Leisure Studies in a Global Era

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In this book series, we defend leisure as a meaningful, theoretical, framing concept; and critical studies of leisure as a worthwhile intellectual and pedagogical activity. This is what makes this book series distinctive: we want to enhance the discipline of leisure studies and open it up to a richer range of ideas; and, conversely, we want sociology, cultural geographies and other social sciences and humanities to open up to engaging with critical and rigorous arguments from leisure studies. Getting beyond concerns about the grand project of leisure, we will use the series to demonstrate that leisure theory is central to understanding wider debates about identity, postmodernity and globalisation in contemporary societies across the world. The series combines the search for local, qualitatively rich accounts of everyday leisure with the international reach of debates in politics, leisure and social and cultural theory. In doing this, we will show that critical studies of leisure can and should continue to play a central role in understanding society. The scope will be global, striving to be truly international and truly diverse in the range of authors and topics. Editorial Board: John Connell, Professor of Geography, University of Sydney, USA; Yoshitaka Mori, Associate Professor, Tokyo University of the Arts, Japan; Smitha Radhakrishnan, Assistant Professor, Wellesley College, USA; Diane M. Samdahl, Professor of Recreation and Leisure Studies, University of Georgia, USA; Chiung-Tzu Lucetta Tsai, Associate Professor, National Taipei University, Taiwan; Walter van Beek, Professor of Anthropology and Religion, Tilburg University, The Netherlands; Sharon D. Welch, Professor of Religion and Society, Meadville Theological School, Chicago, USA; Leslie Witz, Professor of History, University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

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Continuing the Conversations: 
Introducing Volume Two of Sounds and the City

Brett Lashua, Stephen Wagg, Karl Spracklen, and M. Selim Yavuz

When we initially considered putting together our first book, Sounds and the City: Popular Music, Globalization and Place (2014), we were both inspired and overwhelmed by the range of possibilities: who is writing about music in cities? Which contributions, and from where, would comprise a well-rounded volume? Where is there a need for greater attention? Limited to 18 chapters in our first collection, we included as broad a range of cities, sounds, and social issues as possible. If restricted in its volume, we remain proud of the content of the book, and grateful for the outstanding contributions by the authors involved. Yet there was always more to say and to have said about popular music, globalization, and place, especially cities.

When our publisher asked if we wanted to revise the first edition, we knew that rather than update the first book, we wished to follow up with an entirely new volume attuned to “new” cities and places. This book is thus a sequel—volume two. It continues the conversations from

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our first book by tuning into various soundings of urban life as measured out in music. We were, and remain, interested in popular music as a kind of record of urban life. As with the first book, which germinated in conversations among the co-editors as colleagues chatting about popular music—from recent gigs attended, new releases, books, memories, deaths, old favourites, and so on—our conversations carried through into this second volume, as popular music opens inexhaustible seams for discussion and questioning. Conversations, among the co-editors, have been collegial; elsewhere, many of these debates have raged through recent events.

In the few years since our first book, debates about globalization have intensified, concerns about the place of music and culture in cities have amplified, and, in many ways, the politics associated with cultural identities, globalization, urbanism, and “the popular” seem more polarizing, and solutions more difficult, than ever. One central strand of our first book was that “popular music opens up questions of cities – and their social relations – that other kinds of investigations and analyses might not” (Lashua et al. 2014, p. 3). Here we pick up this thread again, and draw it out further, to see what popular music can offer about the debates that continue to trouble the world and some of its cities.

Terror attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015 targeted, in particular, the concertgoers at the Bataclan Theatre, but also people enjoying urban leisure such as dining in cafés and attending a football match. This attack, among others, highlights the politics of popular music and what it “stands for”, as well as links popular music to debates over global terror, refugee crises, and overspill from zones of ongoing conflict. Attacks on people in leisure spaces—at the Bataclan, this was during a concert by the group Eagles of Death Metal—may be described as “soft” targets (as opposed to “hard” ones, e.g., military infrastructure or government buildings). Another attack, at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, brought attention to sexual identities and spaces of electronic dance music as targets of terror. If initially seen as mundane—merely music venues of one sort or another—these spaces highlight, in very sharp relief, what is at stake on the contested terrain of “the popular” (Hall 1997). Nor should this observation be seen as Western-centric: for example, how many musicians, wedding singers, café clientele, and children at play have died
this century in the bombardment of cities and townships in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, or the Gaza Strip by the Western powers or their allies? More than simply spaces of idle leisure, frivolity, or merely “free time”, popular music, night-time entertainment, and music spaces are powerful cultural representations. In Raymond Williams’ oft-quoted words, “culture is ordinary” (1958, p. 1), and popular culture represents not only a shared way of life but also, as Stuart Hall (1997) put it, shared maps of meaning that make the world intelligible. Popular music and where it takes place are deeply rooted in the production of people’s shared cultural maps. Running the gamut from conversations and debates about local music through to global terror attacks—at varying intensities—are questions about “who we are” and “what makes our lives meaningful?” to “what are our shared maps?” By taking seriously popular music, and the places where music plays out in people’s everyday lives and histories, this book aims to address, at least in part, these questions.

As with our first, this book draws from a rich history of scholarship about the relations between music and cities, and the global flows between music and urban experiences. From Charlie Gillett’s (1970) The Sound of the City to Iain Chambers’ (1985) Urban Rhythms through to more recent volumes including White’s (2011) Music and Globalization: Critical Encounters and Crane et al. (2016) Global Culture: Media, Arts, Policy and Globalization, there are numerous volumes that address the complex array of issues and global flows of music, people, and cultures. Throughout, the city remains a central space for critical debates. In British popular music studies, recent research has provided a renewed focus on live music venues via an ecological approach toward the “health” of live music in UK cities (Behr et al. 2016). This perspective attends to concrete, material spaces of live music-making as well as intangible aspects such as the experience and heritage of specific venues. Thinking in terms of live music “ecologies” brings to mind complex ecosystems of social actors, economic and symbolic relationships, and physical structures (Behr et al. 2016). In this, we cannot help but hear echoes of Engels (1993[1845]) when, stunned by London and “[t]he very turmoil of the streets … [t]he hundreds of thousands of all classes and ranks crowding past one another”, he wondered how “the whole crazy fabric still hangs together” (pp. 36–37). Additionally, these words could aptly describe, for instance, the huge
contingent of tie-dyed, counter-cultural “Deadheads” who followed the hippie San Francisco band the Grateful Dead around the San Francisco Bay Area and across America between the late 1960s and the mid-1990s (Jackson 2000). Arguably, music is one “thread” by which the whole crazy fabric hangs together.

Once again, this book will, in one way or another, expand upon the twin questions posed by Cohen (2007, p. 3) when she asked what “popular music can tell us about cities” and also, in turn, what can “cities tell us about popular music”. Cities, as anthropologists and sociologists often remind us, are perhaps the most global of globalized spaces (Massey 2007). To explore them is to puzzle over the “rapid telescoping of changing images” (Simmel [1971][1903], p. 325), but also sounds: of moving people, changing places, and shifting social relations. Since the publication of our first volume, other movements, changes, and shifts have amplified debates about cultural identities, places, and globalization: from the waves of people migrating to Europe from the Syrian civil war and other conflict zones, to the 2016 British referendum and “Brexit” vote to leave the European Union, to the 2016 American presidential election victory of Donald Trump. These, and other events, have exposed deepening fault lines in debates over “place”. To an extent, they underscore an anti-globalist retreat toward isolationism and a backlash against multiculturalism that has been termed “post-globalization”. Amidst this, what of popular music? Does music offer renewed spaces and avenues for public protest, for collective action and resistance to fear and hatred? Or is it otherwise, sweeping people into increasingly isolated pools and dangerously deeper ideological torrents? These questions are precisely where, and why, we wish to continue the conversations.

The Chapters

We have maintained the broad thematic structure of the first volume, with the chapters in this book addressing relations between music and place (primarily cities), history and heritage, social change and globalization, in their own ways. The first section is ordered around questions of “cities of origin” and its chapters trace the histories and debates about the
(often) mythic “birthplaces” where music genres emerged. As Gibson and Connell (2007) noted, the “roots” of popular music remain a vibrant strand of inquiry (and often, mythmaking), especially where planted in particular locations or sites of popular music activity. The idea of a “music city”—one with a celebrated past, or at least claims to past events worthy of celebration—has become increasingly valued and valuable, particularly in the reinvention of cities as cultural destinations for heritage tourism.

Following this introductory chapter (Chap. 1), Chap. 2 by Catherine Strong is about grunge music and the burgeoning field of anniversary journalism. Strong discusses the ways in which particular grunge anniversaries—of the death of leading grunge icon Kurt Cobain, for example, or of the release of the *Nevermind* album by Cobain’s band Nirvana in 1991—have been marked by an array of music writers. The chapter shows how the relationship of grunge music to place has been reconstituted by these writers in ways that render the city of Seattle (USA) as the legitimate birthplace of grunge and downplay other apparently relevant locations.

Shifting to electronic dance music in Chap. 3, Hillegonda Rietveld and Alessio Kolioulis write about the origins and circulation of techno from Detroit (USA). They map the mythology of Detroit as “Techno City” and its DJ-producers, contrasting politics in Detroit’s techno scenes, and the appropriation of abandoned industrial spaces. In doing so, they argue that techno dance music has come to articulate a wider technoculture since the late 1980s: it signifies lived experience of culture dominated by information and communication technologies in a city that had partly morphed into a post-industrial ruin.

Kevon Rhiney and Romain Cruse illustrate how place became embedded in the production of popular Jamaican music—particularly in reimagining and transforming the urban landscape of its capital city, Kingston. Chapter 4 examines the evolution of popular Jamaican music from its early rural origins during slavery to the urban forms that emerged in the post-colonial era, before then tracing the birth and rise of reggae. The chapter looks specifically at the urban roots of reggae music including Kingston’s social and economic conditions. By illustrating the complex interconnections between popular culture and place, the chapter develops clearer understandings of how and why reggae emerged in specific parts of Kingston, and not in others.
Chapter 5 by Brett Lashua recounts the construction of Cleveland, Ohio, as the “capital of rock ‘n’ roll” and, since 1995, the site of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. The city’s “capital” claim has been based, primarily, upon the legacy of DJ Alan Freed (1921–1965). Working in partnership with a local record store, Record Rendezvous, and its owner, Leo Mintz, Freed hosted a late night radio programme “The Moondog Show”, through which he popularized—some claim “invented”—the phrase “Rock and Roll” and organized what is often viewed as the “first” rock ‘n’ roll concert, the Moondog Coronation Ball, on March 21, 1952. These events have been mythologized, told and retold as part of the city’s popular music heritage, particularly in the campaign during the mid-1980s to become the host site for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum. Through its claims as the birthplace of rock ‘n’ roll, Cleveland has been reimagined and reinvented as a popular music city of origin.

The second section of the book attends to music and cities as sites of globalization, consumption, and hybridization.

Chapter 6, by Kariann E. Goldschmitt, uses ethnographic research to explore the independent music industry in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro between 2007 and 2015. For much of the recent past, Rio de Janeiro has been flagged, not least by the Brazilian government, as the headquarters of the country’s music industries: Brazilian musical styles—not least samba and bossa nova, the latter of which was popular internationally in the 1960s—were associated with the wealthier districts of Rio. Now, in the twenty first century, as Goldschmitt explains, São Paulo is becoming the new centre of the Brazilian music industry.

In Chap. 7 Gwen Ansell writes about jazz in Johannesburg, South Africa’s largest city. Jo’burg jazz, as Ansell acknowledges, has a long and diverse history and its leading interpreters regard it as traditionally “multivocal”. While showing some of this history, this chapter concentrates on the period since 1990—effectively, the post-apartheid era. With the political disappointments of post-apartheid governance as a backdrop, it discusses the ways in which jazz in the city has become a marketing tool—a way of attracting cultural tourists to gentrified areas where smart new cafés beckon.
Chapter 8, by Andrew David Field, traces the rise of live music scenes in Beijing and Shanghai since the 1980s. The scene in Beijing, the capital city, was initially informed by rock ‘n’ roll and anti-government protest. After the brutal suppression of this protest in the city’s Tiananmen Square in 1989, the scene went underground, gradually transmuting into an indigenous punk subculture. More recently Beijing has developed a strong jazz presence—something longer established in Shanghai—and, as Field shows, these different musical forms contribute to a diverse soundscape in contemporary urban China.

Chapter 9 by Mira Malick has as its focus Tokyo, Japanese pop music, and Visual Kei. This chapter confronts the questions posed by globalization—and the attendant concepts of “bricolage”, “hybridity”, “transculturality”, and so on—for debates about music and place. Malick discusses Kei as a difficult to pin-down, eclectic, ever-renewable template for the production of music, which serves as an insightful case study of how the de-territorialized experience that is rock music in the contemporary global sonic-scape can no longer simply be described in terms of having “local” and “foreign” elements.

In Chap. 10 by Stephen Wagg, there is an analysis of the flourishing during the 1990s of a club dedicated to Louisiana Cajun music in the city of Derby in the English East Midlands. Based on interviews both with people who ran and who attended this club, the chapter explores the transplantation of Cajun music to these—on the face of it—inauspicious surroundings, the initial and sustained success of this transplantation, and the final disbanding of the project amid arguments over what was, and what was not, “authentic” Cajun culture. The chapter is effectively a case study in the globalization of music and its likely limits.

As Julia Sneeringer observes in the opening sentence of Chap. 11, “no other German city carries as much rock and roll mythology as Hamburg”. The preeminent place of this city in north Germany in musical history was assured with the unrivalled global success of The Beatles: chroniclers of popular music soon made known the fact that the band had cut their rock ‘n’ roll teeth in the clubs of Hamburg between the late summer of 1960 and December of 1962. But, as this fascinating chapter shows, there is much more to the urban music culture of Hamburg—or, more
specifically, of St Pauli, the culturally bohemian district where these clubs were located—than the fact that The Beatles were once there.

The resistance story of Aeham Ahmad, a Palestinian-Syrian musician and activist who has gained most of his fame by playing a portable piano in the ruins of Yarmouk refugee camp under siege, forms the heart of Chap. 12, by S. Ali Mostolizadeh. The chapter explores the possibilities of music to reshape conflict in urban areas. Analysing the lyrics of songs Aeham performed publicly in Yarmouk when it was under siege, and incorporating a number of Aeham’s interviews with global media, this chapter highlights the possibilities that arts provide in the context of “urbicide”, that is, the violence induced by war and expanded into cities. As an act of local resistance, Aeham’s music represents the everyday suffering and lived experiences of those who were trapped in Yarmouk. Beyond representation, Aeham’s music offers an alternative urbanity, calling for change, hope, solidarity, and alternative realities for reconstructing and reordering urban spaces post conflict.

Chapter 13, by Gregory D. Booth, is an ethnographic case study of six contemporary musicians and composers working in Mumbai. The urban context for this study is framed, in the first instance, by the Indian “Bollywood” film industry for which the musicians produce soundtrack and, second, by the independent popular music performance scene in Mumbai, dominated largely by western-based rock and pop.

In the third section, we have essays on music, heritage, nostalgia, memory, and urban change.

In Chap. 14, Stephen Petrus and Ronald D. Cohen write about the Greenwich Village district of New York City and Newport, a city in the New England state of Rhode Island. Both places have historic musical associations: the Village as the habitat of aspiring and leftish folk singers (including a young Bob Dylan) from the early 1960s and Newport for its music festivals—the Newport Jazz Festival, established in 1954 and its companion Folk Festival, founded five years later. In these locations, as this chapter shows, some of the most important cultural politics in post-war America were played out, including the much argued over incident of 1965 in which an unapologetic Bob Dylan and his electrified band confronted an audience of predominantly folk purists, who saw his performance as a betrayal of the American rural, folk (acoustic) musical tradition.
Chapter 15, by Katie Milestone, is about the popular cultural phenomenon known as “Madchester”—a (predominantly) youth culture in the UK city of Manchester, England. The idea of “Madchester” was promoted by and centred on a range of bands—notably the Happy Mondays, The Stone Roses, Inspiral Carpets, Northside, The Charlatans, New Order (who grew from the band Joy Division after the death of their singer Ian Curtis in 1980), The Smiths, Buzzcocks, and Oasis. Factory Records (set up in 1978) and The Hacienda Club (opened in 1982) are framed as focal points of the city’s burgeoning music scene. The chapter provides a telling analysis of hedonism and miserabilism that characterized “Madchester” as a post-industrial city and the ways in which the often larded-up, laddish couldn’t-give-a-fuck-ness fed a thriving popular cultural moment.

Hot Springs, Arkansas (USA), is the focus of Chap. 16 by Robert W. Fry. Hot Springs is a city in the Ouachita Mountains of Arkansas and its National Park has since the nineteenth century been a popular destination for people seeking the medicinal benefits of the thermal waters that give the city its name. Moreover, blues and jazz musicians such as Mamie Smith, Bessie Smith, WC Handy, and Ma Rainey played at its bathhouses and music venues in the early 1900s. This chapter describes the political circumstances in which this music was made and, in doing so, explores the geography of place as reflected in the soundscape and landscape of a transforming American city and in the preservation of America’s natural wonders.

Rio Goldhammer analyses the post-punk scenes (1978–1984) and legacies of provincial Yorkshire towns in and around Bradford, Barnsley, and Dewsbury, England, in Chap. 17. While the original punk movement, through its DIY-orientated form of decentralized production, is said to have empowered the UK provinces in a formerly London-centric landscape, the musical contributions of rural and quasi-rural places such as Yorkshire have been absorbed into the memoryscapes of nearby cities—primarily Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Sheffield. Through interviews with key participants in Yorkshire’s post-punk scene, this chapter explores musicians’ relationships with nearby cities and their enduring, if not always cherished, links to smaller local towns.
Staying in the north of England, in Chap. 18, Stephen Catterall and Keith Gildart focus on the Lancashire town of Wigan and the legacy of Northern Soul music. Wigan—given prominence in 1937 by the writer George Orwell, who recorded the lives of the poor of the industrial north in his *The Road to Wigan Pier*—in its industrial heyday was, among other things, a cotton town, but its last mill closed in 1980. By then, the youth of Wigan had acquired a reputation for their love of soul music, played at the local Casino Club between 1973 and 1981 and celebrated in *Northern Soul*, Elaine Constantine’s film of 2014. This chapter explores the relationships between history, place, class, industrialization, mythology, and nostalgia in relation to Wigan, the Casino Club, and the Northern Soul scene.

Finally, Chap. 19 by Dave Robinson focuses on Austin, Texas, site of the annual City Limits music festival and a city increasingly associated with the musical field known as “Americana”. Locating Americana’s musical antecedents in the white, middle-class worlds of the urban folk revival and Austin’s 1970s progressive country movement, Robinson explores the paradox of a musical taste community which, whilst expressing progressive values, is constructed according to racially and class-defined spatial and stylistic boundaries.

Closing the book, in Chap. 20 the co-editors offer reflections on the breadth and depth of case studies included and the potential for further scholarship at the intersections of popular music and cities.

References


Part I

Cities of Origin?
Re-Calling Grunge: Seattle, Anniversary Journalism, and Changing Narratives of a Genre

Catherine Strong

While grunge has come to be regarded as a music genre almost exclusively associated with the city of Seattle, this characterisation has not always been stable. This chapter will use anniversary journalism on grunge to demonstrate the changing usage of the label while also showing the importance of anniversary journalism in creating a historical narrative for the genre. For a brief time in the 1990s, as grunge became a worldwide phenomenon, bands from many locations were admitted into the genre, but over time the label ‘grunge’ has been increasingly reserved for Seattle bands. This serves to help recreate the impression of grunge as being based in an organic scene—where people all knew each other and were friends who helped each other out—and erases the global and mass-produced nature of the movement in a way that reinscribes ideas about authenticity. The chapter will also consider how other forms of commemorative activity being undertaken, particularly in Seattle and Kurt Cobain’s hometown of Aberdeen, work to reinforce these stories.