. They are emphatically part of the spectacle, too. They receive their costume when they book to be part of the *bloco* and it functions as an entrance ticket, thus they look like part of the group. They usually sing along to the songs which, if they do not know them already, they certainly will after a few hours of procession. As long as their energy lasts they will also be dancing to the music of their *trio*, often in synchronised movements, so that they form one entity with the band inside the rope. Beyond the rope are two main types of spectators; those at street level known as *pipoca* (meaning 'popcorn' - because they jump up like corn being heated), and those in *camarotes* or stands. The former move freely about, sometimes following a bloco outside the rope (the *cordeiros* regulate access), fully exposed to the dangers of the street which include pickpocketing, mugging and fighting. Watching more securely are the paying guests of the *camarotes*, which are huge but temporary spectator stands which have been erected with the use of scaffolding around key points of the circuits in the weeks prior to *Carnaval*. These vantage points offer safety and varying amounts of comfort, ranging up to opulent luxury

---

[23] *Pagodge* is an up-tempo samba using *pandeiro* (tambourine) and *cavaquinio* (small guitar-like instrument) and sung by groups of men.

[24] *Música Popular Brasileira*; Brazilian popular style influenced by samba, rock and pop ballads.

in those frequented by the elite, including music business celebrities. Some people also follow proceedings from the windows of buildings along the route, or from bars which usually restrict entry and use some kind of barrier to protect their clientele from the open street.

The smaller route around the historic centre is quite different in character. There are no trucks no ropes and no *camarotes*. Bands play mainly acoustically and parade between a number of stages on which they perform for a time before moving on. Here brass instruments and saxophones feature heavily alongside percussion. Some groups have fantasy costumes which may follow an overall *Carnaval* theme. Spectators are free to follow any band at will, singing and dancing as they go. The stages are in public places and freely accessible, both for audience and performers. In this part of *Carnaval* there is room for smaller amateur and youth groups, providing access both for spectators less willing to pay or brave the wilder streets in the newer parts of the city, and for performers who are not part of a powerful and famous band such as Olodum or Filhos de Ghandi.

Formal concerts

The main theatre and concert stage of the city of Salvador, the Teatro Castro Alves (inaugurated in 1967), boasts three performance spaces; the main concert hall which holds over 1500, a smaller studio space and a large outdoor arena. The programme for the three spaces has a mixture of concerts, films, theatre and dance. Of the concerts many comprise various types of Brazilian popular music, particularly on the outdoor stage. However, mixed programmes (of serious, popular and jazz for instance) or performances crossing over between popular and 'classical' are well attended and received. Bahia also has a symphony orchestra which offers concerts with music by canonical Europeans such as Mozart and Brahms as well as more recent Brazilian composers such as Guerra Peixe.

In general concert audiences do not attempt keep to a strict silence. I once observed a man

whose mobile 'phone rang during an acoustic performance on the large stage. Not only did he *not* react with embarrassment, but he answered the call! Furthermore none of his neighbours complained. On the whole the audiences were attentive however and did not unduly disturb any performances I witnessed, certainly not to the extent of drowning out the music. One particular concert, by veteran accordion virtuoso and formally trained[25] song-writer, composer and arranger Sivuca, was non-amplified, in the main concert hall and the master was accompanied by a string quintet. When, in response to a request,[26] he played his piece *João e Maria* written in 1947, also known for its later lyrics by Chico Buarque,[27] the full house began to gently hum and sing along with the melody.

Performing with Encontro do Samba

Encontro do Samba is a group that performs *samba de roda* songs in various venues across Salvador. This genre has its home in the Recôncavo, the region around the huge bay on which Salvador lies. It is traditionally a samba in the round, the dancers, players and singers forming a circle[28] with people coming into the centre to dance. Anyone not playing or dancing can also stand in the circle to clap and sing along. There is a lead singer and the songs usually have infectious, frequently repeated choruses, which band members and others join in with.

During my involvement with the band the instrumentation consisted of female voice, two acoustic guitars and between two and four percussionists playing bass drum and *clave* block, *atabaques*,[29] djembe and, on large stages, full drum kit. I played soprano saxophone. Although this is not a traditional *samba de roda* instrument, saxophones are

---

[25] By Peixe.

[26] Levine (1988: 189) describing the process of formalisation of US concert culture in the late 19th century quotes conductor Theodore Thomas as justifying his abolition of 'request' programmes by saying that 'they [the audience] are satisfied with what satisfies me'.

[27] *A Tarde*, 19/1/2005. Caderno 2, p. 6.

[28] The *roda* or circle is a feature of other Bahian cultural forms such as *capoeira* and *candomblé*.

[29] Brazilian conga.

commonly used in Bahian music generally and this band were not aiming for purity; the other instruments were not precisely those that would have been used in the Recôncavo.[30] In the venues I played the band was usually at one end of the room or space, sometimes on a stage, so there was no *roda*, or circle to join. Nevertheless there was a good deal of audience participation. The songs were familiar to many Brazilians and they would readily sing along. Two of the regular venues were set out to have dance spaces and people needed no encouragement to make use of them. In one open air café which was fully set out with tables and chairs, one or two customers would usually find a space near the band to samba. Sometimes pedestrians on the pavement would also stop to dance for a while. Although this was voluntary behaviour, Luana the singer also encouraged it, inviting people to come and dance with her. This was particularly remarkable in situations where we were performing on a large, high and security-protected stage. Luana would still manage to get people onto the stage to dance. Sometimes she would invite people up the steps at the side or back of the stage. Others would be helped up the front, children would be lifted onto it. Nor were the band members exempt, sometimes we all had to take our turn in a re-enactment of the traditional *roda*.

One engagement was for local radio. We were invited into the studio where two presenters and a producer sat around a table, playing records and talking on air. Luana sat with them and had her own microphone. The equipment available was basic, so the band simply stood behind her. She gave an interview interspersed with songs. We played behind her and our sound was picked up by the microphones on the table. Interestingly, not only Luana sang, but so did the presenters and the producer, quite unselfconsciously, the presenters straight into their microphones! Apart from one of the regular venues which charged entry, the other performances with Encontro do Samba all had open access; two on outdoor stages in large public squares, one on a *trio elétrico* during

---

[30] Traditionally the ukulele-like *cavaquino* (also *cavaco*) would be used and sometimes a seven string guitar known as a *memere*, as well as various traditional percussion and hand-clapping. The two guitarists in the band were comfortable in a number of styles and we would sometimes play bossa nova, funk and blues while waiting to perform.

Carnaval, and regular appearances in two café bars.[31] One of the latter was also on a public square so passers-by could see and hear.

Samba-reggae

The dominant street samba style in Salvador since the late 1980s has been samba-reggae, which essentially takes a typical reggae bass line shape; bouncing on the fifth and dropping to the root for the down-beat, together with guitar chord up-beats, and transfers them to a percussion ensemble of indeterminate size.[32] Elaborations of the rhythm include the superimposition of *clave*[33] type patterns. It is usually used to accompany a song which is sung by an amplified singer. In some situations the percussion play without melody, while in established venues (rather than in the street) they will often be joined by a pop band line-up. Percussion with singing is in many ways the 'default setting' for much Bahian music and most of the *blocos afro* - the bands that play *samba-reggae* - such as Olodum, Ilê Aiyê, Muzenza and Cortejo Afro operate on this basis. These bands tend to have major community projects, involving educational and cultural activities based in their particular home *favela* - usually a poor shanty district with serious problems of violence, drugs and socio-economic marginalisation for many of its inhabitants. Here accessibility takes on the significance that through participation in the band, or one of the other activities associated with the band's organisation, young people are given access to more than musical participation. They are drawn into a socialisation and education process with the intention of taking them out of a marginal, violent slum existence[34] and

---

[31] People would sometimes come into the enclosed café just to listen to us without buying anything. As well as getting paid by the establishment the band would pass a hat around the audience for tips.

[32] The percussion instruments mainly used by the *blocos afro* are the *zabumba* (bass drum) played with one beater, *surdo* (tenor drum) played with two soft mallets, *repinique* (small side drum) played with a pair of long sticks and *caixa* (snare drum) played with drum kit sticks. The wider range of smaller instruments common in Rio samba are not widely used in Salvador.

[33] The word *clave* ('key' in Spanish) derives from Cuban music and denotes a repeated two bar rhythmic pattern. Variations of these found in samba-reggae include *son, rhumba* and *bossa claves*.

[34] Deaths from drug related fire arms incidents are particularly common in Salvador and are reported in the local press almost daily.

giving them self-esteem with a view to a more promising future. In interview material I recorded, Bahian educators and musicians consistently professed faith in this process.

E ao Quadrado

I observed and made video recordings of the youth group E ao Quadrado in the *favela* district of Alto do Cabrito. It is not one of Salvador's high-profile bands but incorporates a theatre group, show band, *bloco afro* and home-work club. My observations centered on the *bloco afro* during half a dozen rehearsals and a public performance. It was made up of about twenty boys and girls between the ages of eight and sixteen who all lived in the neighbourhood. They were taught by Fábio, a twenty-one year old who had come up through the group. In interviewing some of the band members and leaders it became clear that help with homework, musical rehearsal and instruction in *samba-reggae* were seen as leading to the formation of confident individuals who would have a positive role in society. Bahian percussion music is regarded as a matter of identity and pride by African-Brazilians and although the genre E ao Quadrado play (*samba-reggae*) is common throughout the city, they make it their own by composing and performing song-words or raps which tell of their experience of living in Alto do Cabrito. All young people of the neighbourhood are welcome to receive free instruction and to participate in the activities of the group. Although Fábio and the children work hard during rehearsals, participation is more important than perfection.

Cortejo Afro

A *bloco afro* gaining in stature and popularity is Cortejo Afro. It has its roots in the *candomblé* temple of Terreiro Ilê Axé Oyá in Pirajá and is associated with a variety of social and creative projects which are supported by local government through the Instituto Oyá. During the summer of 2005 Cortejo Afro played once a week on the stage of the

Praça Teresa Batista in the Centro Histórico. This is a medium sized open air venue which charges entry at the normal price for concerts by popular local acts. I was present at two performances, one of which I recorded on video for subsequent evaluation.

The beginning of the concert is not in the venue, but in the Praça Terreiro de Jesus, the main square of the historic centre of the City. Here the percussion bloco *play in front of the imposing Catedral Basílica. There are eighteen of them including the conductor. They are dressed in matching white costumes, and are augmented by four natural trumpets. The performance includes synchronised choreography by the players and continues here for around twenty minutes before they move off around the square and down through the narrow streets of the Centro Histórico. By this time they have attracted a considerable crowd which they lead, pied piper style, towards the actual venue. On the way they are joined by Giba Gonçalves, the* mestre *or leader who attracts attention by wearing a bright stylish outfit which contrasts with the rest of the band, and a headphone/microphone set. He flamboyantly greets friends and admirers along the way.*

Having reached the Praça Teresa Batista, the band are ushered in through the gate and those of the following who want to continue listening are charged the entrance fee of 15 reais. *Once inside, the percussionists and brass take up position on one side of the space where there is a low stage. Opposite them is a much larger one, with public address speaker towers on either side. This is reserved for the six singers[35] who will take part in this performance. They take it in turns to sing. Some appear more than once and they all sing together at the end of the evening. All singing is accompanied by the percussion band, with occasional, sometimes dissonant interjections from the brass.[36] The audience, which numbers over two hundred, mainly occupies the space between the two stages. They are enveloped by the musicians in a way reminiscent of the way dancers are encircled in a traditional* samba de roda, *and many dance energetically for hours. The*

---

[35] The singers include local celebrities such as Mariene de Castro.
[36] There is no attempt by the singers to pitch their songs to be in tune with the trumpets while these, being without valves play fanfare like figures at their usual pitch during the song. This frequently results in a kind of polytonality.

concerts attract about three quarters locals and one quarter tourists, both Brazilian and foreign, with many enthusiastic dancers, especially Bahian teenagers of both sexes. These form the core of those participating in the synchronised dance of around fifty of the audience in front of the vocal stage, the most confident and skilled taking it in turns to lead and modify the repeated movement.

Accessibility in the Musical Culture of Salvador

This section draws on the above account of musical activity in Salvador to identify particular aspects of accessibility which are demonstrated by one or more of the phenomena surveyed. Further field-work observations will be included to clarify points being made.

Outdoor performance in public spaces - music comes to the people

The most obvious aspect of musical accessibility in Salvador and one which appertains mainly to LI, the physical access level, is outdoor performance in public spaces. This fundamental feature is clearly facilitated by the climate, but also by a general acceptance of music in public spaces and tolerance of high sound levels. Performance in such situations (on or near a street or square), the most notable and extensive being *Carnaval* itself, means that one does not have to seek music out, one will simply happen upon it in certain areas at certain times. Many of these performances are programmed, advertised and publicly announced and many people will have made an intentional journey to hear and see a certain band. In the case of those joining a *bloco* in *Carnaval* or watching from a *camarote* they may even be paying and will have booked in advance to follow proceedings in that 'public' space, although strictly speaking the *camarote* and the *bloco* inside the rope are temporarily semi-public in that not everyone has access. Still, there will at all times be people who have not paid who are partaking of a similar view.

Despite this essentially public nature of *Carnaval*, there was discussion in the local press about its *lack* of accessibility and a process of 'elitisation'. Malu Fontes points out that citizens are faced with the choice of either paying to join a *bloco* or *camarote* which 90% cannot afford, or of exposing themselves to the filth, overcrowding and danger of the street.[37] A poll conducted by *A Tarde* found that nearly 55% of respondents did not join the *Carnaval* in 2004, but stayed away. A slightly lower total of 53.9% of the 746 interviewees were reportedly in favour of regaining the previously 'popular character' of the festival with its 'spontaneous spirit'.[38] A few days later the paper bemoans the lack of provision of entertainment in the suburbs of Salvador,[39] with several pictured Bahians demanding top quality *trios* and *blocos* in *their* neighbourhood and that Ilê Aiyê should stay to play in their own *bairro* of Liberdade and not in the centre of town.[40] The tenor of these opinions is that people should not have to make the journey to the city centre and brave the frightening crush (possibly with children[41]) but that the *Carnaval* should come to them. They are demanding Level I accessibility in other words. This is despite the fact that there are major *Carnaval* events in the suburbs,[42] but evidently not enough to satisfy people. These apparently ambitious demands are rendered somewhat more reasonable when one considers that the peripatetic nature of *Carnaval* means that it comes to *you* rather than you necessarily having to go to *it*. Whether you are sitting in a roadside bar, ensconced in a *camarote* or happen to live, or be staying, along the route, you are treated to an unbelievable musical theatre of bands, dancers, crowds, fights, costumes, police and much else besides.[43] So the expectation of physical accessibility (LI) is deeply ingrained in the population and many clearly resent any sign of it being diluted.

---

[37] *A Tarde*, 13/2/2005. Malu Fontes, "Você acredita no Carnaval da TV?" P. 8.

[38] *A Tarde*, 13/2/2005. Cláudio Bandeira, "Folião condena elitazação do Momo." P. 3.

[39] *A Tarde*, 15/2/2005. Péricles Diniz, "Carnaval nos bairros sem programação." Local, p. 7.

[40] A vain hope. Ilê Aiyê do play in Liberdade at the start of *Carnaval*, but they are one of the big attractions of the festival.

[41] There is a designated children's day during *Carnaval* in the historic centre.

[42] One of the performances the author participated in with Encontro do Samba was on a huge stage in the *bairro* of Periperi, on a square where the crowd numbered about 5,000.

[43] Many residents who live along the routes rent out their apartments for *Carnaval* to people who then enjoy the spectacle from the safety and comfort of the flats, turning them into ringside party venues. Playing on top of a *trio elétrico* one can see into second and third floor flats along the way, and those inside, like *camarote* spectators, can see the musicians better than those at street level.

'Multimedia' presentation

It is difficult to conceptually separate out into stages what in practice exists as a unified process in Salvador; performance, reception and participation, all of which involve multiple sensory, communicatory, cognitive and physiological modalities. An attempt will be made to deal with these stages in turn however, beginning with performance. Live music in Salvador is seldom presented as instrumental music for listening only. The sounds of instruments usually accompany singing with words and words are part of the vast majority of performances. Song lyrics are well known not just from live performances, but from radio and books of lyrics sold at newsagents. Most bands, even if they create original material, also play 'covers'. In this way songs are heard in many guises and become very well known.

Musicians also tend to perform some kind of choreography. Bodily movement (beyond what is required for playing) is virtually inseparable from Bahian music, and dance is strongly associated with it. Percussionists are taught to move their bodies rhythmically as they play and often swing their arms high between beats. Players with portable bass drums sometimes athletically hold them above their heads with one arm and beat them with the other. Singers also perform dance sequences. There are frequently 'official' dancers on stage with bands and in *Carnaval* they are seen on top of the *trio elétrico* or following behind.

Dancers and musicians usually dress up to perform and the whole *bloco* will have its design for *Carnaval*, which might be a printed fabric from which male and female costumes have been made, or matching T-shirts with panama hats, or totally white outfits. Although the nudity of Rio *Carnaval* is not a major feature of the celebrations in Salvador, eroticism plays a part in the form of highly sexually suggestive dance moves. Both male and female official dancers are chosen for their physique as well as their dance skills. Finally food and drink (alcoholic or not) are usually available from street vendors or bars wherever there is a musical performance.

A typical musical performance thus includes melody, rhythm, (often harmony as well), words, dance, costume and eroticism, with sustenance and alcohol close at hand. As a direct result of this multifaceted nature of music performance the whole person is addressed. In terms of reception, every sense is potentially engaged; the performance has multiple surfaces or points of accessibility through which the audience can gain meaning and enjoyment. We are dealing with a kind of popular *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

Participation

Multimedia performance and multimodal reception are usually joined by participation in Bahian musical contexts. All of the abovementioned performative aspects can lead to an active response. Cantabile melodies with familiar words enable people to sing along with many performances, which they do with alacrity. Lyrics represent a feature of interest, a potential point of recognition and a vehicle for LIII (participatory) accessibility. As described previously, audience members need no particular encouragement to dance, but encouragement they receive nevertheless. Audience dancing ranges from a person doing so by themselves to thousands following synchronised movements in a *bloco Carnaval*.[44] The dress design of a *bloco* is worn by all those who pay to join it, not just the 'official performers'. Even gigs in standard venues sometimes have a T-shirt as the entry ticket. Such costumes are often customised by females using techniques such as cutting and tying. Some have simple T-shirts turned into elaborate individualised 'tops' by seamstresses.

The clear boundaries which exist in many musical cultures between performer and listener, between expert player and non-musician, between culture bearer and outsider,

---

[44] There are three main dance styles; samba, afro and *suingue*. Samba is danced to most up-tempo Bahian popular music with small fast steps. Afro includes ritual moves from *candomblé*, expansive arm movements and foot stamping. It is mostly danced to *samba-reggae*. *Suingue* combines elements of the other two as well as additional turns and hip movements.

tend to be blurred and porous in Salvador, particularly during *Carnaval*. Apart from ad hoc participation there is strong encouragement and ample opportunity to develop musical skills, and provision to include the potentially excluded. This latter strangely brings together underprivileged *favela* teenagers with relatively wealthy tourists, not just conceptually, but sometimes physically and musically in the same ensemble. Vaughan Williams would have approved:

> If we have music in us it must show itself actively and creatively, not passively and receptively. An art which is not creative is no art.
>
> <div align="right">(Vaughan Williams 1934: 124)</div>

The fact that audiences almost always sing and dance along with the musicians means that they are part of the performance in a very real sense. In *Carnaval* the *bloco* moves along and the rope spatially includes band, official dancers, and the paying followers who are dressed to match the *bloco* and sing and dance with the paid artists. Static spectators watch the whole *bloco* pass and the paying members are fully part of the music, the performance and the spectacle. As described in connection with the Cortejo Afro concert, audience members in static staged performances often perform synchronised dance movements too, meaning they are performers as well as spectators. In the case of Encontro do Samba, dancers were regularly brought onto the stage for 'guest' performances. My own involvement with this band is an example of an outsider being welcomed and musically integrated. All these instances demonstrate the different ways in which participatory access is facilitated in Bahian popular music culture. As the earlier accounts show; even in the concert hall and the radio studio, the line between performer and observer is easily crossed.

Holistic engagement

For the performer then, and particularly for the spectator, music is not a matter of

concentrating on the auditory while suspending other life processes, but the integration of all those processes with music. The audience member is receiving stimuli of various different kinds and is more likely to be engaged 'holistically', particularly if she is also participating. Multiple cognitive, cultural and physical processes operate including those involving language, the body in movement, visual sense and sexuality. Bahian music typically offers stimuli in a range of modalities. These stimuli are perceived by the recipient and offer multiple forms of engagement. This rarely remains passive, subjective or introspective however, but is more normally expressed in forms of participation such as singing, dancing and wearing a similar costume to the performers. These three stages; multimedia presentation, multimodal perception, and participation militate towards a holistic engagement with music. Since these processes usually take place in settings where there are many people present, this holism is not only personal but extends to the social dimension. It is not just about 'all of me', but also 'all of us'.

Social inclusion and equality

A band is itself clearly a collaborative social entity which presents itself as such in public, a group of people working and creating together, communicating with each other and with the audience. The audience also represents a conglomeration of individuals joined by the purpose and activity of listening, seeing, dancing, and interacting with each other. This is true of many musical situations the world over. The musical culture of Salvador has the particular propensity however for both band and audience to grow to enormous proportions. Carnival bands can number hundreds of players and dancers, with numbers of over fifty reached both by brass sections in the more traditional processions in the old quarter, and also by the percussionists of a *bloco afro*. The size of audiences during *Carnaval* has already been mentioned. This kind of inclusivity represents Level I and III accessibility on a huge scale; Level I because anyone and everyone can attend the event if they want to (to the extent that even several hundred thousand tourists do so) and Level III because the audience participate and many players can be accommodated in the bands.

This also includes foreign enthusiasts. Coretjo Afro for instance have close links to European samba groups and run small-scale 'package deals' which enable players from those groups to come to Salvador for *Carnaval* and rehearse and perform with Cortejo. For locals, apart from the large and well known blocos like Olodum and Ilê Aiyê and second tier ones such as Malê Debalê and Muzenza, there are a plethora of smaller amateur and grass roots bands as well as *barrio* and *favela* projects (E ao Quadrado for instance) that strive to provide access to music making for disadvantaged young people, using musical and social inclusion as a way of increasing the social capital and self-esteem of the participants. Although such bands may not be able to perform in the main *Carnaval* circuits of Campo Grande and Barra-Ondina, they find other opportunities, such as the smaller one in the Centro Histórico, *bairro* carnival presentations and festivals such as *Lavagem Bonfim*. I observed the youth group E ao Quadrado leading a procession of several hundred Hare Krishna followers for several hours, three weeks after *Carnaval*. Thus although the major carnival acts are highly professional and involve great expense, with thousands paying for *bloco* or *camarote* membership, smaller entities still have the opportunity to perform in similar circumstances.

The increasing 'professionalisation' of *Carnaval* was discussed in *A Tarde* during my stay in Salvador. By this was meant the involvement of city council bureaucrats and workers, private companies and star performers. It is the inevitable consequence of the growth of the event and its potential for generating income. This trend however is seen by many as going hand in hand with a growing elitism, so much so that the mayor of Salvador, João Henrique Carneiro, publicly defended professionalisation as a way for private enterprise to improve infrastructure, cleanliness, lighting and security while affirming that:

> We live in a city which needs to be more equal...the 'elitisation' of *Carnaval* should be fought by everyone. [45]

---

[45] *A Tarde*, 13/2/2005. "Prefeito quer festa com inclusão." P. 3.

By taking this position the mayor is emphasising that although the festival must be well organised and presented, this should not be at the expense of its inclusivity and popular appeal. Carneiro is also making clear a connection between social equality and the accessibility of *Carnaval*. It should be borne in mind that this is not some utopia, but an extremely unequal society, with many extremely poor, and some very rich people living in the same city. The inclusivity and accessibility of *Carnaval* can be seen as an expression of inclusive intent rather than something which necessarily translates into everyday life.

Something which *is* reflected in other spheres is the profligate use of 'man-power'. Building gangs for instance are huge, numbering up to 50 for a medium sized project. This is clearly due to cheap labour costs. Whereas in developed countries high wages mean that anything employing large numbers of people (such as a symphony orchestra) becomes almost prohibitively expensive and the purpose of many productivity drives is to decrease the amount of people employed in a process, Brazil is still a country where it is possible to employ dozens without incurring crippling costs. Domestic work is also common. Thus the huge bands seen in *Carnaval* are on one level simply a function of cheap labour with musicians, like the *cordeiros*, paid very little. The other way to use large numbers of people is through the opposite of professionalisation: amateurisation. In Bahia, there are many amateur and semi-professional musicians who take part in performances, and this is also the basis on which the samba band movement operates in Europe (see Chapter 8).

Complexity, precision and accessibility

Although percussion and rhythm are indispensable in Brazilian popular music, it is evident in Bahia that song and melody are equally important. Whereas extended and convoluted melodies exist in this environment, there is an unashamed predilection for a simple hook, with a predictable repetitive line, often falling inevitably to the tonic (in a

resolutely diatonic context), which is an access point for people to remember and later to join in singing the song. Rhythm is more complex than melody as a rule and virtually always multilayered. There is hardly a band with only one drummer and simple Anglo-American rock rhythms are a rarity. Not only are there different, layered rhythmic lines, with certain syncopations emphasised, but there are typical distortions of the tempo over the two bar cycle. Despite this rhythmic density however, the rhythm is clearly perceived by very many people, Brazilians and others, as eminently suitable for dancing, in fact it seems 'infectious'. Crook reports of his experience of *maracatu* in Recife that 'large drums were beaten in a simple yet bewildering pattern' (Cook 2005: 1). The rhythm may be inaccessible in terms of one (not) being able to analyse immediately and clearly exactly what is being played, but there is no doubt as to what one may use it for. In this way one component of LII accessibility (*b*, [structural] understanding) which is low, is balanced by another (*k*, having a use for) which is high. This apparent contradiction is possible because the kinaesthetic response to sound does not require cognitive analysis.

In more commercial presentations such as those of Daniela Mercury, the pop band guitar and synthesizer parts overlie the complex percussion, which is however still present, whereas in the *bloco afro* style it tends to be exposed as it is accompanied only by singing. Conceptually, rhythm gives a counterweight to melody in that it is the bearer of structural complexity and formal depth, whereas melody seeks to convey the words and gives another point of access, a less involved 'surface layer' so to speak (Matthews 1989: 244). This contrasting function of rhythm and melody is further accentuated by the tolerance for vague pitching which exists in many situations as opposed to an insistence on rhythmic exactness. In many group singing situations enthusiasm and inclusion counts for much more than being in tune. Even in the school choir I observed, the teachers were leading the dance moves and thus giving a definite rhythm for all to see, but made no attempt to tidy up the pitch range being sung on each syllable by the children. The singer of Encontro do Samba, who certainly had a good ear would, however, never express concern about pitch, even in situations where poorly regulated sound equipment made singing in tune difficult. On the other hand percussionists are often pulled up for their

time keeping. In the other band in which I participated for instance, the leader would stop a song in performance if he felt the pace was wrong and make the drummer start it again. Thus there appears to be an intra-genre, in fact an intra-opus contrast between structurally simple melodies and more complex rhythmic form, with the former open to loose pitch interpretation while the latter are subject to strict timing parameters. In this way both perceptual and participatory accessibility are aided by the melodic element while the rhythm carries both the kinaesthetic impetus to dance, and cognitively more demanding structural interest.

Intra-genre 'high/low' boundaries

The 'default' melody-words-rhythm format of *samba-reggae* has a certain asceticism in the context of Bahian music and performance which is so often 'busy' with multiple layers of sound and visual stimulation. It appears to forego the voluptuousness of harmony and many timbres to convey a certain gravity of message (of which more later). Also, the *blocos afro* have a tendency for more modal melody (usually dorian or pentatonic) in their own compositions, rather than the major diatonic writing which dominates most of the other local genres. However these differences are not absolute. Whereas Ilê Aiyê only use drums and voice, Olodum certainly do perform with other instruments sometimes. One can also hear the extremely Afro-conscious and 'ethnically' attired *blocos* strike up some of the most catchy commercial *Carnaval* hits. This lack of concern for crossing style, and possibly intra-genre hi/low boundaries is also evident in the way artists such as Carlinhos Brown and Caetano Veloso, who write involved and challenging music for their albums ('Baby Groove',[46] 'Tropicália'[47]) with innovative arrangements and production, also turn their hand to unashamedly obvious *Carnaval* fodder ('Maria Caipirinha'[48], 'Chuva, Suor e Cerveja'[49]) for the crowds to drink and carouse to. This does

---

[46] *Carlinhos Brown es Carlito Marrón.* With Arnaldo Antunes (2003) BMG Brasil.
[47] *Caetano Veloso.* (1990) Polygram.
[48] Carlinhos Brown *Carnaval* single (2005) apparently not currently available on disk. A song using only

no harm to the respect in which such artists are held. (In the case of Carlinhos Brown this is also because of the social regeneration work he has been involved with in the *bairro* of Candeal[50]). Both write material that succeeds at both ends of this putative high/low 'spectrum'. It must be acknowledged however that the notion of such a spectrum is being deliberately imposed from outside the culture in this case, for the sake of our exploration. In the UK, popular music accessibility, credibility and kudos concerns are crucial as was discussed in Chapter 3. In Bahia they are clearly less important. Of course, people make value judgements about music, dismissing certain songs or sub-genres as facile for instance. However there seems to be little reticence about also writing, enjoying or participating in such music at appropriate times.[51]

Identity

The matter of identity has been theorised previously in this thesis in relation to musical accessibility, with reference to personal identity, subculture, fashion, class and nationality. These notions will be augmented here by considering the relationship between Afro-Brazilian music, particularly the *samba-reggae* of the *blocos afro*, ideas of Brazilian national identity and their relation to the outside world as represented by tourists and the US. Music that relates to, defines or underscores different kinds of identity makes itself accessible through being useful to the subject by helping to construct and assert an identity. The music may also speak to a sensibility associated with that identity. Furthermore, there will be a familiarity with the tropes of music in an identity-

two chords throughout, and two frequently repeated hook lines: 'Samba da Bahia' (on two adjacent notes) and 'Tê tê tê têtê tê tê tê'.
[49] Caetano Veloso, *Muitos Carnavais.* (1989) Philips. The title of the track translates as 'Rain, Sweat and Beer'.
[50] See the film: *El milagro de Candeal* (2004) Spain. Dir: Fernando Trueba.
[51] This part of the analysis is partly informed by a conversation with Deise Silva, 27, a secondary school arts teacher with an interest in music. She is not however an active performer.

related genre for people who have previously associated themselves with that identity. Finally, music related to a particular group of people tends to address those people, their concerns, their view of themselves and their history, with the consequence that they are likely to gain meaning from and perceive relevance in that music, thus providing further points of accessibility at Level II.

Recent literature on identity has tended to warn against the acceptance of simplistic, one-dimensional, primordial or essentialist views of identity (Mayo 2000, Jenkins 2002, Weedon 2004). Concerns about the undermining of class solidarity through ethnic and localist fragmentation play a part in these approaches as do fears of chauvinist ideologies. More important however, are theorisations which see the 'boundaries of collectivities [as] perpetually renewed interactional constructs' (Jenkins 2002: 16). Within these boundaries there is a focus on in the individual whose identity, according to Giddens, 'has in large part to be discovered, constructed, actively sustained'.[52] As a result social groups defined by 'identities' or 'ethnicities' are not seen as homogenous or monolithic. People are recognised as possessing or selecting multiple, and possibly conflicting, identities which can be differentially emphasised. This foregrounds the role of agency and the point has been made that this is not equally available to all, being more a function of wealth and global social privilege. In what follows Afro-Brazilian identity, which is emphatically stated by its performance in *Carnaval,* is examined. In this form, literally bounded by the rope which encloses the *bloco,* such an identity seems to be clearly defined. The *bloco afro* stands for the ethnic group in *Carnaval*, just as *Carnaval* is sometimes taken to stand for Brazil in the world.

The importance of Brazilian popular musics in the discourse of Brazilian national identity has been discussed extensively by Vianna (1999), Reily (1994) and others. In Salvador an unmistakeable and confident sense of Brazilianess coexists with a strong local identity and important projections of African heritage and black consciousness. By the use of

---

[52] Cited in Mayo (2000: 43).

African-looking designs for *Carnaval* costumes, the paring down of music to singing and drumming only, and referring to Africa in song texts, an imagined bridge is built from the present to the history of black Brazilians in the African mother land. It reaches over the intervening period of slavery and privation, which is remembered, but not necessarily to be celebrated in a carnival context. Rhythm-words-melody forms played by *blocos afro* and *afoxé* groups are related to the Afro-Brazilian religion of *candomblé*. This is derived directly from Yoruba[53] practices and according to Fryer its 'most important drum rhythms...have been passed down unchanged in Brazil, from generation to generation, for some 450 years' (2000: 12).[54] They are played on Brazilian congas or *atabaques*. *Afoxé* goes back to the late nineteenth century (McGowan & Pessanha 1998: 122) and is basically the processional and secular performance of such rhythms using *atabaques* or the similar (more modern) *timbals*, augmented with natural trumpets and *agogô* bells. *Blocos afro* are a further development which play different rhythms (see above) but the perceived links with *candomblé* and therefore with the African heritage are still strong as witnessed by the name of the oldest *bloco afro,* Ilê Aiyê, meaning 'house of life' in Yoruba (McGowan & Pessanha 1998: 125). *Ilê* is frequently part of the name of *candomblé terreiros* or places of worship.

Surprisingly, although important Bahian groups like Olodum are well known throughout Brazil, they perform only in Salvador during *Carnaval*, and conversely there are no comparable groups from Rio represented in Bahia. There is a strong sense of a particular Bahian musical culture. Local music is played on local radio, performed locally, recorded and sold around the city. Many local *Carnaval* hits are not even commercially available as recordings outside Bahia. For Salvadorians, their music gives them a way of constructing an image of themselves and their society, reinforcing their self-esteem. It is *their* music and talks of *their* history in the city, in the Recôncavo and in Africa. The

---

[53] Ethnic group now mainly found in Nigeria.
[54] This may well be overstating the case, but the links are strong, to the extent that there are not only musical tropes which are found on both sides of the tropical Atlantic, but a vocabulary of African words still current in Bahia. See Yeda Pessoa de Castro, *A Influência das Linguas Africanas no Portugês Brasileiro* <http://www.smec.salvador.ba.gov.br/documentos/linguas-africanas.pdf>

perception of the music as *theirs* is helped by the familiarity which is assured by performance in public spaces, extensive radio play and discussion in the print media of local musical events. Each and every Salvadorian knows many locally composed songs, every child can do the samba step.

Outside influences

Yet despite the fact that there are very strong and lively local traditions, present in all media and playing a vital role in the lives of the vast majority of people, the culture as a whole is by no means hermetically sealed or purely Bahian or even Brazilian. One influential import has been reggae. Many black Salvadorians identify with the African Zionism of rastafari and the music has been popular in Brazil since the 1970s, with a large number of Brazilian reggae bands singing in Portuguese (and sometimes English). The influence of reggae on samba-reggae is clear, but the founders of Ilê Aiyê were also fans of soul music before the inception of the group (Vianna 1999: 102), which might well explain the tendency of *bloco afro* melodies to be less major/diatonic than those of samba, tending towards pentatonic or dorian, blues type scales (rather than a direct African connection). Many forms of globalised popular music are heard here and available in record shops. Salsa; funk and rock for instance; hip hop is very popular with younger people and there are plenty of local (Portuguese language) exponents. Fat Boy Slim performed in the 2006 Carnaval to popular acclaim.

Whereas Salvador is firmly part of the 'global village', the majority of the music played and listened to is local. A survey I made of the radio stations receivable found that 16 out of 18 were playing Brazilian music sung in Portuguese, rather than Anglo-American product. Madonna, Beyoncé and Eminem are known but no more so that Ivete Sangalo, Daniela Mercury and Carlinhos Brown and it is these, the Bahian stars, that hold most of the public attention. Bahian musical identity is not preserved by keeping it pure of outside influence, but by absorbing foreign ideas and using some of them to energize an already

295

burgeoning local musical industry and culture. Musicians famous (such as David Byrne and Paul Simon) and not so famous (such as myself) come here to learn, document, participate and collaborate. Particularly percussionists flock to Salvador to study and play.[55] Paradoxically Salvador combines a strong sense of its musical identity with an extreme openness to outsiders and their music. When this involves teaching foreigners to play the music and allowing them to participate, it is a remarkable example of LIII (participatory) accessibility.

Beyond such musical inclusivity, there is the matter of openness to cultural and racial mixing itself as an aspect of Brazilian culture and identity. As a country populated mainly by invadors, immigrants and the descendents of immigrants from all over the world, with sizeable proportions from Africa, Europe and, to a lesser extent, Asia,[56] there has clearly been mixing for generations. Until the intervention of Gilberto Freyre (1964 [1933]) this had been regarded as a weakness of the 'Brazilian character'. Freyre however portrayed racial mixing, particularly between the Africans and Europeans in a positive light; 'In Freyre's Brazil, the fact of race mixture would itself be a point of national pride' (Vianna 1999: 52). Mário de Andrade was to find national unity 'in the way the national psyche had transformed European, African and Amerindian elements...' (Reily 1994: 83). This implies not just openness to new foreign cultural impacts, but also an easy interchange between those long established in the country. Notions of a pan-Brazilian culture still turn on inter-ethnic accessibility, exchange and synchreticism, and such fluidity is widely regarded as central to Brazilian identity (Vianna 1999: 108-111).

Blocos afro and Afro-Brazilian particularism

An exception to the open attitude of Bahian musical groups is that of Ilê Aiyê. They

---

[55] For example see <http://www.layneredmond.com/>
[56] Indigenous peoples account for less than 1% of the current population.
See <http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/censo2000/populacao/cor_raca_Censo2000.pdf>

rather infamously do not allow lighter skinned people as part of their *bloco* during *Carnaval*. Even where some have managed to pay the money to join and wear the required costume they find themselves expelled. This is because the Africanist, black consciousness ideology of the group regards it as incompatible to have white people wearing the 'African' costumes and parading in a *bloco* with such a strong Afrocentric message. The attitude can be seen as a piece of political provocation, mirroring the exclusion which blacks still experience despite the ideology of a multiracial national Brazilian identity. However, even this rather extreme case has its limits. Firstly the luminaries of Ilê Aiyê are not so inflexible as to allow 'gringo' dollars to slip through their fingers. So, although whites cannot parade with them, there is a special *camarote*, in which whites can wear the Ilê Aiyê dress and pay extra for the privilege. But João Jorge,[57] the cultural director of Olodum, a group with equally strong credentials in the movement for 'black consciousness and solidarity' was interviewed by Vianna in 1988 and said:

> We're the synthesis. It's only possible to be Brazilian by being a synthesis of a wide range of colours, of peoples, of languages, of customs, of cultures. And music can only be Brazilian - new or old, current or traditional - by synthesizing and not excluding.
>
> (Quoted in Vianna 1999: 103)

Clearly then, even in movements which tend most towards particularism, there is a recognition of the value of embracing the 'other' as well of emphasising one's own 'identity'.

Brazil and the USA

In global and historical terms Brazil in many ways mirrors the US. For most cultures the

---

[57] For information on João Jorge see <http://www.ashoka.org/fellows/viewprofile3.cfm?reid=96999>

USA represent a kind of Big Brother, with more money, power and cultural reach than any other country. The influence of the US also dwarfs that of Brazil, but there are many parallels between the two. Historically they share the story of discovery and colonisation with the virtual 'disappearance' of the natives as a significant proportion of the population. There is the legacy of slavery and the resulting African influence, as well as the presence of a wide variety of immigrants from different backgrounds. In terms of the current situation both places have a gun culture which to a European seems out of control. Both are the dominant power in their part of the continent with population sizes of the same order. One could go on for long time identifying such similarities but let us turn to music.

Both Brazil and the US have an astonishingly rich musical culture, particularly in terms of vernacular musics and in both cases they have been influenced by, and have impacted on, much of the rest of the world. The difference is one of wealth and power. It is reasonable to see the US and Brazil as alternative global musical hubs. This is something of which many Brazilians themselves are aware, particularly musicians. Their idea of musical identity is thus partly defined relative to, even in opposition to, the US. These words are from the well known song 'Chiclete com Banana':

> I'll only put bebop in my samba,
> When Uncle Sam plays tamorim,
> When he gets a pandeiro[58] and zabumba,[59]
> When he learns that samba isn't rumba,
> Then I'll mix Miami with Copacabana,
> I'll mix bubblegum with banana.
>
> (Gordurinha & Jackson do Pandeiro)[60]

Stylistically, despite all the openness previously discussed, US elements are clearly out of

---

[58] *Pandeiro,* Brazilian tambourine.
[59] *Zabumba,* portable bass drum.
[60] *Ciclete com Banana* means 'chewing gum with banana' which is now the name of a popular Bahian *axé* band which has been active since the 1980s. Cited in McGowan & Pessanha (1998: 144).

298

place in many Brazilian musical situations. When playing with Encontro do Samba I realised very quickly that 'blue notes', for instance, were not compatible with their music.

For Brazilians being a counterweight to the US can represent another aspect of musically constructed identity. For foreigners, to take an interest in Brazilian music represents a choice of a different *personal* identity. A choice of solidarity with the developing world, rather than aspiring to be more (US) 'American'. A choice of music which is less associated with global stars and big business (although the major record labels are of course very active in Brazil) and more with ordinary people (such as the members of *blocos afro*). This perception has become stronger in recent years with the presidency of Lula da Silva appearing as a South American social-democratic counterweight to the neo-conservative US administration. Power and hegemony are at issue here and the grass roots fecundity and participatory accessibility of Brazilian music can be seen as an alternative to overly commercialised US cultural products.

Theoretical Discussion

Accessibility and resistance

Between identity and inclusivity there has to exist a dialectic. Too much openness to outside influence and the difference marked by a particular identity is threatened with dilution to the point of disappearance. However, Gilberto Freyre, Mário de Andrade and Brazilian nationalist-modernism aimed to make exactly this point of instability the focus of national identity. Vianna (1999: 108-111) recognises two currents which turn on the same dialectic: one tending towards pluralism, the other towards synchreticism. What is remarkable is the way these are kept in balance in the musical life of Brazil.

The 'aesthetics of participation' which makes Brazilian music and North-Eastern

Carnaval particularly pertinent to a study of musical accessibility has been noted by Crook (2005: 29) who offers this observation from the *Carnaval* of Recife, which is the next major centre of population along the coast, to the north of Salvador:

> The music...demanded participation from all those who could feel it...one must be deeply engaged in a kind of interplay of competency with the more skilled 'performers' who provide the security of a solid musical base. This inspires wider spread participation and creates the environment for social bonding. In reality everyone is a potential performer at such events. A well-played samba or *maracatu* inspires Brazilians because of the participatory quality and forges bonds of identity among those competent in the aesthetic rules of the game.
>
> (Crook 2005: 28)

Salvador is full of opportunities to become competent. There are percussion and dance courses offered for locals and visitors and one can even study and practice in the street. Thus a culture can be asserted by those who are 'competent' even as it is offering itself for participation. The identity-inclusivity dialectic is evident in Crook's appraisal of *candomblé*:

> Racial identity within *candomblé* is not based on biologically determined concepts, but rather on the aesthetics of participation achieved through dancing, singing and drumming.
>
> (p. 29)

This is an identity that the *blocos afro* also express. Here the contradiction is at its plainest; most of these *blocos* emphasise Africaness and blackness, Ilê Aiyê go as far as to exclude white people from joining their *bloco* in *Carnaval*. Whereas almost everyone might be able to achieve participation 'through dancing, singing and drumming', everyone cannot be black. By projecting a vision of an identity a group of people assert their difference and frequently they do this musically, but by inviting everyone else to understand, enjoy and participate in the projection and its musical component, by making

300

it accessible, the difference is at once threatened with erasure:

> Brazilians have a wonderful knack for blurring the boundaries of the musical traditions of their country and mixing one tradition with another. Music and musicians from rural and urban areas of Brazil freely interact with each other, regional traditions are embedded in national forms of music, and musicians often serve as cultural mediators linking the interests of different sectors of society.
>
> (Crook 2005: 36)

What holds when particular Brazilian ethnic groups are juxtaposed with the wider society is also true when notions of Brazilian culture as a whole, or a component ethnicity are juxtaposed with 'global' or 'outsider' culture; there is at the same time a confident musical assertion of identity and an openness to other people and styles. This is more surprising when one considers how Afro-Brazilian culture is informed by the history of slavery, a condition which separated the experience and interests of the un-free section of the population unambiguously from the rest.

Fryer (2000) gives hundreds of examples of slaves and their descendents continuing and evolving African musical and cultural practices in Brazil over five centuries. In the context of slavery these are rightly valued by *afrodescendentes* as expressions of resistance, which could take the form of work songs with encoded complaints about the overseers and the condition (and conditions) of bondage, or the continuation of African religious practices (and music) disguised by a veneer of Catholic iconography. Among the clearest expressions of potential belligerence were various musical martial arts, a survival of which is *capoeira*, always accompanied by the music of the *berimbau*, singing, hand-clapping and *pandeiro* percussion. Originally it appears the music helped to mask the martial nature of the training. This was by no means academic since there were regular and serious slave rebellions (Reis 2003). Attitudes appertaining to slave resistance have been discerned in *capoeira* practice:

301

Capoeira teachers say that one should play with a 'cool head'...Superior emotional control is an example of a kind of one-upmanship available to the slave, through which he could demonstrate his power over the master by making him angry and frustrated while the slave smiled inwardly. [61]

Fighting disguised as dancing, practiced even in Angola soon after the Portuguese takeover, is ironically one of the globally most widely adopted Brazilian cultural forms.

Present-day *capoeristas* indeed display a marked generosity and hospitality to all those from outside Bahian culture, including foreigners, who sincerely want to learn and master capoeira.

(Fryer 2000: 31)

In the same way that this assertive and identity-specific practice is nevertheless attractive and open to outsiders, it is the carnival music of the emphatically *African*-Brazilian Northeast which tends to be most attractive to foreigners (see Chapter 8). Yet with their associated social empowerment projects and black consciousness agenda, the *blocos afro* are a high profile force of resistance to marginalisation, exploitation and inequality. Here then is an alternative vision to Horkheimer's insistence that only inaccessible art can challenge oppressive social conditions. The Afro-Bahian cultural expressions of *Capoeira* and *samba-reggae* combine assertions of identity, social activism and accessibility to Brazilian and foreign outsiders.

Bakhtin, carnival and binary oppositions

In Bakhtin's examination of European folk culture traditions he uncovers a recurring

---

[61] J. Lowell Lewis quoted in Fryer (2000: 29).

collapsing of the differences between otherwise clearly separated notions and phenomena. Some of the most striking are those between high and low class, authority and anarchy, birth and death. This can be traced to the middle ages and still has a firm place in contemporary European carnival traditions. Bakhtin discerns in such joining of opposites a philosophical sense in the nonsense of revelry. Here, through the eyes of Goethe, he approaches a unity in the juxtaposition of disparate elements:

> Beyond the isolated, apparently unrelated foolish pranks, obscenities, and coarse familiarity of carnival, and also in its complete lack of seriousness the poet sensed a single viewpoint on the world and a single style.
>
> (Bakhtin 1984: 252)

The dramatised de-construction of relative social and biological status does indeed open to the observer (or participant) the way to meditations on the fundamentals of social structure and human existence.

Although one of the roots of *Carnaval* in Brazil is clearly the popular festival tradition of Europe, some of the expressions particularly remarked on by Bakhtin, such as mock birthing and dismemberment were not observed by the myself in Bahia. Cross dressing however was very much in evidence, with entire *blocos* of hundreds of men in female dress. This relates to a particular view of Brazilian identity explained here by Caetano Veloso:

> To people in the United States 'white is white, black is black, and mulata, there's no such thing. Gay is gay, macho is macho, woman is woman, money is money. That's how rights are bargained for, granted, won and lost up there. Down here, indefinition is the rule, and we dance with a grace that I myself can't explain.'
>
> (Quoted in Vianna 1999: 109)

Beyond this it is possible to draw a parallel with Bakhtin's observation relating to

Rabelais' surreal descriptions of the acting out of birth and slaughter:

> These images create with great artistry an extremely dense atmosphere of the
> body as a whole in which all the dividing lines between man and beast, between
> the consuming and consumed organs are fused with the generating womb. We
> thus obtain a truly grotesque image of one single, superindividual bodily life, of
> the great bowels that devour and are devoured, generate and are generated...We
> see looming...the devoured and devouring womb of the earth and the ever-
> regenerated body of the people.
>
> (Bakhtin 1984: 226)

Eating and being eaten, birth and dismemberment, priest and devil, beggar and king; all
are brought together in carnival and confused and no less is true of the obfuscation of
gender. Particularly the unifying thought which Bakhtin crystallises as the 'body of the
people' is brought into focus by the sight of hundreds of men in drag, be they as girls in
mini skirts or as matronly *baianas*; the all important male-female distinction, in what is
predominantly a sexualised and macho culture, is temporarily erased and reveals a unified
humanity:

> In the world of carnival all hierarchies are cancelled, all castes and ages are equal.
>
> (Bakhtin 1984: 251)

The unity of the people can be conceived biologically, philosophically or socially:

> This festive organisation of the crowd must be first of all concrete and sensual.
> Even the pressing throng, the physical contact of bodies, acquires a certain
> meaning. The individual feels that he is an indissoluble part of the collectivity, a
> member of the people's mass body. In this whole the individual body ceases to a
> certain extent to be itself; it is possible, so to say, to exchange bodies, to be
> renewed (through change of costume and mask). At the same time the people

become aware of their sensual, material bodily unity and community.

(Bakhtin 1984: 255)

Thus the performance and satirisation of oppositions of gender, class and so on cause us to divest ourselves of the defensive ego which has to assert its personal identity against others under normal conditions. In exchange for this we are given freedom and normally repressed portions of society and of the personality are given licence to run amok.

The symbolic suspensions of authority, which are found even in the highly ordered modern German polity during carnival in the Rhineland, have a more direct expression in Salvador. Reading one of the city's daily newspapers reveals shootings, hold-ups and even lynchings as commonplace all the year round. However there is a measure of perceived zoning, in that there are some areas which are extremely violent and others which are heavily policed. The latter are those frequented by tourists and affluent Brazilians and are relatively safe. Poorer areas on the other hand can be extremely dangerous. Most locals are very clear about which areas are to be avoided (by themselves and tourists) but the perception of what is a safe and what is a violent area varies from person to person and depends partly on where they themselves live. It is fair to say that most Salvadorians are suspicious of most parts of their city.

During *Carnaval* all social strata and *bairros* meet however. The zones and the safe-dangerous distinctions are lost, like so many others, or at least they are brought into extremely close contact. A *camarote* may be relatively safe, but it still has to be approached on the street and usually on foot. Muggings are common and pickpocketing becomes a kind of mass pastime which is almost impossible to avoid in the crush.[62]

---

[62] Bakhtin mentions that 'One of the most famous an popular diableries of the sixteenth century was produced at Chaumont in the Haute-Marne as part of the "Mystery of St. John." The announcement of the performance mentioned that the male and female devils would run loose in the streets of the city and of the nearby villages several days before the opening. The actors, disguised as devils, felt that they were somehow out of bondage and communicated this feeling to those who came into contact with them. They created an atmosphere of unbridled carnivalesque freedom. They considered themselves exempt from the law and, being mostly recruited among poor people (hence the expression "poor devil"), they often took

Supposedly one is safer parading as part of a *bloco*, but even here thefts by other *bloco* members are reported. On the other hand the police presence is massive, with an observation post every few dozen meters and patrols of the steel helmeted Polícia Militar never far away. These always consist of five male or female officers armed with truncheons, pistols and sometimes electric shock weapons. They are notoriously violent themselves and although many Brazilians approve of their tearing through the crowd in pursuit of an offender, injuries of the innocent are common and inevitable. Thus there is danger from 'the law' and 'the mob' alike. The vexed struggle over social control and law and order in Brazilian society is here presented as a theatre of the absurd with the distinctions between criminals, police, costumed performers and revellers thrown into confusion.[63]

What is crucially confused in all this is sense and non-sense, or to put it another way, meaning. If, as Zygmunt Bauman claims, meaning is made up of oppositions,[64] then the dissolution of oppositions suggests a meaning vacuum, or at least a wiping clean of conventional meanings, making possible another, perhaps deeper understanding, as Bakhtin and (as he shows us) Goethe suggest. Meaning and the reading of meaning are central to Level II accessibility and in *Carnaval* the profusion of signs offers meanings which can be grasped at easily, but frequently burst in the hand like bubbles, bringing the accessible and inaccessible close together. Particular identities are musically enacted and publicly performed, they may be defined by problematic oppositions of race, class, gender, and yet are transformed into theatre, vaudeville, caricature. In this context there can be a presentation and negotiation of difference, musical and otherwise, because everything is literally 'out in the open', accessible, even if everything is not necessarily what it seems. We can relate such openness to 'dialogism', which in Holquist's reading of

---

advantage of their role to rob the peasants and mend their financial affairs. Regulations were often issued to restrict the devils' bahaviour off stage' (p. 266).

[63] This is in no way an unreal perspective. In everyday Bahian life the police are corrupt, their violence casual and usually unsanctioned, the rich are renowned for defrauding the government while many *favelas* suffer from endemic drug-fuelled gang warfare involving firearms.

[64] See Abbott (1998: 8).

Bakhtin is seen to 'militate against monadism, the illusion of closed-off bodies or isolated psyches in bourgeois individualism, and the concept of a pristine closed-off, static identity and truth wherever it may be found' (Holquist 1990: 90).

Bakhtin addresses another aspect of carnival which has already been mentioned in this chapter: the blurring of the distinction between performers and audience. He identifies this distinction as 'footlights', borrowed from theatrical terminology:

> The absence of clearly established footlights is characteristic of all popular-festive forms. The utopian truth is enacted in life itself.
>
> (Bakhtin 1984: 265)

Talking of those disguised as devils as part of renaissance passion plays Bakhtin claims:

> Thus, though a part of the mystery, the diablerie was related to carnival. It crossed the footlights to merge with the life of the marketplace and enjoyed similar privileges of freedom.
>
> (Bakhtin 1984: 267)

This denial of a separation between art and life has its concomitant in the borderless musicalisation of a context here described by a *capoeira* master:

> The main thing in all manifestations of black culture is that they always go hand in hand with music, and *capoeira* is no different...Basically the function of music is to give rhythm to the whole environment, to the whole process, but within this rhythm you notice other things; sometimes it even liberates people. People who are normally timid start to feel other values, they become uninhibited... [65]

---

[65] Mestre Nenel of Filhos de Bimba, interviewed by the author in March 2005.

The smudged line between performers and others means that the divide between identity and integration, between accessing and being accessed is breached, and music is not the preserve of the few, of specialists, of particular places or strata.

Carnaval as medium

Claude Lévi-Strauss (1978: 44) compares the structures of myths to musical forms such as the Rondo and the Fugue. There is in this the suggestion of a global intelligibility based on inherent thought structures, going beyond localised cultural homologies and across different forms of expression. In another musical analogy he explains that cultural manifestations need to be read like a score, meaning that the staves have to be taken together and not in isolation (1978: 39-40). This suggests an extremely embedded kind of meaning which may only be read subconsciously, putting us in mind of Horkheimer's somnambulant masses and Freud's psychoanalytic interpretations. In this reading of culture it is possible that aspects of different layers of a performance, such as a *Carnaval*, reinforce each other at a deep level, calling forth echoes in different modalities.

A concern for overarching significance beyond specific utterances can also be discerned in Marshall McLuhan (1964) who is of course best known for his dictum; 'the medium is the message'. His concern with 'media' is extremely wide, including as it does such phenomena as money, oil, trains and novels. Thus he claims that railways changed the world in a number of ways (such as collapsing distance) regardless of what was being conveyed in their carriages. In the same way modern electronic media impact on our lives in ways which have little to do with their (in any case uncontrollable) content. If we take *Carnaval* as a medium then, what might its message be? It would be an oversimplification to try and sum up such a meaning in one phrase, but the importance of *Carnaval* in Bahian and Brazilian society is as fundamental as that of any other crucial medium. It is a pivotal component of economy and culture. As has been discussed, much

about *Carnaval* is contradictory, such as the dimensions of identity and inclusivity, community and disorder. Yet it is precisely here that a start can be made. *Carnaval* shows us a way of presenting who we are in an inclusive way. There is a sense of 'all together now' which does not attempt to uniform; we may belong to almost any *bloco* or none. If I am white and want to parade with a *bloco afro*, even if Ilê Aiyê will not oblige me, Cortejo Afro or Malé de Balé certainly will. Yet their expression of Africaness will not be effaced by this. Like our contemporary electronic media *Carnaval* is a multimedia medium. Music is inseparable from dance, costume, words, identity, visual art, satire. All these 'surfaces' interact and provide potential points of access. The people together, the arts together, the arts talking to each other, the peoples talking to each other, merging, and singing of who they are and how they want to be.

An instance where the medium of carnival celebrations (and preparations) seems to have been more important than the musical content was the selection of Ilê Aiyê's carnival queen for 2005; a dance presentation by the candidates, followed by a concert by veteran *Carioca*[66] singer Elza Soares. The contestants were not competing on looks alone as in similar contests but 'the candidate has to demonstrate a knowledge of black culture and have mastered "*dança afro*" '. She would 'contribute to the appreciation of the woman of African descent and to the fight against discrimination, ideas which mark the philosophy of Ilê Aiyê since its foundation thirty years ago'. Elza Soares, the star turn, is described in the newspaper preview from which these quotes are taken, as 'an authentic ebony goddess...Symbol of survival and the overcoming of difficult obstacles in life and career, she radiates, with her 67 years, good humour and a lust for life which is not found in many people of somewhat younger age.'[67]

Although this *bloco* excludes whites from its carnival parades, this event was open to all, in fact some of the judges were white academics and Caetano Veloso was a guest of

---

[66] Meaning 'from Rio de Janeiro'.
[67] *A Tarde*, 14/2/2005. Eduardo Bastos, "Noite das deusas." Fim de Semana, p. 7, my translation.

honour. Thus there was no doubt that this was a celebration of black consciousness and survival, but in an inclusive *Carnaval* spirit. Unfortunately the Elza Soares set was marred by serious sound problems; at times there was so much bass feedback that the bassist threw up his hands in frustration. Most of the audience were standing for hours and the sound, as well as being excruciatingly loud, could at times have been described as abstract. Yet the (mostly black) audience seemed to be enjoying the experience and carried on in a spirit of party and celebration. The meaning of the event was clear, and identity *and* accessibility were at its core. Under those circumstances the compromised quality and accessibility of the musical content was of secondary importance. The medium, on this occasion, really was the message.

Carnaval, accessibility and globalisation

Over forty years ago McLuhan appraised a situation that since then has intensified:

> Today, after more than a century of electric technology, we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace, abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned.

> (1964: 3)

In view of the present trajectory of ever more efficient mass communication and globalisation, questions of identity and accessibility will become daily more pressing for all cultures and art forms. How to assert one's right to exist in this interconnected world without becoming indistinguishable from it? Brazilians have faced this dilemma for 500 years, as indeed have other Americans, north and south:

> Mario Vargas Llosa, for example, has declared that 'there are, always have been, and surely will be ever more intermingling' among Latin America's diverse cultural wellsprings. Like Freyre, though for different reasons, Carlos Fuentes

310

characterizes the mestiço cultures of Latin America as a sort of global cultural vanguard: 'the whole world will become what we have long been, a world of [racial and cultural] mixing'.

<div align="right">(Vianna 1999: 110)</div>

Any attempt to 'market' one's culture in the welter of competition is likely to be attended by fears of homogenisation through accessibilisation, which could 'produce a world oppressively dominated by sameness'.[68] Lévi-Strauss claims that: 'All humanity lumped together in one way of life would be unthinkable because it would be petrified'.[69]

Perhaps the *Carnaval* of Salvador da Bahia provides an example of identities in cooperation rather than competition, managing to be accessible without becoming homogenised, because while presentations are designed to appeal widely, they also serve to project different identities. Furthermore, the various *blocos* do not simply vie for attention with each other, but they are collectively positioned on a global stage. This event is a major tourist attraction, but the particular approach and confidence of Bahian musicians means that outsiders are frequently welcome not just to attend but to participate at various levels, to the extent that they may train to do so in their own countries. Thus Bahian music is disseminated beyond Bahia, and beyond Brazil, by virtue of representing forms of identity which incorporate accessibility and inclusivity.

We are all global consumers but Bauman reminds us that although 'All of us are doomed to the life of choices, ...not all of us have the means to be choosers' (1998: 86). The global exchange is not equitable. African-Brazilians are predominantly amongst the poor of Brazil and Brazilians are predominantly amongst the poor of the world. The fact that Bahian music brings in tourist dollars and that a few *samba-reggae* entrepreneurs such as Carlinhos Brown and Giba Gonçalves are doing well, does not change the overall freedom/power/wealth/mobility gradient between rich and poor. But perhaps *samba-*

---

[68] Loc cit.
[69] Quoted in ibid: 111.

reggae does suggest how people can lay claim to a voice, and enact an empowerment at least culturally. It shows us ways of absorbing without copying (such as reggae elements in *samba-reggae*), of resisting without withdrawing, of being accessible without giving up on refashioning one's culture in a way that seems to answer adequately to one's situation and particular historical, contemporary, local and global context.

Summary

As in the examination of Vaughan Williams' attitudes to musical accessibility it has become clear from this delineation of some of the music cultures of Bahia that historical and cultural contexts have a considerable influence on the way music is intended and conceived, presented and received. Through a history of cultural mixing and a positive valorisation of the processes involved, Brazil provides an environment particularly conducive to distinct but accessible musical forms. It has been argued in Chapter 6 that vernacular musics often aid Level II accessibility by addressing themselves to an idea of a community. Such communities may in many cases be thought of in terms of identities and it has been demonstrated above that notions of identity are an important aspect of Bahian musics. However, looking back to our discussion of subculture we may recall that accessibility linked to identity is frequently as much about excluding as it is about including. Remarkably, Bahian musical forms such as *samba-reggae* frequently combine a clear and powerful assertion of identity with a high measure of accessibility at all three Levels, even to 'outsiders'. Furthermore, the contradiction between resistance to oppressive social forces and accessibility found in Horkheimer's view of modern art is also elided in Bahia, since many musical groups address issues of oppression both musically and through social activism, while maintaining extensive accessibility.

Such high accessibility is achieved by practices which involve the following:

1. Performance in public places

2. Multimedia presentation

3. Encouragement of participation

4. Appeal to identities

5. Combination of complexity and simplicity in musical forms

The combination of accessibility factors appertaining to all three Levels reaffirms the interrelatedness of these Levels identified in Chapter 2. The sectioning off, in Northern European culture, of musical sound from other aspects of culture, the body and the social body, have gone hand in hand with the specialisation required by industrialisation. Nicholas Cook reminds us that:

> If the public concert began what might be called the narrowing of the doors of musical perception, the process has been completed by mechanical reproduction: the technology of radio, long-playing records, and CDs filters out everything from music except the sound.

> (1998: 266)

In Salvador there are many examples of the integration of linguistic, visual and physical performance with music. Divisions we tend to take for granted in the UK; between playing and dancing, performer and audience, listening and singing, and between musical performance and visual presentation, are called into question by Bahian practices. This might lead us to consider whether what we often accept music to be, that is 'the sound', is indeed everything that music is. This chapter presents musical sound as part of a range of performative and sensory modalities, enveloping people who are clearly part of a social context. Perhaps the three Levels of accessibility can also be viewed as three ways of thinking about music: music as stimuli reaching the senses (Level I), music as structures and signs being perceived, understood and reacted to by the subject (Level II), and music as an active, social process (Level III). In Bahia it seems difficult to separate these. In the UK it sometimes appears difficult to bring them together.

Chapter 8

Case Study 3b

Samba in Wales:
How is Adopted Music Accessible?

Samba, bossa nova or *tempo de Carnaval*: one loves all these musical currents without ever knowing which, how, when, nor why they saw the light of day. The most remarkable thing about this spontaneous enthusiasm, is that it endures...: from boisterous samba to tasteful bossa nova, Brazilian rhythms have had their followers for more than eighty years. When a new fashion emerges, Brazilian music withdraws a little, almost modestly; until that passing trend becomes exhausted. Then it reappears, still exercising its attractions.

(Delfino 1998: 9)[1]

Introduction

This chapter examines street samba percussion, including notably the *samba-reggae* style extensively discussed in the previous chapter, as an adopted music played by a band in

---

[1] My translation. This opening passage of Delfino's book begins with a quote from Darius Milhaud in which he speaks of 'That typically Brazilian little nothing', suggesting an easy digestibility and accessibility at the heart of that music. Delfino is writing from a French point of view and links with Brazil have been much stronger in France than in Britain over the last century. 2005 was celebrated as the 'Year of Brazil' in France.

Wales: Samba Bangor. The intention is to debate questions of musical meaning in relation to homology and context, particularly when music is initially alien to its recipients and participants. As with the previous one, this chapter uses ethnographic methodology, which includes formal interviews with band members, and begins with a survey of the locale and its cultural and demographic attributes. The Band being researched and the music they play is described and there is an account of how rhythms are disseminated. Typical rehearsal and performance procedures are described. Particular attention is then paid to how band members first came into contact with this music, why it attracted them and why they decided to join the band. This is seen as crucial as it should illuminate questions of how and why music from a different culture to the recipient can be meaningful, attractive and accessible. In the discussion which follows similarities and differences in uses and meanings of samba percussion between Bangor and Bahia are investigated, as is the question of how meanings and uses are constituted in the adopted culture.

Accessibility and adopted music

Blacking's claim that that 'Music can communicate nothing to unprepared and unreceptive minds' (1995: 35) reflects a well-established stance in ethnomusicology, emphasising that musical understanding is dependent on enculturation and a familiarity with other cultural norms. The idea of what Turino calls the 'homologous relationship between musical culture and...values in other realms of activity' (1989: 2) is also widely espoused. It follows that accessibility, particularly at LII, but also for participation, would depend largely on familiarity with a music's cultural substratum. While it is unarguable that knowledge and experience of music facilitates access to its meanings and uses, being confronted by unfamiliar music 'unprepared', without prior knowledge of its codes and associations, is commonplace in a globalised situation. Such collisions by no means always result in bewilderment. Indeed alien music is frequently espoused and adopted and many musical histories have been shaped by such processes. In the absence of prior

315

knowledge about music, how does such music mean? How is its field of possible significations interrelationships and uses revealed? Is it in fact possible that social relationships and ideologies are encoded in musical styles and can be decoded reliably by an entirely different set of people? Or, on the other hand, do the adopting parties ascribe meanings to their chosen style in a way that bears no relationship to the originating culture? If meaning is merely associational, the adopted form could be used as a *tabula rasa* to represent any desired set of values. If there is an element of homology, the question of how meaning is derived and constituted for practitioners who are not originally culture-bearers becomes pertinent.

European street samba

The 1990s in North Western Europe saw the flowering of dozens of percussion groups, often calling themselves samba bands, or schools of samba. At the time of writing the website *Samba in Britain and Ireland*[2] lists nearly 200 bands, the number having more than doubled since 1999. Essentially these bands specialise in the rhythms (rather than the songs) of street bands and *blocos* of the kind that process during *Carnaval* in the urban centres of Rio de Janeiro, Salvador da Bahia and Recife. In many cases European groups play music from a variety of origins (Manchester boasts a band called Sambhangra which plays a mixture of Brazilian and Indian music!), but Brazilian rhythms, instruments and terminology are central. The present chapter[3] examines the theoretical questions outlined above in relation to Samba Bangor,[4] a relatively small group from North Wales. Fieldwork comprised regularly attending rehearsals, performances and social gatherings, both as an observer and as a player, over a period of three years between 1996 and 1999 and observations in the text are from point of view of the end of this period, unless otherwise stated.[5] Further investigations included participating in and hearing other

---

[2] <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/mally/samba/bands.htm>
[3] Published in part in Eisentraut 2001.
[4] Latterly Batala Bangor.
[5] Beyond the period of intensive research my contact with the band has continued and at the time of writing

ensembles, meeting members of different bands from Britain and Germany, as well as the gathering of video material in Salvador da Bahia in 1997/1998.

Feld writes that 'the *perception* of style is empirically real, but...it is also necessarily, general, vague, and physical, feelingfully ingrained in affective time and space' (Keil & Feld 1994: 112).[6] Informants' statements about musical meaning and significance arise out of this *melange* of subjectivity. They are not quantitative and yet Feld goes so far as to credit them with 'empirical' reality. Ultimately they are as close as we get to the relationship between music and human being. Small, in *Musicking*, describes the western art music concert with fascinating perceptiveness, but almost without any statements from those doing the 'musicking' (which includes the audience in his analysis). The main data of the study presented in this chapter is extensive interview material and the tenor of the paper represents respondents' attributions and perceptions as much as those of the researcher. This qualitative approach, which has been widely used in social science research, psychology, as well as constituting an important tranche of ethnography,[7] is more appropriate to a group the size of Samba Bangor since the numbers involved are too small to yield useful statistical results. The questions involved are also largely of a subjective nature and more amenable to interview exploration rather than the more simple questions that would be asked in a questionnaire.

In further field work in 2004 the author attended an *encontro* between a group of bands called Batala[8] of which Samba Bangor was by then essentially a member. The opportunity

---

has stretched over 10 years.

[6] My italics.

[7] See Miles, M. & M. Huberman. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[8] Batala represents a new era in the history of Samba Bangor (since 2001) during which the band has come under the influence of Paris based Giba Gonçalves. Giba is a professional musician and music entrpreneur closely associated with Cortejo Afro in Salvador, where he also has a home. He has been instrumental in setting up a number of bands in France and Britain who are all called Batala and all play exclusively his samba-reggae compositions. The link to the Bahian bloco afro style which was privileged in any case has thus been strengthened considerably for Bangor samba. Furthermore they have, through Giba who gives occasional work-shops at considerable cost to the band, a direct link to Brazil, which has resulted in some of them going to Salvador to play with Cortejo Afro in *Carnaval*.

See <http://www.mundobatala.com/home.htm>

thus arose to use a questionnaire on a large enough sample of players. The results of this are used to supplement the information gleaned earlier.[9]

Samba in Wales

In a scorching summer field near Ffostrasol, an audience of several hundred local youth and fans from around Wales appreciate Welsh and other Celtic 'folk' orientated bands at the Cnapan *festival. The atmosphere is extremely relaxed, mainly due to the heat, and brisk business at the marquee bar. In these circumstances the bands are finding it difficult to elicit any reaction beyond lethargic applause. Enter Samba Bangor; fifteen people in 'ethnic' patterned ponchos and mini parasol hats, playing frantic Brazilian rhythms on a variety of strange and impressive percussion instruments; tiny drums - a reco-reco[10] made with springs - huge surdos.[11] A significant section of the audience is galvanised into excited dancing and whooping, more people gather round for a better view of the stage. The applause becomes enthusiastic. Several girls dance wildly for the entire set and when the band moves into the crowd to play the last couple of pieces, they are ringed by the appreciative and the curious.*

Samba Bangor - and Bangor

Samba Bangor are a group with about seven core players and a fairly fluid wider membership of about another twenty. Most are in their thirties and forties with a few younger adults. The majority are well educated, but with low to medium incomes. There is a more or less equal balance between the sexes which has however veered towards the male in recent months, as a number of births have affected the availability of several

---

[9] Such multi-methodological approaches have been called 'triangulation', a term which could be applied to this thesis in general. See *Triangulation in Research.* <http://www.tele.sunyit.edu/traingulation.htm>
[10] Guiro type idiophone.
[11] Large tenor drums.

female members. There are no obvious categories which will encompass all Samba Bangor members. The band divides in more or less equal proportions into those in formal employment; those unemployed, those in casual or self employment; and students. In all, this results in a varied social mix with a majority of members able to organise much of their time themselves. The student contingent provides a few players from overseas, almost all of the others are from an English background. In 1999 Greek players (2) significantly outnumbered native (Welsh speaking) Welsh (1).

To some extent one may discern a predilection for alternative lifestyles which is also a feature of many who *choose* to live in and around the small University town of Bangor. In the 1960s and '70s the area became something of a magnet for those seeking a way out of the materialistic mainstream because of its remoteness, its natural beauty, its low cost of living and perhaps also because of the cultural ambivalence (exemplified by Welsh-English bilingualism). Some Samba Bangor members have been resident since that time and the locality retains something of an 'alternative lifestyle' ambience.

One player mentioned that he thought people in Bangor were more receptive to samba than in Caernarfon or Llandudno (other towns in the region), because Bangor consisted of 'left-overs'; left over students, hippies, escapees from Thatcher's Britain, those who have opted out. This suggests a particular use of samba as community-generating music for people somehow adrift and cut off, which could of course also apply to current Bangor students who are far from home.

The Welsh context

The county of Gwynedd in which Bangor lies (most Samba Bangor members live outside what is officially the 'City' of Bangor) is predominantly Welsh speaking[12] and is therefore

---

[12] <http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/index.cymraeg.htm>

rich in Welsh cultural activity. In UK terms however it is peripheral and non-Welsh immigrants find themselves part of a minority within a minority, which can be difficult for them to come to terms with. This may be expressed in a rather defensive, negative stance towards Welsh culture which is quite prevalent amongst Samba Bangor members. Some incomers learn the language in an attempt at a more positive engagement with their adopted home, but only a few reach a stage of comfortable fluency.

The ensemble under scrutiny are part of a UK, and indeed Europe-wide, growth in Afro-Brazilian style percussion bands. Samba Bangor members may in many ways be typical of other *sambistas*[13] in the rest of Britain. However, in this part of Wales, the linguistic and cultural environment has a particular structure which must be fed into the ethnography. Furthermore, while rehearsals are conducted in English, many of the performance contexts such as playing in the street, at *eisteddfodau*, village carnivals, sports events and Welsh language rock concerts, bring the band into contact with the largely Welsh speaking environment. At such events there is sometimes nervousness about the band's position as cultural outsiders and a certain apologetic reticence about introducing the band in English when all other communications from the stage will be in Welsh.[14] Another aspect of this is that many of the mainstream cultural activities which are supported by the community, and in some cases funded by government agencies, are configured around Welsh language and identity, such as the *Urdd* (cultural youth organisation), *eisteddfodau*, *cerdd dant*[15] festivals and choirs. There is a perception amongst some members that Samba Bangor are somehow excluded from funding, and such opportunities as holding youth workshops, because they are outside the circle of Welsh cultural activity.

---

[13] People who play samba.

[14] The interaction between samba and Welsh culture is in many ways symbiotic, as is evidenced by the fact *samba* bands play at the kind of events mentioned. At the time of writing Samba Bangor are regularly playing support to Anweledig, a successful Welsh ska band. The audiences are almost exclusively Welsh speaking, but very appreciative of the *samba* band and relations between the two bands are friendly.

[15] Traditional Welsh method of setting poetry to music incorporating a pre-existing melody.

It is impossible to live in Gwynedd without being confronted by the Welsh-English cultural divide. Many people on both sides have strong feelings and opinions on the matter. When anyone engages in a socio-cultural activity, the question of whether it takes place through the medium of Welsh, or not, is woven into a complex web of historical, demographic and linguistic juxtapositions and power relations. When people join Samba Bangor, they are essentially affirming their outsider status. When they perform in an *eisteddfod*,[16] they are unusual not just because they play Brazilian music, but because they are not Welsh speakers. The uses samba has for these players may therefore be amplified and inflected by the context into which it is projected.

Some key band members

John, the leader of Samba Bangor, was involved in the percussion workshops in 1994 that led to the band's inception. Since that time he has been the main motivating force, becoming knowledgeable about samba in the process and providing much needed continuity in a group with quite fluid membership. Musical interests date from his teens at which time he liked R&B and later soul. In the 'eighties he became interested in 'world music' and went to WOMAD festivals. He has a self-deprecating view of his own musical gifts and apart form his present interest in percussion only played piano as a child, to which he does not attach any significance. John has a strong sense of what the band's aims should be. 'Community' and 'empowerment' are terms he uses readily and he expects others to be prepared to contribute time and effort freely for the furtherment of the group and its ideals.

An enthusiastic member of the band, who attends regularly and knows the repertoire on *tamborim*,[17] is Susan. She is in her thirties and has returned to Bangor from London,

---

[16] Welsh competitive arts festival.

[17] Small hand-held drum.

where she had a successful career, to recuperate from an illness. Susan plays and dances with the band and is powerfully drawn to several kinds of Latin and African rhythmic music. In London she participated in the salsa scene and there are some interesting parallels in her initial encounter with the two genres. In both cases she describes having become fascinated by them at a key moment; salsa upon hearing a piece on television and feeling compelled to find out more about it, and samba when she saw two *baterias*[18] play at the 'Hay on Fire' festival in Hay on Wye and found she simply had to follow them around the town while dancing, to the consternation of the friends accompanying her. Samba has clearly replaced salsa for her on moving to Bangor, both in terms of social and musical life. She explains that the interpersonal aspect has grown in significance for her, claiming that initially 'the rhythm thing was about 99% of it' whereas after a two years its importance had dropped to '50 or 60% and the other part is the group...creating something in a group situation'. By the end of the main research period for this chapter in 1999, Susan is living with another group member and they have a young child together.

Maggie is another player who values the communal feeling the band affords. She is specific about how she perceives this as musically engendered: 'it's a communication...with the other people you're playing with, - or for.' She is one of the members with a 'regular' job, and in a way samba is simply a leisure pursuit. She explains: 'I needed a hobby and I've tried things like pot plants, but I can loose myself completely in samba whereas I couldn't lose myself in propagating plants; but some people do.' Maggie, who is in her forties and lives with a semi-professional blues musician, claims that playing samba has not only opened up the possibility of performing music to her, but also boosted her confidence in other ways.

Dewi, is a native Welsh speaker and interestingly was brought up in a family which practised traditional Welsh musical forms such as *cerdd dant* but he turned away from these as he gained adulthood. Although he has many English friends, he is supportive of

---

[18] Portuguese word for percussion section used in British samba. The word is not often used in this sense in Salvador where it usually means 'drum kit' which is why it did not arise in the previous chapter.

Welsh culture generally and uses the language freely. I would therefore not describe his involvement in samba as symptomatic of his turning away from his native culture, but maybe as a way of individuating himself vis-à-vis that culture. What he made very clear was that he feels samba to be 'more me' than traditional Welsh music. In his case the adoption of an 'alien' music is particularly remarkable since it has been made in the presence of an available musical culture rooted in his personal and ethnic history, which does not seem to be the case for most of the other members.

Instruments, repertoire and dissemination

The repertoire of Samba Bangor consists of percussion-only versions of some of the important Brazilian genres such as *samba-reggae, baião,*[19] *batucada,*[20] *afoxé* and *samba de roda,* as well as a piece of Sikh origin and the occasional version of a western popular or dance track, also rendered in percussion only. There are also some compositions generated within the group and these may have an optional rap or melody. Instruments are imported from Brazil and purchased from specialist suppliers in the UK. We would recognize them as staples of Rio *baterias* such as the *surdo, caixa, repinique* and *tamborim.*

Street samba rhythms consist mainly of two-bar 2/4 patterns which are sometimes written as two 4/4 bars with the note values doubled. In 2/4 however, there are generally *surdo* beats on the crotchets. *Caixas* and *repiniques* largely play continuous semiquavers, but with accented off beats, particularly the notes leading into crotchet on beats. The semiquavers are played with a certain amount of bunching around one of the crotchets of the bar, giving a feeling of rising and falling tension. Bells and *tamborims* accent syncopations and are frequently used for two bar patterns with one half mainly on the beat and the other falling on syncopations. Particular parts sometimes vary their pattern so that

---

[19] Northeast Brazilian song style.
[20] Rio samba rhythm.

they in effect play a longer one which might repeat every four or eight bars.

Pieces tend to have introductory and coda sections and 'breaks' in the main groove. During such breaks, all instruments often play homophonically, or in mixed groups for call and response passages, or the call and response may be between the leader's *repinique* and the rest of the *bateria*. In Brazil, where many of the conductors do not play while they lead, such punctuations, changes and breaks in the fundamental groove are often dictated by the song with which that particular variant of the rhythm is associated. In Europe, where use of melody is the exception rather than the rule, they represent independent determinants of the structure of the piece. Samba Bangor play a number of arrangements which change into a completely different rhythm after a bridge section and back again later. They also make use of dynamic and tempo variations. Sections where instrumental groups drop out in different combinations are performed by most *baterias* encountered in the course of the study.

Dissemination of samba rhythms to and among Europeans is by a mixture of face to face teaching and notation. There are a number of professional percussionists such as Dudu Tucci, Giba Gonçalves and Sam Alexander who 'import' rhythms and techniques. Sam Alexander for instance, has close links with Recife and specialises in the Maracatu beats associated with that Brazilian city. He runs workshops attended by players from a number of other bands. On return to their own bands *sambistas* may pass on what they have learned.

The main form of transmission is teaching by the band leader who will have a whole piece committed to memory. He or she demonstrates the rhythm that each instrumental section has to play and they imitate. Subtle elements such as degrees of 'swing' and precise mallet or stick technique are sometimes contentious and there is a certain amount of striving for 'authenticity' in these matters.

Rehearsals and performance

The band usually rehearse once a week and play in public once or twice a week during the summer. Sometimes a 'gig' replaces the rehearsal. Performance opportunities include town and village carnivals, festivals, clubs (e.g. at a Bangor Student's Union 'club night' called 'Ethnomuzicology' [sic]), as well as events such as bonfire nights, *eisteddfodau*, rock gigs and parties in North Wales and beyond. Occasionally they travel to England, Ireland or even France to perform, meet with other *sambistas*[21] or attend workshops. Strength at concerts and rehearsals is generally between seven and fifteen, which is about the size of the *baterias* found in Rio de Janeiro in the early days of samba (Raphael 1990: 79) and of some *Carnaval* bands in provincial areas of Brazil (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 487).

A typical rehearsal takes place in a small disused Catholic church in Bangor on Saturday afternoon. Players drift in and start chatting between the official start time and about half an hour later. The instruments are brought in by John and Bryn, a long standing and indispensable member, who is giving him a hand. Both are men in their mid forties who have lived in Bangor most of their adult lives and have been heavily involved in community ventures such as street theatre and a food co-op. The players are dressed casually and colourfully. John is keen to get the rehearsal underway and tries to fix everyone up with an instrument. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly. Any newcomers or spectators are given an instrument to try.

Eventually a circle is formed and after some quick reminders to the different sections of their patterns, the first rhythm is started with a virtuosic introduction on John's *repinique*. Players who are not sure of their part will often follow a neighbour who is playing the same (type of) instrument or pattern. Although the *mestre* has clear authority over the proceedings, there is a good deal of help given by other experienced players to those in

---

[21] Band members refer to such meetings using the Portuguese word *encontro*.

need of it. This is conducive to a feeling of mutual support and once a piece is going well, the band stepping to the rhythm, there is a tangible sense of communal enjoyment, with people smiling at each other as they play.

Sometimes, particularly when there are beginners present, John will begin the session with a series of warm-up exercises which also demonstrate some samba percussion fundamentals. Crucially this begins with the 'samba step'. This movement is one of the aspects of playing this music emphasised in almost every situation where it is taught, both in Wales and Brazil. The two main forms are either two steps forward followed by two steps back, or a side to side movement of swaying steps and stops. In both cases the first beat of the first bar of the cycle coincides with the right foot stepping out or forward. John explains that the step measures out the two bar cycle and how the beats are distributed along it. Everybody stands in a circle and follows the sequence of steps continually. He then asks everyone to clap minims, then crotchets, quavers, quaver triplets and semiquavers, while still doing the step. Beginners are always taught to 'step' to the beat. Conductors will regularly demonstrate and lead it, reminding even expert *sambistas* to move to the rhythm. Not every player is always moving, on the other hand more elaborate dance moves are often incorporated. These may be individual variations on the step, or synchronised choreographies involving groups of players.

Rehearsals continue for approximately three hours with a break halfway, during which we mostly chat, drink coffee and smoke. During the entire rehearsal only two different rhythms may be attempted. These will usually be new to only a minority of the players. While these learn them for the first time, others are perfecting their technique, enjoying playing and bringing in subtle variations.[22] Players generally adhere to their pattern when playing a specific piece, but may vary emphases and dynamics. (Occasionally

---

[22] The tension between accessibility and excellence which is discussed below sometimes manifests itself in the expressed boredom of experienced members at having to be patient while a never ending stream of newcomers and weak players are shown the basic. As with the other aspects of this dialectic, the options are limited by the size of the band (and the town) which prohibits the formation of a 'beginners' and 'advanced' section.

improvisatiory sessions develop where everyone chooses what they play and changes it at will). Band members will generally be associated with a particular instrument, and therefore with particular patterns for each piece.

Punctuality is not expected of *sambistas* for rehearsals. Although there is an official start and end time, essentially people drift in and out during the session. One rehearsal I attended which was scheduled to run from midday until 3 pm, actually lasted from 12.20 until 4.45. During that time people came and departed, with only a core of about five remaining for the whole time. At its peak the band numbered sixteen players. This particular session however was not an aimless 'jam'. It was a specific practice for a forthcoming performance at a large private party over the border in England. Particular pieces were being worked out, rehearsed and refined. Yet no one was told they were too late, or too inexperienced, to join in.

Ways into samba; possible preconceptions

In the mid-1990s Brazil did not attract much attention from the British media. 'Carnival in Rio' was in the public consciousness - for instance through occasional media representations of costumed dancers - but this did not extend to clear associations with the sounds of particular musical genres.[23] Some aspects of Brazilian *Carnaval* of which there *was* an awareness in Britain, are clearly rejected by the respondents and do not generally form part of British samba culture:

I had a vision of samba...of half nude women sort of twirling their tits - the carnival - and I wasn't interested, I just thought 'this is exhibitionism'. I think I'd

---

[23] Samba rhythms have influenced popular dance music during the late 'nineties in particular, but this phenomenon, which is probably in part due to the UK samba movement, was not significant at the time the informants for this paper became involved with samba. Nor does it seem to have penetrated the consciousness of the respondents of the questionnaire mentioned later. One is reminded of the opening quote of this chapter; Brazilian music makes repeated appearences without being clearly identified.

just seen lots of tinsel and glitter on various pictures.

Samba Bangor costumes are humorous rather than 'glamorous', silly rather than sexy. They show confidence by drawing attention to the band, but are worn with irony. They tend towards self-mockery (e.g. umbrellas or large plastic flowers worn on the head), rather than towards the heavy satire found in Rio (Guillermoprieto 1990: 188) or the specific ethnic references of Bahia.[24]

In the interviews conducted for this study, the question of what brought people to samba, and more specifically, what prior knowledge they had of it, was explicitly and thoroughly explored. Typical responses included:

I couldn't have told you what country it came from.

I just found it clicked into something.

I was also interested to discover whether notions of exoticism were a factor in people's attraction to the music. This did not appear to be the case. Respondents asserted that what initially engaged them was the experience of samba percussion in action. The direct impact of the music and its production is extremely powerful for some listeners in that it effects major changes in their social and cultural behaviour, both immediately and in the long term (if they join a band). This process can be observed in audience reaction, as the above description of the *Cnapan* performance illustrates.

The social context in which the music is encountered may be a street procession, a performance at a festival, or tuition at a workshop. Clearly in the workshop situation the participants have already shown an interest by attending, but the decision to sign up for

---

[24] The *afoxé* band Filhos de Gandhi dress like the eponymous Mahatma and North American Indian costumes were a favoured Salvador theme in the seventies. Today, Ilê Aiyê use African style graphics and clothes, and refer to African identity in their lyrics.

tuition often results from having heard a band perform. Some Bangor players had been interested in percussion, other kinds of 'world' music such as Bulgarian music, or Latin forms such as salsa dancing, prior to their encounter with samba. These previous musical predilections of 'Welsh' *sambistas*, while being quite wide ranging, usually have some commonality with samba percussion, being either dance forms, 'non-western' and/or percussion based. Thus the attitude people brought to samba was informed and prefigured by their interest in tangentially related music. However, this does not negate the specificity of samba as a genre and their reaction to it. Band members usually become involved after hearing a public performance by a British samba band, which is related as a epiphanic moment. One said: 'I thought; "this is it, I'm hooked on this samba sound" '. They were not musically naïve, but neither did they bring with them any specific knowledge of the original cultural context of the music. Their reaction was no *blasé* acceptance of yet another kind of 'ethnic' rhythmic music, but rather a recognition of something which spoke to them in a particular way and in which they wanted to participate.

The questionnaire returned by 38 respondents from various British bands of the Batala 'family' in 2004 provided the following information which supplements the above interview material:[25] 26 respondents reported little or no knowledge of samba before joining a band whereas only 2 had a clearer impression of the origins of the music. 22 first became aware of the style through local performances, while 26 cited the opportunity of belonging to a social network as an important factor attracting them to a band and/or remaining in it. Since the questionnaire allowed for statements, there was also qualitative information which supported the earlier investigation. Some respondents reported that samba had given them a whole way of life, including a way of earning money through tuition, reminding one of the value of social capital that can be gained through such involvement. Most striking perhaps were some of the other statements in response to the

---

[25] At the time of the original fieldwork Samba Bangor were small enough for the author to talk to all members in person. The sample for the questionnaire was drawn from a number of bands throughout the UK.

question: 'What do you get out of playing samba?' For instance the following:

The most fun and enjoyment I've ever got out of anything in my life.

The best thing in my life at the moment.

Priorities, Perceptions and Uses of Samba in Wales

The following section is predicated on the respondents' foregrounding of values they associate with participation in the band. There is little question that for them these values are to some extent genre specific. Finnegan's work in *The Hidden Musicians* (1989) gives a wealth of examples of musical involvements in a British community. In her discussion of rock bands she contrasts two in particular with entirely different aims; one hoping to become 'famous and wealthy' (p. 110) whereas the other 'saw the band's main rationale as voicing their political convictions' (p.111). Thus the same genre may serve entirely different ends. It may be significant however, that the bands in question had different membership systems, used different instruments, and contrasted in levels of musical training and gender ratio. Different constructions of meaning clustered around a musical system may also feed back into performance and attenuate the resulting sounds. Thus a particularly ambitious and competitive choir might sound different from one to which people belong purely for enjoyment. In the following sections possible links between perceived meaning and musical form and practice are highlighted.

Accessibility

One of the aspects of samba members of the band perceive and value is inclusivity. There are a number of ways in which the specifics of the form facilitate this reading. Performance in public spaces constitutes a kind of accessibility already described in

relation to the musical culture of Salvador. The Welsh performance contexts mentioned above juxtapose the band with the wider community. The audience is not self-selecting in the way it is in many of the instances Finnegan (1989) cites. Thus the band is constantly bringing the music to fresh ears. There is no audience of devoted samba fans, because such people would almost certainly be samba players.

On a more basic level, the fact that drums are relatively easy to begin to use means that a newcomer can immediately take part. Once novices realise that the music is made up of discreet and manageable patterns (something not immediately apparent to everybody) they feel that this is something that they can attempt. Usually, each pattern is played by several people, so the success of the piece is not dependent on a particular drummer. The size of the band is entirely flexible. One can play with 3 or 300 people. 'I didn't know what I was doing but I could just go along. They were doing a gig, this was actually out of doors, we played outside 3 pubs and I had such a great time,' reported one respondent. As already mentioned, at rehearsals observers, latecomers and beginners are always encouraged to participate.

Many of the larger British bands have a beginners' and an advanced group. This is true of the Cardiff band Samba Galês for instance and enables the fostering of excellence in one 'elite' group while the other is open to all comers. The size of Samba Bangor prohibits such a division which means there is inevitably tension between achieving musical excellence and allowing everyone to participate. Members are acutely aware of the trade-off between open access and the standard of the music, and would discuss this frequently and at length. A considerable amount of intra-band tension in late summer 1997 was essentially over this contradiction.

Tim was the unofficial musical director for about a year, but eventually found it impossible to come to terms with the lack of a group of dependable players with whom he could build up a number of fixed arrangements. During the latter part of his involvement, by his own admission, the atmosphere suffered. Although the band regretted the fact that

they were not going to attain a polished repertoire, ultimately inclusivity was their priority. They were also concerned that too much emphasis on the standard of playing at rehearsals undermined the spirit of community. Tim eventually left and several members quit the band at the same time. This demonstrates that the music is open to be conjoined to a less inclusive ethic than the one espoused by the majority of Bangor players, but the size of the band prohibits the equal accommodation of both currents.

Community

The intra-band community is close-knit and the social interaction opportunities the group represents are an important factor for players. The music often becomes pivotal to the social life of the members. Close friendships and romantic attachments are formed through the band, children are conceived between band members. The word 'community' also appears regularly on the *Samba in Britain and Ireland* website, although sometimes it refers to the wider community from which the band is drawn;

> The Barracudas, Barrow-in-Furness. Loud and spectacular community street band formed after the closure of the Barrow shipyards, memorable for their samba version of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*.

A samba band is itself a community which is open to and plays for a larger community. In Bangor this dynamic is complicated by the predominantly English composition of the band in contrast with the mainly Welsh environment. However, this discourse also needs to be read in terms of the 'community music movement' and its terminology. Everitt, in his examination of 'participatory music' points out that in western society:

> ...we tend to make opportunistic use of multiple communities to construct a confident, customised sense of ourselves...Community music [is] speaking less to identifiable social groups than to *ad hoc* gatherings of deracinated individuals for

whom it may be a ladder to the attainment of a personal aspiration as well as a means of personal empowerment in the context of a wider social movement.

(Everitt 1997: 86)

Although it is difficult to give a precise definition of 'community' in terms of samba in Wales, it is possible to see how the music lends itself to this kind of interpretation in a number of ways. Firstly, a samba band is communal in the same sense as any other ensemble; people come together and co-operate to make music. Secondly, the interlocking rhythmic patterns can be seen as an analogue of a tight weave of social interaction. Furthermore, musically, equal weight is given to different parts, i.e. it is not entirely apparent which is the lead line and which are accompanying voices. Indeed one of the pleasures of this music is that the listener can focus in on different patterns and compound patterns. However, there are certainly hierarchies:

1. - of complexity (some patterns are more syncopated or difficult to play)

2. - of experience (e.g. in Bangor only old hands play the big drums or *surdos*)

3. - of freedom (only the conductor normally improvises)

4. - of knowledge (the conductor does the vast majority of the teaching)

5. - of authority (the conductor leads the performance)

Thus we may conclude that the music and its production incorporate 'communal' elements, certainly, but that these are not by any means thoroughly democratic or egalitarian.

Community values in 'Welsh samba' are stressed to the extent that competitiveness is essentially absent. The inclusive attitude means that there is a supportive atmosphere *within* bands and also co-operation rather than competition between them. This represents a marked contrast with many amateur musical ensemble types, such as brass bands and choirs, in which formal competition plays a major rôle, and particularly with the Welsh

eisteddfod tradition, which is fundamentally competitive, both for groups and soloists.

Physicality and sexuality

The nexus between instrumental performance and whole body movement formed by the 'samba step' is crucial to some of the meanings perceived by informants. The forceful physicality of striking the drum is augmented by the involvement of the entire body. Synchronised movement of the group integrates the musical, the physical and the social inextricably. Many samba bands have dance groups, or players who double as dancers for some performances, which is at times the case for Samba Bangor. Beyond this, audiences and bystanders are often moved to dance when they hear a performance and this 'infectious physicality' is one of the powerful dynamics of street samba percussion.

The placement and macro-ordering of beats is a function of mathematical and structural design, requiring high level concentration and control. Frith (1996: 123 - 158) foregrounds these elements in African-derived rhythmic musics, claiming that the physical and sexual emphasis is a construction of detractors of these traditions who thus ghettoise such music in the realm of the body rather than the intellect. However McClary (1991) and Chua (1999) identify the fateful and 'mendacious' denial of physicality and sexuality in the western 'serious' tradition as factors which have lead to that music's alienation, initially from the feminine and ultimately from a holistic way of being human. To return to samba; it is precisely the apparently visceral, physical and sexual effects and meanings of this music which were emphasised by the respondents in Wales:

> It's something here [indicates abdomen], it's very gut, it's a very gut feeling, it's a very sexual thing, I think it's kind of deep, it's not a music that happens up here [indicates head] it happens here [abdomen again] and that's where people are, that's where I'm coming at it from.

This seems to contradict any assertion of conceptual content, but as Barbara Browning puts it, samba comes from 'a culture which comprehends intelligent bodies' (1995: xiix). As the respondent implies, whether one approaches it cerebrally or in movement depends on where one is 'coming at it from', and interesting though it is to engage with this music intellectually, it is also to understand it only partially. Periodic rhythms can be related to the essential life processes of pulse, breath, sexual movement, the menstrual cycle, desire and fulfilment, hunger and fullness, sleeping and waking, life and death. Rhythm 'is an organisation of mental objects, and one that we know intimately from our own inner experience: the experience of life conscious of itself as life' (Scruton 1997: 35). The physical articulation of 'mental objects' in samba performance and dance represents a cultural expression that involves, challenges and integrates the entire human being. In Wales people often become *sambistas* at an age when their sexuality and behaviour might otherwise be circumscribed by social strictures associated with maturity. However, street samba percussion enables them to assert themselves personally, physically and creatively, reversing or pre-empting social marginalisation which might otherwise precipitate personal (midlife) crisis.

Well-being

Some respondents reported that playing with the band usually influences how they feel:

> It changes your brain chemistry in some way. You can go with a headache and play for half an hour or so and it's lifted your mood. If it goes well it has a predictable effect.

This may be partly due to this being a recreational activity. A favoured sport or hobby would probably work in a similar way. However, the many uses of rhythmic grooves for physical work situations and for religious ceremony in different cultures suggests the action of additional processes to those involved in the benefits of tennis, or gardening. The rhythm animates the body in a way which appears to release energy resources, 'for

rhythmic movements that are properly organised on some regular basis appear to be less fatiguing' (Nketia 1975: 29), eventually giving way to post-cathartic relaxation: 'The playing keeps you going, when you take the drum off you collapse'.

Empowerment

The potential of processional performance of percussion music for martial and political[26] purposes suggests the appropriateness of street samba for communicating 'empowerment' and 'confidence'. 'Empowerment' is a word used freely by John of Samba Bangor as being a central aim of the band. This is closely bound up with the already cited benefits such as the opportunity to play and perform music, the assertion of one's physicality, musicality and sexuality, and the perceived feeling of physical and emotional well-being. The strength derived through acting together as a micro-community and projecting this togetherness in performance is another aspect of this empowerment. There is also pride in creating a life-enhancing activity out of nothing more than the will of the players (or the 'community'). This was reinforced because Samba Bangor did not depend on grant aid, but had been entirely self-supporting in the five years running up to 1999, which created a sense of economic self-reliance. The strong sound of the band, heard in public spaces, is indicative of the confidence of the individuals. Several *sambistas* also reported experiencing a particularly notable sense of achievement when passers-by spontaneously started dancing upon hearing the band.

---

[26] Many major demonstrations in London over the last ten years, such as the anti Iraq war protests for instance have been accompanied by street samba percussion ensembles.

Discussion

From Brazil to Wales; what remains?

The most fundamental musical difference between street samba in Brazil and Wales is the dissociation in Europe of rhythm from melody. In Brazil and more particularly in Bahia the form is based around percussion and singing, although in Rio it traditionally includes the *cavaquinho* playing chords. The usually numerous *bateria* or percussion section accompanies a song which features a solo singer and sometimes a chorus. In formal settings, such as staged concerts and recordings, other instruments are often present. Ilê Aiyê's heats for choosing *Carnaval* songs in 1998, used massively amplified solo singers and acoustic percussion bloco only, while Bira Reis' *bloco afro* is made up of the *bateria* and a saxophone section (playing in unison or octaves) of around eight, augmented by guest solo singers. Crucially however, *baterias* are detachable and work as free standing (or moving) entities. There are many situations where just percussion is performed and appreciated. It is this, the percussion of street samba, which is the mainstay of UK samba. There are bands which include sung or played melody, 'horns' or rap, but the majority of UK samba played is percussion only. Thus two important elements of the Brazilian manifestation are largely left behind; melody and words.

However, despite having been transposed into an entirely different culture, with a different history and cultural mix, it is possible to identify continuities in the use and understanding of samba percussion between Wales and Brazil, or more accurately, between Bangor and Bahia. As I relate in the observations from Salvador, street samba is used to represent, bond and empower communities there, as demonstrated by Olodum for Pelourinho, Ilê Aiyê for Liberdade and Cortejo Afro for Pirajá. The celebratory aspect is prominent during the summer holiday season and *Carnaval* itself, *joie de vivre* being an important part of the *jeito brasileiro* or 'Brazilian style', which is often used as a way of forgetting the woes of life in general, and the privations of the underprivileged in

337

particular, through foregrounding *beleza* and *alegria*; beauty and happiness.[27] In Wales, while there is no great poverty and violence is less prevalent, the splash of colour and rhythm provided by a samba band in a grey and draughty shopping precinct can also serve to project a celebratory spirit into an unpromising space.

Physicality and sexuality play an important part in performance and reception in both Wales and Brazil. The majority of percussion performers in Salvador are young (people mostly having to concentrate on earning a living when they are older). Wales players are frequently middle aged, so while in one place we are dealing with people coming into their maturity as sexual an physical beings, in the other they are often in sight of the waning of their powers. Despite this difference, the use and usefulness of the music for projecting physicality and sexuality is undiminished and it is not difficult to see how both age groups should find this aspect of the music fulfilling; one demonstrating that they are *already* capable physical and sexual beings, the other that they are so *still*. Inclusivity and accessibility in Bahian music have been extensively discussed in the previous chapter. They are also evident through the toleration of indifferent players at certain levels, bystanders playing performers' drums and the encouragement through tuition of outsider groups such as street children and tourists.

Why samba? Towards a theoretical synthesis

There are a number of approaches which might help illuminate the processes which led people to involve themselves in samba. Paul Willis refers to music which is 'differentially sought out and pursued by...a social group' because it can 'sum up crucial values, states and attitudes'.[28] Gibson uses the word 'affordances' for the adaptive and therefore

---

[27] This juxtaposition is demonstrated compellingly in the 1999 Brazilian remake of the groundbreaking 1959 French film of the Orpheus legend set in Brazil at carnival time. In the later film the hero forces himself to dance the samba in the the middle of his violent *favela* even after his heart has been broken and his friends killed. (Orfeu, Brazil 1999: Carlos Diegues; Orfeu Negro, France 1959: Marcel Camus).
[28] Quoted in Middleton 1990: 159-60.

interpretive options provided by environmental 'surfaces'. He emphasises the 'complimentarity of the animal and the environment' (1979: 127) which links the actual form of an object with the uses an organism might have for it. This complimentarity is heightened with music, because it is a part of the environment produced *by* human beings *for* human beings. It might be argued that players in Europe are responding more directly to the sounds and build social meanings around them (and the process of their production), whereas in Bahia the sounds are extrapolated from the historico-social situation to which they are linked at multiple levels.

Finnegan (1989) has already been cited for an example of similar music giving rise to different interpretations (see also Meyer 1956: 271 and Blacking 1995: 35) and the period of conflict within Samba Bangor over the band's ethic supports this. Small (1998) also draws our attention to the different ways in which western orchestral music has been performed and received during its history and Cook claims that 'the listener can....take up an interpretative position in relation to...' particular works (1990: 169). However, the various continuities discernible in readings and uses of samba also invite us to consider a position which posits that: 'Though imprecise, the relationship between the form of the symbol and its symbolism, between structure and meaning, is fluid and yet not arbitrary. The symbol is not infinitely adaptable' (McKinnon 1994: 8). A possible connection between the malleability of associated meaning *and* a degree of resonance between music and interpretation may be found in Merleau-Ponty's proposition that: 'It is the work itself that has opened the field from which it appears in another light' (1961: 750).

If 'the cultural construction of hearing [is] the key to understanding' (Segato 1993: 16), it raises the question of why Bangor Sambistas initially know how to read the text. How is it accessible to them when it could be argued that their minds are 'unprepared', although it is clear that for some reason they are not 'unreceptive'. Attention has been drawn to certain practical and physical aspects of performance that have a bearing on how this music is used and perceived: the association with movement through the 'samba step', the comparative ease of joining in, loud performance in public. We might say that these carry

the 'affordances' of physicality, accessibility and empowerment in ways that a proportion of Europeans respond to without specialist cultural initiation. Whereas these aspects are easier to identify it would be obtuse to deny the important part played by the purely musical (sound) structures in the process of understanding, responding and accessing samba.

In general terms the process may to some extent be based on commonalities; commonalities between human beings, human cultures and between musics. In identifying these we might begin with 'the biological anchoring of symbolic associations' (Nattiez 1990: 104). In terms of culture, Blacking allows that people can 'make connections between musical and non-musical experiences without specific cultural rules, ...because the human brain's ability to relate different transformations of the same figure do not depend entirely on cultural experience' (1995: 233). Furthermore, musically, there are clearly links on a number of levels. The same West African roots to which street samba can be partly traced influenced Afro-American popular music and more recently, samba-reggae arose from the fertilisation of Bahian practice by reggae. These related genres would clearly not normally be strange to British listeners. Global cultural interchange (in this case going back to the transatlantic slave trade) has ensured that *completely* 'alien' music is hard to come by.

Members of Samba Bangor find themselves in a complex cultural environment and one of the ways in which they situate themselves within it is through their involvement in the band. Their adoption of an extraneous musical form defines them as different from both a specifically Welsh context and the wider society of the UK. In playing samba they create a community which reaches out to others and yet emphasises their particular 'values, states and attitudes'. Samba percussion has become important in their lives through releasing and realising potentialities that are immanent in themselves, the music and its performance.

Summary

This chapter has sought to demonstrate how music with which people have little or no initial cultural connection can nevertheless be accessible to them at all three of the Levels postulated in Chapter 2. LI access is in this case available through globalisation, particularly travel by key figures who introduce the music into a new domain. From that point onwards it is performance in public spaces and 'word of mouth' that ensure further dissemination. In the absence of prior experience or cultural knowledge of the genre, the musical structures and their implications, connotations and affordances have to be largely responsible for accessibility at Levels II and III. The parallels between the meanings of samba percussion in Bahia and Bangor suggest that the form the music takes, and the way it is performed, open a field for the construction of meaning, but the likely meanings are somewhat constricted; clustered around those to which the music most readily lends itself. It is easy to imagine samba becoming popular with gay rights activists wishing to protest issues publicly for instance. It is more difficult to conceive of it being chosen to accompany transcendental meditation.

In this way it is possible to understand how alien music means and becomes espoused in a new context. Not because it immediately communicates its original significations to its new hearers. This is impossible because such significations depend on a complex web of intertextuality, history and cultural practice. But neither is a music taken up like a blank slate to be inscribed with whatever is pertinent to the new situation. Such a process would not explain the epiphanic sense of recognition many people experience when first coming into contact with samba percussion performance. This gives a new slant to the homological 'fit' between music and culture frequently described in ethnomusicological approaches. It suggests a homology of accessibility between music on one side and humanity, personality and potential personal and social application on the other.

Chapter 9

Main Themes

Introduction

The intention of this exploration has been to open up a discourse on accessibility. In doing so it has become apparent that this discourse inevitably relates to a wide range of themes and areas and these have been dealt with in the preceding Chapters. Sometimes they have been addressed specifically in one of the case studies or in the two initial chapters. Others have been recurrent and have thus been examined from a number of perspectives. The most important are briefly reprised below. It would be possible to section this field differently and the themes are inevitably interconnected in multifarious ways. One of their points of contact is musical accessibility itself, which has functioned as a conceptual guide.

Three Levels

Chapter 2 explored the meanings of the word accessibility as applied to music, proposing a division into three Levels:

Level I: Physical access
Level II: Reception
Level III: Participation

These signalled the breadth of the term accessibility but it became clear that although the

Levels are clearly distinguishable they are also intimately interconnected. For example; it is the huge increase of available music in our time (Level I) that makes questions of perception and choice, particularly of unfamiliar music, more pressing (Level II), and both physical access and favourable reception are necessarily prerequisites of (at least voluntary) participation (Level III). It was shown that the venue and presentation of music (Level I) are important to how it is perceived (Level II). Ilê Aiyê's pre-carnival festival was deemed accessible and enjoyable by its audience, despite at times appalling sound quality, because the intentions and meanings were clearly signified by the *mise en scène*, and the majority of the intended recipients were positively disposed towards these meanings and intentions. On the other hand the increasing formality of art music concerts in the late nineteenth-century United States, and their withdrawal into 'temples of culture', made the music both physically and perceptually less accessible, particularly to lower status listeners, because it did not appear to address them. In Brazil accessibility is positively valued at Levels I and II, and there is also a willingness to participate (Level III), even in formal concert settings.

Table 1 in Chapter 2, was used to introduce the Three Levels, and can be conceived as a kind of 'Level tool'. Tables 3 - 10 use this tool to set out some of the notable accessibility features of the main objects of study of the thesis. For each case study there are two tables, each usually summarising an instance of a musical genre, with the exception of Table 6 which sets out Vaughan Williams' relevant opinions as stated in *National Music*. In Tables 9 and 10 the 'Level tool' is applied to the early musical modernism of Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances and contemporary art music in the UK respectively. These last two are included because they have been variously addressed in the text and because the question of modern art music represents a kind of 'hidden case study' that is woven through the thesis. The reasons for this are threefold. Firstly, it is the contention that attitudes towards accessibility which have attended the blossoming of modernism permeate European culture to a considerable extent. We have encountered them, for instance, in discourses on popular music (Case Study 1). Secondly, Vaughan Williams' project (Case Study 2) attempted to set out a constructive role for

accessible art music in modern society, and even though his vision was seriously flawed, it warrants revisiting in this context and invites an appraisal of the present situation. Thirdly, it is the contention here that contemporary art music, although it has a kind of reservation in the music academy, is nevertheless facing a severe test of its viability and this relates directly to the accessibility issues under discussion. It thus appears pertinent to apply the 'Level tool' to contemporary UK art music.

Table 3: Progressive Rock 1975

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
Low	Low-Medium	Low-Medium
Performance: - Expensive large venue gigs *Dissemination:* - Expensive albums - Little on radio or TV	*Relevance:* - Esoteric lyrics, relevant to drug experience and hippy style but not ordinary life - Associated with counterculture values, so relevant to counterculture *Enjoyment:* - High polish and luxuriant textures *Difficult to perceptually process and remember:* - Long pieces, little repetition, frequent tempo changes and modulations	*Participation/learning:* - Difficult to play - Expensive to record - Complicated to perform *Social use value:* - Status value of understanding involved music - Signifies belonging to 'prog' rock scene *Opportunities for creativity:* - Requires significant level of musical skill and knowledge to write

Table 4: Punk 1976-7

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
<u>High</u> *Performance:* - Small local gigs *Dissemination:* - Cheap singles - Some played on radio - Moral panic type media attention	<u>High</u> *Relevance:* - Expression of teenage frustration and boredom *Some recipients (positively) respond emotionally to:* - Aggression *Easy to perceptually process and remember:* - Short, simple repetitive pieces	<u>High</u> *Participation/learning:* - Easy to play - Cheap to record - Straightforward to perform *Social use value:* - Status value of being part of the *new* style - Signifies belonging to punk rock scene - Excludes 'boring old farts' *Opportunities for creativity:* - Requires low level of musical skill and knowledge to write

Table 5: English Folk-Song 1900 - 1950

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
Low	Medium	Medium
Performance: - Mainly by older people in domestic settings or small gatherings *Dissemination:* - Some through revival movement; notation and performance	*Relevance:* - Not very strong for 20th-century urban England - Not important part of modern English identity *Personal use value:* - Not high for majority *Engages through:* - Short repeated melodies	*Participation/learning opportunities:* - Some due to activities of revivalists - Learning to sing (easy) *Social use value:* - Not high for majority *Opportunities for creativity:* - Tunes can be freely interpreted, adapted or composed (in theory) by amateurs

Table 6: Vaughan Williams' Approach
to Art Music Accessibility 1933

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
Medium	Potentially High	Medium
Performance: - Formal concerts *Dissemination:* - Embraced new media such as film and radio	*Relevance:* - Believed art music should be relevant to a community - Believed art music should grow from nation's musical heritage - Believed art music should relate to vernacular music *Engages through:* - Short repeated melodies taken from folk-music or written in folk style.	*Participation/learning:* - Worked with and wrote for amateurs - Conducted at Leith Hill Festival choir competition for 48 years. - Believed music should be participatory - Believed music should be creative and participatory *Social use value:* - Failed to engage with majority - Believed composer should create public 'monuments' *Opportunities for creativity:* - Believed music should be creative pursuit

Table 7: *Samba-Reggae* in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil 2004

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
High	High	High
Performance: - Regular street performance - gigs and festivals *Dissemination:* - Comment in local media - CDs locally available including cheap pirate copies - Formal and informal teaching	*Relevance for Bahians :* - Afro-Brazilian identity *Meaning through:* - Connotations of *candomblé* & Africa - Pertinent lyrics *Some recipients respond emotionally to:* - Rhythm - 'Infectious physicality' *Engages through:* - Multimedia presentation - *Cantabile* melodies - Intra-opus simplicity-complexity combination (melody-rhythm) *For foreigners in Bahia:* - Exotic interest	*Participation/learning opportunities:* - Singing along - Dancing - Joining a *bloco* as 'guest' - Learning to play through joining *favela* project - Learning to play in classes - Learning to dance in classes *Social use value:* - Expressing group empowerment - Expressing group identity - Social activism *Opportunities for creativity:* - Only for group leaders

Table 8: Street Samba Percussion in Bangor, Wales, UK 1997

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
Medium	High	High
Performance: - Occasional street performance - clubs, gigs and outdoor festivals *Dissemination:* - Word of mouth	*Personal use value (via participation):* - Allows expression of physicality and sexuality - Feeling of well-being - Personal empowerment *Some recipients respond emotionally to:* - Rhythm - 'Infectious physicality' *Engages through:* - Intelligible modular rhythmic structure	*Participation/learning opportunities:* - Joining a group (easy) - Learning to play (easy) - Workshops - Visiting teachers *Social use value:* - Community - Group empowerment - Dance *Opportunities for creativity:* - Only for group leaders

Table 9: Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performances, Vienna 1920

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
Low	Low	Low
Performance: - Invitees only *Dissemination:* - Comment in specialist publications	*Relevance:* - Removed from vernacular music - Perceived as uniquely timely by initiates *Personal use value:* - Subjective interest in novelty and contemplation for initiates *Enjoyment:* - Not intended to be enjoyable *Difficult to perceptually process and remember:* - Complex structures - Melodic intervals difficult - Rhythms not perceptually easy to 'group'	*Participation/learning:* - Difficult to play - Audience reaction unwelcome *Social use value:* - Membership of cultural elite *Opportunities for creativity:* - For specialists only

Table 10: New Art Music, UK 1976 - 2006

Level I - Physical accessibility	Level II - Reception accessibility	Level III - Participation accessibility
Low	Medium	Low
Performance: - Concert venues, specialist festivals *Dissemination:* - Receives little media attention compared to other contemporary art forms - Not widely broadcast or sold - Higher education	*Relevance:* - Not perceived as relevant to mainstream - Does not appear to address any identity or community outside specialists *Personal use value:* - Subjective interest in novelty and contemplation for initiates *Enjoyment:* - Problematic due to history of art music aesthetics *Engages through:* - Some attempts to re-claim intelligible gestures which are easy to remember - Attempts to engage with various vernaculars and ex-vernaculars	*Participation/learning opportunities:* - Some outreach activities by orchestras - 'Classical' music education widespread but often focused on older music *Social use value:* - Too much of a minority pursuit to have extensive status value - Little sub-cultural capital to be gained - Not strongly associated community *Opportunities for creativity:* - Mainly for specialists - Some encouragement of amateurs through funded arts projects

Engaging with Music

Psychology and psychoacoustics

Important concepts and data for understanding better how individuals perceive and understand music can be gleaned from the psychological sub-disciplines of evolutionary psychology, psychoacoustics and perception, gestalt theory, memory and personality theory. These areas were introduced in Chapters 1 and 2. Fundamentally it appears that there are some musical features which appertain in most cultures, such as the use of relative pitch, minimum and maximum number of notes per scale and privileging of the intervals of the octave, fourth and fifth. Contours seem universally to be more easily remembered than distinct pitches. Even whole song classes such as lullabies have common features which appear in many cultures. It is thus reasonable to suppose that the accessibility of these is to some extent determined by in the human genome. Ceiling effects such as those demonstrated by research into short term memory have a bearing on the accessibility of musical combinations and tropes. Sequences of more than 7 +/- 2 units of information (which could apply to notes or phrases) will be difficult to remember and process on initial hearing. Melodies or beats that do not lend themselves to being grouped into a 'gestalt', or conceptualised into a composite form will also represent a barrier to comprehension. In terms of our case studies, economy of musical material and repetition is characteristic of punk rock, English folk-song and the main Brazilian genres examined, all instances of music which have been argued here to be largely perceptually accessible. The latter two make extensive use of memorable melodic contours while punk seldom strays from a harmonic language based on the predominance of octave, fourth and fifth. *Samba-reggae*, while incorporating a good deal of rhythmic density and complexity, nevertheless lends itself to the perceptual grouping of beats according to gestalt principles.

In a different area of psychological research Marvin Zuckerman (1994) has isolated a personality factor he calls 'sensation seeking' which appears to be predominantly

'hardwired'. It describes a temperament more disposed to taking risks and seeking novel experiences. This alerts us to the individual postures and preponderances which are likely to influence what is accessible to whom. Someone who likes to be challenged and has a large appetite for strongly textured experiences is perhaps more likely to enjoy punk than someone who prefers an 'easy life'. The idea of predisposition towards preferring certain kinds of stimuli can be seen as complementary to that of 'affordances' of music and musical practice discussed in Chapter 8. Thus the epiphanic sense of recognition felt by some people on first hearing a samba percussion group can be discussed in terms of an interlocking of musical and personal attributes. Vaughan Williams also experienced a kind of epiphany when he first heard folk-song performed. Whereas the personality theorists cited in relation to sensation seeking in this work claim such traits to be mainly inherited, a range of cultural reasons for Vaughan Williams' reaction have been offered in Chapter 5.

Repetition

Another relevant concept widely used in psychology is that of habituation. This is the process whereby organisms react less markedly over time to a constant stimulus, suggesting that our interest in repeated musical features is bound to wane. At various points in this thesis we have met with indications that repeated listening can enhance the accessibility of a piece of music or musical genre. This is closely related to habituation. We might describe the first stage of habituation 'learning to tolerate/understand/like' and the second stage 'learning to ignore/become bored with'. Coming to appreciate music after repeated listening is a commonly reported experience and has to do with literally learning about the music by direct repeated exposure and thus gaining more sense and enjoyment from it. The frequently heard complaint that a disliked form 'all sounds the same' is because the stylistic commonalities are perceived more than the particularities of each piece. Repeated listening allows one to become habituated to the commonalities while more clearly differentiating the specifics.

Memory mechanisms clearly have a part in this, as repetition (or 'rehearsal') is also the primary method of allowing the transfer of material from short term to long term memory. As Adorno pejoratively pointed out, recognition can be as good as liking (1997 [1938]: 14-15), and in order to recognise, we have to first remember. Repetition is of course not only involved in repeated listening to a piece, but also in the construction of musical works. From repeated phrases in a melody, to repeated themes in a sonata, to cycled hooks in pop songs; repetition is one of the essential procedures of composition and improvisation, and means that even without repeated listening there is frequently repeated listening. It is an indispensable aid to perceptual accessibility.

Predictable or attractive?

There is a subdivision of the term 'accessible' at LII which has suggested itself at times in this text, but which has not so far been argued out. It has at various points arisen as 'challenge-predictability', 'exoticism-familiarity' and 'newness-predictability'. The fact that attraction to music often depends on a balance of the poles of these pairings also relates to what has been previously described as the 'accessibility paradox'. At this point it is proposed to integrate the oppositions that constitute the paradox.

One interpretation of accessibility is to identify it with the former of pairings such as:

<div align="center">

easy - difficult

familiar - unfamiliar

play - work

comfortable - uncomfortable

old - new

safe - challenging

home - outside

</div>

In this sense the accessible is always the easy, predictable element. However, through

habituation the difficult can become easy, the strange familiar, work can become play and so on. Furthermore, we do not always choose the 'soft option'. People run marathons, climb mountains, starve themselves and injure themselves deliberately. Indeed the familiar, easy, safe and comfortable is also boring if it is not juxtaposed with its opposite. To spend an evening at home on the sofa after an eventful day out in the world is bliss. To spend a month at home on the sofa under house arrest is agony. The 'easy' side of the above dichotomies can eventually become repellent because of its tediousness. But is something repellent still accessible?

The desire for novelty, challenge, abrasiveness and exoticism has been variously described in this thesis. Without such elements many of us would habituate to most music to the point of inaudibility or loathing. Thus what is *truly* accessible, in the sense of being attractive and interesting, is a certain combination of easy and difficult, familiar and strange, safe and challenging and the precise proportions required vary between individuals. They are also in temporal flux for most people, in that not many of us are attracted to the same music to the same extent all of our lives. It is therefore proposed to differentiate between accessible meaning *easy*, and accessible meaning *attractive*. The former is obviously on the left of the above dichotomies, whereas the latter represents some kind of balance between left and right. The terms 'predict-accessible' and 'attract-accessible' are proposed to distinguish between these meanings.

The attraction of shock

Music with shocking elements has been dealt with in Chapter 3 specifically in relation to punk and tangentially with regard to the avant-gardes. It was noted that shock in its various forms does not necessarily repel the recipient, but can have various useful and even attractive aspects. In the context of status and belonging to a group of devotees, shockingness can help to delineate the boundary between those who *are* shocked and repelled, and those who are attracted by the same content, those who understand and

those who do not, those who can 'take it' and those who cannot; thus reinforcing the 'special' status of the in-group. This then represents a use of the music and can consequently enhance LII accessibility.

The exploration further revealed that shock can be due to an elision of meaning, or to meaning which is all too obvious. In the modernist avant-gardes, which share a predilection for shock effects with much popular music, these are intended to provoke reflection and a kind of readjustment of the subject, intellectually, ethically, politically or aesthetically. Insofar as this is a valued and sought after effect on the part of the recipient it may be considered an attract-accessible component. However the avant-gardes have struggled to find their publics because meaning (discernable meaning, particularly for non-experts) has appeared to become evacuated from the works. Empirical research carried out by Colin Martindale (1990) has shown perceived meaningfulness to be most closely correlated with preference for art works.

But beyond these considerations there is the straightforward enjoyment (if we can call it that) of stimuli 'that can elicit anxiety, depression, anger and disgust' (Zuckerman 1994: 199) and at the end of the scale those that represent actual pain and danger. This is common enough both in the arts and in other areas of life. Horror films were given as one example and self-harm in teenagers as another, the latter with specific links to punk. One explanation for such behaviour is to achieve the OLA (optimum level of arousal) for the person concerned. The discussion however found multiple possible motives for apparently auto-deleterious behaviour, concluding that in the reception of music also, such aspects may be sought out for a range of reasons. It is evident from this however, and it reinforces previous observations, that (attract-) accessible does not have to mean bland, in fact it can include shock.

Presentation and sensory multimodality

A type of musical presentation can encompass or enable certain paramusical forms of communication, such as album sleeves or the possibility of searching the internet for further information about particular music, as an adjunct to searching for and downloading music. Such information and sensory input enriches the musical material with stimuli, connotations, information and salience, thus aiding LII accessibility. Accompanying input is likely to be richest in live performance. The venue, performers, clothes and audience are inevitably part of the experience. Stage decoration, special costumes, dance and verbal communication from the performers all contribute to how the music is perceived, remembered and understood.

Two extreme examples with regard to this are the Western instrumental serious music concert and Bahian *Carnaval*. In the former, non-musical stimuli are kept to a minimum. The clothes of the performers are traditionally kept uniform and subdued, and verbal communication with the audience is rare. All this is of course intended to privilege the music which is considered 'absolute'. By contrast Bahian *Carnaval* music is accompanied by a plethora of paramusical performances and explications: costumes, dance, song words, non-musical verbal communication, eroticism, political and identity significations. Presentation laden with associated multi-sensory stimulation gives the recipient multiple opportunities for engagement and thus can enhance the accessibility of the music itself.

Participation

Although there is little need to make one's own music for listening, due to the myriad opportunities for hearing music that now exist, many people nevertheless join ensembles or perform, or participate in some other way. Ruth Finnegan (1998) has shown that in an ordinary English town there can exist a patchwork of musical scenes, following different genres, performance practices and audience behaviours. Previous chapters have attested

to a belief in the UK, the US and Brazil that participation in music can contribute positively to quality of life, and help integrate people in social networks which benefit them and constitute an important element of civil society.

In UK arts policy this conviction goes hand in hand with a desire to make music, and particularly art music, accessible to all social strata at Levels I, II and III. The approach has to some extent challenged the professional status of orchestral music, with many pieces written for, or to include, amateurs. (Vaughan Williams in several senses was a pioneer in this area.) It has also raised doubts about the intrinsic value of the music thus produced. In many 'inclusive' situations 'process' is indeed more important than 'product' and both for Samba Bangor, and some of the *favela* bands in Brazil, participation is prioritised over perfection.

It is clear from the 'samba in Wales' study that benefits to players are both social and personal. It is also evident that people will seek out opportunities for certain kinds of music making without the need for officially funded 'outreach' programmes, but the music has to be in some way relevant, meaningful, useful and attractive. If it is, people will make a considerable effort and give liberally in time, money and effort to be part of music making. The thousands of bands formed at the beginning of the punk era are a particularly striking example of this. The ethnographic work on 'Welsh' samba described how active participation is facilitated by the instrumentation, performance practice and musical structures of *samba-reggae* and some related styles. In organisational terms, questions relevant to participation accessibility would concern performance difficulty, tuition and equipment availability, cost, accessibility of information, and opportunity to join an ensemble.

Chapter 7 recounts that audience participation is widespread in Bahia in both formal and informal situations. What Bakhtin calls; 'The absence of clearly established footlights' (1984: 265) means audiences are often able to sing, dance and even play along with performances. Frequently listeners are encouraged to do so, either by informal invitations

from the band, or by being enabled to join a procession (and sometimes being charged for the privilege). Usually no such encouragement is necessary as people are eager to spontaneously take part. This kind of auxiliary participatory (Level III) accessibility is achieved not least through accessibility at Levels I and II. Conducive staging and danceably rhythmic, *cantabile* melodic music with 'catchy' lyrics are all part of facilitating participation, but it is also a matter of cultural context and social expectations. Audience participation is common in many kinds of musical performance in many cultures. If spontaneous singing or dancing during a performance is part of an accepted range of behaviours in such a situation, it is more likely to take place.

Social, Economic and Technological Perspectives

Media and commodification

Music media from the wax cylinder to the internet have been continually and exponentially increasing LI accessibility of music for a century. To some extent this has gone hand in hand with increasing commodification; but not always. The use of audio cassettes for home copying and private and black market dissemination of music worked against commercialism in the 1970s and 80s, as has illegal downloading from the 1990s to the present. What all these developments have in common, as has already been touched on in this chapter, is the decontextualisation of music with the result that the listener often has to make sense of sounds with few or no visual cues and only an implied cultural context. Thus LI (physical access) is facilitated while LII (perception level) access is made more problematic.

It is not surprising therefore that the structure of commercially successful mediated music tends towards the LII accessible to compensate for the lack of contextual information. Thus short pieces, music with words, much repetition and easily grasped and remembered melodic and harmonic tropes are typical. Interestingly, when progressive rock developed

the more ambitious forms described in Chapter 3, these were accompanied by large and lavish fold-out album sleeves displaying elaborate artwork (for instance the Yes covers by Roger Dean), lyrics, musicians' names and photographs, and information about other personnel and instrumentation. Thus the somewhat less accessible sound structures in terms of scope and complexity were compensated by increased visual information and stimuli.

The tendency of structurally (predict-) accessible music to dominate commodified forms has been interpreted as a sign of commercial rationalisation making production and profit more efficient and predictable. This belongs to a tradition of critiques of industrialised society by authors including Weber, Adorno and Ritzer. The punk revolution is one of many examples however where the music industry has had to catch up with mavericks and grass roots developments. Habituation dictates that product predictability is a strategy of only limited efficacy in the culture industries. Making products predict-accessible is relatively straight forward, making them attract-accessible is inevitably a dynamic process involving commercial risk.[1]

Standardisation and innovation

Chapters 2 and 4 dealt with two contradictory aspects of capitalist commodity design: rationalisation and intentional obsolescence. The former concept is based on the observation that maximum efficiency and profits are in some instances achieved by standardising products and repeating processes in the highest possible volume. Intentional obsolescence on the other hand is the idea that higher turnover over time is attained by periodically making products already purchased either actually, or apparently obsolete. How are these apparently mutually exclusive readings of capitalist production compatible

---

[1] An recent article reported on hit-predicting services offered to the music industry, using software which compares structural features of songs. *The Guardian*, 11/11/2006. Oliver Burkeman, "How many hits." Weekend, p. 55.

and how do they relate to musical accessibility?

The standardised product is effective for consumable and perishable commodities such as food, where repeat purchases are likely if the product is satisfactory. With durable products such a strategy is likely to lead eventually to market saturation which can be counteracted by engineered obsolescence. This may take the form of innovation and product improvement or manipulated fashion revolution. There is obviously a close parallel between the easy-difficult pairings in the list given earlier in this chapter, and the standardisation-innovation dichotomy, particularly from the point of view of the consumer. Standardisation will ensure predict-accessibility, whereas innovation is intended to generate demand through attract-accessibility.

Class

Music as such is no marker of social class, since all classes have music. To remark that different classes use and make different music is only to recognise that classes are also cultural spheres, with unsurprisingly different cultural practices. Even a certain degree of inaccessibility of the music of one class for members of another is to be expected in the same way that music of another culture *may* not be immediately relevant or intelligible (although the samba in Wales study shows that this is not necessarily the case). When a gradient of accessibility appears however, when accessibility seems directly related to status, the stakes become higher. Accessibility can then become associated with money, with power, with education, even with morality and intelligence.

The relationship between musical genre, accessibility and class has shifted markedly as other social parameters have changed. There is now a less clearly defined division between social classes in terms of lifestyle and social mores, but a wider gulf between high art and popular culture. One of the early theorists of consumption, Thorstein Veblen (2005[1899]), surmised that it was *wasted* effort which most clearly reflected positively

on the recipient's status. Such effort need not be wasted by the consumer him/herself, but can be demonstrated by paying for elaborate, but in itself pointless, work. It is understandable therefore how inaccessibility at Level II could become a status-enhancing quality, since an inaccessible art work is by implication useless. Veblen was clear that aesthetic qualities are secondary to 'conspicuous wastefulness' in 'honorific consumption'.[2] His theory thus predicted, and offered a class related explanation for, the development of difficult and 'receptually' inaccessible art. Such art became more useful in differentiating social status from the early twentieth century, because formal art and music generally were becoming increasingly accessible through widening education, recording and photography. By developing less accessible forms however, avant-garde art music has gradually become a niche activity which lacks the general recognition that would allow it to function widely as a signifier of status.

Quantitative work by Peterson and Simkus (1992), carried out in the United States, suggests that those with higher social status, rather than being associated exclusively with particular musical genres as Bourdieu found in France some decades earlier, avail themselves of a wider palette of styles than those with lower status. These included such apparently accessible types as country music. Peterson consequently theorises that *breadth* of musical consumption and taste is proportionate to social status. Such a view questions a direct contemporary correlation between particular musical genres, or accessibility of music consumed, and social status.

Culture, subculture and scene

The question of homological 'fit' between music and culture is a recurring but problematic theme in both ethnomusicology and sub-cultural approaches to the study of popular music. Meanwhile the 'new' musicology is predicated on calls by authors such as McClary

---

[2] Veblen, Thorstein (2004[1899]) *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.
<http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext97/totlc11.txt>

(1991) for the addressing of similar connections between western art music and its cultural contexts. Without being literal and simplistic in accepting music-context correlations, they do potentially provide a clear avenue of accessibility: if the music is analogue to the wider culture then those who share that culture are bound to understand its music. Furthermore if the music has certain functions in a culture its accessibility is further enhanced for the participants through its use-value.

Increasingly however, through a combination of 'mediafication' and globalisation, music is being torn from its cultural contexts and presented in completely new ones, or in 'flat', 'low-context' contexts such as the CD shop and the internet. In such situations the direct, ironically relatively unmediated, music-person impact plays an enhanced role in musical choice. Atomised in this way, the human-music nexus necessarily becomes the crucial subject of enquiry, whereas culture as a series of relatively unified entities in time and space becomes somewhat indistinct, hybridised and less privileged in the discourse.

Subcultures are subject to similar interpretations and dynamics. However the 'sub' level has had a part in the undermining of broader cultural identities. Having been associated largely with class and race by formative theorists such as Willis (1977), Hebdige (1979) and Hall (1976), it is argued here that subcultures can also provide identifications across lines of status, ethnicity and nationality, but not in any exclusive sense. The possibility of regarding subcultural style as simply an opportunity to play with signs and their meanings has to be taken into account. The loosening of subcultural identification has been recognised through the increasing use of the idea of non-exclusive 'scenes' to replace that of sub-cultures (Bennett and Peterson 2004: 3) .

The identification with music and culture is no longer a matter simply of being born in a certain time and place. It is not even a choice of adopting a certain style wholesale for a number of years. It rather becomes a question of negotiating the vast range of music on offer with regard to its accessibility and possibly adopting some of its extramusical cultural or subcultural elements. Alternatively the process may operate 'in reverse' in that

an identification with or preference for certain cultural elements leads to an engagement with the associated music. As the above quotation suggests however, such a choice may be temporary and partial. It forms a part of the individuation process of the human trying to make herself whole in a fragmented world.

Individualisation and technology of the self

Musical choice can consequently be theorised by taking the individual, rather than a social grouping, as its starting point. We may ask how music is employed to construct a personal, rather than a subcultural, identity. Age, gender, cultural background, personality type, peer group and inevitably, class, will have a role to play in this individuation, but without any one of these factors necessarily being the primary determinant.

> What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity - and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour. They are existential questions...
>
> (Giddens 1991: 70)

The music which appears accessible, or which we are prepared to work at making accessible by learning and repeated listening, in part helps to answer some of these 'focal questions'; by concurring with our sensibilities, aiding in the construction of a sense of self, and ultimately as part of the assemblage of a life-style (Giddens 1991: 81). Within the resulting broad individual orientations there are uses of music to accompany certain activities. This has been called employing music as a 'technology of the self' (DeNora 2000: 46). Live music would be the exception to the rule in this kind of listening, which would more frequently involve home stereo, TV, car stereo, or iPod.

The appropriateness of music for time structuring and emotional manipulation is a way in

which it makes itself accessible, by offering certain 'affordances' (Gibson 1979: 127) or possibilities for such uses, of which the individual can avail herself. Much of this kind of listening is clearly indirect 'background' listening, although the 'mode of listening' (Stockfelt 1997: 132) may vary considerably. Insofar as a listener does make time to 'purely listen' this can still be theorised as structuring, forming and individuating the self subjectively by the musical use of time. Such utility constitutes a point of accessibility at Level II.

Habituation, time and style revolution

Habituation is one of the mechanisms which will move the same music from attract-accessible to predict-accessible. Thus it is a factor in innovation, fashion cycles and the search for novel, exotic and challenging experiences in the arts. Music cannot stand still because how we perceive the same music does not remain the same. Crucially for an examination of accessibility in music, habituation predicts that, within the abovementioned perceptual limits, there will be a certain desire for innovation as familiar music becomes uninteresting and new or different music is preferentially sought out, initially by more adventurous people. Class and status issues can have a bearing on style change, as knowing about new developments and espousing them early can enhance status amongst peers. Furthermore a new generation would in some cultures look for a new style to call its own, to set it apart from the society within which it is situated.

While habituation means that existing stimuli lose perceived salience, artistic styles often tend to become more elaborate as they mature, developing their tropes and the power of their effects. The result is what has been termed (in Chapter 4) an *equilibrium of accessibility*. While the artist-music-audience 'system' sustains this equilibrium the musical structures become more complex, extensive and surreal and therefore their 'materiability' declines. In other words the material becomes less accessible to novice ears, while maintaining the interest of those familiar with it. However the *meanings* of the

style become *more* accessible as a wider public becomes familiar with them. This was described as increasing 'semiobility', that is, greater accessibility of meanings. This increased knowledge about, and wider use of, the music means that its initial significations become less precise and less focused on a seminal circle of creators and followers. Eventually a point may be reached where a combination of all these factors, together with extramusical events, precipitates a new style, one likely to be perceived as standing in opposition to the old one, specifically contradicting some of its central tenets. At this point a u-turn in values can become apparent. These primarily include aesthetic sensibilities, but may extend to political and moral attitudes.

Crucially for this enquiry, it is at this point that accessibility is most in flux. In terms of status use the old style becomes like a falling stock that cannot be sold quickly enough as it loses its worth. Consequently this aspect of its use-accessibility disappears. Aesthetically it may have overreached itself in terms of its broader genre parameters and pushed certain tropes to a point where they have become overwrought. The direction of development which has been counteracting habituation, and served to sustain interest in the old style, finally runs out of road. The reading of progressive rock and the punk revolution in this thesis was offered in these terms. Of course people still listened to progressive rock after 1976, but it had become historical and superseded; to be seen thenceforth as part of a sequence of past events. It had forever lost its sense of representing the present and the people most in the present. It no longer had the aura, and therefore the accessibility, of the 'homology of now'.

Theory and Aesthetics

Modernism and postmodernism and new (art) music

Modernism, and particularly the modernist musical avant-garde and its theoreticians, have been a recurring theme of the present exploration. There are a number of reasons for this.

As elucidated by the survey of the psychology of music in Chapter 1, the movement away from *cantabile* melodic contours, regular rhythm and certain simple interval relations has negatively affected the LII accessibility of art music in the twentieth century, and such music has either been withdrawn consciously from the audience (see Chapter 1) or it has struggled to find and maintain an audience large enough to ensure its survival. In this process an unprecedented stylistic gulf opened up between vernacular musical expressions and the contemporary music of the academy and the concert hall. Progressive rock and Vaughan Williams' use of folk idiom in art music have been examined in this thesis and both can be seen as attempting to bridge this gulf from opposing directions. Both eventually failed to significantly narrow the rift.

Modernist theorists Adorno (1997) and Horkheimer (1968) condemned contemporary accessibility in the arts as collaborating with an oppressive capitalist culture industry which threatens to liquidate the individual 'subject'. They and others like them gave inaccessibility a positive ethical value which has helped to keep stylistic developments in modernist music distanced from mainstream tastes. The consequent situation of contemporary concert music is another reason for addressing modernism. Conceptual visual art still seems to stir the public imagination, and contemporary literature is thriving in many respects, with high profile competitions and festivals. New art music, despite a certain amount of postmodern reclamation of accessible procedures, and the efforts of the music and arts establishment to increase LI and LIII accessibility though outreach programmes, finds itself marooned as a highly specialised interest.

In the UK the flagship arts review programmes of the BBC: Radio 4's daily *Front Row*, its *Saturday Review,* and BBC 2's Friday night *News Night Review*, deal with a broad range of popular and 'high' cultural output; exhibitions, films, novels, popular music and theatre. Discussion of concert music makes up a tiny proportion of their content, new concert music even less. 'New music' is hidden in British broadcasting in a late Saturday night ghetto on Radio 3, which in any case has a tiny fraction of the listeners of Radios 1,

2 and 4.[3] Music which is claimed to be the standard-bearer of a great European tradition, has been reduced to a fragile remnant when viewed in the context of the 'media landscape', even in terms of media items aimed at the educated, art-interested middle class. It has been argued here that a minority musical genre which is of considerable interest has every right to exist and may even be deserving of particular support. However, at a certain point it can become threatened by its own marginality and one might argue that that point has been reached. Any debate about this inevitably needs to concern itself with accessibility.

Postmodernism incorporates another reason for the extensive discussion of modernism. The postmodern turn moves modernism into the past tense and seems to require us to evaluate its effects from the newly gained vantage point of the 'post' position. A new objectivity regarding a movement which has had profound effects on how musical accessibility is viewed is now possible. Postmodernism has its own specific agenda concerning accessibility, legitimising the combination of 'high' and 'low' codes and gestures, and opening 'serious' art again to play, pleasure and beauty. However, postmodernism is clearly defined in terms of, and to some extent in opposition to, modernism. Therefore questions about modernist aims and rationales, which crucially involve accessibility, form part of the postmodern discourse.

Art music and the musical vernacular

It has just been recalled that modernist developments have accentuated the stylistic differences between (Western) art music and vernacular musics. Chapter 6 examined these terms and asked to what extent inaccessibility and accessibility can be mapped onto them. In some senses there appears to be a strong correlation. Art music, especially

---

[3] In the quarter year ending September 2006 audience reach of these BBC stations was: Radio 1, 21%; Radio 2, 26%; Radio 3, 4%; and Radio 4, 19%. <http://www.rajar.co.uk/INDEX2.CFM?menuid=9>

insofar as it is intended for focused listening and usually requires formal training for composers, performers, and to some extent listeners, can support more complex and extended structures than vernacular musics, which are frequently produced by autodidacts and heard as part of other activities. The use of notation also contributes to the production of longer pieces in art music, although this has also been made possible for popular music by recording technology.

However not all art music is unapproachable; 'classical' music on UK commercial radio is marketed precisely for its accessibility ('relaxing classics'). Conversely not all vernacular music is simple or short (progressive rock and 1930s jazz for instance exhibiting considerable harmonic, rhythmic and melodic complexity and scope). At Level II, some popular music, such as punk, can seem inaccessible to those outside its terms of reference. Therefore, while there is a tendency for art music to be less accessible and vernacular music more so, the correlation cannot by any means be considered absolute. These observations concern Levels II and III. The greater presence of popular music in the mass media and in commodified forms means that the same partial correlation holds for Level I (physical access) and this is reinforced by the usually formal performance contexts of art music.

Vaughan Williams was concerned about the inaccessibility of art music. He felt that in twentieth-century England this had been partly because the art music espoused was predominantly German and so did not speak directly to an English sensibility. But he also realised that modernist compositional currents were not helping. His attempt to achieve an accessible English art music built on folk-song was intended to weld art music to a local vernacular music and to unite the Nation musically. Taking Vaughan Williams as a starting point this thesis has addressed the relationship between vernacular music and art music. It was asked whether some kind of rapprochement between art music and vernacular music might again be possible. The question seems pertinent in the context of postmodern ideas which allow for a mixing of 'high' and 'low' codes and also because of the increasing marginalisation of new art music. Militating against this is not only the fact

that vernacular and art music now tend to use different instruments, musical structures and performance technology. A greater obstacle is the attitude to accessibility itself in the art music establishment, where it is still frequently viewed either as irrelevant or with suspicion. These postures can be traced to Kantian aesthetics, ideas of absolute music and a defence of the individual subject against commodifying mass culture.

It was considered whether a connection with popular music (i.e. the most widely disseminated contemporary vernacular) would be possible to revitalise new art music and inject it with a measure of accessibility. It was noted that whereas folk-song carries the promise of a connection with an 'authentic' local past, the use of popular music could arguably be seen as providing a conduit to the global present. Some examples of the use of vernacular elements in modern and postmodern art music were cited. Frequently such experiments falter because the vernacular chosen (as in Vaughan Williams' case) is already moribund or specialised and not the current musical language of the majority. In other cases there is an engagement which is less than heartfelt. It has to be acknowledged that there are thousands of such forays across the genre boundaries, sometimes helped by the desire of funding agencies to see their money spent on accessible art. In February 2006 for instance the BBC Concert Orchestra presented a broadcast performance in conjunction with some notable London rappers. Underlining the difficulty of successfully bringing different musics together Charles Hazlewood, conductor and one of the directors of the project, said:

> ...there's a grim graveyard of very, very bad, failed attempts at doing something very meaningful with two very different kinds of music. [4]

Only if such events become a continual fluid communication, rather than an exceptional and awkward clashing of incongruous worlds, will a true rapprochement be possible and beneficial.

---

[4] *The Independent*, 10/2/2006. Matilda Egere-Cooper, "London grime rappers vs the BBC Concert Orchestra." <http//enjoyment.independent.co.uk/music/features/article344358.ece>

Accessibility and resistance

One of the parallels between popular and serious music aesthetics and ethics, is the notion that inaccessibility somehow denotes 'resistance'. This is found both in the Frankfurt School approach and that of (sub-)cultural studies. Accessible music is seen as pandering to the profit motive and allowing the subject to naively acquiesce in an ideology that deceitfully allows the world to appear benign.

Chapter 7, dealing with music in Bahia, offers an alternative vision. It describes how the 'Afrocentric' music of the *blocos afro* expresses identity and resistance while being accessible not only to its own constituency, but largely also to outsiders. This accessibility operates at all three Levels proposed in Chapter 2: physical access, reception and participation. Furthermore the resistance expressed is not purely symbolic, although it certainly carries considerable force in that realm. It is also associated with practical projects aimed at increasing the 'social capital', educational options and self-esteem of poor black Bahians. The music of these bands does not attempt to be non-commercial, it does not attempt to be inaccessible, but it does insist on its difference, its concerns and its community. One could argue that in a globalised context, expressing resistance accessibly is one way of ensuring that one's cry is heard.

Accessing unfamiliar music

Arguing for a 'social construction' perspective of musical meanings, Peter Martin claims that the responses they normally elicit, 'are certainly not evoked in a cultural outsider' (1995: 157). The study on transplanted samba reported in Chapter 8 calls such certainties into question.[5] Participants constructed their meanings and uses for the music to be sure, but these were meanings and uses the music lent itself to readily, due to its

---

[5] Previously published in Eisentraut 2001.

instrumentation, musical structure and performance possibilities. It offers 'affordances' or 'surfaces' which may be used in certain ways and indeed suggest those uses and interpretations, just as a chair offers itself for sitting. In fact one of these 'surfaces' is samba's very accessibility, which partly consists of the 'readability' of those possibilities. The comparison between uses of street percussion in Bahia and Bangor revealed considerable overlap which is consistent with a theory that allows for social construction, but based on musical structures and practice.

Utility, accessibility and disinterested contemplation

Carroll (1998) argues that the concept of disinterested contemplation in Kant has been mistakenly translated into the idea of uselessness as the mark of true art in modernist aesthetics. Uselessness is intimately bound up with inaccessibility, since most of the aspects of accessibility at Levels II and III, outlined in Table 1, can also be construed as uses of music. It has also been argued in Chapter 2 that usefulness is difficult to strip away from art all together, especially once one allows that music appreciation may be *used* to enhance one's social status, or to gain certain states of mind (including paradoxically: disinterested contemplation).

Weber (1971) gives four types of rationale for social action and each represents a kind of usefulness to the individual. These can be applied to reasons for engaging with music and presented as uses of music for (1) a practical end; (2) to reinforce an ethical value; (3) to answer an emotional need and; (4) as part of a tradition. Bourdieu (1984) demonstrates how the espousal of difficult art work is used to enhance and entrench class privilege and, over a century ago, Veblen (2005) discussed the significance precisely of waste, i.e. uselessness, in the demonstration and maintenance of social status. More recently, Heath and Potter (2004) have shown how this can apply in a society with less obvious cultural hierarchies by conferring 'coolness' on the consumer.

Thus even the most esoteric work can be *employed* both subjectively and socially. However, works of (high) art are certainly more than tools for one-upmanship and they can surely still be considered appropriate for contemplation, even of the 'disinterested' kind. But since usefulness appears slippery and all-pervasive, it is open to question whether it profits this debate to exclude works to which a utilitarian dimension can be imputed from categories of art aimed at eliciting such subjective states. Futhermore, since an intimate connection between accessibility and usefulness seems to be inescapable, it is equally questionable whether accessibility disqualifies work from being considered appropriate for disinterested contemplation.

Relativism and essentialism

Various uses of the concept of essentialism have arisen in this thesis. The reasons for avoiding essentialism in relation to ethnic, cultural and social groups, which is by now usual in ethnomusicology and popular musicology, has been acknowledged. Where the related and equally problematic concept of authenticity is concerned, it was suggested that denial of its existence should not go so far as suppressing matters of historical record. 'Essentialism' is used in aesthetics to debate whether there are essential qualities that would help us distinguish between art and non-art. In allowing the inclusion of accessible work in the rubric of 'contemplative art', a potential essentialism of what constitutes art is removed, i.e. that true art has to be inaccessible. Thus a further step is taken towards relativism, where everything is valid on its own terms. Yet this thesis has consciously left the door ajar to other essentialisms, particularly those pertaining to humanity and musical structures and practices. It has examined some of the important dimensions of accessibility and recognised that many of these are indeed relative and in flux. However it has been suggested, here and elsewhere, that the idea of music as a system of arbitrary signifiers, like language, is perhaps not quite the whole story:

The language analogy may be partly, but only partly, useful. While many

semiological concepts originate in linguistics, there are strong arguments that music inhabits a semiological realm which, on both ontogenetic and phylogenetic levels, has developmental priority over verbal language. Such arguments not only suggest the possibility of a specifically musical 'thought' derived from the operations of sensorimotor intelligence; they also imply the existence of a musical 'language of feeling' connected with symbolisms of the unconscious and movements of the body.

<div align="right">(Middleton 1990: 172)</div>

The acknowledgement of the relevance of certain psycho-perceptual constants, and of the power of the structure of music and the nature of its performance to suggest uses and interpretations, mean that there appears to be an essential kernel, in humanity and particular individuals one side, and in musical structures the other, which cannot be argued away. Without this kernel, accessibility would simply be a matter of familiarity or positional readings. Without it, one adopted music would be as good as another for constructing any meanings whatever. And without this kernel, milkmen might be whistling Schoenberg's tone rows as they work.

Possible Schemas,
Integrations and Future Directions

Since the aim of this study has been to explore aspects of musical accessibility, rather than to answer a single hypothesis, there can be no unitary conclusion. A number of themes with a bearing on what must be seen as a cluster of concepts, have been pointed out and the most important summarised in Chapter 9. This range of themes was revealed by the methodology of using three case studies as starting points. These examples: the punk 'revolution', Vaughan Williams' *National Music* and Bahian music, served to provide specific observations, to open areas of discourse and to bring different literatures to bear on the question of what constitutes musical accessibility. They helped raise issues and gave an impetus to consider their implications in the particular context of each case study and in comparison between them. These comparisons may at times have been unorthodox, crossing as they do genre and sub-disciplinary boundaries, but it is hoped that they have nevertheless provided useful insights. In view of the impossibility of providing an overall synthesis or conclusion, is there anything that can be said in summary about musical accessibility that does not oversimplify, or overemphasise one aspect at the expense other equally important ones?

One strategy of the research has been to attempt a refined and differentiated definition of the word accessibility itself, as it applies to music. A number of adjuncts and qualifications have been suggested, most importantly the three Levels: physical access, reception and participation. These have proved particularly useful and have been referred to throughout. 'Predict-accessible' and 'attract-accessible', although built on analogue oppositions identified in previous chapters, were proposed in Chapter 9 and also appear to point to an important distinction. 'Materiability' and 'semiobility' were used to refer to accessibility of structure and meaning respectively. Materiability, the accessibility of

musical structures, is inversely proportional to the density and scope of those musical structures. In other words, the musical material looses accessibility as it becomes longer and more involved. Semiobility on the other hand increases as the meanings and uses of a musical genre become more widely shared in a population.

Insofar as accessibility can be indicated by choice, and choice is to do with preference, what is the difference between music which is accessible and music which is simply liked? The answer has to be that accessibility has to do with potentialities. The potential to appeal, to mean, to be used or enjoyed. This potential stands in a relationship with the potential of the recipient to recognise, to understand, to use or to enjoy the music. Here the Levels (I, II and III) are conflated since 'use' here can mean to use personally or socially and because any potential is opened initially by physical access. Accessible music is not the same as preferred music since it may offer points of accessibility which a listener chooses not to engage with.

It can be surmised from Case Studies 1 and 3, that in terms of Level II there is a strong link between accessibility and being able to find relevant meaning in music. Such meaning can take many different forms including those relating to signification, pleasure, social status, musical structure, identity and utility. Utility itself has arisen as an important point of accessibility and, like meaning, it can be seen as encompassing many of the other facets of accessibility. In fact the two are intimately connected since meaning opens music to utility and usefulness can be construed as a kind of meaning. If music is perceived to have meaning and/or a use for an individual, it may be deemed to be accessible to her at Level II.

Whereas perceived meaning and utility, and therefore accessibility, are bound to depend largely on positional factors, such as the social, cultural and personal situation and history of the recipient, it has been argued here that the field of possible perceptual interpretation is nevertheless constrained by (A) the precise structure of the musical sounds which will militate more towards some meanings and uses than others, and (B) the psycho-

377

physiological composition of the human being. More precisely the constraints are a result of the interaction between (A) and (B). As far as (B) is concerned, the psycho-physiological factors referred to are mainly common to the human species but also vary to some extent between individuals.

Musical accessibility always has to be understood in terms of interaction between three factors:

1. Musical sound and performance
2. The individual human recipient
3. Socio-cultural factors

None of these viewed in isolation will provide a sufficiently rounded account of any situation where accessibility is at issue. Each opens up multifarious fields of knowledge which can never be fully integrated, but neither can they reasonably be excluded. As important as the acknowledgement of these three factors is that of the articulation between them. Between 1. and 2. lie the physical performance context and/or mediation (venue, technological medium) and processes studied in the psychology of perception and memory. Between 2. and 3. musically informed individuation, identity and community are interacting.

Since, supported by the exploration of this thesis, certain cogent statements about musical accessibility can be made, is it reasonable to consider the possibility of a kind of technology of accessibility? Can accessibility be in any way predicted, can it be ensured, taught or programmed? At an obvious level the answer has to be yes. At Level I music in the street is physically more accessible than music hidden away in a private venue. Perceptually (LII) music with memorable repeated sound features, which relates clearly to the needs and concerns of likely recipients, will tend to be seen as accessible by them. And at Level III, music which is also accessible at Levels I and II, and in addition offers ways of participating which are attainable, attractive or useful, will enable people to

become socially involved. However, beyond such broad recommendations the constructed, positional, temporal and personal aspects of accessibility, as well as the novelty, exoticism or challenge requirements of predict-accessibility, are likely to inject any given situation with so many variables as to make a reliable proscriptive system impossible. In any case, such an idea is abhorrent since it would come close to a kind of 'music by numbers' procedure which would threaten to evacuate spontaneity, creativity and personal expression. Some of the things that make music worthwhile in other words. However, where worthwhile music struggles to be heard or acknowledged, a thorough knowledge of processes involved in accessibility would surely be of potential benefit.

What has been revealed is complex enough and requires enough qualifications to suggest perhaps that the idea of musical accessibility be abandoned altogether as one too difficult and contradictory to be meaningful. Yet the term in everyday usage is helpful and we usually know, at least to some extent, what is meant by it. Perhaps the subordinate distinctions reiterated above make it possible to use the concept more directly and precisely in specialist discourses where accessibility is an issue. Certainly the present study, having set out a number of relevant areas, could point to avenues for further research. The tensions and questions over musical accessibility of the 20th century are not yet resolved. Those which are arising in relation to it in the 21st have been addressed in this thesis with reference to fragmenting social structures, globalisation and galloping developments in music media. These processes are set to become more far-reaching in their consequences and implications and as a result we will find ourselves increasingly asking: how is which music accessible to whom, and why?

Bibliography

Abbott, David (1998) *Culture and identity.* London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Adams, Byron (1996) "Biblical texts in the works of Vaughan Williams." In Alain Frogley (ed) *Vaughan Williams studies*, pp. 99-118. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Adorno, Theodor W. (1997 [1938]) *Über den Fetischcharakter in der Musik.* Gesammlete Schriften vol. 14. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Adorno, Theodor W. (1997 [1949]) *Philosophie der neuen Musik.* Gesammlete Schriften vol. 12. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Adorno, Theodor W. (1997 [1951]) *Minima moralia.* Gesammlete Schriften vol. 10-1. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Adorno, Theodor W. (1997 [1953]) *Zeitlose Mode: zum Jazz.* Gesammlete Schriften vol. 4. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Adorno, Theodor W. (1997 [1963]) *Der getreue Korrepetitor.* Gesammlete Schriften vol. 15. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Aiello, Rita (1994) "Music and language: parallels and contrasts." In R. Aiello & J. Sloboda (eds) *Musical perceptions,* pp. 40-6. New York: Oxford University Press.

Althusser, Louis (1984) *Essays on ideology.* London: Verso.

Anderson, Emily (1990) *Mozart's letters: an illustrated selection.* London: Barrie Jenkins.

André, Naomi (2001) "Sullivan, Sir Arthur (Seymour)." In Stanley Sadie (ed) *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vol. 24, pp. 691-704. London: Macmillan.

Auner, Joseph (2003) *A Schoenberg reader.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Bailey, Peter (ed) (1986) *Music hall: the business of pleasure.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Bakhtin, Mikhail (1984) *Rabelais and his world.* Translated by Hélène Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Banfield, Stephen (2001) "England: art & commercial music." In Stanley Sadie ed *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vol. 8, pp. 209-227. London: Macmillan.

Barthes, Roland (1990[1967]) *The fashion system.* Translated by Matthew Ward & Richard Howard. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Baudrillard, Jean (1992) "The ecstasy of communication." In Charles Jencks (ed) *The post-modern reader*, pp.151-7. London: Academy Editions.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1978) *Hermeneutics and social science: approaches to understanding.* London: Hutchinson.

Bauman, Zygmunt (1998) *Globalization: the human consequences.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bearman, C.J. (2000) "Who were the folk? The demography of Cecil Sharp's Somerset folk singers." *The historical journal.* 43.3: 751-777.

Beck, Ulrich & Beck-Gernsheim, Elisabeth (2002) *Individualization: institutionalised individualism and its social and political consequences.* London: Sage.

Benedict, Ruth (1934) *Patterns of culture.* London: Routledge.

Benedict, Ruth (1971) "The growth of culture." In Harry Shapiro (ed) *Man, culture and society*, pp. 223 - 236. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Benjamin, Walter (1977) *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzier-barkeit.* Frankfurt am Main: Edition Suhrkamp.

Bennett, Andy & Peterson, Richard A. (2004) *Music scenes: local, translocal and virtual.* Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.

Bernstein, Leonard (1976) *The unanswered question: six talks at Harvard.* Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Blacking, John (1973) *How musical is man.* Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Blacking, John (1995) *Music, culture and experience: selected papers of John Blacking.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Boulez, Pierre (1994[1986]) "Contemporary music and the public." (Discussion between Michel Foucault and Pierre Boulez) in John Rahn (ed) *Perspectives on musical aesthetics*, pp.83-89. New York: W.W. Norton.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984) *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste.* Translated by Richard Nice. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bradley, Dick (1992) *Understanding rock 'n' roll: popular music in Britain. 1955-1964.* Buckingam: Open University Press.

Brocken, Michael (2003) *The British folk revival*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Browning, Barbara (1995) *Samba: resistance in motion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Budd, Malcom (1992) *Music and the emotions: the philosophical theories*. London: Routledge.

Bürger, Peter (1984) *Theory of the avant-garde*. Translated by Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Burnett, Robert & Marshall, David (2003) *Web theory*. New York: Routledge.

Carey, John (1992) *The intellectuals and the masses: pride and prejudice among the literary intelligentsia 1880-1939*. London: Faber and Faber Ltd..

Carroll, Noel (1998) *A philosophy of mass art*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chang, Jung & Halliday, Jon (2005) *Mao, the unknown story*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Chester, A. (1990) "Second thoughts on a rock aesthetic: the band." In Simon Frith (ed) *On record: rock, pop and the written word*, pp.115-19. London: Routledge.

Chua, Daniel (1999) *Absolute music: and the construction of meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, Ted (1993) "High and low: thinking about high and low art." *Journal of aesthetics and art criticism*. 51: 151-6.

Cohn, Nik (1996) *Awopbopaloobop alopbamboom: the golden age of rock*. St Albans: Da Capo Press.

Collin, M. & Godfrey J. (1998) *Altered state: the story of ecstasy culture and acid house.* London: Serpent's Tail.

Collins, Jim (1992) "Post-modernism as culmination." In Charles Jencks (ed) *The post-modern reader*, pp. 94-118. London: Academy Editions.

Cook, Nicholas (1990) *Music imagination and culture.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Cook, Nicholas (1998) *Analysing musical multimedia.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cooke, Deryck (1959) *The language of music.* London: Oxford University Press.

Crook, Larry (2005) *Brazilian music: northeastern traditions and the heartbeat of a modern nation.* Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

Cross, Ian (2003) "Music and biocultural evolution." In Clayton, Herbert & Middleton (eds) *The cultural study of music*, pp.19-30. New York: Routledge.

Cullen, Jim (1996) *The art of democracy: a concise history of popular culture in the United States.* New York: Monthly Review Press.

Dahlhaus, Carl (1989) *The idea of absolute music.* Translated by Roger Lustig. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Darwin, Charles (1988[1871]) "The descent of man, and selection in relation to sex." In B. Bujic *Music in European thought. 1851-1912*, pp. 315-19. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dawkins, Richard (1989) *The selfish gene.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Day, James (1998) *Vaughan Williams.* London: Dent.

Delfino, Jean-Paul (1998) *Brasil: a música: panorama des musiques populaires brésiliennes.* Marseille: Éditions Parenthèses.

DeNora, Tia (2000) *Music in everyday life.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dowling, Jay (1994) "Melodic contour hearing and remembering melodies." In R. Aiello & J. Sloboda (eds) *Musical perceptions*, pp. 173-190. New York: Oxford University Press.

Duffy, Siobhan C. (1992) *Anglican alternatives to industrial capitalism: a study of Anglican Christian socialism.* University of Wales Bangor, unpublished thesis.

Drake, Carolyn (1998) "Psychological processes involved in the temporal organisation of complex auditory sequences: universal and acquired processes." *Music perception.* 16: 11-26.

Eisentraut, Jochen (2001) "Samba in Wales: making sense of adopted music." *Ethnomusicology.* 10.1: 85-106.

Etizioni, A. & Etizioni, E. (eds) (1964) *Social change, sources patterns and consequences.* New York: Basic Books.

Everitt, Anthony (1997) *Joining in.* London: Gulbenkian Foundation.

Feld, Steven (1994) "Aesthetics as iconicity, or 'Lift-up-over sounding'." In C. Keil and S. Feld, *Music Grooves: essays and dialogues*, pp. 109-150. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Field, John (2003) *Social capital.* London: Routledge.

Figes, Orlando (1996) *A people's tragedy: the Russian revolution 1891-1924.* London: Pimlico.

Finnegan, Ruth H. (1998) *The hidden musicians: music-making in an English town.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fisher, John A. (2001) "High art versus low art." In B. Gaut & D. McIver Lopes, *The Routledge companion to aesthetics,* pp. 409-421. London: Routledge.

Fiske, John (1989) *Understanding popular culture.* Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Freyre, Gilberto (1964 [1933]) *The masters and the slaves: a study in the development of Brazilian civilisation.* New York: Knopf.

Frisch, Walter (2003) *Brahms: the four symphonies.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Frith, Simon (1983) *Sound effects: youth, leisure, and the politics of rock.* London: Constable.

Frith, Simon (1996) *Performing rites.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Frith, Simon (2003) "Music and everyday life." In M. Clayton, T. Herbert & R. Middleton (eds) *The cultural study of music,* pp. 92-101. New York: Routledge.

Frith, Simon & McRobbie, Angela (1978) "Rock and sexuality." *Screen education.* 29: 3-19.

Fryer, Peter (2000) *Rhythms of resistance: African musical heritage in Brazil.* London: Pluto Press.

Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1997) "Die Universalität des hermeneutischen Problems." In J.C.B. Mohr (ed) *Gadamer Lesebuch*, pp. 58-70. Tübingen: UTB.

Gans, Herbert (1974) *Popular culture and high culture.* New York: Basic Books.

George, Nelson (1985) *Where did our love go? The rise and fall of the Motown sound.* Sydney: Omnibus Press.

Gibson, James, J. (1979) *The ecological approach to visual perception.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Giddens, Anthony (1991) *Modernity and self-identity.* Oxford: Polity Press.

Gilroy, Paul (1993) *The black Atlantic, modernity and double consciousness.* London: Verso.

Goffman, Erving (1971[1959]) *The Presentation of self in everyday life.* Pelican: Harmondsworth.

Gottlieb, Joanne & Wald, Gayle (1994) "Smells like teen spirit: riot grrrls, revolutions and women in independent rock." In T. Rose & A. Ross (eds) *Microphone fiends: youth music and youth culture.* London: Routledge.

Gracyk, Theodore (1996) *Rhythm and noise: an aesthetics of rock.* London: I.B. Tauris & Co..

Gramit, David (2002) *Cultivating music: the aspirations, interests and limits of German musical culture, 1770 – 1848.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Green T. & Pickering M. (1987) *Everyday culture: popular song and the vernacular milieu.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Grout, Donald J. (1960) *A history of western music.* London: Dent.

Guillermoprieto, Alma (1991) *Samba.* New York: Vintage.

Hall, S. & Jefferson, T. (1976) *Resistance through rituals.* London: Hutchinson.

Halton, Eugene (1992) "The cultic roots of culture." In Neil J. Smelser & R. Münch (eds) *Theory of culture.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Hamm, Charles (2000) "Genre, performance and ideology in the early songs of Irving Berlin." In Richard Middleton (ed) *Reading pop: approaches to textual analysis in popular music*, pp. 297-306. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hamm, Charles (1995) *Putting popular music in its place.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harker, Dave (1985) *Fakesong: the manufacture of British 'folksong', 1700 to the present day.* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Harrington, Paul (1989) "Holst and Vaughan Williams: radical pastoral." In Christopher Norris (ed) *Music and the politics of culture*, pp. 106-127. Lawrence & Wishart: London,
.

Harvey, David (1990) *The condition of postmodernity.* Cambridge Ma.: Blackwell.

Heath, Joseph & Potter, Andrew (2004) *The rebel sell: why the culture can't be jammed.* Toronto: HarperCollins.

Hebdige, Dick (1979) *Subculture: the meaning of style.* London: Routledge.

Heise, Jens (1998) *Johann Gottfried Herder: zur Einführung.* Hamburg: Junius.

Hindemith, Paul (1945) *The craft of musical composition: book 1, theoretical part.* London: Schott & Co..

Hitchcock, H. Wiley (1988 [1969]) *Music in the United States: a historical introduction.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Hobsbawm, Eric & Ranger T. (eds) (1983) *The invention of tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hollander, Martha (1998) "Baroque Aesthetics." In Michael Kelly (ed) *The encyclopaedia of aesthetics*, vol 1, pp. 199 - 204. New York: Oxford University Press.

Holm-Hudson, Kevin (ed) (2002) *Progressive rock reconsidered.* New York: Routledge.

Homer (1946) *The Odyssey.* E.V. Rieu (ed). Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Holquist, Michael (1990) *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his world.* London: Routledge.

Horkheimer, Max (1968 [1941]) "Neue Kunst und Massenkultur." In Alfred Schmidt (ed) *Kritische Theorie: eine Dokumentation.* Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag.

Hornby, Nick (1996) *High fidelity.* London: Indigo.

Huntley, John (1998) "The film Music of Vaughan Williams." In Lewis Foreman (ed) *Ralph Vaughan Williams in perspective: studies of an English composer.* Albion Music: Somerset.

Jackson, Peter & Penrose, Jan (eds) (1993) *Constructions of race, place and nation.* London: UCL Press.

Jameson, Fredric (1991) *Postmodernism, or, the cultural logic of late capitalism.* London: Verso.

Jameson, Fredric (1993 [1988]) "Postmodernism and consumer society." In A. Gray & J. McGuigan (eds) *Studying culture; an introductory reader*, pp. 192-205. London: Arnold.

Jencks, Charles (1992) "The post-modern agenda" in Charles Jencks (ed) *The post-modern reader*, pp. 10-39. London: Academy Editions.

Jenkins, Richard (2002) "Different societies? Different cultures? What *are* human collectives?" In Sinisa Malesevic and Mark Haugaard (eds) *Making sense of collectivity*, pp. 12-32. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Jenks, Chris (2005) *Subculture: the fragmentation of the social.* London: Sage.

John, Oliver & Srivastava, Sanjay (1999) "The big five trait taxonomy: history, measurement, and theoretical perspectives." In L. Pervin & O. John (eds) *Handbook of Personality*, pp. 3-31. New York: Guilford Press.

Johnson, Julian (1999) *Webern and the transformation of nature.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Justus, T. & Hustler, J. (2005) "Fundamental issues in the evolutionary psychology of music." *Music perception.* 23.1: 1-27.

Kennedy, Michael (1996) *Concise dictionary of music.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kerman, Joseph & Tyson, Alan (2001) "Ludwig van Beethoven." In Stanley Sadie (ed) *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vol. 3, pp. 73-140. London: Macmillan.

Kassabian, Anahid (1997) "Music disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity." In Anahid Kassabian & Lawence Siegel (eds) *Keeping score: music, disciplinarity, culture*, pp. 1-10. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Kassabian, Anahid (1999) "Popular." In Bruce Horner & Thomas Swiss (eds) *Key terms in popular music and culture,* pp.113-23. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Koehne, James (2004) "The flight from banality." In C. Washburne & M. Derno (eds) *Bad music: the music we love to hate*, pp. 149-163. New York: Routledge.

Kramer, Lawrence (2002) *Musical meaning: toward a critical history.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kubik, Gerhard (1999) *Africa and the blues.* Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.

Laing, Dave (1997) "Listening to punk." In K. Gelder & S. Thornton (eds) *The subcultures reader.* London: Routledge.

Lamb, Andrew (2001) "Music hall." In Stanley Sadie (ed) *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vol. 17, pp. 483-6. London: Macmillan.

Lavin, Irving (1990) "High and low before their time." In Kirk Varnedoe & Adam Gopnik (eds) *Modern art and popular culture*, pp. 19-50. New York: Abrams/ Museum of Modern Art.

Lerdahl, Fred & Jackendoff, Ray (1983) *A generative theory of tonal music.* Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.

Levine, Lawrence (1988) *Highbrow/lowbrow: the emergence of cultural hierarchy in America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Levinson, Paul (2001) *Digital McLuhan.* London: Routledge.

Lévi-Strauss, Claude (1978) *Myth and meaning.* London: Routledge.

Litle, P. & Zuckerman, M. (1986) "Sensation seeking and music preferences." *Personality and individual differences.* 7.4: 575-577.

Lloyd, A.L. (1967) *Folk song in England.* London: Lawrence and Wishart.

Lyotard, Jean-François (1991) *The inhuman.* Oxford: Polity Press.

MacCarthy, Fiona (1994) *William Morris: a life for our time.* London: Faber and Faber.

McChesney, Robert (2000) "So much for the magic of technology and the free market." In Andrew Herman & Thomas Swiss (eds) *The world wide web and contemporary cultural theory*, pp. 3-35. New York: Routledge.

McClary, Susan (1991) *Feminine endings: music, gender, and sexuality.* Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

McClary, Susan (1997) "Terminal prestige: the case of avant-garde music composition." In Anahid Kassabian & Lawence Siegel (eds) *Keeping score: music, disciplinarity, culture*, pp. 54-74. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

McCrae, Robert & Costa, Paul (1999) "A five factor theory of personality". In L. Pervin & O. John (eds) *Handbook of personality*, pp. 3-31. New York: Guilford Press.

McDermott, J. & Hauser, M. (2005) "The origins of music: innateness, uniqueness and evolution." *Music perception.* 23.1: 29-59.

McGowan, Chris & Pessanha, Ricardo (1998) *The Brazilian sound: samba, bossa nova and the popular music of Brazil.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

McGuigan, Jim (2000) "Three discourses of cultural policy." In Nick Stevenson (ed) *Culture and citizenship.* London: Sage.

MacKinnon, Niall (1994) *The British folk scene*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

McLuhan, Marshall (2001 [1964]) *Understanding media.* Abingdon: Routledge.

McRobbie, Angela (2005) *The uses of cultural studies.* London: Sage.

Macan, Edward (1997) *Rocking the classics: English progressive rock and the counterculture.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marcus, George E. (1995) "The power of contemporary work in an American art tradition to illuminate its own power relations." In G.E. Marcus & F.R. Myers (eds) *The traffic in culture: refiguring art and anthropology*, pp. 201-223. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Martin, Bill (1998) *Listening to the future: the time of progressive rock.* Chicago: Open Court.

Martin, Peter J. (1995) *Sounds and society: themes in the sociology of music.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Martindale, Colin (1990) *The clockwork muse: the predictability of artistic change.* New York: Basic Books

Matthews, David (1989) "The rehabilitation of the vernacular." In Christopher Norris (ed) *Music and the politics of culture*, pp. 240-251. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Mayo, Marjorie (2000) *Cultures, communities, identities: cultural strategies for participation and empowerment.* Houndmills: Palgrave.

Mellers, Wilfrid (1989) *Vaughan Williams and the vision of Albion.* London : Barrie and Jenkins.

Melly, George (1970) *Revolt into style: the pop arts in Britain.* London: Penguin Books.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1992[1961]) "Eye and mind." Translated by Carleton Dallery in Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (eds) *Art in theory 1900-1990, an anthology of changing ideas*, pp. 750-4. Oxford: Blackwell.

Merriam, Alan P. (1964) *The anthropology of music.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Meyer, Leonard B. (1956) *Emotion and meaning in music.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meyer, Leonard B. (1967) *Music, the arts and ideas* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meyer, Leonard B. (1989) *Style and music: theory, history and ideology.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Middleton, Richard (1990) *Studying popular music.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Middleton, Richard (2000) "Popular music analysis and musicology: bridging the gap." In Richard Middleton (ed) *Reading pop: approaches to textual analysis in popular music,* pp.104-121. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Moritz, Karl Philipp (1981 [1785]) "To Moses Mendelssohn, Esq." In P. le Huray & J. Day (eds) *Music and aesthetics in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,* pp. 186-7. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mozart, Wolfgang A. (1865) *Mozarts Briefe.* Ludwig Pohl (ed). Salzburg: Verlag der Mayrischen Buchhandlung.

Muggleton, David (1997) "The post-subculturalist." In Steve Redhead (ed) *The clubcultures reader,* pp. 185-203. Oxford: Blackwell.

Murdoch, Peter George (1971) "How culture changes." In Harry Shapiro (ed) *Man, culutre and society,* pp. 319-332. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Nattiez, Jean-Jacques (1987) *Music and discourse: towards a semiology of music.* Translated by Carolyn Abbate. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Negus, Keith (1996) *Popular music in theory.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Nettl, Bruno (1985) *The western impact on world music: change adaptation and survival.* New York: Schirmer Books.

Nketia, J.H. Kwabena (1974) *The music of Africa.* London: MGBO Publications Ltd..

Packard, Vance (1957) *The hidden persuaders.* London: Longmans, Green & Co..

Palmer, Roy (1983) *Folk songs collected by Ralph Vaughan Williams.* London: Dent.

Parsons, Talcott (1964 [1961]) "A functional theory of change." In A. Etizioni & E. Etizioni (eds) *Social change: sources, patterns and consequences*, pp. 83-97. New York: Basic Books.

Peterson, Richard A & Simkus, Albert (1992) "How musical tastes mark occupational status groups." In Michèle Lamont & Marcel Fournier (eds) *Cultivating Differences*, pp. 152-186. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pinker, Steven, (2002) *The blank slate: the modern denial of human nature.* London: Allen Lane.

Plato (2000) *The republic.* G.R.F. Ferrari (ed) Cambridge: CUP.

Popper, K. (1962) *The open society and its enemies*, vol. 1. London: Routledge.

Potter, Pamela (2001) "Nazism." In Stanley Sadie (ed) *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vol. 17, pp. 722-724. London: Macmillan.

Rahn, John (ed) (1994) *Perspectives on musical aesthetics.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Raphael, Alison (1990) "From popular culture to microenterprise: the history of Brazilian samba schools." *Latin American Music Review*, 11.1:74-83.

Reily, Suzel (1994) "Macunaima's music." In Stokes, Martin (ed) *Ethnicity, identity and music: the musical construction of place*, pp. 71-96. Oxford: Berg.

Reis, João José (2003) *Rebelião escrava no Brasil: história do levante dos malês em 1835.* São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

Riley, Bridget (2003) *Dialogues on art*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Ritzer, George (1993) *The McDonaldization of society*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge.

Rosen, Charles (1975) *Arnold Schoenberg*. New York: Viking Press.

Rosen, Charles (1976) *The classical style: Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven*. London: Faber and Faber.

Sabin, R. (ed) (1999) *Punk rock: so what?* London: Routledge.

Santos Barbosa, Guilherme dos (1988) "Capueira de Angola: a personal view of a capueira master." *The World of Music*, XXX.2:69-84.

Savage, Jon (1991) *England's dreaming: Sex Pistols and punk rock*. London: Faber and Faber.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy (1992) *Death without weeping: the violence of everyday life in Brazil*. Berkely: University of California Press.

Schoenberg, Arnold (1975) *Style and idea: selected writings of A. Schoenberg*. Leonard Stein (ed), translations by Leo Black. London: Faber & Faber.

Scott, Derek B. (2003) *From the erotic to the demonic: on critical musicology*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Scruton, Roger (1997) *The aesthetics of music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Segato, Rita Laura (1993) "Okarilé: Yemoja's icon tune." *Latin American Music Review*, 14:1:1-19.

Shapiro, Harry (2003) *Waiting for the man: the story of drugs and popular music.* London: Helter Skelter.

Sharp, Cecil J. (1965) *English folk-song: some conclusions.* London: Mercury Books.

Sheinbaum, John J. (2002) "Progressive rock and the inversion of musical values." In Kevin Holm-Hudson (ed) *Progressive rock reconsidered,* pp. 22-31. New York: Routledge.

Sinker, Mark (1999) "Concrete, so as to self-destruct: the ettiquette of punk, its habits, rules, values and dilemmas." In R. Sabin (ed.) *Punk rock: so what?* pp. 120-140. London: Routledge.

Sisman, Elaine (2005) "Haydn's career and the idea of the multiple audience." In Caryl Clark (ed) *The Cambridge companion to Haydn,* pp. 3-16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Slade, Giles (2006) *Made to break: technology and obsolescence in America.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Small, Christopher (1998) *Musicking: The meanings of performing and listening.* Hanover: Wesleyan University Press.

Smelser, Neil J. (1962) *Theory of collective behaviour.* London: Routledge.

Smelser, Neil J. (1992) "Culture: coherent or incoherent." In R. Münch & N.J. Smelser (eds) *Theory of culture,* pp. 3-28. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Snyder, Bob (2000) *Music and memory: an introduction.* Cambridge Mass.: MIT Press.

Spencer, Amy (2005) *DIY: the rise of lo-fi culture.* London: Marion Boyars.

Spier, Leslie (1971) "Inventions and human society." In Harry Shapiro (ed) *Man, culture and society*, pp. 296 - 318. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stockfelt, Ola "Adequate modes of listening." In Anahid Kassabian, David Schwarz & Lawrence Siegel (eds) *Keeping score: music, disciplinarity, culture.* Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Stokes, Martin (ed) (1994) *Ethnicity, identity and music: the musical construction of place.* Oxford: Berg.

Strinati, Dominic (1995) *An introduction to theories of popular culture.* London: Routledge.

Stump, Paul (1997) *The music's all that matters: a history of progressive rock.* London: Quartet Books.

Tagg, Philip (2000) "Analysing popular music: theory, method and practice." In Richard Middleton (ed) *Reading pop: approaches to textual analysis in popular* music, pp. 71-103. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taruskin, Richard (2001) "Nationalism." In Stanley Sadie (ed) *The new Grove dictionary of music and musicians*, vol. 17, pp. 689-706. London: Macmillan.

Taylor, Timothy (1997) *Global pop: world music, world markets.* London: Routledge.
Toynbee, Jason (2000) *Making popular music.* London: Arnold.

Turino, Thomas (1989) "The coherence of social style and musical creation among the Aymara in southern Peru." *Ethnomusicology.* 33:1.

Vance, Carole (1995) "Four essays on art, sexuality and cultural politics." In G.E. Marcus & F.R. Myers (eds) *The traffic in culture: refiguring art and anthropology*, pp. 330-368. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Vaughan Williams, Ralph (1934) *National music.* London: Oxford University Press.

Vaughan Williams, Ralph (1959) *Heirs and rebels.* London: Oxford University Press.

Veblen, Thorstein (2005[1899]) *Conspicuous consumption.* London: Penguin.

Vianna, Hermano (1999) *The mystery of samba: popular music and national identity in Brazil.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Weber, Max (1971) *The interpretation of social reality.* London: Michael Joseph Ltd.

Weedon, Chris (2004) *Identity and culture.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Whiteley, Sheila (2000) "Progressive rock and psychedelic coding." In Richard Middleton (ed) *Reading pop: approaches to textual analysis in popular music.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Carolyn (1995) "Utopia, limited: nationalism, empire and parody in the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan." In Sally Ledger & Scott McCracken (eds) *Cultural politics at the fin de siècle*, pp. 221-247. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Willis, Paul (1977) *Learning to labour.* Aldershot: Gower.

Willis, Paul E. (1978) *Profane culture.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Winter, David & Barenbaum, Nicole (1999) "History of modern personality theory and research." In L. Pervin & O. John (eds) *Handbook of personality*, pp. 3-31. New York: Guilford Press.

Witkin, Robert (1998) *Adorno on Music.* Routledge: London.

Wölfflin, Heinrich (1952[1899]) *Classic art: an introduction to the Italian Renaissance.* Translated by Peter and Linda Murray. Oxford: Phaidon.

Woods, F. (1979) *Folk revival: the rediscovery of a national music.* Poole: Blandford.

Zon, Bennett (2000) *Music in nineteenth century British musicology.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Zuckerman, Marvin (1994) *Behavioral expressions and biosocial bases of sensation seeking.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Glossary of Neologisms

N.B.: all terms refer to music.

accessibility gradient: accessibility differential between genres, particularly when related to other continua such as class.

accessibility paradox: the fact that contradictory elements can be required to make music attract-accessible, for instance familiar and novel elements.

auxiliary participatory accessibility: accessibility to audience participation (e.g. dancing to a band) rather than performance (e.g. playing and instrument on stage).

attract-accessible: accessible due to a balance between contradictory elements, for instance familiar and novel elements.

equilibrium of accessibility: dynamic situation in which style development counteracts audience habituation.

homology of now: appropriateness of music for the time in which it is conceived. Perceived fit between music and the era during which it is in fashion. Hence enhanced accessibility of such music at that time.

Level I accessibility: physical access to music in live performance, or to recordings or broadcasts; being able to hear music. See Table 1.

Level II accessibility: accessibility at the perceptual, personal reception and subjective level. See Table 1.

Level III accessibility: relates to accessibility issues concerning participation or the social use of music. See Table 1.

Level tool: Table 1 when applied to musical genres, situations or approaches to music.

materiability: accessibility or comprehensibility of musical material and structures.

point of accessibility: an aspect of music, its practice or performance which aids or increases accessibility.

predict-accessible: accessible due to simplicity and familiarity.

semiobility:[1] accessibility of particular musical meanings and uses, this being proportionate to the extent of competence regarding such meanings and uses in a culture.

use-accessibility: potential personal or social usefulness of music.

---

[1] Semiobility can be regarded as a counterpart to the notion of 'competence' as used in semiotics and semantics. A genre has semiobility to the extent that there is competence as to its meanings in the cultural environment.

Appendix

Internet Search Completed 6/11/04

A Google search for 'music, accessibility' (without quotation marks) received about 784,000 results but many of these, in fact most, seemed to be about disabled access. The search 'accessible, music' returned about 2,390,000 results. The following are extracts from a selection of these.

1) www.shopping.com/xMPR-The-Doors---The-Doors~PD-66297

THE DOORS take 60s aesthetics to the apex, with loads of experimentation and acute acessibility.

By silktempest a member of Epinions Member: **Carlos Gama** Epinions.com ID: **silktempest** Location: **Belo Horizonte - Brazil**

2) http://www.dustedmagazine.com/reviews/654

Consider first Via Tania's resemblance to the AOR end of recent female R&B stars. While her vocal tone is distinguishable enough from that of Alicia Keys or even a mature Nelly Furtado, her airy, breathy delivery brings the format of such popular singers to mind. The downtempo arrangements of *Lightning & Thunder* bring the songs, at times, dangerously close to easy listening territory, and the overall effect is one of acessibility and comfort. This doesn't strike, on first listen, as difficult stuff.

The act of being (either technically or conceptually) challenging is one of the more narcissistically rewarding traits of indie rock; a distinguishing factor that sets, say, Badly Drawn Boy apart from David Gray. Technically complex music (or something from a label like K, which is conceptually difficult in its ironic insistence upon arrant amateurness) makes for a gratifying, almost self-congratulating listen, but what we lose in requiring a level of complexity is the ability to appreciate the power of music so often dismissed as uncomplicated.

Cory O'Malley

The Esbjorn Svensson Trio's latest is a delicious banquet of accessible, quality music

EST's **Seven Days of Falling** (Act, £13.99) is that rare thing, an immediately accessible instrumental jazz album. The sort of album you can take home to mum, or that you can play in the company of jazz agnostics without reinforcing their worst prejudices. You know what I mean. There are otherwise great jazz albums - classics, even - that contain embarrassing moments (ugly sounds, passionate lapses of taste, freakouts) that you can only appreciate in the presence of consenting jazz fans; anyone else would ask you to turn it down or fast-forward.

John L Walters
Friday September 19, 2003
The Guardian

GIA Publications, Inc.
Music Education Selection

Accessible music, ready to play in your classroom...or at home

You Are My Sunshine

100 Familiar Tunes Performed on a Variety of Instruments
by Richard F. Grunow, Edwin E. Gordon, and Christopher
D. Azzara

This high-caliber recording has virtually countless purposes.

Ever need to demonstrate the sound of an instrument? Need quick access to high-quality recordings of folk songs of all different styles, tempos, and origins? Interested in exposing young children to the rich variety of instrumental music?

You Are My Sunshine is a wonderful, purely instrumental collection of 100 of the world's best-known folk songs, performed by some of the world's greatest musicians-including artist faculty members and students from the Eastman School of Music, members of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and members of Rhythm and Brass. This recording primarily features wind instruments and mallet percussion.

Research tells us that young children should learn as many songs as possible from an early age as a readiness for future achievement in music. You Are My Sunshine is the perfect way to bring children to new music. This collection is the first of three to be released by GIA, each with 100 songs. Teachers, parents, and students will quickly wonder how they ever got along without this essential recording.

Notation for this music can be found in Jump Right In: The Instrumental Series Solo Book 3.

J199CD Compact disc...................$15.95
J199CS Cassette.....................$9.95

5) http://www.acmusic.org/aboutus.html

Accessible Contemporary Music is a non-profit organization based in Chicago, IL. It is our artistic mission to promote the performance and understanding of contemporary music, especially that of emerging composers in the Chicago area. We have as our target audience both those already acquainted with contemporary music and those who tend to think it's all a lot of cacophonous noise. It is our goal to cater to the former without excluding the latter. In pursuance of this goal we take a very direct approach to concert giving, frequently including pre-concert talks and discussion sessions between the audience and the composer. Our programming is frequently an eclectic mix that can include composers such as Claude Bolling and George Rochberg in the same program. So far we have had great success with this approach. New music is not as coldly forbidding as it seems to so many, especially when it is presented in a relaxed, unpretentious atmosphere in which the audience is encouraged to interact with the composer.

6) http://www.ithaca.edu/ithacan/articles/0409/09/accent/2suzuki_makes.htm

Suzuki makes music accessible for all ages

September 09, 2004

Hundreds of children, each with instrument in hand, were eager to begin three vigorous weeks of musical enlightenment. Though some were not yet in preschool, and others may already be looking at colleges, they were all here because of a similar passion.

They were students of the Suzuki Institutes held annually at Ithaca College. The Suzuki Institutes are run jointly between Ithaca College and Ithaca Talent Education. The programs are directed by Sanford Reuning, who founded the institutes 30 years ago. This July brought students, parents and teachers from as far as France to Ithaca to learn music according to the Suzuki method.

The Suzuki Method introduces music to children at an early age. As early as 3 years old,

Suzuki students are first taught to listen and absorb the music they will learn to play years later.

Aaron Arm - Contributing Writer

7) http://www.collegian.psu.edu/archive/2004/01/01-23-04tdc/01-23-04dops-column-01.asp

With that in mind, you can imagine my disappointment in seeing a record titled *Now 14* at the top of the charts every week. The *Now* series is a periodically updated collection of discs that compiles the hottest new music onto one, easily accessible piece of plastic. A lazyman's library of trendy tunes. A radio with a pause button.

My problem with these compilations is not the music itself; Beyonce can put out as many solo albums as she wants, as far as I'm concerned. But that's exactly the point -- a Beyonce solo album is an album, a collection of her own material, placed in context with other songs, over which I'd like to think she had some creative control.

The *Now* discs are not albums. The songs have no context, no flow, no artistic integrity. Yet, they are selling better than the real albums from which the songs were stolen. Is new music so disposable that we can throw it into one bucket and label it with a lifetime in its very title? Just how long is *Now*? The series is ultimately an insultingly disposable product.

Paul Weinstein is a junior majoring in journalism. He is the Collegian's arts editor.

8) http://www.adastra-music.co.uk/class.html

Accessible/Broad Appeal - Whatever the origin of groups in this category, their performance has something to appeal to everyone. Usullay very visually appealing, entertaining and fast moving, nothing too esoteric.
Lindisfarne, Old Rope String Band, Footworks, Si Khan, La Bottine Souriante, Barachois, Juan Martín, Black Umfolosi, Rod Clements, Hassan Erraji & Arabesque

Adastra
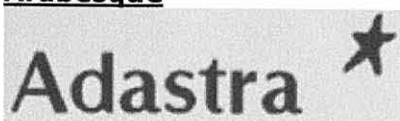
Britain's premiere agency for live music and entertainment.
2 Star Row, North Dalton, Driffield, East Yorkshire, England, YO25 9UR
Tel: +44 (0)1377 217662 Fax: +44 (0)1377 217754

9) http://www.abc.net.au/triplej/review/print/s1216124.htm

Some criticise Cyclic for being an insular magazine for elite, obscure, serious music purists. These people are certainly catered for; however there is plenty in its pages for people interested in more 'lighted hearted' or 'accessible' music. If you enjoy the sounds of Lali Puna, Tortise, B(if)tek, Purdy, High Pass Filter, Koolism, !!!, Sonic Youth or Buck 65, to name but a few, then you'll find something in Cyclic that you can relate to.

10) http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/features/1999/09-14wmt.asp

Providing music over the Internet offers a way for artists to make their music instantly accessible to millions of consumers. Yet until recently, concerns about security and audio quality prevented many artists from using this medium. Record companies were worried about the potential for users to make copies of songs and illegally distribute them over the Internet. And poor sound quality relegated online music to an inferior status compared to the CD-quality music available in music stores. ©2004 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

11) www.middleburycampus.com/news/2002/10/30/Arts/Blowin.Indie.htm

Blowin' Indie Wind: Although Now More Accessible, Sonic Youth Will Never Be Mainstream

By Erika Mercer Published: Wednesday, October 30, 2002

Article Tools:⬚EMAIL⬚PRINT   ⟨PREV PAGE⟩**Page 1 of 3**⟨NEXT PAGE⟩

The first time listening to Sonic Youth is a lot like taking your first bite of sushi — raw, cold, foreign and delicious. It's a taste you've never experienced before, one that startles you with its strangeness and amazes you with its distinctive flavor. Your palate, initially shocked, begins to crave more.

In "Bad Moon Rising," the band combined its raw experimentalism with a straightforward pop song structure, creating a somewhat more accessible sound. The album served as the launch pad for Sonic Youth's takeoff to fame.

12) http://www.uiowa.edu/~ournews/2004/october/101404symphony.html

With two American works in addition to the always-popular "Bolero," the program includes some of the most accessible music of the early 20th century. The concert will open with Charles Ives' bracing exploration of musical Americana, the Symphony No. 2. After intermission, Wolfe will play Samuel Barber's lyrical Violin Concerto. The concert will close with Ravel's "Bolero," which the orchestra will repeat Nov. 12 and 13 when it provides live accompaniment for "aLIVE in Concert," the UI Dance Department's annual Dance Gala performances in Hancher.

13) http://www.npr.org/about/programs/music.html

***Performance Today*®** was honored with the 1999 Peabody Award "in recognition of more than a decade of entertaining listeners and making serious music both contemporary and accessible." Monday through Friday with host Fred Child and weekends with Korva Coleman, *Performance Today* takes an immediate, informative approach to classical music that's loved by casual listeners and music aficionados alike. The program focuses on music made in concert -- more than 1,000 performances each year -- from established stars and promising young artists.

14) http://www.indyweek.com/durham/2000-09-06/bets3.html

In clubs

It's a tribute to just how misguided the music bidness has become that Spottiswoode and His Enemies had to release their scintillating, eponymous debut on their producer's humble label (Kumpelstiltskin). It's a shame because, as recently as the '80s, this is precisely the kind of challenging but accessible music in which the major labels trafficked.

Jonathan Spottiswoode was the best thing about the now-defunct Washington, D.C.-based band The Zimmermans. His ominous baritone calls to mind both Nick Cave and Leonard Cohen, while his cynical lyrics playfully dissect the Battle of the Sexes. His Enemies--most of them holdovers from The Zimms--are musically expert foils for their leader's demented ideas, shifting effortlessly from cabaret and elegant waltzes to brassy Bond raves and raunchy rock 'n' roll.

Spottiswoode opens for whacked-out local superstars Lud this Tues., Sept. 12, at Local 506. *--Gavin O'Hara*

15) http://www.suntimes.com/output/delacoma/sho-sunday-cso10a.html

WYNNE DELACOMA

Bernstein, a great music salesman

October 10, 2004

BY <u>WYNNE DELACOMA</u> Classical Music Critic

Long before everybody in the American orchestral world started talking about "outreach," one of the country's greatest composers and conductors was doing something about it. Leonard Bernstein -- the composer of "West Side Story" and "Candide," music director of the New York Philharmonic from 1958 to 1969 -- was to music what John D. Rockefeller was to the oil industry. A kind of vertically integrated music machine, Bernstein, who died in 1990 at age 72, wrote music and conducted the world's great orchestras. But unlike most conductors and composers, he went one step further. Bernstein, known as Lenny to his friends and the gossip columnists who chronicled his glamorous, controversial life, was one of classical music's greatest salesmen.

Charismatic, informal, formidably intelligent about all kinds of music from Beethoven to bebop, Bernstein turned the New York Philharmonic's 34-year-old tradition of afternoon youth concerts into sparkling TV. A few weeks after becoming music director, he conducted his first youth concert, illuminating the music at hand with his own eclectic, entertaining commentary. Children were mesmerized by the programs with such titles as "Folk Music in the Concert Hall" and "What Is a Melody?" Adults, who also found the programs fascinating, were thrilled that Bernstein was making classical music so accessible to their children. It's no exaggeration to say that thousands of musicians and listeners in today's concert halls first encountered classical music through Bernstein's Young People's Concerts with the New York Philharmonic.

16) http://chinesemusic.net/research_institute_info.asp

The Society celebrates its 25th Anniversary this year. In the three decades, the CMSNA has grown to be the largest Chinese cultural arts organization in the U.S. Its Research, Performance, and Education programs are widely credited with "Making Chinese Music Totally Accessible". Its programming methodology used in designing the U.S. and European Concert Tour of the Silk & Bamboo Ensemble, the Chinese Classical Orchestra, and the Recital and Lecture Programs have been considered one of the most practical and effective nationally. The National Endowment for the Arts has named the Society center of excellence in music. The Silk & Bamboo Ensemble has been chosen to represent the United States in Fourth of July Concerts in Europe!

Music and Culture in the Twentieth Century

IV. THE NEW becomes HISTORY:
CONTEMPORARY: Music in the Shadow of Webern

D. Eighties
1. World events
    a. Detente and the Soviet Union
    b. Long Prosperity, conservatism
2. Classical
    a. Neo-Romanticism
    b. More accessible music

E. Nineties
1. World
    a. Fall of communism
    b. A new world order in the making
    c. European integration
    d. New Russia
    e. European disorder
    b. Technology taken for granted
    c. Pirzig, *Lila, An Inquiry into Morals* questions the results of the seventies and seeks a new grounding in what is good.
2. Classical
    a. Postmodern - more accessible
    b. Reich - wants process to be obvious to audience
3. Pop
    a. Multiple versions of songs - anyone with computer can remix a song.
    b. Afro-pop, interest of broad audience in world music

New York's Run On combined their love of pop, rock, and the avant-garde into complex, eclectic but accessible music. The group's extensive history in New York's underground rock and noise/jazz circles made them comfortable with bouncy pop or extended improvs -- and many of their songs employed both.

19) http://www.chrisruel.com/ChrisRuel.com/MusicReviews/ShawnLaneReviews.htm

The Tritone Fasciniation **is characterized by diverse, sophisticated yet accessible compositions, virtuosic, stellar instrumentation, fastidious production, and solid, theme-centric musicality.**

2001 - 2003 Christopher Ruel.

20) http://www.franciscan.edu/home2/Content/Campuslife/main.aspx?id=963&cc=336

From the opening recital to the closing Mass, panelists stressed the importance of internalizing the principals of the Church's documents and preserving her heritage of sacred music, while students asked for advice in how best to engage the culture and make sacred music as accessible and effective as the documents desire it to be.

2004 Franciscan University of Steubenville

21) http://www.musiccentre.ca/mus.cfm?subsection=mni

Driven by a desire to create music that was more accessible and less encumbered by formal harmonic and melodic traditions, minimalist techniques were pioneered in the USA by its still renowned practitioners: Philip Glass, Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and LaMonte Young. International composers such as Górecki, Pärt, and Tavener led Minimalist movements in Europe.

canadian music centre

22) http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/guides/guide-display/-/1V0ZF8TGIMSQO/103-5913632-8595817

Not into hand drums and harmonies? Try these out: Weezer has been releasing some sub-par albums lately, but back when they were first taking off, they released two of the best albums ever recorded. 'Weezer' is filled with hooks and catchy melodies, but rocks hard, while 'Pinkerton' rocks even harder, but is less accessible. That doesn't make it the lesser of the two albums. Give it a couple listens and you'll agree it's one of the greatest CDs of all time.

Want to chill out to something a little less radio-friendly? Modest Mouse is one of the best indie-rock bands out there. Start out with 'Moon & Antarctica', the most accessible of their albums, and give it a few spins. Then you'll be ready to move on to more obscure

albums like 'Building Nothing Out Of Something' and 'Lonesome Crowded West'. Sometimes it gets a little on the weird side, but it's great music for chilling out to.

More accessible music to chill to: Death Cab for Cutie's 'Transatlanticism', Wheat's 'Hope & Adams', Starsailor's 'Love Is Here', Wilco's 'Yankee Hotel Foxtrot', Howie Day's 'Australia', Dandy Warhols' 'Thirteen Tales From Urban Bohemia', and Dave Matthews 'Some Devil' are all really great albums that I highly recommend.