GROUP IDENTITY:

BANDS, ROCK AND POPULAR MUSIC

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A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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University of Stirling

June 2010

ABSTRACT

Since rock became the subject of academic study, its attendant ideology has been scrutinised and its mythical and Romantic components exposed. Largely absent from this account has been a thorough analysis of the phenomenon of the 'band'. The role of individual acts and the wider contexts in which they worked has been discussed at the expense of an examination of an important form of music-making. This thesis seeks to address that gap.

Using a mixture of literary research and ethnography, I present an overall picture of the band as a *modus operandum*, charting its evolution during the emergence of rock and presenting evidence that it has become a key means by which people enter and engage with the field of popular music. I suggest that debates about 'authenticity' in rock, in seeking to see through industry rhetoric have overlooked the way in which creativity in bands is closely connected to social interaction.

My historical analysis brings to light the way in which the group-identified band has become embedded into popular music practice through the power of narratives. Two case studies, contextualised with archival material and interviews, form the basis for a model for collective creativity. By demonstrating how social action and narrative myth feed into one another, I argue that the group identity of a band is the core of the industrially mediated texts to which audiences respond. Our understanding of how authenticity is ascribed in popular music, and rock in particular, has paid too much attention to genre-based arguments and

not enough to musical and social methods. I propose a way of revising this to take better account of rock as an actual practice.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Simon Frith. His wisdom, patience and intellectual generosity made this thesis possible. The scope of his knowledge of music was eye opening and his facility to make connections across a range of topics profoundly helpful. I have attempted here to synthesize a number of strands of thought. Where I have succeeded I owe him a debt of gratitude. Failures on this front are, of course, all my own.

I am also grateful to all my interviewees for their time and honesty. In particular, the members of Air-Fix— Matt, Mini, Chainey and Kenny— made the business of participant observation a pleasure. Their affability and openness were beyond what I could have hoped for from research subjects.

Matt, Christine, Maggie, Mike, Mark and Pedro were The Distractions. They also fall into several of the other categories listed below. If they only get mentioned once, I nevertheless think of them throughout. Apart from being a significant part of my study and work at Stirling, and beyond, I have fond memories of making music with them. This thesis has been informed in no small way by the fact that above all, and in both the musical and non-musical uses of the term, they rock!

Over the course of working on this thesis, I have also taught extensively at Stirling. My colleagues there in ways too numerous to mention have provided me with advice and help pertinent not only to this

project but to a greater understanding of where it fits in with the world around it. Mark Brownrigg, Richard Haynes, Phil Drake, Jane Sillars and Stephanie Marriot in particular were a constant source of patient and good-humoured insight into how teaching is also learning and the value of knowledge as an end in itself. Louise Womersley and everyone else who kept J corridor functioning also made being in the department rewarding.

Fellow travellers on the PhD trail have been a source of ideas and inspiration. Through engaging and stimulating conversations, and thoughtful comments, the popular music postgraduate community around Edinburgh and Stirling have been a rich source of encouragement- thanks in particular to Inez Templeton, Mary Fogarty, Szu-Wei Chen, also Luis Sanchez and Melissa Avdeef.

Of course this would not have been possible without the support of my good friends from Edinburgh and London. There just isn't space to describe properly how they all helped me through the writing of this but I should mention The Basement crew for, amongst much else, the plentiful supplies of free coffee and fruit juice in the pinch and tolerant ears for my tangential theories and IT related rants. Thanks also to Simon Barrie for swift but considered responses to random queries on any number of subjects, at just about any time.

At the bottom of the list, but not my thoughts, are my family, especially my parents. Apart from all of the opportunities they have given me throughout my life, this simply would not have been possible without their love and belief. For precious advice and support in the closing stages

of this thesis, right back to my first books and records (and first guitar), this is for them.

Oh, and to the person who left that tape of *Back In Black* for me to find on the Northern Line many years ago- thanks.

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INTRODUCTION

This project evolved out of an intersection between a long held personal interest and a growing academic curiosity. Like most of my contemporaries, I had spent the best part of a lifetime spent listening to popular music in its many forms. This intensified when I picked up a guitar and attempted to recreate what I was hearing, and even adapt it and create original music for myself. Still, if I was more engaged with the music than *average*, this hardly marked me out as especially distinct. As people do, I gravitated towards the like-minded and a good proportion of my everyday reading and conversations revolved around the subject. Throughout, however, the different components of my rather haphazard experience of fandom and listening didn't fit together.

One of the TV programmes that our family could all agree to watch was the BBC's *The Rock 'n' Roll Years*—one year was covered every week, featuring archive news footage soundtracked by the hits of that year. There was a series of compilation albums to accompany the series, covering the periods 1955-59, 1960-63, 1964-7 and 1968-71. We had tapes of a couple of these, which were on heavy Walkman rotation on one family holiday. One of the standout tracks from the early sixties tape (the one with the red Stratocaster on the front, anyway) was Johnny Kid and The Pirates' 'Shakin' All Over'. 'Pinball Wizard' and 'House of the Rising Sun' on the other tapes may have trumped it, but they all sounded more exciting and interesting to me than the Whitney Houston album that was on constantly in the hotel bar.[1] My own, as with most peoples', experience of popular music wasn't ordered or sequential. But there were clear aesthetic points of appeal, and clearly

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[1] This was of course a secondary consideration at the time to the more important project of trying, and failing, to get off with the girl from Tonbridge who was staying at the same hotel. Quite apart from a seemingly unshakeable parental police presence—her father actually was a policeman—she liked the Whitney Houston album that I was vocal about hating; therein was a lesson in popular music reception that it took me a long time to learn to even the limited extent that I have actually managed to do so.

different *ways* of making music, even the kinds that had enough in common to end up on the same BBC compilations.

This would have been little more than a straightforward aesthetic preference had my interest not developed to the point of picking up a guitar for myself, and taking an active interest in rock and its story. Latterday reflection made the gaps increasingly apparent. On the one hand, there were the supposedly twin peaks of Elvis and The Beatles in the *Q* and *Vox* versions of history that I was now reading. On the other, when I went to visit my flatmate at home in the Wirral, the trip turned into something of a Beatles pilgrimage— including a visit to the (relocated) Cavern Club. Presumably people must have been experiencing the music here (and in Hamburg) before it hit the charts or even the record shops. The disconnect between different bits of my temporally disjointed listening and reading experiences became more obvious. Having already *heard* the *Sergeant Pepper* and *Yellow Submarine* albums by the time I got to Johnny Kidd and the Pirates, the latter still sounded worthwhile. Still, it was a Beatles t-shirt that I wore and a Who poster on my wall when I went to university and made the pilgrimage to Liverpool. What was it that made these so important to me, and clearly to many others? (Johnny Kidd and the Pirates weren't a feature of the poster sales in the university forecourts).

The way in which consuming music impacts on how we make it, beyond just the notes we play, struck me when I entered into postgraduate study and engaged in further reflection upon how popular music has been both produced and discussed. It occurred to me that in all of the bands I had been in, regardless of how they had formed or who was the driving force, *not once* had we thought about presenting ourselves under anything other than a shared name. At the same time, I noticed that the fiercest musical debates outside of the academy, the ones that couldn't be marked off as a matter of taste, tended to revolve around bands. Why did it matter which line-up of The Rolling Stones was definitive? Why did it seem

so apparent to everybody that Lennon and McCartney in The Beatles were better than either of them alone? Meanwhile, within the academy it became apparent that some of my teenage assumptions were founded on quicksand. 'Rock' was as commercial as any other form of popular music. (The Who poster and the Madonna poster cost the same amount of money and were made by the same firm). But taking rock's claims for art and expression into the realm of commerce couldn't account for the band line-up debates. Nor did it really account for the emotional appeal, in defiance of knowledge of the facts, of the group identity. 'Bands', it seemed, worked in a way that had not been fully explained. I am attempting here to begin to do so.

AIMS AND CONTEXT

My intention is to address what I see as a gap in popular music studies. This is a field whose nominal specificity masks its diversity. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin's (1990) reader on the area, for example, includes pieces by sociologists, semioticians and musicologists. Popular music (along with rock, a sub-set of it) exists at an intersection of economic, social and cultural activity. Music, sociology and cultural studies departments all engage with it. This thesis, for instance, was written in a department of Film, Media and Journalism Studies. My starting point was broadly sociological but my ultimate approach is multi-disciplinary and I employed a mix of methods.

'Rock' has been analysed from a number of perspectives, although early accounts looked at it in terms of its relationship to youth culture. Simon Frith, in his 1978 account of British rock as a whole, pointed towards the multi-faceted nature of the subject.

> [I]t is within the sociology of youth (rather than the sociology of culture or the media) that we find what academic theories of rock culture there are… what most clearly distinguishes rock from other mass media is not its audiences but its form: Rock is *musical* communication and its ideology as a mass culture derives not just from the conditions of its consumption, but also from the aesthetics of its musical forms. (Frith 1978: 15)

Within three years of this, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music had been established, bringing a range of disciplines into formal dialogue. This range is evident in the variety of contributions to the journal *Popular Music* and the subsequent emergence of *Popular Music and Society* and *Popular Music History*. Although it draws on a number of academic backgrounds, the study of popular music also exists as a distinct subject area in its own right. It is my goal to add to the dialogue in this field, rather than any of the specific tributaries that have converged within it. With this in mind, the majority of the material that I draw upon in this study is either explicitly from within popular music studies or is from other areas but is concerned directly with popular music. I occasionally refer to work from which it is absent where I feel that this can illuminate a specific point of discussion. I will explore the literature in greater depth over the course of the thesis, as it pertains to different areas of my topic, but some opening remarks will illustrate how my thinking was shaped.

The 'gap' that I hope to fill concerns the 'band'. A great deal has been written about rock within the academy as an aesthetic and sociological phenomenon. Rather less has been said about the 'rock band'. Specific bands have received plenty of attention, particularly those that have entered the popular music 'canon'. There are countless articles, and even entire volumes, devoted to The Beatles[2] for instance, although they are not alone—Radiohead and Pink Floyd are also the subject of scholarly books and any number of bands provide the starting point for article length pieces. The emphasis of these is usually, however, to see where this or that band sheds light on other concerns in cultural studies or musicology. They either seek to explain another process using the act as a way in, or else they hone in on the act itself in forensic detail using external factors to

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[2] *Reading the Beatles* (eds. Womack and Davis 2006), and *The Beatles Popular Music and Society* (ed. Inglis 2000), to name just two of many.

explain aspects of the band in question's history or art. What's generally missing from these is 'the band' as an object of study in its own right.

The band does appear throughout popular music studies as a site of interaction between musicians and a feature in a local music culture, notably in ethnographic work by Bennett (1980), Cohen (1991), Shank (1994) and Finnegan (2007). Finnegan's comprehensive analysis of music-making in Milton Keynes was useful in terms of illustrating the sheer breadth of musical activity beneath the media radar and in pointing towards the importance of considering rock as a practice outside of, but in relation to, the mass reception with which it is commonly associated.

Bennett's (1980) account of how people become rock musicians through playing in bands and Cohen's of the role that bands play in the cultural life of Liverpool, and the lives of their members, were particularly influential, not least because, like Finnegan, they demonstrate the value of ethnographic work in explaining the extension of popular music into the everyday realities of its practitioners.[3] Bennett's (1980: 17-45) description of group dynamics and Cohen's (1991: 21-46) of collective creativity revealed the extent to which working creatively and engaging socially are mutually dependent. Frith (1978) offers a sociological analysis of the function of rock in a capitalist society. He describes the way in which its production and dissemination, although contra Adorno not the meanings ascribed to it by its users, are determined by the mass-market mechanisms of that society. Bennett, Cohen and Finnegan provide a more detailed account of how some of these meanings are translated into practice.

Notwithstanding the thoroughness with which they examine music making in particular circumstances, their emphasis differs slightly from that of my core concern. Although rightly concerned with musicians, the coverage of bands in Finnegan and Cohen's work places them into a specifically geographical context.

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[3] Cohen makes this point explicitly elsewhere (1993).

For Finnegan, locality is a primary criterion. For Cohen as well, Liverpool is a major 'character' in her work, even though she uses it as an example of how bands intersect with cultural life more generally. (The same is evident in Shank's work on Austin, Texas). In Bennett's writing, the band is the context in which musicians operate. Necessarily, it is a major feature of his analysis but this is contingent upon its integral role as a pathway into musicianship. In Bennett, as with Cohen, the band is a central part of the overall picture but there is a sense in which this is as a *means* rather than an *end*. Both also deal with the band in 'the present'. Its existence as a site of musical interaction is a *fait accompli* and the collective work therein is considered with a view to explaining phenomena other than the band itself.

Deena Weinstein takes a major step in this direction. She builds on her own work and that of others on the genres of rock. Robert Walser's (1993) account of heavy metal pays close attention to musicians, although this is primarily in the context of the individual player and the development of a generic musical style. Weinstein (1991) and Fonarow (2006) also deal with bands in the wider context of audiences, genre ideologies and communities in, respectively, indie and heavy metal. Weinstein's move (2004a, 2004b, 2006) towards a consideration of the internal structural relations of bands and the social dynamic of the band as a *form* rather than in a particular instance of that form is a crucial link between discussions of 'rock' in a cultural and economic context, musicians in a social context and what I am attempting here. Like Cohen and Bennett, her discussion pertains to how bands work *now* rather than how this came to be, although she provides numerous examples from rock's past and, in the process, illustrates the value of supporting ethnography with journalistic and biographical material. This is also, given problems of access, something of a necessity when aspects of the subject pertain to very famous people. I hope to build on her work by explaining how the structural relations she describes evolved and by looking more closely at the constituent elements of the social and creative dynamic in bands.

To do this, I have constructed a model of 'the band' in order to illustrate the general patterns that individual bands recreate in the infinite variety of their own permutations. Therefore, although I have avoided a unifying theory for the entire thesis, it was necessary to apply theoretical formulae to the job of rendering multiple different instances of practice into a coherent overall shape. Here Jason Toynbee's (2000) writing on musical creativity provided me with conceptual models for creativity in individuals that could be incorporated into one for collective agency in bands. His writing draws heavily upon concepts developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1993), notably 'field' and 'habitus'. These also are useful tools for illustrating the structural relations between individuals in a social context. I'll return to them in detail later but will say for now that although Bourdieu's work was primarily concerned with the literary and artistic fields, his conceptualisation of fields as social spaces and human interaction as agency is an apposite metaphor for how individual musicians interact in bands whilst bands engage with popular music and society at large.

Howard Becker's concept of *Art Worlds* (1982) is also applicable to the work of bands, not least because he more explicitly deals with music and musicians. There are certainly broad similarities between an 'art world' and a 'field', which Frith (1996: 36-46) uses as the starting point for developing an aesthetic theory out of sociological work. Becker's understanding of art as a collective activity within networks also has applications for how bands operate although, like Cohen, describes the wider contexts in which they exist rather than the structural characteristics of bands themselves. Becker also led the way in sociological analysis of musicians, although his seminal account of how jazz musicians defined themselves in opposition to their audiences, the 'squares' (Becker 2004: 217-220), at gigs where they were employed to play dance music is perhaps less applicable to rock musicians who emerged from *amongst* their peers. As Frith puts it,

> In rock the process went the other way— rock musicians have developed
> their artistic claims from commercial origins; paradoxically, artistic integrity
> has become, in itself, the basis for commercial success. (Frith 1978: 164)

To an extent, as Victoria Alexander suggests (2003: 295), the difference between Becker and Bourdieu is one of emphasis—Becker on co-operation, Bourdieu on competition. I have applied Bourdieu's concept partly because my historical work suggests that the power of rock's narrative has helped to shape how it is made and Bourdieu, in comparison to Becker, makes more of how wider social processes impact upon artistic practice (ibid.). Mainly, however, the conceptual model of agents constituting between them a field of operation was a better fit for the relationship between musicians *in* an internal dynamic than a network in which meaning is produced between artists and audiences. Allied with Toynbee's concepts pertaining to creativity (which themselves draw largely on the idea of habitus), the notions of fields and sub-fields of production allow for a close reading of the band as a social field (in which creativity is a sometimes contested goal) in itself.

My overall aim, then, is to present a kind of phenomenology of the band—its history, its structure and its distinctiveness as a creative unit, illustrated with examples of this drawn from literary research and observations and reflections of this in practice. Like the phenomenon it discusses, this thesis has borders and parameters and I shall now briefly mention some of these.

SUBJECT PARAMETERS

My study of the band is not explicitly rooted in any one locale. For practical reasons, the ethnographic work took place in Scotland (mainly Edinburgh and Stirling). More generally, my discussion of bands takes place within a basically Anglo-American context. Largely this is because the band arose within a cultural

and economic 'mainstream' that has been dominated by Anglophone[4] nations, a fact echoed in my early listening experiences of popular music (those 'Rock 'n' Roll Years' taped flipped back and forth across the Atlantic) and also in the bulk of the literature that fed into this project. Popular music making extends and varies internationally, although its shape is also affected by the fact that this extension involves global music corporations which are, as Negus points out, 'polycentric' (1996: 189) regardless of their country of origin. The practice of 'rock' (and various sub-genres, notably heavy metal) in Europe has taken on the 'band' method of production. Recent documentaries like that featuring a metal band in Iraq[5] also suggest that 'the band' has been exported along with its parent genre.

Popular music mutates as it moves. It is hardly a representative sample but my own experience of Southern African popular music that has adapted Western forms suggests that the same model is alive there—The Bhundu Boys, Stimela, Juluka and so on—although there is clearly a post-Colonial heritage to take into account. 'World music' is a problematic, and in any case (Western) industrially originated, term (Fairley 2001: 274-279). A discussion of how issues of 'globalisation' and 'cultural imperialism' relate to bands is beyond the scope of this project, but comparisons between how bands work internally in different musical cultures would perhaps shed some light on this area.

There is also not sufficient scope to give all of the issues pertaining to gender the space they deserve although there is a substantial body of work that deals with it more fully. Cohen's ethnographic work in Liverpool explores the

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[4] Notwithstanding the geographical factors that make touring slightly more difficult for smaller bands, Australian acts also fit into the cultural centres of 'rock' and 'pop' with relative ease. Shane Homan's (2000) discussion of the pub rock scene in Sydney also points towards broad similarities between the band method employed by Australian, American and British musicians. My own experience of popular music consumption and music making in Australia, and with Australians in the U.K, revealed no fundamental differences of approach.

The case studies and interviews included participants from Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Canada, the U.S.A, Portugal and Germany, from Catholic, Protestant and Jewish backgrounds. National identity, and religious heritage even more so, were generally background issues, and English was spoken throughout.

[5] *Heavy Metal in Baghdad* (Alvi and Moretti 2007)

general tensions that the entry of women into the rock music environment brings (Cohen 1991: 201-222) as well as the way in which their contribution to bands is often viewed in relation to visual image rather than integral musical function (1991: 81). Mavis Bayton's *Frock Rock* (1998) also uses first hand testimony to provide a thorough account of the heavily circumscribed place for women in rock across the spectrum of economic activity, alongside their general exclusion from it, especially as instrumentalists. This is compounded by their exclusion from the technical aspects of rock, which are central to it given how technologically mediated it is. Bayton illustrates how this takes place overtly in the form of denigrating women's musical skills, subordinating their sound to a male producer's aesthetic (Bayton 1998: 166) and more subtly via the use of technical jargon (Bayton 1998: 106).

Frith and MacRobbie (1990) also illustrate the ways in which 'rock' and 'pop' constitute and reproduce gender roles and sexuality for their listeners and Marion Leonard (2007) looks at gender in relation to the music industry, as well as the press, paying particular attention to 'indie'. Throughout this body of work it is apparent that rock is gendered as male in both consumption and production. I will argue later that peer group activity was an important factor in the evolution of 'rock' and 'bands'. Mary Ann Clawson (1999) makes the important point that entry into the field as an instrumentalist is inscribed early on due to the way in which skills are acquired in bands as part of adolescent male rituals. These exclude girls, denying them the cultural capital to participate in youth and, consequently, later on.

> Because girls' experimentation did not occur in the context of a self-proclaimed 'band', it lacked significance. It was the ensemble form and collective identity of the band that bestowed 'seriousness' on the clumsy early efforts of rock musicians.
> Being a boy served, in these early years, as a form of social and cultural capital. Girls lacked access to an entitlement that seemed to be assumed by boys… Nor were girls viewed by male acquaintances as appropriate candidates for recruitment into bands, despite their obvious interest in music. (Clawson 1999: 111)

The gender coding of rock, and the consequences of this in terms of how it is practiced, have a bearing on how bands work. Therefore, despite the fact that this thesis does not deal centrally with gender issues, they are nevertheless an undercurrent and become explicit in several places.

GENRE NOMENCLATURE

Insofar as I am addressing 'rock', this is because for better or worse, and usually the latter, its use as a term has taken on an ideological component in discourses surrounding authenticity, commerce and value in 'popular music' which is, itself, a term that is open to question.

Richard Middleton discusses various means of trying to define 'popular music' as a whole, from the purely quantitative (that which a lot of people like), through normative, negative, sociological and technological definitions (Middleton 1990: 3-4). Each of these proves problematic on closer examination. A 'pop' record that sells poorly is nevertheless clearly still, even if only in intent, a piece of 'popular music'. Categorising pieces of music according to other criteria falls prey to the variety of *actual* music, and ways of consuming it, that is found in both society and the market. Each of them relies either on arbitrary, or "interest bound" (ibid.) categories. No criterion for exclusion of 'popular music' from other categories can apply to the range of formal and rhetorical modes employed in either 'popular' or 'art' music.

> [M]any pieces commonly thought of as 'art'… have qualities of simplicity; conversely, it is by no means obvious that the Sex Pistols' records were 'accessible', Frank Zappa's work 'simple' or Billie Holiday's 'facile'. (ibid. 4)

Social mobility, along with music's social portability and technological reproduction complicate matters further. Middleton (ibid.) points out that even in the rigidly class structured Britain of the nineteenth-century, bourgeois ballads and tunes were reproduced by the working classes. Frith makes note of the incursion of

opera into the charts and its role in promoting the CD format. (Frith 2001b: 97, 1996: 32).

Since my attention here is directed towards a very specific type of popular music practice, some of these are peripheral and I run with Middleton's conclusion that popular music as a whole is fluid.

> Whichever terms are used, their contents should not be regarded as absolute. Moreover... 'Popular music' (or whatever) 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: 7)

Nevertheless, a 'commonsense' understanding of an agreed middle ground of what constitutes 'popular music' comes up against internal divisions. Here, rock's appropriation of 'high art' (Frith and Horne 1987) and 'folk' (Keightley 2001) discourses of authenticity necessitates clarifying my use of it in relation to bands. In the following chapter I will argue that part of the reason for the addition of an ideological slant to 'rock' is the way in which its evolution as a genre was accompanied by the evolution of the group identified band as a means of making popular music, or at least that the two became entangled. I refer to 'rock' rather than 'pop' partly because the ideological complications I am trying to unpick are attached more closely to the former category and partly because this is mirrored in the practical consequences of discussing 'bands'. Everyday parlance employs the terms 'rock band' and 'pop group', yet a band is also a group. Differentiating between the different types of 'group' that a 'band' is requires an analysis of the terms as they appear in practice rather than in abstraction. Further, as Ruth Finnegan shows, the use of such categories is fluid and attempts to differentiate between 'rock' and 'pop' in terms of their realisation in practice shows that everyday music-making, although it employs ideological assumptions, is less concerned with these than with individual style.

> 'Pop' was sometimes used by players as a way of rejecting what they considered the wilder extremes of, say, heavy metal or punk (which they called 'rock'); for others, 'pop' meant the Top Ten (or Top Forty) records,

> which they regarded as distinct from other popular styles… But these differentiations were not always observed, and some who themselves preferred to distinguish 'pop' from other music were still prepared to accept the term to describe their own tastes to outsiders.
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> The *general* terms 'rock' and 'pop' were in fact little used by local musicians. The unqualified words 'rock' or 'pop' seldom or never appeared in local bands' self-descriptions, for they preferred narrower and more specific terms… What mattered was their own style rather than general labels, and though players sometimes like to relate themselves to nationally accepted images their typical interest was to get on with creating and performing their *own* music. (Finnegan 2007: 104-105)

Cohen makes a similar point (1991: 5) and this was echoed in my own research in which stylistic details proved to be more important than the broad concerns of how the totality of popular music is divided and sub-divided. I use 'rock' as a starting point, then, and to reflect upon the implications of methodological practice rather than generic or sub-generic delineations.

A final point concerns the difference between 'rock 'n' roll', 'rock and roll' and 'rock'. Arguably the former two categories here could be viewed as sub-sets of 'rock', 'pop' or both. For the sake of simplicity, I broadly follow Gillett's (1983, summarised in Longhurst 1995: 95) sub-division of the three according to their historical emergence. I refer to 'rock 'n' roll' as that music which emerged in the middle 1950s, incorporating and adapting elements of rhythm and blues, and 'rock' as that which came to prominence in the 1960s, taking on meanings that extended beyond entertainment and aesthetic considerations but including stylistic elements of its generic parent.

DEFINING THE BAND. WHAT'S IN A NAME (WHICH ONE'S PINK)?

This is in one way a very straightforward question and in others extremely complicated. A band, simply put, is the group of musicians who come together to record or perform under the banner of a shared name. We run into difficulties with this description very quickly however. Line-ups are not stable and stylistic evolution is commonplace. Musicians leave the band to be replaced by newcomers.

Is it still the same band? Departed members whose contribution was pivotal to the work of the band release work that carries the key concerns and markers of the group identity they have shed. Why should this not be included under the same rubric?

Part of the answer to this lies in the way in which bands engage with the mass market. The successful implementation of a corporate, or even small scale, business strategy for promoting the act involves creating a 'brand' out of it, such that the group identity is an easily recognisable, and marketable, product. With this in place, personnel may be replaced by others who can ably recreate their role. If nothing else, the plethora of tribute bands on the live circuit is an indicator of the appeal of 'brand' identities linked to bodies of work. [6] But this does not account for the attachment that audiences have to specific configurations of musicians beyond their ability to reproduce note-for-note or stylistic quirk for quirk a body of work. Why pay close to a hundred pounds to see The Rolling Stones when you can see The Counterfeit Stones for a fraction of the price?

Perhaps the best way to provide an answer to the complicated version of the question is to look at an example of how it has been resolved, or otherwise, in practice.

Pink Floyd[7] formed in 1965 with a core membership consisting of students at London's Regent Street Polytechnic and an additional member who was to become their first creative driving force. This was Syd Barrett, a friend of bass player Roger Waters from his hometown of Cambridge and student at the Camberwell School of Art. As the band, under Barrett's leadership, moved away

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[6] See *Access All Eras* (ed. Homan: 2007) for a throughgoing examination of the tribute band phenomenon. I have avoided looking at tribute bands in this work since the 'group identity' that they adopt is largely borrowed, although as Andy Bennett's piece in the above named volume shows, the addition of humour to the act is one way in which tribute bands play with the identities they are recreating. (Bennett 2007: 27-29)

[7] This account is synthesized out of material in Mark Blake's (2007) biography of the band, Nick Mason's autobiography (2004), John Harris's examination of *The Dark Side of the Moon* (2006), John Cavanagh's of *The Piper at the Gates of Dawn* (2004) and a special edition of *Q* (2004) dedicated to the band.

from blues covers towards its own sound and became increasingly popular in London's psychedelic scene, Barrett and Waters, along with keyboard player Rick Wright and drummer Nick Mason, dropped out of college to pursue it full-time. (Additional guitarist Bob Klose elected to leave the band to continue with his studies). In 1967 they signed to EMI and recorded the album, still popular today, *Piper At the Gates of Dawn* as well as having a couple of hit singles.

This was to be the only album with that line-up, or featuring a majority of Barrett's songs. As the band's career progressed, his behaviour became increasingly erratic. The manifestation of mental illness, possibly incipient but certainly not helped by the prodigious consumption of LSD, made his continued membership of the band untenable. He was initially supplemented and eventually replaced by David Gilmour, a guitarist known to the band's associates, and a childhood friend of Barrett, who also harked from Cambridge. This revised version of the band operated throughout the 1970s, growing in stature and making the record-breaking album *The Dark Side of the Moon* a high water mark of their ascent. Over this period, the social relations in the band deteriorated. Waters increasingly became the driving songwriting and conceptual force behind the band's creations and was correspondingly determined to assert his leadership. His relationship with Wright in particular, they had never been close, soured. During the recording of *The Wall* in 1979 he ousted the keyboard player from membership of the group. The fact that Wright was taken on the subsequent tour to promote the album as a salaried player despite the fact that he was no longer a full member of the band highlights the complexity of the issue.

The Final Cut, released in 1983, was essentially Waters's creation, featuring Gilmour as a guitarist and only marginal contributions from Mason. Waters announced that he was leaving the band and assumed, given his recent dominance of its creative work, that this would spell the end of it. Gilmour disagreed and along with Mason and session players, including Wright, set about producing a new

album, *A Momentary Lapse of Reason*, which he promoted by touring on a grand scale. Waters was scathing about this third version of the band, which he dubbed "the muffins" (Blake 2007: 315) and refused to concede that it could actually *be* Pink Floyd without him. His response included a legal challenge to prevent his erstwhile colleagues from using the name as the two factions engaged in legal wranglings that lasted until the end of 1987 and a war of words in the press that continued throughout the 1990s. A subsequent album release and tour under Gilmour's leadership did little to quell Waters's scepticism. Fans were split, although the name clearly carried a lot of weight since the third version of the band outsold Waters in record shops and venues. Both Waters and Gilmour included material from their successful work together in their live sets. The passage of time diminished the levels of vitriol in their press briefings but, nevertheless, the reunion on stage of Waters, Gilmour, Mason and Wright for the Live 8 concert in 2005 was a news story that threatened to eclipse the rest of the event. Bob Geldof's diplomatic achievement in getting them to reform for the gig arguably outstripped anything that took place at the G8 summit that the concert was designed to accompany and lobby. There were no subsequent reunions of any members of the group under the name Pink Floyd. Wright's death, after nevertheless playing on Gilmour's solo album and tour, was acknowledged by all to spell the end, although Gilmour had already stated that he had no further intention to resurrect the name anyway.

That three different versions of the band could each claim to be 'Pink Floyd' illustrates the ontological vagueness of what a band is. Clearly legal ownership of the name counts for a lot, especially in terms of making money out of it, although this doesn't explain the difference of opinion amongst fans over the extent to which Barrett's, Waters's, or Gilmour's versions can lay a moral claim to it. Obviously money was a major factor in the lawsuit, although Waters was not seeking to say that *he* constituted 'Pink Floyd', rather that it did not exist without him. The legal

system can adjudicate questions of property more easily than those of identity. As Waters put it when he agreed to settle,

> I've finally understood that no court in the land is interested in this airy-fairy nonsense of what is or isn't Pink Floyd (Blake 2007: 333)

Courts may not have been interested but fans and critics were. Their response, along with the abiding interest in the musically inactive Barrett and the fuss over the 2005 reunion, points towards a question of where the identity of a band lies. Michael F. Patton, Jr. likens it to a philosophical paradox (2007: 164-165). The 'Ship of Theseus' leaves port with enough spare parts to replace anything that breaks. It disintegrates over the journey and is repaired to the extent that upon arrival, every component is new. The salvaged parts are made into a nearly exact duplicate in dry dock. Which of these is *the* ship of Theseus? Patton applies this to the question of the band by looking at, and rejecting, various potential markers of identity as insufficient in themselves. 'Band Roster Identity' (ibid. 166) cannot be definitive. The membership of the band, even before Bob Klose's departure, had been unstable. Founder members from Regent Street Polytechnic had left long before the group began recording. Leading light Syd Barrett was all but gone by the time of the second album and absent completely thereafter. To complicate matters further, both Gilmour and Waters contributed to Barrett's solo recordings and Wright played with Gilmour. At least as many members played on these recordings, which weren't by 'Pink Floyd', as parts of *The Wall* and *The Final Cut*, which were. 'Stylistic Identity' (ibid. 167-168) is rejected on the basis of the big differences between the Barrett led version of the band and that which followed, although even within this Mark II, the differences between recordings at the beginning of the 1970s and the end of the decade are marked. 'Nominal Identity' (ibid. 169) falls down in the face of the amount of name changes the band underwent prior to settling on 'Pink Floyd'. They certainly aren't alone in this. Numerous bands change their names, especially in the early stages. Some, also

record under pseudonyms to mark out stylistic differences between projects.[8] The

problems of 'Legal Identity' (ibid.) have already been mentioned. It refers to rights

and properties but not to emotional and critical judgements about 'authenticity'.

Patton's ultimate concern is with wider ontological problems of identity, but

their application to the band is clear. Pink Floyd is an obvious case, if only because

it is writ so large and because the questions were raised so publicly, and bitterly.

Nevertheless, they could be asked about any number of bands whose members,

names or styles change. (The Rolling Stones ousted founder members, Radiohead's

aesthetic has altered over the course of its career). As the case studies which follow

will demonstrate, line-up changes occur and impact upon the group identity prior

to its becoming a brand and acquiring a legal dimension.

Patton's answer comes by way of the 'Officeholder View' of identity. (ibid.

170), in which our identity is affirmed by the relations in which we find ourselves

with others. He gives the example of the different roles he occupies—brother,

colleague, friend, guy in the office who knows about computers and so on.

> Were I to become a right-wing republican, I could imagine my wife
> (truthfully) saying, "You are not the person I married." Yet even though my
> wife would rightly impeach me as husband, my Dean would probably not
> feel the urge… My department chair might decide I was still able to teach
> philosophy, but she might bar me from teaching *political* philosophy. I might
> get tossed out of my bowling league for political reasons and yet stay
> accepted by my investment club… [T]he various constituencies I move
> among are in charge of deciding if I am the same person in the context they
> socially create and maintain. (ibid. 170-171)

In the case of bands in general, and Pink Floyd in this instance, we can

understand them as an 'office' or, "a collection of offices, each filled or not by

different people and their songs." (ibid. 175). Different constituencies of fans will

decide for themselves which is the 'real' article. This has important consequences

for discussions of authenticity. I argue later on, by way of demonstrating that the

social component of creativity is at the heart of various iterations of 'identity' in

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[8] 'XTC' and 'The Dukes of Stratosphear' would be an example of this. The touring version of
Pink Floyd Mark III, fleshed out by session musicians, also played covers clubs and hotel
venues as 'The Fishermen's (Blake 2007: 335)', although few would call these impromptu
gatherings 'Pink Floyd gigs'

bands, that audiences make judgements about the 'authenticity' of these versions of the group identity according to criteria akin to the 'office holder' version of identity.

Patton ends up stating that, for him, "Pink Floyd is the band whose name appears on the spine of several CD's in the "P" section of my collection. I like them, and listen to them when I am in specific moods."(ibid. 176) I use his conclusion as my starting point, although I will discuss some of the ways in which the social dynamic of the group involves looser and broader agglomerations of people than is implied by the core instrumental line-up, or the people who appear on album covers.

Nick Mason, the only presence on every Pink Floyd album, finishes his own version of the story in a manner that hints at the variety of roles that members of bands take on beyond their musical duties and at the extended and overlapping categories of social and organisational relationships in which they find themselves. Paying tribute to Steve O'Rourke, Pink Floyd's late manager, he also uses a nautical analogy.

> On the good ship 'Floyd' Steve and I worked together for over thirty years— mainly before the mast. We served under harsh captains. Mad Cap'n' Barrett was the first; his gleaming eyes with tales of treasure and strange visions nearly led us to disaster, until mutiny put us under the domination of the cruel (Not So Jolly) Roger... Later Roger was to carelessly walk his own plank to be replaced by Able Seaman Gilmour. Throughout these adventures, despite endless promises of promotion... I remained ship's cook. (Mason 2004: 342)

A 'band' is a creative, legal and social entity but throughout all of these, as I will describe over the course of this thesis, its identity primarily derives from the *people* who constitute it.

OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

My abiding concern here is neither with a specific time or place, nor with the minutiae of generic or aesthetic boundaries and overlaps in popular music. Rather I wish to examine a phenomenon commonplace within it, specific examples of which have been much described in both historical and social contexts at the

expense of a more wide-ranging view of how it came to be and how it works. Accordingly, I have adopted a mixture of methods in an attempt to capture the historical arc of its evolution, the structure of its enactment in practice and its intersection with discourses of authenticity in both the reception of popular music in general and in popular music studies. The literature on the history, practice and discourses of popular music is diverse and multi-disciplinary. The structure of my argument concerns a particular type of object (or entity) as opposed to a strand of thinking or branch of practice (academic or otherwise). Consequently, it was best served by approaching the literature as it pertained to different aspects of the band phenomenon rather attempting to cover it as a singular body of work, which it is not, and which would have left 'the band' as a residual feature of the picture, something I am trying to redress here. I have already mentioned some of the ways in which the band *does* appear in previous work and where this has informed my thinking, in terms of both what it includes and where it leaves off. Henceforth, I approach the literature with a view to drawing out the relevance of the band *to* it and, where possible, in it.

In chapter 1, I will examine the central course of Anglo-American commercial popular music. This entails discussing the ways in which narratives are formed in popular music and how they impact upon everyday understandings of the events and social forces that shape them. I trace the emergence of the band as a way of making music from its origins just before the arrival of rock 'n' roll as a potent force in the marketplace and in the consciousness of audiences, through its rise to prominence alongside changes in society and the growth of an ideology in popular music that made particular claims about its relationship to commerce and who it spoke for. One of the key features of the development of 'rock' was the combination of different musical and performative tasks under a shared group identity. I discuss how the influence of artists in this era, through the growth of narrative legends, helped to embed the 'band' into the popular consciousness as a

means of engaging with the world of making music, looking at how subsequent aesthetic and ideological developments have retained it as a central feature.

Chapter 2 moves into the recent past to present case studies of two different bands in operation. One hoped to enter into music making in a professional capacity and featured original material. The other, of which I was a member, was an amateur covers band. By way of close observation, participation and reflection I describe some of the realities of what being in a band entails and illustrate some of the common features of social and creative interaction in collective music making in different versions of a group identified band. Here, my intention is to lay the foundation for a wider examination of the structural relationship between band members in the context of creative work.

Having charted the evolution of the band as a form and the histories and details of a couple of examples this in action, the central part of the thesis constructs a model to show how creativity and social dynamics cohere within the group identity. Drawing upon Jason Toynbee's (2000) hypothesis of a 'radius of creativity' within which musicians work and, through the lineage of this, Bourdieu's concepts of fields, sub-fields and habitus, I envisage the band as 'micro-field'—a collective agent in which musicians, according to their personalities and dispositions, apply their technical skills and imaginative capacities towards expressing themselves through the group. Chapter 3 builds on Toynbee's and Bourdieu's work to assess the interplay of broad categories which constitute creativity in the group identity. In Chapter 4, I turn my attention to how these are mediated through the social component of band work, and life. I discuss the unique properties of the band, its status as both an organisationally and socially defined group, and how these affect its stability. My model is based partly on biographical and historical literature, and largely on the case studies described earlier. Throughout, I draw upon these case studies and interviews with other musicians. These are supported with examples from biographical literature and academic writing, especially ethnographic work, to

demonstrate the extent to which creativity and social interaction are bound together.

Chapter 5 considers the implications for academic discourses of authenticity of the preceding 'close reading' of the band phenomenon. It provides an overview of the inconsistencies that scholars have revealed in every day applications of authenticity and moves on to look at the models that they have assembled to explain the different ways in which audiences validate creative work. I propose here that the case against the Romantic myths propounded for 'rock' being an essentially authentic mode of expression, whilst broadly convincing, have overlooked the extent to which rock's own ideology incorporated the collective creativity embodied by bands. I argue that Allan Moore's (2002) proposal that academics should look to processes of authentication, and who is being authenticated, rather than 'authenticity' as a quality that is found or lacking in performances allows us to account for the appeal of rock 'myths' without having to subscribe to their essentialism. I suggest an addition to his system that would better account for the specific methodology employed by bands, and against which audiences make judgements.

My conclusion is that the 'band', as the site of a specific and intimate conjunction between creativity and sociability, illustrates the degree to which method is inscribed into rock in terms of its ideology. Consequently, I believe that deliberations surrounding genre and authenticity have placed too much emphasis on aesthetic considerations and industrial processes at the expense of the social practices which underpin them. The commercial brands into which many bands evolve have as their root the socially mediated creativity described in this thesis. The methodology of group identified bands reveals the resilience of the social element of collective creativity in the processes of commodification and mass dissemination. Debates about rock have focused on its ideology but, as my thesis

will now demonstrate, this is connected to its small-scale practices as much as its grand narrative thrust.

ONE

HISTORY

And it came to pass
That rock 'n' roll was born
All across the land every rockin' band
Was blowin' up a storm
And the guitar man got famous
The business man got rich
And in every bar there was a superstar
With a seven year itch
There was fifteen million fingers
Learnin' how to play…
AC/DC, "Let There Be Rock" (1977)

Yet, as rock was being constituted as a commodified form of entertainment across the
mediations between production and consumption, it produced different meanings for
audiences, industry and musicians. For the industry it provided the impetus for a
significant expansion in scale and scope of operations… For the audience, the new 'baby
boomers', it was the start of a revolt of the body that would lead to a 'revolution in the head'
during the 1960s… As for the music… it was not that new.
Keith Negus (1996: 143)

1.1- PROBLEMS OF HISTORY

1.1.1- Theoretical Parameters

Any history of popular music- any historical account at all, in fact- has to start from

somewhere. The problem of *where* this might be is built into the project, whatever

its emphasis, and has a profound effect on the outcome given that the material

included therein will inevitably shape any conclusions. Even before this, however,

we need to address the problem of *perspective*. Since it is impossible to be

completely comprehensive, it becomes necessary to provide parameters that make

feasible a coherent account of a specific set of events or trends whilst admitting of

their existence within a wider network. This is, of course, complicated by the

potentially controversial nature of any starting and finishing point. Additionally,

the blurred boundaries between other delineating factors, such as different genres,

mean that aesthetic, economic, technological and sociological considerations can pull a historical account in a variety of different directions.

An acknowledgement of authorial perspective, then, becomes of paramount importance in avoiding a crippling relativism that tries to take account of everything but sheds little light on anything. Even in relation to the comparatively specific area of popular music history, different stances present different answers to the question of what, precisely, is the nature of the topic.

Charles Hamm notes:

> From the perspective of popular music studies, popular music is a complex social and political phenomenon of the second half of the 20th century. For a musicologist, popular music is a succession of individual pieces stretching back at least three centuries, and of information on the creators and performers of this music (Hamm 2004: 11-12).

A close reading of musical texts can reveal a lot about their social and historical contexts and origins. Musicology and the wider study of popular music via history, sociology or ethnography also need not be mutually exclusive. Richard Middleton has highlighted the problems of trying to apply traditional musicological analysis to popular music.

> In many kinds of popular music… harmony may not be the most important parameter; rhythm, pitch gradation, timbre and the whole ensemble of performance articulation techniques are often more important (Middleton 1990: 104).

Susan McClary and Robert Walser (1990), likewise, have drawn attention to the limitations of a strictly score based analysis of music that is heavily technologically mediated and socially inflected. But they have also noted the increasing success of musicologists as they, "have developed techniques for dealing with music as a discourse that both reflects and influences society, and have produced modes of dealing with aspects of music other than pitch organisation." (McClary and Walser 1990: 285). Indeed, Middleton (1993) and Moore (1993) have laid some of the groundwork along this road.

I am mindful of the impact of individual pieces and certainly my account highlights the importance of some particular acts. Nevertheless, my approach broadly follows the former of the two camps outlined by Hamm. The subject in hand pertains more closely to the practices and relationships surrounding music-making than the specific sonic and formal characteristics of that music. In any case, the practices I am examining usually (although not exclusively) tend to privilege methods other than those that mirror closely the origins of traditional musicology. Middleton notes that popular music tends to involve a different set of skills to those of the more technically formal world of 'high art', which exist at a further remove from surrounding practices.

> Popular competence can attach itself to *any* kind of music- though musics themselves coded in an analogous way are the most likely. Similarly, popular *music* can be listened to according to *high* competence principles (as is sometimes the case with professional performers). But a *preponderance* of popular music listening does seem to be of a popular competence type. (Middleton 1990: 175, emphasis in original)

Furthermore, the phenomenon that I'm attempting to understand arose after the shift in emphasis within popular music production and consumption from notated sheet music towards studio recordings and their associated commodity forms. (Live performances, of course, accompanied both). Therefore, although I am aware of the value of musicological analyses in helping to reveal historical patterns in the relationship between individual acts and songs and their contexts, my emphasis lies elsewhere.

As Keith Negus suggests, "there is not one rock history" (1996: 160). Even outside of the technicalities of the songs in question, there remain a number of factors to weigh up against each other. Few, if any, systems exist in isolation and popular music is certainly not one of them. Its historical trajectory can be traced along maps that cover many different territories. The surrounding economic and social histories each feed into popular music and provide alternative, but potentially complementary, standpoints from which to assess its evolution.

Since my field of focus is fairly specific, at least thematically, and concerned with the way in which musicians organise, conduct and project their activities, I will concentrate mainly on the social dimension of popular music. Of course technological, economic and legal considerations also arise in the operations of bands and so, inevitably, have a bearing on their historical context. When these emerge, they tend to become entangled with the social constructions I am describing. I am not, therefore, trying to isolate a social history from economic, legal or technological frameworks but, rather, to illustrate how a specific phenomenon can distinguish itself amidst their complicated interactions.

1.1.2- Temporal Parameters

The time frame of my historical analysis is slightly more diffuse than its thematic focus. Broadly, I am concerned with the period covering the early to mid 1960s until the late 1970s since it was during this time that the 'rock band' emerged and became established as a distinct, and potent, kind of entity within popular music. Obviously the historical threads that coalesce in specific ways during this time extend both backwards and forwards out of it. Therefore, it becomes necessary to refer to preceding and subsequent eras to make a coherent case. The mid to late 1950s and early 1960s are of particular importance partly because they provide a comparator for the way in which popular music was produced later on. They were also the launching pad for the changes I seek to examine, both aesthetically and socially, serving as the bedding for some of the ideological assumptions about what became known as the 'rock era' (Frith, ed. 2004[9], Christgau 1990, Negus 1996: 137). There are no exact start and finishing dates for 'the rock era', and indeed 'rock' as a genre has outlived it, if it is indeed over. Nevertheless, a rough consensus emerges,

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[9] The second volume of the Routledge *Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* series covering Popular Music is devoted to, and titled, 'The Rock Era'.

although it is open to question and prone to oversimplification. Keith Negus offers the following overview,

> It is a period that starts with the emergence of rock-'n'-roll in the middle of the 1950s and which then 'progresses' through various significant moments or stages until it ends with punk rock in the 1970s… I am arguing for a critical questioning of the history of musical sounds as narratives with distinct breaks involving beginnings and endings or births and deaths (Negus 1996: 136-137).

Following Negus, my main concern is with the 'rock era' as described above, temporally at least. As he suggests, however, I am aware of the dangers of isolating it and the need for "re-presentation" (ibid.). In a simple sense, without the apparent rock n roll 'revolution' there would have been no rock 'progression', or the subsequent battlegrounds of punk. In a more nuanced way, without taking some stock of the immediate evolutionary predecessors of the events and phenomena at the core of this account, it would be difficult to clearly illustrate their own distinctiveness.

Popular music, suggests Lipsitz, is:

> the result of an ongoing conversation in which no one has the first or last word (Lipsitz, cited in Negus 1996: 138)

By the 1980s, and beyond, the rock band was not only established but, I would argue, entrenched as a way of making and selling music. If this period receives less attention, it is not because popular music had abandoned this type of group identity or because the value and future of 'rock' came into question. Rather, it is because the band had by then become part of the grammar with which Lipsitz's "conversation" (ibid.) is enacted and my primary historical concern is with how this came to be.

Similarly, whilst there was of course collective popular music making a long time prior to the 1950s, the conditions in which it took place were sufficiently dissimilar from the mass-media age that came afterwards that the language used in the popular music conversation employed a different grammar. The practices that concern me here are thoroughly imbricated in the technological and social milieux

of the era of consumption and production of music in the shadow of, if not always directly via, the culture industries. Consequently, although the work of popular musicians prior to the emergence of rock 'n' roll has a bearing on the rock era and beyond, this tends to be tangential to, or diluted by its distance from, the core concerns of this study. The 'pre-history' of rock and modern popular music, then, is therefore addressed peripherally rather than in the detail it would deserve in a broader account of musicianship.

1.2- THE 'RECEIVED ACCOUNT'

Such has been the impact on wider culture, to say nothing of the commercial magnitude, of popular music in the last half of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first that its history has been well rehearsed. Journalistic and popular accounts of the trajectory of popular music abound. As with any widely dispersed narrative gaps are frequent, as are debates about the relevance of individuals, events and trends.

This is compounded by the fact that much of the history is written not by dispassionate observers but by partisan fans, or even participants. If, to employ Frith's description, rock critics are "professional rock fans" (Frith 1983:165), the co-mingling of the roles of critic and historian has often tended to curtail the possibilities for even-handed analysis. Many of the early histories of rock 'n' roll, or rock, contain a markedly normative bent and were, themselves, a part of the process whereby 'rock' and 'pop' came to be perceived as separate entities. Nick Cohn, for example, concludes his own account with a fairly straightforward division.

> Pop has split itself into factions and turned sophisticated. Part of it has a mind now, makes fine music. The other part is purely industrial, a bored and boring business like any other… the industry is split roughly eighty per cent ugly and twenty per cent idealist… The ugly eighty are mainline pop, computerized, and they hit a largely teenybop or pre-teen market, ages six to sixteen, plus a big pocket of middle aged parents. They have a function and they sell records. They make money. When I've said that, I've said everything… The blue-eyed twenty are hardly even pop stars any more. With very few exceptions… they don't sell records and, after all, what's pop about unpopularity? (Cohn 2004: 264)

Even Cohn's subsequent 'afterthoughts' still state that he "found it easy to remain a reactionary" (ibid. 267). [10]

Histories of pop and rock have been complicated by the extent to which many of the publications in which they appear are, to a greater or lesser degree, a part of the same mass media culture in which pop history is played out (Jones and Featherly 2002). Even without an agenda geared towards the marketing of particular artists or fashions, the underlying mass market needs of their publishers push towards easily digestible narratives.

To take a couple of examples, *Rock of Ages: The Rolling Stone History of Rock and Roll* (1986) and Tony Palmer's *All You Need Is Love: The Story of Popular Music* (1976) are, respectively, adjuncts to a mass market music magazine and a television series. A glance at some of the chapter titles of *Rolling Stone*'s history, the sections are divided neatly into decades, is revealing. 'Rock and Roll is Born', 'Roll Over Frankie Avalon', 'Brits Rule', 'Woodstock…and Altamont', 'All Shook Up: The Punk Explosion', 'The Postpunk Implosion', 'Rock Endures', 'Rock into the Future' (Ward, Stokes and Tucker 1986: 9-10). Palmer's account, written before the onset of punk, starts earlier and is divided along more thematically oriented lines, but retains a narrative drive informed by generic considerations. Donald Clark's *The Rise and Fall of Popular Music*, despite an ostensibly oppositional stance, and an even earlier starting point, evidences a similar narrative thrust.[11] Despite political and aesthetic differences, a clear sense of the construction of a retrospectively 'received wisdom' regarding the 'story' of popular music emerges.

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[10] More measured accounts, roughly contemporaneous with Cohn's, still retained traces of an implicit belief in an explicit divide between creativity and commerce although some, like Charlie Gillett's *The Sound of the City*, first published in 1970, attempted an excavation of the socio-economic factors feeding into the sounds, labels and rhetoric. In Gillett's case, this was an examination of the role of record labels in shaping the genre and its nomenclature.

[11] Chapter titles covering the period in question include: 'The Early 1950s: Frustration and Confusion', 'Rock 'n' Roll; or Black Music to the Rescue (Again)', 'The Abdication of a Generation', 'A Last Gasp of Innocence', 'The 1960s: A Folk Boom, a British Invasion, the Soul Years and the Legacy of an Era' and 'The Heat Death of Pop Music'.

A picture in broad brush-strokes takes shape whereby in America, and in parallel with the evolution of jazz although somehow curiously separate from it[12], country and blues, and later rhythm and blues, coalesce aesthetically and are sold commercially to white audiences as 'rock n roll'. This, with Elvis at the helm, finds a large and enthusiastic following amongst a burgeoning demographic of teenage consumers, the 'baby boom' generation. It is then quickly incorporated and neutered by the music business to become a bland shadow of its former energetic self.

Meanwhile, in England, the teenagers who had become enamoured of this music, and the blues from which it emerged, reinvigorate pop and export this new sound, along with its antecedents, back to the U.S.A in a 'British Invasion'. The trans-Atlantic musical conversation takes on added gravity beyond the dimension of mere entertainment and, spurred on by the social changes of the time becomes allied to the 'counter-culture'.

This (drug infused) moment of progressive optimism, however, cannot be sustained and quickly collapses into chaos and acrimony, whilst the music becomes corporatised and either bland or indulgent. This turgid state of affairs is burst open by a punk 'revolution' which seeks to reconnect with the original energy of the early rock 'n' roll. But, again, the momentum is lost and the components of punk swiftly part ways, the 'postpunk' artists picking their way through a postmodern pop minefield. Nevertheless, 'indie' is born of the DIY punk ethos and the landscape has been rearranged such that corporate rock, on the one hand, and independent music on the other, co-exist in an uneasy, and uneven, relationship where subsequent eruptions (like hip-hop) or developments (like video) provide, depending on the author, either hope for the future or more of the same.

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[12] Even when 'rock' became more improvisational and experimental in the 1960s, reaching for 'artistic' status, its story has been told as distinct from jazz history. Brennan (2006) has illustrated, via an examination of *Downbeat* and *Rolling Stone* in the late 1960s, how the retrospective perception of 'separate' histories for jazz and rock doesn't necessarily match the musical, or even critical, realities of what took place at the time.

I have, of necessity, condensed and caricatured this version of events in order to illustrate a basic timeline and simultaneously point towards some of the limitations (or, at least, perceived limitations) of a journalistic narrative. Nevertheless, it provides something of an aerial view of the historical terrain and a point from which to assess some of the contours to which scholars have added explanatory and contextual detail.

Morten Michelsen sums up some of the fundamental problems of the type of account outlined above.

> Rock histories have introduced an incipient self-reflexivity unknown to most other popular musics and have been used as central arguments for legitimizing rock within a high cultural framework, even as rock took part in the partial dismounting of high/low cultural distinctions. Although a host of rock histories now exist, few are academically grounded and there is even less work on the theoretical background for producing such histories… [A]s histories of rock have been developed into high-profile visual media accounts and have become reified through permanent museums and exhibition spaces, the need for a critical reappraisal of historical representations has become even more important. (Michelsen 2004: 19-20)

There is, perhaps, a danger in being too high minded about popular histories which, after all, serve a different purpose to academic study. If nothing else, they provide the raw material for academic processing- the edges of a jigsaw that can be constructed in a more substantive fashion. As the aforementioned dialogue between musicological and sociological accounts suggests, the analysis of popular music has not been rigid and linear, but an open and discursive field. Simon Frith writes:

> One of the peculiarities of rock studies as an academic topic… was that it developed as a conversation not just across disciplines but also across occupations- academic and non-academic, music-making and journalism, policy-making and teaching. From the start, that is to say, PMS drew on low as well as high theory, on concepts used by people producing and selling music, as well as listening to and talking about it. (Frith 2004a: 370-371)

Michelsen is correct to note the gaps in popular and journalistic narratives, and there is usually much room for revision or, at least, clarification and contextualisation. But journalists are not in the business of historiography and even

these relatively roughly sketched accounts, broader than they are deep, vary in detail and tone, as a comparison between *Rolling Stone*'s celebratory version of events and Clark's bitterly polemical assessment illustrates. The 'received' account is not a monolithic consensus and, anyway, such agreement as there is need not be swallowed whole but can help to set the parameters for further study. Brian Longhurst, for instance, provides a "composite account of rock 'n' roll" (199: 102-106) which is suggestive rather than prescriptive. Being wary of 'received' accounts, and prepared to re-evaluate them, does not necessarily imply a wholesale rejection of a narrative line that, for all its flaws, has nevertheless ploughed a deep furrow through the collective memories of popular music practitioners, audiences and commentators.

1.3- 'PERSONALITY vs 'PROCESS': 1955 and all that

One of the gaps in both journalistic and academic accounts of popular music history is the role of the band. To be sure, the biographies and impact of some particular bands have been extensively raked over. But the function and influence of 'the band' as a form has been largely overlooked, not just in relation to the sequence of events at 'ground level' but insofar as it has helped to shape the narrative that constitutes popular music history itself.

One of the fundamental tensions in accounting for historical progress is between the forces of 'personality' and 'process'. If biographers and journalists have tended to err in favour of the former then much of the work of scholars has sought to redress the balance by explaining their effect in the context of the latter.

History is perhaps most easily digested as a dramatic narrative, but this may be at the cost of a more sophisticated and complete understanding. As Ian Inglis puts it,

> While it is a truism to state that cultural phenomena need to be contextualized before they can be comprehended, it is a necessity that is

often unheeded. Indeed much writing on the history of popular music in general is characterized by an impulse to present it as a series of separate and revolutionary events... a desire to concentrate on immediate and apparently disruptive incidents and dates, which may well add to the historical drama of popular music but which detracts from our understanding of it as cycle or process. (Inglis 2000a: xviii)

This applies to both moments in history and the actors within them. The mythologizing tendencies of dramatic narratives tend to exaggerate the importance of specific events and individuals. The danger at the other extreme of the spectrum is that the effects of individuals become lost in the shuffle of historical process; agency is reduced to a matter of temporal contingency.

Richard Peterson's (1990) detailed and omnivorous explanation of the wider reasons for the seemingly abrupt outburst of rock 'n' roll hints at a way forward, even as it questions the 'supply side' explanation of creative individuals as the primary engine of historical development. Using a 'production of culture' model to answer the question 'Why 1955?', he places the early rock 'n' roll stars and their baby-boom audience into a framework of legal, technological, industrial and institutional factors which can constrain or foster development, pushing and pulling in different directions.

> [I]t is possible to point to specific individuals like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis and say that rock emerged in the late 1950s because… they began their creative efforts at this specific moment. In bringing into question this 'supply side' explanation, I do not, for a moment belittle their accomplishments. Rather, I suggest that in any era there is a much larger number of creative individuals than ever reach notoriety, and if some specific periods of time see the emergence of more notables, it is because there are times when the usual routinising inhibitions to innovation do not operate as systematically, allowing opportunities for innovators to emerge. (Peterson 1990: 97)

The 'demand side', or audience, is similarly queried, and contextualised.

> The baby-boomers demanded music that spoke to their own condition… Although it can be argued that the uniquely large baby-boom cohort has been responsible for a number of changes in the US, it did not cause the emergence of rock in the mid-1950s. In fact it could not have done so. After all, in 1954 the oldest of the baby-boomers were only nine years old and half had not even been born yet!…[But] we are not arguing that audience preferences had nothing to do with the rise of rock. Quite to the contrary,

the newly affluent teens and pre-teens comprised the heart of the market exploited in the rise of rock music. The point is that this market demand had been growing gradually for over a decade and remained largely unsatiated because the decision-makers in the culture industry simply did not recognise that it was there. (ibid. 98)

Peterson places particular emphasis on the shift in power between publishing collection agencies ASCAP and BMI, the possibilities for the dissemination of music unlocked by transistor radios and vinyl 45rpm records, marketplace fragmentation, radio formatting procedures and career structures in the record and radio businesses (ibid.113-114). All of these factors provided an *environment* in which the celebrated creators and entrepreneurs could flourish.

His account is convincing, not least because he acknowledges that things could have been different. Even if we accept that the removal of surrounding constraints was a key component in the emergence of certain stars, we are still left with the idea of a historical 'narrative' shaped around, if not directly caused by, certain figures.

> [I]t is tempting to ask who then would have emerged into the limelight as the creative leaders of the new music if it had emerged at an earlier time. What if the year had been 1948 rather than 1954? A number of accomplished black rhythm and blues players come to mind, most notably T-Bone Walker and Louis Jordan… Would the whites have come from jazz or from country music? Probably some would have come from each of these traditions, but who would have been the Elvis Presley? (ibid. 98)

I am wary of attaching too much import to counterfactual speculation but a significant point emerges here. Even as scholars (and journalists) seek to explain *how* particular narratives were arrived at, *that* they came into play is beyond doubt.[13] What matters here is that although the timing of constraining or influential factors might be a matter for historical and geographical contingency, or even blind luck, their outcome produced a set of circumstances that shaped perceptions in specific ways. To follow Peterson's example of Elvis and the 1950s, conditions may

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[13] Negus (1996: 142) gives the example of rock 'n' roll becoming associated with a particular version of male sexuality, shaped around Elvis.

have changed earlier, or later on. Or somebody else may have walked into Sam Phillips's studio and become a star. But 'somebody else' didn't. Consequently, the iconography we ended up with was 'Elvis' shaped, and Chuck Berry and not T-Bone Walker penned the linguistic tropes that prevailed. To look at it another way, the individuals- and, later on, groups- who gained ascendancy might be objects carried along on the stream of history but they can, nevertheless, affect the course of that stream and help to determine how it is perceived.

1.4- 'REVOULTION' vs 'EVOLUTION'

1.4.1- An 'interregnum'?

Part of the perception, the 'received' narrative, of popular music is of a dearth of vibrant, exciting music in the period immediately following on from the early flowering of rock 'n' roll. The chart music of the early 1960s is often characterised as bland and uninspiring. The 'personality' driven accounts of history roughly chime with Don McLean's (1971) Romantic perception of the plane crash that ended Buddy Holly's life as "the day the music died", the start of an interregnum in popular music that was broken by The Beatles and their ilk.

> Nineteen hundred and sixty was probably the worst year that pop has been through. Everyone had gone to the moon. Elvis had been penned off in the army and came back to appal us with ballads. Little Richard had got religion, Chuck Berry was in jail, Buddy Holly was dead. Very soon, Eddie Cochran was killed in his car crash. It was a wholesale plague, a wipe-out. (Cohn 2004: 74)

Again, the view of rock 'n' roll limping on as a toothless form until it emerged, revitalised, as rock in the mid 1960s pops up even in more contextualised and thematically focused accounts.

> The period 1959-1962 was the deadest phase of British and American recorded song since at least 1945… For adolescents it was a *desert*… Unless you lived in a major city or coast, or had access to amusement arcades or fairgrounds or made your own music, musically it was a *bloody desert*. (Harker 1980: 73, emphasis in original)

As with any reductionist version of events, this fails to present the full picture. It tends to privilege, with hindsight, a supposedly 'revolutionary' moment, glossing over, as Negus points out, the "continuities" (1996: 145) across generic lines and the variety of performative and creative strategies used by musicians in response to the musical changes that were afoot (ibid. 146). A simplistic perception of an interregnum between Elvis and The Beatles also under-represents the developments in production and consumption patterns that were both popular at the time and important pre-cursors to what was to follow, as well as implying a unison between the British and American experiences that did not really exist. Keir Keightley summarises:

> The music and culture of the in-between years were incredibly important, and may be viewed as a laboratory of sorts in which different elements of what would later become rock culture took shape. The years 1959-63 saw a great deal of experimentation in the recording studio, with producers like Phil Spector, Berry Gordy and Brian Wilson using available technologies to create exciting new sounds that could only exist on tape. Rhythm and blues musicians developed new arrangements and rhythms that would nourish the creation of soul and funk… The rise of instrumental and surf bands contributed to the development of an amateur language for the electric guitar. Folk music experienced a phenomenal rise in popularity during this period, and… contributed greatly to the rise of rock. (Keightley 2001: 117)

A number of these developments have significant ramifications for the acts that were to symbolise the achievements of the 'rock era' and the importance of the studio aesthetic and folk-derived concepts of authenticity will be revisited further on. Of most immediate significance for the evolution of the band as a major contributor to the direction of popular music history is the increasing centrality of 'amateur' music making to the pop music process.

One of the primary effects of the original rock 'n' roll 'moment' was that it galvanised a host of young men (they were almost exclusively male)[14] into taking up the instruments of their idols and coalescing into groups to play the music for themselves. Quite apart from the fact that the line between 'professional' and

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[14] Bayton (1998), Clawson (1999), Green (1997) and Walser (1993) have all addressed the ways in which rock has been coded as 'male', often in ways that involve the exclusion of women and girls from the initial uptake of the instruments associated with it.

'amateur' musicians is, anyway, often blurred (Finnegan 2007: 12-17), the career paths of the musicians both behind and carried along on the early waves of rock 'n' roll were mostly characterised by a lack of formal training[15]. The blues and country forms that evolved into rock 'n' roll were 'folkloric' rather than 'institutional' in origin, from traditions that tended to be excluded from the mainstream of the culture industry, and the academy. To follow Peterson's example, they were also more BMI than ASCAP. (Peterson 1990: 99-100, Middleton 1990: 80).

This is not to suggest that such divisions were absolute, or that there were not dialogues between both black and white and urban and rural forms (Negus 1996: 142). The influence of jazz, across the board, should also not be overlooked, notwithstanding that by the 1950s jazz had, certainly in America, taken on a seriousness that distanced it from the swing that had fed into Tin-Pan Alley songwriting and hence popular music as 'entertainment' rather than 'art'. (Keightley 2010: 94) Nevertheless, the fact remains that the *icons* of early rock 'n' roll, those whose stories fed into the narrative, began their ascent to stardom from outside of both the academy and the centres of power of commercial popular music. Chuck Berry worked in a car factory, Elvis was a truck driver and Buddy Holly passed into the music business more or less straight from school. It is notable too that, using relatively simple musical forms, both Berry and Holly wrote their own songs and that early experiments with *recording* outside of major studios was a feature of their formative years. The legendary contingency upon which the discovery of Elvis hinged, his encounter with independent producer Sam Phillips, was a consequence of his decision to make an amateur recording.

Of course, as Peterson's analysis suggests, the changes in industry structures allowed for such relative 'amateurs' to break through into a relationship with

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[15] Buddy Holly came from a family in which music was important. Both of his brothers played instruments. He took piano lessons for about nine months and then guitar lessons, quickly (after about twenty lessons) deciding that he wanted to play country and blues styles and moving towards self-tuition. (Goldrosen 1979: 22-26)

industry. Independent producers like Sam Phillips, Norman Petty and the Chess brothers were instrumental in the growth of rock 'n' roll and dissemination of black music, not least by catering for tastes that the majors bypassed (Hancox). But one of the consequences of this was the introduction into the mass market of, at least, a perception of self-generated, youth-led popular music. To use Peterson's terminology, one of the main effects of the (commercial) popularity of rock 'n' roll was the removal of "constraints" on young, self-taught musicians entering into a relationship with the mainstream.

1.4.2- Surf, doo-wop and girl groups

The idea of a 'gap' between the moments of rock 'n' roll and the British Invasion also rests on a perception of 'rock' and 'pop' as distinct that became marked later on and could not have been so easily applied at the time. Popular music of all kinds, vibrant and bland, rebellious and tame coexisted then (as now) on the radio and in the charts. In America, even as youthful 'teen idols' were promoted by the mass media, the entertainment at 'ground level' for the surfing scene in California featured the rougher electric sounds of the guitar led 'surf' groups like Dick Dale and Del-Tones (MacDonald 2003: 58, Garofalo 2008: 156-157). The early 1960s saw the musical stylings of rock 'n' roll percolate downwards into the hands of younger musicians like those in the surf scene and then back upwards into the (regional) charts.[16] And whilst production lines still thrived, they were starting to recognize the input of younger, rock influenced, writers. (Paul Simon and Carol King, for instance, found work in New York's Brill Building). Already, the confluence of composition and performance in the same unit was becoming evident. In the footsteps of Buddy Holly, and via the wholesale adoption of Chuck Berry's riffs,

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[16] Early incursions into the charts by instrumental surf bands had limited nationwide and international success, although in 1963 The Surfaris scored a major hit with 'Wipe Out', and the surf inflected 'Telstar' achieved chart success for British band The Tornadoes. In fact some of the rawer sounds of early 1960s rock, aesthetic pre-cursors in some ways to the psychedelia that was to follow, made the journey into the charts 'under the radar' as novelty instrumentals. (Garofalo 2008 : 157)

The Beach Boys had broken into the Billboard charts by the end of 1961 (Gaines 1995: 67) with the Brian Wilson penned 'Surfin'' and were to secure a deal with Capitol in 1962.

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s, even away from the electric sounds that most easily, if retrospectively, came to define rock 'n' roll and the roots of rock, the presentation of smoother sounds was also moving in a direction that would have a bearing on subsequent developments in the 'rock era'. At the same time as rhythm and blues was converging with country music to become rock 'n' roll, another form of music, also deriving its personnel from 'ground level' but drawing more explicitly on the vocal stylings of gospel music, was making inroads into the charts. As black rhythm and blues found a white label as rock 'n' roll, independent labels continued selling the (mostly urban) street corner vocal efforts of black youth in what would later become known as 'doo wop'. As with rock 'n' roll, its early stand out success was limited and it quickly became a part of the broader pop palette. Paul Friedlander describes its trajectory,

> By 1960 doo-wop, like classic rock, was beginning to fade. The sounds had become softer as the faces became whiter… The doo-wop branch of rhythm and blues established vocal virtuosity and background harmonies as commercially viable elements in popular music. Having coexisted with classic rockers of the middle and late fifties, it too faded at decade's turn. Like classic rock, doo-wop also had a major impact on the music of the sixties; it provided the vocal foundation for Motown and, to a lesser extent, soul music (Friedlander 2006: 65-66)

As well as bequeathing vocal harmonies to the successors of rock 'n' roll, doo-wop also marked a step in the direction of how musicians would present themselves. A large proportion of the doo-wop acts that marked out the style were 'one-hit wonders' (Garofalo 2008: 113) but what most of these had in common, as well as their sound, was that they traded under a *group* name. Although Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers are now probably the most famous exponents of doo-wop, their nominal foregrounding of the lead singer was the exception. Group

labels like The Moonglows, and The Orioles and The Five Satins were more commonplace.[17]

A similar trend is evident in the music of the girl-groups of the early 1960s. As well as providing the front line for Phil Spector's production innovation, 'The Wall of Sound', they cast doubt upon the extent to which the 'interregnum' was solely characterised by the blanching of popular music. As Garofalo points out (2008: 166), by the end of 1962, girl-groups had been responsible for there being more black artists in the singles charts than ever before. To be sure, many of the producers and songwriters behind this success were white and Phil Spector, in particular, epitomised the idea of a male genius, a Svengali figure, pulling the strings but, again, retrospectively applied notions of 'pop' and its trajectory do not always fit easily with the multifarious experience of the time.

History has certainly tended to write out the contribution of women like Darlene Love, whose voice graced a number of early 1960s Spector hits (ibid. 167). This is partly due to a tendency to subordinate their talents to those of their producers. But it is also stems from the fact that many of these individual talents were subsumed into group identities. As with the male doo-wop acts, the girl-groups of the era were characterised by names which placed all of their members under a single umbrella- The Crystals, The Chiffons, The Ronettes, The Shirelles, The Dixie Cups.

Much has been made of the impact of Elvis on the British rock contingent of the 1960s. But as well as rock 'n' roll, and music hall, the music of the girl groups was a key ingredient in the musical mixture that would help to propel The Beatles to era defining prominence. It provided a source of material for covers in their live sets and on their early records as well as inflecting both their vocal delivery and discursive expressions of desire (Bradby 2005). For all that the initial hook may

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[17] Of the forty-three 'Notable One-and Two-Hit Doo Wop Groups' between 1953 and 1961 listed by Garofalo (2008: 114-115), all bar four subsume all of their members into a single name.

have been the muscular performances of the early rockers, a strand of American pop songs brushed shoulders with rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues in the club sets of the putative big names of sixties rock. It is worth noting that these were largely not by the solo singers, like Frankie Avalon and Bobby Vinton, who represented what Garofalo derides as "Schlock Rock" (2008: 43-47), but by entertainers whose aesthetic appeal, visual and musical, was marked by group interaction and whose presentation was based around the sale of a group identity. (Cyrus 2003)

1.4.3- Back In the U.K

In Britain, whilst access to rock 'n' roll had been more limited on the radio[18] and frequently characterised by pallid cover versions on record, the appeal of the musical developments overseas effect was comparable, although not congruent. Apart from the standing socio-cultural differences between the U.K and the U.S.A, Britain was characterised by austerity, not prosperity, in the decade following the Second World War. Although the presence of U.S servicemen had helped to advance the appeal of American popular music prior to the flowering of rock 'n' roll, Britain did not enjoy an economic boom until the late 1950s, the teenage consumer culture lagging somewhat behind its American counterpart. Ian MacDonald, although his focus is on The Beatles, neatly summarises the gap.

> In America, a so-called 'generation gap' had been heralded in the early Fifties by J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* and screen stars like Dean and

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[18] Britain's smaller geographical size militated against the regional, and commercial, radio stations that provided a forum for rock 'n' roll in the U.S.A as the American radio industry fragmented. Radio in the U.K was still dominated by an onshore monopoly held by the BBC, itself still largely characterised by Reithian values. The BBC's roots in a 'mixed content' policy was also in contrast to the 'jukebox format' that made popular music easy to find, and promote, on radio in the U.S.A. The challenge mounted by Radio Luxembourg and, from 1964, the pirate radio stations provided a degree of variety but the inertia of a state run broadcaster historically inimical to commercial considerations meant a slower uptake of this new commercial, and American, phenomenon. It is notable that the success of pirate radio was, in no small way, due to its adoption of American formats and the heavy rotation of the popular music favoured by younger audiences (Crisell 1994: 27-30), although needletime agreements and the Musicians Union's protectionism and policy of only granting licenses to American bands on a reciprocal basis (Schwartz 2007: 9) provided a space for skiffle and British blues and early rock bands on the BBC.

Brando. In Britain, this disjuncture became apparent halfway through the decade with the simultaneous appearances of rock-and-roll, television[19], *Look Back in Anger*, and the Suez crisis (the first crack in the façade of the establishment since 1945). Any domestic film of the period will convey the genteel, class-segregated staidness of British society at that time… Lennon, in particular, loathed the Fifties' stiff and pompous soullessness… For him, as for the other Beatles, the arrival of Elvis Presley turned the key. (MacDonald 1995: 7)

In fact the 'revolutionary moment' of rock 'n' roll in Britain has probably been retrospectively overplayed here. The 'Teddy Boy' fashion, for instance, slightly pre-dated the arrival of rock 'n' roll and the uproarious response to Bill Haley's music in the promotional film *Rock Around the Clock* was exaggerated by a moral panic in the press (Cloonan 2002:115, Longhurst 1995:105). Likewise, some of the most celebrated exponents of the skiffle boom, like Lonnie Donnegan (Brocken 2006), had backgrounds in other areas, and the appeal of rock 'n' roll wasn't universal, trad jazz also attracting a vociferous, and partisan, audience.[20]

But 'overplayed' is not the same as 'non-existent' and there is no doubt that rock 'n' roll had a great impact on a large number of would be musicians in Britain in the late 1950s. Even if *Rock Around the Clock* was a focal point for teenage energy rather than a cause of delinquency, this still points towards the centrality of the music in the youth culture of the time. Certainly much of the biographical and autobiographical evidence testifies to the arrival of rock 'n' roll, and the guitar, as a key influence. The feeling that this new music had 'turned a key' may have been

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[19] The first television service was actually launched in 1936, although its initial reach was limited and it was suspended during the Second World War. By the mid 1950s its audience had grown considerably, the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II proving to be a significant draw (www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/innovation). This period was also notable for the introduction of the first *commercial* television service in the U.K in the wake of the Television Act of 1954 .

[20] The Cavern club, for instance, although famous for early Beatles gigs, was started as a jazz club (Cohen 2007: 188). Here and elsewhere, jazz and rock 'n' roll co-existed, sometimes uneasily, as musicians shared the spaces in which they were played (Frith and Horne 1987: 81). Biographies, autobiographies and critics illustrate how rock 'n' roll, the blues boom, trad jazz and modern jazz ran alongside one another, sometimes on alternate nights in the same venues, sometimes centred around specific locations. Val Wilmer's *Mama Said There'd Be Days Like These* (1991: 26-52) provides examples of the availability of different types of music. Philip Larkin's writing provides a less open-minded indicator of the more dogmatic sections of the jazz listening cohort. (in Kington, ed. 1992: 260-261)

stronger for Lennon and his fellow Beatles than the population at large, but they were far from exceptional amongst musically oriented teenage consumers.

> **Pete Townshend** (on hearing *Rock Around the Clock* in the cinema): We had seats in the gallery at the very back of the old Odeon Marble Arch, and the walls rumbled and the floor moved. A chill ran up my spine as I heard the native rhythms. I looked round at my father and I said, "What is this amazing music?"… Rock 'n' roll got to my blood as a new form. (Black 2001: 11)

> **Nick Mason:** I must have been about twelve when rock music first impinged on my consciousness. I can remember struggling to stay awake through Horace Batchelor's exhortations for his unlikely pools system on Radio Luxembourg, hoping to catch 'Rocking To Dreamland'…. At thirteen I had my first long-playing album- Elvis's *Rock 'n' Roll*. This seminal album was bought as a first LP by at least two other members of the Floyd, and almost all of our generation of rock musicians. Not only was this fantastic new music, but for a teenage rebel it also had the additional frisson of receiving the kind of parental welcome usually reserved for a pet spider. (Mason 2004: 10)

> **Andy Summers**[21]**:** A few years earlier you would never have seen something as exotic as a guitar, but now it's beginning to establish its iconic presence as the trenchant symbol of youth… Skiffle is a new movement and a new word that has recently entered the English vocabulary with the emergence of Lonnie Donegan… He sings songs like "Rock Island Line"… and skiffle seems like a music that even we lowly schoolboys might achieve. (Summers 2006: 25-26)

Admittedly, this is a sample from a self-selecting group of people in whose lives popular music would become a defining factor, but since they are also the group who constituted the next wave of practicing popular musicians their impressions have a bearing on the history of how it was made.

The widespread adoption of the guitar as a hobby, the success of guitar primers, which bookshops struggled to keep on the shelves (Schwartz: 137), and the realignment of youth leisure activities around the new guitar based music all suggest that the relationship between music fans and music producers was becoming more intimate. Roberta Schwartz highlights the extent to which skiffle took off, with bands proliferating and providing a more visible youthful demographic with its live entertainment.

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[21] Summers is another good example of the contemporaneous appeal of jazz and rock (Summers 2006: 38-40). Made famous as a rock musician, his influences were wide ranging, and his post Police career was more oriented towards the jazz world.

> Skiffle was soon *the* activity for young Britons… there were between 30,000 and 50,000 groups in the British Isles by 1957… Youth organizations promoted skiffle as a positive and constructive activity, and churches and civic groups sponsored contests and booked bands for socials and mixers. Coffee bars, newly popular hangouts for teenagers, generally offered their patrons live entertainment; within months skiffle became their music of choice. (Schwartz 2007: 66)

The long-standing gap between composition and performance that had arisen with notation, eventually creating a distinction between 'commercial' and 'folk' music, had been closing since the introduction of recording technology allowed for the commercialisation of folk forms like the blues (Frith 2001a: 30-31). This trend was amplified (literally and metaphorically) by the move towards the industrial centre-stage of rock 'n' roll, a genre for which both the primary commercial focus and point of audience appeal was the youth market. This meant that the reorientation of musical commodities towards performances in musical styles that were, formally at least, relatively rudimentary facilitated the entry into the mass media of a generation of musicians whose skills were honed in the field of peer centred activities.

The skiffle boom, crucially for the development of what would become rock, strengthened a musical connection between Britain and America, introducing British youth to American roots and blues sounds that had previously been marginal (Schwartz 2007: 70). This contributed to the blues boom of the early to mid 1960s which also introduced, through its valorisation of the black American originators of the sound, notions of 'authenticity' into British popular music of the time, particularly an authenticity of expression based on (often poor) imitations of blues stylings that helped to form the rock aesthetic. The blues boom also benefited from the fact that the preceding skiffle craze had introduced the idea that nascent musicians with limited skills could get up in front of an audience.[22]

> Many of those trying to play the blues were doing well to turn out credible renditions of their favorite R&B songs; as a whole they lacked sufficient

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[22] Skiffle thus also prefigured the punk movement of the 1970s, which was in many ways an attempt to return to the 'roots' of rock, which was often taken to mean a DIY ethos.

musicianship to create blues in their own distinct style. Before the skiffle boom such limited skills might have kept a young band rehearsing in private until their talents were more fully formed, but by 1962 the do-it-yourself ethos had triumphed and many started playing for audiences as relative beginners. (Schwartz 2007: 140-141)

Skiffle, rock 'n' roll and the blues were not the sole beneficiaries of the technical and institutional changes that occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nor was music making, even amongst young people, foremost amongst the wider pantheon of other activities (like listening, or dancing). But it was in the area of popular musicianship, especially in the overlap between the realms of the professional and the amateur, that the aesthetic and structural developments of the time converged most closely to allow for a feedback loop between production and consumption. In Britain as well as America, the musical practices of the peer groups at whom the music was aimed started to inform the 'star' narratives that have been prominent in popular music history.

1.5- CANONS AND CONTEXTS: HOW THE BAND WAS EMBEDDED INTO POPULAR MUSIC MYTHS

1.5.1- 'Places I Remember': The Beatles and Narratives

"It was the year of The Beatles
It was the year of The Stones
It was nineteen sixty-four"
Paul Simon, 'The Late Great Johnny Ace' (*Hearts and Bones* 1980)

Paul Simon's lament for 'The Late Great Johnny Ace' unintentionally makes note of a shift in how popular music was being presented. After the titular rock 'n' roll singer blows his brains out playing Russian roulette, we are ushered into 'the year of The Beatles, the year of the Stones'. The passing of a lonely solo star and the ascendancy of the group also marks the drift from 'rock 'n' roll' to 'rock' in the dreamlike narrative and, as Simon's impressionistic account suggests, the power of narratives is often more keenly felt than properly understood. Nevertheless, such feelings have a powerful, if subtle, effect on how actors define their role in what

they perceive of the story surrounding them. To put this another way, social agents don't always have access to, or time to consider, the vast array of contextual factors as they engage in the material practices in front of them. Historically simple narratives are the first point of contact with the past for the practitioners involved in making the future.

The idea of the 'British Invasion', a sudden and distinctive incursion of British bands in the American market, has certainly taken hold. As with rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, it is possible to view this 'moment' in evolutionary rather than revolutionary terms, in relation to both wider demographic sales patterns (Keightley 2001:118) and longer standing instances of foreign influences in the American charts (Schurk, Cooper and Cooper 2007). But the narrativisation of more discrete events has perhaps had a greater, if less obvious, long term effect on both popular music history and practice.

The artists who led the 'British Invasion' were, almost without exception, bands constituted of musicians from the generation drawn into popular music making in the late fifties and early sixties. Their own stories, through the formation of a canon, have been woven into the tapestry of rock history. Canon formation is certainly one of the most prominent ways in which the creation of a narrative history becomes bent around individuals and dramatic events although, as Robert Strachan points out, there is a corollary to this process that stretches beyond the role of journalists and biographers in selecting the membership of such a 'hall of fame'.

> Rock biographies are also instrumental in constructing and perpetuating the discourses prevalent within rock culture…[they] are a key point in which such discursive conventions are solidified into the collective memory. (Strachan 2008: 68)

Strachan's main emphasis is on the relationship between critical and biographical discourses, industrial concerns and "the critical space of fandom" (ibid. 78) in the construction of collective memory. But, as the reminiscences of Townshend and his contemporaries illustrate, practitioners are also fans. There is a large overlap in popular music between consumption and practice and the narratives that feed into

the collective memory affect not just discursive conventions but, as a result, practical ones as well. Myths form not just around personalities, but also around processes.

If, for Paul Simon, 1964 was the year of The Beatles and The Stones, then these two keystones of the rock canon, The Beatles especially, have also come to represent a good deal of the wider developments of that decade and, further, the means by which they were brought about. The narrativization of history privileges certain events and people. Who these are might be partly a matter of historical luck, but they nevertheless, as they enter the collective memory, shape the future. Just as the iconography of early rock 'n' roll is 'Elvis shaped', the canonical acts of the sixties, as they have become mythologized, have helped to make the idea of a group-identified band an intrinsic part of the mythology of rock in a kind of feedback loop between myth and practice. Although both the general thrust and the minutiae of their careers have been thoroughly raked over from a wide range of biographical and academic perspectives, it is nevertheless worth looking at the scale of their impact and a couple of specific examples, to illustrate how the big pictures of canonical legends relate to the details of small scale practice.

An obvious, but important, example of this feedback loop is The Beatles, whose musical and cultural legacy is undeniably massive. Kenneth Womack and Todd F. Davis, for instance, open their anthology of literary and cultural examinations with some grand claims.

> [I]n the decades since their disbandment, they have continued to exert a substantial impact on the direction of Western culture…Perhaps even more remarkably, the Beatles continue to influence our conceptions of gender dynamics, *the nature and direction on popular music* [emphasis added], and the increasingly powerful and socially influential constructions of iconicity and celebrity (Womack and Davis 2006: 1)

Certainly within a narrower remit than 'the direction of Western culture', The Beatles are usually marked out, with a minimum of contention, as significant[23]. Overviews of twentieth-century popular music, journalistic and academic, acknowledge their centrality to the development of the field. *The Cambridge Companion to Rock and Pop*, for instance, opens a section on them as follows:

> The Beatles were the most important twentieth-century pop stars not simply because of their legacy of songs nor even because of the scale of the commercial success but because they forever changed pop's social and musical meanings and possibilities" (Frith, Straw and Street (eds.) 2001: 77)

In the midst of this grand sweep some details may get lost in the shuffle. Others, however, get magnified; they become emblematic. In his overview of The Beatles' story, Ian Inglis points towards the complicated relationship between prosaic historical facts and the filtering process that takes place as they get written into biographical narratives.

> On one level the story of The Beatles is deceptively easy to relate, not least because it has been retold, reproduced and reinvented on so many occasions. John Lennon met Paul McCartney in Woolton, Liverpool, on 6 July 1957, and shortly afterwards invited him to join his group (then known as the Quarrymen). In 1958 McCartney introduced Lennon to George Harrison; these three remained the nucleus of the group…(Inglis 2000a: xv-xvi)

That John Lennon and Paul McCartney met when Lennon's band played at the Woolton Fête is a well-known and frequently cited fact. It is understandable that the genesis of such a successful partnership should be worthy of note, although perhaps the way in which it has been related goes beyond noting the facts. Ray Coleman's *Lennon: The Definitive Biography* (1995) typifies the language used to tell the story.

> That fateful sunny Saturday Aunt Mimi did not know John was taking his Quarry Men to the Woolten fête…(Coleman 1995: 157)

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[23] Even sceptics, and people who just don't like The Beatles, tend to acknowledge their impact- or ubiquity. It sometimes seems to me that they are overrated by people who like them and underrated by people who don't. That they are influential is surely beyond doubt.

Bob Spitz's *The Beatles: The Biography* (2005) takes a similar line, foregrounding the events of June 6th in a chapter title, "A Simple Twist of Fete" and with reference to the mystical importance of what happened, even as it purports to reveal the underlying truths.

> Legend has it that the lads, anxious about playing in front of such a familiar crowd, decided to lubricate their nerves with a few hastily downed beers…(Spitz 2005: 94)

'Fateful', 'Legend'— the language used is telling. Woolton Fête has become enshrined in the rock mythology, the starting point for a great voyage, or an important conundrum which it is the biographer's job to decode. A similar status has been granted to the chance encounter a few years later on the platform of Dartford Station between Keith Richards, on his way to college, and his erstwhile childhood playmate Mick Jagger whose package of rhythm and blues records attracted the attention of his future bandmate. (Bockris 1993: 24, Norman 1983: 39)

That McCartney joined the Quarry Men and Richards played with the Blue Boys is a matter of historical record. Somewhat taken for granted in these narratives, however, is the fact that the schoolboy Lennon and college student Jagger had bands in the first place into which they could invite their new friends. Making music, without adult supervision, was becoming a normal part of the range of youthful leisure activity. These less tangible historical matters are part of the wider story of a generation of music fans and nascent musicians, echoing a broader range of developments.

As Spitz's account reveals, Lennon and McCartney's meeting wasn't the only first at Woolton.

> In the more than forty years that Woolton's villagers had celebrated an event they commonly referred to as "the Rose Queen", only marching bands had ever entertained… But something had changed. The steady song of the men in blue failed to enchant their children, whose expanding world held little glamour for tradition. Bessie Shotton, Pete's mother [Shotton played washboard in the band], convinced the church fete committee that a skiffle band would bridge the divide between young and old and proposed the Quarry Men. (Spitz 2005: 93)

The Quarry Men's appearance was a symptom of shifts in the musical and leisure cultures of the era. As rock 'n' roll bands were on the way up, brass bands were on the way down. Dave Russell provides some context as he examines the decline of the brass band in the face of cultural change.

> The [brass] band movement showed early, and in revealing microcosm, the combined impact of an economic shift from a manufacturing toward a service-based economy, rising living standards and greater consumerism, and the nationalization and internationalization of popular taste made possible by a powerful, largely commercially controlled technological media (Russell 1991: 96)

It is significant that his account ends as The Beatles and their peers came to dominate the popular music media; nineteen sixty-four, "the year of The Beatles, the year of The Stones". Typical of their time, these acolytes of American music wielded guitars that they learnt alongside their schoolmates and local friends, forming themselves into clearly demarcated (if often unstable) units. Events like those at Woolton and Dartford became loci around which myths and methods crystallised as rock 'n' roll matured into rock. The success and influence of their protagonists has, in the process, granted an imprimatur to the means by which they came together, and to prominence.

1.5.2- 'You're Such A Lovely Audience': Art, 'The People' and the album

The ascendancy of the 'British Invasion' groups, the alumni of the skiffle boom, was at the heart of a series of changes in popular music itself and in its relationship to society at large. Ian MacDonald forwards The Beatles' oeuvre as a good bellwether for the philosophical currents that emanated from the sixties, and their consequences.

> [T]he revolution in the head which The Beatles played a large part in advancing and whose manifesto runs willy-nilly through their work, render[s] it not only an outstanding repository of popular art but a cultural document of permanent significance. (MacDonald 1995: 33)

To narrow this perspective down from the psyche of Western society over the last fifty years, the 'revolution in the head' of which MacDonald speaks was also part of a longer evolution of the wallet and the bedroom wall as popular music's commercial and artistic centres of gravity moved. In another essay, MacDonald argues that there has been a lengthy transfer in the production of 'popularity', with producers increasingly looking towards consumers.

> The process whereby the audience took over the pop industry was protracted, and 1963 was merely the year in which it could be seen as getting under way. Elements of the process had been in place since the beginning of the twentieth century; indeed, the very concept of the popular music industry, being predicated on what audiences liked, was to some extent audience-led. What began to happen from around 1963 was a decisive shift of power from producers to consumers in the business of identifying what is popular, deciding how this music is to be packaged and controlling the way new developments in style are labelled and sold. Those who had previously made the decisions and led the market began to follow the market and have their decisions made for them. (MacDonald 2003: 192-193)

Whether or not one agrees with 1963 as the starting gun for this process in earnest, it makes sense that it should accelerate in the wake of the convergence between fans and performers in the 1950s. Simon Frith writes:

> The full integration of pop music and youth culture was a development of the 1950s and was symbolised by a new form of music, rock 'n' roll, and a new form of youth, teddy boys. If the young had always had idols- film stars, sportsmen, singers such as Frank Sinatra and Johnnie Ray- the novelty of rock 'n' roll was that its performers were 'one of themselves', were teenagers' own age, came from similar backgrounds, had similar interests (Frith 1978: 37-38)

If the fifties saw popular music making drifting into the hands of youthful peer groups, the sixties saw the bands that emerged from these groups combine commercial success with a revised perspective on the possibilities, and meanings, of their own work and popular music as a whole. Again, this was both a reflection of and fuel for surrounding socio-economic circumstances.

Frith and Horne describe at length the widespread, and ongoing, impact of the connections between British popular musicians and art schools. Certainly many of the key figures of 1960s rock trod a path from art school into musical careers

(Frith and Horne 1987: 73). As well as the artistic license to experiment, this also provided them with the logistical freedom to make music with their contemporaries, early audiences and access to a range of musical and social influences (ibid. 81-83). In part, this was a factor of the wider relationship between leisure and work enjoyed by students in general (Frith 1978: 70), but the combination of institutional and social exposure to Romantic conceptions of creativity, authenticity and autonomy was to imbue the popular music culture of the post-war generation with a set of values and practices that has had a lasting effect. Central to these were the combination of peer focused musical skill sets with an artistically infused sense of direction. As Frith and Horne put it:

> Our argument about this crucial period in British pop history is not that all significant British musicians were at art school but that those who were, brought into music making attitudes that could never have been fostered under the pressures of professional entertainment' (Frith and Horne 1987: 86)

These attitudes, in turn, paid off. The process whereby pop was becoming 'The People's Music' (MacDonald 2003: 2009) in the 1960s coincided with this Romanticizing of popular music, both adding to and detracting from its function as entertainment. Popular music came to be valued as something more than entertainment whilst simultaneously music that was judged to be 'mere' entertainment became open to derision from across the divide that opened up as high art and folk notions of authenticity were pulled into rock's orbit.

Several of the key aesthetic and procedural changes of the sixties which came to characterise the 'rock era' are closely associated, in the broad narrative sweep, with the key groups of that time. The group identity may have had its roots in preceding decades and studio experimentation, as well as the presentation of songs as part of a coherent 'album', may also have been part of a longer trajectory rather than a sudden explosion of experimentation. Frank Sinatra's *In the Wee Small Hours* and *Songs for Swinging Lovers*, for instance, were early examples of a thematic link between songs the songs collected on an album, and Les Paul had pioneered

the use of overdubs in the early fifties, long before sequential recording entered the mainstream of popular music production (Toynbee 2000: 80-81). But these trends reached, if not their apogee then certainly widespread critical and commercial recognition in the sixties, as part of the wider breakdown between perceptions of 'popular' and 'high' art that took place. If, as Toynbee suggests (ibid.), the musical culture of the 1950s was still bound by conventions of musicianship that privileged a minimum of mediation, then one of the effects of the succeeding decade was to reposition musicians' ambitions about what could be achieved and, more importantly, how.

The mid 1960s increasingly saw popular music products viewed as cultural artefacts. As well as the long-player usurping the single's financial position, it came to occupy a critical and social space as the prime marker of an act's progress and status. The relative value of singles and albums has varied across time, genre and different bands. Led Zeppelin, for instance, made a point of not releasing singles. Other acts, like Madness, are remembered for their classic singles. The 'singles band' versus 'albums band' is a familiar vernacular trope. But, notwithstanding the challenges posed by web based distribution and the propensity of consumers to 'cherry pick' songs, [24] the album occupies a prominent place in the popular consciousness. High street book shelves abound with paeans to the form— *100 Albums That Changed Music* (2006), *1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die* (2008), the *33 1/3* series— and barely a month goes by without an issue of a music magazine paying homage to a classic album, often including a cover mount CD which recreates the original by way of cover versions. Era defining albums, alongside the

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[24] This is a source of ongoing tension between artists, labels and distribution outlets- reflecting both the financial and artistic status of the album. Pink Floyd have recently prevailed in a legal battle, one of their many, against EMI centred on the 'unbundling' of songs from their albums in online sales, a practice forbidden in their original contract. Although the financial aspect of the case was doubtless a major consideration, it has been framed differently. The judge, finding for the band, made reference to the debated part of the original contract as being designed to "preserve the artistic integrity of the albums" (Jonze: 2010). AC/DC, rather less convincingly, explained their boycott of i-tunes in similar terms. (Boyd: 2008)

acts that recorded them, have also been taken as indicative of popular music's overall progress and status in society. Martin Cloonan, for instance, begins his examination of the censorship of popular music in Britain in 1967:

> Why 1967? The most important reason for starting in 1967 is that it is a landmark year for pop. In record terms this centres on the release of The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper* on 1 July. This album begins pop's slow climb out of a cultural ghetto… It is *Pepper* which sees many critics seriously examine pop as a musical form for the first time. (Cloonan 1996: 4-5).

This is not to suggest that The Beatles, or other bands, were the sole source of such landmarks. But, as with other significant shifts, they were foremost among them. *Sergeant Pepper* has certainly become a touchstone for cultural achievement in pop, even if its chart shelf-life was to be overtaken by juggernauts like *Dark Side of the Moon* in the 1970s. The key point is that the possibilities for rock expanded in the 1960s, and that one of the vehicles for this was the form if not pioneered then at least hugely developed by the bands of the day. The group identified bands that came through from 1963 helped to create a template for popular music creativity, adding cultural kudos to the commercial validation of their format.

We should, nevertheless, be wary of overemphasising a strain of intentionality in what was, often, the day-to-day process of running a band rather than a grand plan. As Allan Moore illustrates in relation to *Sergeant Pepper*, what would turn out to be a celebrated milestone was, in its inception, "business as usual…merely another album" (Moore 1997: 20). Novel ideas like the unifying device of the 'Lonely Hearts Club Band' and epic songs like 'A Day In The Life' were part of a working process that included the disinterring of older songs ('When I'm Sixty Four') and piecemeal ad hoc work. Other works would have been subject to a similar mixture of forethought and contingency. The transatlantic 'conversation' of influences and rivalries that saw, for instance, The Beatles and The Beach Boys push each other into further innovation was as much informed by routine necessity and wont as by a larger vision. Moore writes:

> [T]here should have been nothing special about *Sgt. Pepper*. Accounts of its genesis and architecture paint it as something of a mixed bag. It was not the 'all-time killer album' planned in meticulous detail from beginning to end. As [George] Martin points out, the Beatles sensed a strong challenge from the Beach Boys' album *Pet Sounds* (and also the single 'Good Vibrations' of 1966), both in terms of production values and songwriting, but such concerns were not evident in the manner in which *Sgt. Pepper* was put together. (ibid. 24-25)

Rock came to inhabit high art discourses, then, via a mixture of means grounded in both blunt expediency and creative flight. That these discourses were expressed in the commercial and popular forms from which it originated highlights the disparities it embodied.

1.5.3- 'Come Together': The combination of functions in the band

There were also attitudinal differences between musicians, within and across groups. Some sought authenticity in backwards-looking loyalty to a genre, like the blues, whilst others valued future-gazing experimentation. This is epitomised in Clapton's departure from The Yardbirds in a retreat from their 'pop' direction and their subsequently more varied aesthetic palette with Jeff Beck on guitar, Clapton and Beck having both spent time in art colleges (Frith and Horne 1987: 73). Emerging distinctions between 'rock' and 'pop', and tensions between commercially remunerated and artistically motivated entertainment, became tangled up in the careers of musicians with origins in the professionalisation of amateur methods. The emerging rock culture saw an incorporation of both folk tinged conceptions of value, derived from blues and folk music, and high art sensibilities into a new, and not always coherent, version of authenticity which placed artists at the centre of an unstable network of sometimes competing commercial and social dicta.

I shall examine notions of authenticity at greater length further on, but an important general point to note here is that for many, as a result of the

developments of the sixties, the torch of authenticity in popular music movements was passed, or grabbed, from folk to rock. This was, of course, a general rather than thoroughgoing shift and the source of some dispute, centred on the relationship between performer and audience- rock 'stars' were elevated from their peers. A more specific point is that this became significant at the same time as, and via the success of, the group identified bands who emerged from the combination of fifties peer group and sixties art college movements and scenes.

These strands combined through the practical, and affective, consequences of the 'band' method of musical creation. The operational mechanics of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones et al saw the various roles of singer, songwriter and instrumentalists combined into one unit. Crucially, this unit was one whose *persona* resided in and stemmed from the interactions of the musicians therein. As P. David Marshall has illustrated (2000), a part of The Beatles' legacy was the way in which they informed the text of the 'celebrity'. Their early fame saw them instil the group presentational modes of the girl groups and doo-wop acts with a kind of joint individuality in place of interchangeability. By including in the group mode not only vocal performance but also the compositional and instrumental skills that previously resided separately, the early rock bands merged the production of musical and celebrity texts. Line-up changes, for instance, had always been a common feature of group musicianship and this did not change. But it *mattered* in a new way, that referred to more than just musical functions, when, say, Jimmy Nicol replaced a tonsillitis-stricken Ringo Starr on part of a world tour.

> **George Harrison**: Of course, with all respect to Jimmy, we shouldn't have done it. The point was, it was the Fabs. Can you imagine The Rolling Stones going on tour: 'Oh, sorry, Mick can't come'.-'All right, we'll just get somebody else to replace him for two weeks'… As we grew older, I suppose, we would have turned round and said we wouldn't go; but in those days it was the blind leading the blind.

> **George Martin**: They nearly didn't do the Australia tour. George is a very loyal person and he said, 'If Ringo's not part of the group, it's not The Beatles.'
> (The Beatles 2000: 139).

The seeds of this could actually be seen earlier in the band's career when a vocal section of their fanbase objected to Pete Best's ejection from the group (ibid. 72). If in some ways, it was writ larger later on, this was partly because of the differences in terms of audience size, and financial stakes, although the fact that Martin and Epstein had to work hard to persuade Harrison, at least, to go out with a different drummer, when there had been little thought given to dropping Best, suggests that Ringo was a better social 'fit', and highlights the entanglement of social and musical roles within the group identity.

At the same time, the formerly unified functions of the troubadours of folk and rural blues were divided amongst the members of bands. This is clearly exemplified in the common axis of singer/main guitarist in bands like The Rolling Stones, Led Zeppelin, The Who and The Kinks, for all of whom blues and rhythm and blues were major formative influences.[25] Where the spotlight, even in the urban electric blues which was played by bands, was on central figures (band *leaders*) like B.B. King, Buddy Guy and, moving towards rock 'n' roll, Chuck Berry, rock's star text of the group allowed for different members to colonise different parts of the celebrity landscape. That these roles, and goals, tended to, roughly, align with their own personalities and skills helped to solidify the idea of the band as something more than just a group of people making music together. Different musical and personal traits could cohere for external consumption, even if they were often the cause of internal strife. The Beatles were almost an archetype of this. Lennon's caustic wit, McCartney's charm, Harrison's studiousness and Starr's affability served as different facets of the same shape. As Deena Weinstein says,

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[25] The power axis of singer/guitarist, as Deena Weinstein (2006:171) points out, was to become familiar in hard rock bands throughout the 1970s and beyond, exemplified by the likes of Aerosmith and Guns N'Roses. This is compounded by the fact that the functional aspects of the singer and guitarist also often overlap with lyrical and musical songwriting roles. This is evident in early influences,(Jagger/Richards and Page/Plant), and in later prominent bands beyond the realm of hard rock, as with Morrissey and Marr in The Smiths, or Doherty and Barat in The Libertines.

> Such duality is advantageous because it allows fans to have the soft and tough in one package, and from a commercial standpoint, it can appeal to a wider audience that often splits along gender lines. (Weinstein 2006: 171)

To give another example, the same could be said of Daltrey's swagger, Townshend's intensity, Entwistle's stolidity and Moon's unpredictability in The Who.

> **Chris Stamp** [an early manager of the band]: Pete was cerebral, John was very isolated and shut down. And Roger was Roger- his anger came through in his voice. It moved because of Keith. His energy energized them. (Black 2001: 29)

> **John Entwistle:** We were sorting out the pecking order. Everyone wanted to be the most important member of the band. I decided to be the best musician in the band. Pete Townshend went his own way, wanted to do most of the writing. Roger and Keith were the ones the little girls screamed for, and they were fighting for that. (Black 2001: 59)

In a change from the celebrity texts of the 1950s, function and form were pulled under one umbrella. Unlike the girl-groups and Motown acts, musicianship, composition and charisma were contained in the same package. The band model that arose in the 1960s allowed musicians to project, and fans to identify with, the Apollonian and Dionysian at the same time.

Lee Marshall describes the Newport audience's legendarily hostile response to Dylan's electric performance in 1965 as, "a key moment in the transferral of…markers of folk authenticity into the emerging genre of rock" (Marshall 2006: 18). It is somewhat ironic that one of the central objections to rock lay in its valorisation of the individual as antithetical to folk authenticity (ibid. 18-20), for in many ways the 'individual' that was lifted above the crowd was a group. Furthermore, it was the adoption and adaptation of professional tropes amongst young people, inspired by the possibilities of self-generated music and given extra leeway by the relaxation of post-war strictures, that had helped to bring about the 'rock culture' in which this took place. 'We' no longer referred to 'the folk', of whom the singer was a member, but to the band, enacting communality in a commercially mediated context. To use MacDonald's label, the 'people's music' no

longer referred to the community, but to the 'audience', and if the idea that "smoking dope together in a field doesn't turn an audience into a society" (Frith 1993: 594) was lost on many of them, that *sense* of a society nevertheless had a significant impact on how the music was both sold and consumed. The 1950s led to the peer formation of bands whose methods, whose *type*, became solidified and authenticated in the 1960s. Once this 'type' had taken root, what followed was its commercial and social entrenchment, even as the surrounding environment weathered stormy changes.

1.6- SURVIVING THE (EVER) CHANGING OF THE GUARD: HOW THE BAND REMAINED INTRINSIC TO POPULAR MUSIC PRODUCTION

> "They're selling hippy wigs in Woolworths man… we have failed to paint it black"
> Danny in *Withnail and I* (Robinson 1986)

The popular myths of the 1960s have somewhat overstated the dominance of rock culture. As Dave Harker (1992) has shown, soundtracks to films like *The Sound of Music* and artists like Englebert Humperdink were equally prominent in sales, and the charts, even if they have occupied less space in the history books. Either way, the apparently utopian moment was not to last. In another example of high profile events being made to stand for a bigger picture, the free concerts at Woodstock and Altamont, in 1969, have been mythologized as a kind of binary trope, symbolising the positive and negative aspects of the much touted 'counter culture' for which rock was a soundtrack[26]. John Street mentions, even as he queries Woodstock's political legacy, the lasting but murky effect that this has had.

> Woodstock exists largely as a folk memory and one that is, at best, confused… Such myths contribute much to the history and *character* of popular music (Street 2004: 41, emphasis added)

Up to, and beyond, their break-up The Beatles' story, for instance, was a rich source of raw materials for the construction of such myths, at least in part due to

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[26] One of the striking features of Robinson's film is the way in which it portrays the grotty realities of some 'alternative' lifestyles alongside the mundanities of an often drab, class divided England, psychologically distant from the counter culture, yet contemporaneous with it, and sharing a soundtrack.

the unprecedented scale of their effect and prominence. Some of the ennui and acrimony of the band's death throes spilled over onto cinema screens in the film *Let It Be*. Also contributing to the character of popular music were the stories of those bands graduating into the 1970s as commercial leaders. The legends surrounding the blitzkrieg tour exploits of The Rolling Stones, The Who and Led Zeppelin have been described at length, with varying amounts of accuracy, jaded detail and starry-eyed zeal (Greenfield 1997, Cohn 1993, Davis 1995), and there is no need to retread them in detail here. I mention them to illustrate that, as with the 'creation myths' that sprung up around the activities of musical teenagers like those at Woolton Fête, the higher profile behaviour of successful musicians has added to the stock of collective memories.

Ian Inglis explains how popular music's 'urban myths' serve various functions for audiences.

> [T]here is a considerable number of urban legends whose primary social function is to allow for members of the public to engage in vicarious identification with the named protagonists and elements of their lifestyle. This should not be taken to mean that storytellers would wish to emulate the precise activities detailed in the stories, many of which are, after all, unpleasant, uncomfortable and dangerous. Instead, the stories reflect an envy for the social and professional environment they describe- particularly for the freedom from constraints (material and behavioural) that wealth and fame allow popular musicians to enjoy. (Inglis 2007: 599)

Further, such stories are often not only plausible in a field replete with well-documented cases of substance abuse alongside sexual, social and financial excess (ibid. 594), they resonate with some of the more self-mythologizing proclamations of artists and the more chaotic aspects of popular music practice.

> In short, the urban legends of popular music effectively manipulate the (stereo)typical characteristics of performers and their associated lifestyle into convenient and familiar narrative forms that are generated and circulated by its followers and fans. (ibid. 602)

That young men, well paid for performing in front of large crowds and subject to the concomitant pressures of audience expectation, as well as the stress of dislocation and the potential boredom of prolonged travel, relieved the tension

through outrageous and often anti-social behaviour is perhaps not surprising. It becomes even less surprising when one factors in that they would have been insulated from some of the more mundane consequences of their actions by the machinery of the tour party and the amount of money it generated. That acts like The Who and The Rolling Stones contained musicians who had arrived at this position *together*, from shared obscurity, and with the adulation aimed at the group identity can only have increased rather than diluted such propensities, adding to the sense of a band as a 'gang', in some instances inclusive of elements of the criminal traits that the word often implies.

Whatever the reasons for their actions, or the truth behind the anecdotes, one of the consequences is that the rock band has a central role, again, in forming some of the enduring myths around the music. Throwing a television out of a hotel window, for example, is now lodged in the popular vernacular as somehow a 'rock and roll' thing to do.

In line with technology that allowed for increasingly elaborate, and expensive, stadium shows and evolving business and logistical mechanisms that facilitated international touring and marketing, rock's scale and reach grew to match the mythical pronouncements and aesthetic tropes of some of its players. Classical high art techniques and aspirations or, depending on one's point of view, pretensions and high finance entertainment spectaculars became a familiar part of the landscape.

The 'received' narrative is that the punk occurred as a direct response to an industry, and a genre, that had become aesthetically bloated. As ever, there is a mixture of truth and oversimplification in this. Punk had different inflections in America and Britain, although was certainly championed by prominent critics in both. As with rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, it is also possible to trace its origins back to any number of different aesthetic or historical points, The Velvet Underground or MC5, for instance. Malcolm MacLaren, famed for his management of The Sex

Pistols and a doyen of U.K punk had been involved with The New York Dolls further back, in 1972. As with rock, the influence of art schools was also far reaching (Frith and Horne: 1987- esp. Chapter 4).

It is possible to draw out points of both continuity as well as disruption between punk and what had preceded it. Sean Albiez's illustration of some of the problems with a 'year zero' account of punk in relation to progressive rock (Albiez 2003: 358-360) suggests more dialogue than popular myths concede, as well as a degree of co-existence, akin to the presence of *The Sound of Music* and The Rolling Stones in record shops a decade earlier. Likewise, Andy Bennett as part of a broader case that the 1970s have been under examined, argues that the attention given to punk has overlooked some of the aesthetic and social contiguities between it and other music of the era, like pub rock, glam rock and the New Wave of British Heavy Metal (Bennett 2007).

Certainly, the manner in which punk encroached on the popular consciousness, again aided by a moral panic in sections of the press (Cloonan 2002: 119-121), had a revolutionary flavour, as did much of the rhetoric leading up to and surrounding it. But my purpose here is not to re-examine punk to draw wide-ranging conclusions about its origins or direction. I simply wish to make the rather specific observation that even at their most vituperative, punk's proponents and participators didn't abandon, or even really question, the 'band' format that had by then become a fixture in the mainstream and on the fringes of popular music production.

Even as they were decrying what rock had become, there was an implicit assumption that the basic constituents of what it was supposed to be still involved the peer driven collective playing that had been intrinsic to its evolution. Impassioned critiques like Caroline Coon's rejection of the rock aristocracy hark back to a previous era of rock rather than suggesting a fundamental shift in the perception of what type of music should speak for the people.

> Mick Jagger, once the arch-deacon of iconoclasm, now couldn't be further removed from his fans. It's no longer possible to imagine him as a man of the people… There is a growing, almost desperate, feeling that rock music should be stripped down to its bare bones again. It needs to be taken by the scruff of its bloated neck and given a good shaking, bringing it back to its sources and traditions (Caroline Coon, in Brackett, ed. 2005: 315-317)

It's taken as unproblematic here that 'rock' is in some inherent sense a music of the people and that this is what's at stake. Mick Farren's complaint has a similar tone,

> Did we really come through the fantasy, fear and psychic mess of the last decade to make rock 'n' roll safe for Princess Margaret and Liz Taylor... If rock becomes safe it's all over.... it may be a question of taking rock back to street level and starting all over again... Putting The Beatles back together again isn't going to be the salvation of rock 'n' roll. Four kids playing to their contemporaries in a dirty cellar club might' (Farren 1976: 5-6)

The Beatles themselves weren't the solution. And The Rolling Stones were a fairly major part of the problem. But it's clear that how these bands worked, at least in the beginning, had been swallowed, and incorporated into the discourse being advocated. Nowhere is there evidence of a contention that "starting all over again" might involve rejecting the ways in which popular music was organised around small group production containing composition and performance by, say, favouring a folk troubadour or communally based locally oriented music, like brass bands, or the looser agglomerations of individual improvisers in jazz. The call was for a return to a pre-1960s musical simplicity, not the dismantling of the communal methods that had taken hold alongside rock's aesthetic and commercial expansion. Quite the opposite, the "[f]our kids playing to their contemporaries" (ibid.) were a source of potential salvation.

In the event, the story of punk's figureheads turned out to be a similarly mixed bag of brief glory, sustainable careers, ignominious drug addled dissipation and death, accommodation and reunion. For all that their time in the media glare bore the stamps of disruption and novelty, the formative years of The Sex Pistols,

for instance, were a recognisable pattern of bunking school, cheap instruments and various line-ups around a nucleus at a local peer level on the road to fame (Savage 2001: 71-81). Spittle flecked live shows aside, The Sex Pistols, as Albiez points out (2003: 370) were fairly conventional in the studio. Indeed, the decision to showcase themselves on an album at all can be seen as stepping into line with aspects of the rock band 'tradition'. The Clash's *London Calling*, likewise, from its Elvis referencing sleeve through its consistency of tone to its CBS release, was in a familiar mode.[27]

In essence, punk, at the same time as rejecting rock's apparent status quo, was also an affirmation of a key part of its underlying methodology. As with rock's Romantics, punk's sceptics failed to resolve the fundamental tensions between art, society and commerce, although the DIY ethos that was carried through into post-punk was an important progenitor for the indie labels and music of the 1980s (Hesmondhalgh 1999:37). The methodology carried through from rock pertained not only to the terms of the relationship between capitalist modes of production and cultural efforts but, more fundamentally, concerned how these efforts were, themselves, arranged even before they came into contact with industry. Punk's ascendancy was short lived, as was its notoriety. After 'The Filth and the Fury' had died down, by the end of 1977 *The Sun* was running an 'A to Z of punk' and serialising a book on The Sex Pistols (Cloonan 2002: 121). Different elements of its artistic and political manifesto were devolved into the various strands of New Wave, Oi, post-punk and HardCore that followed in Britain and America. This is perhaps a natural feature of the evolution of musical genres and bears a certain resemblance to the evolution of rock 'n' roll and its successors in the 1960s. My point is that throughout and across this branching out and re-combination of musical styles and their associated fashions a specific way for musicians to work together has evolved. Far from challenging the 'rock band' as a standard way of

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[27] The Sex Pistols' *Never Mind the Bollocks* and The Clash's *London Calling* have both entered the canon of 'classic albums'. Certainly not all of punks acts were as amenable to the rock tradition, and a strand of 'grassroots' punk ideology eschewed albums entirely, although they still largely maintained the 'band' format.

making music, punk, if anything, ingrained it further into both the practice and mythology of popular music.

1.7- CONCLUSION

The ongoing flux and flow of popular music generic movements- hip-hop, grunge, Britpop, trip-hop, electro- has seen dazzling variety and wearisome continuity; unexpected innovation, predictable retreads and familiar circularity in musical and rhetorical characteristics have existed contemporaneously and in sequence in the charts and in venues. There is insufficient space here to examine all of these in detail. But the group identified model, in aesthetic variations of all of them- from Run DMC and Public Enemy to Portishead and Massive Attack- has become a feature of popular music beyond the stereotypical 'guitar band'. I do not mean to suggest that this modus operandum is the only notable one for popular musicians, or even necessarily the dominant one, although there have been points were it has been. Nor do I wish to present the history of the band as separate from the multi-layered and complex evolution of popular music of which it was a part. But the role of 'the band' is, I believe, worth highlighting in relation to the general history of popular music since it is revealing about the ways in which history, myth and the nitty-gritty of music making interact.

Biography affects collective memory; myths affect ideas, and ideals. And ideas inform practice. The history of popular music in the technologically and commercially mediated mass culture of the post-war era has been a dialectic between slow-acting social changes, almost invisible up close, and large looming figures and events whose fame has sometimes eclipsed their context. As part of this negotiation, however, the sheer weight of biographical effort, itself a factor of the commercial and artistic weight of the subjects, has become a part of that context. As Frith's account of the mythologizing aspects of the rock culture concludes,

The significance of magic is that people believe in it (1981: 168)

The means by which, to paraphrase Muddy Waters[28], the blues gave birth to rock 'n' roll and rock 'n' roll flew the nest involved the interaction of a variety of technical, social and aesthetic developments. The band model was not a paradigm shift from previous modes of musical organisation. But it did differ in certain key respects, with far reaching reverberations. Even as the rock 'n' roll experience was becoming commodified (Frith 1981: 166), the artists in the midst of this process were bringing in notions of art and authenticity that were to alter the dynamic of the relationship between popular music and commerce. The 'beat combo' may have been a fashionable label only in passing, but the significance of what it stood for— combination— had a lasting effect on the production and reception of popular music. The coming together of the various roles of performer, composer and musician within the industrially mediated form of popular music helped to reconfigure the celebrity texts of pop, and now 'rock', stars adding a Romantic authorial aura to the mix which in some cases, boosted by sales, meant greater autonomy. To sell a sense of the Bohemian individuality that the music was starting to take on, and indeed the idea that it spoke not just to but also for the audience, the record companies had to allow for a minimum of independence. At the centre of this process were musicians whose entry into the field was via the professionalisation of amateur peer activity. The most successful of these were able to parlay financial rewards onto a focus on recordings as both a site of experimentation and the primary representation of their activities.

As albums, and festivals, came to stand for 'seriousness' in popular music, the figureheads of this change helped to shape the perceptions of how it had come about as their own histories became representative of the myths that grew up around the music, and the era. Although the causes of the 'rock culture' are myriad

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[28] Muddy Waters, 'The Blues Had A Baby and they Named it Rock and Roll', from the album *Hard Again* (1977), Blue Sky Records

and exist in a convoluted relationship with social progress, its icons are more easily discernable. John Lennon, although prone to both wide-eyed sweeping gestures ('Bed-In for Peace') and deflating scepticism ('I Don't Believe in The Beatles'), offered a reasonably perspicacious assessment.

> Whatever wind was blowing at the time moved the Beatles too. I'm not saying we weren't the flags on the top of the ship. But the whole boat was moving. Maybe the Beatles were in the crow's nest shouting 'Land Ho!'… but we were all in the same damn boat (cited in Inglis 2000b: 20)

When musical groups, incorporating performance and composition, turned a host of musical and cultural influences into a projection of a group 'self' this became part of the methodological, and ideological, language of popular music. The ensuing institutionalisation of the both the groups and the music normalised this model. Changes and ructions within the aesthetic and political spaces of popular music have done little to challenge it. Punk, for one, kept the 'band' model, tying it into a perceived reappropriation of the 'spirit of rock 'n' roll' even as it sought to reject the excesses of the rock culture of the time.

The 1950s saw the evolution of the 'band' as a phenomenon of small-scale production emerging onto a larger stage, which became authenticated and solidified in the 1960s and beyond. By the 1980s it had become embedded into popular music as a standard practice. In the guitar oriented genres whose descent from the rock culture of the 1960s is perhaps most obvious, the 1980s, '90s and 2000s have witnessed countless replays of the formative stories, inclusive of youthful alliances and courtroom acrimony, explosive tragedy and slow dissolution, workmanlike persistence, stability and fluctuation; The Smiths, R.E.M, The Stone Roses, U2, The Pixies, Radiohead, Nirvana, The Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Oasis and so on. In other genres as well, new movements – hip-hop, for instance- and many of their adherents have consistently adopted, or at least found unproblematic, the group identity model.

To return to Nik Cohn's idealising account. Thirty-five years after the fact, with a more plangent tone, he still views the period of his initial polemical stance as somehow 'revolutionary', with what followed as a treadmill of skin-deep adaptation and assimilation.[29]

> Rock has evolved enormously as an industry, but remarkably little as music… disco, metal, grunge, glam, funk, techno, and all their innumerable sub-genres- ha[ve] been in some way a rehash or, at most, a reconfiguration. The basic playing field was already marked out in that first mad rush between 1956 and 1968… The rest has been nine-tenths marketing… Heady days. But not, by their nature, made to last… The world I knew and savoured was basically an outlaw trade, peopled with adventurers, snake-oil salesman, inspired lunatics. But their time was almost over. With each passing season, the scene was becoming more industrial. Accountants and corporate fatcats were fast driving out the wild men. The new buzzword was 'product'. It wouldn't be more than a few years, at most a decade, before rock became just another branch of commerce, no more or less exotic than autos or detergents. (Cohn 2004: ix-xii)

What this rather bleak assessment of the terrain contains in its valorisation of a 'golden era', is the observation that permanent changes took place within it. In his focus on aesthetic and commercial considerations, however, Cohn misses the fact that one of the lasting consequences of the 'rock era' was that as the 'playing-field' (ibid.) was being defined, the nature of the teams on it were also being shaped.

For subsequent generations of teenagers, 'being a musician' means joining a band. It's worth adding that this has applied predominantly to male teenagers. As well as its adoption of performative and ideological notions of authenticity, the 'playing field' also took on some of the features that have continued to make rock (more than pop) resistant to feminism and femininity. The 'peer rituals' of adolescent males, as illustrated by Mary Ann Clawson, have also retained aspects of the 1950s.[30]

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[29] He makes an exception for hip-hop.

[30] I would also add the personal observation that reading and watching interviews and film footage of the 1960s, from the distance of a generation, shows evidence of little development from previous attitudes towards women, even amidst the hippy 'utopia'. Presumably the feminism espoused by my mother's generation in the 1970s was a response not to the inequalities of the time before the 'rock era' but those which they encountered themselves in the 1960s.

> [T]he band's origins as a medium of early adolescent masculinity may help
> to define rock as a male activity long after the more blatant masculinist
> agendas of the very young bands are suppressed and superseded, if not
> wholly renounced. (Clawson 1999: 112)

The band model was, and still is, far from fully inclusive. In this it echoes wider inequalities and even possibly, as Clawson shows, magnifies some of them. Nevertheless, whilst the entry criteria for the 'teams' on the rock 'playing field' adopted the limits of entry points for other careers, the significant shift was that this particular mode was specifically a team game. As the case studies in ethnographic work by Cohen, Finnegan, Bennett, Bayton and Shank (as well as the ones in this thesis) illustrate, forming a band has become a primary means of entering into the world of popular music making, across the spectrum of amateur and professional, for the aesthetically bold and traditional.

TWO

CASE STUDIES

This chapter describes two case studies, involving different levels of participant observation. They serve as the foundation to some of the observations in the subsequent sections on 'Creativity' and 'Dynamics' and provide the ethnographic background for much of what follows. Here, I introduce some of the ideas which I will develop further on by way of reference back to these case studies alongside comparisons with interview and archival material.

2.1- AIR-FIX

2.1.1- 'Hometown': The formation of the band

My involvement with Air-Fix involved a longitudinal study starting in May 2002 as I attended acoustic performances at The Waverley's 'Out of the Bedroom' open nights. A fairly detailed level of involvement was maintained until the Spring of 2004, when there was a hiatus in their work- of which more later- from which they never recovered their initial momentum. They operated mainly as a four piece- Matt Hay on lead vocals and guitar, Andrew (Chainey) on guitar, Kenny on bass and Graham (Mini)[31] on drums and vocals. This was until February 2004, when Chainey was thrown out of the band and they continued as a three piece for a time.

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[31] I have called him Matt Hay occasionally hereafter when I need to distinguish him from the Matt Brennan who was a member of the band in the other case study. It is usually obvious in context which one I am referring to. When there is any doubt I will use a surname. Andrew Chainey was known universally by his surname in the band, a holdover from his schooldays. Graham, likewise, has been called Mini since childhood and was known by this name in Air-Fix and other bands of which he has been a member. Hereafter, I will refer to them throughout as 'Chainey' and 'Mini'.

They were also, briefly, a five piece of sorts with an occasional second singer, Sally until just after their first gig at the end of July 2002.

Air-Fix, although it underwent a couple of name changes before settling on the name Air-Fix[32], was essentially Matt's brainchild. Hailing from North Berwick but living in Edinburgh, he was working as a hairdresser whilst he played in Air-Fix, although he had previously worked in Sound Control[33]. Generally even-tempered, although not afraid of profanity, affable and socially confident but (usually) relatively restrained in volume, he is self-contained and outgoing in almost equal measure. Twenty-two when he formed Air-Fix, schoolyard alliances had played a major part in his thinking in assembling the personnel. He had a portfolio of songs, in the form of home-recorded demos, but his previous attempts to form a group to realise them on stage had fallen by the wayside due to a lack of sufficient social cohesion.

> *Matt: There were a few incarnations of the band which lasted basically no time at all… kind of false starts.*
> *Adam: How were they false starts?*
> *Matt: Just getting the absolute wrong people involved. Not being able to meet people that were really into it and that had the same kind of drive and determination.*
> *Adam: A work ethic?*
> *Matt: Yeah, but social skills as well, very important. There were a few people that were just…had no idea how to interact with people and were just really kind of shit at getting on with folk. Had nae kind of go and nae banter with people.*

The social aspect of being in a band was clearly important. Matt felt that he had not only had to work with other musicians, but to like them as well. His choice of a bass player was a direct result of this. Kenny owed his place in Air-Fix largely to his status as Matt's 'best-mate', although he is a competent bass player as well.

> *Matt: I've held Kenny as a best mate for quite a long time and we always have a total fucking riot.*

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[32] They were called 'Posture' when I first start working with them, until shortly after their first gig and had briefly been called 'The Alpha' until an internet search revealed a London based dance act with the same name.

[33] An Edinburgh musical instrument shop

In keeping with the 'gang' mentality that has pervaded the mythical narrative of the band, but also illustrative of the fact that such narrative clichés often have corollaries with straightforward social and psychological motivations, Matt simply felt more comfortable going ahead with someone whose company he enjoyed and on whom he clearly felt he could rely. Kenny, like Matt, had been playing in bands since they were at school together. Although they hadn't been in a band at school, they had jammed on and off since that time.

> *Kenny: Well I used to jam with Matt at school and then I was at his house…*
> *Adam: More recently?*
> *Kenny: Yeah. And he said, 'Do you want to listen to the stuff', and so I did and… [pause]… to tell you the truth it was a lot better than I thought it would be and so… we went from there.*

Kenny was generally happy to let Matt direct him musically, although he took on a more active role as they proceeded. His generally easy-going nature belies a solidity of attitude and determination of purpose. This saw him commute into Edinburgh from Aberlady (East Lothian)- where he lives with his wife and daughter- for rehearsals and gigs. He was firmer in his opinions than he was forthcoming in expressing them[34]. He seemed content to play the agreeable foot soldier to Matt's striving officer, but not to the extent of compromising on the material, or at least what his sense of dignity would allow him to perform on stage.[35]

> *Adam: You like Matt's songs?*
> *Kenny: Yeah.*
> *Adam: He's your mate but if he'd asked you to play bass and you thought the songs were no good, would that have affected your decision, him being your mate and everything.*
> *Kenny: Well I wouldn't do it [laughs]*

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[34] Kenny was certainly the hardest to interview. Mini took the process in his stride and was open and loquacious. Matt and Chainey approached it with bemused good humour, seemingly surprised and mildly flattered that anyone was actually interviewing them. Kenny was hesitant and seemed a bit embarrassed.

[35] His comments in a discussion about what they should wear on stage were typical: "I don't really mind what we wear or stuff like that, as I long as I don't look stupid, that's okay by me".

Adam: You'd say…
Kenny: *No! I'd have just told him straight up.*

Kenny is more reticent than his friend, generally relaxed and quietly spoken- he tends to follow the progress of a conversation with a slight detachment before pitching in with a punchline or opinion, or wait until one is solicited. More immovable object than unstoppable force, his role, musically and socially, seemed to be to anchor Matt. The singer dominated in the rehearsal room but this was limited to that particular space. They appeared to enjoy a relative parity outside in both their social relations, meeting in the pub before or after practice, and before gigs, although their lifestyles differed, Matt living a bachelor existence in town whilst Kenny was a husband and father. He was a painter and decorator, on the point of moving into self-employment, with his wife, Margaret, doing the books. His and Matt's shared background seemed to contribute to a facility of communication. Despite Kenny's surface taciturnity, he was open to the point of bluntness when asked about a run-through of a song. He often made his feelings known by simply looking at Matt or the others and either nodding or shaking his head, or shrugging his shoulders. I should also say that Kenny opened up as time passed. His initial quietness might have been a response to the presence of unknown quantities, like myself. Upon getting to know him better, and seeing them interact across a range of situations, his assertion that he would tell Matt "straight up" if he wasn't prepared to do something rang true.

Also enlisted from Matt's schooldays, but subsequently sacked, was Chainey. Chainey was working in the press office of Edinburgh University at the start of his tenure with the band. Of slim build and quiet demeanour, Chainey was also generally happy to take direction from Matt, his musical role being quite firmly defined. The least experienced of the musicians in the band, Chainey was more vocal than Kenny in rehearsal but generally appeared the least confident on stage. Happy to join in with the group banter, he was reactive rather than dominant when they were working up songs and deciding set-lists, although he also became more

vocal and relaxed over time. His playing style, nevertheless, shaped the arrangements. Chainey and Matt spent time both in full band rehearsals and outside of them simultaneously re-working the songs to suit his style, and limitations, whilst adapting and extending his technique to meet some of the requirements of the songs[36]. As with Kenny, Chainey's recruitment represented a need for a familiar base of operations, at least in the formative stages. Also like Kenny, Chainey felt that a degree of musical as well as social appreciation was necessary. Friendship and taste were both factors in his decision to join the band.

> ***Chainey:*** *Matt's music is definitely the softer end of what I would listen to. Having said that I do really like it. It's something I would buy… I think that's pretty important. I think with anything, I have to be really motivated to do something and I think if I felt the songs sucked I would have no motivation and I think that would make the whole thing nigh on impossible.*

The final core member and by far the most experienced was Graham, known to all but his family and girlfriend as Mini since his schooldays in Penicuick. With a shaved head, and a no-nonsense attitude, he was more outspoken than the others. As well as being more experienced, Mini was also several years older than the rest[37] and had been in long standing bands before. One of these, Dunderfunk, was popular on the Scottish live circuit. Matt and Kenny could remember seeing them whilst they were at school. Another, Dum Dum, played gigs up to the size of Glasgow's Barrowlands and the Edinburgh New Year street party. Both of these bands toured the U.K and self-released recordings. Dum Dum had come teasingly close to getting signed, being pipped to the post of a recording contract by Reef.[38] Rarely less than forthright, Mini played up to his comparatively advanced age and

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[36] Chainey was a competent guitarist, although not as technically able as Matt. The main issue was that he had to learn how to play in the open tunings that Matt used. He was unfamiliar with DADGAD and EADGAD tunings and these were central to the sound of some of the songs.

[37] Nine years older than Matt, with eight years on Chainey and seven on Kenny.

[38] Mini would occasionally refer to Lisa Stansfield as 'Number 2', in reference to the fact that, as a child, he had beaten her in a singing competition on holiday in Blackpool. I would tell him that, even in his world, this would make her 'Number 3' since he would be 'Number 2' to Reef's 'Number 1'. Swearing ensued.

caricatured himself as a misanthrope, although his gruffness was paper thin, used as a tool used to shock and amuse his friends.

Matt, aware of Mini's abilities as a drummer, recruited him over the bar at which he (and I) then worked by giving him a tape of songs. Mini, who was about to move jobs and take up a position in Drum Central (a local music shop), was also keen to return to playing original material. He heard some commercial potential in the songs and signed up. He saw his initial involvement as purely professional but the nature of the group work and the conflation of social and musical considerations militated against this over time, as his comments just after their first gig pre-figure.

> *Mini: I'd love to just be able to sit back and just play drums. That's what I'd like to be able to do but because of my past situations I can't. I'm nearly ten years older… eight to ten years older than them plus I've got a fairly good, knowledgeable past, so that can bring something to it. And if you've got knowledge about something, I don't think you should be shy with it. Try and steer it in a new direction because… there's mistakes to be made but also I'm not fucking young enough to make them again and I don't see why people should make them if they can be avoided.*

From the outset, Air-Fix was conceived of in terms of 'professionalism'. Another regular figure at gigs and in rehearsals just prior to gigs was Graeme Hughes (known as 'Shoozy', or 'Griz') a sound engineer who worked the desk at many of their gigs. Shoozy was known to Mini from his time in Dunderfunk and Dum Dum, having recorded Dum Dum's CDs and engineered many of their gigs both in Edinburgh and on tour. Mini had introduced him to Matt. My relative 'outsider' status as a researcher was qualified and mitigated by my taking on the role of guitar tech for the band. Matt wrote songs with multiple tunings and so between himself and Chainey there were at least three[39], usually four or five, guitars used in a set. My acting as guitar tech was part of a *quid pro quo* that had been negotiated with Matt when I approached him about using Air-Fix as a case study. We were known to each other because he drank in the bar where I worked and was

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[39] Matt also switched between acoustic and electric guitars, Chainey always played acoustic.

often in with a guitar strapped to his back, stimulating general discussions about guitars and music.

Sally's brief tenure as a musical associate of the band stemmed from acoustic sessions at The Waverly that she and Matt had both played. She didn't feature in all of the songs, and only occasionally attended rehearsals. She left the band after their first gig at La Belle Angele. This may partly have been a matter of fitting in differently for personality reasons and also her being the only female participant. The atmosphere was 'laddish', although no more so and probably slightly less than in similar groupings. There was an increase in sweary 'laddism' after Sally left although this was only gradually, over time spent together, rather than in an instantly detectable 'before' and 'after' manner. Her role was as a co-lead singer on duets in the songs in which she featured rather than as a backing singer. (Her stage position for the one gig she played with the band was at the front of the band). Nevertheless, although she was consulted about the songs during rehearsals, she was not invited to join in as an instrumentalist[40].

Additionally, the invocation of 'professionalism' in Air-Fix was manifested in frequent and detailed recourse to technical minutiae. As Mavis Bayton (1998: 106) has pointed out, this is a field from which women and girls have traditionally been excluded and alot of time was spent poring over PA settings and guitar effects.[41] There was also the factor of her lack of commitment to the Air-Fix 'project' compared to the other members of the band. She had other musical commitments in which she occupied more of a central role and it was clear that her priorities lay elsewhere. The conflation of band work and alliance formation was evident when I asked Matt about her participation.

> **Matt:** *I think she lacks the determination that we've got, that the four of us have got. I mean if I said, 'You know, we've got a rehearsal' and she said, 'Give me a phone nearer the time, I might not have time for it'. That basically means… it gives*

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[40] This reinforces Clawson's (1999: 112) point, cited above, that masculinist agendas may be repressed but not fully renounced.

[41] The participants at The Waverley were also mainly male. It varied from week to week but, on average, about 70% of the acts were male.

a decent signal that she's not got the kind of… the right mentality. Not a bad thing against her, she's got her own band happening and that's fine and we've discussed that… and she has the very same idea about her music. So she's quite motivated for her stuff but I think she finds it hard being motivated for someone else's.

Sally spoke to Matt shortly after their first gig and said that she needed to re-think her involvement with Air-Fix (then still called Posture) and that she wished to prioritise her own music.

Mini, like Sally, was taken on for musical rather than social reasons, but was drawn further into social relations with the band by the scale of his musical and work-related engagement with the project. In this respect, a common musical goal helped to forge a social bond. [42]

From its inception, then, Air-Fix existed at the centre of overlapping social and musical networks- from school in North Berwick to the Edinburgh music and pub scene- and with a core membership pulled together through a mixture of social and professional considerations which, themselves, quickly became further entwined.

2.1.2- 'Promises'- In Rehearsal

Air-Fix gigged semi-regularly and rehearsed, their work commitments permitting, approximately once a week, although there were longer gaps in the periods between gigs and bouts of more intensive activity in the run up to a gig. Matt would record new songs at home and pass out CDs to the others who would listen to them, learning and adapting their parts both at home and then, further, in the practice rooms, usually at Edinburgh's Banana Row.[43]

Matt and Mini led the rehearsals between them. Matt's position as the songwriter and Mini's as the most experienced musician were telling and although they tended to be slightly more vocal than the others outside as well as inside of the

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[42] The same thing had happened with Dum Dum. Keith, the singer, and Mini were recruited by Jimmy, the guitarist. He had initially wanted Keith for vocals but Keith had said that he and Mini came as a pair. Keith, Mini, Jimmy and Dal (the bassist) had started Dum Dum as colleagues but became, and have remained, friends.

[43] Towards the end they rehearsed in The Lighthouse, in Granton.

practice room, this was more noticeable in rehearsal. Chainey and Kenny were less likely to defer to them on non-musical matters. It was usually Mini who would move the rehearsal onto another song or push for re-doing one that they had just run through. If Matt's position was as front-man, and ostensible leader, Mini would act as a kind of sergeant and would sometimes overrule him. His assertions, although often couched in humour and usually negotiable, were rarely tentative.

Mini [regarding the drums in conjunction with Chainey's acoustic guitar part]: That's fighting against whatever he's doing. It [the song] sounds like it's having a fight with itself.
They run the section again, and Matt suggests they refer back to his home demo in an attempt to pin down the arrangement. In the end they decide- or Mini does- that the song has evolved beyond the point where the CD is a worthwhile guide.
Matt: When did you last listen to it?
Mini: Tonight, before the practice.
Matt: That track?
Mini: Well I'm never listening to it again, it's all fucked up. It's too different now.

They settled quite quickly into stable, although not completely rigid, roles. Matt defined the general creative direction of the band, although not always the details, which could often add up to produce an end result quite different from the original vision. Mini, as the most experienced musician, took it upon himself to act as something of a director. This is not say that he defined the musical parts for the others. Rather, he managed the rehearsals- decided when a tune was sufficiently well practised, or "nailed" as he would put it, usually with that word alone.

Chainey and Kenny's opinions were more likely to be solicited over logistical matters, or at least those areas where logistics and creativity overlapped, like constructing a set-list. Their views were heeded when offered, but there was rarely the sense that they carried as much weight as Matt's and Mini's.

The group were relatively disciplined in rehearsal, tending not to drink, or not often and then not much. The same applied before a performance[44], although after playing was sometimes a different story. This did not preclude occasional

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[44] A 'couple of pints' ruling was in place.

'mucking about' between practising songs, although jamming was kept to a minimum. The songs were arranged and rehearsed, not jammed into existence. The general tenor of their interactions was, nevertheless, fairly light-hearted and jokey and their language took on a series of band specific verbal 'tics' which they carried out of the rehearsal room and into the pub and each others' flats. 'Tune' became, 'tunage', beer, 'beerage', and so on, with just about any one-syllable word. Kenny was usually referred to as Dod, a play on his name, or sometimes 'Shakey' a reference to him having seen Shakin' Stevens as a boy, and also his legs-akimbo stage stance. ('Dod', as with 'Mini' and 'Chainey' was a legacy from school). Names were adapted at random- 'Chainemeister', 'Minster', 'Dodmeister' and 'Mattster' were common forms of address.

Rehearsals were also characterised by a mix of band related technical talk, planning for gigs and more general social chat- often slipping between the three without any real feeling of modulation.

> *Matt makes a frustrated growl.*
> *Mini: What's up?*
> *Matt: My pedal's being a prick.*
> *Adam: Have you tried putting the settings into a different patch to see if it works there?*
> *Matt crouches down by his effects unit and starts fiddling with the settings. Mini half-heartedly taps the intros to 'Hey, Gotta Go' and 'Everybody's Slim'- then turns to Kenny and picks up the conversation they were having as we came in about his daughter's sleeping patterns.*
> *Kenny: Aye, well. You just grab a kip where you can get it. It's getting better though. Fingers crossed. How's your sister's wean getting on Chainey?*
> *Chainey: Pretty good. I haven't seen 'em for a couple of weeks. I'm due over there next week though.*
> *Matt:[looking up from his pedal] Are they still in Abbeyhill?*
> *Chainey: Yeah, but maybe trying to get somewhere else- hey what's next?*
> *Matt: 'Fading', then 'Postures'.*

Likewise, the 'work' and 'play' aspects of being in a band were often conjoined. Mock accents, face pulling and over-the-top 'rock' poses, never employed on stage, were part of their stock-in-trade jokes in the rehearsal room. Musical jokes were also commonplace. Kenny often leaned his head down in a heavy metal stance whilst playing 'finger tapping' riffs on the bass as they

discussed tempos and dynamics, usually to laughter, or brief joining in on 'mock'

metal versions of the song or generic riffs. Mini would sometimes finish a song, or

punctuate a conversation, with a 'comedy' drum roll, either of the stereotyped sort

that would accompany a joke in a nightclub, or one that suggested incompetence,

starting briskly and tailing off into silence.

> *'Lover's Fall', Mini keeping time on the cymbals rather than trying to incorporate the full drum part. Kenny is unsure of his part. Mini and Matt, looking at Kenny, struggle with the high-notes. Mini and Chainey crease up laughing as the song grinds to a halt.*
> **Matt:** *[puts on a 1950s style BBC announcer voice]: A brief history of the bass parts of the song.*
> *He shows Kenny the part again, playing it through on his guitar.*
> **Mini:** *That's a good note Kenny's playing though.*
> *Kenny and Matt continue to play through the bass line.*
> **Mini:** *[getting up to go to the toilet]: We'd better think about packing up soon.*
> *They run through the song another couple of times and then start packing up. Mini pulls out a DVD of 'Band of Brothers', which he moves to pass to Chainey.*
> **Chainey:** *Oh no, he's on it next [motions towards Kenny]. You need to watch the first couple to get into it, then the action starts.*
> **Kenny:** *I'll have a look in the week, while I'm practicing the bass lines of course.*
> **Chainey:** *He'll not know the bass parts but all the quotes.*
> **Mini:** *[in the same announcer's voice that Matt had used earlier]: Disc two, scene five.*
> *[General laughter]*

Band practices were sometimes, but not always, followed by an excursion to

the pub. Kenny usually had to head home to join his family. He and Mini were also

usually driving. Practices were also used as an opportunity to make other

arrangements, for both gigs and other social activities. Band work, usually on

harmonies and guitar parts, also took place in their flats, often accompanied by

meals, computer games and watching DVDs.

By and large, then, Matt led the proceedings but it would not be strictly

accurate to say that the 'musical identity' of the group was completely in his hands.

The contributions of the others were often more editorial than compositional, but

not exclusively so. In either case, the way in which they rehearsed the songs meant

that the group dynamic had an influence on the final product. Within these

parameters there was a variation in the extent to which Chainey, Kenny and Mini

adapted their styles. Kenny was the most willing to subordinate his playing to the songs.

> *Adam: And have you written any songs yourself?*
> *Kenny: No.*
> *Adam: Have you tried?*
> *Kenny: No.*
> *Adam: Is there any reason why?*
> *Kenny: I just... don't think I've got the capabilities, you know. Prefer playing bass...more of a band thing. I don't even really sit in the house and play bass, apart from practising these songs.*

Chainey was also hesitant to bring his own material into play, although less so.

> *Adam: Do you write at all yourself?*
> *Chainey: No, I haven't. I think it's something I'd quite like to do in the future maybe but... I think I do need to progress, but it's not really something... I've never written any lyrics or anything.*
> *Adam: But you have written music?*
> *Chainey: I've done a few things.*
> *Adam: How many of the arrangements on the acoustic are yours, and how much of it is Matt's?*
> *Chainey: I'd say... obviously Matt's been kinda showing me how he wants it played and how he wants it to sound and I'm adapting things to how I play. For example 'Shine' is quite different now to how it was when Matt... when we first started playing it. It's just kind of... the way I play it.*

Mini was the most insistent that his drumming in Air-Fix was an extension of himself.

> *Mini: It's almost a hundred per cent my sound. You take me into a band, I just kinda do what I do.*

A mixture of their personalities and musical proclivities delineated their contribution to the group. Matt was clearly the main songwriter from the beginning, but his status as the sole songwriter was as much a factor of his being more prolific than an immutable agenda.

> *Adam: How happy would you be to sing someone else's songs? If Chainey, say, came in and said, 'I've got three songs'…*
> *Matt: I would love to sing someone else's song. Definitely. It's like, such a pleasurable thing singing a cover but we're never going to do a cover, not until later on anyway, not until we've proved ourselves in the first place… I'd love to sing someone else's stuff because someone else has got a completely different melody, kind of in their head, than I have… yeah, totally. It's like I sang 'Fly Me To The Moon' a couple of months ago for a Cheynes thing [a party at his work] and it was fucking brilliant, I totally loved it because all the work had been done before I could look at it and maybe put slightly different twists on it and kinda change it a wee bit and I*

could do the same for anyone else's song. Like, 'That sounds great there, but what about maybe if we pop this on top', or something like that.
Adam: Like other people do to your songs?
Matt: Yeah, totally. 'What about if we do this?' So I'd be well up for someone writing some other stuff…
Adam: To take the burden off you a bit?
Matt: [laughs] Totally, yeah. It could give a contrast in a live show or an album or that to have a completely different style of song with a similar… kind of… voicings and things. The same kind of way of… playing it but with some different melodies… In these practices there's always stuff that we need to crack on with really quite quickly. I think that we're restricted by our creative time together, completely… I always want to encourage the members of the band to come up with other stuff, Kenny and Chainey but we... don't have time to do it. But I think they're quite happy with that. They don't feel left out. Well, they might do but...
Adam: They know that if they wanted?
Matt: Fuck, aye. Well, the intro to 'Home', Chainey had wrote that ages ago and asked if we could stick that at the start.

'Being in a band' carried slightly different inflections for each member of Air-Fix. To a certain extent, it was more of an end in itself for Kenny and Chainey, an extension of their friendship with Matt. For Matt and Mini it was also a means towards a purposeful engagement with the music industry. This was not an absolute dichotomy, but a difference of emphasis although the distinction between the professional and the social became blurred as friendships formed between Mini, Chainey and Kenny. Practices were simultaneously work related and social occasions. This was compounded by the fact that all four of them had other jobs. Matt may have been the 'leader' and he had certainly made the greatest financial outlay on equipment for the group[45], but he was not in any formal sense an 'employer'.

2.1.3- 'Shine'- Gigs, and the invocation of 'bandness'

Air-Fix tended to play music venues rather than pubs, with a few exceptions, and usually in Edinburgh although occasionally in Glasgow and around the central belt of Scotland. Gigs were reasonably regular although not

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[45] He also cut his hours at work to get the band off the ground.
"Well I've already kind of taken a pay cut. I've dropped to four shifts a week to put the extra time into this which is… difficult, you know with having got the flat now and everything. I mean it's taking ages to get this place [his flat] sorted. But you need to put the time in so if I have to go out less and all of that then that's that."

frequent, averaging a bit less than once a month. They also convened in Shoozy's studio to record a five-track demo. It was Shoozy who also usually engineered their sound at gigs and he was increasingly present at their rehearsals as they progressed. Like myself, he became part of the 'extended' network around the band whose opinions as well as our help were sometimes elicited[46].

Despite, or even because of, internal agonizing over details, they were usually tight and fairly well received, if not rapturously so, (save on the occasions when they were headlining and had managed to fill a venue with their friends, when the audience response often signified good natured and boisterous support as much as anything else). Mistakes noticeable to anyone but the band and their immediate associates were unusual.

A rare exception was a show at the Ross Bandstand in Princes Street Gardens. Chainey had forgotten to move his capo in between songs and so started a number in the wrong key. They recovered musically but seemed somewhat shaken and the rest of the performance lacked their usual energy. This was not helped by the fact that Mini's flat had been broken into that afternoon and he was, as he put it, "not really firing today- in fact thoroughly-fucked-off-raging". Chainey's apologies were taken in reasonably good spirit after a brief lecture on concentration from Matt and once the gear had been taken back to their flats the band decamped for food and a night's drinking in the Opal Lounge.

What was noticeable was how the incident, almost immediately—that night at the Opal Lounge—started being written into a 'narrative' of the band. Even on a small scale, the activities of the band were set into semi-mythical frameworks. The Ross Bandstand gig quickly became known as 'Black Thursday', a label it carries to this day.

Probably their most successful gig was at The Venue, in support of Speedway (February 2004), who had charted with a cover version of Christina

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[46] This presented something of a methodological problem for me as researcher since I did not wish to alter the dynamic I was trying to observe.

Aguilera's 'Genie in a Bottle'. As Bennett (1980: 76-78) has noted, there are rituals

that help to bond band members together. For Air-Fix, this was a pre-performance

vocal warm up, usually performed in the dressing room or bar cellar. On the night

of the Speedway gig, there was no space for them to do their warm up in the

downstairs dressing room, so they decided to take one of the acoustic guitars and

do it outside.

> *We move the rest of the gear into the cellar at the back of The Cooler [the name of the basement bar of The Venue] and head up the stairs and outside, while we're waiting for Shoozy.*
>
> *Mini: Is he in a huff?*
> *Matt: No, no- he's on his way.*
> *We're sitting on the wall by The Venue, as Kenny opens the hatchback of his car[known as "the dodmobile"] and puts down the back seats.*
> *Chainey: [imitating Mickey Rooney] Let's do the show right here kids.*
> *(Laughter from the others).*
> *They go through a couple of songs and choruses, Matt singing, Chainey playing the acoustic, Mini doing harmonies and Kenny clapping and jingling his keys in time. They flip between random chat and choruses until Chainey stops playing.*
> *Chainey: Oh, forgot the chords. [He doesn't forget them during the gig and was, in the warm up, covering a part usually played by Matt].*
> *Matt: And now a new song. [He imitates a trumpet fanfare]. Oh, we've forgotten it.*
> *Mini and Kenny [perform mock audience derision]: FUCK OFF-AIR-FIX, FUCK OFF-AIR-FIX[47], WE WANT SPEEDWAY.*
> *Chainey mimes running away and throwing a set of keys to Kenny.*
> *Kenny: I'll have the car out front in a minute with the motor running.*
> *They finish running through the songs and discuss the set list.*
> *Matt: I'll go and get a pen and paper from Jacqui [she helps to run The Venue].*
> *Kenny: I'm gonna pick up the missus on London Road, get some food.*
> *Matt: See you in Pivo [the pub across the road from The Venue] at eight.*
> *I go with Chainey and Kenny into Waverly Station to get some food. Chainey gets a sandwich, Kenny goes to Burger King.*
> *Kenny: Is that all you're having?*
> *Chainey: I don't want to feel sick on stage.*
> *Kenny: [a reference to the fact that they'd played in Glasgow the night before] Well that's our tour catering then.*
> *Chainey: Two- day world tour. Big glamour.*

These small rituals and shared jokes prepared them socially for the set, as

the rehearsals had prepared them musically and technically. The gig was well

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[47] This was a reference to 'Bad News', the comedy heavy metal band created for Channel Four's 'Comic Strip Presents…' Adrian Edmondson, Nigel Planer, Rik Mayall and Peter Richardson starred in two mock documentaries as 'Bad News' and released an album.

attended[48] and went well. For a change, there was a rider (a case of Kronenbourg) and they came out financially ahead (about £100 between them).

The conversation in The Cooler afterwards was, like the pre-performance ritual, the usual mix of minute dissection of the set, idle chat and forward planning. The mood was generally upbeat, the only bone of contention being whether they should do a gig in Glasgow that was 'pay to play'.

> *Matt: Well I sort of said to…*
> *Mini: Donald's got that place, it's not as if he needs any of my money.*
> *Chainey makes some noises about them 'moving away from that sort of thing now'. Mini is swift to disabuse him of this notion.*
> *Mini: I mean, yeah, we've got this gig, which is moving upwards, but they're not all going to be like this. It won't be a straight line upwards.*
> *The discussion tails off, leaving the matter unresolved, and they shift into talking about who's going to 'go for it' tonight (Mini) and who has to go to work the next day (Matt and Chainey).*

Beyond the discussion of specifics and the logistics of moving the equipment the next day, there was also mention made of the fact that they looked, and felt, "like a band".

> *Matt: We were a band tonight, know what I mean?*
> *Mini: We were. It was fun.*

In purely technical terms, they were a 'band' every time they played together. But Matt was invoking a sense of communality conjoined with musical tightness that was neither entirely musical nor social, and in which his songs were only a component. The fact of it being shared with friends heightens the enjoyment of a gig, although this compounds the frustrations when things don't go well. From an observer's standpoint, they looked more cohesive when they also looked as if they were enjoying themselves.

What was also striking was that, sitting on and around 'the dodmobile' next to Calton Hill before the gig and with one guitar between four of them, they looked 'like a band' almost as much as they did on stage. In some respects, there was both a difference and a congruity between the members of Air-Fix and 'Air-Fix'. Matt,

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[48] About 225 people through the door according to Jaqui, part of the team that ran The Venue.

Chainey, Kenny and Mini could look like four people playing musical instruments, or chatting, or 'like a band'. If they couldn't call forth the latter onstage, then this could be subtly disappointing. When they did, they drew on relations that were extra-musical and extended beyond the stage.[49]

2.1.4- 'Hey, Gotta Go'- Dissolution

Air-Fix didn't really split up so much as slowly fall apart, although there was a schismatic moment when Chainey was ejected from the band. The crux of this matter was that he forced them to cancel a gig in Glasgow by crying off with a toothache at very short notice (the same day). Matt, certainly, was angry at the time. I saw him at my work the next day and he was unforgiving, although not disbelieving, of Chainey's predicament

> **Matt:** *I mean get some Neurofen. Fuck's sake. It's not as if he bust his hand or anything. Or like he had to sing. Now we all look stupid.*

Matt told me then that he was on his way to tell Chainey that he was out of the band. In retrospect, however, I believe that this was part of a longer process and that feelings of dissatisfaction with Chainey's playing and commitment were allied to a desire to streamline the band. Mini, in the random drift of a conversation on New Year's Eve December 2003 had, tired and a little drunk, alluded to there being "some politics" but had refused to be drawn, and changed the subject. He had also occasionally said to Chainey that he was "not a natural", even though he usually qualified it by adding that he was "improving" or "coming on".

I asked Matt and Chainey about this later on- after the group had dissolved completely. Chainey, for his part, had been losing interest slightly in the band and becoming more interested in writing scripts for short films. This was occupying

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[49] I think this is the quality that my former colleague Shelley was referring to when she said of a photograph of four of our friends that, "They look like a band". (They weren't in a band together).

more of his creative energy and was something that he felt he was putting more of himself into. Although he had not wanted to leave the band, and so the decision couldn't be called 'mutual', it was now not his only creative outlet.

> ***Chainey***: *I was pretty pissed off at the time, yeah. But… Well, he kinda said we should still be mates and all that and that he didn't think I was so into it anyway if I was gonna call a sicky. I mean, I felt maybe a bit… Patronised isn't the word but… I suppose it'd have been different if we were on the point of getting signed or something.*

> ***Matt***: *Well I was fucking fuming about that toothache thing but, it's like it was getting harder to, sort of co-ordinate things and, well… I mean I could play all the parts myself as well so… I mean it was hard, 'cos he's a mate and everything, but I just got the idea that he wasn't so into it any more. I think if, maybe he'd been more… I dunno… active.*

Rather than replace Chainey, Air-Fix elected to continue as a three piece, re-working the guitar parts for Matt to play them on his own. Since the parts were rarely obviously divided between rhythm and lead, and the band tended to eschew 'grandstanding' guitar solos, this was comparatively straightforward. Matt invested in a new electric guitar with a piezo as well as a magnetic pick-up[50] so that he could switch easily between acoustic and electric sounds. With this 'aardvark'- so named because the shape of the headstock resembled one- they were able to approximate their previous sound quite easily.

There were a few problems adjusting the arrangements, but not enough to prevent them gigging. For a while they set about reworking the set with, if anything, a renewed sense of purpose, receiving a morale boost from a slot on a late night cable TV show 'The Indie Channel' as the featured act in the slot, 'The Venue Sessions'. There were also organisational changes. Shoozy was now a semi-permanent feature in the rehearsal room, and Kenny also became more vocal. The dynamic of the band altered slightly, Kenny filling the gap left by Chainey. It was as if socially, if not musically, he had to make more noise. In the three-piece, instead of there being one 'quiet one' in place of two relatively silent members, there was

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[50] A Parker P36.

instead a slightly less 'quiet' bassist. As ever, practices were a mixture of detailed technical work, random banter, musical gags and mutual teasing.

They're running through 'Everybody's Slim', trying to get on top of it.
Matt: *Let's try it again. With, then without the accents.*
Mini: *Let's get the set done though.*
They do a quick run through of the problem sections.
Mini: *That doesnae work.*
Matt makes another suggestion, which they try.
Mini: *See, that's us back to where we were.*
They carry on, with different versions, breaking off to talk about the set [at Bannermans on the following Monday].
Kenny: *I don't think we should do that. [i.e: not play 'Everybody's Slim' at Bannermans].*
They move onto 'She's So Good'- during the second run-through they fall apart in the 'stop'.
Mini: *Can you not do what Chainey did in that bit?*
Matt: *I am.*
Mini: *[exaggeratedly shaking his head, and putting on a stern 'teacher's' voice] Well, you're no Chainey then.*
Matt: *[puts on a childish prima donna voice, and gives a sweep of his head] I fucking wrote it dahling. [He's clearly joking here but it seems like there might be some genuine irritation underlying it.]*
They run through the set, without 'Everybody's Slim'. Matt looks at his watch.
Matt: *Thirty-seven minutes. Should be O.K with a bit of chat and whatnot.*
Shoozy: *You'll be faster on the night though.*

With some adjustments, then, they persevered. The gig at Bannermans was cancelled due to a flood making it unsafe. (A text from Mini on the Monday night informed me, "Games a bogge[sic]. Still unsafe"). Another gig, at The Roxy, followed soon afterwards but as 2004 moved into 2005 other considerations increasingly came into play as gigs started to dry up.

Media narratives and biographies of famous bands tend to focus on acrimonious bust-ups that take place in the public eye. Air-Fix were a good example of the more common reality of a kind of 'terminal drift' whereby band members, not bound together by contractual obligations or financial necessity, go their separate ways imperceptibly over a period of time as gigs, and rehearsals, get further apart. Air-Fix inasmuch as they did split up did so less by explosion than a process of entropy. There were the usual constraining factors of work and family

commitments becoming more pressing with the passage of time. Matt, for instance, could not maintain a curtailed working week at his day job indefinitely.

In the case of Air-Fix, this was exacerbated by illness. Kenny's wife Margaret developed a back problem, eventually needing surgery, which meant that his childcare commitments increasingly tied him to Aberlady, precluding band work. As he put it later,

> *It's enough trying to look after a toddler as it is. Never mind if you can barely move. There was just no way I could make it across to town that much. Fuck knows what single parents do.*

Alongside Kenny being pulled away from musical commitments, Mini was also flexing his drumming arms in paid cover and ceilidh work that he was picking up through his job at Drum Central. On top of this, he also developed prolonged gastro-intestinal problems which repeatedly ruled out not only playing with Air-Fix but any other work, musical or otherwise, paid or not. Matt also took ill, although not as seriously, but occasionally said that he had to "save my strength for my day job". There was a general sense of attenuation.

Characteristically, they referred to all of this as "the curse of Air-Fix". I would occasionally ask Mini when I was passing his shop what was happening with the band. Sometimes he would mention an upcoming practice or, more rarely, gig. More often he would just laugh and say "the curse, the curse", before relating another tale of illness or misfortune.

Eventually, by the Autumn of 2005, with the initial run of gigs having petered out and momentum difficult to maintain in the face of "the curse", Matt made the decision to spend a year in Australia and to work in London in the meantime. There wasn't so much a final decision to end the band. For different reasons, it just gradually slipped down everybody's list of priorities.

Different types of band along the scale of amateur and professional require different levels of financial input to keep going. The job of balancing the band against other commitments varies, depending on the degree to which the band is

the main source of subsistence, and on the degree of its centrality to the lives of its members. In the case of Air-Fix, the band failed to make enough money to become their main focus. It did, however, continue to exist in a diffuse, non-musical form.

2.1.5- 'Fading'- Coda

Beyond a demo CD, a bunch of home recordings and videotapes of a couple of gigs, Air-Fix continued in a sort of 'social afterlife'. Having sprung up amidst various networks, it eventually constituted one in itself. Just before Matt left for London and having had a leaving do from his work, he phoned me to invite me to an "Air-Fix night out" in December 2005. Present were himself, Kenny, Mini, Chainey, and, briefly, his friend Frazer who had on occasion helped with moving the equipment and selling tickets. (Shoozy was invited but was working that night).

What stood out about this night was that what had survived the (limited) rise and (protracted) demise of Air-Fix the musical outfit, was the social bond. The atmosphere was convivial, even when the matter of Chainey's sacking came up amidst a discussion of his travails with shoplifters at his current place of work, a Borders bookshop. There were some moderate jibes but no lasting acrimony was evident.[51]

> *Chainey: I mean, I work in a bookshop. I don't see how I should have to deal with radges. I mean you might expect some grief working in a pub. But in a bookshop, I've almost had it.*
> *Matt: Why don't you just quit?*
> *Chainey: I need the money. Can't just quit. You don't get any benefits if you just walk.*
> *Matt: Well, why don't you just, I dunno, act up and get the bullet?*

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[51] The matter will, however, probably remain in the background. Mini described lasting memories from a sacking back in his Penicuik days as the flux of personnel between bands led to people being excluded as the members of Dunderfunk coalesced.
Mini: So we, to all intents and purposes, sacked the guitarist and bassist out of General Damage, the other guitarist, and there was much falling out.
Adam: Are you still mates?
Mini: Eh. He still hasn't forgiven me. I mean I saw him recently at his thirtieth, best man at his wedding and all that. It's all joking now, but he was really pissed off.

Mark Percival also said that, fifteen years after he sacked a bass player, "He still reminds me of it when he's drunk".

> *Chainey: Ah, well you'd know about that.*
> *Matt: (laughing) I can give you a reference and everything.*

Talk of music making did feature, predominantly as part of an exchange between Matt, Chainey and myself about software and the relative complexity, and expense, of Apple's 'Logic' programme. Kenny contributed with a roll of his eyes to which Mini's responded in his usual faux-gruff style.

> *You guitarists and your computer wank. If you can't hit it to make a noise you've got it all wrong.*

The conversation veered across numerous topics, including the band's triumphs and travails. "Black Thursday" and "the curse" were mentioned, although the latter more as part of general enquiries about one another's health. Nevertheless, these took something of a back seat over the course of the evening. What 'Air-Fix' referred to, by this time, was a group of people, not all of whom had played in the band, rather than a musical unit. Whilst the latter was defunct, the former was extant, albeit less ergonomically defined. (The extended network by now included Margaret, Kenny's wife, and Julie, Mini's girlfriend although they had no direct creative input into the musical grouping).

The paradox of simultaneous difference and congruity that had defined Air-Fix outside The Venue on the night of the Speedway gig had been resolved as the social formation of the band outdistanced its creative incarnation. A kind of reversal had taken place whereby the band was no longer a distinct entity at the centre of other networks (school, pub, music scene and so on) but was instead one of those networks. Just as common ground helps to build cohesiveness in the social identity of the band, this band was now part of the common stock of anecdotes and shared experience that gave shape to a group of people. This is not unique to bands, or rock. Robert Stebbins makes a similar point about networks of amateurs in the classical music world.

> Though the common purpose that brings these people together is the making of music, the interpersonal ties that emerge come to mean much more than this. (Stebbins 2004: 234)

It is, however, quite intensive in rock bands because of the extent to which the projected identity of the group is based on the people in it, particularly when they are playing original material. Additionally, bands are perhaps more prone to narrativizing their experience due to the mythical component of rock history which helped to give rise to the form in the first place

This sense of coherence faded over time, like the salience of any connections whose initial raison d'être has passed on -schooldays or a former job, for instance, become one of only many contexts in a friendship that spans years. There were other 'Air-Fix' nights out when Matt returned to Edinburgh from Australia, each successively less defined by the band and more by the group of people within and around it.

The broad sweep of popular music history pays more attention to acts that have achieved wide exposure. This is perhaps only natural in some respects. Through sheer weight of numbers and the difference in the scale of their critical or commercial impact, some artists will touch more lives than others[52]. There are a multitude of 'unknowns', also-rans and outriders who, for many reasons, fly beneath the media radar. For some this is due to a failure to break through. For others it is by choice- the band is never intended as anything more than a hobby, or other considerations like family and work inform a decision to operate at a local, or similarly limited, level.[53]

Even if these acts are unlikely to ever appear in the widescreen version of history, however, they still occupy a standpoint in relation to it that reveals different and interesting aspects of the picture. Accounts of bands like The Jactars, Crikey! It's the Cromptons (Cohen 1991) and Scream and The Fits (Finnegan 2007:

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[52] Of course some artists can be 'influential' rather than successful but there is still a threshold of public notice to cross, and such judgements are usually made retrospectively.

[53] Twisted Nerve, for example, plays occasionally around Edinburgh and sometimes at Goth and Punk festivals in Germany. Richie (guitar) and Billy (drums) were formerly full-time members of Baby's Got A Gun and had tried to 'make it' with that band. Now both in their forties and with children, activity with Twisted Nerve is pursued in their spare time without grand ambitions.

111-113) have been used to illustrate the small-scale realities of band work away from the distorting light of critical canonization. Every band's details and experiences are different, but particular cases can be used as exemplars and ways into thinking about aspects of cultural production. With this in mind, I am not proposing that Air-Fix represent all bands. But they are a good example of an aspect of band relationships that is often missed in accounts whose focus is a historically minded version of creative and financial trajectories. For many professional and amateur musicians, bands become part of a shared *personal* history that serves as the basis for alliances and connections beyond the musical world. It's unlikely that The Waverley, or The Venue (which no longer exists) will be written into the macrocosmic rock history in the same way as The Cavern, at least not on the basis of Air-Fix having played there. Nevertheless, the commingling of musical and social elements in bands is a two-way street. Whilst the most obvious way in which this is represented is the emergence of musically creative output from social interactions bands, even those without legions of fans organising themselves, also create extra-musical networks of their own.

2.2- THE DISTRACTIONS

The Distractions was a cover band, consisting mainly of postgraduates in the Department of Film and Media Studies at Stirling University, which lasted just under two and a half years, from the beginning of 2004 to the middle of 2006. There are obviously big differences between an avowedly amateur cover band like this and a band like Air-Fix with original material and an eye on entry into the market. Nevertheless, The Distractions revealed some points of structural congruence with more clearly industrially oriented bands in terms of how creativity and social dynamics were played out. I shall introduce these briefly here and develop them further in subsequent chapters.

The band originated out of socialising within the department's postgraduate community as musically inclined students eventually gathered for a jam. Pub based

discussions had revealed that the potential for a band line-up existed and the possibility of playing the departmental end of semester party was mooted.

The line-up consisted of:

Adam (guitar)
Christine (vocals)
Maggie (vocals)
Mark (bass)
Matt (drums)
Mike (vocals, later guitar)
Pedro (guitar)

One on one occasion, Pedro being in Portugal, we played a party on the Renfrew Ferry with Mark's friend (and former bandmate) Bob on guitar. After Pedro moved back to Portugal permanently, we rehearsed again with Bob for one gig but he had to pull out at short notice due to family commitments. Mark and I hurriedly rearranged the set to see if we could cover the parts between us. Thereafter, Mike played guitar on some numbers and we played others with just one guitar.

Having agreed on four or five simple 'classics', the cohesive outcome of the first jam was a pleasant surprise. As Mark put it later, "I fully expected us to be in the pub within an hour or so." The party was a success too, and the group fell into a practice routine, usually driven by an upcoming gig, over the next two years, gradually building a portfolio of songs. The generic preferences of the group varied, although there was sufficient common ground within the popular music canon and beyond to build a set out of what we thought might work in front of an audience.

The opportunity to practice consistently was limited by busy schedules and also by the fact that three of the members had 'home bases' abroad- Matt in Canada, Christine in Germany and Pedro in Portugal- to which they would return for holidays. Likewise, term time bases were spread around- I lived in Edinburgh and Mark in Glasgow, the rest lived in or close to Stirling. Practices were usually at Stirling's Random Rhythms, although later on were occasionally held in Edinburgh (Coloursound) or Glasgow (Calton).

Unlike Air-Fix there was no songwriter and less of an obvious hierarchy although there were some clear variations in our musical technique and experience. Matt was the best technical musician among us, followed by me, and then Pedro and Mark. (Mike's level of ability didn't become fully clear until Pedro's departure when he filled some gaps on rhythm guitar and proved to be more than capable of the job). Christine and Maggie did not play instruments. Consequently Matt tended to be, more or less, the musical director and the task of working out the chords for songs generally fell to me, although Pedro and Mark contributed on this front as well and arrangements were fine tuned in rehearsal. (Matt worked out his own drum parts).

The matter of when a song was sufficiently rehearsed was reached by consensus, when everyone felt happy enough with their parts to move on. Like Air-Fix , in-jokes abounded. The code in The Distractions for a song being up to scratch was to aver, with a heavy dose of irony, that it was "better than" whichever artist had recorded it originally.

Gigs were usually parties or functions[54] - birthdays, weddings (including my brother's), or the like. We also played at the Student Union, the 'Spring Fling' end of year party for the university's undergraduate student body and an Edinburgh charity event in tribute to Johnny Cash as well as recording a CD of songs from the set at Chem 19 studios in June 2005. In line with the stated purpose of the band, this was to be for fun and to provide us with a record of our efforts rather than to serve as a demo in an economic context.

> I think it would be great to have a professionally recorded live set to annoy our friends with…I suggest just doing it exactly as live, and if we make any mistakes, just live with them, like we'd have to if we were actually playing live. Rock and, indeed, roll. (e-mail from Mark, 19/05/05)

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[54] The parties were always in venues or function suites, with full PA, rather than in houses with limited equipment.

2.2.1- 'Rocks'- The band sound

Matt Hay's comments regarding the possibility, which never arose, of Air-Fix playing somebody else's songs with similar "voicings and things" to those used on his own compositions refers to the characteristic 'sound' of a band. His songs were partly shaped by the styles, preferences and limitations of the other members of Air-Fix. Andy Summers talks about the process of shaping Sting's songs, along with his own and Copeland's, into a 'band' sound in a similar way.

> [A] set of natural responses converge to bring about a sound that no trio in rock has possessed before… With this information in place, we are able to codify it to the point where we can take almost any song and, as we say, "policify" it- even a piece of material by Noël Coward or a folk song from the Scottish Isles. (Summers 2006: 251)

At the opposite end of the scale in terms of economic and creative ambit to The Police, the way in which different musicians cohere to create a band sound was similarly obvious in The Distractions despite, or even because of, the lack of original compositions in the set.

Mark's punk bass style, combined with Pedro's 'indie' leanings and my own tendency to add blues or funk inflections and classic rock fills to the mix helped to provide a coherent aesthetic behind which Matt's versatility meant that he could apply whatever was deemed necessary for the song in hand. On top of this, the vocalists provided a wide palette of tonal characteristics that contributed to the 'rockification' of pop songs or added a 'poppy' dimension to rock numbers. If a song contained a 'hook' or prominent line that was played on any instrument other than a guitar, I would usually cover it. Hence a wide range of songs from the popular music pantheon could be incorporated into an amalgam of punk, indie and classic rock dictated by the divergent playing styles of musicians who had originally come together for social rather than explicitly creative or economic reasons. As we gained in confidence, and became quicker at working up songs, we began to refer to the process of arranging songs for the band as putting them through "the Distractionator". The parallels with 'Policification' are obvious.

Creativity, for the band and the individuals within it, was expressed through the vehicle of other people's songs but the musical realisation of these involved the accommodation of a variety of styles, preferences and abilities into a workable whole. Our remit was primarily to entertain, audiences and ourselves, at parties. This tended to guide us towards a certain type of song (upbeat numbers) and away from others (experimental or obscure songs), even within the range of our personal taste profiles. Nevertheless, some songs were ruled out due to their technical requirements. 'The Distractionator' could accommodate a surprising range of generic soundscapes beyond 'guitar rock' but was, initially at least, limited to relatively straightforward song structures. My early attempt to push the band into attempting 'Sparky's Dream'[55], by typing and e-mailing out a chord chart with lyrics, resulted in us wasting an hour of practice time in a failed attempt to cohere over the frequent chord changes. Pedro referred to it as 'Sparkey's [sic] nightmare'.

> I love the song as much as I fear I may mess it up on the rollercoaster ride…
> if only one chord would stand for a few secs… (e-mail, 18/03/2004)

As we developed, it became possible to attempt trickier songs and, as Matt pointed out much later, had we attempted 'Sparky's Dream' further down the line we may well have come to grips with it. By the final stages of the band's active lifetime, 'the Distractionator' became a much smoother running machine. Once a template of our 'band sound' had been established, it became much easier to see where songs could be edited or adapted to fit it. ('Johnny B Goode' and Jailhouse Rock' were hurriedly arranged, rehearsed and "better than" their originators for a wedding in Musselburgh in March 2006 in around half the time it taken for us to work up similarly simple songs at the beginning of 2004).

We also became much more cavalier with the original arrangements of songs. Increasing confidence and collective ability fed back into our assessment of what was possible and the extent to which it could represent our collective

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[55] By Teenage Fanclub, on *Grand Prix* (Creation 1995)

aesthetic. For the Johnny Cash tribute gig in March 2006, we applied 'the Distractionator' with the breaks off and subordinated his songs entirely to the punk/rock aesthetic of band, our 'sound' taking prominence over the songs in a reversal of our early attempts to recreate what we heard on a CD.

Nevertheless, 'creativity' was bound by the extent to which we could 'meet in the middle' over what it was possible to play or sing as well as being defined by how we did so. At its least successful, The Distractions, usually at my instigation, overreached itself in attempting songs that were too complex for the middle ground we all occupied or alternatively attempted slavish reproductions of well known songs without taking account of our individual stylistic quirks. At its best, it managed to synthesize these quirks into a coherent sound—a creative space into which could be pulled a range of popular songs, regardless of their original aesthetic.

2.2.2- 'Mamma Mia'- Song Selection and creative contribution

The process of choosing songs, and compiling set lists out of these, was by far the most contentious area of activity in The Distractions. A few issues arise from this and they pertain to the way in which the essential structure of The Distractions contributed to its social and creative dynamic in a way that resembles professional bands.

After an initial run of gigs, about one every three months, with occasional rehearsals in between and frequent discussions about what to include in the set, it became evident that the singers were unhappy about the way in which songs were being selected. In any band, the individual members express their *own* creativity via the group. The singers in The Distractions were limited in the extent to which they could do this by the songs that featured them. Consequently tensions arose, each feeling that he or she was in competition to participate on an even footing. This is similar to the competition in groups with more than one songwriter to get their

compositions played by the group, although it lacked the financial dimension that often arises in such cases due to the question of royalties. (The frustration felt by the singers in The Distractions is comparable in form if not scale to George Harrison's resentment at his songs being overlooked in The Beatles). Deena Weinstein points out that the structure of band positions is often a source of strain (Weinstein 2006: 170-171). She is talking about the 'traditional'—guitar, bass, drums, singer—line-up but her basic point is that the supposedly 'egalitarian' ethos of the band is often at odds with the actual creative and material rewards for its members.

In Air-Fix, and many other bands, a hierarchy is imposed by way of songwriting duties. In other cases, the person who books the gigs and takes on managerial tasks may have an authoritative role. In bands where these roles are unclear, or shared, the functional and creative input of the individual members defines their position. In such a situation, a band member's stake in the whole enterprise depends on them feeling that their contribution is valued. Choosing songs in The Distractions was the means by which the singers' creative contributions were delineated.

The problem was compounded by the fact that the instrumental backing of Mark, Matt, Pedro and me did not have to contend with it in terms of our own roles. The tensions that arose amongst the singers tended to feature less between the instrumentalists. This wasn't because they were necessarily more obstreperous or precious than the rest of us. Even in a non-profit covers band, structural matters come into play. When roles are clearly agreed, or at least defined, tension is less likely. A working accommodation between Pedro and myself over guitar parts, for instance, fell into place fairly quickly as a result of our own proclivities, abilities, playing styles and listening habits. The arrangement regarding vocal duties had been vague from the outset. Mike had initially joined to take on the lead vocal role since everybody else was hesitant to do so at first but, the initial practices having gone well and Maggie and Christine having thrown themselves into the enterprise,

songs were allocated on, supposedly, a democratic basis. The problem, as is so often the case, was that the manner in which this was to be done was not discussed early on and so random suggestions were put to the group and worked out by the instrumentalists with little regard for parity between the singers. Mike consequently felt that his role was being undermined, and Christine and Maggie that they were being excluded.

The blunt fact was that the instrumentalists featured in *every* song. Had song selection meant one or other of us sitting out, or taking a minimal role in, portions of the set it's likely that our own personal stake in the matter would have been greater. Additionally, there were cross-purposes between the singers and the instrumentalists in terms of how our roles in the band extended outwards of it and dictated our positions on wider issues. An impromptu band meeting of sorts in the university cafeteria, for instance, concluded unsatisfactorily. Maggie sat down full of enthusiasm for the idea of trying out The Bangles' 'Walk Like an Egyptian' at the next practice. I said, perhaps a little bluntly, that we should try it at some point but that I had alot of marking to do and there would be no way I'd have time to work it out and arrange it before then. We agreed that it would go down well with audiences and was an evergreen hit, but Maggie left clearly feeling that I had poured cold water on a perfectly sensible suggestion. I can remember saying to Mark and Matt afterwards, with a hint of whininess, "Christ. Don't they get that every time we add a song to the list, that's hours of my life spent trying to pull apart loads of keyboard parts or whatever to try and sort it out."[56]

The gap here represented a fundamental difference between singers and instrumentalists common to bands. Weinstein describes it.

> One of a complex of factors that helps to explain negative views toward singers relates to their "otherness". The singer's instrument and role in creating the band's music is, and is felt to be, so distinctly unlike the musicians' that it creates a structrual split.

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[56] 'Walk Like An Egyptian' did make its way into the set, ultimately becoming a mainstay. Working it out also turned out to be relatively straightforward in comparison to some of the other songs in our repertoire.

> Difference as such is not animosity [but]… a singer who does not play an instrument is an alien, a stranger, whose distance from the others can be reduced but not completely bridged by ties of friendship, shared outside interests, or common background. (Weinstein 2004b: 324)

On the same front, Mini was relatively quiet about Matt Hay's status as a singer, but Matt played the guitar. He would, however, frequently tease his friend and former bandmate Keith about it. Keith was a lyricist, lead singer and front man but does not play a musical instrument. (Mini would hum atonally and refer to songs being "in the key of Keith"[57]).

The matter of song selection in The Distractions also wasn't necessarily a question of ego and vying for position at the central microphone. In fact on several songs, verses were split between the singers to democratise the vocal duties. The point most frequently, or at least most bluntly, brought up was not the amount of time spent on lead vocals on stage, but the amount of time spent in the rehearsal room doing nothing while another song was being worked on. Since the cost of the practice room was split evenly between whoever was present, this didn't just involve wasted time.

The band was formed 'for fun'. 'Fun', in the context of The Distractions, meant involvement, and what the instrumentalists had missed in the first year of the group was the extent to which, for the vocalists, being 'present' didn't always constitute being 'involved'. The instrumentalists, or at least I, had overlooked this due to the fact that it didn't arise for us. The Distractions was unusual in having three singers, but the impact of the band's personnel structure on its social and creative dynamic was consistent with other groups. The extent of this was evident on one occasion when the instrumentalists practiced for an hour before any of the singers were able to make it to a rehearsal and behaved like schoolchildren when the teacher has left the room, ignoring all the songs in the set and running through

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[57] Weinstein's article opens with a 'lightbulb' joke about singers (Weinstein 2004b: 323). The same sort of structural gap brought about by different musical roles is at the heart of the plethora of drummer jokes, in this case predicated on the lack of potential for melodic composition on the instrument.

heavy rock classics by AC/DC, Black Sabbath and The Who. Matt said it felt like there was "an Incredible Hulk" waiting to burst through the shirt of the band we were actually in.

The Distractions also echoed other aspects of the professional field, and these too came to the fore in terms of how we allocated songs. The matter came to a head over an arrangement I had done of Britney Spears's 'Toxic'. I had instinctively thought of it for Mike to sing since I thought this would suit the 'rock' arrangement I had done- (two guitars, bass and drums). As Maggie pointed out at the band meeting that she and Christine called to discuss things, there was no need to assume that a 'rock' version should mean a male vocal. ('Teenage Kicks' was, after all, a 'Maggie song'). In defaulting to a position where we split some songs between vocalists on a verse by verse basis or else assumed that the guitar based instrumental sound of the band implied a male vocal we had, in effect, recreated in microcosm some of the sexist preconceptions of the wider music industry. This, Maggie and Christine felt, was sidelining them in what was supposed to be a joint activity and a primarily recreational one at that. To an extent, this was a factor of the structural differences described above. But these in turn are also subject to the barriers to women on participating in instrumental activity in the first place (Clawson 1999, Bayton 1998: 30-32). As Marion Leonard puts it,

> While a rock group comprising female instrumentalists *and* vocalists challenges certain associations between rock and masculinity, a male band with a female vocalist does not (Leonard 2007: 2)

If The Distractions could make any progress in this area, it was by switching the gender of the singer from that of the original recording but assuming that a rock arrangement meant 'male vocal' detracted from the potential of this strategy. Even if this was an unintentional side effect of a set of ingrained rather than conscious assumptions, it had nevertheless spilled over into the social and functional dimensions of the band. The 'rock' instrumental line-up, at least as it relates to the

structure of bands, brings with it a set of specific problems across the spectrum of amateur and professional operation.

2.2.3- 'One Way or Another'- The changing nature of the band

The tensions surrounding song allocations were alleviated, if not entirely removed, after the matter was aired. The band made a conscious effort to strike a better balance in the gigs that took place in 2005 and 2006. The issue still arose, but usually in a more structured manner.

Besides having come to acknowledge that we needed to take each other into more consideration when allocating songs, other factors took the pressure off. Some of these were clear, if unfortunate. Christine she found herself travelling to Germany at short notice due to a family illness, increasingly unsure of both her ability to commit to practices and gigs, or her inclination to do so.

> Given the successful recording, this might be a bit of a surprise, but I have decided to leave the band. There are a number of reasons for my decision... lately, I didn't feel like making music and it's tricky for me to make any commitments regarding practices - let alone gigs. It has been wonderful to be part of the band and I'm sure that you will continue to distract people - including myself, then taking on the perspective of a member of the audience. See you all soon and take care, Christine (e-mail, 26/07/05)[58]

In terms of straightforward practicalities, there were more songs to divide between fewer singers, although some were dropped altogether because they were too obviously 'Christine's songs', either in terms of her vocal range or the manner in which she sung them[59]. Nevertheless, everyone still very much thought of her as part of the group, if not the band anymore, and she was included in the financial

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[58] I explain in the appendix why I did not show a draft of this chapter to the other band members. Since this passage concerns personal matters that go beyond the business of the band, I did request permission from Christine before including it as it is.

[59] '99 Red Balloons' was performed in the original German, for instance. We also rehearsed, but never performed a version of Bowie's 'Heroes' in German, based on a bootleg Mark had of it.

and logistical plans for the 'road trip' to play in London at my brother's wedding that October on the basis of this.

> At least part of the reason for this undertaking is also for us all to get together and have a good old party… No pressure to sing, rehearse or do anything other than guzzle free food and beer. If you fancy a free trip to London for a party, just say the word- you can let me know any time in the next couple of months- it'll be no problem to sort out. (e-mail, 01/08/05)

It is more difficult to ascertain with The Distractions than with Air-Fix the extent to which social relationships grew out of or depended on the band since we were connected in other ways through academic work and networks. Nevertheless, the feedback loop between band 'work' and social activity was much in evidence.

The wedding in London would also prove to be Pedro's last gig with The Distractions. He was back in Portugal by the end of the year and his search for a job made it unclear whether or not he would return. This meant that Mike took on some of his guitar duties and, again, the musical functions of the band were more evenly spread around its members since Mike could still participate even when he wasn't singing. All of this meant a slight alteration of the band's overall sound- it became slightly 'rockier' without Christine's vocals, which were the 'purest' and least 'grainy' of the three of them, and Pedro's guitar influences, which were more leftfield than Mike's. But the basic components of the band's aesthetic had already been put in place.

Additionally, the way in which gigs were acquired, and approached, was becoming increasingly streamlined. To an extent, The Distractions always operated 'one gig at a time', with periods of inactivity during which everybody went about their other business replaced by flurries of activity once a date to play was arranged. The band itself actively sought out, or even arranged, the first few gigs. After 2004, and paradoxically given that it was intended more as a 'vanity project' than anything else, especially after the recording was made, we were increasingly asked to play. In the reverse of Air-Fix's drift, this generated momentum. To an

extent, every gig was 'our last' until another was planned. Mark stated this openly at a gig, since he was finding it difficult to accommodate the band in his schedule and was also finding that it aggravated his tinnitus, although his girlfriend Jenny pointed out that he always said that and then got "all excited" in the run up the next gig. (Mark was also the connection with the hosts of at least two more gigs after that occasion as well as being responsible for instigating the recording session).

Playing the departmental party, one year after our first outing in front of an audience, two offers to play arrived on the same night[60]. Pedro noticed the self-generating momentum of the band. Nevertheless, as Matt pointed out ruefully, opportunities to play are more likely to arise when you do it for free[61]. The 'stop-start' nature of the band remained in place, but the bank of songs grew, along with our facility in adding to it. Taking a gig no longer required intense negotiations about song selection but increasingly, as Mike put it, "brushing the dust off" the set and occasionally working up a new song or two. To an extent, the decline in active membership made matters logistically simpler. But alongside this, ergonomically if not financially, the band was becoming increasingly 'professional' having played together for over a year.

A band's evolution is subject to external factors as well as internal ones, regardless of its position in relation to the market. Even when performing is 'its own reward', the success or failure of the band in reaching an audience tends to be self-reinforcing, whether this means that gigs generate more gigs or that internal problems—like "the curse" of Air-Fix—generate resistance to momentum. Rock's historical association with peer activity rather than formal institutions allows for its practice amongst a wide range of contexts in which 'professionalism' and

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[60] One was for a charity event that we ended up not playing because it clashed with various other commitments of band members. The other was for the wedding in London.
[61] We never charged a fee, although we always made sure that whoever was engaging us covered our expenses, including travel, equipment hire (where necessary), purchase of sundries (usually drumsticks), food and drink.

'competence' meet and diverge in a similarly wide array of fashions. The Distractions all had other priorities but the band, in its inception if not its ultimate trajectory, was not very different from numerous others that were formed for the primary purpose of making music 'for fun'. In many respects, its origins and internal dynamics were little different to those of any other college band. (I have certainly witnessed, and been in, bands that were markedly less 'professional' in the way they organised and bore themselves, despite claims of various members that the enterprise would ideally become a full time occupation). As the tensions over set lists, the huge amount of their spare time and thought that the members of The Distractions expended on the band, and the development of a coherent aesthetic illustrate, 'fun', particularly when an audience is involved, can quickly become a serious business.

2.2.4- 'Let the Train Blow the Whistle'- Dissolution

The end of The Distractions also illustrates how a band's identity, which includes but is not limited to its sound, is wound out of its members. The dissolution resembled that of Air-Fix in that it was gradual rather than immediate. But rather than thinning out into non-existence, it altered by stages until a final circumstance marked the end. The last two gigs, the Johnny Cash night and a birthday party at The Counting House in Edinburgh, were performed as a four piece. Maggie's pressing academic commitments meant that, despite still being a member of the band (just as Pedro had been when he could not play at the Renfrew Ferry), she could not commit the time to rehearse the new songs that were in the offing for the Cash tribute. In her own words she "um'd and ah'd" about this but felt that she had "little choice" (text messsage, 18/03/06). Nevertheless, the Cash gig, which was only the second time we had shared a stage and the first in which we featured on an extended bill where the bands were the defining feature of the

event, left us feeling rather pleased with ourselves[62]. More rehearsals were scheduled to integrate Maggie into the new songs and discuss further additions to the set.

For a while, however, it had become increasingly difficult to accommodate everybody's schedules. A professional ethic may have informed our response to a gig once it was decided that we would play it but this did not extend to prioritising the band above all other commitments. Matt had, by now, moved to Glasgow and was playing there in a band which produced original material but the final push came when Mark's tinnitus made it impossible for him to continue with any regularity in a band with a drum kit and electric guitars. He had been wearing ever more powerful ear defenders but after the second of the rehearsals in the spring of 2006, he said that the after effects were like "a fairground going off in my head" and called time on his own involvement.

> Maggie, Mike, Matt, Adam- Just wanted to let y'all know I'll totally miss the Distractionator. Its been a very fine 2ish years. Lots of love and rock, Mx"- (text message, 31/05/06)

Without this, it is possible that we could have continued operating on the part time and ad hoc basis that had carried us through until that point. Since the rest of us lived in different cities, the matter was discussed separately, but a consensus emerged. Matt was reluctant to continue without Mark, especially since he now had other musical commitments. I had conversations with Mike and Maggie in Stirling and a similar feeling emerged. We briefly mooted the possibility of recruiting another bassist from people that I had played with in Edinburgh but this was swiftly rejected. In terms of the social identity of the band Maggie said that with Christine then Pedro and now Mark having left the, original character of the band would be too dilute. I agreed, as did Mike. Musically, as well, I had always

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[62] In Matt's words, we "owned" the gig. In my own rather less circumspect manner I admitted to my brother when he asked that, "I was quite pleased- in a kind of overgrown schoolboy way- to see that actually, we more or less kicked everyone's ass"-(e-mail, 01/04/06)

thought that a key component of 'the Distractionator' was the interplay of mine, Mark's and Pedro's guitar styles. I remarked that a plane could continue to fly with one engine gone but not two. Either way, even if Matt were willing to continue, it was generally concluded that whatever band might carry on with a new bass player, it wouldn't be 'The Distractions'.

The 'group identity' of The Distractions, then, emerged in a similar way to others that have been formalised by the process of branding. Obviously branding was not much of an option for a cover band with other priorities and only marginal economic activity. Nevertheless this case does illustrate that the processes giving rise to the identities at the core of brands take place irrespective of whether or not branding is the intention. Musical and personal interactions take on a shape that is delineated by the people involved. This extends beyond simply playing on the same stage. Bob, although he deputised admirably, wasn't 'a Distraction', in much the same way that Jimmy Nicol wasn't a Beatle when he filled in for Ringo Starr. Christine and Pedro, by contrast, *were* still Distractions in a way, even once they had left the band. The group identity is formed amidst a network of social and aesthetic relations. Neither category alone is sufficient to define it. A band's group identity may be more or less binding to its constituent members depending on how it relates to their other interests. Without the impetus of career concerns or financial gain the drive to maintain it might be relatively weak. But the internal negotiation and combination of varying creative influences and styles into a purposeful external projection underpins formally recognizable rock texts. The methodology of making music through the vehicle of a band, with all the lack of initial formal systems that this implies, means that one of the texts that the band produces is *itself*. The extent to which these texts become products varies according to either the inclination or success in pursuing it of the band in question. Throughout this spectrum of activity, however, the text of the *band* is produced alongside its specific performances or songs.

THREE

CREATIVITY

It [Yesterday] was my most successful song. It's amazing that it just came to me in a dream… I think music is all very mystical. You hear people saying, 'I'm a vehicle; it just passes through me'. Well, you're dead lucky if something like that passes through you.
Paul McCartney (The Beatles 2000: 175)

If exceptionality is to be understood, it cannot be isolated from the ordinariness of human life, and not only because exceptionality is defined exclusively in contrast to what is ordinary. Isolating it in this way can lead to the myth of monumental greatness, conceived in terms that are abstracted from any sense of changing biographical circumstances, economic imperatives, stylistic conventions and historical traditions.
Negus and Pickering (2004 :160-161)

The concept of 'creativity' in music- and rock bands especially- is fraught given the tendency towards collective production and the relation of that production to the market. One of the notable features of a rock band is the extent to which its existence is an end in itself, rather than for the purpose of recording of a particular song, or album- (as with the cast of a play or film). Unlike, say, orchestras, rock bands also tend to be self-generated. The members are not usually gathered together by an institution or business outside of the group itself.

The historical evolution of 'the band' as a type of group tends to mean that its members initially come together via informal activity, even if the backdrop to this is an institution like a school or college. The narrative myths that have grown up around bands, and rock, make joining a band a natural point of entry into the field of music making for those musicians whose skills are acquired informally, without the validating stamp of pedagogy or qualifications, or those whose aesthetic and generic preferences in terms of music making incline them towards the field of popular music. Informal skill acquisition alongside the gathering together of musicians out of peer groups is certainly common, even the norm, amongst young bands. (Clawson 1999, Finnegan 2007: 112-113, Bennett 1980: 24-26, Green 2001: 76-82)

In later bands, formed out of a pool of local musicians, the process of hiring and 'coming together' still tends to be based around personal contacts rather than institutional or official employment structures. There are numerous examples of bands formed by experienced musicians out of a pool on a local scene, without any intervention from industry, but in the self-generated manner of early bands. These can be found across decades, following the rise of the band model in the 1960s—The Rolling Stones (Bockris 1993: 28-45), Squeeze (Difford, Tilbrook and Drury 2004: 17-19), R.E.M (Buckley 2003: 33-36), Nirvana (Cross 2001:158-9). Even when industry intervention does spark a change in line-up, as with Pete Best's dismissal from The Beatles, or Paul Gunn's from Squeeze, the musicians themselves tend to choose the replacement from within their peer group or the local music scene. This is, in any case, often an excuse for a decision that was on the cards anyway.[63]

Bands exist simultaneously as social, business and creative groupings. The 'workplace', to a large extent, consists of the membership. Studios, venues and rehearsal rooms are some of the sites of band work, but much of it takes place in geographically disparate and *informal* locations—pubs, vans, flats and so on. Its work spreads across its social sphere (Cohen 1991: 28-30). The band, usually comprising the personnel needed for composition and performance, is a relatively self-contained unit in terms of its creative operations. (This self-containment is not absolute, particularly as the band progresses. I shall discuss the porous nature of the band's borders in the next chapter but to create a working model for discussing creativity the core membership of the band will suffice for now). Bands tend to be more, rather than less, self- contained up to the point where they seek to enter the market.

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[63] This certainly seems to have been the case for Pete Best. George Harrison had long been angling to get Ringo Starr into the band.
"I was quite responsible for stirring things up. I conspired to get Ringo in for good; I talked to Paul and John until they came round to the idea." (The Beatles 2000:72)

Keith Negus posits two ideologies of creativity on the part of the recording companies who hope to profit from it.

> The organic ideology of creativity is a naturalistic approach to artists. The record company acquire a 'band'… that have reached a certain stage in their evolution. It is the record company's job to encourage and direct; to 'nurture' this act. This naturalistic approach often extends to the marketing and publicising of artists, which is explained in terms of the company merely enhancing the identity of the act… The synthetic ideology of creativity is a combinatorial approach to both acts and material. From this perspective the record company executive looks at the various parties who are approaching the company working in the field and assesses their respective qualities whilst weighing up what trends are emerging amongst particular audiences. There might be someone who is a good vocalist but cannot write songs. Perhaps there is a writer with good songs … In this approach it is not a case of discovering and developing 'an' act through a 'natural' process but a catalytic bringing together of various elements. (Negus 1992: 55)

The Romantic myths feeding into the evolution of both the band as a form and many actual bands more closely align to the 'organic ideology'. This is certainly how bands present themselves and often how they see themselves. Creativity in bands involves a combinatorial approach as well, but this takes place (roughly) within the borders of the band. There is a degree of self-declared 'isolationism' about creativity in a band, at least insofar as it projects a group identity. This is a process that, as Negus suggests, needs to reach a degree of cohesion before entry into the industrial field. To a large extent, creativity in bands depends upon a process of negotiation amongst the members and the interactions of key components of the individual musicians' make-up. Before I look at these in more detail, however, I want to put them into an institutional and social context. To do this, I will draw on a couple of concepts employed by Jason Toynbee.

3.1- INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY AND THE RADIUS OF CREATIVITY

The first of these is what Toynbee refers to as 'Institutional Autonomy' (Toynbee 2000: 19-33). There has been a historical disjunction between production and dissemination in popular music— a lack of integration between record companies, venues, radio, television and the web. This gap has been, variously,

wider and narrower over the course of the last hundred years as corporate strategies relating to the integration of hardware and software have varied and technological changes have impacted on the distribution of music. It has, for instance involved the recording and publishing industries embracing new technology (as with CD) or reacting with initial hostility (as with the web, and radio).

Nevertheless, the gap between production and dissemination led to an entrepreneurial model[64] of finding products, products in the form of talent. This model arose because the large-scale music businesses have little direct control over a market to which music *makers* also have access, even if such access is limited in terms of scale compared to the major corporations. To compound this, the market itself is unpredictable. As Frith points out,

> [T]he music industry is… a business in which both the supply side (the musicians) and the demand side (the consumers) are irrational; record companies, which make their money from bringing supply and demand into line, are thus organised around the bureaucratic organisation of chaos. (Frith 2001a: 33)

This industrial dynamic is compounded by a "chronic oversupply of labour" (Toynbee 2000: 26) at the creative link in the chain. More people wish to make their living from making music than there is space in the field to accommodate at a living wage. Furthermore, given that formal qualifications are peripheral, at best, to the process of making and distributing popular musical products, the boundary between the professional and the amateur is not always clear (Finnegan 2007: 12-13). Many musicians support themselves through other means whilst attempting to 'make a break' into the music industries on a full-time paying basis. This is evident in the multiplicity of "low-level" (Toynbee 2000: 26) music production—on the internet, at home, in pubs, at jam sessions, in clubs and so forth. (Air-Fix are a good example). Further, and particularly acutely given the Romantic myths that pervade

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[64] Although the major labels have a corporate, rather than small scale, business ideology, the 'entrepreneurial' model of finding talent remains, encased in the A&R departments whose job it is to manage artists and repertoire- departments which, in fact, often find themselves in conflict with the more traditionally corporate areas of the major labels. (Negus 1992: 49)

rock, professional or amateur status is unclear not just as it refers to economic activity but to musical ability as well, with particular consequences for group creativity. As Toynbee puts it,

> [F]ew people exclude themselves on the grounds of lack of competence. It is possible to become a 'musician' with relatively low levels of economic and cultural capital, and little or no specialist training. (Toynbee 2000: 26)

This oversupply of musical labour leads to a situation whereby musicians at the lower levels of production are forced to work for minimal remuneration if they wish to pursue their own material and artistic goals. It is difficult to consolidate a position of long-term financial stability without at least a modicum of industrial support. It is even more difficult to attain widespread recognition without the co-operation of the larger businesses. The local scenes and environments in which most bands operate are characterised as 'starting points'. The entrepreneurial model applied to finding talent operates in these local environments, the 'gene pool' of musical product from which the industrial operators hope to draw their next profitable acts. This model is being disrupted somewhat by distribution on the web (legally and illegally) but the oversupply of labour and the unequal relations between low level producers and large scale industry remain in place.

Keir Keightley's (2001) account of the emergence of a schism between apparently 'authentic' rock versus supposedly simply 'mainstream' music goes some way towards supporting the idea that both the commercial and ideological appeal of the music depend on a sense that it stands aside from the mechanisms upon which it actually, in many respects, depends. (This occurred at around the same time as the band model of low-level music production came to prominence in the field of large-scale distribution and mass reception). Demographic and social changes in the 1950s and 1960s, Keightley argues, helped to create a situation whereby a, "combination of social marginalisation on the one hand, and newly magnified purchasing power (and thereby cultural presence) on the other" (Keightley 2001: 125) meant that a process of commodifcation seemed exempt from

the taint of commercial 'corruption'. Rock, consequently, "adapted elements of folk's polemic against mass society, and deployed them within (rather than against) the mainstream" (Keightley 2001: 127).

It is this deployment and its incorporation into the 'starmaking' and commodification process, and hence the mythologies surrounding the creation of rock music, that allow for the 'institutional autonomy' Toynbee describes. The industrial stages of production depend upon a sense of 'authorship', inscribed at the low-level, to drive sales of the product. Low-level production consists of 'proto-markets', the areas in which between producers and consumers interact away from industry.

> What distinguishes proto-markets is that they bring together performer and audience in arenas which are not fully commodified. Examples include local rock scenes [and] dance music networks… Commodity exchange does go on in cases like these… But the defining characteristic of the proto-market is that the level of activity cannot be explained by economic factors alone. People are engaged in music-making sometimes for the love it, sometimes for the esteem and sometimes because they expect in the future to enter the music industry proper. (Toynbee 2000: 27)

This leads to a situation whereby, despite industry involvement, the musicians themselves are the basis for what comes to be viewed as the creative work and its appeal. In effect, industry has to allow for social authorship if it is to package and sell 'authenticity'.

> When audiences demand that music makers are creators the music business must guarantee minimum conditions of independence for them. (ibid. 32)

These necessary minimum conditions of independence notwithstanding, the members of a band (like any other creative worker) are nevertheless subject to certain constraints even prior to any compromises they may have to make with each other, managers, record labels, producers or the marketplace. The next of Toynbee's ideas that I wish to use is helpful in explaining these, as well as providing a context for describing some of the social and creative mechanisms within bands.

His starting points are Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'habitus', which are themselves of use in examining the wider cultural and economic areas within which bands work. A 'field', according to Bourdieu, is a set of relationships in which social agents vie for power or 'capital'. This may be economic but some fields, such as 'the art world', or academia, value other sorts of capital above money. The 'field' is largely defined by the social agents who constitute its rules and, henceforth, the type of capital involved.

> As I use the term, a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy. The existence of the writer, as a fact and as value, is inseparable from the existence of the literary field as an autonomous universe endowed with specific principles of evaluation of practices and works… This field is neither a vague social background nor even a *milieu artistique* like a universe of personal relations between artists and writers… It is a veritable social universe where, in accordance with its particular laws, there accumulates a particular form of capital and where relations of force of a particular type are exerted. (Bourdieu 1993: 162-164)

Crucially the field, although hierarchical, is not static and competition between the agents whose social positions relative to one another delimit it need not be conscious or financially motivated. (Johnson, in Bourdieu 1993: 6-7)

Habitus, in turn, refers to a system of dispositions and beliefs, akin to a 'worldview', moulded by a person's background, upbringing and history. Shaped from early in life, a habitus is not an actively conscious set of responses to the world but is equally, being the consequence of socialisation, not innate. Johnson describes how the habitus, whilst a part of an agent's broad modus operandum is neither an immutable pattern of behaviour according to fixed codes nor necessarily a fully conscious decision making process.

> The habitus is sometimes described as a 'feel for the game', a 'practical sense' that inclines agents to act and react in specific situations in a manner that is not always calculated and that is not simply a question of conscious obedience to rules. Rather it is a set of dispositions which generates practices and perceptions. The habitus is the result of a long process of inculcation, beginning in early childhood, which becomes a 'second sense' or a second nature. According to Bourdieu's definition, the dispositions represented by the habitus are 'durable' in that they last throughout an agent's lifetime. They are 'transposable' in that they may generate practices in multiple and diverse fields of activity, and they are 'structured structures' in that they

inevitably incorporate the objective social conditions of their inculcation. (Johnson, in Bourdieu 1993: 5)

Toynbee builds upon the concepts of field and habitus to formulate a theory relating to the creative choices made by musicians. He acknowledges the wide range of social backgrounds of popular musicians (Toynbee 2000: 38) and notes that this has a crucial impact on the likelihood of certain creative choices being made, or conversely on the constraints militating against particular choices. Habitus delineates an artist's positioning within a particular field; the bank of cultural and technical knowledge upon which he or she can draw, as well as the likelihood of various decisions being made according to a set of inculcated dispositions.

In popular music the likely habitus of the participants is wide-ranging, certainly in comparison to the worlds of 'high-art' and the 'avant garde'. Toynbee develops Bourdieu's description of the relationship between field and habitus by formulating a 'radius of creativity'. According to this, musicians are more or less likely to make certain choices according to the point of intersection of their habitus and the field. The 'radius of creativity' defines the options available to them and sets out the relative likelihood of them being disposed to take any of these options.

> Creative space may be envisaged as circular. At the centre is the music maker, sometimes a single subject, sometimes a collective actor. The radius of creativity extends from the centre to an ill-defined circumference. Within the circumference are distributed creative possibles. The further along the radius one moves from the centre, the thinner the distribution of these possibles. Beyond the circumference is an area of impossibility, that is to say a domain where the possibles cannot be heard.
> The music maker identifies (hears) possibles according to a) the perceptual schema of her/his habitus and b) its point of intersection with the creative field…Just as possibles are more densely distributed towards the centre so too are customary patterns of selection and combination. The propensity to identify and select possibles within the ambit of 'strong' disposition near the centre represents one form of constraint on creativity. The difficulty of so doing further out along the radius, among the thinly distributed possibles where dispostivity is weakest, constitutes another. (Toynbee 2000: 40)

There are, then, almost invisible constraints upon musicians in relation to their habitus. It largely defines what somebody might regard as a viable creative choice and even what choices are available in terms of where they sit within the field. This

is mitigated slightly in popular music by the lack of formal restrictions upon entry
to the field and the consequent variety regarding the range of habitus amongst
popular musicians. Nevertheless, it is also a complicating factor in the creation of
rock music given that it allows for potentially divergent dispositive tendencies to
overlap not only within the field but also within a particular collective agent.

> [T]he point where habitus intersects with field, determines the particular
> universe of possibles traversed by the radius. Habitus, with its 'portfolio' of
> capitals (musical knowledge, economic wealth, general education etc), will
> have an important impact here, affecting both the position and extent of the
> radius in the field. However because the field of popular music is lightly
> codified (people do not tend to need a specific portfolio of capitals in order
> to enter it) there is a relatively high degree of unpredictability about
> position and extent of radius, and therefore also about likelihood of the
> selection of possibles. This is one reason why popular music has changed so
> much and so fast in the late twentieth century. (Toynbee 2000: 40-41)

The band is subject to a particular set of circumstances in the field of
popular music (and the wider sphere of music making) in general; relative, if
circumscribed, freedom from institutions in terms of the creative process is likely.
The group is socially constructed as much as the music is socially authored. A lack
of rules pertaining to the formal aspects of music creation is mirrored by a lack of
guidelines about how to arrange the creative work. Musical skills are often acquired
informally. Likewise the process of band formation also takes place without a set of
institutional processes to which participants can adhere. Such 'rules' as do exist are
shrouded in Romantic myth or scratched out of historical narratives. There are no
set hierarchies other than those that become inscribed in the band by the very
processes of its working practices and social interactions.

Deena Weinstein puts it like this:

> Rock bands start from scratch. Most groups with which we involve
> ourselves- at work, at home, in recreation, religion, politics and other
> pursuits- have a model for roles and authority that precedes any specific set
> of people. This structure serves as a blueprint that newly formed groups can
> more or less follow. Bands have no such models, except for genre
> requirements; which members sing, write the music, focus on the finances,
> mediate disputes, and so on is left up to each group to devise. The media's
> inattention to the working life of bands and, worse, their promulgation of
> the nearly impossible all-are-equally-creative egalitarian model, leaves each
> set of young musicians to reinvent the wheel themselves. (Weinstein 2004a:
> 194-5)

Creativity in bands is closely connected with how they manage to build their own 'blueprints' and operating manuals. The 'creation' at work turns out to be both social and musical.

3.2- THE CREATIVE 'EDIFICE'

With or without industrial support, or intervention, creative work in bands is delineated by a complex system of social and musical transactions and decisions. The first point to note on this front is that creativity is not as straightforward a process as Romantic appeals to inspiration or innate genius imply. It involves the combination of numerous influences upon musicians, derived from their habitus and drawing upon the entire range of 'possibles' available to them within the radius of creative possibles described by Toynbee. It is worth stating that this applies, first of all, to single agents as well as collective actors, even in those cases when 'inspiration' is seemingly unmediated by the input of others. Phillip McIntyre (2006) provides a detailed breakdown of one such case. The melody for Paul McCartney's 'Yesterday' is famously described as having come to him in a dream. Leaving aside the process of recording and arranging the song, whereby George Martin provided a string arrangement and numerous collaborative and technical processes were needed to shepherd it from his imagination towards a publicly disseminated recording, the melody itself would still not have stood isolated from McCartney's musical habitus.

> [T]he writing of 'Yesterday' was certainly not an overnight item falling complete from the dream consciousness of Paul McCartney. It was instead the result of a long and often arduous but nonetheless highly explainable process springing from McCartney's deep well of experience, his intensive immersion in the domain of popular songs, and the product of long reflection and persistence. (McIntytre 2006: 215)

Even when working alone, musicians (or artists of any kind) do not work in complete isolation but within a system of rules and historical precedents that inform their work. Even the rejection of these rules still implies a standpoint in

relation to them and the array of pre-existing musical tropes provides a series of forms and building blocks that musicians use to shape their creations. In this sense 'creativity', insofar as it is presented to the public as a product, is actually the end result of numerous tiny and incremental actions and decisions, not all of which fit easily alongside the Romantic conception. Many of these, in fact, are rather prosaic. The most obvious example of this is perhaps the very process of learning to play an instrument in the first place. An apparently spontaneous creative outburst like a guitar solo, even when it is improvised on the spot, is actually the result of countless hours of practice. There is nothing ostensibly 'creative' about the repetitive playing of scales, or training one's fingers to make the coherent shapes of chords, and yet these are the essential pre-requisites for making music.

Beyond this, there are aesthetic repercussions from choices that are, on the face of it, not specifically musical or creative, although which derive from an artist's habitus. There are tonal implications, for instance, in the choice of instrument. (The brighter sound of a Fender Stratocaster's single coil pick-ups, for instance, in comparison to the rounder more full bodied sound of a Gibson Les Paul guitar). Playing styles notwithstanding, part of the 'sound' of The Distractions was derived from the interplay of Pedro's Jaguar with my Stratocaster. The possibilities open to musicians have an impact on their creative output even before a note has been played. The social pressure moving female musicians towards instruments other than the electric guitar is a striking example of this (Leonard 2007: 50), although such constraints and likelihoods apply right across the spectrum of historical and social positions and inputs for musicians. Whether a musician is formally trained or self-taught affects their choices and dispositions, as would, for example, the listening habits of their family and peers. Toynbee illustrates as follows.

> Likelihood relates to the selection of possibles by the creator and the fact that some possibles are more likely to be selected than others. Thus it is almost certain that the rock guitarist will play her electric guitar with a plectrum and it is very likely that she will use an electronically generated sustain in her playing. It is unlikely that she will hit a diminished thirteenth

> chord, play a solo with constant intonation, or indeed be a woman. This parameter of likelihood effectively divides constraint in two.
>
> On the one hand, constraint can take the form of likeliness. The most repeated, most normalized tropes and figures (such as use of plectrum and sustain) are possibles in the sense that other possibilities could be selected (for instance finger picking and staccato) and position in the field of works ('rock guitar style') means that the first set of possibles are most likely to be selected.
>
> On the other hand, *un*likelines also represents a form of constraint. What tends to prevent the selection and combination of possibles is their distance from the dispositive centre of the musician's habitus. Instead of congruence the operative principle here is divergence which makes certain possibles in the field of works 'hard to hear'. (Toynbee 2000: 39)

Creative propensities and methods are circumscribed and to an extent even defined by a host of non-creative, or rather 'pre-creative', factors in even the most individualistic of musical expressions. Prosaic activities like practice and instrument selection also constitute the essential building blocks of creative pursuits. (There is nothing especially creative in the act of tuning an instrument, yet doing so can mark the difference in the resultant sounds between 'music' and 'noise'). This is foregrounded in rock, where technological mediation plays an important role. Seemingly small decisions, such as where to place the microphones in relation to the drum kit, or whether to use valve or transistor amplifiers, add up to produce the final aesthetic. This is perhaps particularly acute in recording, where the norm is for a work to be constructed piecemeal, each component layered on top of the next, but it applies to live performances as well. Anybody who has spent time around bands will be familiar with the large amount of effort expended on setting up equipment and fine-tuning technical details like EQ settings. The 'spontaneity' of performance is actually the result of numerous very specific non-creative decisions. Much of the 'rock' aesthetic, in fact, depends upon masking the mundane elements of the creative process and projecting it as immediate.

'Creativity' then, as an audience perceives it, is actually something of an 'edifice'. Behind this lie innumerable decisions and dispositions. Some of these are almost unthinking, the result of the musician's social history and environment. Others involve more active choices—acoustic or electric, modern or retro sounds.

They are a mix of technically, aesthetically and even ideologically informed biases and practices. Some conscious decisions are obviously aesthetic and have a clear bearing on the creative process—a major or minor chord, for example. Many are not, even when they are musical or performative in nature—a habitual tendency to bend or hammer-on to a higher note, say. Still more of these are not in themselves musical choices at all, or even necessarily arrived at via a conscious assessment of all the variables.

Creativity is commonly acknowledged to involve a 'process'. Marking it off from other kinds of activity as 'extraordinary' in some way is part of the Romanticising of the artist in the star-making process. The status of artists resides in their ability to express themselves in this 'extraordinary' fashion. Curiously, and somewhat paradoxically, the appeal of some artists simultaneously resides in the fact that in some ways they are *just like us*. (The Beatles were down-to-earth 'cheeky chaps' and yet able to 'dream' melodies like that of 'Yesterday'). This becomes easier to account for when we view creativity not as an entirely separate category but as a way of channelling a range of influences, experiences and tendencies towards a particular outcome. Different conceptions of 'genius', that most exceptional type of creativity, often involve different value systems. Underlying all of them are unexceptional practices, even if (like practising a musical instrument) they are sometimes taken to exceptional lengths. As Negus and Pickering put it,

> [E]xceptionality depends on a longer process of *becoming* , from which the exceptional creative act that is termed genius can emerge. In this way, the ordinary is not at odds with the exceptional, but continually open to the possibility of becoming exceptional. (Negus and Pickering 2004: 158)

I would apply this to creative output generally. That which is presented as the 'creative work' is the frontispiece of a multitude of smaller actions and interactions which take place along a spectrum of activity that encompasses learning the fingering for a G major chord or selecting the pick-up on a guitar to playing an iconic solo or 'dreaming' the melody to 'Yesterday'.

3.3- CREATIVITY IN GROUPS- THE 'NEGOTIATED CENTRE'

'Creativity' for even a single musician is a variegated affair. Even a 'solo' musician does not work in isolation, particularly in a field that involves recording. It is possible for somebody to write, and even record, alone. More commonly there are associates (producers, engineers and so forth) helping to assemble the finished works and these certainly become necessary when it comes to selling them. Even highly individualistic musicians, occupying numerous roles in the production process themselves, often rely on trusted accomplices[65]. Usually this is to deal with the business aspects of their career but multi-instrumental 'solo' performers will also have regular producers and collaborators.

If assembling the 'edifice' is a complex process when the primary, or at least publicly primary, source of the 'creativity' is a sole actor, it becomes even more so with collective agents like bands. Creativity in a single musician involves making choices according to the 'possibles' within range of his or her dispositive centre but in a collective agent that 'range of possibles' can, theoretically, be multiplied by the amount of people in the group. In practice, bands often contain members whose habitus are *broadly* similar. This is generally the case with early bands and those formed from peer groups at school, college or in local scenes. The seminal bands of the 1960s illustrate this, The Beatles being a case in point. The canon is certainly replete with examples—U2, Radiohead, R.E.M, Nirvana. The case studies in this thesis also roughly fit this mould. The members of Air-Fix shared similar backgrounds. Three of them went to the same school and all were working or lower middle class. The Distractions had different geographical backgrounds but shared enough social common ground to be found in the same academic department.

In other cases, bands composed of more experienced musicians often cohere due to shared tastes, or when prior knowledge of each other's playing styles

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[65] Elliot Smith and Rob Schnaff, Neil Young and Elliot Roberts, Bruce Springsteen and Jon Landau, for instance.

suggests that they might be able to work together (Cream, for instance). This is not to suggest that musicians from widely different backgrounds cannot, or do not, work together although wildly divergent backgrounds between musical collaborators are more likely to be a destabilising than a stabilising factor, if not necessarily fatally so, depending on other influences. Age, class, gender, geography, type of musical training, point of entry into music making, response to unpredictable elements like sudden wealth, choice of drug; all play a part. The permutations are too numerous too iterate completely here and my intention is not to create a map of all the different types of musician that can or cannot cooperate. Rather, I wish to present a general set of observations that can be applied to 'the band' as a type of working and social group.

From this perspective, the important point is that the 'rock band' as I'm referring to it here is a collective agent in more than just the sense that its members make music together. Collaboration in popular music occurs across a range of hierarchy structures, each allowing for different levels of individuality. The relationship between a 'solo' performer and a backing band, for instance, varies greatly. Some 'stars' have been happy to allow their supporting musicians to shape the direction of the music, even choosing them because of their particular idiosyncrasities—Neil Young, for example. Others are much more stringent, and choose backing musicians for their ability to reproduce, exactly and without error, the sound that the leader wishes to hear—James Brown, or Ben Folds, for instance.[66]

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[66] This also involves slightly different generic inflections. Backing musicians in 'pop' performances are more likely to be chosen for their ability to recreate recorded sounds consistently and accurately than to display individualistic quirks. In fact, this is one of the differences between 'rock' and 'pop'- the backing band in 'rock' is more likely to be foregrounded, even as they are the secondary to the star—The E Street Band, Crazy Horse, The Heartbreakers. Elton John might use the same musicians year in year out, and pay them generous retainers but he doesn't present them as a group entity. The opposite end of the scale on this front would be The Foo Fighters. Essentially, it is Dave Grohl's band and he is the 'star of the show'. Yet he subsumes himself in the group identity as far as possible. A stable line-up is maintained and songwriting credits are split between the members of the group, although Grohl is the main songwriter. He is clearly 'the boss', but the presentation is very much that of a group identity.

Bands, however, involve a greater degree of integration. Degrees of similarity or difference between the habitus of different musicians within the same band need not mean that the range of possibles within the group increases exponentially with each additional member. In a group that functions well, or even at all, a significant amount of overlap can be expected. Nevertheless, the amount of dispositive possibilities is significantly greater than in a sole creator. Instead of a single centre within a radius of creativity, there are multiple overlapping circles, each with its own centre. Certain possibilities will be shared by all, others will only be available to a particular band member. To an extent, every time a new musician joins a group, this process must begin again, although groups that have been together for some time are more likely to have reached a degree of stability and formulated working practices into which newcomers are likely to have to 'fit' and may in fact have been chosen for their ability to do so—musically, socially or both. Ron Wood in The Rolling Stones (Bockris 1993: 234, Lysaght 2003: 188, Wood 2007: 116) would be an example of this. Longstanding groups may have particular ways of working to which incomers will adapt, or fail to, and this can determine the extent to which they fit in. There may be some adaptation on the part of the incumbents as well but the need to re-write the rule book from scratch is unlikely, if only because certain aesthetic norms are already in place for that particular band.

Creativity in bands, then, involves accommodating the dispositive centres of several musicians. When Weinstein writes that bands have to "reinvent the wheel" (Weinstein 2004a: 195), we can take this to mean that every time musicians conjoin into a band, they have to find a new way of placing, say, four centres into a relationship that is stable enough to allow the group to function as a creator. The possibilities available to each musician must be considered not just in relation to one centre, but to several. Creative and social transactions involve a process of negotiating a space that serves, in effect, as the *group's* central point. This negotiated

centre is obviously subject to a host of different influences and factors, but we can delineate a few of these to provide a general account of how musicians manage, or fail, to arrive at it. The exact interplay of these will vary greatly across different bands, but the categories allow for a model that can accommodate the general dynamic of the band as a type and the nuances of individual examples.

3.3.1- Technique

Perhaps another way of putting this would be to label it 'musical method', or 'style'. I am not referring here to just technical facility on instrument, or as a singer, although that is certainly a significant component of this category. It is rather obvious, but worth stating, that musicians in a band have to be able to play *together* to a minimum degree if the enterprise is to get off the ground. If this is to happen, then they must be able to deal with each other's playing styles and methods of musical communication. In these circumstances, technical ability does play a role. Musicians with different levels of ability can, and do, co-exist happily in the same band but theoretical and technical disparities must be *accommodated*. Modes of musical expression and communication are elements of the individual's radius of creativity that must be negotiated against those of bandmates to create a habitable centre ground.

Bennett mentions gaps in technical development as one of the destabilising factors in bands and provides a schematic that correlates 'individual skills' against 'group skills' to describe a number of potential outcomes (1980: 31). An individual, for instance, whose skills outstrip those of his bandmates might seek to play elsewhere. One whose development lags behind might be ejected from the group. Groups in which individual skills increase in line with the 'group skills' are more likely to be stable configurations of musicians. Bennett's configurations apply most easily to the kind of band derived from peer groups in which skills are learnt

alongside the process of group formation. Richie Simpson, guitarist with Baby's Got

A Gun, describes the rudimentary technical skills of the band's initial incarnation.

> The very first line-up of the band, we couldn't really play. It was like, here's a riff [sings] 'De nah nah, neh neh neh, neh neh neh, neh neh neh' and that was the song, you know. But then we done a gig and we thought, that was great fun, let's keep doing it. And we just kind of went from there really. But I mean we were atrocious. What was it my Dad said? He said we were a tenth rate Ramones and the Ramones were tenth rate.

The strength of the social element of rock bands is evident from the fact that

early bands of this type can exist with almost no musical ability at all.[67] For many

musicians, like the type described in Bennett's account, being in a band is also a

way of learning an instrument. The stable and unstable configurations that he

outlines refer to the extent to which band members, individually and in relation to

one another, weigh up the processes of learning and socialization. Richie Simpson's

account of an early band chimes with Lucy Green's point that the discipline

involved in learning to play rock music is often masked by the fact that it originates

as a social activity or hobby, and is considered fun.

> Overall, the musicians shunned the notion of discipline in so far as it was associated with something unpleasant, but recognized it in so far as it related to the systematic ways in which they approached learning. The level of systematization seems to have become increasingly apparent to the musicians as time went by. It is plausible to hypothesize that informal popular music learning begins as a jumble of relatively unconscious processes. (Green 2001: 103)

The reconfiguration of musicians from unstable alliances into more viable units is a

consequence of the extent to which some of them more than others readily engage

with the "systematization" of acquiring instrumental skills. The progression from

undisciplined enthusiasm into consistent music making involves an active 'sorting'

process amongst peers and within scenes.

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[67] Mini's first band at school, Guillotine, had a logo and an album cover that their art teacher had helped them with, but no instrumental capabilities.

Rick Heller- (drummer): Well the first couple of bands I was in… I mean you'd only barely call them bands. You know, couldn't play properly or anything. It was just that if you played an instrument at all, like the drums, well then you kind of had to be in a band. But the first sort of proper band[68] I was in [Dr. Know], we'd been playing a while. Still knew each other from around and everything, but we'd kind of done with playing bands that did nothing.

Robert Stebbins draws the distinction between "devotees", "participants" and "dabblers" in social networks amongst amateur classsical musicians (Stebbins 2004: 234-235). This flux between groups at a local level is part of a process whereby 'devotees' leave the rest behind and move towards professionalism. Socialization is a factor here but an intrinsic part of this process, for many popular musicians, involves the extent to which 'participants' acquire technical skills. Musical ability is one of the criteria that participants apply to one other when they make judgements over which alliances to form.

Beyond the means by which musicians gather together initially in early bands, theoretical knowledge and physical skill still affect the creative and social relationships between them. Playing alongside somebody whose skills do not match one's own is a potential flashpoint. In an overview of the stress factors for popular musicians Wills and Cooper (1988: 48-49) note that, "playing with musicians of a different ability level" was a cause of job dissatisfaction. This could apply from either direction, frustration either arising from a feeling of being 'left behind' or from a sense that the work as a whole is being slowed down by somebody's inability to 'keep up'. Sufficient common ground can often be found to form an initial working relationship that becomes unsustainable when a player's limitations come to light and are judged to be detrimental to the group effort. This was a factor, for example, in Henri Padovani's ejection from The Police (Summers 2006: 221-223) and, less explicitly, in Chainey's from Air-Fix. Equally, skill development is not limited to early groups and different rates of progress can have

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[68] The distinction between a first band and a first 'proper' band was common to musicians I spoke to and is indicative of this sorting process.

a destabilising effect if one group member feels that either their own creative vision or that of the group is being held back as a result of inequalities in technique. To return to Toynbee's formulation, if certain technical 'possibles' are within the radius of one group member but not that of another they are left with a situation which pits a potential creative decision against the ability of a musician to realise it. They must decide whether that particular creative act can inhabit the group's creative space.

Popular music, as we have seen, is relatively "lightly codified" (Toynbee 2000: 41) in terms of the type of formal knowledge needed to participate. Classical musicians, for instance, are able to make certain basic assumptions with relative ease about their collaborators, such as that they will be able to read music. Two popular musicians, on the other hand, may arrive at a similar junctures in their careers with different portfolios of skills and different approaches towards communicating their intent. Ginger Baker describes a failure of communication between himself and George Harrison.

> I was doing a session with George Harrison for Billy Preston… And that didn't last long. He [Harrison]… didn't know what the fuck he was talking about. His way of explaining an idea was to wave his arms about. He'd be going: 'Y'know, Ginger, play it like this', flailing his arms. What the fuck are you talking about! Write it down so I can see what you mean. He couldn't. (Bell 2010: 74)

Baker is a renowned curmudgeon, and this bad-tempered interview contains invective against a good number of his former collaborators, although Clapton escapes his wrath despite the fact that he also does not read or write in standard notation. Nevertheless, this incident illustrates clearly the discrepancies that can arise between musicians even at a high level of industrial activity. The point is not that an inability to read music will necessarily be an obstacle, nor even that different skill levels need be problematic at all. The Velvet Underground, for instance, was able to accommodate the conservatory trained John Cale alongside

the rudimentary skill sets of Reed, Morrison and Tucker because of other areas of agreement.

It is not just a question of pure proficiency. Taste and its accompanying ideological baggage come into play as well. A deft guitarist with a leaning towards extended solos might, for instance, be at odds with bandmates who favour a simplistic punk oriented approach. As Steve Waksman shows (2003: 122-132), the evolution of rock guitar techniques since the 1970s has been intimately linked to genre ideologies, from the 'three chords' of punk to the classical influences on heavy metal and its sub-genres. Robert Walser makes a similar but more wide ranging point regarding heavy metal virtuosity.

> Like all musical techniques, virtuosity functions socially. Some might find virtuosity inherently distancing or elitist, since it is a sensational display of exceptional individual power. But for many others virtuosi are the most effective articulators of a variety of social fantasies and musical pleasures. (Walser 1993: 76)

The extent to which technique is bound up with arguments surrounding creativity and expressivity is evident in the frequently invoked dichotomy between 'chops'[technical skill] and 'feel'[expressive skill], especially in genres like jazz and heavy metal where individual virtuosity is prominent. The following comments by Living Colour guitarist Vernon Reid provide a good illustration of this.

> What I question are guitarists who use technique to make themselves invincible- an 'I'm going to blow you away with my chops' attitude… Listen to people who use space in their solos, like Wayne Shorter and Sonny Rollins, who are two of our greatest living improvisers. And after you check out their use of space, phrasing and note selection, try and capture their overall feeling and spirit. Too often the term 'playing with feel' means playing without technique, but that's a misconception… There is a bridge between technique and emotional commitment (quoted in Waksman 2003: 128)[69]

The ideological component of musicianship is well exemplified in the pejorative connotations of the term 'muso'. The difference between a 'good musician' and a 'muso' is highly subjective but is a clear illustration of how musical

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[69] See also Robert Walser (1993: 67-103) for a detailed history of virtuosity in heavy metal and the extent to which it is contested territory.

ideologies feed into the mechanics of musicianship and its status as a point of agreement or contention within a band. Cohen, for instance, describes different perspectives on the matter.

> Member of the Jactars and Crikey it's the Cromptons! had clearly adopted [punk's] challenge to technical and musical virtuosity, believing that 'musos' who trained themselves in, and often became obsessed with, musical and technical skills had, in doing so, lost the right attitude… A musician who rehearsed at the Ministry said that he and other bands at the Ministry believed in 'musicianship' and hadn't time for Half Man Half Biscuit and 'their friends'. As far as he was concerned that was not music and those bands would vanish in a few months whereas bands like his continually worked hard and achieved something musically. (Cohen 1991: 173)

This was not a major concern in Air-Fix, mainly as a result of Matt's dominance of the songwriting, and although Chainey's lack of technique in comparison to Matt may have been a factor in the decision to oust him it was not explicitly expressed in these terms. Differences regarding technique were more noticeable in The Distractions, although since the focus was on covers there was less of a sense that individuality as expressed in technique was at stake and tension tended to focus on selecting songs rather than ways of playing them. One of the reasons that I ended up playing more guitar solos in The Distractions than Pedro was not just a matter of technique. Or rather, it was but the reason that my playing style incorporates the 'guitar solo' more easily than Pedro's is that my listening habits and preferences lean further towards styles in which soloing is more of a central feature. Pedro's lack of 'flash' in his lead guitar repertoire is at least partly derived from his suspicion about that way of playing. I can remember playing him a recording of a Robert Cray live track and enthusing about the phrasing in the solo. Since Cray is often described as an exponent of understatement who eschews overly technical displays of fretboard pyrotechnics in favour of considered and 'tasteful' playing I had hoped that this would appeal to Pedro. His rather noncommittal response was that he supposed it was O.K if you liked that sort of thing. The point seemed to be that, for him, it was not just that egregious displays

of speed were unnecessary but that the foregrounded lead break, in itself, was a device to be approached with caution.[70]

Such debates apply across the spectrum of creative decision-making, taking in matters like the direction of the band to individual albums or songs, even when there is agreement about an overall stance. In *Some Kind of Monster* (Berlinger and Sinofsky 2004) Metallica, a band with a clearly defined generic aesthetic, can be seen debating whether or not to feature guitar solos on their forthcoming album (1:15). Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield, the dominant members of the group and main antagonists, have decided that solos should be avoided. Kirk Hammett, the lead guitarist and main conciliator, clearly feels that his capacity for musical expression is being threatened and says that, equally, they should not reject solos for the sake of it. An uneasy agreement that the songs should come first is reached. Nevertheless, it reveals a clear relationship between a creative trajectory, whether this should involve a particular technique and, not least, the personal status and input of a musician.

Since technical prowess and attitudes towards it derive from habitus, musicians invest significant aspects of *themselves* in how they play. From tentative bedroom-based forays into musical activity right up to the recording of albums by million selling acts, a constant and delicate pavane takes place as individual abilities and their related predispositions circle the centre ground. The crux of the matter is that musical skill and technique are constraints upon, or opportunities for, creative work and that the extent to which these apply to individual band members must be measured and balanced to define the creative space for the group.

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[70] As far as solos were concerned, the songs themselves tended to dictate (for me, anyway) the 'style' and extent of the lead break. 'Echo Beach' clearly required a note for note recreation of the saxophone solo in the recording and 'One Way or Another' a direct reproduction of Chris Stein's guitar part. 'You Really Got Me' and 'Molly's Chamber', on the other hand, allowed for more leeway. This extended to the sonic characteristics of tunes as well. The 'twanginess' of the main melody in the James Bond theme was a good fit for Pedro's guitar, and part of my thinking in suggesting and arranging it was as a vehicle for him. An additional point to make is that technical facility and playing well can be two separate categories. Pedro generally made fewer mistakes than me.

3.3.2- Experience

In certain basic respects, 'experience' feeds into musical technique. Skill levels generally increase with experience, especially insofar as it includes practice. This isn't necessarily a given since complacency or stagnation can set in, particularly with regard to the imaginative component of creativity. Generally however, people who play regularly tend not to get any *worse* at the practical aspects of music making as they gain experience. Given that it is also difficult to completely separate the technical and ideological aspects of musicianship, personal experience becomes interleaved with musical output at quite an intimate level. In a group setting, shared experience is a crucial part of building a communal aesthetic as well as defining and working towards common goals. This is what makes a sense of exclusion from decision-making so keenly felt. The injured party may feel a feel a personal slight, however unintentionally it has been committed, arising from the fact that they have not been party to a process that pertains to the group.

Again, the staggering levels of dysfunction on display in *Some Kind of Monster* provide a clear example of this. As part of James Hetfield's recovery programme, he is only allowed to work for four hours a day, and insists that the rest of the band (along with their producer) also adhere to this ruling. The revelation that the others have been reviewing the recordings outside of the allotted time frame provokes a blazing row (1:04). The main bone of contention here is not that Hetfield thinks that specific creative decisions have been made without his consent, but that he has missed out on the experience of reviewing the recordings and that this contributes to his feeling that he is being shut out. In Pink Floyd, even after David Gilmour had been recruited to fulfil the role in live shows that an erratic Syd Barrett could no longer perform, the final line that was drawn under Barrett's membership was the decision not to pick him up for a gig (Harris 2006: 37, Mason 2004: 103). Barrett had already ceased to be an effective part of the group but the decision to leave him out of the experience of even being present at the gig

marked the symbolic end (the practical end was already a fact) of his tenure in the band.

At a more functional level, The Distractions always went to great lengths to try to arrange practices so that everyone could be present. The end of each practice, as we paid for the room and made bookings for next time, was always characterised by much poring over diaries and head scratching as seven busy people tried to co-ordinate their schedules. This was not always possible and there were occasions when one or other of us couldn't make it, or could only be present for part of the practice. There were also sometimes 'section practices' in people's flats to save time in full band rehearsals, whereby the singers would meet to work on their harmonies or Pedro and I would work on guitar parts. (There was also the 'emergency' session, after Pedro went back to Portugal and our standby second guitarist had to pull out of a wedding gig with insufficient time for anyone else to learn the songs. Mark and I had to assess whether we could cover all the guitar parts between us[71]). In a way, the amount of hanging around which the singers had to do whilst we worked on songs in which they only had a small part, and which contributed to the tension surrounding song selection and allocation, could have been alleviated had we opted to 'block' the rehearsals according to featured lead vocalist.[72] But in a much more fundamental way, this would have gone against the grain and although we worked around absences by concentrating our attention on songs in which the absentee played a minor role this was as a matter of expediency rather than policy. The whole point was that this was a group enterprise.

The shared experience of being in a practice room or listening to work in progress is part of the formation and maintenance of a group sound and identity. Creativity as expressed by a group involves social as well as musical

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[71] We could, just. My message to the others read, "Had a jam with mark. The good news is- we're not fucked. Should be ok with current line-up and a bit of rearranging…" After that gig, Mike played on songs that couldn't be covered with just one guitar.

[72] Close to gigs, it became important to have everyone present so that we could run the set.

communication and so on two levels experiencing things as a group feeds into the definition of the creative centre. In an obvious but sometimes minor way, absence can mean that somebody does not have the chance to contribute to a decision. In a more subtle, but sometimes more significant, fashion it might mean that they aren't party to something that provides a common referent and passes into the creative mix through the very process of group interaction via shared experiences, even ones that are individually not worthy of note.

Experience also plays a part in negotiating how the group arrives at the small decisions that build the creative edifice in a different and quite straightforward way. This doesn't necessarily involve the major 'artistic' decisions, although it can, but more commonly those areas of overlap between 'creativity' and 'practicality'—set lists, technical details, presentational matters and so forth. Personal experience, in this context, becomes a means by which decisions that affect the group are pulled in a particular direction. It gets used as a bargaining chip. Mini's greater levels of gigging and industry related experience, for instance, heavily influenced the dynamic in Air-Fix. He was open about the extent to which he could bring his "good, knowledgeable past" to the table, and this was generally acknowledged. Chainey stated,

> Well I've still got a lot to learn about that end of things. I mean... I'm picking stuff up but, you know, well Mini's been there, had the t-shirt and everything.

This also fed into the way in which Shoozy's opinion was solicited along with, to a lesser extent, mine. It certainly helps to account for the prominent role of producers and engineers in the creative work of many bands, especially less experienced ones.

In The Distractions as well, prior experience was invoked in the decision making process. At only the second or third rehearsal, when it became obvious that we were going to play at the end of semester party and we were trying to work out how many songs we would need, discussion drifted towards the matter of an encore. Mark, Matt and I piped up, almost as one, "No encore". Mark in particular,

whilst modest almost to the point of disingenuousness about his capabilities as a bass player, was unreserved about using his bank of experience to drive and shape the process of fine-tuning the band's live sound. Insofar as he had an agenda here it was to benefit the group as a whole by either saving time or avoiding potential technical pitfalls. Nevertheless, his gigging history was used as a kind of 'trump card' to cut through wrangling over details. At a gig at Glow[73], for instance, Mark cut off a protracted attempt to increase the vocal levels in the monitors that was leading to feedback. He pointed out that he had played in rooms like this before, stating that we were just going to have to live with the PA settings as they were and should rearrange our stage positions if people still needed to increase the extent to which they could hear themselves. (I should add that he applied this technique at least as much with sound engineers and event organisers, on behalf of the band, as he did with the members of the band itself).

This 'trump card' is also played higher up the industrial ladder. Tommy Cunningham described how his experiences in Wet Wet Wet were used as leverage during his tenure with The Sleeping Giants, in the context of both the music industry and intra-band relations.

> It gave us instant access to record companies and press… It meant I could win every argument.

Likewise, in Wet Wet Wet, Graeme Duffin's introduction to the band had shifted the dynamic. His ideas and contributions carried weight because he had more 'hands on' experience than the others and, like Mini in Air-Fix, was about nine years older than them.

> We brought in Graeme, and he kind of created a dynamic. Just, you know, 'You stand over there', and, 'It'll work better if we do it this way' and so on.

Alongside their technical skills, musicians bring their experiences to the table in the ongoing business of building a creative character for a band through the

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[73] A Stirling student union venue.

push and pull of agreeing on the details that eventually cohere into a distinctive whole. Shared experiences strengthen the social bond. They are also the context in which the minutiae of creativity bleed from sociability into practicality. In this sense, inclusion or exclusion from the creative process is not as simple as having a 'vote', however it may be weighted. A completed song, album or live performance is the creative destination of a longer journey upon which numerous turns and stops affect the outcome. At the same time, the personal histories of band members, especially the bits that confer specialised knowledge, are brought to bear on more overt negotiations, disputes and predicaments. In this context they are used to add weight to an opinion, if not an actual vote, on elements of the group's overall creative work.

3.3.3- Innovation and Originality

More than raw technique or practical experience, 'innovation' and 'originality' are particularly conspicuous components of everyday understandings of creativity. In a simple sense, it implies making (creating) something new. There are maybe different inflections for 'innovation' and 'originality', the former playing to the more mechanistic aspects of creativity (what one 'does') whilst the latter suggests the mindset that underpins such developments (what one 'is'). 'Innovation' leans towards 'technique' and 'originality' to content. The notion of 'originality' perhaps feeds more smoothly into the Romantic conception of the artist, 'innovation' implying development over genesis. 'Innovation' can be an adaptation or different use of an 'original' idea.

To apply this more specifically to popular music 'innovation' perhaps sits closer to Negus's formulation of the 'synthetic' ideology of creativity with 'originality' more closely aligned to the 'organic' (Negus 1992: 54-55). I am alive to the differences between these terms and hesitate to use them interchangeably. At the same time creativity in popular music generally, and in bands especially,

involves the interaction and melding together of numerous factors. Given that technique, in any case, is one of the means by which musicians express their creativity and the degree to which rock is technologically mediated and often created incrementally it can become difficult to disentangle 'innovative' means from 'original' ends.

As with other aspects of creativity, it also becomes more complex when the 'creator' is a group rather than an individual. Innovatory impulses are brought to the table alongside musical skills and practical experience as band members carve out the shared space in which they create the works upon which their progress depends and by which it is defined. To an extent, the generic field in which a band operates will set some constraints upon what is an acceptable idea. Genres, however, are not static and even if some are more rigid than others there is usually some room for manoeuvre. They also, as Franco Fabbri has pointed out, involve the application of beliefs and conventions that extend beyond purely musical utterances and involve both fine and coarse grained "Behaviour Rules".

> It is well known to those familiar with more than one genre that each genre is characterized by rules of conversation, smaller and larger rituals which more than any other rule help to make an exclusive circle of a genre and to quickly show up any intruder who is not well informed. (Fabbri 1981: 58)

These 'rules of conversation' are a clear starting point for the creative work of band, as is evident in the finely wrought and often highly specific lists of genres and influences in the advertisements for musicians in instrument shops. They also inform the often confused disagreements in which musical, personal and homological issues converge. Glen Matlock's departure from The Sex Pistols, his melodic inclinations and sartorial leanings markedly divergent from the rest of the group, and his replacement with the musically less competent but more 'authentically punk' Sid Vicious would be an example of this (Savage 2001: 308-10). Similar concerns are evident in Cohen's research, as Huw and Tony wonder whether Pete the bass player can really 'be a Crompton'. (Cohen 1991: 37)

In this context, the habitus and creative radii of individuals are, again, important components in defining the overall creative stance of a band. If musicians' attitudes towards genre conventions and conversations inflect their relationships in terms of the broad spectrum of creative input, they are likely to be particularly pointed regarding the extent to which they adhere to, or flout, generic conventions. Fabbri notes,

> A new genre is not born in an empty space but in a musical system that is already structured (Fabbri 1981: 60).

Negus and Pickering extend this to the traditions in which creative works, along with their social extensions, exist and evolve.

> Living traditions are not static but always temporally in movement, always in the process of being reshaped in adaptation to the present. By definition, innovation alters what is already established. Bringing existing cultural elements together in a different arrangement to any witnessed before necessarily changes them. But the generation of new elements or combinations can only be recognised as new in relation to what has come before or what exists in some previous arrangement of codes, conventions, styles and practices, either within or across particular cultural formations. (Negus and Pickering 2004: 111)

A novum may extend the vocabulary of a genre, as with Edward Van Halen's tapping technique, or it may remain more closely associated with a particular act—Queen's distinctive vocals harmonies, for instance. As with these examples, it can be a new way of playing or a new configuration of existing sounds and styles. The success or failure of a novelty is usually gauged retrospectively, most starkly in its commercial fate but in critical terms as well. (Of course, reappraisals are also made and many acts achieve critical acclaim long after their musically active lifetime). Crucial judgements about whether a work is strikingly original or just obtuse are not, ultimately, made by the band, but by its audience. Unfortunately for bands, the only way to find out which fate an idea will meet is to try it. Innovation is risky in the context of unpredictable public response. Equally, 'more of the same' could be met with ennui and accusations of creative stagnation. This lies at the heart of industry's inability to guarantee a return on its investment (Frith 2001a: 33, Negus 1999: 62). Audience uptake of new products is difficult to

predict accurately, whether this is via intuition or intensive market research (Negus: ibid.). This also contributes to the relative autonomy granted to artists in such a commercially directed field, particularly those with a track record of success.

Up to a point, the nature of the band and its fan-base define the extent to which it can experiment. Some bands are renowned for an almost quixotic changeability over the course of their career—Radiohead, for example. Others make a virtue of stolid predictability—AC/DC would be a case in point here. But even for acts whose work is characterised by a degree of flexibility, 'new directions' can be tricky paths. Despite having successfully dragged opera, music hall, rockabilly, metal and other tropes into their musical centre ground, Queen's attempt to build on the funk oriented success of 'Another One Bites the Dust' with the album *Hot Space* proved to be a commercial, critical and artistic disappointment[74].

These are rather clear-cut examples of musical innovation in a band context, however. Most changes aren't on the scale of wedging an 'opera section' into a rock song as Queen did with 'Bohemian Rhapsody' or abandoning guitars for electronic sounds as Radiohead did for *Kid A*. Even when they are, they are part of the negotiated and gradual sequence by which bands produce both their individual works and complete oeuvres. Obviously power structures vary from band to band but, in all but the most leader centred models, nova on large and small scales are subject to a degree of communal approval.

Innovation is a key part of the formula for creativity and is one of the assets that musicians take into negotiations as they attempt to invest the character of the band with, in a very real sense, elements of *themselves*. Originality or innovation need not be of the genre changing or platinum selling variety but are commonly manifested much more simply as *ideas*. These range from the grand to the minute.

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[74] *Graceland* is an example of the other side of this coin. Given the controversy that it stirred, it's easy to forget that Paul Simon and Warner had no reason to suspect that it would be a success on the scale that it was. Lauded as fresh and original, and criticised for being exploitative, Simon's recordings with South African musicians came in the wake of two albums that had been commercial flops.

At one end of the scale could be a vision for a themed double album that tackles complex issues of personal and societal alienation, complete with finished songs and a narrative thread, as Roger Waters presented *The Wall* to Pink Floyd (Blake 2007: 259); an architectural plan for a creative building. At the other end, an idea could be a single song, a riff, a lyrical turn of phrase, a new synth sound or a distinctive combination of guitar effects; the individual bricks in the building.

As the main vehicle for creative expression in popular music, songs occupy a prominent role in the shared space of band work. As Deena Weinstein points out,

> Writing songs is a major form of domination: "Play my song," "Play these notes in this precise tempo," "Sing these words with this emotional tone." (Weinstein 2004a: 195)

This was certainly the case in Air-Fix where Matt's 'leadership' was reinforced by his role as the songwriter. It wasn't heavily disputed there, although it is in other bands. Roger Waters's bid for overt leadership in Pink Floyd was realised by way of his more prolific rate of songwriting (Blake 2007: 258, 298). In the era when songwriting in bands was becoming *de rigueur*, and on its way to becoming a compulsory marker of authenticity in rock, the power structure of The Rolling Stones shifted radically away from Brian Jones as Jagger and Richards developed their songwriting. Their appropriation of the songwriting mantle was also a lasting source of resentment for Bill Wyman, although this may have been due more to the financial implications of their dominance of the publishing rights than a concern about artistic input. The division of creative labour in songwriting is also not straightforward. There are several axes and emphases, even in exclusive partnerships. Relationships may be "complementary" or "synergistic" (Weinstein 2004a:195). Lyrics may be the main, or sole, provenance of one partner whilst the other concentrates on the music—Difford and Tilbrook in Squeeze, or Morrissey and Marr in The Smiths. Equally, they may bounce ideas back and forth to arrive at a finished product, write separately, or like Lennon and McCartney, do both. In bands with more than one songwriter, negotiations over the shared creative space

can be dominated by the question of *whose* songs are recorded, or make it onto an album or single release. The financial dimension of songwriter's royalties compounds disputes on this front.

In 'closed' writing dynamics, there are also numerous other ways for band members to impact on the songwriting process. Weinstein also articulates, more clearly than many musicians would perhaps be able to do from within, the roles that non-writing band members can adopt in the creative relationship.

> Reacting to suggested solutions is so fundamental to a band's functioning that roles tend to emerge. The critic evaluates the quality of a work in a variety of ways. For example, if it's a new song, the critic may ask: "Is it a good song?" "Is it a song that fits with others on the new album or on the set list?" "Does the song violate the band's image or clash with its signature sound?" "Is it a song that sounds fresh". In contrast, the emotional appreciator- the audience-within-the-band – provides immediate feedback: "That sounds great" or "It's good but it needs something near the end." Of course, some emotional reactors are extremely stingy with praise, more given to hisses and boos. (Weinstein 2004a: 194)

In Air-Fix, Mini was both the main critical evaluator and emotional reactor. Chainey and Kenny, to a lesser extent, acted as emotional appreciators. Mini's greater levels of experience also meant that he was more likely than the others to employ scepticism in his range of 'emotional appreciation'. Given that this critical input is almost always combined with a musical contribution, 'creativity' is not the sole preserve of the songwriter. Mini also said that, should a deal of some sort arrive for Air-Fix, he would expect "some points" in the publishing.

Monadic and dyadic arrangements are, of course, not the only possibilities for songwriting in bands. Rick Heller described how in both Dr. Know and The Joyriders, songs were 'jammed' into existence. In Dum Dum, Keith Taylor wrote the bulk of the lyrics whilst the rest of the band came up with the musical component between them.

I shall say more about 'creative differences' further on, but it merits mentioning here that a consistent failure to have one's ideas taken into the shared creative space is a primary driver for both side-projects and departures from bands

(Weinstein 2004a: 196-197)[75]. This is in no small way due to the extent to which musicians invest their personal sense of creativity into the collaboration. (It depends, as well, on the musician. Some, like Ringo Starr, are relatively happy to 'go with the flow' and take a back seat. Others, like George Harrison, might bridle at what they perceive as insufficient attention to their ideas).

Creativity in bands, especially those with looser power structures and more 'synergistic' working methods, relies upon the continuous assessment of numerous individual impulses and ideas, sometimes complementary, sometimes competing. The group must decide which of these will be allowed to pass through the construction process into the creative edifice. On the one hand ideas may be rejected as boring, or hackneyed. In Metallica, these were derogated as "stock" (Berlinger and Sinofsky 2004: 00:29) in the band's patois. On the other hand, something might not make sense for the group, or to it. This is the equivalent in terms of originality and innovation to disparities in technique. The idea simply will not be within the radius of imaginative possibility for all of the group members. At the outer extreme, this can signal a complete breakdown in creative functioning of any kind. Creativity, like any form of communication, needs to operate within boundaries if it is to be meaningful. At their most restrictive, these can mark the difference between, say, keenly felt sub-generic divides. At their loosest, they can demarcate between music and noise, or poetry and automatic writing[76]. Syd Barrett's final days in Pink Floyd were marked by just such a catastrophic combination of personal and creative collapse. His ideas and songs had drifted, wilfully and accidentally, too far away from the common creative ground of the group for them, or him, to be accommodated. Creative divergence on this level is exceptional, and was in this case exacerbated by personal dysfunction. But closer to

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[75] The departure of Jason Newstead from Metallica for this very reason sparks the crisis depicted in Berlinger and Sinofsky's (2004) documentary. (0:22)

[76] All communication relies upon socially acquired common referents for utterances to be anything more than, literally, nonsense. Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* illustrated the impossibility of Private Language and the dependence of meaningful communication upon learned Language Games. (Wittgenstein 1991: 94-95)

the centre of creativity, ideas may still be deemed unsuitable for being excessively obscure, or potentially too difficult to communicate to an audience. Musicians and audiences alike make value judgements that can involve a hazy border across which 'original' and 'outlandish' carry respectively positive and negative connotations. Like different sides of a coin, ideas which end up even slightly on the wrong side of this divide will be inappropriate for the opposite, but related, reason to those that are reckoned to be too formulaic or unoriginal.

This applies to smaller creative gestures as well, like a guitar solo that is too atonal, or even just too long. Even in The Distractions, where creative work was partly delineated by other peoples' compositions, decisions about what to play were not grounded solely in concerns about what would work in front of an audience but involved an investment of a personal sense of contribution. Without the financial consideration of publishing rights and in a less obvious manifestation of self-expression than composition, a degree of 'ownership' still became attached to songs, beyond the question of who sang it. Pedro only occasionally made a concerted stand about song selection, but repeatedly made the case for 'I Just Can't Get Enough'. I always thought of it as somehow 'his' song, in much the same way that I thought of 'Teenage Kicks' as Maggie's, 'Material Girl' as Christine's and 'Molly's Chamber' as Mike's.

Just as some ideas carry more potential weight than others in the creative centre—a whole song compared to a drum fill—different degrees of personal attachment also apply. Some suggestions are more speculative than others. In The Distractions, for instance, I wanted to cover the theme from Buffy The Vampire Slayer, and was also keen on medleys. There was some tentative approval for the Buffy theme, but not without reservations. Matt was concerned, needlessly, about whether his drumming style would be able to incorporate the relentlessness of the track. I was keen, and so pushed the point. It ended up in the set, as a 'bridge' between two other numbers. I had also, somehow, stumbled over the fact that the

chords for Spandau Ballet's 'True' and Wings's 'Live and Let Die' were the same and toyed with the idea of presenting bits of both of them as a medley. I was less certain that this would work in front of an audience but sketched a quick chord chart and pushed it over to Mark as I suggested it to him in a coffee break. His amused and incredulous response—"Behr, you're a fucking lunatic"— quickly sealed its fate.

From platinum selling grand concepts, then, down to song selection in a cover band there is a spectrum along which innovation and originality feed into creative work. For musicians whose careers are conjoined in a group identity, individual ingredients of the creative mix must be ascertained in relation to their own stake in that identity. The presentation to the group of original contributions, large and small, is a way of maximising one's share of it. Since popular music is a highly competitive field, artistically and commercially, the fate of the individual and that of the group depends upon striking a balance between 'innovation' and effective communication, to both audiences and the other group members. Ideas that stray too far from the overlap between the members' creative dispositions will fare badly. Equally, those that rely too heavily on accepted patterns may be rejected if they jar with a group's perception of itself as creative. Band members engage in a perpetual process, simultaneously a tussle and an embrace, of integrating and rejecting one another's original ideas. This shapes the collective output by defining the size and ideological parameters of their creative workspace.

3.3.4- Personality

If technical ability, personal experience and original ideas are *what* band members bring to the table, their personal styles define *how* this is done. Weinstein highlights the extent to which musicians liken bands to families (2004a: 187-188). There is certainly at least one element of truth in the comparison. As with families, despite some basic structural similarities amongst bands, no two are quite the same.

If this is, as Weinstein says, "the mother of all rock clichés" (2004a: 188) then another is that creativity works through 'chemistry'. This is somewhat misleading in the sense in which it is meant. It implies that creativity is somehow a natural process and in playing to Romantic conceptions of inspiration, belies the constant and painstaking work that underpins them. People from all walks and occupations talk of 'chemistry'—sportspeople, actors, lovers and so on. Given the unquantifiable amount of variations and permutations in human interaction, it is perhaps unsurprising that the term is used to refer to something that is felt to be ineffable. And yet in a more literal sense it too is accurate. Boyhood practical applications of chemistry at school tend to show that random mixtures of different elements are as likely to produce explosions, mess, untoward smells and damage to property as they are pleasing special effects and interesting new compounds—or possibly any combination of the above at the same time. Much the same could be said about 'chemistry' between musicians.

The point here is that the aforementioned contributory factors to negotiating a shared creative centre interact in unpredictable ways. It is impossible to weight their relative importance in the minutiae of the creative process because of the huge variation in social relations in bands. The personalities of band members—the elements in that elusive 'chemical' process—have an enormous impact on the way in which the constituent elements of creativity interact. Simply put, no amount of imaginative ideas or technical flair will result in creative communication from somebody who is either too diffident or too dysfunctional to put them across. A forceful colleague may browbeat a more skilled or imaginative musician into quietude. The creative centre in a band is shaped as much by musicians' ability to persuade and negotiate as by the items on the agenda. As with any negotiating table, the end result depends on the negotiators as much as the issues.

Cards like experience, technical skill or new ideas are only 'trumps' in a relatively open game. Few bands are completely egalitarian, or at least not all of the

time and certainly not in every department. This doesn't mean that less dominant or active members can't play a vital role in the shaping the group identity, creatively and socially. Apart from acting as 'emotional appreciators' or 'internal critics', band members can stabilise the creative dynamic by acting as conciliators or, often unobtrusively, as lynchpins. Charlie Watts, for instance, occupies such a position in The Rolling Stones, in part because of his drumming but also because of how he weathered the years of fractious intra-band difficulties in such a way as to maintain the respect and (no small consideration) affection of all concerned.

> Charlie Watts is the cornerstone. Absolutely, without a doubt, and everybody in this band knows that. There's an undying love and undying respect that we all have for Charlie. (Lysaght 2003: 306)

The fact of presenting creative work under a collective banner intensifies the social element of group production and this means that the personalities involved become crucial delineators of it.

Chainey's hesitancy in Air-Fix made his ejection from it easier. I am wary of employing counterfactuals but it is possible that, had he been more forthcoming with his ideas, his role would have been more difficult to discount. Notwithstanding that they became perhaps more musically streamlined without him, there was a different character to the group, in rehearsal and on stage after his departure. Not necessarily *worse*, but different in the 'chemical' way that defies mechanistic description. Such is the source of the endless debates amongst fans surrounding line-up changes. (To return to The Rolling Stones, and offer a subjective point of view, it is interesting that their defining sound cohered not around the seminal guitar line-up of Keith Richards and Brian Jones but around Richards and Mick Taylor and yet seems best exemplified by Richards and Ron Wood. Wood is clearly a better social fit than Taylor was, and there are sufficient stylistic similarities for him to fill his predecessor's musical shoes. Personal and musical roles, here, are hard to differentiate).

With Christine in Germany and Pedro in Portugal, The Distractions played their first gig with a different line-up at a birthday party on the Renfew Ferry (Mark's friend Bob stood in for Pedro on guitar and we were down to two singers). Musically and performatively everything was fine. But Maggie said she missed Christine. This may have been partly down to the reduced female quotient in the band, but more importantly—and this is what she iterated—there was a gap, beyond the physical one, on stage. I knew what she meant. Bob is a fine guitarist but I missed Pedro. This wasn't just a matter of my having had more experience of weaving my guitar style into Pedro's and so having a better intuitive response to his playing. He would sometimes jokingly liken his role to that of Keith Richards—the unflashy but rock solid rhythm guitar player. But in some respects he more closely resembled Watts; he was a lynchpin in the band.

Where Chainey's diffidence contributed to side-lining[77] in Air-Fix, Pedro's had the opposite effect in The Distractions. I have already mentioned that disuptes in The Distractions tended to derive from the question of allocating songs to singers. If Christine featured less prominently in these, this is more due to the fact that she is more naturally self-effacing than Mike and Maggie than a lesser sense of what she would consider to be 'fair-play'. This is not to suggest that Mike or Maggie are overly headstrong, just that they are more forthright than Christine[78]. If the tone of debates surrounding vocal duties was more strident than those pertaining to guitar parts (traditionally, perhaps, a more common source of tension) then this was as much due to Pedro's low-key amiability as the synergies in our playing styles. The way in which and the *extent* to which band members contribute to the group is also a factor of their personal styles, and their personal lives outside of the band. There are parallels between Rick Wright's ejection from Pink Floyd, for

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[77] Musical roles played a part here. There were two guitarists, one of whom wrote the songs. The bass player, being the only one of his kind in the band, had a steadier footing regardless of what his contribution was.

[78] When, early on, it was suggested that a friend of the band might sing lead vocals on a number, Mike wrote a polite, but clearly stated, e-mail outlining his objections, although he did suggest the compromise of this person joining us as an additional singer.

instance, and Chainey's from Air-Fix. Obviously much less was at stake in the latter case given the extent to which the members of Pink Floyd were involved in the business of being in a band and their many more years of association. Nevertheless, despite being a more technically able musician than Waters, Wright found himself marginalised due to his lesser rate of productivity. Where Waters turned his anger and frustration into concepts for double albums, Wright found himself paralysed by personal difficulties (Mason 2004: 247, Blake 2007: 265-266). Aside from character clashes between them, his reticence made his status in the group more difficult to defend when Waters sought to consolidate and extend his own position.

> **David Gilmour:** Rick's relationship with all of us, but certainly with Roger, did become impossible during the making of *The Wall*… He had been asked if he had any ideas or anything that he wanted to do. We would leave the studio in the evening and he would have the whole night to come up with stuff, but he didn't contribute anything.
> **Bob Ezrin:** [producer] Rick is not a guy who performs well under pressure, and it sometimes felt that Roger was setting him up to fail. Rick gets performance anxiety. You have to leave him alone to freeform, to create…
> **Rick Wright:** At the time… I was depressed… and I wasn't offering anything because I wasn't feeling very good within myself. But I'm pretty sure the others interpreted it as, 'He doesn't care' (Blake 2007: 266)

Some musicians are just more driven, ambitious and sure of themselves than others. As well as playing out in debates about specific creative decisions, this is also manifest in how the ideas are presented to the group. This in turn stems from how individuals think and work, and how committed they are to an idea. Waters's presentations eventually became more fully formed than those of his colleagues, particularly in their lyrical content. Matt Hay took entire songs to the members of Air-Fix, the rest of them working on style rather than basic content, their specifc contributions coming in the form of nuances, licks and fills. Whereas I presented the 'Live and Let Die' medley to Mark tentatively, if I wanted to push a point I would arrive with printed out chord and lyric charts to accompany a recording of a song, using the amount of preparation I had put in as leverage. Work, like skill, is a tool for shaping creativity. The application of such tools depends greatly upon who is wielding them, and how.

None of the categories I am describing here are entirely discrete. Technique, for instance, overlaps with commitment. In the most clear cut examples, it doesn't matter how good a musician somebody is if they fail to turn up for rehearsals or, worse, a gig. Bennett, for instance, includes unreliability in the category of declining skills in a group context.

> [A] decrease in musical skills is accounted for by both groups and individuals as an interactional form. One manifestation of this form is the failure to appear for a group event –a practice or performance… In [another] case the presentation of self generated by amphetamine abuse accounted for an inability to play with the rest of the group. (Bennett 1980: 32-33)

Equally, technical expertise or imaginative flair are of little use in a band context if they are accompanied by an inablitiy to co-operate, as various versions of Pink Floyd proved in different ways when their primary songwriting forces softened into incoherence and hardened into recalcitrance. Regardless of the constituent ingredients of creative work in bands, the 'cooking' process is heavily mediated by the personality traits of those involved.

3.4- 'MICRO-FIELDS' AND CREATIVE CAPITAL

Although not much concerned with popular music, Bourdieu's schema provides a useful means of examining creativity in bands, notwithstanding that certain incongruities must be taken into account. Within the wider field of cultural production Bourdieu differentiates between sub-fields of 'restricted' and 'large-scale' production , the former characterised by greater autonomy but limited access to economic capital in the wider field of power and organized around symbolic power, the latter concerned with the economic capital around which culture industries are organized (Bourdieu 1993: 15-16). This works as a general organizing principle but leaves gaps. David Hesmondhalgh illustrates some of the missing nuances in the overall conception of, "small-scale production as oriented towards the production of 'pure' artistic products, and mass production as oriented towards the making of 'commercial' cultural goods" (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 214). There is a

clear overlap in many areas of large-scale production with the sort of consecration found in the more autonomous field of restricted 'production for producers' (ibid.). Hesmondhalgh's primary example is that of 'quality' televsion, although we could add certain types of film production. Closer to home, he notes that, "prestige and popularity are not necessarily so much in contradiction… the most canonized rock act of the 1990s (Radiohead) sold millions of albums. " (Hesmondhalgh 2006: 222)

The field of popular music exists within the broad field of cultural production. Instinctive judgements according to the 'stratification' (Keightley 2001: 125) between 'rock' and 'pop', made by audiences, critics and musicians alike rest on whether the judge views the music in question from the perspective of the (relatively) autonomous sub-field of restricted production or the mass market of large-scale production. (This is at the heart of accusations of 'selling out'). Some genres of popular music, and rock in particular, straddle these 'sub-fields' within the field of cultural production.

We can use the concept of fields and sub-fields, and their interrelations, to draw an analogy and provide a model for how the categories listed above operate in shaping band creativity. Bourdieu suggests, for instance, that, "the literary and artistic field… is contained within the field of power, while possessing a relative autonomy with respect to it, especially as regards its economic and political principles of hierarchization" (Bourdieu 1993: 37-38). There is a degree of homology between the two even as one is contained within the other.

Without wanting to suggest a direct congruity, I would like to propose that we can look at bands in the context of the field of popular music in a similar light. As the field of literature, or popular music, is contained within the field of power, bands can be viewed as 'micro fields' within the field of popular music. The key difference between these models is one of agency. The literary and artistic field within the field of power, and the field of popular music within the field of cultural production, are not agents but exist in a structural relationship with the overarching

field. Bands collectively, and their members individually, *are* agents within the fields of popular music, cultural production and power.

But there is a sense in which bands, as well as being agents, are also fields. They are 'micro-fields' in which their members have agency, just as they do in the wider field. (I call them 'micro-fields' to distinguish them from 'sub-fields' of small and large-scale production). Obviously bands engage in small-scale production at the lower end of the industrial scale and often even in the way they work as they formulate their products for presentation to the field of large-scale production. It is important to make this distinction because of the structural difference between a 'micro-field', as I conceive it, and a 'sub-field' in relation to the wider field. The 'micro-field' reproduces characteristics of the wider field, and indeed sub-fields, in that it contains agents who strive for capital and power within it. But it is also an agent within both the overarching and sub-fields. The sub-field, in itself, has no such *active* agency; it is a sub-set of the field of power. To put this another way, sub-fields are contained within the wider field like rooms in a house. Bands on the other hand, as 'micro-fields' are almost like fractals, or dolls-houses, of the fields in which they operate.

The creative work of bands, the small-scale production in which they engage, involves finding an accomodation between its members. The creative centre that is the result of this accomodation is what will be presented to audiences regardless of whether they be in the sub-fields of restricted production, mass production or both. It will define the band and, by extension, its members. Their accumulation of either symbolic or economic capital in the field depends on the character of the band's creative centre. Different orientations towards symbolic or economic capital amongst its members can also, of course, be a major destabilizing factor in a band. Johnson writes,

> In any given field, agents occupying the diverse available positions (or in some cases creating new positions) engage in competition for control of the interests or resources which are specific to the field in question. (Johnson, in Bourdieu 1993: 6)

The band, acting collectively as an agent in the field of popular music, competes for all the resources of cultural production—money, fame, prestige, respect, audiences and so on. Its means of competing are its creative offerings. The agents *within* the micro-field, whose competitive prowess in the wider field depends upon the micro-field's success, therefore compete for creative capital. The resources specific to the micro-field are the creative gestures and directions that shape its overall output. The process of negotiating the creative centre of the band is marked by competition for that creative capital. Musical competence, original ideas and practical experience are the means by which this competition takes place. In any competition, the players have a portfolio of tactics and skills that they use to their advantage. These are the items in that portfolio as it relates to the specific micro-field of the band, and indeed, the wider fields in which the band is an agent. Equally, the nature of any competition can involve anything from co-operative selection, through friendly rivalry to bitter intransigence. The personalities of the players will define where the competition sits along this scale.

The struggle for control of the creative centre will also define the band's bearing within the field of production. Bourdieu says of the specific literary and artistic field that its organizing principles contain relations to poles at its edges that orientate differentially and simultaneously towards both commercial and symbolic capital.

> It is… the site of a double hierarchy: the *heteronomous* principle of hierarchization, which would reign unchallenged if, losing all autonomy the literary and artistic field were to disappear as such (so that writers and artists became subject to the ordinary laws prevailing in the field of power, and more generally in the economic field), is *success*, as measured by indices such as book sales, number of theatrical performances, etc… The *autonomous* principle of hierarchization, which would reign unchallenged if the field of production were to achieve total autonomy with respect to the laws of the market, is *degree specific consecration* (literary or artistic prestige). (Bourdieu 1993: 38, emphasis in original)

To reconfigure this to account for the more active agency of 'micro-fields', there are not poles at the edges of the micro-field which abutt the surrounding field.

Rather, the micro-field, the band, moves around the field of production towards heteronomous large-scale production on one side or autonomous restricted production on the other, depending on the result of the negotiations of its members. The creative centre space of the band (the micro-field) is, in a way, the steering wheel which orients the band as it moves around the field. (Fig. 1)

Fig 1. Band 'micro-field' in relation to field of popular music production.
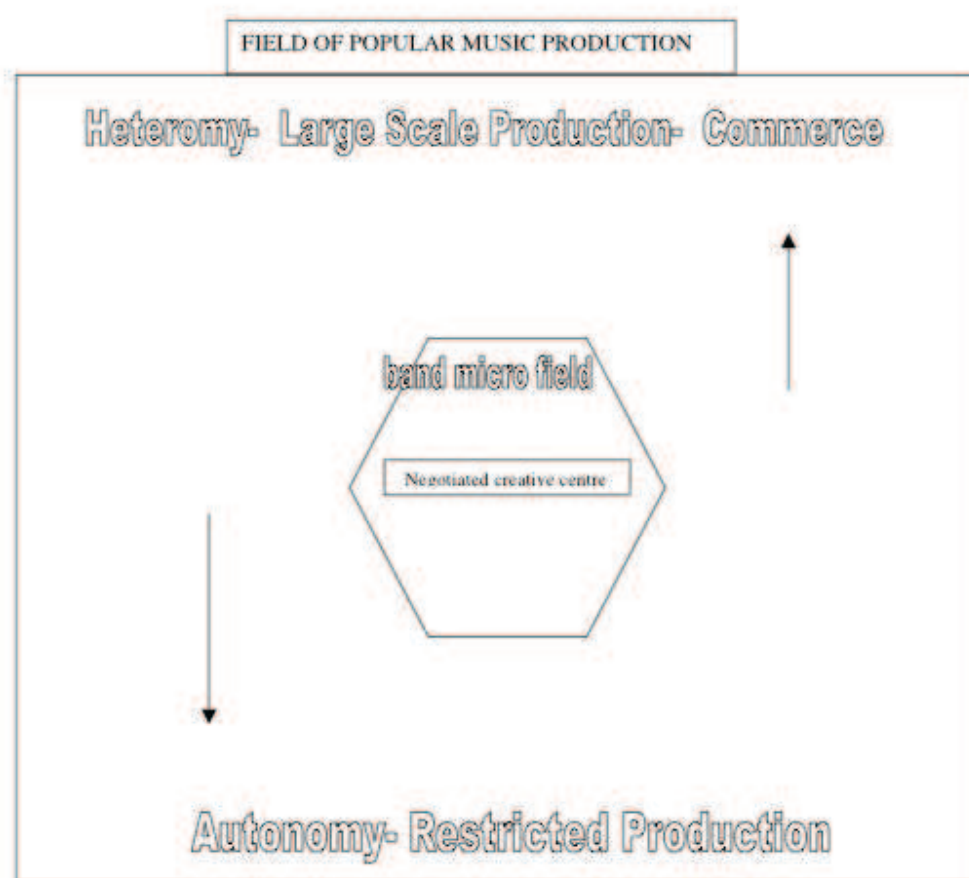
Bands, with their 'critical evaluators', internalise some of the heteronomy of large-scale production into the autonomous work of the collective actor. Emma Pollock, of The Delgados, described how the band didn't necessarily bear an audience specifically in mind when they were expressing their creativity by writing and arranging songs— "The audience likes to be surprised". Nevertheless, there

were constraints in the form of the business exigencies of selling the music, such as the length of a song if they wanted to get it played on the radio. (Cultural Creativity Seminar, Stirling Media Research Institute 21/06/04). Mike Jones[79] makes a similar point,

> [A] musician can be 'in two worlds at once'- because their work consists of consistently mediating, negotiating and reconciling the shifting dimensions of 'art-making' and commerce-satisfying'. Additionally, the industrially-demanded supply of musical 'raw materials' *is* shown to be present through the aspiration of musicians who desire to enter the market-place because those aspirant musicians create their *new* music… in a bid to reach the places where those who inspired them have already been. (Jones 2005: 234)

Any individual musician's dispositive range is likely to include both 'artistically' and 'commercially' directed impulses, although the difference between the two is often far from clear. Agents are not one-dimensional but have diverse notions and instincts. The same applies *in extremis* to collective agents in which the creative process (or any decision making process) involves the multi-dimensional characteristics of more than one individual. The results of any internal mediation, of the kind described by Jones, are subject to an additional layer of negotiation with the other members of the collective agent. And since habitus, and its relation to the field, is dynamic, this is a two-way process. People can be persuaded, or change their minds.

The competition for creative capital within a band thus involves the definition of its ouput as a means of competing in the wider field—i.e. whether or not it is successful. The members of the band, usually to varying degrees, will design the tools with which it will compete. Additionally, internal competition for creative capital is a struggle to decide what *kind* of success might be achieved, or even sought. This is likely to be framed in terms of audiences and markets, or ideological and material goals— art versus commerce— but it could also be described in terms of the orientation of the micro-field.

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[79] His own position as a lyricist for Latin Quarter reveals some of the complications surrounding the borders of the band's micro-field which I shall address further on.

3.5- CONCLUSION

Few, if any, other creative groupings engage in internal competition in quite the same way as bands. The members of an orchestra have their roles more clearly defined in terms of a hierarchy. Competition amongst members is for pre-defined roles in that hierarchy. Actors may compete for stage time or lines when the text is loosely structured upon entering into a process (as with, say, a Mike Leigh or Ken Loach film that employs a 'workshop' approach as opposed to one where the script is sacrosanct). But this is in the interests of furthering, not defining, their own creative careers, however much consideration is given to the needs of the project in hand. Likewise, although rivalries amongst cast members of a TV show might be framed in terms of what is best for the programme there is not the same level of co-dependence. Writing partnerships—like that of Dick Clement and Ian LaFrenais—may engage in struggle for creative capital within the boundaries of their work, although they too are rarely subsumed into a common branded identity. Perhaps comedy troupes are the closest analgoue, particularly when they combine the functions of writing and performance. Monty Python's group identity, complete with competing internal alliances and tensions, resembled a rock band right up to the point of playing stadium gigs in front of crowds repeating every line.

Musicians, as members of society, are agents within a range of fields. Yet they are also agents in a particular field that, like the others, is constituted by its members. This micro-field, the band and its members, is however also an agent in the surrounding fields. Like them it is characterised by competition for resources. The 'creative capital' for which the players in the micro-field strive is the means by which they exercise power over the way in which it competes in the surrounding field. Employing the same skills and dispositions as they do in the world at large, but in a highly specific context, the members of a band rely on the centre ground,

which they negotiate between their own dispositions, to carry them into the fray. The creative capital of the micro-field, the negotiated centre, is more than the band's competitive strategy. It is also the strategy for each of the individuals within it.

Musical skill, practical and technical knowledge and knowledge of the industry (or the proto-market) are levers used by band members in an attempt to put their own stamp on the creative centre. Ideas and innovations (large and small) are brought into the group context as a way of expressing individual creativity. This is 'competition' but it is also co-operation. A band exhibiting creativity through a group identity puts its members in a position where a strong belief in an idea might derive from a sense that it will be beneficial to the *whole* as well as expressing individuality. The extent to which the process of negotiating the creative centre ground is marked by fractious and overt competition or relatively benign co-operation varies according to the skills and personalities of its members. In either case, everyone will have their own 'radius of creativity', and their own sense of how important it is to them that the ideas deriving from it shape the overall character, the creative edifice, of the group identity. Individual expression and group expression are constantly mediated against one another in the micro-field of band creativity. Musicians need to have a large amount of trust in their bandmates as they relinquish control over aspects of the centre ground and a good deal of faith in themselves to set a course which applies to them all. In light of this, it is unsurprising that bands are often unstable and fragile entities.

FOUR

DYNAMICS

The essential thing is that you've got to realise that the band is more important than your hurt feelings. And if it comes to the point where the band is not more important than those particular personal feelings, then maybe it's time to move on.
Mike Mills- bass player with R.E.M (quoted in Doyle 2001: 128)

We call it democracy by dictatorship.
Colin Newton- drummer with Idlewild. (Interview with author)

As should be increasingly obvious, it is difficult to separate the group dynamic from creative work. Creativity is collective (Cohen 1991: 22-64) and fundamentally social (Toynbee 2000: 42-46). Therefore, although I have nominally separated the creative work of bands from an examination of their social dynamics, the two should be thought of as intrinsically linked. It is my contention that, certainly in bands and possibly beyond them, the two are co-dependent; they are like different instrumental parts in the same song. To stick with this analogy briefly, this and the previous chapter examine that song with different characteristics, the drum track and bass line say, in mind. Elements of each have a bearing upon and feed into the other. 'Personality', as described above, is one of the guiding forces of creative work. Equally, creative work impacts on the social make-up of a band.

4.1- THE CREATIVE 'CENTRIFUGE'

In the process of negotiating the central space that defines the group's creativity, musical ability, ideas and experience are expressed as a series of propositions. These either manage or fail, depending upon their relative merit and the interaction of the personalities at work, to find a home in the centre ground and contribute to the creative character of the band. An abject failure of social interaction will have a concomitant effect on creative productivity and creative

stagnation is likely to degrade the quality of the social relationships. One way to think about this is to picture the band—the micro-field moving around the field—as a kind of spinning top, or centrifuge. (Fig. 2)

Fig. 2: The band 'centrifuge'
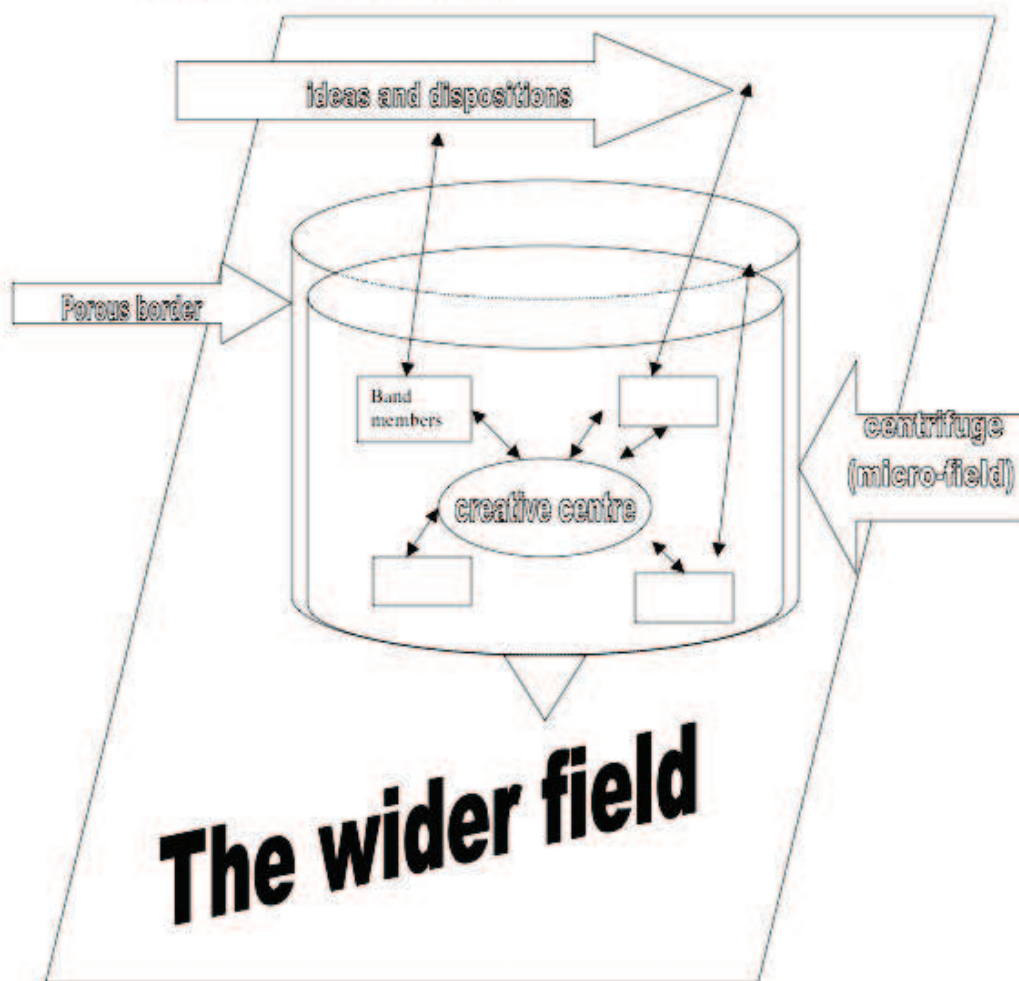
When all is going well, the centrifuge stands upright and the process of creative negotiation within it generates the movement that keeps it functioning. Social breakdown slows the spin, as does creative stagnation. If this reaches a terminal condition, the device will collapse. Given that creativity and sociability exist in a feedback loop, this could happen (is indeed most likely to happen) on a combination of both fronts. When it works effectively, the motion is, to an extent, self-perpetuating. This is, of course, notwithstanding the variety of potentially

disruptive inputs like the effects of fame, stress, frustration at lack of success and so on.

Whereas the negotiated central space defines the direction of movement, the success, or otherwise, of the negotiations defines the rate of spin and hence the overall stability of the enterprise. Creatively and socially, band members must, to a minimum degree, be able to subsume themselves into the group. Individual ideas and dispositions are bounced around the inside of the centrifuge. Centrifugal forces outwardly direct them away from the centre of creativity towards the borders of the field. Some instances of individuality will escape and fail to add to the creative centre. They nevertheless add momentum to the spin. The contrasting centripetal (inwardly directed) forces of negotiating the ones that remain define which of these *will* go into the central space, to add weight and therefore balance. The extent to which musicians subordinate their individuality to the needs of the band, whilst maintaining sufficient levels of self confidence to contribute creatively to it, will decide whether the social/creative dynamic runs smoothly or jerkily.

The analogy of a precariously balanced centrifuge seems appropriate to me. As Weinstein says, "it's a wonder that rock bands survive at all. Most don't." (Weinstein 2004a: 199). When they do, or whilst they do, the centrifuge functions not only by reining in individuality but by simultaneously combining individual strengths and shoring up individual weaknesses. This applies across the spectrum of economic activity. Difford's lyrical flair and Tilbrook's melodic gifts in Squeeze, for instance, gave each of them a stronger hand in the marketplace. The very form of a band, a group identity, provides a means of entering into performance in a public context. I found it difficult to imagine Chainey or Kenny performing at The Venue in support of a chart act in any other fashion. Matt Hay, too, needed both the musical backing and social support of his friends to get him to that point.

Whatever my own skills as a guitarist, I would not have been able to play in front of a thousand strong audience, covers or otherwise, had Maggie, Mike and

Christine not had both the vocal abilities and the willingness to display them that I lack. By the same token, their performative tendencies were very much dependent upon the ability of the backline to recreate the songs. (I know also, from bitter experience, that solo flight on the guitar without support of the calibre of Matt, Mark and Pedro can be a nervy and hesitant experience. Playing in a band, as Mini suggested, might involve showing off but if one is to stand on a podium to do so it must be secure). Even in the midst of their bitter sniping, for example, the antagonistic camps of Pink Floyd talked in terms of how their relative strengths and weaknesses had cohered. David Gilmour commented,

> What we miss of Roger… is his drive, his focus, his lyrical brilliance… I had a much better sense of musicality than he did. I could certainly sing in tune much better… So it did work well. (Harris 2006: 7)

Waters for his part noted,

> Dave needs a vehicle to bring out the best of his guitar playing. And he is a great guitar player. (ibid.)

Their sound engineer Nick Griffiths summed things up more objectively,

> Dave made people enjoy it and Roger made them think. (Sutcliffe 2004: 69)

Another cliché is that in successful bands, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. The kernel of truth in this lies in the way that individual strengths and weaknesses are managed and mitigated in the micro-field. This applies to personal characteristics (shy, headstrong, conciliatory, determined) as much as it does to creative ones (imaginative, traditional, eccentric, formulaic). Weinstein's analysis of The Kinks (2006) provides a clear picture of the social and creative interplay at the heart of band relations. She dismantles the often-cited trope of 'sibling rivalry' between the Davies brothers. In its place she puts a version of events whereby a 'depressive' (Ray) and a 'manic' (Dave) personality type in the immediate context of structural relations (singer/songwriter and lead guitarist) and the wider context of business problems in the field account for both the personal tensions and creative

accomplishments of the band. As with The Kinks, 'tension' need not mean total collapse.

> The Davies's root relation was a dance… Much like a tango, one (Ray) withdraws, withholds attention, and reduces the interaction to near nullity, while the other (Dave) comes on, screaming to be noticed, very strongly. The withholding leads to guilt; the attempts to be recognized lead to frustration. Like some perpetual motion machine, this guilt and frustration constantly refuel behaviors that reinforce the depression and mania, respectively. Unlike many other forms of conflict in bands that lead to a total rupturing of the relationship, the Davies's dynamics help to explain the band's extreme longevity.
> (Weenstein 2006: 184)

In many other cases, of course, disharmony *will* lead to a breakdown in creative co-operation. This may happen quickly, in which case the band will probably fail to operate effectively in that line-up, or eventually, when the tension becomes too much for one or all of the protagonists to bear. In either situation, the point is that assertions that either 'tension' or 'harmony' lead to creative success are putting the cart before the horse. Some groups might thrive on tension, particularly those made up of psychologically robust individuals. For others it will be deleterious to the work of the band if the process of creative negotiation is unable to survive prolonged conflict. Equally, whilst consensus may provide a rich source of original and distinct material, a consistently congenial dynamic might neuter creative output, rounding off the edges to produce stagnation. The truth, for most bands most of the time, probably lies in between. The point of negotiation is to resolve tensions into an agreed, if sometimes compromised, harmony. Again, where tension produces spin in the creative centrifuge, successful mediation of it produces balance.

Creative relationships, like any others, also evolve over time. Consensus can become boring, and a collaborative partner may seek fulfilment elsewhere. Strife can become intolerable, regardless of any creative or material rewards that may accrue from it. Additionally, in longstanding as well as new groups, individual abilities and preferences shift over time. People can grow to like, tolerate or despise

each other over the course of a career. They can also acquire new skills, or lose the ones they had. As Weinstein says,

> Creative abilities within a band also change. Those who once weren't able to write songs may learn to do so… Moreover it's common for those who were once the creators in the band to lose their ability at some point or at least to experience its decline. (Weinstein 2004a: 196)

The variable skill rates that Bennett describes (Bennett 1980: 30-31) in the shifting formations of local bands apply further up the ladder as well, leading to changes in the social dynamic that can be anything from an altered power relation to a new line-up. Weinstein cites Brian Wilson as an example of decline. Syd Barrett in Pink Floyd would be an equally potent symbol of this. (As was the case with Barrett, and the speed abusing musician in Bennett's example (1980: 33), drug use is often a factor in diminishing skills). The *development* of skills, like George Harrison's songwriting in The Beatles, can destabilize the social dynamic from the other direction by adding to the amount of ideas seeking inclusion in the creative space. The centrifuge spins faster so the task of balancing it becomes more difficult. A previously harmonious social relationship will come under strain if band members feel that their developing skills are being hampered by an internal hegemony. This was also, for instance, a factor in The Distractions as Maggie and Christine's initial hesitancy about singing up front with a band quickly gave way to confidence, ability and enjoyment, increasing the pressure on the available creative space.

4.1.1- External forces

The model of the 'centrifuge', balanced precariously in the field, does not preclude the influence of external factors. A spinning top may fall sideways due to a lack of internal momentum, or it may hit an obstacle. Alternatively, outside forces may push the plunger to provide an injection of energy, or help to correct imbalances. Artistic and commercial success would be clear examples of how this works in the band context. Getting signed or having a hit will increase the energy (whether functional or dysfunctional) of the band's dynamic. From the other

direction, a consistent lack of success will sap a band's energy, possibly leading to dissolution. As ever, much depends on the structure and orientation of the band. A full time commitment to industrially related practice is likely to suffer at the hands of financial shortfalls, particularly when the band becomes a drain on personal resources. Rick Heller described the demise of The Joyriders to me in these terms.

> Everything we had coming in from live performances, royalties, we split, so we could live off it, and the dole, or whatever part time work we could get here or there. It all got very, very messy and that ultimately was the reason we ended up breaking up. It was costing us more money to be in the band and we ended up having to put our own money into it, which ultimately meant that we had no money to live off.

The attempt to sustain the creative project in the face of persistent external resistance is a strain. This may, as it did with The Joyriders, spill over into financial and personal disagreements or it may just lead to amicably throwing in the towel. Dum Dum also ran out of energy to continue, despite nearly signing to Sony, although they continued to operate as a cover band.

> **Mini:** We had one A&R guy come up, then another, and another, to see us. Eventually Muff Winwood even saw us. But one person back at Sony didn't like us, so Reef got the deal instead, it was obviously between us two. By then we'd been at it full time, and working jobs, trying to keep it going and it was all back to square one and, maybe in retrospect it might not have been the best time to get signed, we didn't have all that much material and we'd have struggled trying to put out a second album but it was, like, 'Screw it'. We carried on doing the covers thing, which we'd started in the first place to support Dum Dum, 'cos we were all still mates but I don't think we had the heart to carry on banging our heads against that wall.

A lack of momentum can lead to slow dissolution, as happened with Air-Fix, but the stress of maintaining a band to the point where it becomes financially self-sustaining may also be more than its members can manage. Richie Simpson said that, despite a deal from Chrysalis being "on the table", Baby's Got A Gun ended up creatively and emotionally spent.

> They just wanted us to go away and write a few more songs. It was all in place but, I mean, I was burnt out by then, you know. It was hard to pin Gary [McCormack, a new bassist] down, get him to turn up at rehearsals. And we'd been used to doing five a week and that was when we had to really put the work in but we were just… burnt out.

For financial, creative or social reasons, or a combination of them, the maintenance of a band without external support can become increasingly difficult, for individuals as well as their combined enterprise. The lifestyle becomes harder to maintain as time goes by.

> **Rick Heller:** In The Joyriders we decided that we didn't want to be all sleeping in the van and eating shitty food all the time so I suppose that made it a bit more expensive.

The consequences and rewards of success are also no guarantee of stability. The financial and critical stakes in any potential disagreement also rise as a band accrues more attention and more fans. Wealth and fame are unpredictable influences and will test relationships as surely as poverty and insignificance. Stronger bonds or a parting of ways may arise from either. But inflated egos and creative ambitions need not be the only reason for weaker social bonds. There is a structural factor to take into account. Many bands don't survive, but amongst those that do success must be weighed against considerations extrinsic to the band. Weinstein writes,

> Success helps, providing extra musical incentives for cooperation… Although sometimes, of course, success can break a band, as when the creative centre thinks it's all due to him and his ego swells to intolerable proportions. (Weinstein 2004a: 199)

This is true. But whilst the material and symbolic rewards of co-operation may override social considerations, the band may also find itself in competition with other relationships and interests. This does not usually take place according to the stereotype of the 'John and Yoko' model; here, again, the historical narrative of The Beatles lays down tropes which others pick up.[80] Particularly as band members grow older and build relationships and families outside of the band the strains of longer tours, reaching further afield, can work against external commitments.

Nevertheless, even without problems pertaining to specific issues, the straightforward facts of career and family progression, along with ageing, weaken

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[80] Sara Cohen's case studies, for instance, attributed the breakup of The Beatles to Yoko Ono. (Cohen 1991: 209)

the *necessity* of sticking together as a group. Colin Newton described a change in Idlewild's routine as, having moved to different places, they convened occasionally for blocks of time when they had to for work purposes, rather than frequently and in a manner more closely interwoven with their everyday lives as they had when they were trying to get the band off the ground.

> If we weren't on tour we'd practice everyday basically… we wouldn't have a couple of weeks sitting around doing not very much. But then Roddy moved to London… Since that happened and since having Gavin in the band [a replacement bass player] who lives in Dublin, now what we do is we go away for a couple of weeks and rehearse, like, for twelve hours a day type of thing… rent a house and practice solid without doing anything else.

This is not to say that band gatherings are not still characterised by a mix of sociability and work, just that the emphasis in the relationship may shift from 'mates' to 'workmates'. Maintaining the levels of social intensity of early bands is neither easy nor, perhaps, desirable. Tommy Cunningham's comments about Wet Wet Wet's rise to prominence evidence a comparable pattern.

> After the first album we stopped socialising together… It's healthy to be separated. The band's life would be halved otherwise.

Success also affords the opportunity to spend less time together. The Joyriders' unwillingness to re-experience the hardships of early touring may have added to their financial burden and hastened their demise, but the accumulation of material benefits that accompanies the refinement of skills can weaken social connections in a different way. Barry Shank outlines how early tours bind bands together socially and professionally.

> The first few tours of any band are exciting times, as each band tests out their material on audiences who do not already know them. They provide an opportunity to practice with great intensity every night… Bands find out whether or not they can play the same songs in the same order, smile in the same places, and move and nod their heads together without boring themselves… Bands also learn whether or not they can live together… Simply surviving a tour… and returning home without the band breaking up represents the achievement of a certain professionalism… Each bare-tour completed adds its store of specific anecdotal details to the overarching myth and more completely stitches each member of the band into the position of the working musician. (Shank 1994: 170-171)

Having achieved such professionalism, already knowing where to smile, bands may find that they no longer *have* to live together, as Tommy Cunningham's remark about touring in comfort illustrates.

> You just get to the point where you can do your own thing more. You know, 'Well he snores so I'm going to sit next to *him* on the plane.'

Money need not be divisive. It often is, however, especially when the matter in hand is the division of that money and this is likely to intensify as the sums in question increase. It is harder to negotiate a disagreement over a million pound recording bill or royalty agreement than a ten pound bar tab or rehearsal room fee[81]. Tommy Cunningham drew the distinction in Wet Wet Wet's progress between 'security' and 'wealth'. He marked 'Goodnight Girl' (a U.K Number 1) as the moment where he felt financially secure.

> It was a nice feeling, 'We're secure'…I could go off and get married.

But money, at that point, was not a divisive issue. It was later on after the huge hit, also attached to the successful film *Four Weddings and A Funeral*, 'Love Is All Around' (a U.K number one for fifteen weeks) that, "serious cracks started to appear."

What this reveals, apart from the fact that a number one single is less of a passport to great riches than myth-makers might suggest, is not that material rewards are *necessarily* divisive but that they are unlikely to heal any existing cracks, and can exacerbate structural financial inequalities in the band's set-up that matter less when the contents of the pot are correspondingly small. (Cunningham left Wet Wet Wet in a dispute over royalty payments although they have subsequently reformed with him back in the band).

Even when success provides reasons for continued musical co-operation this may be utterly distinct from any vestiges of social affinity. When a band reaches the

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[81] Persistent failure to contribute to small expenses can be a source of resentment in small time bands. I didn't encounter this with Air-Fix or The Distractions but have witnessed it elsewhere, and heard plenty of complaints on the subject.

level of recognition whereby it has become a brand, the musical and professional operations can continue without the need for the social component in a state of affairs diametrically opposed to that described above by Barry Shank. In early periods of hardship and adversity a relatively high level of social cohesion is necessary to keep the creative enterprise operating. One of Shank's points is that making it through a 'bare tour' with the band intact is, in itself, something of an achievement. If the band is lucky enough to progress far enough into the professional ranks to achieve, in Cunningham's formulation, 'security', then the work unit can survive a decline in social cohesion. Idlewild, for example, are able to convene for two weeks to rehearse and go back to their separate lives after a tour or recording stint. Public projections like that of The Beatles in the film *Help*, in which they share a house that they enter via different doors, are to an extent taking a previous state of affairs (the social situation in a striving band) and recasting it in the light of a new reality (the successful one).

In the even more extraordinary cases in which 'security' becomes a surplus of wealth, the extra money allows members to transgress long held social bonds, both within and outside of the band. In such situations, the level of necessary social cohesion between the members of the group must be relatively strong if they are to continue as a creative unit. Even without acrimony, when the members of a band are 'set for life' they have no need to work together again. Relatively high levels of cohesion, even in the form of understandings that have been reached over many years, will be needed for the band to work creatively, or even at all. (Fig. 3)

Fig. 3

Necessary social cohesion

Levels of material success over time- (starting out→ surplus wealth)
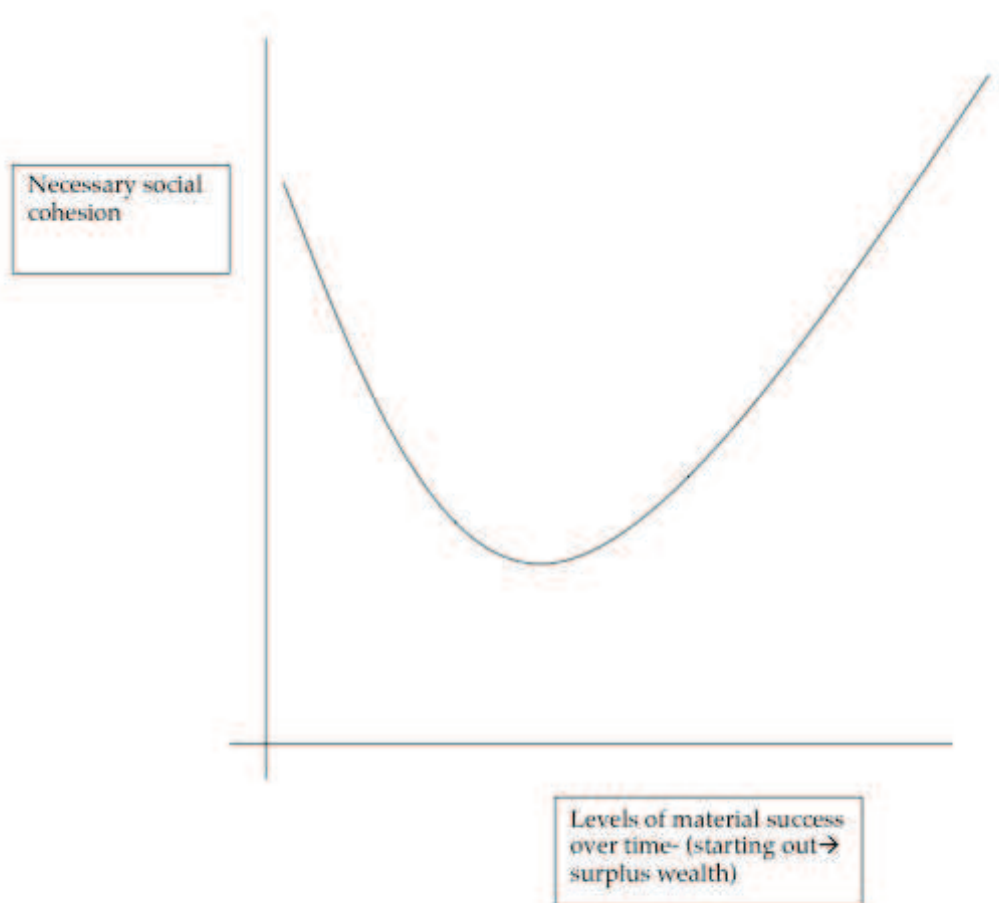
Material considerations may override social apathy, or antipathy, but the demands of bands who *genuinely* don't need the money are likely to be high. Sometimes the rewards may be too great to refuse, and worth papering over social cracks. Bands whose members have fallen on 'hard times' may also reconvene, despite lasting enmity, for the financial benefits involved. In these cases, however, what appears on stage is usually the iteration of the 'brand' rather than the 'band', in the sense of the creative and social nexus from which the brand was formed.

Certainly for meaningful new creative work to take place, rather than live renditions of greatest hits, there must be some sort of lasting social accommodation

or negotiated entente. There is a difference between, say, U2 touring behind a new album and The Police on their reunion tour. Some ties, family bonds or lasting friendships, can survive long distances and periods of separation intact. Even if the decision to stay together is largely a business decision, it must involve enough social cohesion to remain workable if none of the partners has a practical need to remain in business. Beyond a certain point, the band and the brand can become separate entities. For the band to remain intact as a creative unit after achieving success that goes beyond operational security (i.e. by removing the need to work) lasting and resilient social bonds need to be in place (or healed) even if they lack the intensity of early experiences. The same, however, is not true of the brand.

In this context, the cliché of spoilt stars in separate limousines is not far removed from the truth, as Garry Mckenzie's account of working for Yes illustrates.

> They don't even talk to each other. They don't travel together. They're like…
> the production manager's going 'Stage at ten o'clock' [for the encore] and
> one of them's saying, 'ten past ten' and this guy's feet are sewn to the
> ground. And then he [the production manager] is going to the others and
> they're saying 'ten o'clock'. (As recounted to the author- 23/09/07)

In cases like these the creative edifice has already been built and pre-sold to an audience, and so no longer depends on the integration of social and creative relations. In a sense, the centrifuge is no longer turning, although the (financial) external forces are sufficient to keep it upright.

4.2- POROUS BORDERS

The line dividing social from creative interaction in bands is blurred, at best. The brand that evolves from the band derives from both. Once the musical and performative components are in place, of course, it is relatively easy for a newcomer to enter into the musical space. It is less easy to fit in socially. Jason Newstead's perpetual 'outsider' status in Metallica when he replaced Cliff Burton, who had died in a coach crash, is a case in point (Berlinger and Sinofsky 2004). Often new members will be chosen as much for their social fit as their musical

abilities. Particularly for long-standing bands, prodigious musical skills or a known musical suitability[82] are likely to be pre-requisites for any candidate for inclusion.

The brand and the band are distinct but related units. The work of branding begins before involvement with industry, which merely accelerates and systematizes the projection of the group identity into a brand. Mini, for instance, described how both he and Keith [the singer in Dunderfunk and Dum Dum] had, as schoolboys, designed logos and album artwork for bands that were, at the time, only imaginative realities. Rick Heller, likewise, noted that Doctor Know paid careful attention to artwork and 'image' as well as their music. Dress codes, logos and websites are the site of conscientious expense of creative energy. The industrial brand takes its character from the homologous nature of the band's musical and extra-musical creative codes.

As we have seen, the brand can outlive the band that spawned it. This may be in complete and final terms. Here, the band no longer performs in any living way and exists only as commodity products —re-packaged greatest hits albums, live DVDs, t-shirts, computer games and so forth. Alternatively, some form of the band may continue to perform under the brand name but in a static re-production of the fluid dynamic that gave rise to the brand in the first place. Such units may contain some, one or even none of the musicians who constituted the original, or 'classic', band. In disputed cases, there may also be more than one touring version of a 'brand'. Alongside the songs, the brand name, is a property and in the event of a terminal social collapse it might be unclear where it should reside, as the case of Pink Floyd described in large and expensive letters. (Blake 2007: 321-322, 333-334)

Less likely is that the band will outlive the brand although it is possible for the social relationships to outlive the working ones, as with Dum Dum and Air-Fix. Once the branding process has taken place the underlying band is likely to either continue working within it, possibly sporadically, or disperse. Even when bands re-

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[82] This is especially pronounced in heavily codified genres like heavy metal.

convene only occasionally, the brand has a life of its own— 'Is there going to be another album?', 'Will you tour again?' ask fans and the press (and record companies and promoters). In the case of irrevocable dispersal, the brand is all that remains.

At the heart of this duality is another one that not only makes the band/brand binary possible but is also the source of many of the fundamental tensions in bands. One of the things that makes the band a remarkable phenomenon—makes it a 'micro-field'— is the fact that it exists simultaneously as two types of group. As Weinstein observes (1991:70, 2004a: 189), the band is both a familial circle bound by emotional ties and roles (gemeinschaft) and a work unit in which functional performance of tasks is required, the group being enjoined by a common goal (gesellschaft). The emphasis may shift, from bonds of friendship to those of function, especially as original members leave and are replaced with musicians who have become acquainted with the band in a working context (Weinstein 1991: 70); the changes in Idlewild's membership and working pattern (described above) are good examples. The social and ergonomic consequences of this are almost endless, and played out in countless intra-band encounters, triumphant, tragic, affirmative and disputational alike. Structurally, however, there are two main points of note, which are related.

4.2.1- External and internal borders

Firstly, the external borders of both the 'working' and the 'family' group are porous. Membership of the 'gesellschaft' extends outside of the band, and the brand, to include a range of collaborators, musical and otherwise; session musicians, producers, managers, sound engineers, marketing staff, road crew and numerous others all occupy positions within this space. They might be only marginally involved with the core creative work, like a roadie, or they may central participants; producers like George Martin with The Beatles, Brian Eno with U2 or

Nigel Godrich with Radiohead for instance. In some cases, their involvement may extend beyond that of core members of the band. There are numerous examples of this. Bob Ezrin arguably contributed more to both *The Wall* and *A Momentary Lapse of Reason* than either Richard Wright or Nick Mason, both of whom followed directions rather than leading the way and had their roles supplemented by session musicians (Blake 2007: 269). On a smaller scale, Graeme Hughes (Shoozy) and I were also involved in the working realm of Air-Fix.

Membership of the 'family' unit is also not confined to membership of the band. Girlfriends, wives and friends all move into and out of the social sphere of the band. Since bands are often formed out of peer groups, mutual friends are also commonplace. There is likely to be a degree of overlap between the social circles of band members, particularly in early bands formed out of a music oriented scene or local community or at college. Membership of the 'family' unit is less easy to quantify than that of the working group, although this is a function of the characteristics of the groups. Whatever anyone may *feel* about, say, a backing singer or member of a hired horn section, their functional purpose is obvious. The emotional ties in the community-oriented group are more subjectively defined. Both groups, however, contain members who are not in the band. The borders of the micro-field, in which creative and social interactions combine, are not a rigid shell but a semi-permeable membrane.

Secondly, *within* the specialized micro-field the line between 'working' and 'family' relationships is also porous. For the core membership at least, it is often impossible to distinguish between the 'family' and the 'working' relationship, especially since the two are often historically co-dependent. The working relationship also extends beyond music. In the early stages of a band's development, many of the functions later taken on by others are split between the musicians. This, as well as music, is a potential source of dispute. Tommy, of Found, said that he "practically had to force Ziggy [his bandmate] to sit down and

do some of the accounts". Sometimes the division of ancillary labour falls naturally according to the various strengths of the band members. In Dr. Know, Ishmael the bassist was "very artistic" and so took care of the posters. In Baby's Got A Gun, according to Richie,

> Billy didnae mind doing the driving[83], Bill didnae mind doing the technical thing, me and Garry were okay with phoning people and that kinda stuff.

Nevertheless, ancillary work is another area of band operations that involves negotiation and consideration.

The members of a band, then, are *simultaneously* colleagues and (assuming things are going well) friends. The particular emphasis of their interactions does not just change over the passage of years but from moment to moment, consciously and unconsciously. Additionally, and increasingly if the band is successful and its logistical needs expand, the porous external borders have an effect on the blurred line between function and community within them.

Founder members of bands may fall out, or drift apart, leaving only a working arrangement. Equally, hired hands can become close friends. Indeed, when the nature of the work involves prolonged proximity and intensive co-operation, such as occurs on stage, on tour or in a studio, such alliances are likely. The forces that pushed the members of Dum Dum, who gathered for occupational reasons, into close friendship apply no less to other people working together in close conditions. There may also be the constraining factor of the employer/employee relationship but this is not always an eternally 'fixed' relationship. Enmity rather amity may arise but either way *emotional* relations become apparent, although enmity is less likely to be allowed to flourish in this context if the relationship is one between employee and boss. (Or, at any rate, the

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[83] Matt Brennan said that the members of Zoey Van Goey, none of whom could drive, agreed to take lessons at the same time so that they were not left in a situation whereby one of them was landed with the onus of driving. Until they could take on the task themselves, they were reliant on their manager, friends or people that they hired to do this. (There was no immediate answer to the question of what would happen if only one of them passed the driving test).

employee, as in any other work context, may have to put up with the situation for the sake of a pay cheque). There are also shades of grey between the absolutes of a 'four headed' brand predicated on Romantic equality and a core group of players with regular musical support. The difference between the session players who form the longstanding additional quasi-membership of Pink Floyd or The Rolling Stones and Bruce Springsteen's E-Street Band is illustrative of this.

Movement between categories is possible, and frequent. The tendency to expand recordings beyond the physical, and sometimes musical, capabilities of the 'core' that was a consequence of rock's aesthetic and ideological expansion in the 1960s and the impossibility of re-producing these recordings on stage mean that bands often require additional help. So called 'fifth-members' are a frequent addition to album credits, although not album covers, and stage line-ups— John 'Rabbit' Bundrick for The Who, Spike Edney for Queen, Chuck Leavell with The Rolling Stones and so on. Such associations can last for decades[84]. Depending on the nature of the band, and the brand, the journey between 'core member' and 'additional member' can go either way. The Foo Fighters' Chris Shifflet became a full member of the band having been a supporting guitarist in the touring line-up, likewise with Allan Stewart in Idlewild. More famously, Ian Stewart was shunted out of the limelight in The Rolling Stones, his image deemed unsuitable for their projected group identity (Norman 1984: 10, Bockris 1993: 51-52). It is telling, nevertheless, that their acceptance speech upon induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1989 gave equal weight to both Stewart and Brian Jones in a tribute to deceased members. (Lysaght 2003: 252).

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[84] The additional member is often also a keyboard player. Technology allows keyboards to easily re-produce the range of orchestral and other sounds found on recordings. In bands whose core membership has limited formal musical skills, a keyboard player may also plug the gap between the formal skills applied to the recording and the core sounds provided by the band members themselves.

4.2.2- The problems of differentiation

Since the creative work of the band also involves collaboration with 'outsiders', a delicate balance must be found between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, particularly in light of the competition for creative capital. Sometimes the difference is obvious. Andy Summers describes the tense situation when Sting tried to bring a keyboard player into the working dynamic of The Police.

> One of the first things we have to deal with is the fact that Sting has invited a Canadian keyboard player to join us on this album. Stewart and I are incensed… I feel adamant about not turning our guitar trio into some overproduced, overlayered band with keyboards. But within a day he turns up, a heavily built guy with an oversize ego to match his bulk… It's a difficult situation and it's hard for Stewart and me to talk Sting out of it, so we go into the studio with the keyboards. But here the intruder signs his own death warrant because he smothers everything with dense keyboard parts… He compounds the problem by leaning over his synthesizer every few minutes and playing us one of his riffs and exclaiming, "Listen to that- boy, if I heard that, I'd love to have it on my album". It's painful. He lasts three days and then even Sting wearies of him and sends him on his way. (Summers 2006: 382)

A great many of the tensions within the social dynamic arise from the overlap between the 'family' and 'work' groups. For core members, this is sometimes simple to explain, if very complicated to deal with. A failure to pull one's weight may endanger the prospects of all concerned and be read as a form of 'betrayal' as well as a functional shortfall. From the other direction, it involves a great deal of self-discipline, and self-censorship, to prevent personal disagreements from manifesting themselves in a working environment, particularly when they occupy the same social and physical spaces. It is often difficult to differentiate between personal and practical criticism.

> Deena Weinstein writes,

> In the close-knit circle, members are valued simply because they belong to the group. In an organization, members are valued only for their contribution to the achievement of the group's goal. (Weinstein 2004a: 189)

These relative values can easily come into conflict due to the temporal simultaneity and physical proximity of their enactment. This is compounded firstly by the fact

that the structure of the band's creative functionality involves competition for influence and further by the fact that there are often financial ramifications of this competition, songwriting credits or the inclusion of songs on albums, for example. A musician's individuality might be a reason for inclusion in the close-knit circle but work against the needs of the organisation, or it may be useful to the organisation but a strain on the communality of the family circle. Beyond this, the porous borders of the group can be a source of tension if the status of relationships is unclear. Managers, for instance, are often part of both the family and organisational circle. Lack of clarity about the extent of their role may strain relationships. Lennon's caustic response to a Brian Epstein's attempt to comment on the Beatles' sound during a session is a clear example.

> You stick to your percentages, Brian. We'll make the music.
> (Coleman 1995: 314)

The distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', then, is unclear. Key members of a band's organization may be 'insiders' in one aspect of its functional work but extraneous elsewhere. The presence of 'insiders' from one sphere of the band's experience may be unwelcome in other areas of their operations. When I asked Russell Anderson, then of The Men, if I could sit in on their rehearsals, he demurred, despite the fact that I was known to all of the members and had worked, socialised and, in a couple of cases, played music with them.

> I dunno man, it'd be a bit weird having someone else around when we're trying to get stuff together. [85]

Joey Chaudury, a sound engineer and guitarist made a similar point.

> It sort of turns a practice into a kind of performance… I mean it depends where you are with the song.

This is also a contributory factor to what Cohen calls "The Threat of Women" (Cohen 1991: 201-222). Feelings of suspicion towards girlfriends may stem from

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[85] This problem was alleviated with Air-Fix by my acting as a guitar tech and taking on a functional role.

jealousy if relationships that were previously consuming become diluted as attention turns elsewhere when new people enter the circle. Certainly if the activities of the band have revolved around codes of masculinity (as they often do), the presence of women may prove problematic. This situation is ably parodied in *This Is Spinal Tap* (Reiner 1984). "It's your wife", screams a frustrated Nigel Tufnell, jealous of his friend's conjugal happiness and missing the laddish camaraderie, "You can't play guitar because of your fucking wife".[86]

Lenny, a former tour manager with Simple Minds, painted a similar picture. When the band started touring internationally, the increasing presence of partners in the touring party impacted on their working dynamic. Much of this was simply the curtailment of their extra-mural sexual activity but there was also the factor of the occasional collision of the work and domestic spheres.

> Having an argument with a girlfriend or a fiancée when you're at home is one thing, but when you're on tour and you've got, you know, a gig to do having your state of mind being disrupted and emotional turmoil being thrown into the mix does not make for a smooth gig… Other members of the band will quite happily point out, you know, 'she's causing a problem here, we need to tell her to go home'.

His unreconstructed account of disruptions to the working life of the band, such as an incident where [keyboard player] Mick MacNeil's girlfriend tore up his passport after an argument, glosses over the fact that such disruptions can occur for any number of reasons – drugs, alcohol, accidents, arrests or injuries for instance. But it does reveal the potential problem of divided loyalties for musicians.

The undeniable sexism at work here also masks, and exacerbates, another issue, namely the tension across the border between the communal and the organisational spheres. The 'threat of women' is not just rooted in the encroachment of females into what is perceived to be male territory (although that is often the case). It also derives from the overlap between the communal and

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[86] *Spinal Tap* reveals the difficulty that rock has in accommodating women on equal terms in more than one way. It is telling that, even in a film which lampoons excess, stupidity and sexism in rock, and whose success rests on realism and 'believable' protagonists, of all the main characters the one that is least finely drawn- most 'caricatured'- is Jeanine, the singer's girlfriend.

organisational components of the band. Resentment of people in the area between the two is likely to be stoked by a perception that they are attempting to move across the (often invisible) internal border without due justification. Attempts to bring new members into either the working or communal band space are potentially fraught.

Sexist responses, like those on the Simple Minds tour, apply to the inclusion of women into a male social environment but are at their most vituperative when this is perceived to have undue influence on the creative work and the organisation.[87] This is one of the reasons for the case of Yoko Ono and The Beatles achieving the status of an archetype. To be sure many bands fear women as, "intruders into male solidarity" (Cohen 1991:222). But transgressions along the 'gemeinschaft/gesellschaft' axis are problematic whoever makes them— the manager offering unwanted creative advice, the producer who interferes in personal matters or the session musician who oversteps his remit, for example. This is not helped by the fact that the personal and organisational groups co-exist synchronically and diachronically. For all concerned, from founder members to fledgling hired hands, this is a difficult space to navigate. Fissures form due to mismanagement of the simultaneous roles that people play, and misapprehensions of their positions within the social/organisational arena. Guy Pratt was hired to play bass in Roger Waters's stead in the final version of Pink Floyd. A generation younger than the 'principals' he started an affair with keyboard player Rick Wright's daughter- they subsequently married- and provides a stark illustration of the mixture of domestic, social and organisational categories surrounding bands.

> This hadn't really endeared me to anyone, certainly not Rick, and *certainly* not Gala's mother Juliette, who I'd met rather awkwardly with David [Gilmour] one night at a bar owned by a friend of theirs. I wasn't the only member of the party to get embroiled with the band's offspring, though.

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[87] In Squeeze , for example, tensions between Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook regarding the latter's wife Pam came to a head when she designed stage clothes for the band which Difford refused to wear. This was a manifestation of a more general personality clash, but it is notable that it was provoked by her contribution to the band's working sphere. (Difford, Tilbrook and Dury 2004: 121-122)

One of our security guys had apparently been liaising with the delightful Chloe Mason [daughter of drummer Nick Mason], and I couldn't help but notice his absence. Stupidly, I took this to mean that perhaps my actions weren't so disapproved of after all, and even *more* stupidly I thought I'd mention it to David.
'It doesn't take six weeks to rehearse a security man, Guy', he replied.
(Pratt 2007: 178)

4.3- MOLECULES AND ATOMS- THE CONJOINED CREATIVE AND SOCIAL DYNAMIC

Most bands lack the extended operational scope of Pink Floyd, but even within the core creative membership of more self-contained units, social, creative and organisational interaction combine into a form of hybrid activity. As Air-Fix's rehearsals and gigs showed, 'work' related activity could easily take on a social tone and slip into extra musical chat, the communal bonds forming throughout the more formal business of the practice and arrangement of songs. Gigs, as well, united the band through both ritual and informal activity (See also, Cohen 1991: 39-40).

The merging of social, organisational and, crucially, *creative* activity also takes place from the other direction in an automatic and uninhibited manner, as the following example illustrates. Found are an Edinburgh based three piece consisting of three friends who started making music together at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen. The musical division of labour has Ziggy (Barry) on guitars and lead vocals, Tommy on bass and Kev on beats, keyboards and, as he puts it, "silly noises" (they mix folk with electronica). All other functions are divided between the three of them, although Tommy and Ziggy take on most of the administrative roles since their day jobs allow them to spend more time than Kev on band related duties. (Ziggy works for Edinburgh University, Kev in a bar and Tommy is a

freelance designer). They manage and produce themselves, although not without assistance from friends and collaborators.

If the studio and rehearsal room are the site of social exchanges, the converse of this also applies as routine activity is shot through with creative and organisational discourse. A Saturday morning and afternoon when the band and some of their associates convened to help Kev move flat provides a good snapshot of the extent to which the three (categories and people) are interleaved. All three members of the band were present along with me, Tommy's girlfriend Helen and Emma, a friend of the band, double bassist and sometime guest musician at their gigs as well as on their first album. The purpose of the day wasn't ostensibly related to the work of the band and conversation, as would be expected in an informal gathering, was free flowing and wide ranging. It drifted from discussion of films, to local shops, to nights out and encompassed the mundane and the surreal. Over the course of these exchanges, the extent to which Found is entwined into the lives of its members became clear. The minute details of its creative work camouflaged themselves into the broader topics of conversation without the band really noticing.

> *Whilst we're waiting for Emma to arrive with the van, Tommy notices a pile of records leaning against a sofa—the ones that Kev has decided to discard. Ziggy picks up on this.*

> **Ziggy:** *Is that the 'nay' pile.*
> **Kev:** *Aye, it's the 'nay' pile, help yourselves like.*

> *Ziggy proceeds to root through the assorted vinyl, stacked against the sofa, itself covered with newspapers and other detritus from a three-year tenure in the flat.*
> *He holds up a copy of a Beavis and Butthead 12", and then a Donna Summer album,*

> **Ziggy:** *But surely, even the covers, I mean...*
> **Kev:** *No, I know, but… I set rules. Not even for the covers. Some of them don't even have the records anymore.*
> **Ziggy:** *What about these big beat ones.*
> **Kev:** *I think they're fucked, I thought maybe for our DJ sets but…*
> **Tommy**: *Remember we talked about the big beat revival*
> **Kev:** *re-beat….*
> **Tommy:** *back beat…*
> **Ziggy:** *Beat box…*

> *An incoming phone call interrupts the batting bat and forth of potential names for a DJ set and the conversation moves onto the job in hand.*

Unbidden, very small-scale band 'work' was piggybacked onto the task of moving boxes by their shared history. Personal decisions about whether to keep scratched records and empty record covers impinge on the entangled job and lifestyle of being in a band. This pattern continued as more substantial issues arrived in a similar fashion. At the new flat, home-life, social life and membership of Found were shown to be interconnected in such a manner that slippage between the categories was natural and unthinking.

Whilst unloading the van and looking around the new flat in Iona Street, everyone notes with approval the amount of large storage cupboards. After a few mordant jokes about cellars and gimps, Ziggy pauses.

Ziggy: *So is that going to be your beat den Kev?*
This is clearly a reference to Kev's role as percussionist and programmer of beats for the band, and marks a tacit assumption that much of the work pertaining to this will take place at home.
Kev: *No way. [He points towards a much larger room at the front, with a window] That's going to be my beat den.*
Tommy: *And Nicky? [Kev's girlfriend]*
Kev: *We're going to share it.*

Kev makes tea and, as everybody relaxes, the everyday badinage between friends and acquaintances segues into financial and work related discussion. Emma mentions that there is a good cake shop near the new flat, although Kev seems unconcerned.

Emma: *You grumpy old git.*
Kev: *Yeah, 'I hate cake'*
Ziggy: *You can get a good bacon roll round here, now you're in the 'hood.*
Tommy: *They did good rolls at the van outside Chem [Chem 19, the studio where they have been recording]*
Helen: *What sort?*
Tommy: *Everything. It was massive.*
Ziggy: *Yeah, like at a festival, four or five staff. It's a big [industrial] estate I suppose.*
Tommy: *Yeah, it was busy the first couple of days we were there. All sorts [answering Helen's question]- you'd have liked it. Bacon, sausage…*
Helen: *Square sausage?*
Tommy: *[In the affirmative] Square sausage.*
Emma: *Did you stay there?*
Tommy: *Not there, but near. Like, full office days.*
Emma: *Have you thought about doing somewhere residential?*
Ziggy: *What like before?*
Kev: *Our flats! [laughing]*
Tommy: *It was pretty full on.*
Ziggy: *It would be nice to be just in there.*

Tommy: It would be great if like… if you didn't have to think about another job. If you could… that was just the job.
Emma: When are you going back? [to mix]
Tommy: A month.
Emma: What did you do?
Tommy: Loads and loads of guitars.
Ziggy: They had all these really old mics. Like a 1950s radio mike, and that Shure SM7.
Adam: An SM 7?
Ziggy: Yeah, a dynamic mic- and this Neuberger, kind of a copper mic.
Kev: Are we going to re-do those other bits [it's not entirely clear what he's talking about here, although Ziggy and Tommy seem to know what he's on about]
Ziggy: Well Jamie said that there's usually a couple of…
Tommy: We're going to do it [the mix] with Paul…
Ziggy: We are, Jamie was just saying that they can maybe make time on the first day or so for things…

Discussion of timetables and working arrangements leads to comments about the expense of recording.

Adam: I suppose the main expense is for the engineer…
Ziggy: And if you've got all that vintage gear.
Tommy: 8 hour days, so…
Adam: about 30 odd quid an hour?
Tommy: I suppose…
Ziggy: [interrupting] We should have just, like, had a roll of fivers and put one down every ten minutes.
[General laughter].

The decision is made to decamp to the pub where Emma has to meet people, after moving the van.

Emma: Does anybody need a lift back up to Broughton Street.
Adam: My bag's still in the van.
Kev: Yeah, I need to go back and change out of my 'moving top'.
Ziggy: Isn't that your recording top?
Kev: No, that's the other red one.
Ziggy: But you didn't have that when…
Kev: No, I had it hanging over my arm. It's still my 'recording top'. [To Tommy] I've still got that other top of yours actually…

Kev's categorisation of 'moving tops' and 'recording tops' was made with a dose of irony, characteristic of his dry sense of humour. What stood out was that the way in which the other two instinctively picked up the reference. The ritualistic ascription of 'tops' to 'tasks' is part of their shared mode of address. The journey back to the pub was, likewise, a mix of anecdote and arrangement. The conversation shifted from a discussion of Emma's Arts Council grant applications,

the van itself, past gigs, the general pros and cons of potential future venues to play and more specific rehearsal arrangements.

Ziggy: I remember my mate had to play in front of this massive bright, garish painting.
Tommy: I'm not so sure I want to play there now. Great big dogs, crazy Russians, horrible paintings.
Ziggy: But yeah, it'll be a laugh. You should see it. And it's a low-pressure gig.
Kev: When's Home Game by the way. [Home Game is a gig for all the bands associated with the Fence Collective]
Tommy: Two weeks.
Kev: What are doing practice wise before that?
Tommy: Well we should get a couple. Just the usual, with maybe like one other. On Tuesday, to work out… not for the mix, just for practice…

Helen feeling unwell, and Tommy forgoing the trip to the pub to "be a good boyfriend", amidst jokes and comic impersonations of him coming home drunk with everyone else in tow, the morning bled into the afternoon as memories of school, comparisons of different beer, and the merits and de-merits of children in pubs mingled in almost Brownian motion with detailed technical discussions of which guitars to use in recording and how to schedule the mixing of the album.

Ziggy: And they had this really old Epiphone- looked dead cool.
Adam: Like an Explorer?
Ziggy: I couldn't tell you what it was called. Loads of switches- but as soon as I did them on the Strat- even with the Tele, you know, it's really good for live, just cuts through and that, but the Strat-we just did them all on that afterwards.
Kev: So, it's just gonna be that on everything?
Ziggy: Well… yeah.

Arranging a date for dinner at Kev's new flat morphs into a division of the workload for the mixing between him and Ziggy. This is nearly finalised. The dinner party is left hanging.

Emma: [looking at her diary] Can't do next week, What about after that.
Ziggy: No that's the gig
Kev: And then we're back in Chem.
Ziggy: I can't do the whole week, with work and that…
Kev: Me either. I've already had all of this week off, and then next weekend...
Ziggy: Tommy's there all week, yeah?
Kev: Yeah, so… I think they were talking about him and Paul on the first day looking over it and seeing… you know… mapping it out… what needs doing
Ziggy: And then if I do three days and you do two or three.
Kev: So if you do Tuesday and Wednesday, or we both do Wednesday and I do Thursday and Friday?

Ziggy: Yeah, well, speak to Tommy but…
Emma: [laughing] Is he the boss of you?
Ziggy and Kev: Nah…
Kev: [to Ziggy] Yeah, if… We'll finalise it next week, but that sounds about right…Are we going to… Well we've got Home Game first anyway.
Ziggy: [getting up to go to the bar] Same again?
Emma: So, and then?[meaning the album]
Kev: Find someone to put it out…
Ziggy: Do you want to put it out?
Emma: (laughing) Yeah, no problem.

What's evident here is that, although there are demarcations between band 'work' and socialisation, these are far from clear. The purpose of that Saturday morning was for Kev to move flat, and those present were not all members of Found. First of all, it's telling that although Kev had arranged for friends to help him move, these included both of the other members of the band, and associates of it, from both the communal and operational spheres.

Ziggy and Tommy were acting here as 'friends' rather than 'colleagues' but in a natural and unforced way, with the three of them in the room, the work of being in Found wove its way into flow of conversation, often in quite detailed and specific ways.[88] Additionally, it was often difficult to distinguish between where the subject pertained to the work of the band or just the background radiation of shared interests and tastes that infuses their friendship, as when Kev's "nay pile" of records led to a brief digression into a themed DJ set and potential names for it. At other times, more specific and detailed subjects arose; the amount of time spent recording guitars, the cost of recording, the types of microphone used. Nevertheless, it is clear from their manner that their way of engaging with each other involves a low level patois, a kind of shorthand that even when it is understandable to outsiders still originates from shared experiences. Kev's "beat den" and "recording top" are cases in point. Air-Fix added the "-age" and 'Meister'

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[88] Admittedly, the fact that other people in the conversation, particularly in the pub, were familiar with the terminology and processes involved made this more likely. Both play instruments and work in fields related to popular music.

suffixes to any random word or phrase and carried it from the pub into the rehearsal room and back, or referred to "the curse" to tie individual difficulties into a band context. Found also instinctively employ a battery of in-jokes and references that help to define a 'group identity', pushing inwards to reinforce it and simultaneously projecting it outwards.

The way in which these experiences involve both 'work' situations and the more diffuse everyday business of spending time together is a clear illustration of how the band's creative output and ergonomic decisions are interlinked with their socialising. Over the course of a morning and afternoon, the members of Found touched on potential names and themes for a DJ set, the location of a potential gig, equipment needs, gig rehearsals and expensive studio mixing timetables. The fact that these topics were triggered by and interwoven with the countless conversational miscellany that ebb and flow over a period of hours (bacon rolls and cake shops) is not beside the point. It is the point. 'Found' as a band, and a business, consists of Tommy, Ziggy and Kev. But these three people are part of each other's lives in a wider and more complex manner than just as business partners or people who share a stage. And their interactions as colleagues are difficult to distinguish from their interactions as friends. This is at the core of being a 'bandmate'. Their banter and in-jokes inform their working practices, and creative output. Admittedly Found have not reached the 'secure', much less wealthy, career stage described by Tommy Cunningham and Colin Newton. But their interactions illustrate the extent to which the brand, as it formalises the creative characteristics of a band, must also take in elements of its social discourses.

Sara Cohen notes that the members of the Liverpool bands she studied were bound together by a shared sense of humour, and in-jokes.

> The injection of humour into the music, performance, and general image of the band was common practice. The lyrics of Crikey it's the Cromptons!, for example, were largely based upon Tony's individual sense of humour which his co-band members to some extent shared. That same sense of humour was also expressed in Crikey it's the Cromptons!' music, stage dress and performance, poster designs, name and song titles. …Many bands

incorporated humour in more subtle ways. Lyrics, for example, might contain references or jokes recognizable as such only to the band's members and close friends. Musical jokes might also be included, such as the Jactars' instrumental number of 'pure noise', Crikey it's the Cromptons!' ending one song during a performance in 'tongue-in-cheek', 'heavy metal' style, and their inclusion of some drunken yodelling on a demo tape recorded in a studio late one night. Such humorous elements brought band members and associates closer together as participants in a shared code and were thus an important part of the band's image and identity. (Cohen 1991: 185-186)[89]

This is pertinent to the relationship between the social, musical and performing identities of bands and Cohen's observations are a useful marker of the extent of their connectedness. I would suggest, however, that these processes also take place at a deeper level. Cohen shows how such matters as musical influences, aesthetic decisions and shared musical jokes help to bind bands (and audiences). To apply a scientific analogy, I would say that her remarks are illustrative of how bands form their identities on a molecular level, collating recognisable instances of communality and musicality into a cohesive cell. Moving beyond this, I would argue that the same process takes place at an atomic level as well. Beyond obvious markers of inclusion like 'musical jokes', the non-musical interactions of the band members feed into the creative work of the band.

'Creativity' is built into an edifice partly out of many ostensibly 'non-creative' decisions like amp settings, pick-up selection or even choice of studio, and 'non-creative' activities, like practicing scales. The social component of band life is similarly constructed. It is built not only out of the 'visible' and directed jokes that Cohen describes but also from the minutiae of everyday interactions. Some of these

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[89] Cohen's inverted commas around 'tongue-in-cheek' are perhaps revealing. Social and genre conventions often militate against such outright displays of bombast, despite a certain pleasure in playing them. Given the 'cult of originality' (Cohen, 1991: 182) within which Cohen's subjects were operating and their desire to be seen as 'different', it's perhaps not surprising that they should place certain genre tropes behind a mask of humour. Nevertheless, the 'heavy metal ending' is an easy way to finish a song, to such an extent that it has become a cliché. Playing it in inverted commas mitigates the cliché, and the bombast, but it serves a purpose, and can be fun to play. Kenny's invocation of heavy metal riffs or finger tapping in between-song moments during Air-Fix rehearsals is an example of this. He would always do this with his 'tongue-in-cheek', despite his evident enjoyment of playing them. My own 'guitar behind the head moment' in The Distractions, as scripted as it was to make it a kind of 'joke', was also about showing off, as well as adding a dimension of 'showmanship' to the act. The tension between 'musicianship' and 'being a muso' is often evident in these musical 'jokes'.

will grow into specific points of reference. The title for Found's song 'See Ferg's In London' is one such example. Likewise Paul Savage of The Delgados confirmed when one of The Distractions noticed a piece of studio equipment in Chem 19 labelled 'Universal Audio', that this had served as an inspiration for The Delgados album of the same name. Most of these shared rhetorical or experiential quirks and tropes will not make a direct appearance in the band's creative work. They will remain the atoms in the background radiation that, nevertheless, shapes the social/creative nexus. The 'shared sense of humour' is not just about repeated gags that make their way into the set, but the more marginal exchanges— Kev's 'beat den' and 'recording top'— as well. This means that, at the same time, band 'work' (often relating to the logistical and business decisions), arrives and departs from social exchanges almost unnoticed. That these exchanges feed into the prosaic individual creative acts that make up the binding and frontispiece of group creativity is evidence of the depth of the bond between the social and the musical activities of bands. Even when there is a different structure, as in Air-Fix, or a non-professional set-up, like The Distractions, these characteristics inform the working practices of the band.

Another way of expressing this would be to say that molecular interaction occurs whilst the band is physically together and performing, rehearsing or even doing less obviously creative but nevertheless work-related tasks. But much of this is happening at a subliminal, unconscious level while the band is performing seemingly *unrelated* tasks, like moving flats. This atomic interaction tends to get passed over but is important in understanding the factors that contribute to creativity and cohesiveness.

Cohen's examples show how bands form attachments and meaningful identities out of their explicit and surface interactions amongst themselves and with their audiences. My experience and observations suggest that, whilst this is true, creative and social formations take place less visibly as well. A comparison between

popular music and other fields helps to illustrate the depth— the almost 'atomic level' connectedness— of creative work and sociability in bands.

Berman, Down and Hill (2002) illustrate the extent to which "tacit knowledge" contributes to competitive advantage in sport; their study focuses on basketball teams. Perhaps the differences between basketball teams and bands are more immediately obvious than the similarities. Functional roles are much more structured in sport, changes in membership are built into the nature of the group identity, not a disruption of it, and 'success' is easier to quantify with clear criteria for victory and without the obfuscating difference between artistic achievement (rewarded symbolically) and commercial achievement. Nevertheless, the concept of 'tacit knowledge' is applicable to music, particularly as it is practised in groups.

> Tacit knowledge is knowledge that is not codified. If it could be codified, then it would no longer be tacit knowledge; it would become explicit knowledge (Berman, Down and Hill 2002: 14)

Tacit knowledge exists at both individual and group levels. Individual tacit knowledge is exemplified in the baseball player whose reaction time in hitting a home run appears to defy science. His stroke begins just before the pitch since the time for the nerve signals to go from eye to brain to arm is greater than the time the ball takes to reach him.

> How can this be? The answer is that through cumulative experience, having faced hundreds of pitchers in many different settings, the batter has amassed the tacit knowledge required to read the signs and anticipate the trajectory and speed of the ball. The look in a pitcher's eyes, the placement of his feet, the curve of his arm… these are the signs that the batter has learnt through experience to read and interpret. He does this not in a conscious fashion, but in a wholly unconscious process that enables him to begin his swing before the ball has left the pitcher's hand. (ibid. 15)

Group tacit knowledge is explained by way of individuals interacting on a sailing boat.

> [T]his is a complex situation in which a simple error can rapidly magnify into a major adverse event unless all participants not only perform their ascribed tasks, but also adjust rapidly to the way in which others performing their tasks and to unpredictable events… Each individual lacks the full knowledge required to undertake the roles of others on the boat and is not in a position to do so. Thus, the knowledge required to perform this task is diffused among the individuals, each of whom has a different

> responsibility. In its totality, the knowledge required to perform the task does not reside in the head of any single individual. Each individual possesses but a part of the whole. Nor is the knowledge purely technical. It has an important interpretative component. The effectiveness with which individuals perform their prescribed tasks is contingent upon their interpretation of how others are simultaneously performing their tasks while adjusting to unpredictable environmental events. (ibid.15)

It is not difficult to see how these can be mapped onto the intuitive actions and responses of both individual musicians and groups, which occur instantaneously and often without conscious thought, although they are usually the result of countless hours of practice and experience[90]. This is most immediately apparent in the context of live music, especially when it involves jamming— seemingly creating new and unique pieces of music 'out of thin air', although really out of a bank of both familiar patterns and tacit knowledge.

I would like to suggest, however, that it could also be applied to the way in which social dynamics feed into creativity in bands more generally. The store of shared experiences binds the band together socially and functionally as described above. But it also works by building a level of interaction that operates unseen. My point here is that while tacit knowledge in the sporting context applies on a functional plane, functionality in bands includes creativity and this operates, at a very basic level, socially. In the details of their formative and everyday social interactions, bands build a common stock of a kind of 'tacit creativity'. The nicknames, patois and in-jokes operate on the social plane of creativity in the same way as the hours of practice and trial and error do on the technical component. Creativity in the micro-field of the band is, as we have seen, subject to social as well as musical forces. Just as not every hour of practice or musical decision is immediately evident in the band's creativity, low level but cumulative interactivity adds to the band's social, and therefore creative, character. Visible and describable

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[90] Daniel Levitin cites a body of research that suggests 10,000 hours, equivalent to three hours a day for ten years, is the amount of practice needed to acquire 'world-class' expertise in any field from sport to music to writing to jewel theft. (Levitin 2006: 197)

instances of camaraderie (or indeed tension) combine in an easily apprehensible (molecular) way to provide a band with its projected social identity. Within these are the unconscious (atomic) ways in which such interactions bind sociability into 'tacit creativity'. This is perhaps an aspect of 'the whole' that, in certain cases, is 'greater than the sum of the parts'.

4.4- CREATIVE DIFFERENCES

I have included this section under the wider rubric of 'Dynamics' rather than 'Creativity' precisely because these 'differences' are usually played out socially, whatever their point of origin. In the film of Neil Simon's *The Sunshine Boys*, Ben Clark asks his curmudgeonly uncle Willy why he split with his vaudeville partner, Al Lewis.

> **Willy:** Creative differences.
> **Ben:** Creative differences? What do you mean, creative differences?
> **Willy:** I hate the son of a bitch.
> (Ross 1975)

Willy and Ben's exchange is played for laughs but it resonates with a common assumption that 'creative differences' is a veiled reference to personal animus between band members. Often enough this may be the case but the realities are more complex. Just as the starmaking and mythologizing process guarantees Toynbee's "minimum conditions of independence" (Toynbee 2000: 32), so the band's creative work necessitates a 'minimum meeting of minds'. Personal and creative dispositions, as suggested above, are balanced against each other to negotiate a middle ground. When destabilising factors become overpowering, it therefore means that disentangling the personal from the creative is rarely a simple matter. It is not always easy to place areas of disagreement into separate categories.

Deena Weinstein points out the relationship between myth and reality here.

> According to the romantic myth, the only legitimate justification for a band to break up is 'creative differences'. That phrase is used as an excuse for any breakup- and there can be many reasons that have nothing to do with the

actual creative function. Yet the appeal to creative differences is at least one case in which mythology is often not so far off the mark- creativity is the rock band's most sensitive function, and creative differences and accords often genuinely determine whether or not a band will survive. (Weinstein 2004a: 199)

Her observation is pertinent insofar as it reveals the extent to which creative differences are indeed at the core of what is often taken to be a more personal acrimony. In addition to this, however, what needs to be acknowledged is the difficulty in separating 'personal' and 'creative' differences. Weinstein is correct to note that creative differences are genuine more often than is generally appreciated. But given the bond between creativity and social interaction in the work (and play) of bands, it becomes possible to see how personal enmity and creative divergence can be mistaken for one another or conflated into a single Gordian knot. If we bear this in mind, the internecine conflicts at the heart of so many legendary dissolutions, and forgotten upheavals, shift into focus.

Perhaps a useful way of thinking about an operating band is to envisage it as a three-legged stool. The base is the working band, and the legs are the social, creative and business relationships in which the members find themselves with one another. Weaknesses in any one of the legs will affect the stability of the stool as a whole, but if the other two are sufficiently strong, it will still function, still be able to bear some weight. If any one of the legs collapses completely, the others will struggle to maintain the function of the chair. Weakness in one of them leads to stresses on the others. Weinstein's point is that creative differences have a direct bearing on the survival of the project. I would add that this is so precisely because of the strain they put on the other elements of the support structure that maintains it.

When the creative centrifuge is spinning smoothly, and the dispositions of band members are managed effectively, creative differences need not be disruptive at all but can in fact be a source of strength. Alex James describes the recording of Blur's *Modern Life Is Rubbish.*

> I think it's our *magnum opus*. The scope of the album was vast. We were all listening to different music and pulling in different directions. 'Musical differences' are often cited as the reason bands disintegrate, but they are actually what make a good group great. (James 2007: 100)

Just as saying that either 'tension' or 'harmony' is necessary for creative work is to misstate the case, citing 'creative differences' as an inevitable source of collision, or 'creative agreement' as a guarantor of amicability, is also to put the cart before the horse. Differences may drive creative achievement, as in the case of *Modern Life Is Rubbish,* or lead to deadlock and dissolution. Equally, creative common ground may be unequal to the task of mitigating personal disagreements. In either case, personal and creative matters usually spill over into one another. Terence O'Grady makes the case, for instance, that Lennon and McCartney's aesthetic directions had been diverging long before it became impossible for them to work together. He describes *Sergeant Pepper* in terms of how it marked their realisation, separately, of their own musical styles, even though they were in service of a common aim.

> While it is always possible to hear Lennon's contributions to *Sgt.Pepper* as fully compatible with the album's innovative thrust, the fact remains that his aesthetic had diverged sharply from McCartney's by the conclusion of the *Pepper* sessions, never to converge completely again.
> The Beatles were to combine their efforts with great success on a number of occasions after *Sgt. Pepper,* but the album nevertheless represents a critical point in their history in terms of the development of the unique and fully personal aesthetics of both Lennon and McCartney. (O'Grady 2008: 32)

What we can take from this example is that 'creative differences' are a matter of scale. The Beatles were able to negotiate and sometimes synthesize these differences into cohesive works, but with diminishing success as their creative paths diverged. This was, of course, made increasingly difficult by the ever more

strident personal clashes that ensued with the vacuum created by Brian Epstein's death[91] and the financial and organizational mess of the Apple enterprise.

It is rare for 'differences' to be solely creative or personal. Just as the strong points of individuals in the group shore up corresponding weaknesses in other members, creative or personal harmony can offset dissonance in the other category. Equally, disagreements in one category can unbalance the other. Financial disputes are most likely to lead more immediately to personal ones, but these can quickly spill over into creative work as well.

That creative disagreements can become personal is obvious enough. Less clear is the way in which they can be one and the same thing. The point here is that given the intimate connections between social and creative interaction, it is often difficult to distinguish between the two in the first place. Creativity in bands derives not just from surface level agreements but the tacit and unconscious consequences of social interaction. Weinstein's point that 'creative differences', as they tip into the personal realm, are often the genuine cause of disintegration in bands is well made. Above and beyond this, however, I would say that rather than *becoming* personal, 'creative differences' very often *are* personal in the first place.

4.5- ENDINGS

I would like to make the point here that as with any relationship, the end of a band is as different and individual as the social dynamic during its lifetime. First of all, it is worth repeating that once a certain stage of industrial prominence has been achieved, the band has an indefinite afterlife in the form of a 'brand'— the hardened projection of creativity that has grown up around a core of social and musical interactions like a shell around a living organism whose patterns may remain pleasing to the eye after the death of the creature inside. The levels of

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[91] Despite the shock of his death, and the problems that resulted from it as members of the band had competing ideas about who should act as their manager, his influence over The Beatles had already diminished significantly. Their decision to stop touring, in particular, left him without a clear functional role. (Spitz 2005: 626)

congruity between the band and the brand can be anywhere from nearly absolute (U2 for instance) to marginal (Thin Lizzy, say, or any one of the innumerable touring outfits whose makeup bears only a passing resemblance to its original iteration). In many famous cases, the brand may be all that remains, however prominent it is. (Once more, The Beatles lead the way).

It is also worth noting that the quasi continuation of the band in brand form might lead to the re-ignition of the original unit—those simultaneously celebrated and derided 'reunions'. This may be impossible due to death (as with Nirvana) or unlikely due to irreconcilability (as in the case of The Smiths) but it does illustrate that 'endings' are rarely absolute once the market has taken a band under its wing. It may also involve relatively low levels of creativity—live renditions of popular favourites for huge fees, or formulaic retreads of familiar patterns in the studio. Arguably, for example, The Rolling Stones are more brand than band since their reformation after the schisms of the 1980s. Ultimately, judgements about such matters are often subjective and the extent of the difference is difficult to ascribe from the outside.

Away from the zombie-like lurch into eternity of the brand, however, the end of a band is rarely an immediate and absolute fact. As the case of Air-Fix illustrates, a kind of 'terminal drift' is more commonplace, certainly without the financial impetus of industrial involvement. Gigs and rehearsals get further apart, and other commitments become more pressing. The band slowly dissolves rather than spontaneously combusts. Sometimes a firm decision will be made to discontinue the band, such as was the case when Dum Dum ran out of energy after failing to secure a deal. Even in such cases as these, however, elements of the unit may continue to exist, in the dilute form of a social network or in a more concrete fashion. Dum Dum, as Die Happy, continued as a cover band long after abandoning attempts to 'make it', out of the sheer enjoyment of playing and

socialising together. The covers sets were an excuse to hang out rather than an attempt to rekindle a career.

A break-up, whether amicable like Dum Dum's or "messy" like that of The Joyriders, is also not as immediate as the cessation of creative work might suggest. Rarely is a single act or argument responsible for the collapse of the unit into its constituent parts in one fell swoop. Usually resentments or doubts will have been bubbling under for some time. A single act might bring them to a head but, short of a death, it is unlikely to spell the end of the working unit. Even in these extreme cases, replacements are commonplace, although these may often mark a step from a 'band' into a 'brand' identity.

As with the living dynamics of bands their deaths occur along a scale, with 'acute schism' at one end and 'terminal drift' at the other. The reality is usually somewhere between the two. Even in cases of dire social and creative disagreement, musicians may find themselves shackled together out of financial necessity or even contractual obligation. If the band has been branded, they will almost certainly find themselves in a business relationship beyond the end of the creative one—Pink Floyd, again, are a troubled case in point.

The ontologically vague status of 'the band' means that 'schism' and 'drift' tend not to be absolute categories. A change in one component of the group need not signal the end of its creative viability. It is rare for a long-standing band to maintain the same line-up, still less its original one, over the course of its lifetime, although changes are more likely to be controversial if the departing member is an intrinsic part of the group identity upon which the brand was based.

Away from the refractions of branding, the end of the enterprise is also usually a matter of degree. The dissolution of The Distractions came in stages. It survived, in altered form, the departure of Christine and Pedro. Mark's inability to

continue, although he was a key component of the band's sound, was as much 'the final straw' in an entropic process as it was a death knell in its own right.[92]

Another comparison to a different type of group can help to provide a structural context for the complexities at work here. In her overview of groups in music therapy, Heidi Ahonen-Eerikäinen (2007) describes four phases of development. In phase one, people set goals and find ways of relating to one another (Ahonen-Eerikäinen 2007: 39). In phase two, "The Differentiation-Individuation-Reactive Phase" (ibid. 40), members present their individuality in the group context, rather than seeking commonality. Phase three, "the mature phase" or "working group"(ibid.), is characterised by intimacy and mutuality. These do not, obviously, map exactly onto the working and social practices of bands, although there are similarities between the processes at work in the creative centrifuge and the accommodation of individuality and differentiation into a mature working group. The goals are different, and of course there is not, formally at least, the mediating figure of the therapist for a band, although a manager or producer may take on aspects of this role, as may a member of the band itself.

The differences become most obvious, however, in phase four- "The Termination Phase".

> *The end* comes at the conclusion of every group. It should always be discussed early and should never come as a surprise. Depending upon how long the group has been working together, the termination process may need more time.
> (ibid. 41, emphasis in original)

The 'death' of the band is not formalised as it is in a therapy group or, to draw more obvious parallels with creative units, the wrapping up of production on a film, or the end of an exhibition. The lifetime of a band is more open ended than even stage

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[92] Even in this case a reformation of sorts was close. A colleague who had heard the CD approached me in 2008 to ask if we could play at his wedding. Matt demurred being too busy with other projects but I had a drummer in mind with whom I was playing in another band. Mike and Mark were up for it as a 'one off', although we were to get paid for the event as well, and I'd agreed a rough song list with the couple and was on the point of e-mailing Maggie and Christine to see if they wanted to join in. Unfortunately band relationships aren't the only ones that are fissile and shortly after provisionally booking the bands, a venue and caterers, the couple parted ways acrimoniously.

or television shows that may run for decades with gradually changing casts but don't conjoin actors into the common brand to the same extent. 'Closure', as with the terminal phase of a therapy group, is almost impossible to achieve.

Small-scale 'closures' occur upon the end of a tour, for example, or the completion of an album but these apply mainly to ancillary workers, or at least to members of the extended organizational group and not to the members of the 'family' unit. Those who drift in and out of the porous boundaries around the core group experience these 'mini-closures' before going onto other projects, maybe to return into the orbit of the core at a later time. Matters are different for occupants of the overlap between kinship and organization.

This lack of clarity about a final phase helps to explain both the pressures leading to explosive schisms and the attenuation of 'terminal drift'. In the former case the 'working phase' is long past but members continue to pursue the group for either external reasons, like financial benefits, or because they simply cannot envisage other options. In the latter case, the terminal phase is drawn out to such an extent that any acknowledgement of its having happened is retrospective. The open ended nature of band groupings also means that the journey from vibrant band to static brand is usually akin to the case of the proverbial boiling frog. The shift from a social compact into a working arrangement happens by degrees. The conclusion of either or both of them is equally vague. The social component of a defunct band may live on as a friendship or the functional component might become a 'day job' for mere colleagues. Fractures at one end of the scale and distance at the other provide the markers for how bands come to a conclusion—the reality usually lies in between.

4.6- CONCLUSION

The social dynamics of any band are unique. Given the interplay of 'personality' with the practical and imaginative components of creativity, the

sociability of band life is difficult to separate out from the creative process and its products. Creativity and social interaction are fluid. The 'micro-field' in which band members exist as both teammates and competitors puts them in a position whereby the group supports their weak points. At the same time, their strong suits may need to be reined in to allow this to happen. Throughout, mutual benefit accrues through the suppression of individuality but paradoxically the expression of individuality is necessary for the group's progress towards a common goal. This paradox drives the creative work of the band, but is the source of tension within it.

The dynamic of a band is complicated by the fact that both the musical and social hierarchies within it are self-generated. The functional and creative hierarchies within a band don't necessarily correspond, with either each other or the 'standard format' of many other creative groupings[93]. This is largely a consequence of the fact that if there is a common delineator for bands it is that they are self-generating. The historical evolution of the form and its market value both dictate at least a projection of communality over hierarchy. Since hierarchies of some kind are more or less inevitable, they evolve without reference to practices elsewhere. The Romantic image of a band and its practical realities are thus often at odds.

This structural ambiguity is extended inwards to the core of the band's creative and social dynamic and outwards to encapsulate the myriad of other people on whom the members of the core depend as individuals and as a group, in both their personal and professional capacities. Band members are tied together in two ways—as members of a group predicated on kinship and as members of an organization based around functional roles. The demands of these groups are not always complementary. Furthermore, membership of either group is not fixed. The growing needs of a band for industrial, technical and musical support bring other

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[93] String quartets, for instance, are also susceptible to social and financial strains, but musical and creative roles are much more strongly delineated.

people into the organizational unit. The progress through life of the people within the organization inevitably entails forming new social bonds and alliances. The porous nature of the borders between both types of group is potentially disruptive to the social dynamic. People move into the orbit of the band, socially and functionally. Extra movement caused by new relationships within the band's operational and social sphere compounds the difficulty of negotiating already obscure and shifting hierarchies. (This adds another dimension to the difficulty encountered by women entering into the male domain of many bands).

Even in stable units, especially in stable units perhaps, the social dynamic feeds into creativity at a very fundamental level. The minute everyday occurrences, comments and references of band members tie them together visibly as a social unit but also invisibly shape their discourse and hence their creativity. Elements of these interactions will stand out in the creative work of the band, but the tacit common framework that they form will also colour its overall creative character. Creativity is a social activity and a social process. In bands, this applies in the opposite direction as well. Social activity is a creative process, beyond its application to specifically creative tasks.

A consequence of this is that attempts to disentangle the creative and social points of divergence in disputes are often doomed. Creative satisfaction and social harmony are mutually reinforcing but cracks in one sphere are likely to weaken the other. Beneath the straightforward feedback loops of achievement and amity or frustration and strife sit the tacit bonds between creativity and sociability. Creative and social differences are difficult to tell apart not only because of the causal relationship between them. In a very real way, that is hard for those involved with them to discern, the creative and the social combine so that differences between band members simultaneously involve both processes.

Whether or not these differences can be managed will decide the fate of elements of the band's working and social lifetime. They will not, however, have

the final say over how its projection of group identity is played out. The industrial character of the field of popular music means that creative work, and the bands that produce it, get turned into marketable brands that can prolong the life of either a creatively or socially inoperative coalition. This process makes use of the porous borders of the band's social and operational fields since these allow for the introduction of new members. Given that neither the social nor the creative element of a band is completely independent of its operational realm and also that both elements extend beyond that operational realm, its lifetime is diffuse. Schisms need not overturn the operative brand and continued alliances do not always lead to creative work, especially away from the industrial field. Line-up changes, reformations and long periods of inactivity are commonplace but they all refer back to the same group identity. This is a projection of the social/creative nexus, the heart of both the 'organization' and the 'family'. The extent to which appeals to the original group identity are or are not taken seriously, by fans and critics, reveals much about how 'the band' as a form relates to the wider discourses of popular music production and reception.

FIVE

AUTHENTICITY

I don't care what anyone says- there is no substitute for blood-sweat-and tears playing because it simply can't be faked… Great, timeless classic rock artists relied on talent, and that is one thing that no machine can mimic- the individuality of humanity.

ANTHONY BOZZA,
***'Why AC/DC Matters'* (2009: 130)**

The most misleading term in cultural theory is… 'authenticity'. What we should be examining is not how true a piece of music is to something else, but how it sets up the idea of 'truth' in the first place…

SIMON FRITH,
***'Towards an aesthetic of popular music'* (1987: 137)**

The history of popular music in the latter part of the twentieth-century, and the 1960s in particular, involved structural changes. These fed into genre ideologies, their relationship with commerce and therefore the ways in which the music was organised both internally amongst musicians and externally in relation to audiences and critics. Foremost amongst the shifts in the evolution of the 'rock era' were those that involved the concept of 'authenticity'. I would now like to undertake a more detailed examination of this slippery and problematic concept, and apply it more closely to the phenomenon of the band.

'Authenticity' is a term that has been frequently misused, or at least used lazily. Consequently it has also been much derided, or at least its value has been questioned. The means by which the "voraciously entropic" (Marcus 1990: 476)

popular music process continually seeks to valorise, commercialise and, in so doing, incorporate symbols of difference, novelty and even opposition appears at odds with the instinctive assumptions of many of those who value them.

The notion that something is 'authentic' suggests that it has the qualities, to follow the OED definition, of being "reliable" or "trustworthy". The separation of these qualities, as they apply to creative endeavours, from the mechanisms of commerce pre-dates modern popular music, although the consequences of this are felt in the most modern of contexts. Lee Marshall, for instance, traces the rhetorical background to the battle between the RIAA and Napster[94] back at least as far as the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century.

> Out of social changes such as industrialisation and urbanisation, there developed a number of ideas concerning art and creativity. The most significant of these were: the individualisation of creativity; (tortured) genius; originality; the radical separation of art and market; art as a spiritual not material entity; and a temporal judgment of art. All of these features feed into one another: the idea that art is spiritual rather than material relates to the notion of the incompatibility of art and market; this means that art can only be truly judged over a long period of time rather than through the immediacy of the market; this suggests that the artist has to endure poverty while creating because the market will not reward him adequately, and so on. All of these features are important rhetorically because they provide the dominant image of the artist in modern society.
> (Marshall 2002: 2)

Certainly, Romantically tinged conceptions of authenticity have frequented discussions about popular music in general, and the rock era in particular. It is a common trope in rock criticism, for instance, even that which is self-reflexive enough to "find authenticity suspect as a concept" (McLeod 2002:105). Kembrew McLeod provides plenty of examples.

> "The Ramones are authentic primitives whose work has to be heard to be understood", Paul Nelson (1976)

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[94] I am referring here to the legal action taken against the file sharing website *Napster* for 'contributory and vicarious' copyright infringement (Garofalo 2008: 477) by the Record Industry Association of America in 1999.

"One hopes Arrested Development is savvy enough to stick with its substantial, authentic groove", A. Foege (1992)

"Divisive, extreme and visionary, the Jefferson Airplane was a band of absolute artists- Jefferson Starship, at its best, became nothing but a band of hitmakers…[and]…chose survival by means of sheer commercialism" Paul Evans (1992)

Steve Pond of *Rolling Stone* describes U2 as "refreshingly honest", Fricke admires Lou Reed's "unflinching honesty" and Lester Bangs makes an appeal to "real rock 'n'roll".
(All of the above quotes cited in McLeod 2002:103-105)

Critical assessments abound which take for granted that inchoate values of 'truth' and 'honesty' depend upon an opposition between art and commerce. In the process of "Deconstructing a (Useful) Romantic Illusion", Deena Weinstein illustrates some of the reasons for this.

> The art-commerce binary functions for rock journalists in several ways. Merely perpetuating the myth makes their writing agreeable to their readers… And clearly the rock industry approves of their ideology and supports much of it with advertisements… Maintaining the myth of the opposition of art and commerce, and seemingly siding with the artist, allows rock journalists to maintain the aura of art critics, rather than appearing to be members of the hype machine. (Weinstein 1999: 66-67)

Yet even when writers are engaged in more forensic examinations, or even exposing the 'hype', there is an underlying sense that 'business' and 'creativity' are naturally conflicting forces. Fred Goodman's *Mansion on the Hill* (1997), for example, deals with the corporatisation of the 'counter culture'. Its sub-title, "The Head-On Collision of Rock and Commerce", still implies that the two are, somehow, fundamentally opposed.

Given the role that popular music plays in identity formation (Frith 1987: 143-144, Bennett 2000: 195) it is perhaps hardly surprising that people should hope that their tastes are validated by something beyond 'mere' entertainment, and motivated by goals beyond profit. Even apart from a belief in Romantic creation allowing fans to validate their own "sense of autonomy" (Weinstein ibid.), an appeal to a moral plane is built into judgements of popular music. Simon Frith's

examination of the aesthetics of popular music includes the observation that aesthetic choices and moral values, like 'honesty', are conjoined.

> The marking off of some tracks and genres and artists as 'good' and others as 'bad' seems to be a necessary part of popular music pleasure and use; it is a way in which we establish our place in various music worlds and use music as a source of identity. And 'good' and 'bad' are key words because they suggest that aesthetic and ethical judgments are tied together: not to like a record is not just a matter of taste; it is also a matter of morality. (Frith 1996: 72)

The concept of authenticity, then, has become central to the ways in which we think about, and apply value to, popular music and inveigled into the surrounding sales processes, critical discourses and instinctive audience responses.

5.1- CRITIQUES OF DISCOURSES AND ASSUMPTIONS

These critical discourses, and their associated value judgements, became particularly pronounced in the 1960s and beyond when they brought an ideological dimension to generic distinctions in popular music. The association of some forms of popular music, such as folk, with an anti-commercial stance, of course, pre-dated the rock era. Folk songs with "no got-up glitter" (Hubert Parry, quoted in Moore 2002: 211) were presented in opposition to the commercial music of the early twentieth-century. Even in this area, however, there were disputes and mediating forces involved in canon formation and genre narratives which necessitate the contextualisation of how such values were ascribed (Harker 1980: 146-158, Brocken 2003: 89-93). This is compounded by the fact that artists and others have appealed to rock's antecedents, its musicological lineage, to validate an essentialist conception of it as unmediated. As Allan Moore points out (1993: 64- 73), the blues serves as both a 'pretext' and a 'context' for rock authenticity. But the commercial presentation of popular music as non-commercial grew wings with the onset of the rock era and the inclusion of serious artistic merit beyond 'mere' entertainment within the remit of the star. Keith Negus describes it thus,

> Whereas the music of the rock n' roll era had been associated with working class teenagers, during the 1960s various elements of pop were 'appropriated' by a recently enfranchised grammar school student and 'hip' middle class audience. Rock was not only a source of pleasure for these consumers, but it was imbued with libertarian and artistic allusions as the emergent middle class audience (and artists) drew on an aesthetic vocabulary inherited from an appreciation of European high culture. (Negus 1992: 57)

This is important, because for all the oppositional energy attached to rock 'n' roll, there was no claim to 'high art' to distinguish it from other youth music. The presentation of the emerging 'rock' as 'non-commercial' relied on some debatable claims. Nevertheless, one of the consistent factors in its evolution has been a differentiation between itself and other, apparently 'compromised', forms. Amongst these claims are those that portray 'rock' as 'unmediated' in comparison to 'pop'. This relies on the questionable idea that some forms of technological mediation are inherently less authentic than others. (Frith 2004b). Jason Toynbee offers an example:

> [There is] a strong naturalistic discourse where, for instance, Humbucker pickups and Marshall valve amplifiers are treated as though they were timeless craftsman's tools, while the use of sampling or sequencing technologies is considered to be a form of trickery. (Toynbee 2000: 59).

Even amongst practitioners and listeners more aesthetically open-minded than those described by Toynbee, there is a lingering adherence to the idea that valuable creativity is contingent on an anti-commercial position. Keightley (2001: 137) distinguishes between a 'Romantic authenticity' and a 'Modernist authenticity'. The former category privileges tradition, continuity, community, a core sound, gradual stylistic change, directness and hiding musical technology. Modernists privilege the status of the artist and are more inclined towards radical shifts, openness regarding sounds, obliqueness and the celebration of technology. Their perception of rock authenticity derives from the introduction of high-art values into the mainstream. Nevertheless, both camps, cleave to a higher ideal of authentic music making. As Keightley says,

> Both Romantics and Modernists are anxious to avoid corruption through involvement with commerce and oppose the alienation they see as rooted in industrial capitalism. (Keightley 2001: 136)

Rock, then, in either expressive or experimental mode was positioned as distinct from a commercial mainstream. As has been already noted, a considerable financial and critical compact arose out of this, with 'authenticity' at its heart and which, in placing itself against commercially compromised 'pop', involved processes of exclusion, even as it made claims to be 'of the people'. A great deal of academic attention has been paid to decoding and explaining this compact. The facts behind rock authenticity work against how it has been presented and consumed, both commercially and culturally, and scholars have not been hesitant to point this out.

> [R]ock, like all twentieth century pop musics, is a commercial form, music produced as a commodity, for a profit, distributed through mass media as mass culture... The myth of authenticity is...one of rock's own ideological effects, an aspect of its sales process: rock stars can be marketed as artists, and their particular sounds marketed as a means of identity. (Frith 1987:137)

> Less believable than it ever was, the art-versus-commerce myth is promoted and probably believed in as much if not more than it ever has been. The myth persists because too many people gain too many different things- money, identity, prestige, or a common critical standard- from it to give it up. (Weinstein 1999: 68)

If the rock ideology has employed such terms as 'honesty' and 'authenticity' in contrast to 'commercialism', then academic critiques of this ideology are replete with sceptical inflections. Frith and Weinstein have highlighted its mythical nature. Negus makes note of the "Ironies of Authenticity" (1992: 69-71). Toynbee's tone in the quote above is similarly sceptical and Keightley's measured (re)consideration of rock still serves to undercut grand claims by exposing them to their context and a wider narrative.[95]

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[95] Even in passing, authenticity is contentious, its use often moderated and qualified. Robert Walser (1993), for example, places "authenticity" in telltale inverted commas throughout his analysis of heavy metal to show an awareness of the underlying controversies.

> The individual gestures of 'making music seriously' may vary, the particular formulations of authenticity may differ; conflicts between them may drive rock forward, producing what are often viewed as cataclysmic moments or musical revolutions. Nonetheless, the key structuring principles of rock remained relatively stable in the last three decades of the twentieth century, even as its cultural prominence declined from the 1980s onward. (Keightley 2001: 139)

Due to its presentation as an absolute in the service of selling music, and its status as a dividing line across which different musics are evaluated, rock authenticity has often been viewed as something of a dogma whose inconsistencies need to be exposed, or at least explained. The conceptual model of innate authenticity is itself problematic. In any case, the borders between 'rock' and 'pop' (or indeed between any genres) are debatable and dependent on their context and on the viewer's position. This means that the ground underneath any appeal to a direct authenticity can quickly become unstable. Johan Fornäs notes that attempts to displace the exclusionary ideology of rock authenticity are doomed to recreate its essentialism if they only replace the referents for the 'authentic'.

> The rock/pop field is a contested continuum. Authenticity is frequently used to distinguish rock from pop, as rock ideologists defined the values of the folk and/or art genuine against commercial substitutes. Since the 1960s a network of institutionalised voices… have asserted and administered the sincerity, legitimacy and hegemony of rock in opposition to the vulgarity of pop. Some critics of this rock establishment have on the other hand turned the same dichotomy upside-down while allegedly dismissing it, as they deride the authenticity illusions of the rock establishment and elevate the honest construction of the pop machinery. (Fornäs 2004: 395)

5.2- MODELS OF AUTHENTICITY

There is a disconnect, then, between our apparent emotional need to validate our aesthetic choices against a concept of authenticity, and our intellectual wish to make that concept a stable point of reference. With one foot on the solid ground of terminological definition and contextual analysis and the other on the floating boat of genre definitions and contested ideologies, the concept of authenticity becomes spatchcocked; torn between opposing tendencies which recognise it as relative but acknowledge its use as an absolute.

Attempts to unpick this problem have had to take account of a multiplicity of factors— the unstable generic dividing lines in popular music, the historical variety of subject positions, the social variety of subject positions and the innumerable amount of texts to which these can all refer. In short, 'authenticity' is being made to do too much work for a single indivisible concept. It is perhaps hardly surprising then, that such attempts have taken recourse to the sub-division of a monolithic concept into more manageable and defensible *systems*. These have differed in their angle of approach, but have in common an attempt to account for the variety of contexts in which authenticity is used, and the variety of cultural and social objects to which it is applied.

Lawrence Grossberg (1993) divides authenticity along three broad generic threads. The 'rock/folk' authenticity involves the articulation of individual and inward needs in the context of a communally mediated system. Authenticity in dance music, alternatively, involves the "construction of a rhythmic and sexual body" (Grossberg 1993: 202). Finally, an accommodation of the postmodern play with different styles allows for a version of authenticity that resides in the self-awareness of the overtly artistic avant-garde. Here, the acknowledgement of artificial construction in pop becomes a source of honesty, since it highlights the realities of the matter. This goes some way towards unshackling authenticity from being hidebound to generic and aesthetic mores, although still locates a more flexible version of it across genre lines, even as the claims to primacy of any particular genre are deflated.

Fornäs modifies this model by repositioning its labels within a system whose terms refer back to a socio-cultural map rather than a generic one. Rock authenticity becomes "social authenticity", since it relies upon the processes of "collective group interaction" (Fornäs 1995: 276).

> Here, the judgement of genuineness is based on the norms that are legitimate within a certain (real or imagined) social (interpretive) community (ibid.)

Dance and the body are relocated into a category of "subjective authenticity" that "focuses on the individual's mind and body, as a state of presence" (ibid.).

Postmodernism and the authenticity of self-conscious artistry are explained with regard to the wider symbolic milieu in which they operate and to which they refer.

> The third form could be defined as *cultural or meta-authenticity*, since it moves within (and derives legitimacy from) the level of the symbolic expressions (texts) themselves: the well-formedness of cultural works related to historically determined aesthetic genre rules. (ibid., emphasis in original)

In building upon these systems, Allan Moore is sensitive to the contradictions inherent in the mythical formulations of authenticity. He takes account of the problems caused by our need to ascribe authenticity in conjunction with our failure to adequately pin down a definition of it.

> What we declare 'myth' is that whose historical reality we cannot prove, indeed, we have every reason to doubt: in rock terms, this is the myth of unmediated expression. But, equally, what we declare 'myth' is that whose psychological necessity is so strong for us that we are constrained to build it. (Moore 1998: 27)

Consequently, although he adopts a similar model, his tri-partite division, whilst it does not contradict that of Fornäs, shifts the spotlight sideways slightly away from the nexus of individual and cultural formations contained in the music (Fornäs 1995: 277). He moves instead towards an assessment of "who, rather than what, is being authenticated" (Moore 2002: 209). He examines a number of accounts of authenticity that privilege honesty in different ways and to different referents—experience, tradition and ideology. In so doing he notes, whilst acknowledging a historicized position, that they have in common a particular relationship between audience and performer.

> What unites all these understandings of authenticity is their vector, the physical direction in which they lead. They all relate to an interpretation of the perceived expression of an individual on the part of the audience. Particular acts and sonic gestures (of various kinds) made by particular artists are interpreted by an engaged audience as investing authenticity in those acts and gestures- the audience becomes engaged not with the acts

and gestures themselves, but directly with the originator of those acts and gestures. (ibid. 214)

Thus, where Fornäs's model accounts for the variety of musics that are authenticated, Moore's engages with the locus of this authentication, and the way in which the audience goes about that process. Drawing on Romantic rock claims to uncompromised communication, he posits "*authenticity of expression* or… 'first person authenticity'" (ibid., emphasis in original).

> [This] arises when an originator (composer, performer) succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience. (ibid.)

Such claims, although emotionally powerful, are subject to doubts regarding the veracity of 'unmediated expression'. He therefore correlates them with the ways in which artists refer back to previous markers (the blues, say, or even other acts) to legitimise their work. Here authenticity is conferred if artists manage to impart to audiences a sense that their music is true to an (often auratic) original.

> *authenticity of execution*, or… 'third person authenticity'… arises when a performer succeeds in conveying the impression of accurately representing the ideas of another, embedded within a tradition of performance. (ibid.218, emphasis in original)

Finally, Moore takes account of the ways in which an audience's own experiences of life are read into performances which feeds into the psychological tendency to build stabilising 'myths'. Here the affirmative power of music is recognized.

> [T]his 'place of belonging'… a 'centredness'… call[s] attention to the experience that this cultural product offered an affirmation… This 'centredness' implies an active lifting of oneself from an unstable experiential ground and depositing oneself within an experience to be trusted, an experience which centres the listener. (ibid. 219)

Hence, the last component of his typology is:

'second person' authenticity, or *authenticity of experience*, which occurs when a performance succeeds in conveying the impression to a listener that that

listener's experience of life is being validated, that the music is 'telling it like it is' for them. (ibid. 220)

By laying down a code that takes account of audience members as evaluators, Moore continues a movement away from a view of genres, or even individual texts, in which authenticity might be said to inhere. At the same time, he also acknowledges that these authentications depend upon the *success* (ibid.) of the performer in conveying these (often overlapping) characteristics, thereby sidestepping a relativistic minefield in which either nothing is authentic, or everything is.

Thus far, we have arrived at a manageable, if extended, understanding of authenticity and authentication as general concepts within social contexts. But applying these to specific instances can generate stresses in the overarching models, particularly when such instances fit uneasily into normative or homogenising categories. Carys Wyn Jones, for example, describes Radiohead as "occupying the oxymoronic position of possessing mainstream integrity" (Wyn Jones 2005: 38).

The notion of 'oxymoronic mainstream integrity' usefully highlights the paradox inherent in trying to ascribe authenticity in commercial forms like rock. The slippery nature of the concept presents analysts with something of a differential equation, whose terms shift according to which subject is in the spotlight. As Wyn Jones notes, neither a worm's-eye nor a bird's-eye view alone is adequate.

> An obvious answer would be to reject meta-narratives of authenticity and to simply leave intact small, situational instances of perceived integrity, sincerity, and truth. And yet this too is misleading as all judgements happen interrelationally, and an overall coherent picture is always built up around a single referent that accommodates all facets of its articulation in our known world-view. To deny this mini meta-narrative is as misleading as it is to say that authenticity is a fixed term unchanged by culture or the passage of time. (ibid. 47)

Here the problem becomes how we negotiate the numerous different ways in which authentication takes place. Moore's model usefully accounts for the 'centred' experience without buying into the concomitant myths that obfuscate our

attempts to understand it. But models that become, as Wyn Jones points out, "progressively non-specific in order to encompass all styles of music" (ibid. 49) fall prey to the quirks of the particular instances she describes. Radiohead's problematic status, here, derives not from the fact that such models can't encompass their songs or performances. (It's easy enough to see how these can be authenticated in terms of centred experiences, sincere expressions or contributions to a cultural conversation). Rather, it exposes potholes in the terrain that Fornäs and Moore seek to map. A presentation of naivety and uninformed sincerity, for instance, might be unsustainable over a prolonged career. Wyn Jones asks how Radiohead manage to convey the 'sincere' angst of *Creep* and the artistic distance of *Kid A*, and deploy both within a mainstream commercial setting. These questions are not incompatible with overarching typologies, but neither are they comprehensively accounted for.

> Both the problem and the value of the concept of authenticity in popular music is that the word generates a multitude of implications and sites of authentication. It is the tension that such models… generate when mapped on to actual songs that is often most revealing, and so such models are more useful if they undergo constant evolution rather than be declared suddenly extinct…[I]t has been possible to identify some of the large number of threads of authenticity generated… but this… has ultimately only managed to hint at the vastness of such a web of authenticities that is woven through music and its related discourse. (ibid.50)

Moore's map helps us through this web but the path is still strewn with obstacles thrown up by complex musical transitions and formations and so it is to its evolution that I now wish to turn. In trying to more fully account for the enduring draw of the myth of authenticity, I would like to refine his concept by incorporating into it the historical baton passing of 'authenticity' that occurred in the 1960s when the birth of the 'rock era' saw the folk movement's reaction against the mainstream redeployed within it (Keightley 2001:127) and rock reached for the territory previously occupied by 'high art'.

5.3- 'COLLECTIVE'/'FIRST PERSON PLURAL' AUTHENTICITY

5.3.1- 'Collective/first person plural' authenticity in theory

Rock's incorporation of an anti-commerce rhetoric and attempt to enter the realm of 'art' were part and parcel of the move towards the centre of popular music production of the 'band model' predicated on the 'group identity'.[96] Some of the problems and inconsistencies around authenticity, and the tensions between genres, arose during this period. The hostile reaction to Dylan's embrace of elements of the 'rock' aesthetic is perhaps the most emblematic and well known of these. But as well as hiding his eyes behind dark glasses, Dylan also (partially) hid *himself* in a band. To be sure, this wasn't the fully-fledged 'group identity' evidenced by the "four headed monster" (The Beatles 2000: 354) of The Beatles. But it was a retreat from the lone troubadour of 'folk' Bob Dylan. And the musicians with whom he chose to expedite this shift of emphasis themselves stepped out of his shadow in the latter years of the 1960s enacting an archetype of group identity as 'The Band'.

These tensions are at the root of Wyn Jones's conception of "oxymoronic mainstream integrity". But we can begin to unpick this knot if we understand how group identity has come to underwrite certain perceptions of authenticity in popular music, as illustrated by acts like Radiohead.

The internal contradictions become less problematic if we allow for a "first person plural" or "collective authenticity"[97]. This doesn't contradict Moore's assertion that the audience is doing the authenticating, nor do I seek to replace any

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[96] As described in Chapter 1, the colleges and art schools produced many of the key figures of the 1960s rock cohort. Even if far from all of them originated from this source, it's notable that many did- on both sides of the Atlantic. Members of The Beatles, The Rolling Stones and The Doors, for instance, all spent time in art based educational institutions. It's also notable that even when there was, initially at least, a driving force or leadership such 'leaders' as Pete Townshend of The Who or Jimmy Page of Led Zeppelin chose the band/group identity model.

[97] I have labelled it thus in order to distinguish it from Fornäs's "social authenticity". Although both refer to validations made according to criteria based on groups or communities, my formulation refers more specifically to the socially modulated creativity of the groups- the creative/social nexus of the micro-field- that are authenticated, as opposed to the wider community in which this tales place.

of his categories. Rather, a "collective authenticity" allows for an authentication to take place whereby the subject is not only the singer or songwriter whose expressions are authenticated but the social context in which they are produced. These expressions can then be seen to fall into a relationship with other elements in the context within which they are enacted. Creativity in bands is socially constructed. If it can be acknowledged that one of the consequences of this is that the *mode* of social construction is in itself a site of authentication and a reason for it, the position held by acts like Radiohead seems less contradictory.

We don't need to fall back into the 'commercial/authentic' opposition either. The 'first person plural' cuts across aesthetic genre lines- and could as easily be applied to less straightforwardly 'credible' acts across the rock/pop spectrum— Queen, say, or Wet Wet Wet, or ABBA[98]. The "mainstream integrity", in this case, isn't a Romantic victory over commerce, or a commercial exception to an incorporative rule. It's the means by which audiences recognise, and musicians enact, the communality that underlies both the commercial marketing of 'authenticity' and the pre-commercial basis for it. And even if this is only 'pre-commercial' in so far as a relationship with commerce at some stage is implicit, even perhaps built into the model (and certainly more or less inevitable in pragmatic terms), the authentication that takes place refers to a sense of the 'we' that makes this engagement (in the first place). The 'mainstream' part of the formulation is the commercially extended version that refers back to the socially extended component to connote 'integrity'; the group identity at the heart of the brand.

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[98] The narrative of peer formation, schism and speculation about reunions that applies to this latter group is another illustration of the way in which the pop/rock divide becomes easier to navigate if we think about it in terms of methods of creativity rather than aesthetic criteria- or even audience demographics. ABBA, notwithstanding the reappraisal of their work and revival in their fortunes that took place around the release of the *Gold* compilation (Vincentelli 2006: 87-96) have been critically viewed as part of the 'pop' landscape, despite their collective 'band mode' of production. It seems plausible that this was a factor in their being deemed suitable for inclusion in the postmodern play undertaken by the likes of U2 and KLF in the 1990s, as opposed to other pop acts of their era who had, by then, drifted into 'camp' territory.

The 'we' of the 'first person plural' underwrites the 'first person singular' expressions not by conferring upon them a Romantic validity but by affirming the social nature of the creativity in hand. This is not just the 'group' underpinning the expressions of the singer, although that is a factor. It's also possible to understand the band itself as a single coherent text. Even with the band as a 'singular' entity, the 'we' of the mode of creativity underpins the collective 'I' who makes the expression.

5.3.2- 'Collective/first person plural' authenticity in practice

It is easy enough to see a 'band' as a kind of text through the prism of branding. Logos, images and bodies of work can be lumped together and read-off as coherent sites of analysis. (In some ways, this is the biographical/critical norm). But the band also exists as a socially extended phenomenon and as the focus of authentication. The status of 'collectivity' (the band mode) as a site of authentication in itself could also shed some light on the numerous everyday debates surrounding line-ups. Part of what is at stake is the authenticity of a particular configuration of musicians. Whether Pink Floyd Mark I, II or III, or all of them, counts as 'the real deal' is a matter of how an audience member ascribes the 'first person plural' authenticity, in the same way as they judge a rock song according to its success in conveying an emotion, a folk performance as true to the form or a pop act as articulating their own experience.

It seems plausible, as well, that these ascriptions also derive from audience members' validation of their own experiences and judgements. I remember talking to a security guard at Edinburgh's Corn Exchange—not long after seeing AC/DC at the SECC, and just before seeing The Who. He had seen AC/DC "back in the day" with Bon Scott, and was scathing about their reincarnation. When I mentioned The Who, a similar mix of wistfulness, boastfulness and negation of the present came forth. He didn't fancy the current tour, having seen them "with Moonie, back in the

70s", to which my only, slightly petulant response, was "Well I didn't, so I wanna go now, O.K?". I, in my turn, got to see The Who before John Entwistle's demise, and The Rolling Stones before Bill Wyman's departure so could, I suppose, apply similar bragging rights to more recent concerts although this might serve little purpose beyond validating my own experience.

My point is that long-standing bands—those that have undergone the full extent of the branding process—return us, when line-up changes occur, to the paradoxical Ship of Theseus. To re-work this into a more modern context, we could see it as a drum kit. Skins can be replaced, or a snare. Over time, each component might be new. At what point does it cease to become the same drum-kit? The debates about whether Bon Scott's AC/DC, The Rolling Stones after Brian Jones, or The Pretenders with only Chrissie Hynde left from the original line-up are the 'correct' or genuine article are, to an extent, moot. Original line-ups don't necessarily trump 'classic' line-ups or vice versa.[99] In a similar vein, it's plausible that the diluted Rolling Stones of the 2000s put in better performances than some of those of previous eras which saw heroin addled guitarists nodding off on stage. (Bockris 1993: 248)

Just as arguments about whether a performance is 'genuine' in the Romantic sense can go around in circles until we review them in the context of the authentication process, so debates surrounding personnel can be better understood if we reconfigure our view to take in the 'first person plural' authentications that audiences make in relation not only to their own experiences of bands (and brands) but the ways in which these feed into wider perceptions of what is 'authentic'.

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[99] The most critically and commercially successful incarnation of The Red Hot Chilli Peppers, for instance, includes guitarist John Frusicante who was a replacement for Hilel Slovak, who died after the release of their third album. Slovak himself, despite being a founder member, was absent from the first album, which was recorded during a hiatus in his tenure with the band. (Apter 2004, Kiedis and Sloman 2004). Similarly, The Foo Fighters didn't coalesce into a stable four-piece until after their third album- (the first being recorded entirely by Dave Grohl). (James 2003)

This is what is often missing from critical accounts of the branded experience of bands. John Strausbaugh, for instance, offers a sustained and entertaining polemic against the culture of nostalgia that lauds the sexagenarian alumni of the rock era, using The Rolling Stones as one of the keystones of his argument. His lament is for the sense of revolution with which their performances were imbued (even if these were, all along, part of an 'act', as Jagger's business acumen suggests). For Strausbaugh, 'rock' is a young person's game.

> Listening to *young* bands doesn't make me feel old. It makes me feel young. Young*ish*. Even when they're repeating dumb rock tropes I was playing twenty-five years before they were born… That's rock 'n' roll. The Jagger of 1965 is very rock 'n' roll. The Jagger of 1995 is a nightmare. (Strausbaugh 2001: 78)

The bulk of his complaint is not that they're still playing, but that they're behaving on stage like men in their twenties[100].

> [W]hen the elder Mick sits on a stool and simply sings a nice, bluesy number, it's much easier on the eye and the ear than his sexy-senior-citizen antics… If they'd played the whole concert that way, just a bunch of old white blues-men plucking away on hollow-body guitars and honking on the harmonica, it would have been a lovely evening out with the elderly Rolling Stones. But, of course, you can't play an evening of acoustic blues to a stadium crowd of yahoos who've paid way too much money and drunk way too many beers not to hear 'Satisfaction' and see some fireworks. (ibid. 68-69)

This disillusionment is understandable, but perhaps also rooted in a form of the nostalgia he decries. His dogged insistence that the Baby Boom generation dropped the revolutionary ball and are now engaged in a pantomime of self-delusion hinges on the assumption that his 'first person plural' ascriptions of authenticity have priority over the 'yahoos' in terms of a (moral) claim to valid experience. By subjecting such stadium gigs to the weight of his moral expectations, he overlooks the component of entertainment and enjoyment that helped to drive the rock era as much as the ideology that accompanied it. In doing so he trips over backwards into a position that opposes 'worthwhile' rock with 'inconsequential'

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[100] It is, perhaps, also worth bearing in mind that he is writing from an American perspective. Another of his targets is *Rolling Stone* magazine (Strausbaugh 2001: Chapter 4, pp.133-170- "How *Rolling Stone* Turned Thirty, and Why You Didn't Care").

pop. Subsequent generations of Rolling Stones audiences know full well that this is not rebelliousness in anything more than a strictly theatrical sense. But some of them are judging the latter day Stones as *true enough* to the original 'drum kit' to perform its function for them at the time.

The residue of the 'first person plural' of the band is what drives the continuing success of the brand. A lot of this *is* the straightforward marketing of nostalgia. But this doesn't account for the whole picture. Audiences make their own judgements about whether a 'branded' act has enough integrity to the 'we' that underlies the brand to validate their experience of it. Musicians make decisions balancing their own views of how worthwhile co-operation with continuing or former bandmates is with regard to their own agendas. Some of these may be financially based. Others may not. Band perceptions of what is a worthwhile experience don't necessarily have to correlate with those of audiences either, as long as certain minimum performative lip service is paid to the collective. The audience may have ascribed sufficient 'first person plural' authenticity to validate their experience of it, even though it was characterised for the band by a big pay cheque that scarcely justified the undercurrent of seething mutual resentment.[101] Pink Floyd clearly felt that either the ethos or scale of Live 8 merited subordinating personal reservations to the task of re-producing the classic line-up. (The tribute concert to Syd Barrett after his death obviously didn't merit a similar priority over personal concerns). Likewise, the relative commercial failure of Mick Jagger's solo ventures (Bockris 1993: 388) is an example of how sections of the audience can reject an act as insufficiently authentic to the residue of the 'first person plural'.

There might well be a pantomime element to the type of performance that induces such discomfort in Strausbaugh— but it's maybe not as self-delusional as

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[101] My own criticisms, and those of other members of the local crew, of The Eagles at Edinburgh's Murrayfield Stadium on their 'Hell Freezes Over' tour of 1994 reflected this. I cared less that they probably hated each other and were in it for the money, and more that *they looked like* they weren't interested. It wasn't so much that they were only going through the motions. It was more that they *weren't*.

he thinks. The Rolling Stones, in this case, are playing at being (a version of) *themselves*. Audiences are complicit in this aspect of the pantomime and can, to greater or lesser degrees, accommodate it depending on the success of the performance in enacting a sense of the social identity at the core of the brand. Strausbaugh quotes Giorgio Gomelsky, a blues promoter and early manager figure for The Rolling Stones, reminiscing about an early gig.

> So Brian[Jones] says, 'Giorgio, there'th sikth of us, and there'th three of them. Do you think it'th worthwhile? Thould we play?' I said, 'Brian, how many people do you think can fit in here? A hundred? Okay, well then play as if there were a hundred people in here.' And they did. And that was one of the reasons I rarely went to see the Stones in later times, because in some ways, that was like the best show they ever did. For three people. (Strausbaugh 2001: 41-42).

There's a putative 'spectrum of credibility' for long standing acts that can quickly become subject to a *reductio ad absurdum* whereby the early performance in front of three people is the 'most authentic'. Gomelsky's 'playing to three men in a pub' becomes more authentic than The Stones in 1972, which is more authentic than my experience of them on the Steel Wheels tour, which is more authentic than the fortieth anniversary tour.

It's also likely that, notwithstanding Gomelsky's preference for this early Stones gig, few bands regard a performance in front of three people as a career highlight. (Mini referred to this process of building a live audience as "the rainy Cumbernauld on a Tuesday thing"). Regardless of the intrinsic quality of the performance, such events tend to attain cultural capital *retrospectively* with regard to extrinsic factors brought about by subsequent (commercial or critical) success. In practical terms, persistent failure to move beyond playing to tiny audiences is likely to lead to dissolution. [102]

I'm not proposing an all encompassing relativism here, or trying to suggest that some performances, or line-ups, can't be better than others. I am, however,

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[102] This isn't to say that bands might not look back fondly on early poorly attended, shoestring or technically inept gigs. But this is more likely to be socially than musically inflected- part of the process of forming and then reinforcing the group identity. (cf: Shank 1994: 170-171)

suggesting that we can circumnavigate this one-upmanship, which itself derives from the conflation of "different understandings of authenticity" (Moore 2002: 211) along a perceived opposition between commercial and authentic music. In summary, a concept of 'first person plural'- or 'collective'- authenticity allows us to apply Moore's model to the text of the band such that we can understand its appeal and function as a model and an entity without the burdens of generically infused value judgements.

5.3.3- 'Collective/first person plural' authenticity in context

Simon Frith writes:

> Rock was a last romantic attempt to preserve ways of music making-performer as artist, performance as 'community'- that had been made obsolete by technology and capital. (Frith 1988:1)

That this attempt failed is a critical commonplace, and at the heart of jeremiads like Strausbaugh's. What survived, however, was the form of the band as a key producer of meaning in popular music. The 'rock' modus operandum outlived the rock aesthetic as a site of socially extended music making. Lou Reed, on the sleeve notes to his *New York* (1989) album claimed, "You can't beat two guitars, bass and drums", stating a preference for a set of instrumental choices and by implication adducing a kind of inherent authenticity for it. The cracks in this aesthetically aligned, and historically derived, account were already evident. A year earlier, Simon Frith already found "something *essentially* tedious these days about that 4:4 beat and the hoarse (mostly male) cries for freedom" (Frith 1988: 1, emphasis in original).

The likelihood that rock, to extrapolate from Lou Reed's inclination, was ever inherently anti-hegemonic is questionable at best. In any case, by the end of the 1960s the relationship between commerce and counter-culture was already being ironised by advertising campaigns like Elektra's which used the 'anti-establishment' credentials of acts like The Doors to aver that "the man can't steal

our music", or that which stated "The Revolution is on CBS" (Shuker 1994: 6). By the time of the upheavals brought about by punk in the late 1970s, and long before the release of *New York*, it was already apparent that, as Frith puts it, "…far from being 'counter cultural', rock articulated the *reconciliation* of rebelliousness and capital" (Frith 1988:2). And certainly this assessment seemed to be borne out as the question of *what* was *whose* music came to the forefront when Metallica, as Garofalo says, "squandered valuable cultural capital" by adding their own lawsuit to that of the RIAA in the battle against the file-sharing website *Napster* (Garofalo 2008: 477).

Nevertheless, the combination of appeals to 'high art' discourses, and the connotation (if not, in any real sense, denotation) of a sense of 'anti-establishment' sentiment that surrounded some of the prominent members of the vanguard of the 'rock era' were often hugely successful in terms of generating sales. This, in itself, helped to instil within rock's relationship with commerce a dynamic that reinforced the cultural capital of the music makers. Foremost amongst these were those who had chosen to adopt a group identity, helping to cement that means of peer driven cultural production as a keystone within the emerging rock tradition. That these groups had formed with a view to participating in the generation of economic capital rather than resisting the means by which it was accrued helped to make the group identity implicit in the institutional autonomy that was, in no small way, a consequence of their success. If the figureheads of the counter culture in the 1960s, and punk in the 1970s, did not live out the grandest revolutionary claims that were made for them, this should not negate the changes that they did manage to make. As Martin Cloonan puts it:

> {W}hile it is true that the Beatles did engage in the activity of money-making, this in itself did not conflict with their pursuit of artistic freedom. That they did not change the capitalist nature of the business is, in terms of pop, beside the point. The Beatles' commercial success earned them unprecedented artistic freedom... the Beatles' achievement in terms of artistic freedom is considerable. They managed to change the *relative* power in the relationship between artist and industry. (Cloonan 2000: 130-134)

In effect, then, both specific bands and the wider phenomenon of the band, have become tied up with how authenticity is attributed in popular music, especially the Romantically tinged 'rock' authenticity, in complex and often barely visible ways. The band in and of itself, and not just its output, becomes subject to authentications. These authentications adhere not to a song, or an album, but to the text of the band. They can override aesthetic considerations for the many listeners to whom it matters whether, say, Keith Moon or Zak Starkey is playing drums for The Who, and are similarly subject to the 'moral' dimension of aesthetic judgements described by Frith (1996: 72). These 'first person plural' authentications have the added effect of helping to endorse other judgements made about acts in a wider arena.

The band, as described earlier, is in many ways a 'micro-field' within the wider field of popular music. A collective agent, it seeks both cultural and economic capital. The evaluations that are made about the "collective" authenticity of a band relate to the operations of the micro-field. But they also have a bearing on its position in the wider field, within which being perceived as 'authentic' is a form of symbolic capital. The internal stability of the band is a factor in the quest for capital-both symbolic and economic. Obviously a smooth running operation is more likely to succeed than one that is rife with conflict (notwithstanding that a certain amount of tension, depending on the personalities in the group, might be conducive to creative work). If the centrifuge of creative work is turning efficiently, and the personnel within the core of the band and those passing in and out of its borders are in a relatively harmonious dynamic, then the micro-field of the band acts as a stable agent. Disruptions to this dynamic will weaken its capacity to work effectively and therefore its position in the wider field.

Beyond this fairly straightforward relationship between the band as an agent and the field, however, there is also a further way in which its group identity pertains to its status in the overarching struggle for capital. The kind of judgements

outlined above— the authentications of the band in relation to its projection of itself— feed into the commercial star-making process. Since this is, itself, aligned to judgements about authenticity it makes sense that these will produce value in the field. The symbolic capital of being perceived as authentic, then, underpins the idea of the 'star' in both a general and systemic way and in the narrower, more specific, manner addressed here. The 'collective authenticity' of the band not only provides a referent for specific musical expressions, but also acts as a kind of guarantor for them. The structure of the 'band', in relation to the commercial milieu in which it exists, provides a link back to the pre-industrialised musical and social activities of the group.

This applies in both the general and specific senses. Many bands consist of musicians who come to the enterprise after they have already spent some time working in a commercially inflected context. (Led Zeppelin or The Police, for example). Many others contain musicians who meet industry as a group, having built their position (and often their musical skills) together. In both cases, they tend to be formed by peers—whether at school or in a local music scene. [103]

In building their relationships not only with each other in the 'micro-field' but, as a group, with the outside world a band forms a 'character'. In learning, socialising and negotiating creative decisions together, the members of a band become entwined in an enterprise whose outward face incorporates musical, performative and image-related features. Logos, stance on stage, lyrics, musical style, haircuts, clothing and any number of other details form part of this mix. The myriad ways in which the complex of social and creative activity expresses itself works towards projecting this character that has both inchoate social aspects and

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[103] One could argue that even 'supergroups' are also made up of peers, in these cases the peer group consisting of wealthy and internationally well-known musicians. The fact that bands like Blind Faith, or Them Crooked Vultures, tend to attract this epithet is also evidence that they are somehow perceived as 'different' to bands whose members achieve fame together. The 'day job' aspect of being in a band, a degree of commitment to conjoined careers, is seemingly a part of what constitutes its identity.

more material and self-evident facets. These, along with the tacit creativity described earlier, become institutionalised if the band is successful enough to evolve into a brand and the 'group identity' becomes a material and financial fact.

Once this has taken place, new musicians can be slotted in, as long as they can be seen to 'fit' into that identity. Within the marketplace, and the star system, one aspect of the star, alongside 'talent', is 'personality'. When an established 'personality' has evolved out of historical interactions amongst a group of people, it is plausible that even when individuals within that group change, or the nature of its expressions alters, revisions to the original template are evaluated in relation to that template. To follow Wyn Jones's example, then, *Kid A* and *Creep* are both 'true' to the institutionalised character of Radiohead. This helps to explain how wildly different musical gestures can be 'true' to a common referent. This is especially so if one of the characteristics of that referent is a degree of eclecticism but it also applies to changes in emphasis over the passage of time- and not least whether these are judged to be developments of an original sound or merely a dilution or bastardisation of it.

5.4- CONCLUSION

The group identity, then, has a bearing on the question of authenticity in rock. The conception of authorship as socially constructed (Toynbee 2000: 42-46, McIntyre 2006) exposes the Romantic 'myth of authenticity' that supports the notions of authorship inherent in the star-making process. But despite these inconsistencies in the Romantic account of authenticity, there remains a way in which, in some cases, a version of authenticity can be discerned that neither depends on appeals to Romantic genius nor rejects an understanding of popular music as socially authored. A position that places rock in opposition to capital is inconsistent in the face of the evidence about how it is made and scholars have correctly debunked the myths on which this position relies. Nevertheless, as with

Moore's focus on authentication rather than authenticity, and building upon that assertion, we can view the situation from another angle.

Some of the ways in which rock is produced, the social axes along which it is organised, have been inscribed into it along with the myths. These myths have become crystallized via branding into a particular methodology— the band. Ascriptions of 'collective authenticity' assess specific bands (and even specific versions of these bands) against this archetypal methodology. In individual cases audiences ascribe authenticity, or otherwise, by mapping specific incarnations against the original, now institutionalised, character of a band. But there is also a sense in which 'authenticity' refers to a quality extraneous to the band. Not only does the collective 'first person plural' methodology provide a 'collective authenticity' for the communal 'first person singular' agent, but this is extrapolated out into the field at large.

A perception of authenticity as a myth stems from a viewpoint from which it is regarded as an ideology, and in critiques of rock the stress tends to be on seeing through that ideology to explain why such myths have arisen. Keightley asserts, for example,

> Rock emerged because one segment of the popular mainstream was associated with a particular demographic anomaly- a huge increase in the number of affluent youth born in the wake of the Second World War. Paradoxically, the baby boom's numbers magnified- rather than 'massified'- youth culture. The longstanding sense of youth as marginal and subordinate allowed this newly dominant culture to continue to imagine itself as subcultural. (Keightley 2001: 139)

But as well as an ideology, rock is a specific sort of socially extended material practice. Since many have accepted that it is, as Frith puts it, "the *reconciliation* of rebelliousness and capital" (1988: 2, emphasis in original), there has been a tendency towards an overemphasis on 'myth-busting' that can lead to a form of category mistake. The problems of seeing authenticity as a platonic form against which acts should be evaluated have been well rehearsed. But authenticity in rock can also be understood not as an ideology but in relation to a practice. It is a social

construct of a particular way of making music. In this light it is not just a myth, although it is still a myth in terms of the Romantic aspirations for the word. It is, however, also a reality in terms of it being encoded in a practice.

The 'collective authenticity', in this respect, becomes not so much a quality inherent in an individual. Rather, it describes a set of relationships between groups of musicians and fans. Allan Moore's refraction of authenticity into authentication provides a basis for reassessing the processes at work. To this we can add a 'first person plural' locus of authentication that sheds light on not only the enduring appeal of the more 'mythical' formulations of the concept but the reasons for their evolution. Beyond this, it also allows us to understand the work of bands, and rock, in relation to a particular strand of the history of popular music.

Rock can be understood as a set of practices that are subject to authentication in relation to the methodology that has become prescribed as part of the formulation of the genre, and its surrounding ideology. This reveals the relationships between musicians amongst each other, and between bands and their fans, as rooted in concrete acts, not just adherence to mythical and ephemeral values and is a consequence of the entanglement of socialisation and creativity. Although the fruits of this process are heavily subject to commercial manipulation, a one-eyed view of this complicity between the rock ideology and commerce increases the risk of throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The 'baby' in this case is the 'band' mode of creativity. Even as the aesthetic with which it arose has been corporatised, this has survived as a means by which musicians enact and refer back to collective pre-industrial creativity. Audiences, in their turn, evaluate musicians' interactions and expressions in relation to these models of collective creativity.

"What's so funny 'bout peace, love and understanding?" asked Nick Lowe in the song of that title. 'Peace, love and understanding' may have been overused as words and tropes in the 1960s and 1970s to the point of negating their value as

meaningful terms. Certainly, it's much easier to parrot them than to do the hard work of bringing them about. But if we view them as practices rather than abstract ideals valorised by catchphrases, Lowe's question gains traction. The knee-jerk appeals to Romantic authenticity and a rock ideology that was somehow 'above' commerce served, likewise, to devalue the very concept upon which they depended. Again, however, a 'collective' or 'first person plural authenticity' with a basis in the actual practices of musicians, historical and latter-day, and the material consequences of these as they become subject to audience authentication, is less of a laughing matter.

CONCLUSION

I approached this research in light of what I perceived as a gap between my understanding and my experience of rock, and rock bands in particular. I knew from extensive reading, and limited experience, that many of the bands I admired had thrived in a hard-nosed commercial environment and also that musical unity onstage often belied the fraught reality behind the scenes. Early research upon entering into the study of popular music in the academy confirmed that the Romantic version of rock promulgated in the mass media, which I nevertheless still consumed avidly, was at best wishful thinking and at worst a hoax. Clearly, at least as far as rock was concerned, 'art' and 'commerce' were on the same team. If nothing else my bank account suffering as my CD shelves groaned illustrated this.

At the same time, a part of me still cleaved to something beyond just the music. A life of engagement with music is also a life of talking about music and it was apparent in a multitude of everyday conversations that when the subject of the compromises and inconsistencies at the heart of rock's myths came up many people either didn't want to know or more often already knew but didn't *care*. The tenor of these exchanges also drove me towards the study of bands in a different way. I listened to a lot of jazz and funk as well. These are also made collectively, and mediated by technology. But it didn't seem to matter, apart from in a basically musicological or aesthetic way, *who* was in the group that made the music. Debates about the merits of different versions of the Miles Davis Quintet carried nothing like the same ascriptions of an essential validity as those about Pink Floyd. It wasn't just because of musicological or aesthetic considerations that cynical and knowledgeable rock fans, including me, were misty eyed watching the reunited Pink Floyd at Live 8, but felt like crying for the opposite reason when presented

with a DVD of Queen with Paul Rodgers. Clearly there was something in the relationship between the musicians and the brand name that helped to explain the distance between understanding the situation and responding to it instinctively.

Responses to band reunions might be primarily driven by nostalgia, even nostalgia for something we have only experienced as a simulacrum. It is nevertheless a very human response, and these involve a range of judgements that are not easily categorised. We are neither 'cultural dupes'—we rejected the Queen DVD—nor immune to myth—we dropped everything to watch the Pink Floyd set. Simon Frith's aesthetic of popular music makes plain the social foundation of these judgements.

> Music is not in itself revolutionary or reactionary. It is a source of strong feelings which, because they are socially coded, can come up against common sense. (Frith 1996: 277)

In a way, what I have attempted with this thesis is to work backwards from his argument that popular music produces rather than reflects popular values (ibid. 270) to illustrate how a particular case, that of the band as a way of making music, has impacted on our value judgements and then forwards again to show how some of the discussions about those judgements might be able to take better account of the social coding that underpins them.

To do justice to a topic that carries both emotional weight and practical consequences I have approached it from a variety of angles. I have avoided an all-encompassing theoretical framework because as my research progressed it became increasingly obvious that the phenomenon I was trying to examine existed across a range of domains—historical, creative and critical—not all of which could adequately be described in one scheme. A unitary theoretical approach to the whole would have meant sacrificing depth in some of the parts. To this end, I let the subject dictate my approach rather than trying to fit it into an overarching system. Sara Cohen's argument for ethnography in the study of popular music provides

good reason to support textual analysis and broad ranging descriptions with illustrations of where these intersect with actual practice.

> Individuals produce and consume music within specific social contexts (households, neighbourhoods, etc.); at specific times or historical moments; within specific networks of social relationships (involving kin, peers, colleagues, etc.), relationships that have different dimensions (social, political, economic). People's experiences of music, the uses they have for it, and the meanings they construct around, or through it, are bound up with these specificities, and with the interconnections between them… An ethnographic approach to the study of popular music, involving direct observation of people, their social networks, interactions and discourses, and participation in their day-to-day activities, rituals, rehearsals and performances, would encourage researchers to experience different relationships, views, values and aesthetics, or to view familiar contexts from an alternative perspective. (Cohen 1993: 135)

Nevertheless, my debt to Bourdieu is clear, especially in my analysis of the creative and social dynamic within bands. His concepts of field and habitus are sufficiently fully realised that I was able to use them as a 'toolkit' to describe the general patterns that emerged from observations of specific cases. My conclusions about bands in the field of popular music, however, perhaps suggest a more ambivalent relationship between the autonomous sub-field of restricted production and the heteronomous mass market than that described by Bourdieu.

> The opposition between legitimate and illegitimate, imposing itself in the field of symbolic goods with the same arbitrary necessity as the distinction between the sacred and the profane elsewhere, expresses the different social and cultural valuation of two modes of production: the one a field that is its own market, allied with an educational system which legitimizes it; the other a field of production organized as a function of external demand, normally seen as socially and culturally inferior.
> This opposition between the two markets, between producers for producers and producers for non-producers, entirely determines the image writers and artists have of their profession and constitutes the taxonomic principle according to which they classify and hierarchize works (beginning with their own). (Bourdieu 1993: 129-130)

The way in which the band became, and remains, a mode of entry into the field and is simultaneously valued by audiences as an enactment of collectivity, the 'high' values for which rock strove in the 1960s alongside its function as pure entertainment support Hesmondhalgh's (2006) contention that the symbolic and financial rewards are less distinct than Bourdieu suggests. Popular music

production from ground level upwards was altered by the success in the field of bands drawn from peer groups. The way in which rock impacted on subsequent assumptions about authenticity in popular music was due to the fact that such success carried material and symbolic rewards. The case of the 'band' points towards a more fluid dynamic between both symbolic and economic capital and small and large-scale production than that implied by Bourdieu.

If some of my conclusions diverge from what the more deterministic aspects of Bourdieu's theory might suggest, it was nevertheless possible to apply the tools that he forged to one case in the huge variety of cultural production without buying into an entire world-view. I hope that by adapting his schema, I have managed to put a human face onto a useful but occasionally rather cold, and to my mind rather dour, way of assessing social practices. Theories, like the subjects to which they are applied, are dynamic. They evolve, as Cohen suggests, through a process of application and re-application in light of experience of the world, the fields in this case, to which they refer.

Toynbee, here, was a crucial link in the chain and whilst my argument goes somewhat against the grain, or rather the severity, of his critique of authorship and the cult of the author in rock, his concepts of the 'radius of creativity' (Toynbee 2000: 35-42) and 'institutional autonomy' (ibid. 25-32) provided me with the means to describe without recourse to subjectivity the range of directions from which musicians approach music making in bands. Likewise, Allan Moore's (2002) conceptualisation of how authenticity is ascribed allowed for an accommodation between the felt responses to music and the known inconsistency of the myths that such responses feed. Here, in particular, my adaptation of his work in light of my observations is in the form of an addition to, rather than a replacement for, his 'toolkit'.

'ROCK' AS A METHOD

A reading of the history of rock, in the context of the wider history of popular music, illustrates that 'narratives' have the power to shape perception and practice. Following Negus's example, I have tried to approach history as "an ongoing process during which music is actively made through 'dialogues with the past'"(Negus 1996: 160). Where he looks at musical practices as they intersect across generic lines, my own attempts to read beneath popular narratives approach them from a slightly different angle in order to describe how a way of making music became embedded into a genre ideology.

Histories of genres, especially rock, have often approached them from a perspective of 'creative flashpoints' or slightly deterministic readings of the social and economic background to these. Peterson's (1990) version of the events surrounding the emergence of rock 'n' roll strikes a balance between these approaches. His reading of the big picture, in its focus on constraints and possibilities, also chimes with Toynbee's account of how musicians themselves operate on a smaller scale. A broad view of rock history, with a specific focus on an element of it, shows how narrative myths interact with practice. As Frith (1981) and Moore (1998) point out, myths do not need to match reality to be powerful. If anything their power stems from their unreality, their appeal to 'strong feelings' rather than 'common sense'.

My reading of popular music history revealed the extent to which narrative myths have shaped practical reality. The combination of composition and performance into a commodified group identity was part and parcel of the Romantic conception of authorship and authenticity encouraged by the rock era. Practical facts, the popularity of a style easily accessible to peer groups with little or no formal training and the increasing orientation of the market towards these groups, led to new ways of making and presenting both music and musicians. The enormous commercial and critical success of these led to their becoming inscribed

into the narrative of a genre. The mythical power of such narratives carved out a path which subsequent generations of musicians have followed. It is my contention here not that it has been wrong to reorient an understanding of history away from individual examples of 'genius' towards an analysis of context but that, such is the enormity of even such a relatively small slice of history, one example of that context has been passed over. Inglis (2007) makes a cogent point about the way in which legends interact with reality. I believe that the case of the band as a form illustrates this. In describing the context of *particular* bands, popular music studies has said little about the evolution or potency of the band as a type in itself.

A reassessment of the populist (and commercial) narratives of rock via academic accounts of their context shows how the emergence of 'the band'— music making enacted in a group identity— in tandem with the shift in the ideologies promoted in the production and reception of popular music has shaped the practice of musicians entering the field ever since. The fact that membership of a band was the first port of call for engagement with public music making for the musicians in my case studies, and interviews, bears this out. Indeed, for most of them, it was the only means by which they have ever participated in the field.

My conclusion here is that 'rock', even with all its myths and dogmas, is as much a methodology as it is an aesthetic. The taxonomy of popular music employs a battery of labels that inadequately account for the practices underlying such aesthetic categories. 'Pop' and 'Rock' in particular have become uneasily segregated by ideological suppositions about the relationship between 'art' and 'commerce' that, as Keir Keightley shows (2001), have little bearing upon either genuine historical processes or their present everyday interpretations. Both are 'mainstream', and both are aesthetically omnivorous. Overviews of the territory point towards the difficulties inherent in aesthetically or ideologically based classifications.

> Pop is a slippery concept, perhaps because it is so familiar, so easily used. Pop can be differentiated from classical or art music, on the one side, from

folk music, on the other, but may otherwise include every sort of style…
When in 1990 British legislators (concerned to regulate the content of music
radio) defined 'pop music' as 'all kinds of music characterised by a strong
rhythmic element and a reliance on electronic amplification for their
performance', this led to strong objections from the music industry that such
a musical definition failed to grasp the sociological differences between pop
('instant singles-based music aimed at teenagers') and rock ('album-based
music for adults').

Here pop becomes not an inclusive category but a residual one: it is
what's left when all the other forms of popular music are stripped away,
and it's not only rock ideologues who want to distance their music from
pop, for them a term of contempt. (Frith 2001b: 94-95)

Taking account of the way in which narratives have shaped the practice of

popular music would provide some traction against this slipperiness without

sliding, in the other direction, into ideological dogma. A conception of 'rock' as

music that is made in the self-generated, but commercially mediated, way

described in this thesis would accommodate aesthetic variety but demarcate it from

other forms in such a way as to avoid putting commercial orientation into one camp

and artistic intent into another. This is not to say that such music could only be

made under group identities but rather to highlight working practices that

originated in them. This may help to alleviate some of the confusion that needlessly

arises over aesthetic categories and different audiences in talking about an artistic

and commercial environment in which the experiences of both listeners and

musicians is infinitely variable.

The working practice of forming into bands operating under a group

identity (the basis for a brand) was accompanied by the onset of ideological

assumptions about the genre in which this happened. These were broadly attached

to the aesthetic tropes that prevailed at around the time that guitars came to the

fore. Peer driven or self-generated music making outside of pedagogy or formal

structures takes on an ever-widening range of aesthetic and instrumental forms.

(Conversely, the 'guitar, bass and drums' set-up has become a core feature of

institutional learning and teaching). 'Rock' as 'guitar, bass and drums' makes as

little sense now as does 'rock' as 'revolution'. Equally, 'pop' as music for teens and

'rock' as music for adults does not account for the range of tastes within either individuals or groups. As Tommy Cunningham put it,

"You don't choose your audience, your audience chooses you".

My argument here is not that 'rock' is all music made by groups, or even that this is the best way to refer to music that is made in the way I have described. The fact is, however, that much of the music that is made in proto-markets and beyond does not resemble the 'traditional' rock aesthetic[104]. Neither do the creators of much of the music that *does* follow those patterns adhere to the blinkered vision that critics of 'rockism' (Christgau 1990: 3) ascribe to them. By unhitching musical methodology from aesthetic genre ideologies we may begin to unpick some of the knots in the classification of the sub-divisions of popular music.

THE INTERSTICES

As a consequence of both the wider social forces that removed constraints on self-taught musicians from dominating the market and the narrative myths arising from that domination and its associated ideological support structures, group production on a small scale became a key *modus operandum* for generations of young (mostly male) musicians. The range of performing spaces for these bands is wide, from pubs to church halls (Cohen 1991: 66) as is the range of contexts in which they perform, from regular bar gigs to weddings (Bennett 1980: 82-97).[105] Equally, there are different orientations towards industry and the value of (or chances of achieving) fame (Finnegan 2007: 110-119). What an overview of this work suggests, and what my own research confirms, is that the work of bands, in

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[104] In fact, the 'guitar band' has long been only a rough common denominator rather than an absolute. Apart from the variety of other instruments used on recordings in rock, local bands have often gathered together out of 'interested parties' with whatever skills they could bring to the group. Finnegan (2007: 129) describes the range of other instruments used by bands in Milton Keynes.

[105] A key difference between Cohen's and Bennett's case studies, apart from geography and era, is that the latter's focused on covers whereas the Liverpool bands played original material. This affects the *type* of gig they are likely to play. Nevertheless, variety of performing contexts was a common factor.

public and in private, takes place across the physical spaces in which they find themselves. Homes, bus journeys, day jobs, cafés and anywhere else that band members find themselves become the site of band work. Air-Fix and The Distractions discussed matters pertaining to the band in transit or used social spaces like bars for meetings and to make decisions. Individual band members practised their parts at home, and also convened in each other's flats as well as in rehearsal rooms. The members of the band, in effect, constitute its workplace more than any specific location. Certain locations (gig venues and rehearsal rooms) emphasise band 'work' but are simultaneously the site of socialisation.

This is carried through into the way in which creativity operates hand in glove with social interaction. I have described the band as a 'micro-field' because of the way in which its membership constitutes it as both a working and social space and because the artistic or commercial success of the group applies to the individuals within it. They all have a stake in the group identity as it is being formed. This means that 'creativity' in this context is the result of negotiation (and competition) in which band members apply their own skills and imagination to the process of trying to define the specific characteristics of the group identity of which they are a part. The band is therefore an agent itself, in the field of cultural production, and the context *in* which other agents interact.

My application of Bourdieu's conception was designed to illustrate the extent to which intra-band relations share certain characteristics across bands along the spectrum of economic activity. The way in which people grow apart, fall out and recombine is a part of their progress through life that matches any other working environment. But the way in which they express their creativity and *themselves* through the medium of collective action in a group identity is specific to the form. The combination of social interaction with creative work is the key to the creation of a group identity. Whether creative roles are clearly delineated, as they

were in Air-Fix, or the output of the band is the result of explicit negotiation, the abilities and personalities in the mix provide the character of the final product.

My observations here confirmed elements of previous research that describes how collective creativity in bands has strong links to social activity (Cohen 1991: 42-45). However, my particular focus on bands *themselves* rather than as they exist in a wider network or culture leads me to conclude that social and creative activity are more strongly combined than has previously been suggested. Since the abilities and personalities of the constituent parts of a band define the shape of it creative centre, they are also the source of any resultant commercial texts, including the brand. The group identity, a kind of proto-brand, is both a creative and a created construct. In such circumstances it is difficult to disentangle creative work from social interaction. The inscription of this methodology into working practices means that creativity happens in the physical interstices between prescribed sites of activity and in the social interstices between individual creative acts.

According to Negus and Pickering,

The virtue of thinking of creativity as the effectively achieved and actively received communication of experience is that it affirms a view of creativity as a socially inclusive rather than exclusive ability without evading the value question (Negus and Pickering 2004: 38).

This achievement in bands takes place through the synthesis of numerous impulses and dispositions not only into specific instances of communication but, equally significantly, into a communicative vehicle. The activities of my case studies and interviewees illustrated the extent to which everyday events and creative work occupied the same social and physical spaces. Creativity here is not just socially inclusive because the band *modus operandum* allows for participants without specific skills, or with them but without the ability to express them. It also incorporates the social into the creative sphere.

GROUP IDENTITY, AUTHENTICITY AND PRACTICE

Ultimately, then, the group identity in rock is a specific practice. It is specific to the genre in which it arose, even as that genre's aesthetic boundaries have expanded and diffused into other types of popular music, and unique in each case of its application. The dynamic of every band (like every class of students, every family or every other workplace) is unique. Part of what I wanted to discover is what they might have in common. The answer is that they all engage in a form of creative activity which is intrinsically social *beyond* the way in which all creativity is socially authored.

My conclusions up to this point have been a matter of plugging gaps in and building upon the work of others— adding a history of a type of activity to the extant histories of its iterations and wider context; looking more closely at the microcosmic activities within these specific iterations to describe the full extent of their interconnection. In light of these, however, I believe it is necessary to revise certain assumptions about 'rock' (in the widest sense of the term) and consequently the relationship between restricted and large-scale production. In carrying out the necessary work of exposing the myths of authenticity and the Romantic creator in rock, scholars have overlooked an important example of how collectivity is inscribed into creativity, invisibly but in a real way nevertheless. Toynbee concludes,

> The major shift came with rock and its cult of authorship. Now creativity was conceived as something much more grandiose. Furthermore, the musician took on a representative function. He (I use the gendered form intentionally) sang *for* a better world on behalf of a community of youth… [T]he rock mode did contribute to institutional autonomy in the music industries by endorsing the idea that musicians should be independent creators as well as performers. However this by no means redeems the popular music *auteur* in my view. For, far from being exemplary, rock authorship has constituted a fetish. In other words creativity has been falsely venerated as something extraordinary. The fact that the music industry was able to graft long-term stardom on to the institution of the rock *auteur* also limited innovation and produced an elite echelon of stars remote from the very proto-markets which rock had spawned. (Toynbee 2000: 162)

This is perhaps true as far as it goes but it fails to take account of part of what was left behind in the proto-markets as the first wave of stars ascended into the firmament—the creative method of negotiating individuality into a group identity. This is active in both the pleasures and peculiar strains found in bands—the overlap between 'function' and 'kinship'. The 'we' that is authenticated in 'first person plural' ascriptions is not a magical or mythical community but the social root of the commercial text. The processes that form the 'star' brand in these cases are common to the work of bands beneath as well as in the firmament, from amateur cover bands to would-be professionals to the pinnacle of economic and artistic achievement. The 'cult of authorship' is problematic but 'first person plural' authentication is grounded in an association with collective practice that isn't just mere fetishization of a Romantic author. It is a judgement about whether the social/creative nexus, common to all bands but specific to each one, is evident in the commercial presentation of the brand. The tacit conjunction of the creative and social dynamics through everyday activities supports Toynbee's argument that, "creation occurs on a small scale…[and] involves an accumulation of many acts rather than any grandiose gesture." (Toynbee 2000: 66) But the evolution, and continued enactment, of the band as a means of creation and collective agency suggests that something of the ordinary remains in what is 'venerated' as 'extraordinary'.

Consequently, my work confirms the value of Allan Moore's typology of authentication. My observations lead me to slightly adjust his outline, but reinforce his overall thrust.

> [I]n acknowledging that authenticity is ascribed to, rather than inscribed in, a performance, it is beneficial to ask who, rather than what, is being authenticated… Academic consideration of authenticity should thus, I believe, shift from consideration of the intention of various perceivers, and should focus on the reasons they might have for finding, or failing to find a particular performance authentic. (Moore 2002: 220-221)

Moore stops short of attempting to, "theorise either the rehabilitation of an 'authentic subject' or processes of the construction of subjectivity" (ibid. 221). I make no claims to have achieved this here either, but I believe that I have shown how in one case, with far reaching economic and social influence, subjectivity in audience response is directed not at the intention of a collective creator but at its actions, and more specifically the interstitial interactions that define the public projection of that creativity.

It is easy to become jaded about the relationship between small-scale production and the appropriation of its activities by ideologies in service of large-scale commerce and nebulous mythical formulations. But it is important to bear in mind the vestiges of their origins that remain in such formulations, and the power of myths to continue to reinforce their roots as well as their extensions. Not incidentally, then, my work here also affirms Cohen's (1993) assertion that observing and participating in the worlds one is attempting to describe is a necessary corollary to placing them into a wider discursive framework. I have attempted to sketch a model for how creativity operates in bands but would never have been able to understand the degree of complexity that it involves without seeing and experiencing how Air-Fix and The Distractions extended into the lives of their members. My conclusion about the enduring appeal of bands and the 'myth of authenticity' derived from seeing first hand how myth itself derives from and is recreated in practice.

Unfortunately, this also confirms the extent to which 'rock' remains coded as a male practice. That the process of arranging songs in The Distractions, and the invocation of professionalism by an emphasis on technical detail in Air-Fix, served to set up barriers even in groups which had included women in their line-up shows that even if things have moved on since earlier accounts of this problem there remains much work to be done.

The way in which 'fun' became a serious business for The Distractions and Air-Fix's social extension outlived its musical purpose also adds credence to Finnegan's observation that music making across the board is a powerful component of pathways through life.

> The pathways of musical practice involve people in a series of cumulatively overlapping and criss-crossing social relationships. These in turn relate them both to each other and, through the series of personal networks, institutional links, and social ordering of space and time necessarily implicated in each of these pathways, to other elements in social life... To be involved in musical practice is not merely an individual matter… but *is* to be involved in social action and relations- in society. (Finnegan 2007: 329, emphasis in original)

Finnegan's source was a broad range of music worlds in a clearly demarcated geographical space. Mine was music-making in a specific music way that extends from local spaces into corporately mediated global ones. That the socially infused creativity of the group identity, as exhibited in my case studies, survives the journey from the local spaces of Finnegan's work into diffuse corporate spaces, there to be judged by audiences, confirms her assessment of musical as social action.

This matters, ultimately, because musical creativity is a valuable cultural and economic resource. My concern here has been to see how the way in which 'the band' and its deployment of creativity through a group identity pertains to the discipline of popular music studies. In this context, closer attention to the band as *modus operandum* could, I believe, help to balance the enduring appeal of 'rock' against the rejection of the myths that it relies on. It may also provide at least a marker, if not actually a pathway, through the taxonomic minefield of genre, 'rock' and 'pop'. Beyond this, further research into the activity of musicians and other creators in the gaps between the prescribed, normal and formal arenas of creativity (venues, practice rooms, exhibition centres, community centres and so on) might shed light on how better to support such activity. Equally, taking account of the tacit creativity in collective action might help to show how creative disputes can be

managed, or creativity (the 'extraordinary') fostered in the tacit interactions of 'everyday' sociability (the 'ordinary').

Collective creativity in bands involves the creation of a group identity as much as it involves producing albums, songs or shows. This remains the basis for how audiences evaluate them through infinite mediations and reconfigurations. I began writing this thesis unable to account for the gap between my responses to a particular phenomenon in popular music and what I knew of the facts behind how it was presented to me. At the end of the process, I am no more able to govern such instinctive responses than I was at the beginning, but I have a better idea of what they are a response to. I hope that I have been able to illustrate how these work and how a consideration of this might highlight the value that collective creativity in bands has for its participants and audiences. Such action, even when guided by myths, can have positive consequences and we would do well to consider the practical roots of these myths when we discuss their ideological distortions. With this in mind, I will leave the last word to a man whose journey through rock bands ended up with him swapping dreams of stardom for a career in nursing alongside only part time music-making but whose only regret is for the Custom Les Paul that he lost along the way.

> **Richie:** I'd have rather I did that than worked in a factory when I left school, you know what I mean. Which was about the only other option in East Kilbride, you know… Go and work in a factory or be in a band for ten years and have good fun, you know. I'd probably still be working in a factory just now and I'd not have done anything.

APPENDIX: NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

I have attempted here to present an analysis of a phenomenon that stretches across history and geography, and involving participants whose involvement ranges from childhood dabbling to mass media celebrity. I adopted a mixed method approach in order to provide a synthesis of these aspects of how bands have evolved and how they work in practice.

The literary component of this was relatively straightforward, although not without some complications. Lack of access to the very highest echelons of band activity— requests were rebuffed or, more commonly, ignored—meant a heavy reliance on archival material in the form of journalistic, biographical and autobiographical writing. This is plentiful, but rarely objective and often highly unreliable. It was therefore necessary to 'triangulate' these sources, comparing accounts in order to assess the facts of the matter. Deena Weinstein suggests that the researcher should privilege direct quotes and eyewitness accounts over journalistic generalizations (Weinstein 2006: 169). She likens the process to an archaeological dig, or detective work.

> [C]riminal detectives… know that eye-witnesses are not always reliable (they lie, they misperceive, they've been duped), and they rely on their own practiced judgment. (ibid. 170)

Since my goal was to establish general patterns in bands, rather than blame or credit for specific events, selective quotes were a useful means of illustrating where the experiences and feelings of individuals fitted into these. The problem of individual agendas in longstanding disputes was mitigated by the fact that my focus was on the *nature* of the disagreement as opposed to the chronology or morality of how it played out. Even the most biased of accounts, especially when

compared against each other, usually give a reasonable idea of what an argument is about, if not what was said by who, or when.

Biographies, autobiographies and reminiscences culled from interviews were also a way of establishing a 'first hand' perspective on events from the past (notably the 1950s and 1960s). Here, again, cross-referencing different accounts helped to reveal what common ground existed and to provide a general picture of an era to which clarity could be added by the use of academic assessments of the time. Biographical material was also a useful source of data that are not contentious. Even a hagiography will generally give a reasonably accurate idea of a timeline and be a source of simple facts like album release dates. Nevertheless, their value is limited and although biographies of all stripes are a good way of getting an overall idea of the subject, particularly in terms of how its narratives have been constructed, I tried to stick to biographical material that showed at least an awareness of the flaws as well as the virtues of its subjects.

The case studies were the core of the ethnographic component of the thesis. Here I was able to draw upon connections already in place with Edinburgh musicians and to apply my previous musical background to the task of gaining access by assisting in the logistical aspects of Air-Fix. This did mean having to be mindful of the dangers of affecting their creative and social dynamic by my proximity to it. The extent to which this could happen became increasingly apparent when they starting soliciting my opinion about songs or run-throughs and, where possible, I tried to remain either non-committal without appearing uninterested or very specific about a minor detail without appearing partisan. Acting simultaneously as a guitar technician (on the 'inside') and a researcher (from the 'outside') also threw up methodological issues in terms of how I was able to document the band in action in different contexts. In practices, it was easy to sit and make detailed notes as events unfolded. This was impossible while they were playing since I was usually on stage (crouched behind amplifiers or a mixing desk)

and difficult at gigs in general. In these and other circumstances where overt documentation or tape recording was impossible, I relied on carrying a notebook into which I would hurriedly recount conversations and events, to recall and write them up in detail when I got home. Trips to the toilet, or other errands, often involved taking a few minutes to reconstruct the preceding conversation as accurately as possible. Verbatim reproductions of conversations in this thesis are derived from this method and will differ in only minor details from what was said. Short comments (up to a couple of sentences) from individuals are, likewise, reproduced from notes made immediately after a conversation. Lengthier quotes are taken from the interviews listed below.

The Distractions presented issues of a related but slightly different nature. The general course of the research revealed the extent to which social and creative patterns are recreated across the scale of economic activity and it soon became apparent that The Distractions provided me with a good opportunity to describe matters from the inside. The different structures of Air-Fix and The Distractions, along with different sources of material and attitudes towards engagement with the market, also served to provide a wider base of contexts for creative work.

Being a band member, rather than an associate, however brought up the matter of having to balance the value of the band to the research against how a researcher should approach his or her fellow travellers when the emphasis in participant observation is on the former. My status as a researcher in relation to Air-Fix was explicit from the outset and if it receded into the background as time went by, it was nevertheless an unambiguous presence. With The Distractions, membership of the band made apparent its relevance to my research but the decision to turn the other members from bandmates into research subjects brought up with the question of whether it was right to do so. Once I had made this decision (early in 2005), I was open about it, which received a mixed response from openly enthusiastic to openly sceptical. Here the problem of 'going native' was re-

represented in the form of already being native. On top of the questions about how far I would be able to distance myself from events to present them in a relatively objective fashion was added the matter of using relationships with people who had entered into them prior to their being the subject of research. Given the inherently social nature of the both the research subject and method, this was a factor with Air-Fix as well, but it was mitigated there by my having approached them, as it were, with pen and paper rather than guitar in hand.

I did consider presenting The Distractions with a draft of the material concerning them, partly to corroborate any matters pertaining to straightforward facts and partly to allow them to see how the band had been described. I rejected this for several reasons. Firstly, I had a good record of the timeline from e-mails, my own notes and posters. I was also in sufficiently close contact with other members of the band that I could check up on anything about which I was in doubt. Additionally, I have not publicly disseminated any of the material about the band although were I to do so I would consult further and anonymise. The crux came when I was discussing the matter with Mark. I mentioned that I was thinking about showing a draft to the group out of a sense of fair-play and weighing this against my ideas about the clarity of the thesis. He asked how happy, or even willing, I would be to make major revisions if, upon showing it the others, they proved to be unhappy with my account. The answer, I had to admit, was not very much at all. A band is a joint enterprise. A PhD, notwithstanding the help and advice of supervisors and others, is not. My purpose in writing about the band was not to provide a collectively approved 'story of The Distractions' but to describe how it pertained to the subject of bands in general. The onus, therefore, was on me to do so as fairly and sensitively as I could without compromising the presentation of my observations about bands. Where my memory was in doubt about something, I omitted it. I have drawn on my experiences in that particular band, as both

'participant observer' and participant, to inform and extend my thinking about how it, and other bands, worked.

Ruth Finnegan makes note of the subtle distinctions that lie within participant observation as a research method.

> I did not conceal the fact that I was doing research on local music… and in a vague way it was fairly generally known; but at the same time I did not keep reminding people about it during the ordinary course of my life or in the many off-hand conversations which turned out to be illuminating. The observation was therefore not covert, but neither was it constantly obvious throughout. (Finnegan 2007: 343)

This is relevant to both case studies and to an additional resource upon which I drew; namely, the countless encounters and conversations which, although not ostensibly part of the research were nevertheless relevant to it. I chose to support the case studies and archival material with taped interviews but these were only a part of wider process of data gathering, reflection and analysis. Often such information was 'off the record'. Equally, people were vocal about their own experiences. Many such exchanges occupied a middle ground between 'casual questioning' and 'informal interviews' (Jorgenson 1989: 88).

These observations were often made in passing and although not all of them are referred to explicitly in the thesis, they were nevertheless a valuable addition to the general bank of knowledge upon which to reflect when formulating the direction of the thesis.

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Joey Chaudhuri- (sound engineer, guitarist with CI State) - 15/06/02

Rick Heller- (drummer- Dr. Know, The Exploited, The Joyriders)- 25/06/02

Richie Simpson- (guitarist- Baby's Got a Gun)- 29/06/02

Billy Duncanson- (drummer, Baby's Got A Gun)- 01/07/02

Simon Kass- (sound engineer)- 05/07/02

Lenny Love- (former tour manager, Simple Minds)- 08/07/02

Sheri Friers- (former publicist and radio plugger)- 16/07/02

Graeme Hughes- (sound engineer)- 24/07/02

Matt Hay- (guitarist, singer)- Air-Fix- 27/07/02

Andrew Chainey- (guitarist, Air-Fix)- 28/07/02

Kenny Dalrymple- (bassist, Air-Fix)- 29/07/02

Mark Percival- (former guitarist, Yes Yes Juliet, Chairman Mouth- later bassist in The Distractions) – 05/08/02

Graham Whiteside- (drummer, Dunderfunk, Dum Dum, Air-Fix)- 28/07/02, 10/02/03

Tommy Cunningham- (drummer, Wet Wet Wet)- 15/03/03

Colin Newton- (drummer, Idlewild)- 03/02/04

Kev Sim- (programmer, Found)- 23/11/08

Conversations with many people fed into this thesis but notable of mention are:

Tommy Perman (bassist, Found)

Richard Forbes (former promoter and manager of Dum Dum and Dunderfunk)

Keith Taylor (singer with Dum Dum and Dunerfunk)

Jimmy Anderson (guitarist with Dum Dum). These provided useful corroborations for interview material, as well as valuable insights on the nature of bands and the music business in general.

The experiences and observations of members of The Men- (Russell Anderson, Tim Fidelo, Steven Cartwright) also informed my thinking about bands, as did those of numerous other musicians and road crew, notably Garry Mackenzie, Scott Stoddart and 'Cokey' Shields.

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