14 'We Are the World'

State music policy

Policy in relation to popular music is formulated and implemented at the levels of the international community, the nation state, regions and local government. It includes the regulation and stimulation of aspects of the production and consumption of music. At an international level there are agreements on market access and copyright provisions. At the state level policies include the regulation/deregulation of broadcasting; the use of tax breaks and content quotas; support for local copyright regulation; and, as shown in the previous chapter censorship. The local level involves venue-related regulations and the policing of public space.

State attitudes and policies towards popular culture are a significant factor in determining the formulation of such policies and the construction of meaning in popular music. At the level of attitudes, state cultural policies are indicative of the various views held about the very concept of culture itself, debates over government economic intervention in the marketplace versus the operation of the 'free market', the operation of cultural imperialism and the role of the state in fostering national cultural identity. As the Task Force Report on *The Future of the Canadian Music Industry* (1996) put it:

> Most industrialized states believe that cultural products must not be treated as commodities. The cultural exemption contained in international trade agreements reflects a recognition that it is in their diversity that the richness of human cultures is to be found and that the distinctive characteristics of each culture should be preserved.

This chapter begins with a general discussion of the state and music and cultural imperialism, globalization and music. I then consider two examples of national policy in relation to local popular music: Canada and New Zealand.

The state and music

Until relatively recently, the state has often been ignored in analyses of popular music, although there is a tradition of work on cultural policy in relation to music at both the central and local state level. Studies of local policy include Kenney's

history of the evolution of Chicago jazz, which details how a mix of council regulations, licensing law, moral watchdog organizations and police practices influenced the particular genre form taken by jazz in that city (Kenney, 1993). In a similar project, Chevigney (1991) shows how successive New York City councils applied a network of zoning, fire, building and licensing regulations to discipline the venues and styles of jazz within the city. Homan (2003) demonstrated the complex relationship between city zoning, licensing and noise regulations in Sydney and the venues for rock and dance and the styles of music associated with them. Homan (2010) used a similar approach to analyzing the debates around live music in Melbourne. These contextual factors are significant in shaping local music scenes and deserve greater attention, but I concentrate here on music policy at the national level.

State cultural policies have been largely based on the idealist tradition of culture as a realm separate from, and often in opposition to, that of material production and economic activity. This means that government intervention in its various forms – subsidy, licensing arrangements, protectionism through quotas and so on – is justified by the argument that has been clearly elaborated by Nicholas Garnham:

> that culture possesses inherent values, of life enhancement or whatever, which are fundamentally opposed to and in danger of damage by commercial forces; that the need for these values is universal, uncontaminated by questions of class, gender and ethnic origin; and that the market cannot satisfy this need.
>
> (1987: 24)

A key part of this view is the concept of the individual creative artist, with the associated cultural policy problem defined as 'one of finding audiences for their work rather than vice versa' (ibid.). This ideology has been used by elites in government, administration, intellectual institutions and broadcasting to justify and represent sectional interests as general interests, thereby functioning as a form of cultural hegemony. Seeing classical music, ballet and the theatre as high culture or 'the arts' legitimizes both their largely middle-class consumption and their receipt of state subsidy. Popular culture is then constructed in opposition to this, as commercial, inauthentic and so unworthy of significant government support. Such a dichotomized high–low culture view is unsustainable, yet it nonetheless remains a widely held and still powerful ideology. A comic example was provided by civil servant Sir Humphrey Appleby, giving advice to his ministerial 'boss' in the television comedy series *Yes Minister*:

> Subsidy is for Art. It is for Culture. It is not to be given to what the people want, it is for what the people don't want but ought to have. If they really want something they will pay for it themselves. The Government's duty is to subsidize education, enlightenment and spiritual uplift, not the vulgar pastimes of ordinary people.
>
> (episode: 'The Middle Class Rip Off', BBC Television)

In the case of popular music, government attitudes have generally, but not exclusively, tended to reflect a traditional conservative view of 'culture', a high culture tradition, which is used to justify non-intervention in the 'commercial' sphere. Yet this non-intervention exists in tension with frequent governmental concern to regulate a medium that, at times, has been associated with threats to the social order: moral panics over the activities of youth subcultures, the sexuality and sexism of rock and obscenity (see Chapter 13). There have been a number of cases in which the state has played a significant role in relation to popular music through economically and culturally motivated regulation and intervention. This has usually been to defend national cultural production against the inflow of foreign media products, using trade tariffs, industry incentives and suchlike.

The past two decades have seen increased governmental (state) interest internationally in the economic possibilities inherent in the social and economic value of the arts and creative industries and popular music has been a significant part of this discourse. State and local governments have increasingly recognized the economic and social potential of popular music. By the early 1990s, as Tony Bennett and his colleagues observed, this intervention was 'becoming increasingly explicit, increasingly programmatic and institutional ... the role of government has become a crucial factor in the structural organization of rock music at the local, the national and ultimately at the global level' (Bennett, *et al.*, 1993: 9). This 'turn to policy' in part reflected a concern at the dominance of international music repertoire, along with desire to gain a larger share in this market. Popular music scholars began to pay greater attention to music policy (for example Cloonan, 2007, on the UK); they have also become more directly involved in its development, although this has at times proved an awkward undertaking (see Williamson, Cloonan and Frith, 2011).

Cultural imperialism, globalization and music

The still common preference of listeners and record buyers for foreign-originated sounds, rather than the product of their local artists and labels, is associated with the cultural imperialism thesis. Cultural imperialism developed as a concept analogous to the historical, political and economic subjugation of the developing countries by the colonizing powers in the nineteenth century, with consequent deleterious effects for the societies of the colonized. This gave rise to global relations of dominance, subordination and dependency between the affluence and power of the advanced capitalist nations, most notably the US and western Europe, and the relatively powerless underdeveloped countries. This economic and political imperialism was seen to have a cultural aspect:

> the ways in which the transmission of certain products, fashions and styles from the dominant nations to the dependent markets leads to the creation of particular patterns of demand and consumption which are underpinned by and endorse the cultural values, ideals and practices of their dominant origin. In this manner the local cultures of developing nations become dominated and in varying degrees invaded, displaced and challenged by foreign, often western, cultures.
>
> (O'Sullivan, *et al.*, 1983: 62; see also Hesmondhalgh, 2007)

In terms of mass media and popular culture, evidence for the cultural imperialism thesis, as it became known, was provided by the predominantly one way in which international media flow, from a few international dominant sources of media production, notably the US, to media systems in other national cultural contexts. Not only did this involve the market penetration and dominance of Anglo-American popular culture, more importantly, it established certain forms as *the* accepted ones, scarcely recognizing that there were alternatives:

> One major influence of American imported media lies in the styles and patterns which most other countries in the world have adopted and copied. This influence includes the very definition of what a newspaper, or a feature film, or a television set is.
>
> (Tunstall, 1977: Introduction)

The cultural imperialism thesis gained general currency in debates through the 1970s and 1980s about the significance of imported popular culture. Such debates were evident not only in the Third World, but in 'developed' countries such as France, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, all subject to high market penetration by American popular culture. Adherents of the thesis tended to dichotomize local culture and its imported counterpart, regarding local culture as somehow more authentic, traditional and supportive of a conception (however vaguely expressed it may be) of a distinctive national cultural identity. Set against this identity, and threatening its continual existence and vitality, was the influx of large quantities of commercial media, mainly from the US. Upholders of the cultural imperialism view generally saw the solution to this situation as some combination of restrictions on media imports and the deliberate fostering of the local cultural industries, including music.

While the cultural imperialism thesis has generally been applied to film, television and publishing, it has rarely been examined in relation to popular music. At first sight, its application here appears warranted, given that the major record companies are the dominant institutions of the music industry and local pressings of imported repertoire take the major share of national music markets. But to what extent can this situation be seen in terms of cultural invasion and the subjugation of local cultural identity? Such figures present only the bare bones of the structure of the music industry and tell us little about the complex relationship of the majors to local record companies in marginalized national contexts such as Canada and New Zealand.

Although the existence of cultural imperialism became widely accepted at both a 'common-sense' level and in leftist academia, its validity at both a descriptive level and as an explanatory analytical concept came under increasing critical

scrutiny in the 1980s. The validity of the local/authentic versus imported/commercial dichotomy is difficult to sustain with reference to specific examples, while media effects are assumed in a too one-dimensional fashion, underestimating the mediated nature of audience reception and use of media products. The globalization of western capitalism, particularly evident in its media conglomerates, and the increasing international nature of western popular music bring these notions into question. Furthermore, the cultural imperialism thesis is predicated on accepting the 'national' as a given, with distinctive national musical identities its logical corollary, ignoring the range of cultural and musical identities present within particular national contexts.

It is worth bearing in mind here that Anglo-American popular culture has become established as the international preferred culture of the young since the 1950s, with American rock 'n' roll an instance of the use of foreign music by a generation as a means to distance themselves from a parental 'national culture' (Laing, 1986: 338). Local products cannot be straightforwardly equated with local national cultural identity and imported product is not necessarily to be equated with the alien. Indeed, local music is often qualitatively indistinct from its overseas counterpart, although this in itself is frequently a target for criticism. And while specific national case studies demonstrate the immense influence of the transnational music industry on musical production and distribution globally, they just as clearly indicate that the process is rather one in which local musicians are immersed in overlapping and frequently reciprocal contexts of production, with a cross-fertilization of local and international sounds. The global and the local cannot be considered binary categories, but exist in a complex interrelationship.

More recently, reflecting the internationalization of capital – a trend particularly evident in its media conglomerates – the term 'globalization' has replaced cultural imperialism, As an explanatory concept, however, globalization is often used too loosely and is open to similar criticisms to cultural imperialism. Although awkward linguistically, 'glocalization' emerged as a more useful concept, emphasizing the complex and dynamic interrelationship of local music scenes and industries and the international marketplace.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the major problem faced by record companies is the uncertainty of the music market. In the traditional (pre-internet) music industry, at best only one in eight (to ten) of the artists A&R sign and record would achieve sufficient sales to recoup the original investment and start to earn money for the artists and generate a profit for the company. This situation led major record companies to look for acts that were already partially developed and which indicate commercial potential, especially in the international market (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Negus, 1999). This was an approach with considerable implications for local artists operating primarily at a regional or national level. Attempts at the national level to foster local popular music production are primarily interventions at the level of the distribution and reception of the music. They attempt to secure greater access to the market, particularly for local products in the face of overseas music, notably from the UK and the US. Such attempts, along

with the issues surrounding cultural imperialism and globalization and the status of the local can be more fully addressed through two national examples: Canada and New Zealand.

Global music, national culture: Canada

I want to look at governmental intervention in relation to Canada's popular music industry, taking the story up to 2000, when the place of the local music industry was more secure. Policy since has been largely a case of maintaining existing provisions and dealing with issues of copyright in the digital age.

The history of the Canadian music industry has been shaped largely by its relationship to the international marketplace, especially its proximity to the dominant US market for popular music. During the 1980s and into the 1990s, the Canadian music industry was dominated by the local branches of the majors. Writing in 1988, Berland observed:

> The eight largest record companies in Canada are foreign-owned; 89 per cent of the revenues from the Canadian domestic market goes to multinationals. Their interest in Canadian music is restricted to those recordings which are marketed across the continent. This preference also shapes current government programs for subsidizing domestic recording. All other recording remains economically, spatially, and discursively marginal.
>
> (Berland, 1988)

Economies of scale applied to production meant that indigenous product was far more costly to produce and frequently had inferior production values compared with imports (largely) from the US. With record distribution also dominated by the majors, and commercial radio frequently tied to US programme formats and broadcast sound quality, the Canadian industry and musicians had only a small market share: in 1988 the independents received approximately 11 per cent of national revenues from record sales. One consequence of this situation was that only a small percentage of music recordings bought in Canada originated there, even when it was made by Canadian artists (e.g. Bryan Adams, Celine Dion). This economic situation sat uneasily with the historical Canadian concern to encourage nationhood and a cultural identity via communications technology, while at the same time resisting the intrusion of American media and messages, concerns that pushed the state to the forefront in media and cultural policy. The two core aspects of this policy are the 'CanCon' regulations, administered by the Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the Sound Recording Development Program (SRDP).

The CRTC and CanCon

The CRTC was established by parliament in 1968. The Broadcasting Act requires the CRTC to ensure that each 'broadcasting undertaking ... shall make maximum use, and in no case less than predominant use, of Canadian creative

and other resources in the creation and presentation of programming' (unless the specialized nature of the service makes it impracticable). The CRTC has responsibility for establishing classes of broadcasting licences, the allocation of broadcast licences, making broadcasting regulations and the holding of public hearings in respect of such matters.

In pursuit of this goal, a Canadian Content quota on AM radio was introduced in 1971 and extended to FM radio in 1976. These quotas took into account particular station airplay formats and expected a reasonably even distribution of Canadian selections throughout the day and through the broadcast week. What constitutes 'Canadian' was established by the MAPLE test, in which at least two of the following requirements must be included in a recording:

a) **M** – music is composed by a Canadian
b) **A** – artist (principal performer) is a Canadian
c) **P** – performance/production is in Canada
d) **L** – lyrics are written by a Canadian

CanCon, as the local content requirements came to be known, proved controversial, but had an undeniably positive impact on the Canadian recording industry:

> That simple regulation was a watershed. It was the expression of a protectionist policy designed to allow Canadian musicians to be heard in their own country. The overall effect of the regulations has been the creation of an active, vigorous, self-supporting, and surprisingly creative industry – one that hardly existed prior to the regulations.
>
> (Flohel, 1990: 497)

It was generally agreed that, while the current group of Canadian international stars would have 'made it' anyway, their early careers received a significant impetus from the airplay guaranteed by CanCon. Further, and perhaps more importantly, the quota allowed a 'middle' group of perfomers to make an impact – and a living – within the Canadian industry:

> there's a whole lot of middle ground Canadian artists who are fabulous acts and CanCon has helped to ensure that they get the airplay that allows them to become the stars that they have become in Canada and, in many cases, nowhere else in the world.
>
> (Doug Pringle, director of programming at Rawlco Communications, responsible for a number of newer radio stations, cited in Melhuish, 1999: 73)

The Sound Recording Development Program (SRDP)

The SRDP was created in 1986 to provide support to Canadian-owned companies for the production of Canadian audio and video music and radio programmes and to support marketing, international touring and business development. This recognized that it was necessary to assist the industry to enable it to provide the local content required under the CRTC regulations. A 1991 evaluation of the SRDP found that it had had a very positive effect on the sound recording industry, but that its resources (funding was initially $5 million) were inadequate to significantly strengthen the independent sector of the industry and, in particular, that it provided too little support to marketing and distribution. This was confirmed by a later report, which regarded the scheme has now substantially underfunded: 'A major concern for both English and French language industries is the inadequacy of the resources available to support the marketing of recordings by Canadian artists' (Task Force, 1996).

The Task Force (1996) recommended that the resources of the Sound Recording Development Program should be increased immediately to $10 million annually and sustained at that level for a period of five years, but it was not until late 1999 that government policy began to address this and a comprehensive review of the programme began. In 1999, Brian Chater, President of CIRPA (the Canadian Independent Record Producers' Association) emphasized there remained a pressing need to get 'serious structural funding' in the local industry:

> The music business has become very much like the film business; you have to have a lot of bucks to play the game, and a lot of the time it won't work anyway. Now if you don't invest three or four hundred grand on each project, nobody thinks your serious. Do five of those and you've spent a couple of million dollars. The reality with project funding is that you're always scrambling from A to B trying to pay the bills with the project money. What we want to see indies have access to is structural funding, so that you can operate a company rather than do projects.
>
> (Melhuish, 1999: 79)

The Canadian music industry as a whole was considerably stronger by the mid-1990s. Recordings now generated substantial economic activity: retail sales in Canada totalled $1.3 billion in 1997, while the royalties paid to Canadian songwriters, composers and publishers (as public performance rights) totalled $49 million in 1997, up from $34 million in 1993 (DFSP, 1999). While this overall picture was impressive, the historical dichotomy remained: Canadian firms earned about 90 per cent of their revenue from selling Canadian-content recordings, while 88 per cent of the revenues of foreign-controlled firms came from selling recordings made from imported masters. Foreign firms had five times the revenue, 18 times the profit, 10 times the long-term assets and 16 times the contributed surplus and retained earnings of Canadian-controlled firms (Task Force, 1996).

It should also be acknowledged, however, that the majors were not simply parasitic here. Brian Robertson, President of CRIA, stressed the important investment in Canadian talent by the multinationals (majors), now around

$40 million a year in Canadian Content production. 'This has escalated tremendously in the last decade, and represents a huge investment per year in Canadian music and artists and their recordings' (author interview, July 1999).

Yet in the mid-1990s, while the general picture of a marginalized local sound recording industry remained valid, there were also evident contradictions (Straw, 1996). On the one hand, there was the increased international visibility and success of Canadian artists/music within the global sound recording industry, although these artists frequently record in the US, for US-based companies; e.g. Bryan Adams, Alanis Morissette, Shania Twain. On the other hand, there was also an increased share of the local market for music of Canadian content, with commercially significant sales for several locally based performers, including Bare Naked Ladies, Our Lady Peace, Blue Rodeo and Sarah McLachlan. In 1998, Our Lady Peace's CD *Clumsy* sold over 800,000 copies in Canada, along with well over half a million copies in the US; Bare Naked Ladies had a top ten *Billboard* single ('One Week') and their album *Stunt* reached sales of three million.

At the same time the popular music market had changed dramatically, with the splintering of 'mainstream rock', once the dominant genre, into a wide range of genre styles and performers, along with the willingness of the major record companies to market/exploit these. These trends created uncertainty about the future role and status of Canada's small, locally based firms, which have traditionally nurtured and been economically dependent on new musical styles. In other words, reflecting glocalization, the relative market positions and relationship of 'majors' and 'independents' in the Canadian market had changed. The growth of foreign markets has made artist development in Canada more globally oriented. The Canadian branches of the majors and Canadian-owned independent labels such as Nettwerk Productions, Attic Music Group, True North and Marquis Classics were increasingly looking to develop artists with international appeal.

In the midst of these shifts, positive government policy toward the local music industry appeared to be more necessary than ever, a view shared by the comprehensive and influential Task Force Report, on *The Future of the Canadian Music Industry* (Task Force, 1996). The Task Force was asked to develop proposals that would ensure that the industry could maintain its central role in promoting Canada's cultural identity by providing an increasing choice of Canadian music. Objectives set for the industry were to maintain its ability to compete in Canada and abroad; to be adequately compensated for use of its copyrighted material; and to benefit from new technologies. The Task Force concluded: 'While cultural objectives should provide the basis for music industry policy, measures that strengthen the creation, performance, production, distribution and marketing of Canadian music will also generate important economic benefits' (Task Force, 1996). In early 1999, after a series of public hearings and a review of radio policy by the CRTC, the Canadian content requirement was increased to 35 per cent. This change did not indicate a 'failure' of the previous requirement, but was recognition that the local industry was now in a strong enough position to provide sufficient acceptable recordings to meet such an increase.

The Canadian case raises crucial questions about the role of music as a form of discourse actively engaged in the uniting or fragmenting of a community. Government policy presupposes that listeners consciously identify – and identify with – specifically locally produced music. However, it is misleading to automatically assume that local musicians embody and support a Canadian cultural nationalism in their work: Canada is characterized by considerable cultural diversity, with strongly developed regional music scenes and idioms. The frequent negative reaction local product provokes is an important reminder of how what counts as popular music has been identified with a particular imported form, the result of the dominance of American radio formats, music videos and production values.

New Zealand

These questions of the relationship between popular music, local cultural identity and the global nature of the music industry are also present in New Zealand, a country with a small market for recorded music, a small share for local music within the major-dominated turnover of the local phonogram market and with a relatively unimportant role for local sounds within the international music market. Historically, New Zealand's local recording companies and their products have been largely marginalized by the dominant position of the international record companies (the majors) and the sheer quantity of 'imported' material – mainly New Zealand pressings of international repertoire. Given the economic and cultural significance of recorded music, this situation has been the focus of considerable public debate and government cultural policy.

Pre-2000

The 1989–1990 debate over a compulsory quota for NZ music on the radio traversed the arguments over the importance of supporting the local music industry, the constitution of the 'local' and the relationship between airplay and commercial success (see Shuker and Pickering, 1994). When a quota was not introduced, New Zealand On Air (NZOA) was established to administer the funds collected by the broadcasting fee, with a brief that included provision for subsidizing and supporting local music. After a low period in the late 1980s (in terms of overall chart success), local artists made strong chart showings both at home and internationally during 1991–1992, greatly assisted by the introduction of NZOA's music schemes. Flying Nun, the country's main independent label, saw continued sales growth, particularly in the US. During the next few years, despite NZOA's funding of videos and CD compilations of local artists, retail sales fluctuated and chart success failed to match the peak level achieved in 1992. This was followed in the mid-1990s by the international success of OMC ('How Bizzare'), Crowded House and Neil Finn and strong local showings by artists such as Bic Runga, Shihad, Che Fu and The Feelers.

Despite such occasional successes, in 2001, the vital signs of the local recording industry remained mixed. The local scene was still insufficient to support full-time professional performers, there was still only limited radio and television exposure for local artists and initiatives to support the industry remain limited. Several explanations were offered for this: a general lack of effort on the part of the majors to sign and develop New Zealand artists; the general lack of an industry infrastructure, especially in terms of management; and the limited opportunities for radio and television airplay, especially the absence of a local content quota (as existed in Canada). New Zealand artists who stayed 'at home' remained marginal to the international music industry, since the country lacked the population base to support a music industry on the scale of neighbouring Australia. The result is a tension between the support for the purely local and the need to go offshore to follow up national success. Shihad, arguably New Zealand's premier rock band, relocated in late 1998 to Los Angeles:

> We're not turning our back on New Zealand. A lot of people are coming to the realisation that as a climate for making music New Zealand is tremendously wealthy in terms of what we have available to us and what people can produce here, but the actual platform for getting music out into the market place is absolutely shit. We're crippled in comparison to places like Australia where they have local content quotas.
>
> (Tom Larkin, drummer, Shihad, *Rip It Up*, October 1998: 14)

There are a number of established NZ independent labels, along with local branches of the majors, which still dominate the global music industry. According to industry sources, the subsidiaries of the multinational record companies have traditionally supplied approximately 90 per cent of the domestic market. While any strict division between the majors and the 'indies' is difficult to maintain, with distribution deals tying the two sectors of the industry together, there are interesting questions about the dynamics of their relationship. This is particularly the case with the operation of the majors with respect to local product.

Logically, given the economies of scale involved, the majors concentrate more on promoting their overseas artists, with their local performers treated as a lower priority. The majors also in a sense feed off local labels, treating them in the same fashion as North American professional sports franchises use their 'farm teams' to foster talent and provide local back-up as necessary. But, as in Canada, this is as much a symbiotic relationship as it is a parasitic one. The independents need the distribution and marketing support the majors can provide, particularly in overseas markets, while NZ performers who outstrip the strictly local need the majors to move up a league. This was evident with the operation of the two main New Zealand independent record labels operating in the late 1980s, Flying Nun and Pagan, and continued to be the case.

Given the marginal status of New Zealand recording industry in the international arena and the difficulties facing local artists, the initiatives taken by New Zealand On Air (NZOA) to foster New Zealand music, in operation since July 1991, were of crucial importance. NZOA's brief is not restricted to 'popular music', but in practice this is the case, with classical music having its own sources of funding and support. NZOA is charged with ensuring that 'New Zealanders have a diverse range of broadcasting services that would not otherwise be available on a commercial basis.' A key strategy in pursuit of this goal is 'To encourage broadcasters to maintain a sustained commitment to programmes reflecting New Zealand identity and culture.' Working towards achieving this includes 'funding programming on television and radio about New Zealand and New Zealand interests, including the broadcasting of New Zealand music' (NZOA: Statement of purpose and goals).

By 2000, NZOA's popular music programme had four main schemes related to radio and television, providing the basis for its support of local music:

- **Radio hits**, which provides incentives to record companies to produce records suitable for the commercial radio playlist; and lessens the financial risk inherent in recording and releasing singles, by enabling partial recovery of recording costs.
- **The hit disc**, which assisted record companies to get airplay for new releases and made sure that 'every programme director in every NZ radio station has access to a broadcast quality copy of new singles which have commercial radio airplay potential'. The first of these, and the most important, was the *Kiwi Hit Disc*, made up of 'new New Zealand music on release or about to be released by record companies'. The *Indie Hit Disc* and the *Iwi Hit Disc* were similar schemes with more of a niche market (Iwi targets Maori radio; indie the university stations).
- **Music video**, which funded NZ music videos through subsidising production costs of selected videos.
- **New Zealand music on radio**, which involved funding specialist radio programmes promoting NZ music, for commercial radio and student radio, aimed at the youth audience.

In each of the first three schemes, the criteria for support were similar or identical. First, 'It must be New Zealand music. The priority is original New Zealand music but we accept covers as well' (Guidelines for Music Video; Radio Hits; Kiwi Hit Disc). Second, there must be a confirmed record release: 'the video must back up the release of a single or EP in NZ either by an independent or a major label' (Music Video); and 'A record company – either a major or one of the independents – must be involved in releasing the record' (Radio Hits). Priority goes to projects distributed nationally usually via one of the major record companies. Third, a key consideration is broadcast potential: 'our priority is videos which are likely to generate repeat screenings on national network television' (Music Video); 'To qualify for funding, the record must attract significant airplay on commercial radio' (Radio Hits); and 'the record must be a realistic contender for significant airplay on commercial radio' (Kiwi Hit Disc) Seven radio stations are used as barometers and the schemes use programmers from TV shows and radio as consultants to identify broadcast potential.

A mix of cultural and commercial criteria were being applied here, with an emphasis on the latter. It is important to recognize that the schemes in themselves did not guarantee exposure through local television and radio. What they did was facilitate the production of local product, including an acceptable technical quality of these videos and recordings, and make it more available to local programmers. Recognizing this, in early 1998 NZOA began employing a 'song plugger', whose role was to push (promote) the forthcoming Hit Disc to key radio station programmers. This represented a dramatic departure for NZOA, but was a necessary move given that, despite six years of effort, there appeared to have been only limited improvement in the levels of New Zealand music getting airplay on commercial radio.

Fresh initiatives

The NZOA music schemes were in effect the alternative to a local content quota. Certainly, they contributed to a gradual improvement in the proportion of local content on radio, with NZOA close to its breakthrough goal of 'double digits' (New Zealand, 10 per cent of local airplay) in 2000. Yet, even with the more forceful presentation of the products of the schemes, it remained uncertain if this goal could be achieved, thus making a quota unnecessary.

It was becoming recognized in official circles, as well as in the music industry, that the continued development of the infrastructure of the New Zealand music industry was central to generating opportunities for local musicians and for providing a launching platform for access to the international market.

In mid-2000, Helen Clark, Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and the Arts, in a Labour government elected in late 1999, announced a governmental NZ$146 million arts-recovery package, with three goals: the arts were to be nurtured for their intrinsic worth; they should help build a uniquely New Zealand national identity; and arts and culture should 'contribute to the building of strong creative industries which provide rewarding employment, opportunities for creative entrepreneurs, and good economic returns'. As part of this package, in July 2000 the funding for the NZOA music schemes was virtually doubled, from NZ$2 million to $3.78 million a year, to enable the implementation of strategies to get increased airplay for local recordings. In 2001 a New Zealand Music Industry Commission was created, with initial funding of NZ$2 million (over five years), charged simply with 'growing the industry'.

The proportion of New Zealand music played on radio had remained small through the 1990s, varying between approximately five per cent on some commercial stations and 15 to 20 per cent on student radio. This situation improved quite dramatically in 2001, when a voluntary NZ Music Code was negotiated between the Radio Broadcasters Association and the Minister of Broadcasting, and began operating in 2002. (While not mandatory, the new targets were 'strongly encouraged' with the implicit threat of non-licence renewal.) At the same time, during 2002–2003 NZOA began increasingly using 'song pluggers' to promote its releases to radio playlist programmers. Boosted by the emergence

of a few high-profile local acts and several performers' international success, these initiatives contributed to a marked increase in the proportion of New Zealand artists gaining local airplay, which reached some 15 per cent in 2002. In late 2002 *Billboard*, the main industry trade magazine, featured New Zealand in its high-profile 'Spotlight' section, noting that the strength of the local music scene had set the stage for an international breakthrough (J. Ferguson, 'New Zealand Acts Aim for Global Impact', *Billboard*, 30 November 2002: 37–45).

In July 2004 a government-sponsored report *Creating Heat* (Music Industry Development Group, 2004) set out a blueprint to encourage 'New Zealand's music industry to increase its overseas exchange earnings (from NZ$5 million in 2003–2004) to NZ$50 million per year by 2014. This was to be facilitated by a new export model, 'NZ Out There', that would connect musicians of all genres more directly into overseas networks, a process coordinated by a reorganized New Zealand Music Industry Commission, with increased funding.

These initiatives paid off. In 2003 Hayley Westenra, Bic Runga and Scribe had the three top-selling albums for that year in the charts, the first time three 'Kiwi' acts had taken all three top spots. Westenra also had considerable commercial success in the UK, while Runga consolidated her cult status there and rapper Scribe topped the Australian charts. Launched in 2004 C4 the nationwide, free-to-air music channel, strongly committed itself to New Zealand programming, achieving solid viewer ratings. During 2005 Fat Freddy's Drop's album *Based On A True Story* spent a record 10 weeks at no. 1 in the New Zealand album charts, selling 90,000 copies (by March 2006) and winning worldwide album of 2005 at the BBC's Radio 1 Giles Peterson awards. New Zealand music accounted for a record 20.8 per cent of music played on commercial radio, meeting the Code of Practice target of 20 per cent ahead of schedule (the aim was to achieve this level in 2006). Broadcasting Minister Steve Maharey hailed this as 'a fantastic result for the music industry; it demonstrates that New Zealanders want to tune into more of their own music'. Local bands Breaks Co-op and The Feelers had the top three airplay songs for the year.

Critics of the NZOA schemes, however, pointed to their reductionist assumption of a coherent 'New Zealand' national identity (Zuberi, 2008) and the emphasis on supporting mainstream commercial artists. Tony Mitchell (Kean and Mitchell, 2011: xx) has consistently argued that state intervention is not a significant factor behind the viability and vitality of local music. However, he simplistically equates government support with direct funding and even then only includes NZOA, ignoring the contribution of the Music Commission and the significant role of the radio airplay quota. In support of his view, Mitchell cites examples of bands such as Fat Freddy's Drop and So So Modern whom he considers to have achieved local success without support from NZOA. This conveniently overlooks the success of other performers supported by the schemes; for example, in 2006–2007, nine of the ten top-selling New Zealand artists had received some form of state support (Shuker, 2008). It is worth looking further at the sole exception: Fat Freddy's Drop.

The success of Fat Freddy's Drop is frequently held up by observers, including Mitchell, as an example of the triumph of New Zealand bands through adherence to a DIY indie philosophy. The band is part of the strong Wellington independent roots/dub/reggae scene, along with groups such as Trinity Roots, the Black Seeds and Fly My Pretties. After initially debuting at no. 1 in May 2005, a chart position it held for a record ten weeks, their album *Based On a True Story* was the most successful New Zealand release of 2006 and the band won four Tui (national) music awards that year. Fat Freddy's Drop also toured Europe during 2005 and won a prestigious BBC Radio 1 Award against strong international competition. All this, it was frequently observed, was 'achieved without help from a major record label. The band had turned down offers, preferring to keep control of the music and the business' (Diaz, 2005). Neither did the group draw on support from the New Zealand On Air music schemes.

I would argue, however, that while exemplifying the indie tradition, the level of success Fat Freddy's enjoyed can't be explained simply in terms of the quality of the music itself. The indies have historically produced a body of recordings representing some of the most stylistically distinctive New Zealand music, often including elements of Maori and Polynesian music. What has now been added is the greater commercial viability and visibility of this work, reflecting a more receptive local environment. As Toby Laing (the cornet player in Fat Freddy's Drop) observed in 2006, reflecting on the band's huge success: 'It seems like a cultural renaissance or something, because people in New Zealand are so proud of their culture. All the work that bands and stuff do is great but it is actually the people supporting it that makes a difference' (cited in Smith, L. 2006). Laing is presumably referring to the fans attending the concerts and buying the records, but I would extend his 'people' to the state institutions and those working in them who have altered the local playing field.

There was also a tendency in this debate to conflate questions of identity with that of governmental support for the local music industry. As in Canada, state music policy in New Zealand has been predicated on a conception of local music as an identifiable national category, to better brand governmental support for both industry and musicians. Critics have been quick to point to the essentialism of such a conception and its perceived failure to fully recognize the variety of local music in such national contexts (Johnson, 2010; Zuberi, 2007). However, from the perspective of those making and implementing state policy, it makes sense to mobilize the notion of 'New Zealand music' (or 'Canadian music') to justify their intervention in the marketplace in the 'national' interest of upholding local culture, creating employment and income. This is also important from a marketing point of view, as a 'branded' product is more easily presentable in what is a highly competitive music market.

New wine in old bottles

In 2010 NZOA commissioned a comprehensive review of its schemes 'to determine the best way to respond to changes to the music industry and broadcasting

environment' (NZOA Media Release, 22 December 2010). NZOA also asked for wider feedback on the schemes, through an online public survey. The review was conducted by former EMI music head Chris Caddick, who interviewed 100 'music and broadcast professionals' and also assessed the 655 responses from the public survey. Caddick commended NZOA's achievements in increasing airplay of 'Kiwi music', which had continued to fill 20 per cent of radio airtime, noting that radio remained people's most common source for hearing New Zealand music. His review observed that:

> While industry or artist support is not a primary goal, the stability inherent in NZ On Air's music programme has nonetheless provided strong support for the New Zealand music industry. As a consequence an industry infrastructure has been strengthened and an ever-increasing pool of new artists aspires to create music and have it heard by their fellow countrymen.
>
> (Caddick, 2010: 4)

The review also recognized that misgivings and frustration with aspects of the NZOA schemes were 'reasonably widespread throughout the industry' (5). These concerns included the focus on support for commercial radio audiences, which critics saw as 'crowding out some more cutting-edge and potentially popular music', excessive assistance to some artists; and the scheme's lack of recognition to 'modern methods of interacting with music, specifically the use of the Internet and mobile devices in discovering, consuming and sharing music'.

NZOA quickly responded to the review, making a number of changes to the schemes (these were implemented from July 2011); these included:

- Making greater use of alternative delivery sites, such as student radio, online and digital platforms, to broaden funding opportunities.
- Weighting funding support more towards emerging artists (rather than established artists).
- Placing support for music from more established artist on a more business-like footing, for example, cost sharing and income participation.
- Focusing available funding on individual tracks (including music videos) and abolishing album funding.

In announcing the changes, Jane Wrightson, the chief executive of NZOA, confirmed that the organization's 'prime focus will remain on connecting songs with the widest possible audience'.

Conclusion

The transformation of the global circulation of cultural forms is creating new lines of influence and solidarity that are not bounded by geographically defined cultures and popular music is not exempt from such processes. Accordingly, we need to be conscious of the danger of too easily dichotomizing the local and the global,

recognize the dynamism and intertextuality of at least the best of contemporary popular music and avoid adopting a narrowly defined cultural nationalist position. Nevertheless, there remain important economic arguments for the support of the local. The continued development of the infrastructure of the Canadian and New Zealand music industries is central to generating opportunities for local musicians and for providing a launching platform for access to the international market.

Debates over cultural policy and popular music embrace a volatile mix of the ideological and the economic. At the ideological level, there is the maintenance of an outmoded high–low culture dichotomy, which partly serves to legitimate the general neglect of the popular, including popular music. At the same time, however, the state is also concerned to respond to the significant level of community support for local culture and the perceived necessity of defending the local against the continued and increasing dominance of international popular media. This concern is mediated by the difficulty of establishing the uniqueness of national 'sounds', be they New Zealand or Canadian.

Further reading

Local policy

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Williamson, J., Cloonan, M. and Frith, S. (2011) 'Having an Impact? Academics, the Music Industries and the Problem of Knowledge', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 15, 5: 459–74.

Zuberi, N. (2007) 'Sound Like Us: Popular Music and Cultural Nationalism in Aotearoa/New Zealand', *Perfect Beat*, 8, 3: 3–18.

Websites

Canada's Independent Record Production Association (CIRPA): www.cirpa.ca

Canadian Culture Online (funding programmes): www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/progs

Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA): www.cria.ca

Music Industries Association of Canada (MIAC): www.miac.net

New Zealand Music Industry Commission: www.nzmusic.org.nz

Recording Industry Association of New Zealand (RIANZ): www.rianz.org.nz

Conclusion: 'Wrap it Up'

Popular music studies and cultural meaning

I begin here with some brief comments on the 'state of the field' of popular music studies, in order to give the reader who is new to it a better sense of its development and then situate this study in relation to it.

Development and state of the field

Although the earlier work of Adorno must be acknowledged, the academic study of popular music can be traced primarily to the 1950s and the work of sociologists such as David Riesman (see Chapter 10). Subsequently, with some notable exceptions, academic analysis of popular music and its associated culture was initially slow to develop. During the 1970s and 1980s even the increasingly popular subject of media studies tended to concentrate its attention on the visual media, particularly television, and neglected popular music.

Critical early moments in the emergence of popular music as a valid academic field were the establishment of the journals *Popular Music and Society* (1971) in the US and, in the UK, *Popular Music* (1981), followed in 1981 by IASPM, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music. A small number of institutional bases for the study of popular music were also set up, such as the Institute for Popular Music Studies at Liverpool University. However, most scholars teaching popular music remained in traditional disciplinary settings or associated with the new departments of media and cultural studies and this remains very much the case. It is a situation that makes popular music studies such a vital and interesting one to be working in, but at the same time renders the field's historical ambition toward an interdisciplinary project difficult to realize.

In the 1990s there was a marked increase in publications in popular music studies, including several significant university press series and a number of canonical works (Waksman, 2010). At the same time, there was a marked increase in the number of courses either directly focusing on popular music or on it as an aspect of popular culture within media and cultural studies. The new prominence of the field reflected the recognition of popular music as a global cultural phenomenon, associated with a multibillion dollar industry and a many faceted pop-youth culture reaching out into every aspect of style. Through the 2000s the related academic literature has continued to proliferate, with new journals,

substantive new publisher's series, 'weighty' readers and encyclopedias. In addition, there is important 'vernacular scholarship': I use this term as I am not comfortable with the label 'non-academic', given that I see much 'journalistic' and 'fan' writing as of *at least* a comparable standard.

This literature has taken a number of forms and approached popular music from a range of perspectives. These include musicology, sociology, history, political economy, media and cultural studies, to mention only the most obvious. These in turn display an engagement with semiotics, psychoanalysis, feminism and social and cultural theory more generally. Indeed, as this list suggests, popular music studies is not a discipline, in the coherent sense that such a term implies, but is rather a field of study. An indication of the scope of the field is given in volume one of the *Continuum Encyclopedia of Popular Music* (Shepherd, *et al.*, 2003) which devotes 100 pages to 30 entries on various approaches to it. As Gary Burns, writing in 1997, observed:

> The perfect scholar of popular music would know all the relevant literature from popular music studies itself and also from all other [related?] disciplines. Furthermore, this perfect scholar would be an expert in music theory, literary criticism, the history of popular music, the entire social and cultural milieu that surrounded the creation of the music in question, and all manner of social and cultural theory.
>
> (cited in Anderson, 2006: 285)

This tongue-in-cheek observation is obviously an unattainable ambition, but it does illustrate the daunting scope of the field. At best, it is worth adopting Steve Waksman's argument that 'there are works that any popular music scholar should know, regardless of home discipline' (Waksman, 2010: 69); and I have identified a number of what I consider to be such canonical contributions throughout this study.

A sense of shifts in the past decade can be gained from Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton, *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (2012). For this new edition, the original essays have been revised and nine new chapters added. Comparing its scope with the earlier 2003 edition demonstrates the continuing expansion of popular music scholarship and the ways in which the field has developed since the book's initial publication. Richard Middleton observes in his introduction that 'the new topics we have selected will indicate our sense of the areas that have taken on a new and increased prominence in recent years'. He identifies three of these:

- 'the materiality of musical practice, explored in relation to technologies and locations of music, cultural apparatuses within which it circulates, and the embodiment of practitioners and listeners'
- 'a sense that the social embedding of music should be considered in broader terms than has often been the case in the past, to take in such parameters as race, religion, and emotional well-being'

- 'an increased recognition of (or return to) the importance of political economy, including Marxist models – although it is fair to add that, at the same time, there is a contrasting emphasis that pushes even further than in past work against all such totalizing analytical frameworks' (2010: 10).

I am sympathetic to the aspects Middleton identifies, which can also be considered a potential agenda for future work in the field.

Understanding popular music culture

The core question I have addressed in this introductory survey is: 'how is meaning produced within popular music culture?' Cultural interpretations and understandings are embedded in musical texts and performances: records, tapes, music videos, concerts, radio airplay, internet downloads, film soundtracks and so on. Such meanings are, in one sense, the creations of those engaged in making the music in these diverse forms, but they are also the result of how the consumers of these forms interact with the music. Further, music texts and performances are cultural commodities, produced largely by an international music industry ultimately concerned with maximizing profits. Meanings, or rather, particular sets of cultural understandings, are produced by a complex set of interactions between these factors. Accordingly, the question of meaning in popular music cannot be 'read off' purely at one level, be it that of the industry, the aesthetic creators, the musical texts or the audience. It can only be satisfactorily answered by considering the nature of the production context, including state cultural policy, the texts and their creators and the consumers of the music and their spatial location. Most importantly, it is necessary to consider the interrelationship of these factors. Of course, to facilitate discussion the very organization of this text has tended to perpetuate the notation that these are indeed discrete aspects, although I have tried to stress throughout the links between them.

It is not possible to badly state a model of the interrelationship between these aspects or to claim primacy for any one of them in every case of the process whereby meaning is determined in popular music. While I regard the influence of political economy and the significance of the production context, including its technological aspects, as of central importance, its role needs to be qualified. I would argue that the commodity form that music takes and the capitalist relations of mass industrial production under which most commercial music continues to be created significantly affect the availability of particular texts and the meanings that they embody. However, such determination is never absolute: meanings are mediated, the dominant meanings of texts subverted and 'alternatives' to 'mainstream', commercial music are always present, increasingly so within the new digital environment. Accordingly, popular music must be seen as a site of symbolic struggle in the cultural sphere.

To engage with these questions is not a straightforwardly objective 'academic' exercise. My own location in pop culture, as a 'post-war baby boomer', illustrates the point that our response to popular music and the various attempts to

document and analyse it, is far from a purely intellectual one. Analysis and documentation cannot be divorced from the volatile and contested area of emotions and popular memory. My own emotional ties to the music and artists of the late 1960s, to subsequent styles and performers reminiscent of these, and to the notion of popular music as a politically significant cultural force, are clear in this account.

Further reading

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Tim Anderson discusses the question of method 'by interrogating and negotiating the recorded music object as an appropriate unit of analysis' (287), while also making some observations about the development of popular music studies as a field, especially in relation to sociology and cultural studies.

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