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Ray Hudson

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What is This?

Progress reports

Regions and place: music, identity and place

Ray Hudson*

Department of Geography and Wolfson Research Institute, University of Durham, Durham DH1 3LE, UK

I Introduction
Both historically and contemporarily there are strong links between music and senses of place and identities, both of people and places. Via a variety of musical genres, from the evocative symbolism of Sibelius' Finlandia to Springsteen's gritty images of the deindustrialized relicts of contemporary Youngstown, via numerous strands of folk and popular music such as Tommy Armstrong's vivid descriptions in words and music of the Durham coalfield in the nineteenth century, there is ample evidence to support the proposition that music has the ability to conjure up powerful images of place, feelings of deep attachment to place.

Given this, it is perhaps surprising that music and its relation to place has been a rather neglected topic in human geography. Not only has there been little consideration of geographies of music but such work as there was tended to be descriptive and conceptually limited (for example, see Carney, 1978; 1994). As Nash (1996), not without a hint of frustration, lamented, 'it is . . . a mystery to many as to why cultural geographers have paid so little attention to music because it

influences virtually all aspects of culture and manifests itself in numerous spatial ways'. Although there had been some important contributions, such as Kong (1995), that sought a more sophisticated engagement between geography and music, some five years later Zelinsky (1999) still felt moved to comment, with studied understatement, that 'our accomplishments in exploring the geographic dimensions and implications of that uniquely human, mysteriously indefinable phenomenon we call music have been rather rudimentary'. Clearly here was a vacuum waiting to be filled, and in recent years a range of human geographers have become increasingly interested in issues of music, place and identity in a range of empirical settings, theoretical frameworks and policy contexts. At the same time, other scholars of music and social scientists have also recognized the importance of space and place in relation to making music and issues of identity (Bennett, 2000; Whiteley *et al.*, 2004).

The growing attention to the role of music by human geographers in recent years chimes nicely with a number of broader shifts in emphasis and themes in human geography,

*Email: ray.hudson@durham.ac.uk

which it has both reflected and helped produce. Four in particular stand out. First, there is the more general 'cultural turn' in much of human geography. Second, there has been a growing emphasis upon performance and practice. Third, there has also been a growing sensitivity to the importance of senses other than sight. Fourth, one can point to a much greater acknowledgement of the importance of affect and emotion in shaping behaviour.

However, it is also important to remember that the music industry remains an important site of commodity production in contemporary capitalism and that political economy therefore remains important in understanding geographies of music.

II Making music, producing places

'Places' can be thought of as complex entities, ensembles of material objects, people, and systems of social relationships embodying distinct cultures and multiple meanings, identities and practices. As such, places are contested and continually in the process of becoming, rather than essentialized and fixed, open and porous to a variety of flows in and out rather than closed and hermetically sealed (Hudson, 2001: Chapter 8). How then can music be thought of in relation to the (un)making of place?

In one of the earlier contributions to the literature on place and music, Cohen (1991) explores their relationship in the context of rock music in Liverpool and music-making by local amateur rock bands, caught between the commercial pressures of the music industry and a desire for creativity, poised between success and failure. She emphasizes the way in which rock music is part of a rock culture, a way of life with its own beliefs, conventions, norms and rituals in Liverpool. In so doing, she challenges postmodernist assertions that the globalization of music and indeed other forms of popular culture results in a 'loss of place', a general condition of both placelessness and timelessness. In a later contribution to the literature (Cohen, 1995), centred on the biographical trajectory of an 88-year-old Jewish immigrant in Liverpool, she argues that music can play a key role in

production of place in various ways, literally and metaphorically: as a material setting comprising the physical and built environments; as a setting for the quotidian social relations, practices and interactions of everyday life; and as a concept or symbol that is represented or interpreted. As she puts it (Cohen, 1991: 288), '[m]usic . . . plays a unique and often hidden role in the production of place'. However, the production of place through music – like the production of place in general – is seen to be a contested process, while the dynamic interrelationship between music and place suggests that music plays a very particular and sensuous role in place making.

More recently, Bennett (2002) has analysed how recently developed IT and internet technologies are giving rise to new ways of conceptualizing the relationship between music and place. He deploys the concept of 'mythscapes' (developed from Appadurai's work: for example, see 1996) to the 'Canterbury sound', a term recently revived and adapted by a web-based fan base to describe a loosely defined back-catalogue of albums, songs and home-recorded musical experiments. As a result, Canterbury is being inscribed into a series of urban myths relating to its perceived role in the creation of a musical style which fans claim to be locally specific. Bennett also considers the extent to which the Canterbury sound can be considered to be a 'virtual' scene by virtue of its 'construction' in cyberspace, as internet communication replaces more conventional forms of celebrating collective musical tastes as these emerge through the embodied sociality of club, concert hall and festival-based scenes.

III Music and identities and the well-being of people and places

Over the last decade or so, some important edited collections have appeared, focused on these issues of music, place and identities. Stokes (1994) assembled a collection of work that examined the significance of music in the construction of identities and ethnicities and the ways in which these issues related to those

of place – though interestingly human geographers were not identified as among the potential readers of the book. A year later, Leyshon *et al.* (1995) brought together a set of papers by geographers dealing with issues of music, identity and place, followed by a further collection shortly afterwards (Leyshon *et al.*, 1998) which explored the role of music in the making and articulation of geographical imaginations at various spatial scales and the power of music as a force in the definition of places. Then the complex links between places, popular music and cultural identities at a range of spatial scales – local, national and global – and in a variety of musical genres and styles – from brass bands to buskers, from rap to rai, from the 'Mersey' and 'Icelandic' sounds to 'world music' – and the diverse meanings of music in a range of regional contexts were explored by Connell and Gibson (2002).

While musical genres (like places) can be considered in terms of concepts of authenticity, they can, alternatively, be conceptualized through the lens of hybridity and the ongoing mixing of different musical cultural traditions in place. This routinely problematizes claims as to authenticity, as Connell and Gibson (2004) emphasize in their discussion of the rise of 'world music'. They see this as a 'commercial' or 'marketing' category rather than a genre with definitive links to particular parts of the world. They stress that the rise of 'world music', centred on fusion and hybridity, renders impossible the tracing of authenticity in musical styles. Nonetheless, these processes did create new identities that fused local and global, traditional and modern, while at the same time deterritorializing culture, though – paradoxically – only as a result of the construction and contestation of discourses of otherness and place.

The construction of unique place-based socio-musical identity as a consequence of the arrival and negotiation of Balinese musical culture on the neighbouring island of Lombok through processes of preservation, adaptation and innovation is examined by Harnish (2005). On Lombok, Balinese music and culture collide, converge and mix with the music and culture of the indigenous Islamic Sasak majority. As the Hindu Balinese experienced successive dramatic shifts in status – from colonizer to colonized to minority in the Indonesian state – their music was adjusted and altered in consequence. Their musical culture reveals three streams of influence that define the Lombok Balinese, but these 'traditional' strands are being actively reconsidered as musicians and societal leaders alike struggle to cope with reformist Islam, centralized Hindu organizations, and national and regional political developments.

The ways in which the character of music events can change in unintended rather than intended ways is also explored by Waterman (1998) in the context of the annual Kfar Blum festival at a kibbutz in northern Israel and a very different musical genre, chamber music. Soon after its inauguration, it became dominated by audiences of elite social groups, which made it a highly desirable social event. As a result of the enhanced demand for participation in the festival it became transformed from an artistic celebration to a cultural commodity. This challenged the overall purpose of the festival and resulted in changes in artistic direction, as programmes with a wider popular appeal were introduced in search of new audiences. Waterman argues that the Kfar Blum festival exemplifies the way in which social trends in Israel produced new contested arenas, as place – in this case a quiet kibbutz in northern Israel – became a metaphor for these wider trends, emphasizing the ways in which music in place is both affected by and constitutive of broader social processes. As Harnish noted, wider national and global influences can find expression in more local musical cultures, an issue explored more fully by Connell and Gibson (2002), who emphasize the links between embodiment and mobility, fixity and fluidity in the contemporary world.

An important dimension of the contemporary phase of globalization is the enhanced flows of people between places. In a way that

resonates with other work on mobility and knowledge transfer (Hudson, 2005: Chapters 3 and 4) Connell and Gibson point to the links between migration and new musical practices and the recent rise of music tourism, alluding to the relationships between music and economic development strategies. The relationships between tourism, place and music are explored in a rather different way by Dunbar-Hall (2003), via an analysis of the performances staged for tourists at a prominent site, Puri Saen Agung (the Ubud Palace) in the Balinese village of Ubud. These performances are representative of the ways in which traditional Balinese culture is transformed when it is packaged specifically for tourist consumption. Through a number of readings of the palace, the potential meanings of music are shown to be dependent upon the past and present identities of this site. This is heightened by a view of changes in the palace's status and uses as a metaphor for ongoing developments in Balinese music and dance, and thus of the ways in which tourism has been, and continues to be, a force in Balinese cultural production.

Building on earlier work by Gibson (2002), Gibson and Connell (2003) examine the relationships between backpacker tourism, along with counter-urban migration (of a diverse mix of ex-urban professionals, retirees and the unemployed), music and the production of place. A distinctive cultural economy has developed in Byron Bay on the Far North Coast of New South Wales, building on the connections between tourism and the production and marketing of music. The permanent and temporary inward migratory movements of people have contributed to transformations of regional identity as the Far North Coast is increasingly perceived as an 'alternative' or 'lifestyle' region, and to transforming the former whaling town of Byron Bay into a unique site of backpacker subculture. A crucial element in this is the tourist consumption of popular music, specifically produced for youth markets, informed and influenced by the attitudes and style of backpacker culture. These themes and global and local influences coalesce in the marketing of 'world music' and its artifacts to 'neotribal' subcultures. Baumann (2001) also discusses the way in which, in the contemporary era of enhanced mobility of both people (as migrants, as tourists) and information, regional traditions interrelate with musical diversity and intercultural music-making and improvisation. He emphasizes that, while in certain respects technological advances in transport and communications technologies are shrinking the world, the conceptualization of culture and region is expressed through music in highly differentiated ways. Crucially, the region in which music is made can be differentiated from the (trans)region, which is represented symbolically through music.

The ways in which globalization has complicated modern ways of configuring identity, and intensified struggles over the category of 'identity', are explored by Stokes (2004), using the specific example of Cartel, a German-Turkish hip-hop group. He argues that identity construction and 'difference producing' still need to be understood as central cultural processes in modern urban life (indeed, modern life more generally) but that these need to be located and grounded in the everyday life of communities, corporations and cities (and indeed in the myriad other spaces of contemporary quotidian life). Seen in this way, cultural identities are a product of contested processes, always in the process of becoming and unbecoming. Musical activity, the meanings of which are often particularly difficult to fix, provides a useful vantage point from which to explore this perspective. Using the example of Cartel, Stokes argues that its self-conscious and highly contested identity politics must be understood in the intersecting contexts of migration in post-1989 Europe, world music in the recording industry, Turkish Islamism and the 'global' refashioning of Istanbul. In similar fashion, but in a very different place, Roberson (2001) explores the ways in which the cultural politics of images of Okinawa, Japan, are constructed within

Uchina Pop music, an innovative hybrid synthesis of traditional Okinawa folk music with 'western' musical styles. He argues that the musically constructed images of Okinawan hybridity and difference that this encompasses must be understood within the context of national and international political-economic dynamics and their local effects. The emphasis is again on the ways in which diverse cultural currents flowing through a specific place help shape images of place within music.

While several scholars have explored the more positive aspects of the relations between identity, music and place, others have pointed to the darker side of these relationships. As Cloonan and Johnson (2002) have observed, throughout history a considerable amount of popular music has been integral to exclusionary, divisive and oppressive identities and social relations. To take just one contemporary example, Baker (2005) focuses upon the rise to stardom of the Croatian folk/rock singer, Marko Perkovic Thompson, whose repertoire is strongly associated with the military veterans' lobby and protests against the indictment of Croatian soldiers following the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Thompson's music and lyrics, both during his wartime career and in the post-Tudjman period, reproduce nationalist narratives of Croatian continuity, heroism and victimhood, and draw on (and one might add, help reproduce) an established pool of folkloric imagery, while articulating a myth of wartime brotherhood with explicit political connotations. The fact that the figure of Thompson has become a site at which narratives of Croatia's history, present character and future responsibilities are contested has been further thrown into sharp relief during recent controversies concerning his apparent musical rehabilitation of the fascist NDH, in which his popular cultural product is understood as a vehicle for the transmission of an undesirable interpretation of the past.

Music has also been linked to issues of well-being as well as those of identity. Wood and Smith (2004) emphasize that emotional experiences and relationships are commonly marginalized within human geography, despite their impact on all aspects of social life, and argue that this leads to a partial and impoverished understanding of social life and human (inter)relations. They use the example of musical performance, a setting in which the emotional dimensions of social relations are deliberately and routinely enhanced, to explore how social scientists can access the intimate emotional content of human affairs. However, they then pose two questions: what is the relevance of emotional knowing and being? What might be done with such emotional ways of knowing once they have been acquired? In answering these questions, they turn to the relatively neglected – but increasingly popular – concept of social well-being and suggest some ways in which this might be enhanced by 'musicking'. These include: music as therapy; music as a way of enhancing quality of life; and music as a medium of empowerment.

Based upon empirical research in Australia, Hays and Minichiello (2005) examine the meaning and importance of music in the lives of elderly people, paying particular attention to the ways in which music contributes to self-identity and quality of life. Music provides people with ways of understanding and developing their self-identity, of connecting with other people, of maintaining well-being and experiencing and expressing spirituality. It provides strong memories of and associations with a person's life. Music thereby promotes an enhanced quality of life by contributing to positive self-esteem, by helping people feel competent, and by lessening feelings of loneliness and isolation. In a world of increasing numbers of elderly people, these are potentially very positive therapeutic effects.

IV Music, cultural strategies and regional and urban development strategies

By way of introduction, consider two examples from Sydney – one in New South Wales

in Australia, the other in Cape Breton in Canada. The latter is located in a region which has suffered a profound deindustrialization, with its attendant socio-economic problems. Recently a giant fiddle has appeared on the quayside there, where visiting tour ships tie up. From its structure, the strains of Celtic music emanate on a more-or-less continuous basis, drifting over the town. It is intended to register the significance of Celtic music in Cape Breton (although this is not the only sort of music made in Cape Breton: Earhart, 2002), especially to the newly arrived tourists, and to promote the tourism potential of events such as Celtic Colours, a series of concerts held over a two-week period in October since 1997 (see Celtic Colours, 2005) as part of the cultural strand of a regional regeneration strategy. While its economic impacts are clearly limited, Celtic Colours has a broader cultural significance in registering that Cape Breton has a culture that both deserves valuing for itself as well as for its regenerative potential.

Music is also central to regeneration strategies in the very different context of Sydney, New South Wales. Gibson and Homan (2004) examine the use and promotion of popular music in inner-city spaces there, which are currently experiencing processes of gentrification. While residential developers have played upon the reputation of key suburbs as sites of creativity, lifestyle and 'alternative subcultures' around consumption spaces on the main streets, the resultant rises in property prices and the lifestyle and musical preferences and tastes of the newly arrived gentrifying residents have threatened to eliminate spaces of living, work and performance that are affordable to musicians and other cultural performers. Responding to the work of a Live Music Task Force established to examine musical performance opportunities in the area, Marrickville City Council in Sydney's inner-west area made an imaginative policy response by funding a series of free live music concerts in the open spaces that it manages.

These two examples drawn from the two very different Sydneys illustrate the range of ways in which music is being enrolled into urban, rural and regional redevelopment and regeneration strategies in a variety of locations around the world. Cities such as Nashville, having turned away from their musical history and identity, have again sought to brand themselves as 'Music Cities'. The growing interest in music in economic development policies can be traced back to a more general 'turn' to cultural industries as an important element of urban and regional development policies made in the early 1980s (for example, see Hudson, 1995; Leyshon *et al.*, 1998; Brown *et al.*, 2000; Gibson, 2002; Power and Hallencreutz, 2002; Gibson and Connell, 2003). In the remainder of this section, I will mainly focus on these issues in the context of the United Kingdom, with some reference to other European experiences.

Major northern English cities such as Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield, seeking to cope with the debilitating effects of a profound deindustrialization, sought to develop music and culture and specific 'cultural quarters' as part of new economic development and regeneration strategies (Brown *et al.*, 2000). More recently Gateshead has attempted to follow the same path with the opening of the Sage Centre. Often local authorities in these cities have been unsure how to define the music industry and delineate its boundaries. Many local authority economic development officers see music as a 'soft' and 'unreliable' activity, as not a 'proper' industry, with resultant tensions within Councils. Sheffield City Council was the first of these to target cultural industries following the collapse of the city's steel industry in the early 1980s, establishing Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter (CIQ) as the pivotal place in this strategy with facilities for film production as well as making music, linked to initiatives for training and job creation. The Quarter includes Red Tape, set up in 1986 as the first municipally owned recording studio in the UK. Liverpool City Council also sought

to develop music as an element of its local economic development policies, to a degree building upon its reputation as a major centre of popular music. The designation of Merseyside as England's first 'Objective 1' area within the framework of the European Union's Structural Funds programme resulted in a massive injection of funds into the area (£1.25bn between 1994 and 1999). The arts, culture and media industries were identified as one of five priority investment areas in the search for new sources of economic growth and employment. Liverpool too designated a specific area, the 'creative quarter' in the Duke Street/Bold Street area, as a focal point for these developments. In 1998 Liverpool City Council helped establish the Merseyside Music Development Agency as a further step in its policy of encouraging music as part of its economic regeneration strategy. Finally, Manchester City Council sought to promote the city as a centre for music and culture, centred on the Northern Quarter, as part of its economic regeneration strategy. In this case, however, the designation of the Quarter was more a recognition that the area was a well-established focus for music and other cultural businesses. However, by the end of the 1990s Manchester was evolving a more overt policy of promoting music-based developments with the creation of a Cultural Industries Development Service and the launch of its Cultural Production Strategy, both in 1999.

In summary, each of these cities has sought to encompass music and culture as important strands of postindustrial development strategies, and each has focused its efforts on particular sites, often alienating musical practitioners in other parts of these cities, many of whom in any case were suspicious of an emphasis upon the economic rather than the cultural significance of music. However, there have also been some important differences in both the content and implementation of these policies. For example, Sheffield City Council has taken a more proactive interventionist approach while Manchester City Council has been more prepared to allow market forces to shape the way in which the music industry develops there.

Assessing the policy effects and effectiveness of local economic development and regeneration policies based on musical activities is more problematic. Often they have failed to have their intended effects. For example, in Sheffield the National Centre for Popular Music received substantial funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund (some £17 million) but for a variety of reasons failed. For several years the iconic building stood empty, abandoned and unused at the heart of the CIQ. Despite a grassroots campaign for it to become a public centre for cultural and creative activities, it was sold to Sheffield Hallam University for less than a tenth of its original cost and opened in 2005 as its students' union building. This change of use is seen by local activists as a severe threat to the redevelopment of the CIQ area and to that of Sheffield city centre as a whole, revealing a lack of understanding of Sheffield's indigenous cultural heritage and economy, a lack of recognition for the fundamental role of creative individuals in that cultural economy, and the bankruptcy of 'top down' regeneration policies. Sheffield's cultural ecology has been built upon an understanding that creating genuine opportunities for the community to access facilities for cultural production, distribution and consumption will lever the social, economic, cultural and environmental regeneration of the entire city – not just for a small minority sector (Anon, 2005). While Manchester has probably been the most successful of the northern English cities in capturing the economic benefits of music-based developments and retaining them within the city, in general there has been a flight of talent to London, while services are purchased in London, the dominant centre of the music industry in the UK. However, as Power and Jansson (2004) argue, albeit using the experience of another capital city, Stockholm in Sweden, it is possible for a more integrated local music industry to evolve that stretches

beyond simply the production of albums and songs. Stockholm has developed a more varied music services industry, encompassing the production of everything from remixes to music marketing strategies. At the heart of the emerging music industry cluster is a large number of firms seeking to combine music and ICT in innovative ways (for example, in high-tech postproduction and mixing services). This at least points to the wider possibilities of the music industry as part of urban and regional regeneration strategies.

In general, however, growth in economic activity and employment in the music industry has been very modest in cities in the UK other than London. As Scott (2004: 480) puts it in assessing the effects of local economic development policies centred around music and cultural industries in Manchester and Sheffield, '(n)either of these experiments can be said as yet to be much more than provisionally and partially successful'. Similar conclusions emerge from studies in other and very different parts of the world. For example, as Gibson (2002) emphasizes, despite the growth of a cultural tourism in which music plays a central role, unemployment rates in the Far North Coast of New South Wales remain among the highest in Australia while future employment is likely to be transient and insecure. Moreover, it remains an open question as to whether such music-based urban and regional development policies can ever have more than marginal effects in depressed urban and regional settings – put another way, the implication in Scott's 'as yet' that things might improve given time may well turn out to be overly optimistic.

While the majority of music-based strategies were cast as part of mainstream regeneration strategies, seeking to locate places advantageously in relation to music in the mainstream capitalist economy, Hudson (1995) documents the way in which a group of local residents in the former steel town of Consett in northeast England sought to use music as the substantive focus to demonstrate that there were alternative models of regeneration, based in this instance upon cooperative forms of organization, that could be pursued in depressed, deindustrialized areas. The significance of the 'Making Music Work' project therefore lay in the conceptual and political space that it sought to create in which alternative – even radical – local economic development models could be explored, based on different social relations to those of the mainstream capitalist economy. However, a variety of financial and political pressures led to the radical intent of the project becoming compromised, raising broader questions as to the possibilities for alterity in local development policies.

V Conclusions
There is no doubt that music – in both its production and consumption – can be an important influence in shaping the typically hybrid identities of people and places, of engendering a sense of place and deep attachment to place. In this sense it can help contribute in important ways to the well-being of people and places and this is not without practical significance. However, the extent to which it can form the substantive basis of regeneration efforts in economically depressed places remains much more questionable. There are, therefore, dangers in raising unrealistic expectations in relation to economic regeneration, not least in diverting attention from the other ways in which music can have positive impacts on peoples' lives.

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