culture. Similarly, music critics act as a service industry to the record industry, lubricating the desire to acquire both new product and selections from the back catalogue. Music press reviews still form an important adjunct to the record company and music retail marketing of their products, while providing the record companies (and artists) with critical feedback on their releases. In the process, they also become promotional devices, providing supportive quotes for advertising and forming part of press kits sent to radio stations, websites and press outlets. Yet both press and critics also play an important ideological function. They distance popular music consumers from the fact that they are essentially purchasing an economic commodity, by stressing the product's *cultural significance*. Furthermore, this function is maintained by the important point that the music press is not, at least directly, vertically integrated into the music industry (i.e. owned by the record companies). A sense of distance is thereby maintained, while at the same time the need of the industry to constantly sell new images, styles and product is met.

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Websites

www.rocksbackpages.com

An extensive archive of reviews, interviews, and features on artists; many articles are full text. Some content is freely available, fuller access is by subscription.

www.nodepression.com
www.pitchfork.com
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10 'My Generation'

Identity and consumption: audiences, fans and social networks

This chapter, and the two that follow, consider popular music in relation to aspects of identity. Identity, rather than being fixed and static, is a process of *becoming*, which is developed out of points of similarity and difference, involving both self-description and social ascription. Popular music is an aspect of attempts to define identity at the levels of self, the local community and national identity.

Self-identity can be expressed through the use of music consumption to indicate membership of constituencies based around class, gender and ethnicity. At times, this is more loosely organized around particular scenes and sounds, as with rave culture and contemporary dance music. Self-identity can also be based on activities, such as fandom, and practices, such as record collecting. These identifications are not fixed and constraining; they produce differentially constructed *identities*, which can draw on an amalgam of factors and are subject to change. Self-identity also involves situating the self in relation to competing discourses. For example, adherence to a musical genre can be used to distance oneself from the parent culture, community and social authority.

Popular music plays a prominent role in the creation of community identity in the links between music and locality, especially in local scenes and subcultures (the subject of Chapter 12). These have remained significant, with the internet helping to consolidate links between physically removed scenes. At the national level, identity is a part of cultural policies (e.g. quotas) aimed at promoting locally produced music. National identity can be regarded as a social construct as much as a quality associated with a physical space. While such identities may be constructed or imagined, they are mobilized for particular interests and emerge partly in relation to different 'others'. Particular genres are often associated with specific national settings (as with 'Brit Pop' in the UK in the 1990s), although this, at times reductionist process, has been open to debate.

This chapter begins with an introduction to the general nature of audiences and of cultural consumption, relating these to the social construction of individual subjectivities and identities. I then consider the various modes of popular music consumption, the social categories associated with these (age, class, gender, ethnicity) and the variety of social practices through which such consumption occurs. I argue that two factors underpin the consumption of popular music: the role of

music as a form of cultural capital, with recordings as media products around which cultural capital can be displayed and shaped; and as a source of audience pleasure. To emphasize these is to privilege the personal and social uses people make of music in their lives, an emphasis that falls within the now dominant paradigm of audience studies. This stresses the *active* nature of media audiences, while also recognizing that such consumption is, at the same time, shaped by social conditions.

Beyond patterns of demographic and social preferences in relation to popular music, there exists a complex pattern of modes of consumption. These include buying recorded music, viewing MTV and music videos, listening to the radio, home taping and downloading music in digital form. To these could be added the various 'secondary' levels of involvement or the social use of music texts, such as discussing music with friends and peers groups, reading the music press and decorating your bedroom walls with its posters; dancing and clubbing; and concert going. Several of these have been dealt with elsewhere in this study; here I examine how we actually access music texts in their various modes, and the associated social practices, through two examples: dance and record collecting. I conclude with the role of social network sites, which have added a new and increasingly important dimension to popular music culture and its consumption.

From the mass audience to active consumers

The study of media audiences is broadly concerned with the who, what, where, how and why of the consumption of individuals and social groups. Historically, a range of competing media studies approaches to the investigation of audiences can be identified. At the heart of theoretical debates has been the relative emphasis placed on the audience as an active determinant of cultural production and social meanings. Music is a form of communication and popular music, as its very name suggests, usually has an audience.

Social theorists critical of the emergence of industrial society in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries first used the term 'mass audience', alarmed at the attraction of new media for millions of people. Their fears were based on a conception of the audience as a passive, mindless mass, directly influenced by the images, messages and values of the new media such as film and radio (and, later, television). This view emphasized the audience as a manipulated market. In relation to popular music, it is a perspective evident in the writings of high culture critics and the Frankfurt School (see Shuker, 2012: 'culture' and 'mass culture' entries).

Later analyses placed progressively greater emphasis on the uses consumers (the term represents a significant change of focus) made of media: uses and gratifications, which emerged in the 1960s, largely within American media sociology; reception analysis and cultural analysis all stressed the active role of the audience, especially fans and members of youth subcultures. More recently there has been an emphasis on the domestic sphere of much media consumption and the interrelationship of the use of various media. The emerging information age is seeing

a reorganization of everyday life: 'people are integrating both old and new technologies into their lives in more complex ways' and within an increasingly cluttered media environment, this means 'being an audience is even more complicated' (Ross and Nightingale, 2003: 1). Related to this is an emerging literature on music and everyday life, in a variety of settings, including the workplace and in public space (DeNora, 2000).

The opposition between passive and active views of audiences must not be overstated. What needs highlighting is the tension between musical audiences as collective social groups and, at the same time, as individual consumers. The concept of consumer sovereignty is useful here, emphasizing the operation of human agency. As an influential approach within cultural studies during the 1980s, consumer sovereignty was tied to the notion of the active audience, to produce a debated view of semiotic democracy at work. Advocates of consumer sovereignty consider that people's exercise of their 'free' choice in the marketplace is a major determinant of the nature and availability of particular cultural and (economic) commodities. While the elements of romance and imagination that have informed individual personal histories and the history of popular musical genres are frequently marginalized in the process of commodification, they remain essential to the narratives people construct to help create a sense of identity. While economic power does have a residual base in institutional structures and practices, in this case, the music industries and their drive for market stability, predictability and profit, this power is never absolute.

The sociology of music consumption

Studies of the audience(s) and consumer(s) of popular music reflect such broad shifts in the field of audience studies. Such studies have drawn on the sociology of youth, the sociology of leisure and cultural consumption to explore the role of music in the lives of 'youth' as a general social category and as a central component of the 'style' of youth subcultures and the social identity of fans. Music consumption, and cultural tastes more generally, have been closely related to age, class, gender and ethnicity, with an 'impressive and imposing literature going back almost forty years and raising some major questions of social and cultural theory' (Shepherd, 2012: 239). There has been increasing appreciation of the intersection and overlap of these social categories in the construction of social *identities*, rather than simply a singular *identity*.

The study of audiences in popular music has focused largely on 'youth'. Historically, the main consumers of contemporary (post-1950) popular music have been young people between 12 and 25. Cultural surveys since the 1970s, in North America, the UK and more widely, have all indicated youth's high levels of popular music consumption, along with a clear pattern of age and gender-based genre preferences, with these often inflected with ethnicity. Younger adolescents, particularly girls, were seen to prefer commercial pop; older adolescents expressed greater interest in more progressive forms and artists. High school (college) students tended to be more interested in alternative/indie genre tastes and less

interested in the more commercial expressions of popular music. As youthful consumers get older, their tastes in music often become more open to exploring new genres and less commercial forms. This trend is particularly evident among tertiary students, reflecting the dominant forms of musical cultural capital within their peer groups.

The straightforward association of metagenres such as 'rock' and 'pop' with youth, however, needed qualifying by the 1980s. Certainly, the music was initially aimed at the youth market in the 1950s and the baby boomer bulge of the 1960s, while young people have continued to be major consumers of it and the products of the leisure industries in general. At the same time the market has increasingly catered to aging fans, who grew up with the music in the 1950s and 1960s and have continued to follow it, aging along with the surviving musical performers of the 1960s. Accordingly, attempts to locate the audience for popular music primarily among 'youth', once historically correct, no longer applied with the same force by the 1990s, with surveys undertaken by the Recording Industry Association of America showing the music-buying power of 30-somethings had risen while purchases by those under 24 have fallen: in 1993 music consumers over 30 made up 42 per cent of the American market. Throughout the 1990s, 'nostalgia rock' was prominent in popular music, with the release of 'new' Beatles material (*Live at the BBC*); the launch of the magazine *MOJO*, placing 'classic rock' history firmly at its core and with 35 per cent of its readers aged 35-plus; and successful tours by the Rolling Stones, Pink Floyd and the Eagles, among other aging performers.

These trends have continued, in part exacerbated by the decline of CD sales, especially albums, as younger listeners turned to digital downloading through services such as Napster and its successors (see Chapter 2). Today, demographics are partly responsible for the continued success of performers such as Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan, both still touring and recording. Older consumers, in part at least, also account for the present predominance of 'classic rock' and 'classic hits' radio formats, although their tastes do not remain fixed purely at the nostalgic level. At the same time, the youth market for music remains substantial – what has changed is *how* they are getting their music. The great majority of this music is popular music, with its range of genre styles. Only a minority of students regard classical music as one of their interests, a situation that stands in sharp contrast to the continued classical music orientation of many school music syllabus prescriptions.

The various attempts to profile contemporary music consumption show a clear pattern of gender-based genre preferences. An obvious example is what has been termed 'teen pop', which is preferred by younger adolescents, particularly girls. That girls enjoy chart pop music more than boys reflects the segmented nature of the market. Performers such as Kylie Minogue in the 1980s, New Kids on the Block and the Spice Girls in the 1990s and now Miley Cyrus and Justin Bieber are oriented toward younger listeners, particularly girls, and are being marketed as such. Music and lifestyle magazines such as *Cream* (New Zealand) and *Smash Hits* are aimed at the young adolescent market. The majority of their

readers are girls, who buy them partly for their pin-up posters, reflecting their frequent obsession with particular stars and what has been termed 'teenybopper' bedroom culture.

In studies of music consumption in ethnically mixed or diverse populations, black and Asian adolescents are more likely (than their white counterparts) to prefer genres such as soul, R&B, blues, reggae, hip-hop and bhangra. Such genres are carriers of ideology, creating symbols for listeners to identify with. Rap, now mainstreamed as hip-hop (see Chapter 6), has emerged as a major genre preference among black youth internationally. For instance, such differences are clear in New Zealand, a multicultural society, with almost 15 per cent of the population being descendants of the indigenous Maori people or of Pacific (Polynesian) Islander origin and the majority population descendants of the British and European immigrants ('pakeha'). Strong Maori and Polynesian support for reggae and rap music is hardly surprising, since these categories (along with the blues) have become virtually synonymous with 'black music' and black culture. For such youth, reggae does not simply describe an experience, but it politicizes it through creating symbols for listeners to identify with. Many Maori and Polynesian youth are knowledgeable about rasta and familiar with some of the metaphors in the music (Babylon, Jah, etc.). They regard reggae as relevant to the structural location of Maori and Polynesians as a major part of New Zealand's socially dispossessed working class. Rap has also established a strong following in Auckland, which has New Zealand's main concentration of Polynesians. There are several prominent local performers, specialized record labels, clubs, festivals and radio stations catering for the genre and its audience. Rap's appeal is, in part, through its links to dance and street culture, but adherents are also frequently conscious of the genre's history and the politicized work of performers such as Public Enemy and Ice-T (Henderson, 2006). In the UK, bhangra plays a similar role for young Asians in the maintenance of a distinctive cultural identity within the dominant (white) culture (Huq, 2006).

Modes of consumption

Studies of the process and nature of music consumption have used qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to examine individual practices and broader patterns. These reveal a complex set of influences on the construction of individual popular music consumption. Even younger adolescent consumers, who are often seen as relatively undiscriminating and easily swayed by the influence of market forces, see their preferences as far from straightforward, with the views of their friends paramount. Whatever their cultural background or social position, many young people's musical activities often rest on a substantial and sophisticated body of knowledge about popular music: an understanding of its different genres and an ability to hear and place sounds in terms of their histories, influences and sources. Fans, and young musicians, have no hesitation about making and justifying their judgments of musical meaning and value. Modes of consumption are complex, overlapping and reinforcing one another. They include

record buying, music television and video viewing, listening to the radio, home taping (historically) and downloading from the internet. There are also various secondary levels of involvement, through the music press, dance, clubbing and concert going.

Making copies of recordings has historically been a significant aspect of people's engagement with popular music. During the 1970s and 1980s this was primarily through audio tape: home taping, a flexible and cheap way of consuming and distributing music. Aside from the convenience of ensuring access to preferred texts, selected (particularly with albums) to avoid any 'dross' or material not liked sufficiently to warrant inclusion, there was an economic aspect to such home taping, as it was, in one sense, a strategy directly tailored to recession conditions and youth unemployment. Home taping was significant as an aspect of consumption largely beyond the ability of the music industry to influence tastes and the debates around it are echoed in relation to its contemporary equivalent forms: 'burning' CDs to one's home computer and downloading digital recordings from the internet.

With the impact of the internet on consumption practices, the purchase of recorded music in its various formats from physical sites (shops) has steadily declined (see Chapter 7). The search for 'new' music, now frequently takes place through online music journalism and through accessing sites such as YouTube, iTunes and Last FM.

Music as cultural capital

Music consumption is not simply a matter of 'personal' preference. It is, in part, socially constructed, serving as a form of symbolic or cultural capital. Following Pierre Bourdieu (1984), we can see 'taste' as both conceived and maintained in social groups' efforts to differentiate and distance themselves from others and underpinning varying social status positions. Music has traditionally been a crucial dimension of this process. Writing in 1950, David Riesman astutely distinguished between two teenage audiences for popular music. First, a majority group with 'an undiscriminating taste in popular music, (who) seldom express articulate preferences' and for whom the functions of music were predominantly social. This group consumed 'mainstream', commercial music, following the stars and the hit parade. Second, Riesman identified a minority group of 'the more active listeners', who had a more rebellious attitude towards popular music, indicated by:

> an insistence on rigorous standards of judgment and taste in a relativist culture; a preference for the uncommercialized, unadvertized small bands rather than name bands; the development of a private language … (and) a profound resentment of the commercialization of radio and musicians.
>
> (Riesman, 1950: 412)

Later studies continued to identify links between particular genres/performers and the acquisition of musical cultural capital, especially in relation to indie rock (for example, Fonarow, 2006).

Acquiring any form of popular music cultural capital involves developing a knowledge of selected musical traditions, their history and their associated performers. With this background, an individual can knowledgably discuss such details as styles, trends, record companies and the biographies of artists and even nuances such as associated record producers and session musicians. Such cultural capital does not necessarily have to be part of the dominant, generally accepted tradition, but can instead function to distance its adherents from that tradition, asserting their own oppositional stance. This is the pattern with many youth subcultures, which appropriate and innovate musical styles and forms as a basis for their identity (see Chapter 11).

Fans and fandom

Popular music fans avidly follow the music, and lives, of particular performers/musical genres, with various degrees of enthusiasm and commitment. Fandom is the collective term for the phenomenon of fans and their behaviour: concert going, collecting recordings, putting together scrapbooks, filling bedroom walls with posters, discussing stars with other fans, both in person and online. Music industry practices help create and maintain fandom; record labels and musicians have frequently supported official fan clubs and appreciation societies. Many fan clubs (especially those associated with the Beatles and Elvis Presley) conduct international conventions, even well after the performers celebrated are dead or groups have disbanded

Writing in 1991, Lisa Lewis correctly observed that while fans are the most visible and identifiable of audiences, they 'have been overlooked or not taken seriously as research subjects by critics and scholars' and 'maligned and sensationalized by the popular press, mistrusted by the public' (Lewis, 1992: 1). Although there has been considerable study of fandom since Lewis wrote, and academic discussions emphasize a less stereotyped image, the popular view of fans has, arguably, not changed much. This reflects the traditional view of fandom, which situates it in terms of pathology and deviance, with the label 'fans' used to describe teenagers who avidly and uncritically following the latest pop sensation. These fans are often denigrated in popular music literature and, by those favouring rock styles of popular music. Their behaviour is often described as a form of pathology and the terms applied to it have clear connotations of condemnation and undesirability: 'Beatlemania', 'teenyboppers'. An early example of this was the media treatment of the 'bobby soxers', Frank Sinatra's adolescent female fans, in the 1940s. An extreme form of fandom are 'groupies' – also a largely negative term (although see the reassessment in Rhodes, 2005) – who move beyond vicarious identification and use their sexuality to get close to the stars, even if the encounter is usually a fleeting one.

Fandom is best regarded as an active process, a complex phenomenon, related to the formation of social identities, especially sexuality. Fandom offers individuals membership of a community not defined in traditional terms of status and has been regarded as the register of a subordinate system of cultural taste, typically

associated with cultural forms that the dominant value system denigrates, including popular music (Fiske, 1989). Pleasure and difference are central to fandom and fans are often fiercely partisan. Hills distinguishes 'cult fandom' as a form of cultural identity, partially distinct from that of the 'fan' in general, related to the duration of the fandom concerned, especially in the absence of new or 'official' material in the originating medium or persona (Hills, 2002: Preface: x). Pop fans' commitment may last only as long as an often brief career, as with the Spice Girls, whereas the fans of performers such as Bruce Springsteen (Cavicchi, 1998) maintain their fandom over time, as did the Deadheads (see later).

Fans will collect the recordings put out by their favoured stars, but these are only one aspect of an interest that often focuses more on the image and persona of the star. A passionate identification with the star becomes a source of pleasure and empowerment. For many fans, their idols function almost as religious touchstones, helping them to get through their lives and providing emotional and even physical comfort. At the same time, fans' consumption becomes a significant part of the star system and the music industry. For example, studies of the post-punk British 'New Pop' performers of the 1980s (Culture Club, Duran Duran, Wham!, Spandau Ballet, Nick Kershaw and Howard Jones), showed how they drew on a fanatical female following, who often purchased practically anything associated with them, with their support in extreme cases bordering on the pathological. However, such 'Pop fans aren't stupid. They know what they want. And ultimately, all the media manipulation in the world isn't going to sell them something they haven't got any use for' (Rimmer, 1985: 108). This is to argue that whatever the press of 'context' – the intentions of the industry, the pop press, and musicians themselves – meaning in the music is ultimately created by the consumers.

> By participating in fandom, fans construct coherent identities for themselves. In the process, they enter a domain of cultural activity of their own making which is, potentially, a source of empowerment in struggles against oppressive ideologies and the unsatisfactory circumstance of everyday life.
>
> (Lewis, 1992: 3)

Most fans see themselves as part of a wider community, even if their own fan practices are 'private', individual activities undertaken alone. Examples of such empowerment are as diverse as heavy metallers and fans of the Bay City Rollers, the Grateful Dead (Deadheads), Bruce Springsteen and Lady Gaga's 'Little Monsters'. There is an assertion of female solidarity evident in the activities of many girl fans, for example, those of the Spice Girls in the 1990s. Similar cultural self-assertion is present in many adherents of youth subcultures knowledge of the associated music.

The Deadheads, fans of the American band the Grateful Dead, provide an example of long-term fandom. The band had been leading figures in San Francisco's psychedelic scene since the early 1960s and continued to tour and record extensively until the death of band leader Jerry Garcia in 1996. Deadheads attended large numbers of the band's concerts, often making extensive tape compilations of the various performances or purchasing bootlegs of such performances, with the

band unofficially condoning such practices. The Grateful Dead's concerts functioned as secular rituals for the band's hardcore followers, who were also frequently identified with the broadly counterculture values and style of the band. This led some municipalities to ban Dead concerts, because of the 'undesirable elements' attending them (Sardiello, 1994).

Fans actively interact with texts 'to actively assert their mastery over the mass-produced texts, which provide the raw materials for their own cultural productions and the basis for their social interactions', becoming 'active participants in the construction and circulation of textual meanings' (Jenkins, 1997: 508). This process has become more evident than ever, with the rise of interactive media (email, list servers and the internet) adding a new dimension to fandom, aiding in the formation and maintenance of fan bases for performers and musical style. At the same time, digital music raises questions of the different consumption experiences and practices involved when the physical object, the 'record', lacks materiality.

Beyond possible empowerment, popular music fandom as a form of cultural activity has a number of pleasurable aspects: dance and its associated rituals of display and restraint; the anticipatory pleasure of attending a concert, as well as the concert experience itself; the pleasure of acquiring and playing new music; for some the sheer physical pleasure of handling actual physical musical artifacts (records, CDs, DVDs); and the intellectual and emotional pleasures associated with 'knowing' about particular artists and genres valued by one's peers and associates. Two of these, dance and record collecting are sketched now; each would repay further investigation.

Dance

Dance is an example of our active engagement with popular music and its wider social importance. As a social practice dance has a long history, closely associated with music, ritual, courtship and everyday pleasure. Historically, organized social dancing dates back at least to the sixteenth century and the private balls of the aristocracy, with ballroom dancing popularized in the early nineteenth century (the waltz). The title of a major documentary series on popular music, *Dancing in the Street*, reflected its emphasis on tracing an historical progression of musical genres and their associated dance styles. Dance is associated with the pleasures of physical expression rather than the intellectual, the body rather than the mind. At times, the closeness and implied sexual display of dance has aroused anxiety and led to attempts to regulate dance or at least control who is dancing with whom. Forms of dance subject to considerable social criticism include the Charleston, the jitterbug, rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, the twist in the 1960s and disco dancing in the 1970s.

Dance is central to the general experience and leisure lives of young people, and, indeed, many adults, through their attendance at and participation in school dances, parties, discos, dance classes and raves. The participants in the dance break free of their bodies in a combination of 'socialised pleasures and individualised desires', with dancing operating as 'a metaphor for an external reality which is unconstrained by the limits and expectations of gender identity and

which successfully and relatively painlessly transports its subjects from a passive to a more active psychic position' (McRobbie, 1991: 194, 192, 201). Dance also acts as a marker of significant points in the daily routine, punctuating it with what Chambers (1985) labels the 'freedom of Saturday night'. These various facets of dance are well represented in feature films such as *Flashdance* (1983), *Strictly Ballroom* (1995), *Take the Lead* (2006) and TV series such as *Glee*.

Particular forms of dance are associated with specific music genres, such as line dancing in country, slam dancing and the pogo in punk, break dancing in some forms of rap and head banging and 'moshing' at concerts by heavy metal and grunge and alternative performers. Iain Chambers (1985) documented 'the rich tension of dance' in its various forms in the clubs and dance halls of English post-war urban youth culture, including the shake, the jerk, the northern soul style of athletic, acrobatic dance and the break dancing and body popping of black youth. A detailed history of American dance music though the 1970s traces the development of 'a new mode of DJing and dancing that went on to become the most distinctive cultural ritual of the decade' (Lawrence, 2003: Preface). This dance scene embraced a web of clandestine house parties and discotheques, traced back to legendary New York dance clubs the Loft and the Sanctuary. Similar dance scenes are present around subsequent locales and musical genres, notably electronic dance music.

Record collecting

Most people purchase or otherwise acquire recordings in a limited and generally unsystematic fashion; record collectors represent a more extreme version of this practice. 'Record collecting' can actually be considered shorthand for a variety of distinct but related practices (Shuker, 2010). Foremost is the collection of sound recordings, in various formats, by individuals; the dimension focused on here. Such recordings include various official releases, in a variety of formats; bootleg recordings (largely of concerts); radio broadcasts; sound with visuals – the music video or DVD; and the digital download. Individual collecting also frequently includes the collection of related literature (music books and magazines) and music memorabilia (e.g. concert tickets and programmes, tour posters). Record collecting embraces an associated literature (the music press generally, but especially the specialist collector magazines, fanzines, discographies and general guidebooks); the recording industry targeting of collectors (reissue labels; promotional releases; remixes; boxed sets); and dedicated sites of acquisition (record fairs, second-hand and specialist shops, eBay and high-profile auctions).

The popular image of contemporary record collectors is of one of an obsessive male, whose 'train spotting' passion for collecting is often a substitute for 'real' social relationships. This image can draw on some support from academic discussions of collectors and collecting. Straw shows how, for male collectors, the social role of collecting can be a significant part of masculinity, providing a point of difference and 'confirmation of a shared universe of critical judgement' (Straw,

1997b: 5). In common with other forms of collecting, record collecting can represent a public display of power and knowledge, serving as a form of cultural capital within the peer group. It can also provide a private refuge from the wider world and the immediate domestic environment: in the novel *High Fidelity*, we meet Rob Fleming, who, in times of stress, re-catalogues his album collection (Hornby, 1995: 73). In contrast to the 'high fidelity' stereotype, record collectors demonstrate a complex mix of characteristics: a love of music; obsessive-compulsive behaviour, accumulation and completism, selectivity and discrimination; and self-education and scholarship. For many collectors, record collecting is a core component of their social identity and a central part of their lives (Shuker, 2010).

The landscape of record collecting has changed dramatically in the past 30 years. The range of collectibles has increased, with promotional material and memorabilia more prominent. Record collecting has become more organized, more intense (and, at times, more expensive). The internet has added a major new dimension to collecting, adding increased opportunity but also fuelling price rises. Reflecting such developments, the record collecting press has mushroomed. The shift to online music has raised questions about the nature of collecting, especially the privileging of the album.

Digital consumption/fandom: downloading, cloud services and social network sites

Music fans once met in physical locations and settings (parties, record stores, flats) to hear, discuss and acquire music; Now, with the decline of physical retail, websites such as Spotify, iTunes, and Audioboo perform much the same function. Accessing these effectively turns your mobile device into a portable jukebox and your home computer into a stereo system with built in storage. Along with these 'cloud' services, there are now a number of online music-sharing sites, which recommend artists ('If you like X, try Y') and connect listeners with similar tastes. Last FM records the musical preferences of its listeners in detailed listening charts that can be synched to social media, enabling Twitter users and Facebook friends to 'share' their favourite musicians.

The growth of social network sites has created new modes of fandom and self-promotion for bands. Leading site MySpace began in June 1999; it enables its users to host their own profiles within its formatting protocols and the member can then post a variety of personal information that can be accessed and viewed (with possible restrictions imposed at the member's discretion) by other users of the network. Similar social network services followed, with MySpace's main competitors Facebook and Bebo the most successful. Facebook, MySpace and Bebo all require users to log on to the company's website in order to access their own and others' portfolios; this enables the services to stream advertising within the common pages that all users can see. Advertising-based media companies soon recognized the potential to move beyond traditional mass media, especially to reach younger consumers and began acquiring social network sites. This

advertising potential led Fox Interactive Media, a subsidiary of News Corporation (Rupert Murdoch), to buy MySpace in July 2006.

In July 2010 Facebook announced that more than 500 million people, roughly one-third of all net users, now used it and that a user on average posted photos, links to websites, videos and news stories or created other content about 30 times each month. Mark Zuckerberg, one of its founders, was *Time* magazine's Man of the Year for 2010. The phenomenon even led to a Hollywood feature film, *The Social Network*, on the development of MySpace and the personalities and arguments around who took the credit (and the financial rewards) for this. The commercial and critical success of the film was a further indication of the impact of social networking on digital global culture.

In relation to popular music, social network sites provide an opportunity for performers to promote their music and activities, including new recordings, but also concerts and touring. Fans can get involved in this process, as well as 'meet' those interested in similar styles of music, to exchange information and debate opinions. Today, many young (and some older) fans spend up to four to five hours a day downloading, playing and listening to music and watching YouTube and discussing music and performers as part of their Facebook and Twitter postings; all this is often while 'multitasking' (see the findings from the Pew Internet and American Life Project, summarized in Jones and Lenhart, 2004).

Conclusion

A major theoretical issue with the consumption of popular music – be it by fans, members of subcultures or 'mainstream' youth – is the problem of authenticity: the relationship between popular culture and market forces, especially the extent to which styles and tastes are synthetically produced for a deliberately stimulated mass market. As I have argued previously, we need to see culture as a reciprocal concept, an active practice that shapes and conditions economic and political processes, as well as being conditioned and shaped *by* them. The various types of consumer of popular music considered here illustrate this reciprocity, occupying a critical social space in the process whereby the music acquires cultural meaning and significance. The following chapter examines further the role of music in the construction of social identity, in relation to youth culture, subcultures and music scenes.

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