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EVERYDAY REVERIES:
RECORDED MUSIC, MEMORY & EMOTION

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates recorded music in everyday life and its relationship to memory. It does this by establishing the social and historical context in which sound recording was invented and developed, and by formulating a theory of how recorded music signifies. It argues that musical recordings do not simply facilitate remembering but are equally bound up with processes of forgetting.

Each chapter of the thesis examines a different aspect of the relationship between recorded music and memory. Chapter one analyses the origins of sound recording and charts its subsequent development in terms of a continuum between social and solitary listening. Chapter two interrogates common assumptions about what is meant by the 'everyday', and argues that music in everyday life tends to be consumed and remembered in fragmentary form. Chapter three investigates the significance of, and reasons for, involuntary musical memories. Chapter four analyses the relationship between recorded music and nostalgia. Chapter five examines recorded music's role in pleasurable forms of forgetting or self-oblivion. Chapter six is a summation of the whole thesis, arguing that recorded music in everyday life contains utopian traces which, when reflected upon, yield insights into the nature of social reality.

The thesis also contains two 'interludes' that deal with pertinent theoretical issues in the field of cultural studies. The first of these interludes argues that Peircean semiotics is better suited to the task of analysing music than Saussurean semiology and that, furthermore, it is able to contribute to the emerging field of affect theory. The second interlude continues this analysis by arguing that mimesis or creative imitation should become a key concept in cultural studies.

Introduction

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This project is about recorded music in everyday life and its relationship to memory, the general thesis being that recording gives rise to new kinds of musical memories but also new forms of forgetting. At the heart of the project is a concern with changing the way we listen to music – and the way we think about listening to music – in order to re-invigorate social space. To this end, I introduce the notion of the 'everyday reverie': a moment of vivid reminiscence, heightened affect, or expanded potential triggered by the chance audition of recorded music in everyday life.

Recorded music has a claim to being the medium that has had the biggest impact on everyday life. More than cinema, newspapers, television or the Internet, recorded sounds have penetrated almost all everyday spaces and accompany all manner of everyday activity, whether we are at home or at work, in the bathroom or on the beach, in the supermarket or in our cars. In its early years as a fairground gimmick, the phonograph helped prepare people for the 'magic' of media to come – 'talkies' at the cinema, television at home, and the transistor radio anywhere it could be taken. In spite of this, there was, until recently, a sense that the record industry had been 'routinely ignored' in media studies in favour of visual culture (Frith 1996b: 457). The Internet's role in facilitating digital downloads and file sharing has altered this situation somewhat, moving sound recording closer to the centre of discussions concerning the cultural and political significance of the 'new media' for example, yet it can still be argued that analysis of the record *industry* often stands in for analysis of recorded *music*. This, I would suggest, is connected to the fact that recorded music shares with everyday life a certain 'invisibility':

both fall below the horizon of conscious awareness, rarely warranting further attention. In this respect, recorded music remains an element in what C.N. Seremetakis (1994) describes as 'the material culture of the unconscious' (12). This material unconscious belongs to the everyday, described by Seremetakis as 'a zone of devaluation, forgetfulness, and inattention' but also as a 'site where new political identities can be fabricated by techniques of distraction' (13). Recorded music and the everyday are united through 'habitual' or 'procedural' memory: a type of memory that is deeply sedimented in the body as a set of predispositions, and which we are often barely aware of as 'memory'. In spite of, or rather, because of this, recorded music and the everyday belong to sites where the senses and the memory of the senses get re-made, away from the glare of critical scrutiny and official agendas. In this regard, the role played by recorded music in everyday life is part of a project stemming from time immemorial through which the human senses are constituted. To quote Marx (1844/1974): 'The forming of the five senses is a labour of the entire history of the world down to the present' (96).

As has often been noted, music and memory are intimate partners. Michael Chanan (2005), for instance, observes, 'Music and memory interact at every possible level and in every possible way. […T]he experience of music […] is an unceasing shuttle back and forth between private moments and public settings, private and public associations and connotations' (50, 54). The specific concern of my work is with *recorded* music and its effects on cultural memory – the way it makes possible new kinds of musical memories while, at the same time, giving rise to new forms of forgetting. Sound recording is one of a number of technologies – writing, printing, photography, computers, etc. – which have had more or less direct effects on the way we remember while, unsurprisingly, providing metaphors for *how* we remember, as when we talk about 'photographic memory' or something being 'etched' on our minds. John Young (2008) makes explicit the analogies between the 'internal' memory of our minds and the 'external' memory of phonography: 'The fact that the same snatches of recordings are reiterated in new contexts epitomises the creative, fluid and contextual nature of memory; the specific experiences are the same, but the context in which they are recalled, and therefore the perspectives offered on them, have altered' (324). Memory traces, then, like familiar musical recordings, are 're-made' in the process of their being recalled (or 're-played'); they are rendered fluid and

mobile, forming new connections with other memories. To understand more fully the connection between sound recording and memory, we must go beyond metaphorical parallels. It should be stated instead that phonographic devices are not mere adjuncts to memory, neither are they mere 'artificial' or 'external' forms of memory; rather they are examples of the kinds of tools, aids, or artefactual signs through which human conscious activity has always been formed, and are thus innate to a specifically *human* form of memory. To quote the Soviet psychologist, A.R. Luria (1973): 'these […] historically formed devices are essential elements in the establishment of functional connections between individual parts of the brain [. …B]y their aid, areas of the brain which previously were independent become the components of a single functional system' (31; original emphasis removed). Luria likens devices such as the phonograph to a knot which one ties in a handkerchief so as to remember something important. Such devices, in turn, 'tie new knots in the activity of [our] brain[s]' (ibid.; original emphasis removed). It is not the case, then, that sound recording is an external or 'prosthetic' memory; rather memory itself is 'a prosthesis of the inside' (Derrida 1996: 19; original emphasis removed).

This project comes on the back of a wave of critical interest in memory as well as a resurgence of memorialisation. It is, in a sense, part of a 'memory boom' yet one which, paradoxically, stems from a deep-seated anxiety that memories are in short supply – at least those of a 'real', 'genuine' or politically-progressive description. The emergence of memory studies as a field of research in recent decades is thus predicated to some degree on the alleged existence of a 'memory crisis'. Diagnoses of a crisis in memory are, of course, hardly new. At the dawning of the Western intellectual tradition, Socrates famously fretted that the introduction of writing would lead to a weakening of people's memories as they would come to rely on 'external' props. Closer to our own time, the tumult of rapid industrialisation and urbanisation in the nineteenth century produced a tangible sense that links to the past had been irretrievably broken. This was greatly exacerbated by the advent of modern warfare, which left shell-shocked survivors 'poorer in communicable experience' (Benjamin 1936/2002: 144). What is different about our own 'crisis', such as it is, is that it is founded less on the dislocation and disruption of tradition than it is on 'the experiences of immediacy, instantaneity and simultaneity'

(Radstone 2000: 7). Rather than there being an unbridgeable gap between past and present, they have seemingly collapsed into one another as part of a fully-mediatised reality in which significant events can be (re-)presented to us almost as they happen, and can be spliced alongside archive materials reproduced with an almost equal sense of immediacy. The contemporary memory boom can be understood then as an attempt to recover a more reflective mode of existence as a response to this collapsing of the boundaries between past and present. In the words of Andreas Huyssen (1995): 'Memory […] represents the attempt to slow down information processing, to resist the dissolution of time in the synchronicity of the archive, to recover a mode of contemplation outside the universe of simulation and fast-speed information and cable networks' (7). Huyssen suggests that contemporary interest in memory is also part of a widespread loss of faith in progress, dating from about the 1960s onwards. On this account, a momentous shift in temporal orientation has occurred from attention being focussed on the future to it now being focussed on the past (92). For Huyssen, this means that nostalgia is no longer the opposite of utopia – if it ever was – 'but, as a form of memory, [is] always implicated, even productive in it' (88). Indeed, he suggests that remembering itself has assumed a utopian demeanour: 'In an age of an unlimited proliferation of images, discourses, simulacra, the search for the real itself has become utopian, and this search is fundamentally invested in a desire for temporality' (101).

   As suggested by my former comments regarding the necessity of historically-formed signs and devices in the development of a distinctively human memory, there is a danger of romanticising 'memory' as the personal, direct, unmediated counterpart to 'history'. As Raphael Samuel (1994) points out, our current notions of memory owe more to the Romantic movement in poetry and painting than they do to the mnemotechnics or *ars memorativa* of antiquity and the Renaissance (vii). A decisive shift in our contemporary ways of thinking about the relationship between history and memory has seen history increasingly viewed as an emergent property of memory rather than as something radically counterposed to it. Paul Ricoeur (2004), for example, argues that memory is the 'matrix' of history (386). In the early modern period, by contrast, memory was viewed as inviolably private and individual and thus at odds with the public sphere. Radstone and Hodgkin (2003) note an ambivalence in attitudes towards this relevantly recent

privileging of memory: on the one hand, it might be greeted as evidence of the democratisation of history, of history from the bottom up; on the other hand, it might represent the dissolution of the public sphere into a swirling flux of incommensurable privatised narratives (2-3). For better or worse, something of this ambivalence is to be found in my notion of the 'everyday reverie'.

This project is also concerned with what might be called a phenomenology of the sign, whereby processes of signification are taken to be always already embedded in affective experience. Music has always operated on the plane of affect precisely because of its problematic relationship to referentiality – the way it signifies via connotation rather than denotation (Kassabian 2008). The challenge in my work is to conceptualise musical affect and musical signification in ways that are not mutually exclusive but which stress, instead, that they are two aspects of essentially the same experience.

As can be seen, this project has been undertaken at the intersection of several distinct fields of research: memory studies, everyday life studies, affect theory, semiotics, cultural history, musicology, etc. More generally, I am working within a critical-philosophical tradition whereby insights are gleaned from a range of sources, and then synthesised and gauged against personal experience in order to formulate new insights. My methodology is, in part, then, autoethnographic in that I frequently reflect implicitly or explicitly on my own experiences of recorded music. In this way, I often conduct what has been called 'micrological' analysis – the analysis of concrete details, personal reminiscences, fleeting reveries, etc. – with the aim of tracing their more general historical and sociological lineaments (Wolff 1995: 29). This approach is intended to avoid reifying or naturalising 'memory', 'everyday life', 'recorded music', etc. and thereby forestalling a more penetrating analysis of what they are and what they entail.

Each chapter of this thesis examines a different aspect of the relationship between recorded music and memory. In chapter one, 'Music and memory in the age of recording', I go back to the origins of phonography and, from there, give an account of how recording has enabled music to be heard in an almost limitless variety of contexts, each of which changes the overall meaning of what is being communicated. I also trace how recording has helped to make non-notational features more important in music. We recognise and respond to these features when we hear them but struggle to recall them

later, in our 'mind's ear' so to speak – hence recorded music's ability to surprise us with its vividness of detail, even after many listenings. I argue that an oscillation between forgetting and recognition has become crucial to the experience of recorded music.

In chapter two, I argue that, in everyday life, recorded music tends to resolve into stray fragments: free-floating riffs, hooks and refrains devoid of a stable context. This is true also of the fleeting and contingent ways in which we remember snatches of musical material. The advertising jingle is explored as the paradigmatic example of such a fragment: a musical phrase written in order to be memorable, with the result that it often lives on in popular memory long after the product it advertised has disappeared from the market.

There then follows an 'interlude' entitled 'Music, semiotics, affect'. The 'affective turn' in cultural studies has been predicated, to a large extent, on a rejection of the Saussurean-derived model of the textuality of culture, i.e. culture in all its forms as being analogous to language. I argue that this is to dismiss the contribution of C.S. Peirce, whose semiotics – unlike the semiology of Saussure – was already concerned with non-linguistic signs. In this 'interlude', I use Peirce's work in order to investigate the precise nature of musical signification, focusing on how his model is able to accommodate recent interest in affect without jettisoning the insights to be gained from the 'linguistic turn'.

In chapter three, 'Involuntary musical memories', I investigate the reasons why we spontaneously hear snatches of melody 'in our heads'. The term 'involuntary memory', appearing first in the work of Ebbinghaus and soon after in Proust, arises at a juncture in the history of modernity in which the nature of experience increasingly comes to be recognised as fleeting and contingent. It is also a point at which the problematic notion of the bounded individual – the repository of memories – is more rigorously formulated. The regulation of, and defence against, the stimuli of industrial and urban life also become a matter of concern. In this chapter, I explore different theories as to why involuntary musical memories occur, drawing on Peircean semiotics as well as the work of Freud and Benjamin.

Chapter four is entitled 'Recorded music and nostalgia'. The meaning of 'nostalgia' changes during the period in which Western societies industrialise and their populations become chiefly urban. 'Nostalgia' ceases to mean 'homesickness', a longing for a

particular place, and becomes, instead, a longing for a particular time. It loses its spatial meaning and gains a predominantly temporal one. Music answers to this change. An ineluctably temporal art form, the sovereign role of which is to create a sense of virtual time via patterns of repetition and periodicity, it is the perfect matrix for this new temporal form of nostalgia. With regard to recorded music, I examine the tendency for people to have a greater number of 'self-defining' memories in their late teens and early twenties. A concomitant effect of this tendency – sometimes known as the 'reminiscence bump' – is that music from this time in people's lives is often valued more highly and is more 'memorable' than more recent recordings. Two mutually-supporting explanations can be cited for this: firstly, that such music indexes an era in one's life of greater emotional intensity; secondly, that this music has had more time to accrue a wealth of personal and public associations. This nostalgic tendency dovetails neatly with the economic imperatives of the record industry in its releasing of compilations, reissues, etc. in order to recoup profits from their relatively small proportion of commercially successful artists.

There then follows another 'interlude', this time about music's primordial connection with mimesis. The ancient doctrine of music as mimesis or 'creative imitation' still has much to teach us about the meaning of music, particularly its relation to embodied emotion. In this section, I explore the idea of music as a gestural 'language', iconically and functionally connected to the features of paralinguistic communication: facial expression, intonation, and physical gesture.

Chapter five is entitled 'Recorded music, mimicry, and self-oblivion'. In the twentieth century, the piano was usurped by the gramophone as the fulcrum of domestic musical life. This development might seem, on the face of it, to be evidence of an increasing passivity in musical culture but this would be to discount the many active forms of listening that recording has facilitated such as singing along, miming as if one were playing an instrument, and dancing. Such mimetic actions are characterised by an element of self-oblivion in which the listener forgets his or her identity and momentarily assumes another. I liken this to the age-old practice of possession rituals, in which a devotee becomes possessed by his or her preferred deity, usually to the accompaniment of music.

The final chapter, 'Everyday reveries', is a summation of the whole thesis. 'Reverie' means not only 'a dream-like state' but also an instrumental passage of music. The word's etymology can be traced back to the Old French, *reverie*, meaning 'rejoicing' and 'revelry', itself derived from *rever*, 'to be delirious'. A word that once had a carnivalesque meaning to do with the expression of outward, collective joy has come to be associated with an individual and interior psychological state. Nineteenth-century paintings on musical themes often portray this more inward, atomised meaning of reverie. Moving into the age of recording, music gives rise to a slightly different kind of reverie. Still inward and individual, it is, however, distinguished by much greater contingency, synchronicity, and serendipity. Recorded music frequently irrupts unexpectedly in the midst of everyday life, transforming for a moment or two its character. By reversing the polarity of the recorded music we come across in everyday life – by putting 'background' music in the 'foreground' – we invite moments of reverie that have a potentially transformative effect. Attentiveness to recorded music as we encounter it in our day-to-day environment parallels attentiveness to those with whom we share social space. It is also a way of inviting a contemplative mode of existence into the midst of everyday life – a way of allowing both personal reminiscences and a sense of solidarity to be evoked by the literal and metaphorical voices from the past that we hear preserved on musical recordings.

CHAPTER 1

Music & Memory in the Age of Recording

*

> These singers male and female whom he heard,
> he could not see; their corporeal part abode in
> America, in Milan, Vienna, St. Petersburg. But
> let them dwell where they might, he had their
> better part, their voices, and might rejoice in the
> refining and abstracting process which did away
> with the disadvantages of closer personal
> contact (Mann 1924/1952: 642).

Echo

In one version of the Greek myth, Echo is a talkative mountain nymph condemned to silence other than in repetition of the shouted words of others. She falls in love with Narcissus and stalks him through some woods where he is hunting stags. Longing to address him from where she is hidden, she must wait for him to speak first. Eventually, he hears her footfalls and cries out 'Who's there?' to which she can only reply 'Who's there?' This continues for some time until Echo shows herself and rushes to embrace him. However, Narcissus pulls away from her and tells her to leave him alone. Spurned by the handsome but vain youth, she pines away until only her voice is left.

In a myth belonging to our own age, an inventor, whose technical ingenuity is matched only by his talent for self-promotion, instructs one of his engineers to build a hand-powered device consisting of a metal cylinder covered in tinfoil, two diaphragm-and-needle units positioned either side of it, and a mouthpiece. When the machine is ready – we are told within less than thirty hours – its inventor speaks into its mouthpiece and the first of the needles makes tiny indentations on the tinfoil as the cylinder is rotated. The second needle is then placed in the groove pattern made by the first and the cylinder is

rotated once more. To the astonishment of the assembled group of workshop technicians, the words of the nursery rhyme, 'Mary had a little lamb', as spoken by the machine's creator just a minute before are faintly but unquestionably audible.

The inventor was, of course, Thomas Edison. The machine was the phonograph and the year was 1877. To tell the story of the phonograph like this is myth in the sense that it ignores the social, economic and cultural forces that made the invention of such a device, or one very similar, such a pressing concern.[1] It was not mere coincidence that, on the other side of the Atlantic, another inventor, Charles Cros, was working on his version of a machine capable of reproducing sound. Cros outlined his work in a paper written some months before Edison's application for a patent but the Frenchman's ideas remained a theory. It should also be remembered that the term *phonograph* ('voice writer') was not coined by Edison himself. In the 1850s, it was already in use to refer to a system of phonetic writing. Then, in 1863, another North American, F.B. Fenby, applied for a patent for his idea of an 'Electromagnetic phonograph': a means of recording keyboard strokes onto paper, and a precursor to the punchcard tabulator and the piano roll, both of which followed shortly after in the 1880s. Perhaps most crucially in the genesis of Edison's particular 'phonograph' was an invention that used the same idea of tracing sound waves from a diaphragm and had only a slightly different name: Leon Scott's 'phonautograph' of 1855 (Chanan 1995: 23; Millard 1995: 26). To state the matter simply, the invention of the phonograph came about as a result of what Raymond Williams (1974), writing in a slightly different context, refers to as 'a continuing complex of need and invention and application' (15). Or, to quote Andre Millard (1995) from his history of recorded sound, the phonograph 'was more of a step forward along a well-travelled path than a great breakthrough' (26). Like the other inventions with which it is roughly contemporaneous and genealogically intertwined – the telegraph, the telephone – the phonograph was a product of the relationship between metropolitan centre and provincial periphery that marked systems of distribution for both manufactured goods and information in industrialised capitalist societies.

Prior to it becoming both technically accomplishable and socially important, the reproduction of sound, and in particular, the reproduction of the human voice, had figured as both a powerful literary trope and a matter for quasi-scientific investigation. A

combination of these is to be found in Francis Bacon's 'New Atlantis' published in 1627, in which he depicts the mythical island of Bensalem (somewhere west of Peru) and its state-sponsored college, 'Solomon's House':

> We have also sound-houses, where we practise and demonstrate all sounds and their generation. We have harmonies which you have not, of quarter-sounds, and lesser slides of sounds. Divers instruments of music likewise to you unknown, some sweeter than any you have; together with bells and rings that are dainty and sweet […]. We have also divers and strange echos, reflecting the voice many times, and as it were tossing it: and some that give back the voice louder than it came; some shriller, and some deeper; yea, some rendering the voice differing in the letters [i.e. 'notes'] or articulate sound from that they receive. We have also means to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances (Bacon 1627/1862: 407).

For understandable reasons, this passage has somewhat anachronistically been interpreted as a seventeenth-century anticipation of the modern recording studio.[2] Bacon's prescience is, however, better placed in its proper historical context as part of the emerging science of acoustics, which Joseph Sauveur was to give a name to in the century that followed. In common with accounts from around the same time of attempts to preserve sound, Bacon's vivid description focuses, not on writing or transcribing the voice (as is implied by the nineteenth-century term 'phonography'), but on manipulating and conveying its echo. In 1589, the Italian scientist, Giovanni Batista della Porta, one of the inventors of the telescope, made the following rather improbable claim: 'I have devised a way to preserve words, that have been pronounced, inside lead pipes, in such a manner that they burst forth from them when one removes the cover' (quoted in Grivel 1992: 43). Similarly, a Nuremburg optician, one F. Grundel, is recorded in the letters of J.J. Becher (1683) as having suggested enclosing the echoes of voices in bottles, where, with the assistance of a spiral that one rotates, they might be held for up to an hour (Grivel 1992: 43).

   These somewhat fanciful accounts of attempts to literally capture the human voice occur within a hundred years of each other, from the end of the sixteenth century to the latter part of the seventeenth. As such, they are early responses to a new temporal conception: time as both unrepeatable and irreversible, a conception we now recognise with hindsight as being distinctively modern (Boym 2001: 13). Edison's 'talking tin foil' can therefore be viewed – or even 'heard' – as the realisation of an historically-formed

dream founded in the uncanny experience of hearing the echo of one's own voice (Gelatt 1977: 17). It was a dream that could only assume significance once time was no longer viewed as cyclical and recurrent but as linear and ever new, and it could only be realised after a long concatenation of social, technical, and economic developments, even though all the basic elements of Edison's invention were in place well before his technologically-produced 'echo' was first heard.

Reverberation is musical reproduction in its primordial form, the echo the most instant form of playback.[3] Its history is bound up with the history of special acoustic spaces, from caves to cathedrals, music rooms to concert halls. The experiments and reveries of the early acousticians in this regard contributed towards what Jonathan Sterne (2003) has described as 'the objectification and abstraction of hearing and sound, their construction as bounded and coherent objects', which, he claims, 'was a prior condition for the construction of sound-reproduction technologies' (23).[4] Prior to recording – and just as importantly, prior to musical notation – certain interiors, certain acoustic shells, were valued for the way they seemed to preserve, or at least prolong, sound's inevitable 'decay'. In this sense, the echo was a sonic *memento mori*, morphing the cry of the human voice and delaying its return just long enough for its sender to be given a sense of their own ghostly and disembodied otherness. Like the obscure mountain nymph of Greek mythology, the echo evokes a sense that the human voice might persist in spite of the dissolution of the body.

Today, the echo provides a metaphor of, and, as such, a way of conceptualising, the initial stages of auditory perception (Snyder 2000: 19). 'Echoic memory', in cognitive psychology, is what allows us to repeat back a telephone number immediately after hearing it but not after a break of some seconds. The term suggests a 'reverberation' of the nervous system: a rudimentary sensory memory that forms the initial step prior to the formation of 'short-term' and 'long-term' memories.[5] According to this model, it is what audiences at pop concerts rely upon during call-and-response sessions, in which the singer gets the crowd to repeat back a series of melodic phrases immediately after he or she has sung each of them.[6] Such 'echoed' phrases are particularly prominent in musical traditions in which improvisation is highly valued, for example, in classical Indian and Persian music, as well as jazz. Skill is demonstrated by being able to instantly play back

what a fellow musician has just played. In Western classical music, in which notation eclipsed improvisation, such echoing of phrases by the players of different instruments was retained as a fundamental principle of composition, from 'imitative counterpoint' or the 'round' as it is more commonly known – 'London's burning' is the example that every English school child knows – to the infinitely more sophisticated contrapuntal complexities of the fugue, as exemplified in the music of J.S. Bach.

One last example of an echo effect is especially revealing in terms of how it anticipates recording's alleged disembodiment of musical sound. As with so many of his concerti, Vivaldi's *Echo Concerto for Three Violins in A* (RV 522) was commissioned by the governors of the Conservatorio della Pietà, the orphanage in Venice where Vivaldi (1678-1741) worked as director of music prior to his itinerant career as an opera composer. The Conservatorio placed special emphasis on the musical education of the foundling girls who comprised its outstanding choir and orchestra. The concerto in question requires the second and third violinists to be positioned offstage so that they can 'echo' phrases played by the first violinist. In Vivaldi's day, they would have been hidden behind a screen with the result that the unexpected return of the lead violinist's phrases, exactly as she had played them, would have seemed all the more novel and remarkable.[7] In contemporary performances, the practice of keeping the mimicking violinists apart from the lead is maintained but with one significant alteration: instead of being hidden behind a screen they are clearly visible to the audience, often by being positioned in their midst. As audiences for whom recording is a given, we have wearied of musicians playing behind the metaphorical screens of our hi-fi systems: part of what we crave from concert-going is the spectacle of performance and the sociability this engenders. The disconnection of sound from a visible source has become the norm, its reconnection a novelty.[8]

The term *acousmatic* aptly describes this condition. The word already existed in French long before the founder of *musique concrète*, Pierre Schaeffer, employed it to describe a kind of listening facilitated by modern media that focuses attention away from production and transmission and onto the sonorous object itself in all its uncircumscribed and unanticipated richness of detail. As such, the acousmatic field extends beyond that of acoustics with its concerns with what is visible and measurable, placing attention instead

on direct phenomenological experience. In the dictionary entry to which Schaeffer refers, *acousmatic* simply describes 'a noise that one hears without seeing what causes it' (Schaeffer 1966/2006: 76; original emphasis removed). The term derives from the Acousmatics of ancient Greece: 'disciples of Pythagoras who, for five years, listened to his teachings while he was hidden behind a curtain, without seeing him, while observing a strict silence' (76-7; original emphasis removed). Vivaldi's *Echo Concerto* is not unusual for containing acousmatic elements: there are many such elements in the history of Western art music. Court musicians were frequently separated from their audience by screens. When Copenhagen's Rosenborg Palace was being built in the 1620s, the Danish king, Christian IV, went one better and had the Royal Orchestra banished to a dank cellar from where their music would be conveyed to the State Rooms above via an elaborate system of pipes and ducts – surely one of the first and most literal examples of piped music (Tremain 2005: 7). No doubt, the isolation of sound from a visible source lent it a greater mystery, rather like catching a few strains of the music of the spheres, but for the musicians themselves one suspects that it was a rather less celestial experience. At around the same time in London, musicians found themselves in a similarly uncomfortable and unfamiliar situation as the first public commercial concerts got underway. Later, such concerts would be a welcome source of revenue as well as a chance to experiment with new styles in an atmosphere of greater conviviality and informality than that to be found in aristocratic houses, but for this first series of concerts, held – so posterity has it – in 1672 in a room above a tavern owned by a man called John Banister, the musicians were so uncertain and ashamed of what they were doing that they hid behind a curtain while they were playing (Bott 2008; Chanan 1994: 133). Closer to our own time – and closer too to the introduction of acousmatic music in Schaeffer's sense – Wagner (1813-1883) took care to position the musicians out of sight from the audience when constructing his opera house at Bayreuth so that the music would contribute to the impression of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* or 'total work of art'.[9] What these examples of acousmatic music have in common with Vivaldi's *Echo Concerto* and echoes more generally is a process of displacement. Echoes displace their sound source and, moreover, displace the subjectivity or *logos* that has long been thought to inhere in the human voice.

In discussing echoes, as well as the first ever recording of a human voice – which must itself have seemed like a strange breed of hallucinatory echo – we have already touched upon the relationship between an original and its copy or representation. The phonograph has a much more extensive yet problematic role to play in this regard, expressing the tensions and tendencies of the culture that gave birth to it.

The phonograph and the mimetic faculty

In his *Poetics*, Aristotle claims that humans are mimetic beings, impelled to create artistic forms that, in one way or another, reflect or represent the reality of their experience (1984: 2318). This innately human urge to create copies or models of what we perceive in the world is reflective self-consciousness in action: an embodied engagement with sensuous reality that both imitates and transforms that reality. Aristotle's theories of *mimēsis* ('imitation') differed quite markedly from those of his forebear, Plato, but both philosophers agreed that the term stood in contrast to *diegesis* ('narrative') (Plato 1987: 92-3; Aristotle 1984: 2317). Whereas diegesis reports, narrates and indicates, mimesis represents, embodies and transforms. Furthermore, diegesis looks back on the past while mimesis occupies a continuous present.

In contemporary usage, the distinction to be made is that between 'mimesis' and 'representation', for the latter has passive, ideal and reflective connotations that are quite alien to mimesis, or at least, to a more productive understanding of it.[10] As the hermeneuticist, Paul Ricoeur (1991) explains:

> far from producing a weakened image of pre-existing things, *mimesis* brings about an augmentation of meaning in the field of action, which is its privileged field. It does not equate itself with something already given. Rather it produces what it imitates, if we continue to translate *mimesis* by 'imitation' (138).

Thus, mimesis is 'creative imitation' (ibid.). What this implies is that mimesis frames a perception of the world that was not possible beforehand. The 'copy' becomes the original as when a photograph allows us to see an aspect of reality that was previously invisible to us.

It is in precisely this sense that Edison's phonograph was a mimetic technology rather than a representational one.[11] Like other forms of mechanical reproduction from the

nineteenth century, most notably photography and moving pictures, phonography drew attention to the constructed nature of the representations it produced. This was partly because of technical imperfections but also because of the creative decisions that had to be taken regarding how and what to record. The phonograph actively transformed what it recorded.[12] This was particularly true of, firstly, the human voice, which could be memorialised, scrutinised and contemplated in a manner that simply hadn't been possible before; and, secondly, it was true of music, the trajectory which it took in the twentieth century being unimaginable without recording. Just as photography and film opened up new 'image-worlds', the phonograph and its technological successors enabled the exploration of new 'sound-worlds' (Benjamin 1928/1999: 156). And in acting upon sonic materials – our constant yet scarcely acknowledged companions throughout life – the phonograph also acted upon the human sensorium, investing it with new capabilities and altering which acoustic phenomena were deemed perceptible and meaningful. In this regard, Walter Benjamin's claim that 'film has brought about a […] deepening of apperception' also applies to sound recording (Benjamin 1936/1968: 237).

In his book, *Mimesis and Alterity*, Michael Taussig (1993) claims that the invention of the phonograph and other forms of mechanical reproduction led to a resurgence of the mimetic faculty. By this he means, at the most basic level, that 'copies' could be made more easily: 'copies' of spoken words and music on phonograph cylinders or gramophone records, of people and landscapes on photographic plates, and of dramatic gestures on film reels, etc. More significantly, however, the invention of these 'mimetically capacious machines' was an event of considerable historico-anthropological significance: a 'curious and striking recharging' of the primordial impulse to make fetishes, totems, tokens, models and images, imbued with talismanic powers (Taussig 1993: xiv). Taussig's rendering of the term 'mimesis' is phenomenological in that it stresses the interpenetration of subject and object within transacted relations of similitude and difference. His conception of the term is also animistic in making the inert material world of Western dualistic thought once more alive and sentient. He describes mimesis as 'a copying or imitation, and a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the perceived' (21). Accordingly, the mimetic faculty is 'the nature that

culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other' (xiii).

Central to Taussig's claims about the impact of mimetic technologies is the Benjaminian idea that mimesis constitutes a 'primitive' faculty lodged right in the midst of late modernity – not merely as a counterweight to that modernity, but as a distinctive part of its ideological and material formation:

> modernity provides the cause, context, means, and needs, for the resurgence – not the continuity – of the mimetic faculty. […M]ass culture in our times both stimulates and is predicated upon mimetic modes of perception in which spontaneity, animation of objects, and a language of the body combining thought with action, sensuousness with intellection, is paramount (Taussig 1993: 20).

This reinvigoration of the mimetic impulse in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is therefore complex and ambiguous in terms of its relationship to modernity. On the one hand, the use of recording technologies to make aural and visual copies parallels the prehistoric production of cave paintings and carved figurines, or the imitation of birdsongs and other animal noises. As such, it is part of a distinctly primitivist impulse, sharing something of the 'sympathetic magic' of earlier forms of mimesis (Taussig 1993: xiii). On the other hand, such a technologically-derived ability lies at the heart of what it means to be 'modern': it is part of what Benjamin (1936/1968) describes as 'the urge […] to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness, its reproduction' (225). Thus, to marvel at what a machine like a phonograph could do, to contemplate a sonic likeness, was, at once, to be returned to a primeval sense of wonder and to be brought up to date, to be both 'primitive' and 'modern'.

In this manner, the phonograph – and the gramophone, which superseded it – was a significant source of enchantment. The magical, quasi-ritualistic delight that the use of these record players elicited – especially in the earlier years of the twentieth century prior to their appropriation by the culture industry – helped to counter an alleged sense of disenchantment. According to Max Weber, the world bore 'the imprint of meaninglessness' due to the evacuation of wonder and mystery from modernity, and the attendant mastery of all things by bureaucracy and rational calculation (quoted in Bennett 2001: 8). In contrast to this sense of meaninglessness identified by Weber and other

purveyors of disenchantment narratives, the mimesis wrought by the phonograph was profoundly meaning*ful*, but in an embodied, sensuous way as opposed to an arid, abstracted one. Edison's mimetic contraption, quite literally, 'made sense'. The impression of enchantment it produced is well expressed in an editorial from *Scientific American* dated 17 November, 1877 in which the author greets news of Edison's latest invention:

> It has been said that Science is never sensational; that it is intellectual, not emotional; but certainly nothing that can be conceived would be more likely to create the profoundest of sensations, to arouse the liveliest of human emotions, than once more to hear the familiar voices of the dead. […W]hoever has spoken into the mouthpiece of the phonograph, and whose words are recorded by it, has the assurance that his speech may be reproduced audibly in his own tones long after he himself has turned to dust. The possibility is simply startling. […S]peech has become, as it were, immortal (quoted in Read and Welch 1959: 12).[13]

In addition to the phonograph's ability to memorialise the dead, the editor of *Scientific American* was keenly aware of its musical possibilities: 'Music may be crystallized as well. Imagine an opera or an oratorio, sung by the greatest living vocalists, thus recorded, and capable of being repeated as we desire' (ibid.).

For the thousands of North Americans who made their own home recordings on wax cylinders, hearing the world's leading tenors and sopranos probably held less fascination than hearing themselves, but the sense of enchantment must have been every bit as thrilling as the *Scientific American* had anticipated. This brief flourish of homespun, mimetic activity began in 1888, the year in which Edison replaced tinfoil cylinders with wax ones, and lasted until 1912, at which point the two-minute wax cylinders were themselves superseded by a more durable alternative (Katz 2004: 69; Koenigsberg 1969: xxiii).[14] As Mark Katz (2004) notes in *Capturing Sound*, these cylinders 'provide a fascinating window into domestic musical life' (70). Typically, they were a rough-hewn combination of spoken word and amateur musical performance, such as the 'Christmas card' recorded by one A.H. Mendenhall for a friend, in which Mendenhall intersperses festive greetings with a harmonica solo and a comic song about two Irish bricklayers (ibid.).

Initially, there was considerable encouragement of home recording from within the industry, such as an 1899 pamphlet issued by the National Phonograph Company in

which two sisters describe 'How We Gave a Phonograph Party': an evening of recording by friends and neighbours, complete with phonograph-shaped gingersnaps. Later, however, phonography was blocked from developing into the aural counterpart of photography, which, by contrast, became a genuinely popular mimetic pastime, opened up to a huge domestic market by the first Kodak Brownie of 1900 (Katz 2004: 69-70). In 1912, production ceased of phonographs equipped to allow users themselves to make recordings. In any case, Edison's cylinders were quickly becoming obsolete, ousted by Emile Berliner's disc-playing 'gramophone', which the German immigrant to the United States had first demonstrated in 1888 (Millard 1995: 32).[15] Berliner, unlike Edison, was finally able to solve the problem that had held back the phonographic industry in its early years: how to produce multiple copies from an original 'master' recording. In doing so, he established a model of consumption that still holds sway today, even in the age of digital downloads. Firstly, music was to take precedence over speech; this in spite of the launch in 1901 by Berliner and associates of the misleadingly-named Victor Talking Machine Company. Secondly, the gramophone record was to be treated more like a book than a photograph. (The use of the term 'album' to describe the collection of discs needed to cover all but the very shortest pieces suggested a parallel with photos that was equally deceptive.[16]) Thirdly, the gramophone became an instrument strictly for playback, a different machine being necessary for recording – one that was not marketed to domestic buyers. As Michael Chanan (1995) points out in his history of sound recording: 'The technical possibilities of amateur and domestic recording had to wait for the techniques of magnetic recording to reach fruition fifty years later – while photography became a popular art form' (29).

The 'wonder-box'

In spite of the gramophone's development leading sound recording in the direction of a more passive model of consumption, users tended to engage with recorded music in a way that was often very active. We will have occasion to pause and consider many such instances of the active, affectively-engaged consumption of records, but for now I would like to single out one particular example for the way it evokes the enchantment attendant upon the gramophone's mimetic powers. In his 1924 novel, *The Magic Mountain*,

Thomas Mann offers a striking depiction of a first encounter with a gramophone, at a point in the machine's development when recordings of musical performances were beginning to aspire to what was to become known in the 1950s as 'high fidelity'.[17] The novel is set in the geographically and intellectually rarefied environment of a sanatorium in the Swiss Alps shortly before the outbreak of the First World War. When the director and chief doctor, Hofrat Behrens, purchases what he mischievously announces as 'The truly musical, in modern, mechanical form, the German soul up to date', it is the novel's young and impressionable protagonist, Hans Castorp, who takes the keenest interest (Mann 1924/1952: 637). Upon hearing his first few discs, he is 'filled with the surest foreknowledge of a new passion, a new enchantment, a new burden of love […]. Here was a world to conquer, large enough that even to survey it was a difficult task at first, and bewildering; yet a world full of beautiful possibilities' (639). Castorp quickly takes custodianship of the enigmatic 'casket', assuming the mantle of prototypical disc jockey for the other residents of the sanatorium:

> he had a changing audience for his performance – unless one must reckon him in with the audience, instead of as the dispenser of the entertainment. Personally, he inclined to the latter view. And the Berghof [i.e. the sanatorium's] population agreed with him, to the extent that from the very first night they silently acquiesced in his self-appointed guardianship of the instrument (641).

In sharp contrast to Castorp, the other residents appear almost entirely passive in their consumption of the gramophone and its accompanying albums of discs: 'they cared little to take their pleasures actively, instead […] sitting to be served […] as much and such enjoyment as they could comfortably and unbored receive' (639). In a manner that adumbrates the uptight muso or hi-fi bore, Castorp's attitude towards them becomes somewhat scornful, in spite of – or perhaps because of – their obvious enjoyment:

> They did not care, these people. Aside from their ephemeral idolatry of the tenor, luxuriating in the melting brilliance of his own voice, letting this boon to the human race stream from him in cantilenas and high feats of virtuosity, notwithstanding their loudly proclaimed enthusiasm, they were without real love for the instrument, and content that anyone should operate it who was willing to take the trouble' (641-2).

Eventually, Castorp arrogates to himself sole rights to operate the gramophone, keeping hold of the key to the cabinet where the needles and records are kept, partly in order to

prevent damage being done to the fragile equipment but also so that he can indulge in a more solitary and personal engagement with the machine and the reveries it gives rise to after the other residents have gone to bed.

In describing the responses of Castorp and the other listeners to the sanatorium's newly acquired machine, the narrator gives a vivid impression of the animatedness of the gramophone, its sensate richness. When orchestral music is played upon it during its premier outing, the narrator remarks that 'The wonder-box seemed to seethe: it poured out the chimes of bells, harp glissandos, the crashing of trumpets, the long rolling of drums' (638). Later that same night, Castorp goes to bed as if drunk from carousing of the gramophone's many discs, and proceeds to dream of the 'peculiar, sidling undulation' of the needle upon the record, 'an elastic oscillation, almost like breathing' (641). The inscrutable mystery of the machine's living presence, the secret of its enchanted mechanism, envelops him: 'it remained unclear, sleeping as waking, how the mere following out of a hair-line above an acoustic cavity, with the sole assistance of the vibrating membrane of the sound-box, could possibly reproduce such a wealth and volume of sound as filled Hans Castorp's dreaming ear' (ibid.). During another late-night session of gramophone-playing, Castorp worries lest the sound of the music should disturb the other residents. He discovers, however, that 'there was less danger than he had feared of disturbing the nightly rest of the house; for the carrying power of this ghostly music proved relatively small. The vibrations, so surprisingly powerful in the near neighbourhood of the box, soon exhausted themselves, grew weak and eerie with distance, like all magic' (642). The ritualistic aspects of his solitary nocturnes are emphasised: 'Hans Castorp was alone among four walls with his wonder-box; with the florid performance of this truncated little coffin of violin-wood, this small dull-black temple' (ibid.). The gramophone becomes a kind of altar allowing him to interface, not only with the music of past ages and distant cultures, but with 'a whole world of feeling and sentiment' (651). This is especially true in the case of a recording of Schubert's *Der lindenbaum* ('The linden tree'), the aesthetic power of which evokes in Castorp a sense of universal yet precisely modulated love: 'the love felt for such a creation is in itself "significant": betraying something of the person who cherishes it, characterising his relation to that broader world the conception bodies forth – which, consciously or

unconsciously, he loves along with and in the thing itself' (ibid.). Intriguingly, the narrator suggests that the *lied*, from Schubert's song cycle *Der Winterreise* ('Winter Journey') may have been sung in simplified form by Castorp when he was a child at school: 'We all know that the noble *lied* sounds rather differently when given as a concert-number from its rendition in the childish or popular mouth' (650).[18] This would account, in part, for Castorp's overwhelming response to it. As we shall discover in more detail when we come to discuss the semiotics of recorded music, the affective potential of songs that we have had occasion to listen to – or sing – at various times throughout our lives is greatly increased due to the fact that a cascade of powerful yet scarcely articulated sign-complexes is set off, based on our memories of previous auditions (Turino 1999).

   Mann's description of the gramophone pays careful attention to its mimetic qualities. After the over-inflated grandiloquence of Behrens' introduction to the newfangled contraption, the 'first contagious bars of an Offenbach overture' resonate from it and the lips of the assembled patients part in rapturous smiles:

> They could scarcely believe their ears at the purity and faithful reproduction of the colour of the wood-wind. A solo violin preluded whimsically; the bowing, the *pizzicato*, the sweet gliding from one position to another, were all clearly audible (Mann 1924/1952: 637).

Yet, in spite of its 'A-1, copper-bottomed, *superfinissimo*' credentials as attested to by the sanatorium's director, the gramophone does not imitate the sound of an orchestra in any straightforward relation of identity between original and copy. Rather, there is an effect of miniaturisation or, more precisely, distantiation:

> Of course, it was scarcely like a real orchestra playing in the room. The volume of sound, though not to any extent distorted, had suffered a diminution of perspective. If we may draw a simile from the visual field, it was as though one were to look at a painting through the wrong end of an opera-glass, seeing it remote and diminutive, though with all its luminous precision of drawing and colour (ibid.).

There is a clear difference in this regard with our contemporary experience of recorded music. Whereas the antique gramophone described in the pages of *The Magic Mountain* produces music that suffers from effects of diminution and a kind of aural elongation of the listener's sense of perspective, our current recording and playback equipment is

carefully designed in order to hold true to George Berkeley's dictum that 'sounds are as near to us as our thoughts' (quoted in Rée 1999: 36). In this context, the whole history of recorded music has been aimed at bringing the music progressively 'closer'. ('Closer' must be qualified by inverted commas as what we are really talking about is a virtual sense of closeness to an equally virtual sound source, predicated upon the listener's understanding and imagination of what happens in an actual performance.) In particular, the electric microphone and stereo amplification have produced effects of nearness and intimacy that not only satisfy the Benjaminian urge 'to get hold of an object at very close range by way of its likeness' but regularly surpass the sense of closeness we would expect from a 'live' performance. Recorded music, at root, tends towards the non-perspectival, allowing us to fully inhabit the music and vice versa. If it produces a sense of space for the listener, it is more often a virtual and inner space – a sense of the music's voluminousness. Mann's ingenious metaphor of the reversed opera glasses indirectly expresses a wish, borne out of an intuition of recording's potential, to collapse any remaining distance between us and the sound source, and transform mere representation into mimesis.

Reveries of the solitary listener

Hans Castorp's rapid and eager shift from group to solitary listening in the 'Fullness of harmony' chapter of *The Magic Mountain* enacts in miniature the large-scale transition that occurred between the initial period of the gramophone's use, when it still retained something of the bourgeois ritual of domestic sociability around the parlour piano, to a slightly later period by which time social scruples regarding listening alone had been cast aside.[19] In his history of recorded sound, Mark Katz cites other contemporary reactions to the new phenomenon of solitary listening. A 1923 contributor to one of the gramophone industry's journals, Orlo Williams, imagines how one might react upon walking in on a friend who was listening to recorded music alone:

> You would think it odd, would you not? You would endeavour to dissemble your surprise: you would look twice to see whether some other person were not hidden in some corner of the room, and if you found no such [person,] one would painfully blush, as if you had discovered your friend sniffing cocaine, emptying a bottle of whisky, or plaiting straws in

his hair. People, we think, should not do things "to themselves," however much they may enjoy doing them in company (quoted in Katz 2004: 17).

Yet, as Katz admits, such a reaction was probably overdone: a rhetorical device inserted into a piece that, in other respects, actually serves as a manifesto for solitary gramophone-use, including listening to it at hitherto unthinkable times of the day such as first thing in the morning. The slightly later comments of one Richard Magruder, this time from 1931, are probably more typical of early responses to solitary listening, especially once sound quality had been improved by the electrification of the recording process. His paean to the gramophone is an early example of the by-now well-rehearsed claims to greater immediacy that greet the introduction of each new audio or audio-visual medium:

> Alone with the phonograph, all the unpleasant externals are removed: the interpreter has been disposed of; the audience has been disposed of; the uncomfortable concert hall has been disposed of. You are alone with the composer and his music. Surely no more ideal circumstances could be imagined (quoted in Katz 2004: 17).

Such thoughts of 'unpleasant externals' would not have occurred to those of the preceding generation or two: listening to music on one's own had simply not been possible.[20] Katz emphasises that solitary listening went against the grain of centuries of musical tradition in which 'music accompanied central communal events, including birth or death rites, weddings, and religious festivals' (ibid.). And yet, at the same time, it seems that many of the quibbles and scruples were voiced, as in Williams' article, largely for melodramatic effect. The fact is that the already-established model of solitary reading had helped to make solitary listening a lesser source of concern than it might otherwise have been. Moreover, the more rigorous codification of the bounded, unitary individual that occurred in the nineteenth century brought with it different norms governing what was considered socially-acceptable behaviour. So if the phonograph, gramophone and radio were not, on the whole, suspected of eroding the accepted ethical standards associated with when, where and with whom one should listen to music, if they were not viewed as potential sources of 'anomie' – a word coined in the 1930s to express the apparent 'lawlessness' engendered by certain aspects of modernity – this is because those ethical standards had already been in flux for some time.

As we shall find in the case of the many other changes that were attendant upon the introduction of recording, the musical tide had been turning in the direction of solitary listening for some time, well before it was actually technologically achievable. In the purpose-built concert halls of the nineteenth century, there was already an ingrained tendency in listening habits towards greater introspection and solitariness if not actual solitude. One finds this in Mark Twain's account of his visit to the 'shrine of St. Wagner' at Bayreuth:

> You detect no movement in the solid mass of heads and shoulders. You seem to sit with the dead in the gloom of a tomb. You know that they are being stirred to their profoundest depths; that there are times when they want to rise and wave handkerchiefs and shout their approbation, and times when tears are running down their faces, and it would be a relief to free their pent emotions in sobs or screams; yet you hear not one utterance till the curtain swings together and the closing strains have slowly faded out and died (Twain 1891/2008: 191).[21]

As Chanan (1994) points out, 'the subjective individualism associated with the appreciation of art music is a historical product of the imposition of decorum in the concert hall in the century following Mozart' (157). This concern with comportment during musical performances was itself the bourgeoisie's means of asserting their moral and intellectual superiority over the aristocracy: a will-to-power achieved via rigorous self-policing. 'Contemplation' became, in Benjamin's words, 'a school for asocial behaviour' so that, in hearing the canonical works of the classical and romantic repertoire, one found oneself in the distinctly odd but now characteristic position of listening alone together (Benjamin 1936/1968: 240). Even though bourgeois music was held up as an image of spontaneous social harmony – as opposed to the social order imposed by hierarchy and aristocratic privilege – one, in effect, listened alone as this was an atomised society based on the values of possessive individualism (Fitzgerald 1994: 122). As musical styles changed, and late romantic and early modernist compositions foretold – via the breakdown of the established harmonic code – of impending social crisis, the subjectivity of responses to art music tended to intensify, as evinced by the behaviour of the Wagner devotees at Bayreuth.

In the century prior to the invention of sound recording, not only was musical consumption among the middle classes becoming more subjective and individualist, it

was also becoming more domestic. The key development here was the introduction of the piano into people's homes. By most estimates, piano sales peaked at the close of the nineteenth century, the market for domestic instruments – especially uprights, which were now within reach of the better-off working classes – remaining buoyant until the First World War threw the entire industry into disarray (Chanan 1994: 208). Being too primitive for its first fifty years, the phonograph was unable to challenge the supremacy of the piano, both as a means of accompanying 'silent' films, and as a source of entertainment in the home. The original phonographs were acoustic rather than electric and therefore didn't have sufficient amplification for their sound to fill a large room. Initially then, the phonograph had to find a place alongside the piano rather than as a substitute for it; in these decades immediately prior to the piano's usurpation at the fulcrum of domestic musical life, the instrument was to have important implications for the future of recorded music as it set the precedent for the gramophone's principal use: home entertainment.

In other ways too, the culture of domestic piano-playing served as a bridge to the culture of domestic gramophone-listening. Due to the elements it shares with traditional, everyday modes of music-making – what Roland Barthes (1977), reviving a medieval term, called *musica practica* – playing piano in one's own home might, on the face of it, seem very different from merely putting on a gramophone disc. (A cheery image of a family singing round the parlour piano comes to mind.) Yet, domestic piano-playing was at times quite solitary and passive – 'mechanical' even – with the result that there is a blurring of the boundary that separates it from literal mechanical reproduction. Alan Durant (1984) has alerted, in this regard, to the importance of sheet music, which had itself, since the introduction of Breitkopf's music printing press in the 1750s, been mechanically reproduced. According to Durant, musical notation in the nineteenth century increasingly becomes

> a set of definitions of aesthetic intention in accordance with which precise execution can be attained [… . N]otation led to an increasing emphasis on reproduction, as against creative, collaborative performance. Indeed, the term 'reproduction', when used of music, seems to have itself encroached, during this period, upon senses previously attached to the word 'performance' (100-1).

Also important in blurring the distinction in usage between 'reproduction' and 'performance' was the player-piano or pianola. This was a piano that was 'played' by being fed rolls of perforated paper, the master copies of which were often recorded by the top names from early twentieth-century music: Mahler, Busoni, Paderewski, Fats Waller, and Jelly Roll Morton all made their own piano rolls, providing us today with a fascinating archive of their playing styles (Cook 2009). The pianola's mechanism is not quite as automatic as that of the musical boxes and barrel organs that preceded it: the 'pianolist' pumps pneumatic pedals in order to vary the dynamics and sustain of the music, such that each single reproduction of the music on a roll can be considered an 'interpretation' (Kobbé 1907). One might assume that the player-piano was simply an intermediate step between piano and phonograph; the truth of the matter is rather more complicated. The genealogies of the player-piano and the phonograph were roughly contemporaneous, each machine constituting a different solution to essentially the same problem. (Indeed, Edison himself had considered, but later rejected, the possibility of 'sheets' of paper as a means of storing musical recordings (Laing 1991: 5).) In the event, it was the disc-playing gramophone that, in the 1890s, found a mass market first; the pianola's brief domestic tenure didn't occur until the following decade. The similarity of each machine's intended function meant that there was an obvious tension between them. In the years leading up to the First World War, when gramophone recordings were still made acoustically by scrums of musicians leaning into a megaphone at each of their requisite moments, 'pianola companies tried to cosy up to gramophone manufacturers with the idea that the player-piano could accompany voices recorded on the gramophone' (Cook 2009). It was, however, an unhappy marriage, and when recording entered the electrical era with the introduction of microphones and the marked improvement in sound quality they brought with them, pianola makers faced up to what, perhaps only with retrospect, seems like the inevitability of their demise.[22]

It should be mentioned in passing that by the end of the nineteenth century, the pianola, phonograph, and gramophone were not the only ways of listening to music in solitude. In London, Paris, and Budapest, telephone lines were used to relay concerts, plays, news bulletins, and church sermons into subscribers' homes and hotel rooms, where they would wear special headsets. We know that Proust, for example, listened to

the whole of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* this way, using what in France was known as the *théâtrophone*, while, in London, Queen Victoria was among the *electrophone*'s regular users (Seckerson 2011). In Budapest, the *Telefon Hírmondó* was conceived of as a telephonic newspaper. All three of these experiments anticipated radio broadcasting and, indeed, it was radio that superseded them.

In stating that recording makes actual solitary listening possible for the first time, it should be added that each new playback or broadcasting medium implies a different kind of listening, with subtle modulations of sociability and solitariness. If one takes the example of radio, it could, in the family living room, be at the centre of hearth and home, imbuing domestic life with a sense of intimacy and warmth. Revealingly, Roosevelt's radio addresses to the nation were known as his 'fireside chats'. Similarly, on the other side of the Atlantic, the British Broadcasting Corporation, under the directorship of John Reith, instilled its wireless programming with an overt sense of domesticity, aiming it at an audience conceived of as an idealised lower-middle class family with acceptably middle-brow tastes. Yet in the teenager's bedroom of the 1950s and 60s, radio could at times function as a vehicle for more solitary, somewhat transgressive, reveries, giving the rural or suburban adolescent access to sound-worlds otherwise unavailable in their immediate social milieu: the music of black America, for example; or the pop music broadcast in Britain by the offshore pirate station, Radio Caroline, prior to the appropriation of its format – as well as some of its disc jockeys – by the Corporation's youth channel, BBC Radio 1, established in 1967. Such radio-induced reveries were often characterised by high levels of contingency and serendipity, being predicated on the turn of a dial and the radio user's ability to tune into something to their taste – or something which provoked it.

Radio also allowed people to listen to music in their cars. Michael Bull (2004) spells out the ramifications of this for the history of twentieth-century audio-consumption in terms of the 'increasing mobility' and increasing privatisation of 'sound use in Western culture': 'As early as the 1930s American auto manufacturers associated the radio with individualized listening in automobiles. In the space of five years, between 1936 and 1941, over 30 percent of US cars were fitted with radios' (245). In later decades, car audio helped drive – quite literally – the market for Philips' audio-cassette, introduced in

1963. As improvements to the compact cassette allowed its 'fidelity' to gain pace with that of the high-quality stereo LP, the car interior became a model acoustic environment, a wrap-around of glass, steel, plastic and chrome, enfolding immersive layers of sound whilst denoting individual mobility and sensory cool. Car stereos and car radios were also important for dating, creating an atmosphere of intimacy and tactility without the need for conversation to be maintained, and contributing to the sense of sexual licence that the car already granted. According to the infamous description proffered by a judge in a US juvenile court in the 1950s, the automobile had become a 'brothel on wheels' (quoted in Caccamo 2000: 53).

With the advent of vinyl records, as opposed to the brittle shellac ones of the gramophone, came a distinctly different kind of listening, indissociable from the activity of collecting. According to musicologist, Timothy Day (2000), in the first ten years alone of the long-player, 'a greater range of musical repertoire was brought into the home than in the entire history of recording in its first century' (101). This included pieces that had previously languished in obscurity such as Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, recorded in its entirety for the first time in 1948, the year of the new format's launch. In the words of Travis Elborough (2008), Vivaldi's concerto had, until then, been merely a 'file-under-Bach footnote of the baroque era'.[23] Crucially for the classical market, the new 33 ⅓ rpm microgroove LPs obviated the need to change discs every three or four minutes, as had been the case with shellac 78s, allowing whole movements or acts, and sometimes whole pieces, to be heard for the first time without interruption.[24] Other benefits derived from the new vinyl discs: their slower revolving speed and very much smaller grooves reduced surface noise and enhanced the recorded signal (Chanan 1995: 93).

The introduction of vinyl – including the seven-inch 45 rpm, which was initially launched as a rival to the 33⅓ LP but quickly found a niche as the format of choice for popular music – coincided with the reconstruction of post-war economies and allowed record-collecting to become possible and practicable on a much wider scale. According to Antoine Hennion (2001), it was this culture of vinyl collecting that brought about the historical formation of a new kind of listener: a 'specialist endowed with an ability which no-one possessed before the 20th century, represented by the technical availability of a historicized musical repertoire dating from the Middle Ages to the present day, with

different interpretations, explanatory booklets and clear-cut relations' (4). This 'invention of the listener', or 'the production of the amateur' as Hennion also refers to it, marks a decisive shift towards the predication of musical culture on a phonographic archive; to be knowledgeable about music comes to mean having at one's disposal an artefactual memory made up of shiny black discs. By means of such prostheses, the horizons of what can be remembered musically are greatly expanded. As the musicologist, Joseph Kerman (1985), points out, it wasn't until relatively recently, with one or two exceptions, that the repertory of Western art music extended back more than a generation or two. For example, the composer and theorist, Johannes Tinctoris, was able to claim back in 1477 that there was no music worth listening to that had not been composed in the previous forty years or so. Similarly, we are told that Lasso's choir in Munich, a mere fifty years after Josquin's death in 1521, sang music no older than that of Josquin and his contemporaries. The contrast with Renaissance painting and literature is clear: music, because of its inevitable decay into silence, leaves no tangible objects behind and is thus easily forgotten. Even the introduction in the Middle Ages of staff notation with its fixing of pitch and rhythm had not been enough to ensure the longevity of a piece of music. Kerman argues that it was not until the nineteenth century that a new historical attitude was fully established and the likes of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Weber and Rossini were afforded a place in a more or less permanent canon rather than being supplanted by the next set of good composers to come along (Kerman 1985: 337; Chanan 1995: 13). This historically-informed attitude feeds into the twentieth-century culture of record collecting, producing a new relationship to music: 'The ability to listen is not so much a personal quality as the end result of having reflexively made the necessary time and space, after a long historical and collective apprenticeship which itself produced a world of co-ordinated objects […]. We have learnt to enjoy listening to music' (Hennion 2001: 4). Though these 'co-ordinated objects' might include textual material such as scores, sleeve notes, reviews, etc., they are primarily the discs contained in a record collection, arranged alphabetically, chronologically, or else in some more ad hoc fashion according to the record user's own taxonomical whims. Extrapolating from Benjamin's arguments in his 1936 article, 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', a type of expertise accrues to the record collector, formed not so much out of awed

'contemplation' of an original 'auratic' work of art as out of 'habit' and the 'tactile appropriation' of mechanically-reproduced artworks, in this case, those contained on the vinyl discs that make up a record collection (Benjamin 1936/1968: 242). As we shall discover, recorded sound in general – and more specifically the culture of record-collecting – modifies the human sensorium, allowing us to hear in subtly different ways and making possible a different kind of aural perception founded, firstly, on what we as collectors can do with the music – how we can 'manipulate' it in the tactile sense of handling it – and, secondly, on what the music can do to us – how it can bring about changes in our mood or environment, or trigger personal reminiscences or other associations.

These kinds of arguments regarding the historical construction of the senses have been especially prevalent in the literature on personal stereos: the Sony Walkman, first introduced in 1979, and Apple's iPod, launched in 2001.[25] More than any other kind of individualised listening, using a personal stereo problematises the distinction between public and private space. Walkman- or iPod-use creates boundaries around the self, rather like a sonic suit of armour or psychic buffer, allowing the highly atomised listener to negotiate public space by imbuing it with their own privatised reveries. The 'walk-person' in this sense permeates their physical environment with musically-enhanced affect, receiving the illusory rebounding from that same environment of what, in reality, is their own affective stimulation and comfort. An alienated social world is thus made habitable, in the sense of being mastered via habit, but at the cost, it would seem, of an actual retreat from interpersonal space and a corresponding increase in alienation. (When did you last try asking an iPod-wearer for the time or for directions? And have you also stopped saying 'excuse me' if you need to pass, assuming that they won't be able to hear you?) I would briefly like to frame these remarks by tracing a debate within the literature on personal stereos concerning the role of chance. In an essay written a couple of years prior to the analogue personal stereo's replacement by its digital counterpart, Steven Connor (1999) makes a claim for the emergence of a new kind of musical reception, founded on the welcoming of contingency and serendipity with regard to the auditory channel's interaction with other sensory streams: 'We've become much better as listeners at tolerating openness and chance and at living in a world of multiple stimuli'. He uses

the example of the personal stereo to illustrate his point: 'The Walkman-user is often creating a kind of chance collage between the sounds that are filtering through and are partly contingent and the organised sound they're hearing. There is a sense, therefore, of the recorded sound, which is fixed and complete and perfect, being deliberately exposed to the chance of what might happen' (308). In a more recent article, however, Kathleen Ferguson (2008) takes up some of Judith Williamson's early ruminations on the Walkman in order to question Connor's view: 'For Williamson, the Walkman "negates *chance*: you never know what you are going to hear on a bus or in the streets, but the walk-person is buffered against the unexpected – an apparent triumph of individual control over social spontaneity" ' (70; emphasis in original). Williamson, writing in 1986, views the Walkman as homologically related to Thatcherism: a retreat from civic engagement and communal participation in favour of personal choice and self-betterment. Ferguson extends this analysis to include the MP3 player, 'which', she writes, 'if we're to be honest, carries a fairly limited scope for chance': 'Songs chosen from a repertoire of a relatively narrow, personally tailored music library recycle around in a state of contented monomania' (72). It should be noted in this regard that the iPod's celebrated 'shuffle' function has led some listeners to interpret the suitability to their situation or mood of a randomly-selected track as evidence of a telepathic link between human and machine: 'It's almost as if my iPod understands me' (73). Rather disappointingly, however, these imputations of sympathetic responses on the part of an electronic device coated in sleek white plastic would appear to stem from a poor understanding of the maths of probability rather than something more supernatural; simply put, the likelihood of 'the right song' being played at 'the right time' is greater than we often appreciate.[26]

In outlining all the different ways in which recording allows music to be listened to in solitude, it should be pointed out that a peculiarly sociable feeling often attaches to solitary listening. This can be explained, in part, as being a residual effect of music's centuries-old function as an index of social rituals, but it can also be understood as an effect that is specific to the phonographic medium. Because we tend to hear the playback as the performance itself – not as its trace – we feel the immediacy of a presence, especially when engulfed by the rapture of a living, rasping, sensuously-replete voice.
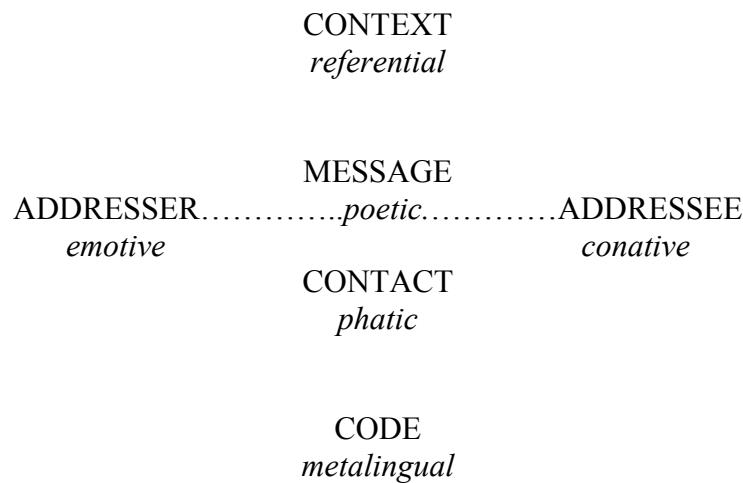
Yet, at the same time, we are reminded, especially in the case of deceased artists, that they are 'no longer with us', and that their presence is an illusion. Recordings are thus glossed by their own poignancy as artefacts of the fleeting and evanescent; the 'decay' of the human voice is arrested, if only in so far as we are able to hear its passage towards silence a theoretically limitless number of times. In a radio programme about the Bacharach-David composition, 'The look of love', Dusty Springfield's former backing singer and close confidante, Simon Bell, speaks of his befuddlement whenever he's in a shop, café or restaurant and is caught unawares by the smooth, suspired intimacy of the song's opening bars: 'The look…of love…is in…your eyes…'. As Bell remarks, 'Suddenly, without warning, Dusty's here again' (David 2009).

The 'choral production in the drawing room': text and context in recorded music

In 'The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction', Benjamin (1936/1968) makes the fundamental point that 'technical reproduction can put the copy of the original into situations which would be out of reach for the original itself. […T]he choral production, performed in an auditorium or in the open air, resounds in the drawing room' (223). Recording allows for music to be heard in new locations and new situations. This, perhaps, is remarkable enough in itself but the point I'd like to stress is that the context in which listening occurs plays a determining role in shaping the act of musical communication as a whole. Recorded music's penetration into new physical locations has important repercussions, not merely for musical reception, the way in which we listen to music, but also for the way it is made and what kinds of musical texts, what kinds of aesthetic objects, are produced.[27] In seeking to understand exactly how recorded music signifies, we have, therefore, to take account of both text and context. One model of communication that is particularly fitting to this task is that put forward by Roman Jakobson (1986). His six-fold schema, which he proposes as a way of investigating language 'in all the variety of its functions', has been fruitfully applied to music by, among others, Claude Lévi-Strauss (1969), Gino Stefani (1973), Franco Fabbri (1981), Richard Middleton (1990), and Michael Chanan (1999). In conducting my own semiotic analysis, I would like to apply Jakobson's model specifically to *recorded* music, seeing that the proliferation in listening situations enabled by phonography makes it a more

urgent task to consider, in addition to the musical 'utterance' itself, the context in which the conveyance of such a message takes place.

Jakobson's communicative schema can be represented by the following diagram in which the words in capital letters stand for the various FACTORS which influence musical communication, and the words in italics for their corresponding *functions*:

<div align="center">

CONTEXT
referential

MESSAGE
ADDRESSER…………..*poetic*…………ADDRESSEE
emotive   *conative*
CONTACT
phatic

CODE
metalingual

</div>

As Chanan (1999) succinctly puts it, communication in Jakobson's terminology 'consists in a MESSAGE referring to a CONTEXT, formulated in terms of a CODE, directed by an ADDRESSER to an ADDRESSEE, through a channel of CONTACT between them' (140; adapted). In the case of recorded music, the ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE will not usually be physically present to each other; the act of musical communication is, to use Schaeffer's word, 'acousmatic'. The MESSAGE conveyed from one to the other is the music itself – the particular pattern of sounds. CONTACT between addresser and addressee is maintained, in the final instance, by the particular playback device being used, often in competition with other ambient sounds in the addressee's immediate environment – people talking, noise from cars or other machinery, etc. – or in competition with other stimuli. Having sketched out some of the rudiments of musical communication in the age of recording, I would like to illustrate each of the factors and functions identified by Jakobson, which, he claims, ought to be considered within an integrative and well-rounded semiotic analysis. I will pay particular attention to the ways in which the advent of recording heralds an alteration in the semiotic code governing

'musicking' in its entirety (Small 1998). In order to do this, I will cite three examples of musical communication in each of which the musical text, the piece of music, is substantially the same, only the context in which it is heard differing from those of the others.

The first situation is that of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, performed in its original setting of a Lutheran church in Leipzig as part of the Good Friday mass in 1727. The CONTEXT, i.e. what the work refers to, is immediately obvious; Bach's setting of the German translation of the gospel of St. Matthew – with one or two judicious insertions courtesy of the librettist – means that the piece is heard fairly straightforwardly as a choral and orchestral representation of Christ's last days. The *referential* function of the music is thus governed by the words it sets, so that, unlike purely instrumental pieces, it is denotative as well as connotative: one not only hears musical allusions to the drama of Jesus' suffering; the details of such allusions are spelt out, firstly, by the soloists, who take the roles of each of the main characters and, secondly, by the choir, who comment upon the events.[28] The context of Good Friday mass further constrains the range of possible meanings: it is clear to all present that this is a religious piece intended to aid contemplation of Christ's betrayal and subsequent agonies on the cross. Having said this, there were those for whom Bach's cantatas and Passion settings aroused mixed feelings; the juxtaposition of Italianate arias and German chorales led some to disapprove of what they perceived as an opera performance in a sacred setting (Staines and Clark et al 2005: 22; Chanan 1999: 150). In this sense, works like *St. Matthew Passion* can, to some degree, be construed as a commentary on the musical CODE itself. Such a critique of, or pause to consider, the conventions by which a message is organised is what Jakobson terms communication's *metalingual* function.[29] In terms of its ADDRESSER, the *Passion* is twice-authored, first by the composer and, second, by the musicians, yet the figure of Bach is, in a sense, absent from these first performances. Instead of the work being heard as the outpouring of a singular genius, it is performed and listened to very much as a communal endeavour. Certainly, there are individual flourishes, as in the arias and certain passages by the lead violinist, marking this out from church music of the Middle Ages but, on the whole, the ADDRESSER is a collective one as is the ADDRESSEE. The billowing acoustic of the church adds to this impression, with the separate voices and

instruments tending to merge all the more, even without the contrapuntal complexity of the work's many interwoven melodic lines. The vehicle of the Passion chorale, which punctuates the drama at five points, reinforces the sense of community.[30]

The second situation concerns another performance of the *St. Matthew Passion*, this time in a nineteenth-century concert hall. Mendelssohn's Berlin revival of Bach's grandest work was certainly greeted by some, including Mendelssohn's sister, Fanny, as a quasi-religious experience (Applegate 2005: 41). Others among those present in the *Singakademie* building, however, were unmoved. Hegel, for one, merely found the music peculiar; Heine, for another, thought it boring. The illustrious roll-call of those who attended – other names include Schleiermacher, Rahel Varnhagen, and Alexander von Humboldt as well as the Prussian king and crown prince – adds to the impression of a momentous occasion (42). At the same time, this was a decidedly more secular experience for most than the work's premiere in Leipzig's *Thomaskirche* ('Church of St. Thomas') had been just over a hundred years earlier.[31] In simple terms, what had been sacred music was now art music. To some degree, then, the *referential* function of the work had changed; alongside the explicit, denotative meaning provided by the setting of the gospel of St. Matthew, there crept in less explicit connotations, most notably a feeling that the recovery of the work contributed to a sense of nationhood – that reviving Bach was somehow 'national work' (Applegate 2005). In tandem with this slippage in the *Passion*'s terms of reference, more focus was placed on the MESSAGE itself, what Jakobson calls the *poetic* function. Bach's mastery of counterpoint meant that the 'poetry' of the music, or 'the play of notes' as Stravinsky called it, was already abundantly evident: no composer before him and few since have experimented as thoroughly with music's formal possibilities. What was different perhaps in the 1829 performances was a new receptivity to this aspect of his work. In the context of a concert hall as opposed to that of a church, the *St. Matthew Passion* was able to be received in a less literal or 'programmatic' sense as being concerned with an external set of reference points – the glorification of the messiah, etc. – and more as an introverted piece of 'pure' or 'absolute' music.[32] This implies too a different relationship to the ADDRESSER of the work: Bach is no longer just a mere *kapellmeister* (literally 'chapel-master') but instead a founding father for the German nation as 'the people of music' (Applegate 2005). In a

way that has become characteristic of the concert-hall setting, the audience feel that in some indefinable way they are in direct contact with the figure of the dead composer, and that the musicians are not so much the addressers of the musical message as its intermediaries or the channel via which CONTACT is maintained (Small 1998). Unlike the case of the ADDRESSER, it is ambiguous whether or not the ADDRESSEE is individualised or not. On the one hand, the ADDRESSEE is still a collective one, though obviously no longer a church congregation, rather a more heterogeneous group bound by ties of nationality and social class. On the other hand, musical reception is more atomised, the audience comprising a public defined by its ability to make value judgements on matters of taste; hence, for example, Hegel's reaction to the *Passion*, recalling in turn Fontenelle's famously bemused question: '*Sonate, que me veux-tu?*' ('Sonata, what do you want from me?').

The third situation is that alluded to by Benjamin: 'the choral production […] in the drawing room'. In listening to, or inattentively hearing, a recording of the *Matthew Passion* as distinct from a 'live' performance of it, its meaning, its *referential* function is put in flux. The multiplication of possible listening situations as well as the pile-up of memories of previous auditions in different contexts means that the piece has for the listener a greatly expanded set of possible associations, both personal and public. The words of the written text have almost entirely released their semantic grip, and the reference points for the act of musical communication possess a new polysemy, fluidity and contingency. Over time, however, a new set of conventional meanings ossifies, based on connotations embedded in the listener's perception of the *Passion*'s style or genre. This is particularly true if snatches of the piece, or even a pastiche of it, have been heard as the background music in films or television programmes, functioning as a kind of indexical and iconic shorthand. The piece might, for instance, signify 'the baroque', 'religious devotion', 'piety', 'angst' or 'despair', or even a cluster of such associations since – in contrast to 'symbols', i.e. signs with a propositional content and thus a more or less univocal meaning – the two classes of signs, 'icons' and 'indices', via which music signifies typically carry several, often heterogeneous, meanings at once. In addition to the CONTEXT to which the musical MESSAGE refers becoming more unstable, certain other aspects of communication tend to become heightened. The first of these is the

expressive or *emotive* function of the ADDRESSER, who is now to be understood not so much as the composer as the performer on the recording. As we shall see in more detail, the emphasis laid on the performer's expressivity is partly to do with the way in which the history of recording has moulded performance practice, but it's also connected to the way we now listen, attending to what Adorno disparagingly calls 'grandiose moments', and often regarding the *emotive* as the primary, if not the sole, function of music (Adorno 1976: 7; Chanan 1999: 147).[33] Thus, as domestic listeners, we might linger, for example, upon the expressive qualities to be found on particular recordings of the *Passion*'s arias: the incomparable diction of tenor Mark Padmore on '*Geduld! Geduld!*' perhaps, or the soaring falsetto of countertenor Andreas Scholl singing '*Erbarme dich*'. The correlate of this increased emphasis on the ADDRESSER and their *emotive* function is an augmentation in the *conative* or imperative function associated with the ADDRESSEE. We hear the intensity of the performer's expressivity not merely as an objective aesthetic criterion but as something addressed uniquely to us in our role as listeners capable of receiving the exquisite sorrow of his or her message. As the Cuban music critic, Alejo Carpentier (1972), points out, the model for this kind of listener is already apparent in Proust. Listening to a sonata, Swann 'lies in wait for that moment when a brief phrase on the violin "addresses itself to him", and […] "tells him everything it had to tell him", to him and him alone' (1097).[34]

The main changes to musical communication in the age of recording can thus be summarised as follows: (i) the destabilisation of music's *referential* function; and (ii) the predominance, relative to other functions, of the *emotive*, the *conative* and the *phatic*.[35] As we have seen, the *emotive* is concerned with the expressivity of the performer; the *conative* function, on the other hand, is imperative or exhortatory, prompting physical, emotional or psychological responses on the part of the listener. The *phatic* refers to the maintenance of CONTACT between ADDRESSER and ADDRESSEE, the verification that the channel of communication between them is open.[36] These three communicative functions become more pronounced in the age of recording, partly in order to compensate for the fact that the performer is no longer physically present. This points to the importance of body language and facial expressions in the overall schema of musical communication.[37] In the acousmatic realm, the performer's physical gestures cannot be

relied upon to execute these functions, so that greater emphasis devolves upon executing them by purely sonic means. I'd like to illustrate this by citing one or two examples for each function.

The first example is that of violinists using vibrato as a means for conveying their expressivity. In the early decades of the twentieth century, violin virtuosos substituted the physical histrionics of the concert hall with the aural histrionics of expanded and virtually continuous vibrato in order to ensure that, in the absence of visual cues, the emotional intensity of their performances was conveyed to an audience that was now largely comprised of listeners at home.[38] Katz (2004) refers to this as a 'phonograph effect', citing the shift apparent in early recordings from sparing or light vibrato round about the turn of the century to its heavy and virtually continuous application a mere decade or so later (85). He also notes the difference between nineteenth-century treatises and scores on the one hand, from which it can be inferred that vibrato had been used very frugally, and later accounts on the other, which either celebrate or denounce the by-now firmly entrenched trend for producing wavering pitches via 'the rapid quiver of the left hand' (85). In addition to the notion that vibrato made up for the lack of visual expressivity, Katz suggests two further reasons why the technique caught on in quite the way it did. The first is that it helped violinists minimise unwanted bowing noise while, at the same time, allowing them to produce enough volume to be picked up by the acoustic horn or the electric microphone. The second reason is that vibrato concealed imperfect intonation on performances which, musicians knew, would be heard again and again by the unforgiving ears of posterity.[39]

The embellishment of pitch accomplished by vibrato is analogous to rhythmic embellishment in the form of syncopation. While there is no simple explanation for the rise of vibrato among classical violinists nor for the rise of syncopation in the jazz world – the causes of each are 'overdetermined' – it is interesting to note that both appear to have been taken up on a much wider scale during the first few decades of recording. We can chart, for example, via the piano rolls and early gramophone recordings he made, Fats Waller's transition from 'ragtime' to 'swing', i.e. from the occasional shifting of the accent onto the offbeat in certain measures (literally 'ragged time') to consistently shifting it throughout entire pieces. The characteristically mischievous lag in rhythm

entered Waller's playing over the course of about a decade, from the ragtime of 'T ain't nobody's biz-ness if I do' (1922) via the transitional 'Ain't misbehavin'' (1929) to the full swing of 'Honeysuckle rose' (1934) (Goodall 2006). By playing with our expectations of where the accent is going to fall, syncopation adds to the emotional impact of a song. As in the case of vibrato, it is tempting to speculate that syncopation gave recorded music a new kind of expressivity, partly as a way of making up for the fact that musicians' facial expressions and physical gestures were absent from the act of communication.

The next example of a communicative function that becomes more important in the age of recording is the *conative*, i.e. an imperative mode of address aimed at eliciting a response from the listener. In popular music, this often takes the form of song lyrics addressed directly to the listener, such as in Eddie Cochran's 1958 rallying cry to teenage fun, 'C'mon everybody'. As Richard Middleton (1990) notes, lyrics such as these, especially when addressed to a 'you' – 'I will always love you', etc. – function via 'interpellation', absorbing the listener and their identity into the song's text, albeit usually at a subconscious, affective level (241-2). The *conative* function also operates in popular music, not to mention military music, via exhortatory or imperative rhythms. Even listening absent-mindedly, you often find yourself tapping your feet. The intros to popular songs can be especially important in goading listeners into action. In music critic David Hepworth's words, the first ten seconds of a good dance record act as 'a combination of permission and order', getting people up and out of their seats and onto the dancefloor (quoted in Chambers 2007). Take, for example, the opening bars of Abba's 'Dancing queen': the warm yet ethereal sheen of vocals, punctuated by piano chords and underpinned by bass and drums, gives you just enough time to get to your feet before you're straight into the chorus: 'You can dance, you can jive…'. Another example of a song that brings together the lyrical and rhythmic dimensions of pop music's imperative function is John Lennon's 'Instant karma'. Each of the song's verses constitute a catalogue of admonitions and entreaties, with John's voice straining in order to get his message across: 'You better get yourself together', 'What in the world are you thinking of?', 'What on earth are you trying to do?', 'It's up to you, yeah you!', etc. In the passage from verse to chorus, however, there is a shift from one voice to many, and from 'you' to 'we', suggesting the formation of a collective: 'And we all shine on…' and

'Everyone, come on!' The *conative* 'we' of the chorus thus replaces the more usual singular addressee of pop songs, implying that the entreaty to 'join the human race' has been responded to. In terms of rhythm, the piano chords plod along on every beat but they are offset by the use of a very predominant backbeat – itself a form of syncopation – in which the drummer accents the second and fourth beat of each bar, often punctuating Lennon's singing as, for example, here on the chorus:

> And we all **whack** shine **whack** | on **whack** [rest] **whack** |
>   1   2   3   4   1   2   3   4

> Like the moon **whack** and the stars **whack** | And the sun **whack** [rest] **whack** ||
>   1   2   3   4   1   2   3   4
>
>   (Levitin 2006: 67; adapted).[40]

Furthermore, the use of cross-rhythmic drum-fills temporarily disrupts the song's other rhythms. Such percussion is very *conative*, almost physically shaking the listener in order to make them sit up and pay attention.

The third communicative function that becomes heightened in the era of recording is the *phatic*: the 'endeavor to start and sustain communication' (Jakobson 1986: 153). This concern with CONTACT takes on a peculiar urgency in the phonographic age, not because it is difficult for us to access recorded music but because it is too easy. Recorded music's colonisation of almost every single daily environment results in it being heard all too often as background noise rather than as a message with informational content. Musically, our ears have become attuned to inattention. Writing in a slightly different context, Benjamin (1936/1968) describes this kind of musical 'reception' as occurring 'in a state of distraction' that is 'symptomatic of profound changes in apperception' (242). I'd like to focus on a few examples of attempts to sustain the act of musical communication in a culture in which inattentive or distracted listening has become the norm. The first concerns a set of musicological features – vamps, riffs, and hooks, etc. – all of which are aimed at catching the listener's interest (Middleton 1990: 242). (This set of features includes, but goes well beyond, the kinds of gimmicks and other fetishistic details to be found in 'the novelty song' (Adorno 1938/1982).[41]) The second example –

or rather, group of examples – concerns amplification. With the advent of electric amplification, especially of bass frequencies, the notion that hearing is a form of touch becomes realisable.[42] Sound enters more concretely the fields of haptics and proxemics (Waters 2008). In their study of the politics of electronic dance music, Jeremy Gilbert and Ewan Pearson (1999) note that 'As sound, the vibrations of all musics are capable of being communicated to the whole body [… . I]t is precisely the bass end of the frequency spectrum – comprising of the slowest vibrating sound waves – that provides listeners and dancers with the most material, most directly corporeal, types of experience [… . T]he bass and sub-bass […] are felt at least as much as they are heard' (45-6). Amplified music is, then, capable of establishing almost direct physical contact with listeners, yet there is an unfortunate side to developments in amplification – quite apart from hearing loss – which is again predicated on the need to make contact with already-overstimulated listeners. The so-called 'loudness wars' of the last couple of decades have seen record companies and artists engage in a kind of arms race of amplitude, in which each tries to make their CDs stand out from those of their rivals by increasing the volume of each successive release. This wouldn't be a problem in itself if it weren't for the fact that the maximum amplitude of CDs is at a fixed level so that, once that level is achieved, the only way to attain extra loudness is to bring all the softer dynamics up to a similar amplitude. The result is a much smaller or 'compressed' dynamic range, as well as some distortion or 'clipping' of the recording's waveform.[43] As many producers and sound engineers themselves admit, these are CDs mixed in order to have an impact in crowded bars; music, in other words, to be talked over but which, at the same time, makes conversation more difficult (Lynskey 2008: 44).[44]

It can be seen, then, that the new context for musical reception, in which performers and listeners inhabit separate physical spaces, alters the act of musical communication as a whole. Although some general tendencies can be delineated, there is, in tandem, a particularisation of types of listening in the age of recording, depending on which aspects of communication are emphasised at any one time. We have, to some degree, become proficient at very different kinds of listening. I would like to pursue this further in the remainder of this chapter in relation to the different kinds of memory processes that are engaged when we listen to recorded music.

Ravel's *Boléro* and the shortened *durée*

If one were choosing a piece that exemplifies Western music in the early twentieth century, Ravel's *Boléro* (1928) might, on the face of it, seem like a strange choice. At a time when the Second Viennese School were rigorously avoiding melodic repetition in their compositions, Ravel's piece was built from an unwaveringly repetitive phrase in C major, underscored by a snare drum and taken up by the various orchestral instruments during the quarter of an hour or so leading up to the piece's famous climax. Composed as a commission for a ballet and scored for a conventional orchestra in a distinctly European idiom, *Boléro* hardly seems to epitomise the decade that F. Scott Fitzgerald termed 'the jazz age'. My interest here with Ravel's most famous composition is to do with its allegorical significance, not as a programmatic piece 'about' a particular subject but as a piece whose structure and circumstances of composition seem to exemplify certain changes undergone by the human sensorium in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These changes have profoundly altered the way we listen to music, especially in terms of the kinds of musical features we listen for and find significant.

In spite of being an idiosyncratic piece, both in relation to Ravel's oeuvre as a whole and in relation to the rest of Western art music, *Boléro* foreshadows the features that would come to characterise almost all twentieth-century music, not just that confined to the classical concert hall: an emphasis on memorable phrases reinforced by their repetition, and the privileging of rhythm, timbre and dynamics as pertinent musical features. 'Orchestration without music' was Ravel's rueful judgement of his own composition, emphasising the extent to which his primary concern in *Boléro* was with the different tone colours of the instruments that take up the melody, as well as the piece's steadily increasing dynamics (quoted in Staines and Clark et al 2005: 435). The piece shows off Ravel's skill as an orchestrator while concealing his failing perceptions of melody and harmony: he is thought to have been experiencing the onset of frontotemporal dementia when he composed it. One of the symptoms associated with this specific kind of dementia is an impairment of the ability to perform tasks that involve complex planning or sequencing – such as writing pieces of music that are through-composed or that have intricate harmonic structures. Other symptoms include

compulsivity, repetition, and perseveration, i.e. repeating or prolonging an action or utterance after the stimulus that prompted it has ceased (Blakeslee 2008: 1). What Ravel was experiencing, in other words, was a shortened sense of 'duration'. Duration is the term Henri Bergson (1889/2001) uses to describe our lived experience of the present as being mobile and in flux, extending either side of a mathematical point in time as the present moves into the immediate past while anticipating what is about to come. One senses that, for Ravel, this impression of the present moment had contracted somewhat, making him more reliant in his work on what could easily be grasped and repeated within the here and now.

It is my contention that something analogous has occurred to our musical faculties as listeners in the recorded era. This is to say we have become increasingly drawn to those musical features over which Ravel retained complete mastery – timbre, rhythm, dynamics – while neglecting those same ones which he lost his grasp on – harmony, counterpoint, thematic development, etc. As I will go on to argue, an important determining factor in this shift is the phonographic medium itself which has meant, for example, that, in popular music especially, musicians now 'compose with timbre' and that this is a large part of what we as listeners find meaningful in recorded music (Levitin quoted in Thompson 2006). In tandem with this, we have become better at discerning nuances of pitch and rhythm; for example, when we hear an alternative version of a recording we are already familiar with.

Recognising and forgetting recorded music

The ability to hear the exact same performance again marks a sea change in terms of how we listen to and remember music. In an essay entitled 'The collective memory of musicians', Maurice Halbwachs (1939/1980) remarks on the situation prior to recording: 'On leaving a concert, we retain in memory almost nothing of a piece just heard for the first time. The melodic themes break up and notes scatter like pearls from a necklace whose thread has broken' (160).[45] The reason for this evanescence is to be found in the nature of the musical sign itself. According to Halbwachs, 'a sequence of sounds has no other meaning than itself' and 'thus is recaptured only by constant re-creation' (186). Unlike a verbal proposition, which can easily be couched in other words, music 'must be

retained […] in full' as 'no appeal' can be made as to its 'meaning' (ibid.).[46] This makes non-recorded music exemplary among the arts in terms of the extent of its reliance on overtly co-operative forms of memory, including traditions of performance practice that supplement what is notated in the score: 'the possibility of retaining a mass of remembrances with every nuance and in precise detail requires bringing into play every resource of the collective memory' (ibid.).

Recorded music, by contrast, exacts no such demands – or, at least, different ones. Instead of pieces of music being reconstructed from their scores and the surrounding culture of musical literacy, they can be heard directly via their recording. As a result, the culture of music-making is thrown back upon the ear. This has had profound effects on the way music is both heard and composed, and accounts for the dominance of Afro-American derived styles in twentieth-century music: 'Suddenly, the performance by an improvising musician could be heard directly, without the previously-necessary mediation of notation. Details such as quality of voice, rhythmic nuance, expressive gesture could be captured and circulated far beyond the musician's actual location' (McClary 1999/2004: 294). In *The Recording Angel*, Evan Eisenberg (1988) gives an illuminating example of how this circulation of non-notational features occurred at the level of musical practice: 'Whereas Bessie Smith had needed to go on the road with Ma Rainey in order to learn from her, Victoria Spivey and Billie Holiday and Mahalia Jackson could learn from Bessie Smith by staying put in Texas or Maryland or Louisiana and playing her records' (116). The exquisitely-honed inflections of pitch and rhythm to be found in these singers' work, together with their crafting of unique vocal timbres, is thus a feature of musical performance that has come about largely due to the introduction of sound recording.

Among the non-notational features of music that have become more salient in the age of recording, record producer turned musical neuroscientist Daniel Levitin reserves a special place for timbre or 'tone colour'. Timbre is the unique set of acoustical vibrations produced by a person's voice box or a particular musical instrument.[47] Due to the fact that recording allows us to listen repeatedly to the same performance, more of our attention becomes placed on this musical parameter. During an interview, Levitin invites a journalist from the *New York Times* to identify a recording by listening to only a

snippet: a single chord struck on a piano. The journalist recognises it instantly as the opening to Elton John's 'Bennie and the Jets'. 'Nobody else's piano sounds quite like that', Levitin explains. Like so many other pop musicians, Elton John 'compose[s] with timbre', creating sounds with a distinct aural fingerprint and combining them to produce new sound-worlds that immediately distinguish his records from those of other artists (quoted in Thompson 2006). Levitin (2006) cites a study in which non-musicians were consistently able to match snippets of Top 40 pop songs with which they were already familiar to their titles. In each case the excerpt was a mere tenth of a second – about the same duration as a finger click – so that the subjects could not rely on melody or rhythm to identify the songs, just timbre (155-6).

The rise of timbre to its current position of pre-eminence in the world of popular music can be charted in other ways and over a much longer timescale than by referring solely to the history of recording. Levitin argues that whereas music from at least the time of the ancient Greeks onwards had been dominated by pitch, '[f]or the past two hundred years or so, timbre has become increasingly important', with new musical instruments being invented 'so that composers might have a larger palette of timbral colors from which to draw' (52). As a result, there are distinct differences between baroque, classical and romantic timbres. New combinations of existing instruments have also been significant, for instance, in the meticulously crafted 'sound paintings' of Ravel and Scriabin, or in Wagner's amassing of huge string sections, which allowed for greater dynamic range as well as new tonal shades. We can therefore discern differences in the way composers from the same era use timbre in their work. The rise of timbre is due, then, to other factors besides the invention of sound recording. One such factor is the way in which 'noise' became progressively musicalised via the experiments of the classically-trained avant-garde. One thinks, for example, of Stravinsky's idea for a composition consisting of one single chord in which only the timbres of the constituent pitches change; or of Russolo's Futurist manifesto, *The Art of Noises* (1913), and the series of concerts held in London the following year in which he presented his *intonarumori* ('noise instruments'); one thinks of the electronic music of Varèse; or of John Cage's 'prepared' piano – the placing of leather, felt, pieces of metal and other objects between the instrument's strings,

thereby transforming its sound into something more like a percussion orchestra than a piano. Levitin cites other, more conventional examples of timbre's importance:

> A standard component of music across all genres is to restate a melody using different instruments – from Beethoven's Fifth and Ravel's *Boléro* to the Beatles' 'Michelle' […]. When a […] singer stops singing and another instrument takes up the melody – even without changing it in any way – we find pleasurable the repetition of the same melody with a different timbre (ibid.).

Tone colour is such an important attribute of certain musical phrases that their impact would be greatly diminished if they were played on a different instrument or if different effects were applied to them. Imagine the gloriously begrimed fuzz of the guitar riff from The Rolling Stones' 'Satisfaction' played on an acoustic guitar, or a flute or piano for that matter. Something of the slouching unease inherent in the phrase's semitone interval would still be there but its musical merit would be quite limited. This was indeed the doubt that beset its creator, Keith Richards, prior to the riff becoming an integral part of the Stones' most famous recording. Richards initially envisaged the fuzzbox-driven guitar being replaced in the final take of the song by a horn section but was overruled by the other members of the group as well as their manager and sound engineer.

Other factors notwithstanding, it is the capacity for hearing the same recording many times that explains, in large part, why timbre is of such importance in the phonographic age. The ability to hear exactly the same performance again allows for much finer gradations of discrimination between tone colours, as well as a greater sensitivity to nuances of pitch and rhythm. To quote Levitin, 'When you hear that same song by a favourite artist replicated thousands of times, it lays down memory traces that are very vivid and detailed' (quoted in Appleyard 2007: 9).[48] In a study of the aesthetics of rock music, Theodore Gracyk (1996) expands upon this point, claiming that the expectation involved in listening to familiar recordings is of a completely different order to that of live gigs, the former being more concerned with shades of nuance and timbre than with the apprehension of melody: 'No longer attuned to the question of how long the guitar will hold a note, we are free to savor and anticipate qualities and details that are simply too ephemeral to be relevant in live performance. When records are the medium, every aspect is available for our discrimination and thus for its interpretative potential' (55). This, in turn, means that much of the pleasure of recorded popular music is based on

recognition or else on having our expectations challenged by unfamiliar nuances and timbres: a novel instrumental effect, for example, or a striking vocal persona enacting a new kind of musical vernacular.

In the way we remember nuances of pitch, rhythm and timbre, there is a divergence between recognition and recall; this is to say, we can recognise such nuances when we hear them but cannot ordinarily recall them in our 'mind's ear' once we have finished listening. Snyder (2000) writes about this from the perspective of cognitive psychology, evoking comparisons with the Kantian sublime – an aesthetic impression that seemingly defies the normal categories of experience:

> An important aspect of nuances is that, under normal circumstances, they cannot easily be remembered by listeners. Because category structure is a basic feature of explicit long-term memory, nuanced information, which bypasses this type of memory, is difficult to remember: it is 'ineffable.' This is probably the major reason why recordings, which freeze the details of particular musical performances, can be listened to many times and continue to seem vital and interesting (87-8).

Gracyk (1996) concurs with this view:

> We can *hear* minute differences between similar timbres while listening, but these nuances begin to be forgotten about a second after the sounds cease […]. When timbre is the basis for expressive qualities of a work – and it seems very important for recorded rock – it will have an expressive impact in direct experience that will be absent in our memories of it. Hence listening to it will be important in a way that remembering it is not (59-60; emphasis in original).

To reiterate, recording has helped to make non-notational features more important in music, both in terms of production – the kind of music that gets made – and in terms of reception – the way we listen. Although we recognise and respond to nuances of timbre, pitch and rhythm when we hear them, we struggle to recall them later, in our 'mind's ear', hence recorded music's ability to surprise us with its vividness of detail, even after many listenings. In this way, an oscillation between forgetting and recognition has become crucial to the experience of recorded music. The listener forgets many nuances of timbre as well as many inflections of pitch and rhythm as they are not usually coded semantically, i.e. as long-term, musicological memories with a propositional content, but he or she is suddenly able to recognise them upon hearing them again.[49]

Having analysed how non-notational musical features have gained predominance in the age of recording, it becomes easier to make sense of – but not to share – Adorno's blanket rejection of twentieth-century popular music. Wedded as he was to 'structural' listening mediated by the score, Adorno was often insensitive to the inner detail of music such as jazz, which had flourished as an integral part of the culture of phonography. To use the terms of Nicholas Cook's critique, Adorno's way of listening was more 'musicological' than 'musical' (Cook 1990: 152). Chanan (1994) explores this idea further:

> Notation erected a block in the Western ear against the inner complexities of non-Western musics. A strange kind of deafness appeared in the most sophisticated ears – Adorno himself […] suffered from it. Under the hegemony of notation, the Western psyche came to fear the embrace of what it repressed, and responded to any music which manifested this repressed material as if it were a threat to civilization (77-8).

Yet, in other respects, we must concede that Adorno was uncannily perceptive about the way popular music often functions in the age of recording. Over time, we come to like what we can recognise because it serves as an index, a more or less unmediated sign, of our own lives and our own identities. As Adorno (1938/1982) writes, 'The familiarity of the piece is a surrogate for the quality ascribed to it. To like it is almost the same thing as to recognize it' (271). This situation is particularly the case when inattentive musical reception predominates, when listeners 'fluctuate between comprehensive forgetting and sudden dives into recognition' (286). This description corresponds in key respects to that of the secretary with whom Adorno's friend and mentor, Siegfried Kracauer, became acquainted as part of an ethnographic study of white-collar workers. Kracauer (1930/1998) remarks:

> It is typical of her that, in a dancehall or suburban café, she cannot hear a piece of music without at once chirruping the appropriate popular hit. But it is not she who knows every hit, rather the hits know her, steal up behind her and gently lay her low. She is left in a state of stupor (70).

The attribution of agency here to the records rather than to the secretary smacks of condescension on Kracauer's part; we can only assume that, for the subject in question, her enjoyment of popular music was linked to her use of it as a performative resource, a

way of constructing an identity out of the cultural materials in her immediate environment, and in this sense the 'hits' she sang along to were really no different from the 'high' cultural materials with which someone like Kracauer would have been familiar. Yet there is also a degree to which, in a world characterised by rapid and on-going change, forging a sense of self becomes an act of improvisation, and the secretary's relatively new sociological status would have made this task all the more pressing. In the midst of the culture of modernity, which makes it seemingly ever harder to remember who we are – in the sense of where we come from, what we do, where and among whom we feel we belong – we often respond to music we are familiar with out of an affective obligation to those shards of autobiographical memories that can be pieced together to form a life. This is to say that music – all music – in the age of recording becomes more intimately entwined with identity and the problems of identity. While modernity functions to dislodge traditional notions of self grounded in relatively stable experiences of time and place, we respond by actively engaging in the formation of more mobile and contingent identities from whatever fragments are at our disposal, including recorded music.

CHAPTER 2

Recorded Music in Everyday Life

*

[W]e are each nodes in an enormous array of listening.
(Kassabian 2002: 139)

Everyday reveries

I'm in an indoor market in Bristol. In the main hall of the large civic building, with its various stalls of clothes, jewellery, and vintage knick-knacks, a song is playing, imbuing the atmosphere with a stillness and poignancy that is almost too much for the everydayness of the location to sustain. When the tune – Snow Patrol's 'Chasing cars'? – comes to an end, it's as if the workaday rhythms of midmorning and midweek can resume. The elderly man who runs the toy stall starts singing the song to himself, barely aware that he's doing so, substituting 'la's and 'da's for the actual words and slightly changing the melody. When I pass by him again five minutes later, he's still singing but the melody has changed even more.

Sitting inside my flat, I can hear the jingle from an ice-cream van being played over and over again. Appropriately enough for a sunny day, the tune is 'The sun has got his hat on'.[50] The jingles are a fairly common occurrence where my partner and I live, not because the streets are teeming with eager ice-cream vendors, but because there's a garage tucked round the corner, where an ageing fleet of vans are serviced. Situated on a desolate backstreet, the garage is attached to an ice-cream wholesaler's at the front, which faces on to the main road. Together with the pealing of bells from the nearby church and the steam train that sounds its whistle as it passes by in the summer months, the ice-cream jingles contribute to the sonic richness of the neighbourhood, steeping it in nostalgic 'pet sounds'.[51]

I'm in the park one morning when I become aware of the sound of a trumpet emanating from one of the nearby houses. After listening for some moments to what the musician is practising, I smilingly recognise it as the theme tune from *The Flumps*: a TV programme I used to watch as a child. I can picture the fluffy creatures of the show's title, can remember – or think I can remember – sitting down to watch it with my mum, as a toddler in the 1970s. The tune's characteristic interspersing of pairs of quavers with quarter-rests, and the simplicity of its harmonic progression, which, in the manner of countless other melodies, modulates between tonic and subdominant before being followed by an authentic cadence, must have constituted part of my unwitting induction as an infant into the Western system of tonality, so that melodies like this are now so familiar, they're part of my musical hard-wiring.[52]

These examples of auditory glimpses might not initially seem to be very representative of music in everyday life for being so specific and idiosyncratic, yet perhaps this is the point: if we reduce the everyday to its most general lineaments, we have failed to recognise its true character. In each of their separate ways, the examples just recounted suggest something of both the strangeness and familiarity of the everyday, the interpenetration of, on the one hand, that which we take for granted and, on the other, that which comes as an abrupt surprise. These examples combine the mundanity and the extraordinariness of the everyday. As such, they are instances of what I term 'everyday reveries', a notion that is explored in more detail in chapter six. An everyday reverie occurs when music that would ordinarily be heard as background noise is suddenly foregrounded and listened to attentively. As part of this experience, there is for the listener an enfolding of memory, a heightening of affect, an altered impression of time, and a new sensitivity towards his or her immediate physical environment and those he or she shares it with.

In this chapter, I will be examining the way in which musical recordings are able to migrate between different social and cultural contexts, often taking on new meanings in the process. I will present the contention that, in everyday life, music tends to resolve into stray fragments, both in the way it is consumed and in the way it is later remembered. Among these free-floating riffs, hooks, and refrains devoid of a stable context, the jingle will be considered as the paradigmatic example. Jingles are motifs written with the

express intention of being memorable and are thus able to lodge their way into every available and contingent crevice, making them among the most mobile and 'portable' of musical forms. Before examining these nomadic musical forms in more detail, I wish to clarify what exactly is meant by a phrase, the very ordinariness of which obfuscates its many levels of meaning and disguises its historical and cultural lineaments. The phrase in question is 'everyday life'.

Music and everyday life

In the era prior to recording, an historically-formed distinction can be observed between everyday music and music for special occasions. When one looks, for example, at paintings that depict music-making, both pre- and post-Renaissance, a noticeable class difference is to be found in this regard (Leppert 1993). Amongst the labouring classes, music is woven into the fabric of everyday life; it is simply in the air. For the aristocracy or nascent bourgeosie, however, music marks the site of social ritual: an event set aside from the everyday. This contrast should not be exaggerated, especially as music was a feature of weddings and other social occasions among farm workers. But in securing its own prestige, the upper strata of society sought to make their own music distinct from that of the lower classes. To achieve this, they reserved their music for activities at one remove from everyday life. Music became a decidedly unquotidian activity, increasingly an end in itself, requiring no bodily affirmation via singing or dancing.

The effect of recording is to immediately problematise this distinction. The ubiquity of recorded music makes it more difficult to use it as a way of demarcating a special time and space set apart from the everyday (Frith 2001). It becomes more difficult, for instance, for a classical concert to be regarded as a peak experience when background music is broadcast in the foyer immediately beforehand. The correlate of this is that the presence of musical recordings – through the earphones of an iPod, for example, or over a public-address system – can imbue ostensibly mundane situations such as the weekly shop with moments of reverie or specialness: the awakening of fond personal reminiscences, a fleeting sense of uncanniness or heightened affect perhaps, or a vivid impression of sensuous repletion. Due to this interpenetration of ordinariness and extrordinariness in our reception of music in everyday life, the category of the 'everyday'

itself is subject to change. More generally, one might state that 'everyday life' emerges from the dialectical interplay of mundanity, routine, and repetition on the one hand, and uncanniness, phantasmagoria, and surreality on the other.[53]

It should be underscored at this point that the 'everyday' is an historically-constructed category rather than a transhistorical one, though this can seem contrary to our sense of what is typically meant by the term. To state the matter somewhat baldly, 'everyday life' is a set of experiences with a common rhythm and locus, emerging at first in the newly industrialised cities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. To quote Henri Lefebvre (1971/1984), whose work stands at the forefront of properly critical and historicised accounts of the everyday, 'Undoubtedly people have always had to be fed, clothed, housed and have had to produce and then re-produce that which has been consumed; but until the nineteenth century, until the advent of competitive capitalism and the expansion of the world of trade the quotidian as such did not exist' (38). Essential factors in the formation of a sense of the everyday are the amassing of populations in urban centres and the routinisation of work and leisure in terms of strict spatial divisions between home and workplace, as well as equally strict temporal divisions between days of the week and within the working day. Life is no longer determined to the same extent by the traditional cycle of the seasons and the various labours and festivals associated with it. Instead, rapid and continual change becomes the norm, with the everyday as its ballast or counterpoint. In this regard, Rita Felski (2002) identifies everyday life as a regulatory force governed by three key principles: repetition, home, and habit. 'The temporality of the everyday […] is that of repetition, the spatial ordering of the everyday is anchored in a sense of home and the characteristic mode of experiencing the everyday is that of habit' (18).

'Everyday life', then, is constituted through particular kinds of spatial and temporal organisation. Indeed, it could be argued that we do away with the 'everyday' as a critical category and replace it with an analysis of space and time seeing that the term 'everyday life' always implies a consideration of spatio-temporal modalities. This, I wish to argue, would be a mistake, as what a critical formulation of the everyday draws attention to, in addition to the particular rhythmic and spatial orchestrations of social behaviour in modern life, is the increasing division, specialisation and hierarchical ordering of skills

and discourses that has occurred in modernity: the way that certain modes of becoming (physical labour, habit, affect, tactility, 'absent-mindedness') and certain modes of description (vernacular, slang, the 'vulgar', the 'feminine', the 'child-like' and 'naïve') have been marginalised or 'remaindered' as obvious and transparent or merely quotidian, in contrast to types of behaviour and discourses that are considered 'rational', 'scientific', 'technical', 'analytical', or 'intellectual' (and by extension, 'white', 'masculine' and 'authoritative'). 'Premodern societies', on the other hand, 'formed a relatively coherent, organic totality, and different activities and knowledges were more fully integrated into everyday life' (Gardiner 2000: 10). There has occurred, then, over the last three- or four-hundred years what T.S. Eliot (1921/2006) refers to as a 'dissociation of sensibility': an (attempted) separation of mind from matter, reason from the passions, and intellectual work from physical labour (198).[54] And it is as a consequence of these far-reaching dualisms and their dialectical interpenetration that 'everyday life' as such is constituted. As Mike Featherstone (1992) puts it, 'science, art, philosophy and other forms of theoretical knowledge originally embedded within everyday life become progressively separated and subjected to specialist development, followed by a further phase whereby this knowledge is fed back in order to rationalize, colonize and homogenize everyday life' (162).

With a few exceptions – Marx, Freud, Benjamin – social theory prior to Lefebvre (1947/1991) tended to offer an untheorised, uncritical, and ahistorical conception of everyday life. This was particularly true of empirical sociology, and remains so. As David Hesmondhalgh (2002) points out, 'The "everyday" is a taken-for-granted category in such sociology, hardly ever discussed or defined, even in books which carry the term in its title. "Everyday" […] comes to mean something like "ordinary human experience" ' (120).[55] Such work unwittingly reproduces the same separation of discourses and the same reification of the everyday as an object of rational technocractic control. After Lefebvre, however – in the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1965/1984), Guy Debord (1967/1995), Maurice Blanchot (1969/1993), Agnes Heller (1970/1984), and Michel de Certeau (1974/1984) – everyday life is figured not simply as a site of mundanity, routine, and repetition but as a site of possible resistance: a mode of becoming that, to some degree, evades rational analysis and control, and hence presents the possibility of

challenging it. Summarising this critically-engaged strand of writing on the everyday, Alice Kaplan and Kristin Ross (1987) argue that 'Even at its most degraded, the everyday harbors the possibility of its own transformation; it gives rise, in other words, to desires which cannot be satisfied within the weekly cycle of production/consumption. It is in the midst of the utterly ordinary, in the space where the dominant relations of production are tirelessly and relentlessly reproduced, that we must look for utopian and political aspirations to crystallize' (3). Such writers are not naively optimistic about the everyday, nor do they dispense entirely with abstract, conceptual knowledge as a way of understanding it; they suggest, however, that there is something left over from everyday experience which can never be captured by discursive language, and which is, in some cases, resistant to it. Certeau (1974/1984), whose work is exemplary in this regard, stresses that 'everyday practices' such as 'talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc.' are not just structurally determined or passive but can, instead, become ways of actively re-combining the 'given elements' of everyday life so that their meaning and function change (xix). Such 'tactics', as Certeau calls them, belong to 'the art of manipulating "commonplaces" and the inevitability of events in such a way as to make them "habitable" ' (xxii). They are a type of 'bricolage' or 'making do', representing the 'victor[y] of the "weak" over the "strong" ' (xv, xix). Certeau repeatedly turns to the example of the indigenous peoples of Central and South America:

> Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection [at the hands of the Spanish colonisers], the Indians nevertheless often *made of* the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind: they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept (xiii; emphasis in original).

In a similar way, Certeau notes that those who occupy subaltern positions in contemporary society – children, housewives, homosexuals, immigrants, tenants, employees – develop ways of subverting cultural and material practices in their day-to-day lives, 'turn[ing] to their own ends forces alien to them' (xix).

   Everyday life understood in Certeauvian terms is, then, an ongoing act of bricolage – a 'making do' with what is to hand but in ways that actively recombine and transform given material elements and what they signify. Bricolage has, of course, been one of the

foundational concepts in cultural studies, particularly in relation to postwar popular music. This is evident when one looks at landmark texts from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, such as the collection of essays edited by Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, *Resistance Through Rituals* (1975/1993), as well as Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979). It is also evident in the work of Lawrence Grossberg (1997), the earliest exponent of Birmingham-style cultural studies in the United States. This body of work has argued for subcultural musical genres and their associated fashions as a type of do-it-yourself collage, in which borrowed materials are arranged in such a way as to constitute a unified but contestatory semiotic system. Whether such writers are focusing on teddy boys, mods, skinheads or punks, the idea is that resistance is signified through the active re-combining of pre-existing cultural forms and artefacts in a way that disrupts the dominant symbolic order. Hebdige's eulogy to punk serves as a signal example:

> Objects borrowed from the most sordid of contexts found a place in punks' ensembles: lavatory chains were draped in graceful arcs across chests encased in plastic bin-liners. Safety pins were taken out of their domestic 'utility' context and worn as gruesome ornaments through the cheek, ear or lip. 'Cheap' trashy fabrics (PVC, plastic, lurex, etc.) in vulgar designs (e.g. mock leopard skin) and 'nasty' colours, long discarded by the quality end of the fashion industry as obsolete kitsch, were salvaged by the punks and turned into garments (fly boy drainpipes, 'common' miniskirts) which offered self-conscious commentaries on the notions of modernity and taste (Hebdige 1979: 107).

In a similar vein but focusing on music and its relationship to affect, Lawrence Grossberg (1997) also describes youth-orientated musical genres as a type of 'bricolage', endlessly borrowing and recombining elements from already-existing styles of music. 'Rock and roll', he writes, 'removes signs, objects, sounds, styles, and so forth from their apparently meaningful existence within the dominant culture and relocates them within an affective alliance of differentiation and resistance. The resultant shock – of both recognition and an undermining of meaning – produces a temporarily impassable boundary within the dominant culture, an encapsulation of the affective possibilities of the rock and roll culture' (36).

At a more primordial level, it can be argued that music *begins* as bricolage, in the sense that found objects are put to new uses: an animal bone is fashioned into a flute, a dried seed pod becomes a shaker, a tree branch hollowed out by termites is used as a

didgeridoo. This practice of music-making as bricolage continued into the twentieth century, for example, in the use of thimbles and a washboard to produce a new kind of percussion instrument, or the fashioning of a double bass from a tea chest. Bricolage has also been important in the history of *recorded* music, with key developments often resulting from already-existing materials and technologies being re-combined or used in ways not intended by their manufacturers. In many cases, these developments have been anticipated by the experiments of the classically-trained avant-garde. In using two or more record players at one time in order to combine music from separate discs, Paul Hindemith and Ernst Toch's *Grammophonmusik* (1930) presaged turntablism and DJ culture. Similarly, audiotape experiments involving splicing, looping, and phase shifting were the forerunners of digital sampling. These experiments include James Tenney's *Collage No. 1 ('Blue Suede')* (1961) – a tape collage of Elvis Presley's 'Blue Suede Shoes' – and Steve Reich's *It's Gonna Rain* (1965) for which Reich recorded a Pentecostal preacher in San Francisco's Union Square telling the story of Noah. When the preacher, Brother Walter, intoned the apocalyptic phrase 'it's gonna rain', he was accompanied, quite by accident, by the sound of a pigeon taking flight. Through successive loops and phase shifting – i.e. the same recording being played on two machines but at slightly different speeds – the sound of flapping wings became the piece's percussive foundation. Another example of existing technology being put to new uses concerns the defining instrument of acid house and techno. The Roland TB-303 bass line sequencer (1981-4) was originally marketed to guitarists as a way of providing them with bass accompaniment when practising alone, but when pushed into overdrive by house-music pioneers such as the Chicago-based group Phuture, it was made to produce high-frequency oscillations: a dirty, rippling buzz as if a field of metallic grasshoppers had imbibed psychedelics. This sound can be heard on Phuture's 1987 composition, 'Acid tracks'.

My main concern in this chapter is with musical bricolage at the level of listening: a kind of *interpretative* bricolage, a search for the chance combinations and collage-like effects of hearing music in ever-shifting circumstances. This is one dimension of the 'everyday reverie', an idea I develop more thoroughly in chapter six. As we have already seen, the textual meaning of a piece of music is changed by its insertion into a different

context. Later on in the current chapter, I will explore this process with reference to concrete examples, focusing on the migration of recurrent melodies and other musical fragments between diverse social and cultural situations. The notion of the everyday reverie implies in this regard an attempt to actively interpret or at least to attend closely to what one hears, particularly in terms of the interplay of text and context. This, however, does not equate to self-conscious listening but, rather, profoundly *conscious* listening: an absorption in the music of one's environment, both literal and metaphorical. The everyday reverie is thus a fleeting union of subject and object, an 'assemblage' of listener and music in which the physical, affective and intellectual meanings of such encounters are actively invited and explored.

For the moment, I would like to pursue the broader affiliations between music and the everyday in terms of their shared characteristics and modes of signification. It is my contention that there is a loose analogical affinity between music and everyday life. In a book on musical semiotics, Wilson Coker (1972) writes: 'through its temporal characteristics music displays its profound likeness to life, because through temporal characteristics both music and life achieve organization' (208). Arguably, repetition and recurrence are the temporal characteristics that unite music and everyday life most strongly. This is Lefebvre's claim. Just as '[e]veryday life is made of recurrence' in the sense of being composed of gestures and movements that are repeated on a greater or lesser timescale, so too is music (Lefebvre 1971/1984: 18). '[A]ll music', he observes, 'is repeatable; all melodies tend towards an end […] that may start a repeat' (19). This musical repetition relies on the workings of memory in order to be perceived. It is mnemonic in another sense too: 'Emotions from the past are re-evoked and moments recalled by and through music' (ibid.). If we tend to think of repetition in everyday life as merely entailing monotony and drudgery, we should therefore pause to think:

> Such visions of the horror of repetition […] are distinctively modern. For most of human history, activities have gained value precisely because they repeat what has gone before. Repetition, understood as ritual, provides a connection to ancestry and tradition; it situates the individual in an imagined community that spans historical time. It is thus not opposed to transcendence, but is the means of transcending one's historically limited existence (Felski 2002: 20).

It should be noted that music of one kind or another, and its repetition, continues to be an integral part of many different kinds of rituals. Music, which – as Lefebvre (1971/1984) reminds us – is founded in repetition and recurrence of one kind or another, 'is at the same time nothing else but lyricism, profusion and dream' (20). Its similar temporal organisation allows it to evoke a poetics of the everyday – to 'express the secret nature of everyday life' as Lefebvre puts it, or, more pessimistically to 'compensate […] for its triviality and superficiality' (ibid.). Music evokes the recurrences and repetitions of everyday life but in doing so is able to transcend them.

Another affinity with everyday life is to be found in music's non-referential mode of signification – the fact that it is generally connotative rather then denotative. In Saussurean terms, music is a signifier without any obvious signified: a sign vehicle without any readily identifiable concept attached to it. Similarly, in the semiotics of Saussure's neglected contemporary, C.S. Peirce, music is a sign *of* something rather than a sign *about* something: it signifies at the more direct and concrete levels of 'firstness' and 'secondness' rather than the more mediated and abstract 'third' level of language and other 'symbolic' systems. This inexplicitness of music accords with the inexplicitness of everyday life – its relative 'invisibility'. An essay by Maurice Blanchot (1969/1993) on 'Everyday speech' helps clarify this connection. Blanchot describes the everyday as being 'without a truth proper to it': 'It belongs to insignificance; the insignificant being what is without truth, without reality, and without secret, but also perhaps the site of all possible signification' (238-240). To make the analogy with musical signification, music – like the everyday – says nothing and yet constitutes a ground for all possible statements. As Susanne Langer (1957) writes:

> The assignment of meanings [in music] is a shifting, kaleidoscopic play, probably below the threshold of consciousness, certainly outside the pale of discursive thinking […]. The lasting effect [of music] is […] to make things conceivable rather than to store up propositions (Langer 1957: 244).

Music is a highly suggestive yet inchoate mode of expression, thus sharing in the 'non-significance' of the everyday as described by Blanchot. 'The everyday escapes': 'If we seek it through knowledge we cannot help but miss it, for it belongs to a region where there is still nothing to know' (Blanchot 1969/1993: 241).

In his survey of everyday life studies, Ben Highmore (2002) claims that 'everyday life is characterized by ambiguities, instabilities and equivocation' with the result that 'no form of discourse is ever going to be "proper" (appropriate) to [it]' (17, 21). But perhaps music is this 'form' precisely because it is not quite 'discourse'? To put this another way, music might be adequate to the task of describing the everyday because of the very inexplicitness of its mode of description. One could claim on its behalf, for example, that it connotes quotidian details in all their fluidity and contingency. As we have seen, Lefebvre (1971/1984) is tempted to privilege music in this regard, though he also wonders whether 'architecture, painting, dancing, poetry or games' might not be equally capable of evoking everyday life (20). If not *the* poetics of the everyday, then, music might at least be *a* poetics of everyday life. The current ubiquity of recorded sound means that, via music's repetitive and recurrent temporal organisation and its connotative mode of signification, it evokes everyday life while being firmly lodged in its midst.

Musical repetition

Whether it be at the micro-level of a pitch, interval, melody or harmony, or the macro-level of an entire section or even a whole work, repetition of musical material is crucial to the psychological experience of music. As remarked on earlier, musical repetition of all kinds engages the listener's memory or, rather, a complex set of memory processes. If, as humans, we were cognitively different in terms of the way we remembered, our music would be very different as a result. Take short-term memory, for example. Its span of somewhere between five to nine seconds corresponds to the amount of musical material we can hear as belonging to the 'present' moment; as a result, a typical musical phrase across all cultures and all styles of music will not usually be longer than nine seconds. (If it is, it becomes very difficult even for accomplished musicians to repeat it after hearing it just once.) Intelligent life forms on other planets, however, might listen to music that falls into phrases of much longer duration. Such music, if it existed, would be largely unintelligible to our ears; we would literally 'not get it'. One could make the more general point that music has a meaning for us because we recognise it: we recognise either the style, genre or era it belongs to, the location it originates from, or we recognise

the specific piece. In the recorded era, we often recognise a performer's voice even though we might not be familiar with the particular song we are listening to.

To a greater extent than we often appreciate, then, it is the repetition of musical material, both introversively and extroversively, that makes music meaningful and comprehensible – though too much repetition can, of course, drain music of meaning. A comparison of music and language is instructive in rendering more clearly the importance of repetition for musical communication. Whereas language, ideally, tends towards maximum information and minimum repetition, music tends towards minimum information and maximum repetition. It is not too much to say that music *is*, in essence, repetition, for without some explicitly iterative aspect, even if it is just the return of a particular pitch, rhythm or timbre, there would be little about incoming auditory information that could be described as 'musical'. In his popular musicology, Richard Middleton employs Jakobson's terminology, identifying (popular) music's reliance on repetition as being crucial to its *phatic* aspect: the need to establish contact as one of the primary motives and expressions within musical communication. As Middleton (1990) comments, 'The import [of repetitive musical phrases such as vamps and riffs] is: "Do you recognize this? Am I getting through? Are we on the same wave-length?" ' (242). Music's *phatic* function can be characterised, in part, as communication for communication's sake: repetition in order to establish that communication is indeed occurring.

In what follows, I would briefly like to examine two main types of musical repetition before going on to consider the significance of re-hearing a fragment from a familiar piece of music but in a context that is markedly different from the one in which it was first heard. The first kind of repetition I would like to consider is introversive repetition: repetition within a single piece of music. Following Leonard Meyer (1956), introversive repetition can be subdivided into 'reiteration' and 'recurrence' (151-2). 'Recurrence' is the reappearance of melody or harmony after an intervening passage that is noticeably different, 'reiteration' the simple and prolonged repetition of the same musical material. 'Recurrence' and 'reiteration' set up different patterns of expectation. The former causes the listener to anticipate the return of a phrase, melody or harmony, etc. whereas the latter will tend to make him or her expect some sort of deviation. In either case, 'recurrence' or

'reiteration', the effect of hearing musical material a second, third, or fourth time is quite different to that of hearing it for the first time. The repetition of a melody is an example of what Meyer calls a 'resolved audition'. As this phrase suggests, there is less tension in hearing a phrase or motif again, less uncertainty about where the music is going or what is to come.

And this is true also of extroversive repetition: the repetition of a piece of music, either in its entirety or as a fragment. A piece of music has a different significance for us if we are already familiar with it. This second main type of repetition is a feature most obviously of the age of recording, in which the exact same performance can be listened to again and again, but it is also dependent in a broader historical sense on, firstly, the development of musical notation in the Middle Ages and, secondly, on the stabilisation of a canon of European art music during the nineteenth century. Prior to this, the author of a work did not hear it performed more than perhaps once in his lifetime – as was the case with Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and the majority of Mozart's works (Attali 1977/1985: 100).

The significance in one's life of much recorded music, especially pop music, can be compared to the significance of strangers whom we pass each day on our way to work. With time, there is a certain sense of intimate discomfort as you pass each other at almost exactly the same spot and at exactly the same minute of the day for the nth time. Just as these strangers, quite arbitrarily it seems, give shape to one's daily life, so too does music that one is exposed to on a recurrent, diurnal basis, such as a song playlisted for radio airplay, or a TV or radio theme tune – *Coronation Street* and *The Archers* to mention two of the most enduring and memorable British examples. In the same way that the role occupied by these intimate strangers could be filled by anyone, so too does it not really matter what the content of the music consists of in order to make it meaningful. The fact that it recurs and persists in our lives for a certain duration and then is heard again is enough to imbue it with significance. The nostalgic value we grant it over time follows from the fact that, in spite of all our intentions, it has given shape and cadence to our lives.

Stray refrains, mobile motifs, and quotation listening

In the *Symphonie Fantastique,* Berlioz uses a single melody that reappears in different guises throughout the work, representing the idea of the beloved. This *idée fixe*, as it is known, had not been used so thoroughly in a symphony before. It was the forerunner of Wagner's *Leitmotiv*, a short phrase associated with a character, object or dramatic idea, which would go on to become an integral part of the classical Hollywood film score of the 1930s and 40s. Both the idée fixe and the leitmotif anticipate the way we now hear music in everyday life – as recurrent melodies. The difference, however, is that idées fixes and leitmotifs were carefully embedded within a narrative context; the leitmotifs of everyday life are usually not. Instead, they are, to a large extent 'free-floating'. In spite of composers' intentions to the contrary, melodies or phrases tend to be lifted free from the works in which they were once embedded, via the use of excerpts in film, television, radio, as well as in 'micro-media' such as the looped music played when you're put on hold during a phone call, or ringtones for mobile phones. With a claim to being the world's most heard tune, the Nokia ringtone – belonging to those brief few years before ringtones became more personalised – is a cadential snippet from a beautiful waltz for solo guitar by Francisco Tárrega entitled *Gran Vals* (1902). The ringtone is arranged for piano instead of guitar and, interestingly, its final note resolves whereas Tárrega's original does not. Although the phrase quoted by the ringtone was just a cadence rather than the main melody of *Gran Vals*, it is impossible now to listen to a performance of the three minutes plus of the original without the phrase in question leaping out from the rest of the composition.

   The case of *Gran Vals* / the Nokia tune is a good example of what Adorno (1941/2002) calls 'quotation listening': the way in which the original version of a piece of music is heard as a quotation or simulacrum due to it having previously been heard in truncated form in another context (263). Whether it be a fragment of classical music used as the theme tune for a television programme, a cover version of a pop song, or a sample of another record, the copy often supplants the original as the 'authentic' version, at least in the listener's mind: 'by sounding like a quotation – the quintessence of the whole – the trivialized theme assumes a peculiar air of authority' (264). Writing in 1941 as an émigré in the United States, Adorno bemoans the fact that Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* has been

transformed into 'a set of quotations from theme songs' (263). 'A Beethoven symphony', he writes, 'is essentially a process; if that process is replaced by a presentation of frozen items, the performance is faithless even if executed under the battle cry of the utmost fidelity to the letter' (265). Taken from an essay entitled 'The radio symphony', these comments on quotation listening continue many of the themes of Adorno's earlier work such as his insistence that music of virtually every kind has become a series of disjointed sound fetishes, making 'structural listening' impossible. While one might not accept his blanket criticisms of popular music nor his insistence that the perception of large-scale structure is what matters most in musical reception, Adorno's comments here are remarkably prescient in identifying how, in the age of recorded sound, chronology can be confounded and the integrity of the original diminished when we to come it via a later re-working of it or via its abridged use in film, television, or other media. Perhaps the most prominent feature of quotation listening, however, is a special attentiveness to what we are hearing due to the fact that we recognise it but are not sure at first from where. This is illustrated by the following personal examples.

One of the most memorable experiences of quotation listening occurred in my early twenties before I'd been to many classical concerts. A friend had managed to get me free tickets for a production of the operas *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* – or 'Cav and Pag' as this conventional pairing is sometimes known in the business. The first of the two examples of operatic verismo passed by enjoyably enough but without incident. Midway through *Pagliacci*, however, at the point where the travelling actor, Canio, breaks down, unable to apply his clown's make-up for the evening's performance because he has been cuckolded, I suddenly sat up. 'That's from a song by Queen' I remember thinking to myself, before a split second later realising that it was Freddie Mercury who had borrowed this heart-rending aria from Leoncavallo and not the other way round.[56] A little more knowledge at that point in my life of the history of recording would have meant that I'd been aware of this fact: Enrico Caruso's 1904 recording of this aria, 'Vesti la giubba', was the first ever record to sell a million copies. Its afterlife in alternate versions and parodies was to be expected.

A second example – which continues the theme of clowns – concerns a chance hearing on the radio of a show tune composed by Stephen Sondheim. 'Send in the clowns' is

from his 1973 musical *A Little Night Music* and is an anthem to romantic regret and disappointment. When I first heard the complete song, however, I knew nothing of this narrative context – the character Desirée suppressing her anger and frustration in short-breathed lines, stoically expressing the ironies and disappointments of her life. I instantly recognised the melody but suspected – rightly as it turned out – that I'd heard a different version of it, seeing as I didn't recognise any of the lyrics. After about five or ten minutes of humming the melody to myself, during which I felt the deliciously tantalising sense of knowing I knew it but not from where, I finally remembered: it was from an album I owned – and, I should confess, *cherished* – as a child. The album in question is U2's *Under a Blood Red Sky*: a compilation of live recordings from their 1983 world tour. 'Send in the clowns' is sung as a kind of middle eight that occurs two-thirds of the way through 'Electric Co.'. Bono sings the merest snippet of Leonard Bernstein's 'America' – but in a minor key – before segueing into the chorus of 'Send in the clowns' and then returning to the chorus of 'Electric Co.'.[57]

Edward Said (1991) has written about 'the unexpected pleasure of recognizing [a] piece [of music] from a different context', which, he says, makes one 'unusually attentive' – though, like Adorno, he also laments 'the comic, entirely parodistic familiarity with […] "alienated masterpieces" enabled by record players and electronic gadgets' (76, 79, 80). For Said, it was hearing Alfred Brendel perform a set of Brahms piano variations that occasioned a sense of unusual alertness. Up to then, Said had only been familiar with the original chamber setting of the variations as part of Brahms's String Sextet in B flat: 'Strangely, I think the effort of correspondence held me much more rigorously to the music than is usually the case: I assimilated, I actively bound my hearing to, an earlier but still lively experience' (80). The encounter was exemplary of Said's experience of music as 'an unceasing shuttle between playing and listening privately for myself and playing and listening in a social setting' (76). Reflecting on the convergence of the two pieces via his private memories of the former and Brendel's public recital of the latter, Said was left with a powerful sense of 'how a set of disparate things coming together consolidate and affirmatively support each other' (88). The incident illustrates how such forms of listening often acquire an oddly personal character, not necessarily because of any sentimental attachment we might have to the piece of

music that we are now hearing in a different form but merely because we recognise and remember it and thus it *feels* personal – it becomes an index of one's life. At the same time, these personal resonances, which occur as we delve into our past to resurrect what for us will always be the 'original' version, intersect with the overtly public meanings of the new version if it is heard in a social setting. We thus have an example of something anticipated in Proust: the way in which memory has acquired a quasi-spiritual value in our predominantly secular society.

The 'refrain' in the work of Deleuze and Guattari

The work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari provides an interesting theoretical insight into the role of stray musical fragments in contemporary society. In a chapter entitled 'Of the refrain' from their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), they privilege the medium of sound because it suggests for them certain ways of thinking about the world, certain ways of being in the world which they find very attractive. In particular, they emphasise sound's ability to travel between different milieux, in the process, opening these milieux up to new influences, 'deterritorialising' them.

Deleuze and Guattari's interest in sound is focussed on what they call the 'refrain'. According to their definition of it, a refrain is a mobile musical fragment or, more broadly, a sonic method of organising affective experience, making it cohere. They give three preliminary examples. Here is the first:

> A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 311).

The second example is as follows: 'A child hums to summon the strength for the schoolwork she has to hand in' (ibid.). And the third: 'A housewife sings to herself, or listens to the radio, as she marshals the antichaos forces of her work' (ibid.). Other notable examples of 'refrains' which they cite include bird songs (as well as Messiaen's musical renderings of them); Wagner's leitmotifs; and also 'the little phrase from Vinteuil' that so obsesses Charles Swann in the first volume of Proust. For Deleuze and Guattari, refrains help to locate humans – as well as non-humans such as birds – within a

'sonorous cosmos', what Jane Bennett (2001) refers to as the 'energetic and rumbling […] dimension of things' (166).

A refrain such as a tune one hums to oneself during a moment of boredom, relaxation, tension or joy has the effect of opening oneself to a world of other sounds and pulsating energies. At the same time, it establishes more securely one's place within that sonorous world, giving oneself the confidence to go on. In common with other poststructuralist thinkers, one of Deleuze and Guattari's primary contentions is that the most essential characteristic of human beings is their lack of an essence. The refrain is not to be understood therefore as something innately human but rather as something innately transitive, moving us beyond the merely human. It is an example of what in actor-network theory is known as an 'assemblage'; or what Bernard Stiegler (1998) terms a 'technic' in the dual sense of a technique and a technology – a non-human agent via which humans' interactions with the world are always already mediated.

A refrain is not, then, a personal expression. Instead, it expresses a 'domain' or plane of existence – a temporary pattern in the endless project of becoming (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 316). A refrain also expresses the beginnings of a domain's dissolution, its transformation into a new pattern, or its reaching beyond one domain before coalescing with another. This relationship between sound and space can be figured in terms of three main categories of refrain: 'territorializing', 'de-territorializing', and 're-territorializing'. Sound is more inherently de-territorialising than other media – as anyone with noisy neighbours can attest to. It is more so than light, for example. Deleuze and Guattari's world view, if it can be called that, is of '[t]he cosmos as an immense deterritorialized refrain' within which any localised orders or territories are fleeting and contingent (327). It is a universe of emergent properties or 'fuzzy aggregates': as-yet inchoate patterns 'of forces, densities, intensities' that 'are not thinkable on their own terms' (378). Although elsewhere in their work desire is their basic social ontology – much like power is in the work of Foucault – in this particular chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, sound occupies a privileged place and is the chief metaphor for their vision of a polymorphous world of infinite becoming.

Deleuze and Guattari offer a potted history of Western art music in terms of the increasing de-territorialisation of its refrains. They stress, for example, the mobility of the

Wagnerian leitmotif – perhaps contrary to Wagner's intentions for it. In this connection, they give 'the little phrase from Vinteuil' in Proust as an example of a de-territorialised leitmotif: in simple terms, it changes its meaning and associations over time, as Swann hears and remembers it in new contexts and as his relationship changes to Odette, with whom it becomes associated.

Extrapolating from Deleuze and Guattari's ideas, it could be said that recording has systematically de-territorialised music, in other words, it has allowed virtually all styles of music from all eras and all geographical regions to travel beyond their proper social milieux and be inserted into new contexts, new milieux, opening them up to their influence. To use a perhaps hackneyed but nonetheless useful example, one might think of the opening up of British society in the 1950s by American R & B and rock 'n' roll, and the corresponding opening up of the US in the early 60s by the so-called 'British invasion'. For an example from before the recorded era, one might look to the interchange that long existed between opera and street songs, sound travelling more easily between hierarchically-organised social spaces than people. Other examples are too legion to list but for a more concrete instance one might mention Eric B. & Rakim's landmark hip-hop recording 'Paid in full' (1987), which brought the Hebrew poetry of a seventeenth-century rabbi and Yemeni-Jewish folk music to a global audience via its prominent sampling of Ofra Haza's sumptuously evocative 'Im nin'alu'.[58] A sense of the de-territorialising effects of recording is to be found in this comment from Michael Chanan (1994), which anticipates the era of downloads and file sharing: 'the ease of reproduction allows the circulation of music to escape the control of the market and discover new forms. In short, the old hierarchies of aesthetic taste and judgement may have broken down, but music continues to breathe and to live according to its own immanent criteria' (18).

Part of music's de-territorialising function – its movement between different milieux – is its ability to 'catalyse' various social interactions, sometimes in an overtly political way. Music evokes sympathy or channels anger. It swells a sense of belonging and adds pathos to loneliness. It can 'lighten the mood', or give people implicit instructions as to how they ought to behave, or give them licence to misbehave. Music 'invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 348). It brings people together

or sets groups up in opposition against each other. Deleuze and Guattari refer to this latter aspect as '[t]he potential fascism of music'. 'Flags', they write, 'can do nothing without trumpets' (ibid.). So, in addition to de-territorialising or disaggregating, music can also produce banal and sinister re-territorialisations: 'Since its force of deterritorialization is the strongest, [sound] also effects the most massive of reterritorializations, the most numbing, the most redundant' (ibid.). The refrain's 'catalytic function' is, then, both its ability 'to increase the speed of the exchanges and reactions in that which surrounds it' and 'to assure indirect interactions between elements devoid of so-called natural affinity, and thereby to form organized masses' (ibid.). It should be added that, by its entry into almost every nook and cranny of daily life, recorded music is able to catalyse social interactions all the more rapidly and effectively. This will be seen in the section that follows.

Of theme tunes, chants, and jingles

I would now like to give a more detailed account of three examples of what I call 'stray refrains'. Though these examples stem from phonographic contexts, they are not limited to them.

'Mbube'

The first example is a song that goes by three separate names, reflecting its migration between different continents and cultures. In many ways, it has become the definitive musical statement of African diasporic identity, though not in the sense of Africa as a point of absolute origins but rather as a node of dense genealogical influences. Recorded in the early decades of phonographic reproduction, the piece of music in question and the musical milieu from which it sprang was, in certain ways, already international in scope and outlook.

In its original incarnation the song went by the name 'Mbube' meaning 'The lion'. It was performed by a six-man choir of Zulu migrant workers, The Evening Birds, who had moved from rural South Africa to work in the country's newly industrialised cities. In 1939, the group's leader and songwriter, Solomon Linda, took a job as a packer in a record pressing plant in Roodeport. Linda's group attracted the interest of the company's

talent scout, Griffiths Motsiela, who was also the country's first black producer. The company's owner, an Italian named Eric Gallo, was eager to open his business up to the black African market and so, somewhat bizarrely with hindsight, initially persuaded Motsiela to produce cover versions of country and western numbers from the American Midwest but sung in local languages: first Afrikaans, then Zulu and Xhosa. When 'afro-hillbilly' failed to catch on, Gallo looked to South Africa's emerging *isicathamiya* scene of male a cappella choirs, of which Linda's group were the preeminent example. Thus in 1939, Solomon Linda and the Evening Birds found themselves in Johannesburg in the only recording studio in sub-Saharan Africa.

The group had a distinctive visual appeal. Linda was the first leader of an *isicathamiya* choir to make it a point to dress members up in a uniform that spoke of indomitable urban sophistication: 'The Evening Birds sported pinstriped three-piece suits, Florsheim shoes, and hats and indulged in a fast-paced, energetic choreography called *istep* that made performers look like resolute men defiantly walking the streets of the white man's city' (Erlmann 2003: 271). Such a visual presentation accorded with Linda's songs, telling of the injustices of urban life in South Africa but also suggesting a determination to distance the group from their rural origins. Raised in the poverty-stricken labour reserve of Msinga in the vicinity of Pomeroy, Solomon Linda was well-versed in the local singing traditions of *amahubo* and *izingoma zomtshado*. But his musical ancestry was not solely African. As a boarder at the nearby Gordon Memorial School, he was exposed to the starched hymns of mission culture as well as the syncopated rhythms of the celebrated Negro spiritual troupe, The Virginia Jubilee Singers, who were touring Southern Africa at the time.

Undoubtedly, much of what is preserved on the recording of 'Mbube' was Solomon Linda's own composition and, indeed, elements of the song that would be given increased salience in later versions were improvised by Linda on the spot. Yet, even before The Evening Birds' 1939 recording, it appears that the song – or a precursor of it – had already been in transit in a manner that exemplifies the complex origins and shared heritage of melodies. According to the ethnomusicologist, Veit Erlmann (1996), who has written extensively on *isicathamiya* music,' "Mbube" was based on a wedding song which Linda and his friends had picked up from young girls in Msinga', though the

words presumably were Linda's own as they celebrate an incident in which the young Solomon and his friends chased off lions that were stalking their fathers' cattle (62).

The recording of 'Mbube' that would go on to sell over 100,000 copies in Southern Africa in the 1940s was The Evening Birds' third take of the song. For this version, they departed from their normal a cappella arrangement, their producer Motsiela hurriedly dragooning a pianist, guitarist, and banjo player in exasperation at the failure of the two previous takes. A short, metrically-free introduction gives way to the main section of the song, a booming four-bar progression, I | IV | I4/6 | V7, in which the members of the choir repeat the line '*Uyimbube!*', Zulu for 'You're a lion!'. The doo-wop feel of this harmonic framework drew upon Westernised styles of music that were popular at the time among the upper strata of urban black society in South Africa (Erlmann 1996: 66). In spite of not being especially original or African, the harmonic progression in 'Mbube' became canonic within Southern Africa, providing the template for much of the music that would follow. Linda's innovation was to have more than one member of the choir singing the bass, thus departing from standard arrangements of the time in which there was one voice per part. This adaptation of *ithicathamiya* forms actually marked a return to traditional, pre-colonial choral practices of ceremonial performance genres (ibid.). The strengthened bass helped give The Evening Birds a territorial advantage over rival choirs, demarcating, by sonic means, a space for themselves within South Africa's urban landscape. It also anticipated improvements in amplification and the invention of the electric bass that would contribute to the much greater prominence of bass lines in Afro-American derived styles of popular music from the 1950s onwards. At the other end of the register is Linda's own voice. His uncompromisingly rough and unrestrained falsetto soars above the foundation laid down by the bass and other voices. There is a sense of uncanniness hearing Linda improvise the melody that would one day be set to the words, 'In the jungle, the mighty jungle, the lion sleeps tonight': the moment, in the last ten seconds of the recording, when one of the most popular and enduring tunes of the recording era, a truly global tune, takes tentative shape for the first time. Such a sense of unwitting momentousness is compounded by the knowledge that Linda died in poverty, and that neither he nor his family were ever properly remunerated for a composition that is estimated to have generated revenues in excess of $15 million.

The record made its passage across the Atlantic when the folk-song collector, Alan Lomax, passed on a box of discarded African 78s to Pete Seeger in New York. Seeger's group, The Weavers, recorded a version of the song in 1952, adhering closely to Linda's original arrangement. A signal difference, however, was in the wording of the song's refrain: when transcribing the song, Seeger, misheard '*uyimbube*' as '*wimoweh*'. 'Wimoweh', as it was now called, took Linda's song into the American pop charts, and its fame spread, culminating in The Weavers' 1957 performance of it at Carnegie Hall. The song was covered by The Kingston Trio in 1959. Shortly after, songwriter George Weiss used Linda's melody to pen the lyrics for 'The lion sleeps tonight'. Weiss's re-named version of Linda's composition provided The Tokens with a hit in 1961, since which time the song has undergone hundreds of covers, copies and arrangements, and has been used in the scores of numerous films, most notably Disney's *The Lion King* (1994 for the film, 1997 for the staged musical) (Muller 2008: 5-6). 'Mbube'/'Wimoweh'/'The lion sleeps tonight' has become a standard for African singers as they take an increasingly prominent position on the global stage, but it has been through far more unlikely guises too, from Navajo powwows to New Zealand army band marches, indicating its status as a song the whole world knows. Its ability to be transformed and adopted as their own by each new group of people who encounter it stands as evidence of melody's nomadic powers and is a fitting tribute to the Zulu migrants who first performed it and, indeed, to the African diaspora as a whole, the music of which continues to exert an influence on popular styles across the world.

'You'll never walk alone'

Another song that has been recorded by multiple artists is 'You'll never walk alone'. It is now internationally famous as a football chant but since its inception in 1945 it has migrated across a diverse range of social territories. It is an example of a song whose lyrics have changed meaning depending on the context in which it is sung. It is an interesting song in the history of twentieth-century popular music because it evidences the interplay between official recorded versions and more or less impromptu, non-professional renditions. In each performance, a different vision of community, a different collective identity, is communicated.

'You'll never walk alone' was the creation of one of the twentieth century's great songwriting partnerships, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II. It first appeared in their 1945 Broadway musical, *Carousel*, and in the Hollywood film that followed in 1956. It appears in the second act, sung by the character Nettie Fowler in order to comfort her cousin, Julie Jordan, after the death of Julie's husband, Billy, in a failed robbery. (In this scene, Julie is carrying their unborn child.) The song is reprised in the musical's final scene in which Billy and Julie's daughter, Louise, now grown up, graduates from high school. For this reason, 'You'll never walk alone' became a standard at graduation ceremonies across the United States, the tradition continuing to this day in some colleges. The lyrics of the song – 'When you walk through a storm / Hold your head up high', etc. – deal with triumph over adversity and are thus applicable to many different situations, not just the trials and tribulations awaiting recent graduates. In 1954, the R&B singer, Roy Hamilton, recorded a version of it, serving as inspiration for African-Americans in their struggle for civil rights (Ripani 2006: 78).

Outside of the States, the song is best known as a rousing match-day chant sung by football fans, especially, though not exclusively, by Liverpool supporters. The origins of the song's long association with Liverpool Football Club is an interesting test case in what is an under-researched area: the role of recorded music at live sports events. In the 1960s, the DJ at Liverpool's football ground would play the top ten in ascending order, with the number one single being transmitted just before kick-off. For four consecutive weeks in 1963, this pop fanfare happened to be a recording of 'You'll never walk alone' by the Merseybeat group, Gerry and the Pacemakers. Fans in the home stand would sing along every time the record was played, and when it dropped out of the top ten, they continued to sing it just before each game (Johnston 2008). In this way, the song became established as the club's anthem, with the words 'You'll never walk alone' later being incorporated into the club crest and being emblazoned above a pair of entrance gates to the stadium at Anfield.

There have been some fine choral arrangements of 'You'll never walk alone' but of the numerous popular recordings of the song, including the 1956 film version and Gerry and the Pacemakers' 1963 hit, most are impaired by the schmaltziness of their vocal deliveries. This is unfortunate as the song contains one of the great crescendos in popular

music: the moment when the words of the title are reached, including the thrilling leap of a major fourth – from 'you'll' to the first syllable of 'never' – when the title is immediately sung again. As a song whose lyrics are about collective support, an impression reinforced by the musical setting which rises up and up, iconically surmounting every obstacle, it is best heard when sung by a group of singers rather than by a single emoting pop star trying to impress upon us that they really mean it. And better still when one is part of the group singing it.

Perhaps the least sentimental and thus poignant version of 'You'll never walk alone' is to be found on Pink Floyd's 1971 album, *Meddle*. Not actually a cover version, it is instead a field recording from the Spion Kop terrace at Anfield, inserted as an aural montage early on in the track, 'Fearless', and then reappearing at the end of the song when the acoustic guitars gradually fade out to be replaced by the rousing voices of the Kop. The lyrics of 'Fearless' tread similar ground to those of 'You'll never walk alone': 'You say the hill's too steep to climb / Climb it', etc. (The song dates from the days when the BBC Radio 1 DJ, John Peel, could remark without irony that what he liked about Pink Floyd was their optimism.) The song's main guitar riff has a suitably intrepid feel to it, using an open tuning in G with chords being played energetically further and further up the fretboard before returning to the tonic. Dave Gilmour's singing, on the other hand, is slow, gentle and laissez-faire; his received pronunciation in contrast to the markedly Liverpudlian accents of the Kop. The inclusion on a progressive-rock album of Liverpool fans chanting 'You'll never walk alone' alters the song's meaning again. In a sense, it 'de-territorialises' it, taking it out of the confrontational politics of match-day so that its aesthetic qualities as a sonic artefact can be lingered upon. The sound of young, working-class men spontaneously joining together in song has a poignancy and nostalgia that they could never have intended. For this reason, Pink Floyd's use of 'You'll never walk alone' can be counted among the classic field recordings of post-war Britain: a fascinating aural glimpse from the archive of everyday life.

'O sole mio'

'O sole mio' is another song that is internationally known yet, almost from its inception, its proper locale seems to have been the provincial and the mundane. Composed in 1898

by Eduardo di Capua and Giovanni Capurro, 'O sole mio' translates from the Neapolitan dialect into English as 'My sun' and there have indeed been numerous English versions, many with altered lyrics: a hymn called 'Down from his glory' written in 1921; 'There's no tomorrow' recorded by Tony Martin in 1949; and 'It's now or never' by Elvis Presley in 1960.

A description of the song appears in the penultimate volume of Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu*. It is interesting to note that, less than two decades after its composition, the song was already seen as crushingly banal through being overplayed: 'this trivial song which I had heard a hundred times did not interest me in the least degree' (Proust 1925/1968: 322). It is also firmly lodged within everyday life: a song one overhears or listens to absentmindedly as one gets on with the business of day-to-day life. The unnamed narrator of *À la recherche*, usually referred to by critics as 'Marcel', hears the song one evening in Venice as he sips a cool drink on the terrace of a hotel overlooking the canal. The number is sung – though not, we are led to understand, performed as such – by a musician on a boat that has stopped in front of the hotel. The essentially joyous character of 'O sole mio' is transformed by Marcel's melancholic and anxious mood as he wavers in his decision to stay in Venice in pursuit of a sexual adventure rather than cede to his beloved mother's wishes and join her on the train back to Paris: 'Presently, she would be gone, I should be left alone in Venice, alone with the misery of knowing that I had distressed her, and without her presence to comfort [*consoler*] me. The hour of the train approached' (320). In this context, the *sole* or 'sun' of the song's title comes to stand for the setting sun and the fleeting opportunity Marcel has to be reunited with his mother before the train leaves: 'The sun continued to sink […]. My irrevocable solitude was so near at hand that it seemed to me to have begun already and to be complete' (ibid.). Marcel sinks further and further into a state of extreme lassitude, indecisiveness, and alienation. The living character of his surroundings is reduced to its 'constituent parts': 'lifeless heaps of marble with nothing to choose between them' and canal water that is merely 'a combination of hydrogen and oxygen' (ibid.). And the blustering brio of the Neapolitan song becomes a source of acute anxiety for him, 'rising like a dirge for the Venice that I had known' (322).

In addition to the link between the sun of the song and the actual sun (*soleil*) that is setting over Venice, there is in this passage a series of half-puns on the word *sole*: Marcel is left 'alone' (*seul*), 'isolated' (*isolée*) and in painful 'solitude' (*solitude*), acutely aware that his mother is not present to 'console' (*consoler*) him (Bowie 2001: 226). A further pun is made on the word 'resolution' (*résolution*) or, rather, the lack of resolution that Marcel feels listening to 'O sole mio'. The melody itself actually resolves very neatly: after a brief modulation to a minor key, it returns to the tonic for the final cadence. But not so to Marcel's ears: 'none of the elements, familiar beforehand, of this popular ditty was capable of furnishing me with the resolution of which I stood in need' (Proust 1925/1968: 322). At best, it is able to function as a surrogate resolution, a way of distracting himself from making a decision, 'anticipating […] each burst of melody' and 'letting myself soar with it, and fall to earth again with it afterwards' (ibid.). He mentally accompanies the singer, singing the words in his head as a substitute for 'making a resolution' as to whether he should stay or not, hence 'the desperate but fascinating charm of the song' for him as he lingers by the canal (323). This morbid compulsion 'to listen to one more line of "sole mio" ' intensifies when the singer gets to the end of the song and immediately begins again an octave higher (ibid.). What had, for Marcel, been merely a 'dirge' is now a 'wail of despair' as he remains paralysed by indecision (ibid.). The song's repetition both by the singer and in Marcel's head contributes to the latter's sense of a lack of resolution (in both senses); the final cadence and silence that might signify decisiveness is denied him. The repetition of 'O sole mio' also makes it a pertinent example of music in everyday life, its persistence creating a musical impression of stasis or paralysis.

The song's perceived lack of resolution can be related to another, less obvious pun that occurs in this chapter of Proust's novel. Richard Goodkin (1991) suggests that Marcel's repeated references to his own 'sadness' (*tristesse*) and 'isolation' (*isolement*) are a coded reference to a famously unresolved piece of music: the prelude to *Tristan and Isolde*, particularly its opening, containing the famous 'Tristan chord' (117). For Goodkin, the words *triste* and *isolé* – and, by extension, the prelude to *Tristan and Isolde* – function as a refrain in this passage, pervading Marcel's tortured audition of 'O sole mio'.[59] The conceit is not as extravagant as it might seem: Marcel mentions the prelude to *Tristan*

and Isolde in the chapter that follows, reflecting that 'things offer only a limited number of their innumerable attributes, because of the paucity of our senses' and that 'a man who knew nothing of Wagner save the duet in *Lohengrin* would [not] be able to foresee the prelude to *Tristan*' (Proust 1925/1968: 362). Furthermore, a writer with the kind of musical knowledge and sensitivity that Proust clearly possesses might be expected to have the prelude to *Tristan* in mind when writing about lack of (harmonic) resolution. Goodkin (1991) notes that the first sung pitches in Wagner's opera correspond to an interval of a minor sixth – a recurrent leitmotif in his work, signifying unfulfilled longing – and that these pitches (G – E flat) in the solfége scale go by the names *sol* and *mi*, hence '*sole mio*'. (The connection is emphasised by Proust's omission of 'O' from the title of 'O sole mio'.) One can thus read in this passage how Marcel's inner turmoil and artistic imagination render the harmonic structure of 'O sole mio' more ambiguous than it would be otherwise. The affective state he brings to the listening experience is deeply unresolved; he seeks a surrogate resolution in the tumbling melodic shapes of the Neapolitan song but finds instead a prolongation of his uncertainty and an intensification of his melancholy and desire.

In Britain, the original Neapolitan lyrics of 'O sole mio' are far less familiar than the English words that were put to the melody for a television ad for Cornetto ice cream. Originally airing on British TV in 1983, the advertisement has been through several incarnations, spanning three decades.[60] In each, a stereotypical scene of everyday life in Italy is suspended when the protagonist glimpses a Cornetto ice-cream cone and bursts into the 'sole mio' melody: 'Just one Cornetto, give it to me / Delicious ice cream / From Italy…'. One ad has a busker in a piazza suddenly switching melodies mid-song when he sees a beautiful young woman seated on the terrace of a café just about to savour her ice-cream cornet, which, after a quick serenade, he cheekily exchanges for his microphone. Another has an opera tenor interrupting the recitative with an impromptu aria of 'Just one Cornetto…' as he duly plucks an ice cream from the hands of an audience member seated in the front row. But the most famous depicts a Venetian gondolier – an unintended Proustian subtext – singing the Neapolitan melody to his passengers in spite of Venice being hundreds of miles from Naples.[61] These agreeably daft depictions of Italians spontaneously breaking into song were updated for an advertising campaign broadcast in

2006 in which pedestrians, drivers, office workers and marathon runners are shown singing the Cornetto theme in central London. The irony here is that the singing voice in everyday British life has never been more silent. Song, it would seem, is no longer on our lips so much as in our ears and in our minds, broadcast to us in order for commercial TV channels to gain advertising revenue and for artists to benefit from the limited licensing of their compositions. Such depictions of spontaneous singing in the midst of daily life can be explained with reference to Richard Dyer's argument regarding the utopian aspect of the Hollywood musical (Dyer 1977/1999). In Dyer's view, the musical genre represents a solution to capitalism from within capitalism itself. Thus, in the case just cited, the problem of the routinisation of the commute to work and the sense of empty or wasted time it engenders is surmounted by an advertising campaign showing Londoners singing as they go about their daily lives; the *feeling* of utopia, the utopian affect evoked by the ad, stands in for the actual *experience* of utopia. And by association, the product being advertised shares in these same utopian qualities.

The memorability of the 'Cornetto' lyrics when married to the 'sole mio' melody is extraordinary: nearly thirty years after first hearing the jingle, I can still remember all the words. In spite of the fact that the ads are not currently being shown on British television, the melody to 'O sole mio' is never far from earshot: the tune is the most popular jingle for ice-cream vans throughout the whole of Europe. Ice-cream van jingles are one of the most literal examples of a stray refrain: as mobile melodic phrases, they cut through other sounds, announcing its presence in social space; it is an index of ice cream and – for young children at least – an announcement of the extraordinary in the midst of the everyday. The melodies themselves are deeply embedded within cultural memory, carried on a summer breeze like a cascading metallic echo from the outer reaches of what we can recollect from our infancy. In addition to 'O sole mio', such melodies in Britain include 'Greensleeves', 'Popeye the sailor man', 'Yankee doodle', 'The teddy bears' picnic', and a Brahms lullaby.

Advertising jingles

As testaments to the compositional skills of their anonymous producers, jingles are written in order to be remembered, with the result that they frequently live on in popular

culture long after the disappearance of the products that they were meant to advertise. These commercial leitmotifs are among the most reified, compressed and 'portable' of musical forms, and thus serve to illuminate an age in which sonic meanings circulate and mutate at dizzying speed via music's insertion within radically heterogeneous contexts.

The advertising jingle is a quintessentially North American invention, mingling a huckster's passion for commerce, creativity and fun, and it is in the United States that the earliest and most significant contributions to the genre originated. The first jingles took the form of rhyming verses of the kind described by Mark Twain in his 1876 short story, 'A literary nightmare' (subsequently re-titled 'Punch, brothers, punch!'). The tale offers a wry view of the nascent advertising industry and its exploitation of rhyming verse for mnemonic purposes. The narrator of the story describes how, having casually read a set of such lines in the newspaper one morning, 'They took instant and entire possession of me' (Twain 1878: 5). His work, mealtimes, and bedtimes are all 'ruined' as the 'jingling rhymes' go round and round his head without respite (5-6). When he confides his plight to a friend, the local pastor, he inadvertently 'infects' him; the pastor, in turn, unwittingly passes on the 'relentless jingle' to his entire congregation (6-11). A particularly successful example of such a jingle was published in 1902 as part of the launch of a new breakfast cereal called Force, aimed at the new class of office workers for whom a cooked breakfast of eggs, meat, fried potatoes, and biscuits was considered too heavy (and too rural and unsophisticated). In its subsequent development, the campaign is deserving of the contemporary epithet, 'viral' marketing. The original lines read as follows:

> Jim Dumps was a most unfriendly man,
> Who lived his life on the hermit plan;
> In his gloomy way he'd gone through life,
> And made the most of woe and strife;
> Till Force one day was served to him –
> Since then they've called him 'Sunny Jim.'
> (Quoted in Fox 1997: 46).

In later verses, readers of the Sunday papers in which the full-page ads appeared were introduced to Sunny Jim's family, cook and janitor, as well as the girl upstairs taking singing lessons. Hundreds of verses appeared, an illustration of the portly figure of Jim

adorned two eleven-storey buildings in New York, and he became the subject of songs, vaudeville skits, and musical comedies. Readers sent in their own unsolicited verses, and anyone with the name James and a cheery disposition risked being called 'Sunny Jim', while in Britain it became a common way of addressing young boys.

The claim to the first *musical* jingle is contested. A song published in 1905, 'In my merry Oldsmobile' functioned as a welcome and unpaid-for commercial for the Oldsmobile Motor Company, and was adopted as their theme song in 1908, before going on some decades later to feature in their radio ads (Jackson 2003: 11; Raph 1964: 316). But the first radio jingle was for Wheaties, another breakfast cereal, but one which, unlike Force, has endured through the decades. The jingle was first broadcast in 1929, sung by a barbershop quartet from Minneapolis (Booth 1981: 176). At the time, the manufacturer General Mills were thinking of discontinuing Wheaties but noticed a spike in sales in the regions where the jingle had aired so they decided to broadcast the commercial nationwide. Jingles had a marked presence on radio in the years of the Depression that followed, partly because, for companies such as the Radio Corporation of America (RCA), who had taken over the Victor Talking Machine Company, radio's profit base in advertising proved a more reliable source of revenue than the sale of records and gramophones (Averill 2003: 82). Another reason was that jingles circumvented restrictions imposed on direct sales pitches on the radio. The 1940s saw the first mass-promoted singing commercials. In addition to airing on network radio over a million times each, 'Pepsi-Cola hits the spot' and 'I'm Chiquita Banana' were both jukebox hits and sold over a million copies each when they were released as gramophone discs (Booth 1981: 176-7; Jackson 2003: 13). As Mark Booth (1981) comments, their 'entry into playground folklore in a variety of parody forms, has been a signal ever since of what such jingles can achieve in making advertising copy intimate to the public' (177).

An apogee of sorts had been reached. Jingles remained a popular form of advertising throughout the 1950s; 'You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent' is the signal example of the era's many mnemonic jingles, and was one of the first adverts to appear on commercial television in the UK. But in the 1960s, the influence of such jingles began to wane, and subsequent decades saw a slow decline in their presence on television and radio, and a corresponding switch towards the limited

licensing of whole songs or pieces of music by existing artists. Before I look at the reasons for this shift as well as its implications for the production and consumption of recorded music, I would like to examine in more detail how advertising jingles actually function. In keeping with the semiotic paradigm introduced in chapter one, I will consider both the text itself, i.e. the musical jingle, and the context in which it is heard.

Advertising jingles demonstrate traits common to all music. In an article entitled, 'Music in advertising', David Huron (1989) makes the claim that any music can be judged on the extent to which it manages to: (i) engage the listener's attention; (ii) provide a sense of structure or continuity; (iii) be memorable; (iv) make use of language in order to contribute to its poetic or emotive appeal; (v) target a particular audience; and (vi) establish its credibility or authority. He adds that, 'on a second-for-second basis, advertising music is perhaps the most meticulously crafted and most fretted-about music in history' (572).

Huron offers the sobering reminder that the 'true product of [commercial] broadcast media is the audience; and the true consumers are the advertisers' (559). In this regard, the style of music used in an advert plays a crucial role in delivering up a target audience to the advertiser. If we take the example of the Pepsodent jingle, it can be perceived how its use of raised/lowered sevenths and syncopated rhythms characteristic of jazz marked it out, in the mid-1950s, as a piece of music with mainstream, cross-generational appeal in contrast to, say, rock 'n' roll, skiffle, or classical music. This chimes with the fact that toothpaste is a product aimed at nearly all consumers. Huron writes that the style of the music in an ad 'function[s] as a socioeconomic identifier – a device for addressing a specific audience' (567). In his analysis of the Pepsodent commercial, Huron identifies a feature common among mnemonic jingles: the use of a cadence at the end of the jingle coinciding with the name of the product.[62] Thus, in the case of the Pepsodent jingle, 'the product name appears on pitches of the tonic major triad (E and C) which completes the cadence' (563). Interestingly, this return to the tonic on the word 'Pepsodent' signifies the resolution of a problem signified a moment before by the harmonic tension or chromaticism on the word 'yellow'. Taken as a whole, then, the jingle, 'You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush with Pepsodent' offers an easily graspable melodic shape that presents a problem (yellow teeth) and its solution (brushing with

Pepsodent). To quote Huron, 'The *antagonist* ("yellow") and the *resolution* ("Pepsodent") are […] tightly reflected in the musical setting' (563; italics in original).

A brief semiotics of jingles can be offered with reference to the three main types of signs outlined in the work of C.S. Peirce. Firstly, the jingle is 'iconic' in that it embodies some of the sensuous qualities ascribed to the product or, rather, these qualities devolve from the music to the product so that a certain stylistic 'fit' is obtained between music and product. Secondly, the advertising jingle is 'indexical' insofar as it comes to be associated with, or to stand for, the product via the sheer fact of their co-presentation in the advert. This is bound up with the memorability of the jingle and, by association, the memorability of the product being advertised. On this point, Huron (1989) notes that:

> Consumers are known to favor products which elicit some degree of recognition or familiarity – even if it is merely the product's name. It is one of the peculiarities of human cognition and audition that music tends to linger in the listener's mind. Surprisingly, such musical lingering may occur even when the mind is an unwilling host. Thus, the association of music with the identity of a certain product may substantially aid recall (562).

Finally, coming to the third type of sign, the jingle is also 'symbolic' in the sense that it sets words to music and that these lyrics have an abstract, propositional content, i.e. they say something explicit about the product. Thus, the ostensible claim of the Pepsodent commercial is that their toothpaste will whiten your teeth. A jingle's 'symbolic' function is, however, inseparable from and, in many ways, subordinate to its function as index and icon, i.e. its purely musical functions as opposed to those operating via the words it sets.

A jingle's discursive content, then, will usually be subordinated to its other functions. Mark Booth (1981) pursues the implications of this in his book, *The Experience of Songs*, drawing attention to the fact that 'testimony on behalf of the product' in a jingle 'is different from spoken advertising testimony because of the nature of song. Jingles cannot have or even seem to have the discursive content of a talking commercial' (177). This is because the singing commercial sacrifices the 'appearance of the rational discussability of the product' as well as 'a certain claim to responsibility, a sense that the words can be traced back to their source': 'There is no apparent personal source of sung words [in radio or television adverts]. Spoken testimony comes from the pulpit or the witness chair, but sung witness is something that even the original, broadcasting performers seem merely to be joining in on' (ibid.). This lack of a personal source whose testimony we are

being asked to trust has important ramifications for how the jingle will be received: 'Because the words are sung words, they will to some extent be experienced as the subject's own words, the more so the more effective the jingle' (ibid.). (To use the poststructuralist idiom, the listening subject is 'interpellated' within the text of the song.) As with the 'circular tootling' of the jingles emanating from suburban ice-cream vans, there is a sense with sung commercials that their lines are in the public domain (O'Brien 2004: 43):

> They are present in the mind as public words, verbal property not bearing the sign of ownership by someone else. Heard sung, they achieve […] the air of what we and the singer or singers joined in on, rather than of what so-and-so said. Recalled, they come in assembled jingling lines as common property objects, available to pass through inner or outer speech and so pass as one's own (Booth 1981: 177-8).

But, as Booth stresses, the mere fact of memorability 'does not imply easy success for song in motivating sales' (178). Instead, 'direct payoff is doubtful' as our absorption within the text of a jingle – or, what amounts to the same thing, our internalisation of it – does not guarantee for the advertiser that the audience will respond to the propositional content of the lyrics (178, 180). Our ludic responses to sung theme tunes and commercials, demonstrated most vividly by the verbal play that children make of successful jingles, means that 'when we enter into jingles we may well not be listening to what the mind's voice is singing'. Instead, what jingles 'draw the mind into is play' (180).

I'd like to return for a moment to Huron's first criterion for judging the effectiveness of a jingle: that it should be entertaining or engage the listener's attention. This presents an immediate problem for the advertiser because radio and television ads are usually consumed – if consumed be the proper word – in a very distracted state. Here the special contribution of sound to the medium of TV advertising becomes important. Due to the fact that a viewer/listener might often turn their gaze away from the screen during an advert, sound – and music in particular – give the ad a coherence it might otherwise lack. (It therefore helps it meet Huron's second criterion of 'continuity'.) Another way of stating this is that the ear, unlike the eye, is always open and its receptivity is multi-directional. Partly because of this, the auditory channel in a television ad can be more significant in exerting unconscious effects on the viewer/listener. The distinction between

implicit and explicit memory is an important one when considering the role of music in television adverts. Implicit memory is a type of memory in which previous experiences aid the performance of tasks or aid recognition but without these previous experiences being available to conscious awareness. To the human subject, it barely appears as a form of remembering at all since its storage and recall are unconscious.[63] It is implicit memory, for example, that enables us to remember how to ride a bike or tie our shoelaces – examples that come under the more specific rubric of 'procedural' memory. A different type of implicit memory and one more relevant to our discussion of music in advertising is that manifested in the phenomenon of 'priming'. Priming is essentially the activation of an unconscious context and is particularly important for recognition, as opposed to conscious recollection (Snyder 2000: 73). Thus, to return to our example of a television advert, product names and the music and attributes associated with them can establish their familiarity without the viewer/listener typically being aware how they came to know a product or the music associated with it; the distracted state in which reception of the ad typically occurs can actually make the advertising campaign more effective as brand recognition arises spontaneously and seemingly naturally. As Alexomanolaki et al (2007) comment,

> music and sound are not used in advertising merely because the medium of television allows this as an extra option. […W]hile the image may serve primarily to attract attention and enhance explicit recognition, elaboration, association, learning and recall of the advertised product, soundtracks may play a bigger part in influencing memories and associations in a more implicit manner via a priming mechanism (53).

Writing in a different context but no less pertinently, Adorno (1938/1982) claims that '[d]econcentration is the perceptual activity which prepares the way for the forgetting and sudden recognition of mass music' (288). Because music in adverts is among that which is listened to least attentively, its familiarity when it is later recognised, perhaps in an entirely different context, seems all the more beguiling.

Alongside nursery rhymes and theme tunes, advertising jingles are often among our earliest musical memories. In his Proustian memoir of growing up in a family comprising a father who was a renowned DJ on New York radio and older brothers who were keen

musicians, Geoffrey O'Brien (2004) renders this twilight world of the infant with exquisite precision:

> a child is defenseless against the incursions of the pre-recorded jingles that will become the earliest remembered artifacts of human civilization. Even before speech or the least glimmer of understanding they have already taken up residence. Years later – at the most inappropriate moments – they will rise unbidden to consciousness, those little songs that were the delight of infancy […]. "I like Bosco," or the Wildroot Cream Oil song: these get their hooks in deeper than any subsequent hymn or love ballad, working their way into the circuitry while it is still forming. Here is substructure that will always be there (36-7).

This kind of relationship to music will be analysed in more detail in chapter three when I come to examine involuntary musical memories.

Our adult indifference to jingles on TV – our tendency to ignore them or actively resist them by using the mute button – explains, in part, why their use in advertising campaigns has declined. By contrast, ads that use pop songs under limited license – limited by time, territory, and medium – give the viewer/listener something that might actively engage their interest. This is especially the case for younger audiences if the images are edited in such a way that they complement the racy tempo of the music as part of what Kay Dickinson (2003) terms an 'MTV aesthetic'. For older audiences, a recognisable song might have nostalgic appeal, which, though jarring with the overt commercialism of the setting – David Beckham promoting the Vodafone network to the sound of the Mock Turtles' 'Can you dig it?' – might be enough reason to stay with it. Even if the ads are scarcely attended to, there is a high chance that the music in question will be heard again outside the context of the ad and thus trigger associations with the product and a modicum of brand recognition.

In an article entitled ' "The new radio": music licensing as a response to industry woe', Bethany Klein (2008) cites a range of reasons for the surge in the number of pop songs being used in television advertising from about the early 1990s onwards. She writes that 'The growing presence of popular music in advertising takes place against a backdrop of significant organizational, legal and technological changes in both the radio and music industries' (465). The most facile explanation for this upsurge would be that limited licensing of pop songs makes for both a quick payday and easy exposure for the musicians involved, but this does not really get at why, in the current economic and

cultural climate, artists might be more inclined to license their work to advertisers than before. The answer to this question is that commercial radio has become more consolidated and incorporated with the result that many artists find themselves excluded from radio airplay altogether: 'artists who formerly may have been denied airplay on some stations and granted airplay on others are now practically locked out of all' (ibid.). Hence the description of film, television and computer game placements as the 'new radio', granting musicians access to audiences on a large scale in the way that radio proper once did (467).[64] (This is obviously a more accurate description of the situation in the States, where public service broadcasting does not play such a prominent role as it does in the UK.) Klein cites the case of the Moby album *Play* (2000) which found its way into the pop charts following the placement of all 18 of its tracks (463). Ironically, music licensing is not just a way of 'reaching the ears of potential buyers' but also a way 'to reach the ears of radio programmers', thereby ensuring further exposure and the kind that makes explicit mention of the artist and their work (467). Klein also draws attention to changes that are internal to the advertising industry, in particular the changing demographic among advertising 'creatives', which meant that, by the mid-1990s, there were more young men eager to see their taste in music reflected in the ads they were producing (463). This has led to the hitherto unlikely situation of advertisers championing alternative or underground music. The music industry has capitalised on these developments by diverting more of their energies into 'synchronisation licensing departments' in recognition of the enormous revenues that can be won from music use in ads, films, computer games, and on TV (469). In general, Klein is not sanguine about the new-found readiness of musicians of all genres and persuasions to license their music: 'Licensing to television commercials does not provide a solution to radio and music industry problems. At best, it provides different problems' (476).

The limited licensing of pop music is, of course, part of a wider trend towards the use of pre-recorded music in screen media. Music used in this way has a range of mutually reinforcing functions. (i) It engages the viewer's attention, especially if they recognise the music. (ii) It produces a sense of contemporaneity or nostalgia depending on whether it is an old or new song. (iii) It carries with it a loose set of cultural connotations based largely on the style or genre of the piece of music being played. (iv) It may also carry with it

more personal associations for the individual viewer, which might engage their attention but might also detract from the association intended by the advertisers. (v) It produces effects of realism owing to the ubiquity of recorded music in everyday life; this is to say that the diegetic use of pre-recorded music in narrative film and television has become a signifier of the everyday. Scenes filmed in 'the caf' in the British soap opera *Eastenders* (1985-), for example, are usually accompanied by fairly recent chart songs playing on the radio in the background, and have become a marker of an artist's success in reaching a wider audience.

This chapter has demonstrated some of the ways in which music in the era of recording circulates – often in truncated form – between different social contexts. Some of the further implications of this dizzying mutation of musical meanings will be explored in chapter three when I come to examine involuntary musical memories. In the next section, however, I wish to elaborate more fully a semiotics of recorded music in everyday life and consider how this kind of semiotic analysis intersects with contemporary theoretical interest in affect.

Music, Semiotics, Affect

*

Here is a message which everybody
understands, but nobody can translate.
(Reik 1953: 7)

The 'affective turn' in cultural theory

In this 'interlude', I would like to consider some of the implications of the recent surge of interest in theories of affect. In particular, I wish to examine what these theories have to contribute to an understanding of the role of recorded music in everyday life. I also wish to integrate such theories with prior semiotic models of musical communication, my contention being that in all cultural theory – and perhaps, most particularly, that concerning music – it is not the case that an analysis of affect, on the one hand, and signification on the other can or should be mutually exclusive. Rather, one implies the other. However, for reasons I shall come to, some of the existing models of how meaning is produced have tended to exclude the dimension of embodied feeling, or have had difficulty in accommodating it within their existing schemas, with the result that, in certain quarters, there has been an impatience with, or even indifference to, what have hitherto been some of the most established ways of theorising culture.

Before there was an 'affective turn', there was a linguistic one. It is my contention that the affective turn can only be properly understood in relation to the linguistic turn that preceded it. To be a little more precise, current theoretical interest in embodied feeling and emotion has largely been due to a sense that rather too much is excluded from the structuralist and poststructuralist paradigms, with their emphasis on discursive and

significatory practices derived from, or analogically based on, the model provided by language. The dominance of the linguistic paradigm in cultural theory, then, and the methodological problems inherent in treating 'natural' languages as in some way analogous to a heterogeneous array of objects of study, has lead some theorists to look in other directions. This is exemplified by a polemically-entitled collection of essays, *The Affective Turn*. The book's editor, Patricia Clough (2007), brings together work which shares a critical interest in 'intensities' rather than 'meanings' or 'significations'. Similarly, body-technology 'assemblages' replace 'texts', while 'information' stands in place of 'representation'.[65]

A figure who looms large in much work on affect is Gilles Deleuze. He is in some ways the founding father of contemporary affect theory in the way that Saussure was for structuralism. Indeed, Peter Osborne (2000) sardonically refers to Deleuze as 'the great white hope of a non-Saussurean cultural theory, offering the prospect of a new beginning' (46). In the anglophone world, one of the texts which exemplifies this Deleuzean slant to the affective turn – it being one of the most regularly cited – is Brian Massumi's essay 'The autonomy of affect'. A translator of Deleuze and Guattari's work, Massumi has been something of an ambassador for their oeuvre, especially in the years following Deleuze's death in 1995. In this essay, he is concerned with delineating a Deleuzean notion of affect while, at the same time, citing some of Deleuze's philosophical forebears in this area and suggesting possible avenues for future work.

Massumi begins by fastidiously insisting on a distinction between 'affect' and 'emotion'. '[E]motion and affect', he asserts, 'follow different logics and pertain to different orders' (Massumi 1996: 221). Whereas affect is impersonal and pre-conscious, '[a]n emotion is a subjective content, the socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal' (ibid.). An emotion is, then, an identifiable psycho-physiological state registered by the subject who experiences it, while affect is much more inchoate and provisional, escaping direct perception yet being the ground as it were for perception to occur. Indeed, conscious experience and affectivity form a loop, with one feeding into the other, the affective level being inferred as it were from the level of conscious experience. It is partly in order to avoid the conflation of 'emotion' and 'affect' that, when referring to the latter of the two terms,

Massumi usually opts for the Deleuzean term 'intensity'. 'Intensity', he writes, 'is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin – at the surface of the body, at its interface with things' (219). As such, 'affect' or 'intensity' operates at a level distinct from that of 'signification': 'There is a disconnection of signifying order from intensity – which constitutes a different order of connection running in parallel […]. Language […] is not simply in opposition to intensity. It would seem to function differentially in relation to it' (218). Massumi urges that 'Much could be gained by integrating the dimension of intensity into cultural theory' (220). In this respect, he doesn't want affect theory to simply eclipse textual or semiotic analysis but to complement it. As part of an analysis of an animated cartoon, he avers that '[a]pproaches to the [televisual] image in its relation to language are incomplete if they operate only on the semantic or semiotic level' (220). He mounts an implicit attack on structuralism, in particular the study of systems of relational differences, urging that what is at stake in moving on from such models is 'the new': 'structure is the place where nothing ever happens, that explanatory heaven in which all eventual permutations are prefigured in a self-consistent set of invariant generative rules' (220-1).[66] Instead, Massumi's interest lies with what he calls the 'event': 'the collapse of structured distinction into intensity, of rules into paradox' (221). In dismantling taken-for-granted categories of thought, this 'collapse' continues the work of deconstruction but in a way that eschews Derrida's focus on language and scripuality.

Massumi's argument for the privileging of intensity over language is, in part, an historical one. In essence, his position is that affective modes of experience have come to predominate over discursive ones – that sensation has trumped reason. Contra Frederic Jameson, he claims that 'postmodernity' is characterised not by the 'waning of affect' but by an increase in it: 'belief has waned for many, but not affect. If anything, our condition is characterized by a surfeit of it' (ibid.). In what is, in many ways, a familiar Benjaminian narrative, he relates this waxing of affect to 'late-capitalist, image- and information-based economies', in particular, our absorption in a fully mediatised reality full of fast cuts, fast turnovers, sensory bombardment, and a culture of distractions. For Massumi, this is suggestive of a decline in linear, narrative thought and genres, and a

corresponding increase in more provisional, affective modes of media production and consumption: 'Everywhere, the cut, suspense – incipience' (234).

The rise of affect, both as a mode of experience and as an object of enquiry, has been very noticeable and yet, at the same time, the adoption of a critical language specific to the study of affect has been tentative, piecemeal, and inconsistent. This can be observed in the field of cultural studies, in which a heterogeneous array of postgraduate work on affect currently abounds but has yet to filter down in any sustained way to undergraduate level and the way undergraduate courses are taught. Affect theory thus occupies an uncertain position within cultural studies' present epistemological configuration. This becomes more obvious when one considers cultural studies' historical trajectory. In an interview given in 1997, one of the doyens of cultural studies, Stuart Hall, traces three distinct paradigms within the history of his field: the first is a culturalist one, embodied in the work of Raymond Williams and his claim that 'culture is ordinary' as well as the related notion of culture as 'a whole way of life'; the second is a semiological one: a shift towards a concern with signifying practices, as evident in both structuralism and poststructuralism; the third and most recent is a 'Deleuzian one, which says that signification is not meaning, it's all a question of affect' (Hall 1997: 25).[67] Interestingly, Hall is rather more tentative about the relative importance of this latest critical turn, remarking that he doesn't see 'a break in the regulative idea of culture as fundamental as the earlier one [i.e. 'the structuralist break']' (ibid.). Perhaps the publication in the decade following this interview of a significant body of work on or relating to concepts of affect has been enough to change Hall's mind, but it is striking the extent to which cultural studies as a field is still pervaded by the vocabulary of 'significations', 'ideologies', 'discourses', 'texts', etc.[68] Massumi's call in his essay, 'The autonomy of affect', for 'a cultural-theoretical vocabulary specific to affect' has, to some extent, gone unanswered (Massumi 1996: 221). Perhaps this is partly to do with Deleuze and Guattari's sometimes unconvincing or problematic borrowings from the lexicon of science and the difficulties of translating these into terms that don't dissolve into an incomprehensible muddle. What this might signal then is the need for different, often older precursors. Two such theorists of affect are Walter Benjamin and Henri Bergson, both of whom connect to long-established critical and philosophical traditions. The ideas of Benjamin and Bergson

figure prominently in later chapters of the current work, while in the following section of this 'interlude' I turn to the writings of another theorist of affect, C.S. Peirce, whose work – rather like that of Bergson – remains under-represented in cultural theory.

In the midst of these critical developments which have seen a succession of theoretical paradigms, there have been fears that the affective turn might undo the gains made by prior critical work, with some writers seeing it as a potential relinquishment of the role of the engaged cultural critic in challenging the taken-for-granted ideologies and discourses that enable power to function more or less invisibly. In a paper entitled 'The feminist intellectual: weariness, critique and the affective turn', Sue Tate (2008) identifies 'a risk of the individualising of experience, retreating into a personal world of affect/feeling, of the indulgence in a pleasurable but depoliticised cathartic release': 'I *fear* a turning from, perhaps a refusal of, ideological and representational critique […]: in turning to the affective, caught up in enthusiasm for the latest buzz term what might get thrown out?' (2; emphasis in original). Therefore, rather than substituting existing critical approaches with an interest in affect, Tate advocates placing one 'beside' the other. Citing bell hooks and the work of Sara Ahmed, she argues that 'individual emotion only moves into politics if linked to the "overall education for critical consciousness". […G]etting to grips with structure and politics, being able to identify and consider how they mediate emotion, requires the understandings and methodological tools of critical theory, that bring the textual and ideological structures of meaning into visibility' (4).

So a rapprochement should be sought between theories of affect on the one hand and a concern with signifying practices on the other. As Jeremy Gilbert (2007) writes, 'we might argue that there is a significatory and affective dimension to all discourse/cultural practice'.[69] In this regard, he stresses the idea of ' "discourse" as always in part a matter of transmissions of force as well as signification', going on to suggest that 'all discourse has to be understood as operating through the production of effects, rather than simply through the organisation of knowledge and meanings'.[70] Comments such as these, taken together with Gilbert's subsequent work, mark him out as being among the foremost proponents of the affective turn but one who refuses simply to jettison previous cultural theories, especially those regarding discursive practices.[71]

My own position should by now be clear: that a perceived antagonism or disjuncture between theories of signification and theories of affect is unnecessary and unhelpful, leading to various oversights and threatening to undo the critical work of recent decades. Yet, at the same time, there has been a paucity of theory and critical language that can bridge the gap. In terms of methodology and theoretical approach, the current study is an attempt to work within this fertile space between semiotics and affect theory. In this regard, music could be considered the perfect object of analysis, as it is never with music simply a question of either meaning or effects but the two together: 'significatory affect' or 'affective significations' if you will.[72] In the following section, I offer a reconsideration of semiotics and, in the process, a way of (re-)connecting it to theories of affect via the work of Saussure's somewhat overshadowed contemporary, the North American philosopher, C.S. Peirce.

Sémiologie or semiotics?

Peirce (1839-1914) and Saussure (1857-1913) were contemporaries who defined very similar areas of study but did so on opposite sides of the Atlantic. For Saussure, *sémiologie* – from the Greek, *semeion* ('sign') – was 'a science that studies the life of signs within a society' (quoted in Cuddon 1998: 805; Saussure 1983: 15). For Peirce, 'semiotics' was a 'formal doctrine of signs' aimed at establishing 'the characters of all signs used by […] an intelligence capable of learning by experience' (Peirce 1960: 2.227).[73] It would seem that Peirce and Saussure demarcated the respective fields of 'semiotics' and 'semiology' without knowledge of each other's work: neither published particularly widely and their influence on a variety of academic fields has been almost entirely a result of their posthumous reception. It is tempting, then, to speculate what it was about the particular order of knowledge in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries that functioned to produce two bodies of work, one in English, the other in French, with such remarkable points of convergence. 'Semiotics' and 'semiology' were, in a sense, attempts at providing a more material and social model of the production of meaning than that proffered by the burgeoning field of psychology with its more atomised and interiorised approach to human subjectivity.[74] In the words of the later Peirce, 'all consciousness is sign-consciousness' (Peirce 1992: xxxvi).[75] As we shall see,

Peirce's statement here does not imply that all experience can simply be reduced to the effects of language or discourse.

In spite of the obvious similarities between their respective projects, there are significant differences too. I would like to delineate some of these as they have important methodological ramifications for the field of cultural studies and the study of music in particular. An initial difference is that Saussure limits the field of semiology to intentional acts of communication whereas Peirce does not. For Peirce, a sign is 'something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity' so that the field of semiotics could include, for example, the study of cloud formations as signs of what the weather will be like or medical symptoms as diagnosable signs of illness (Peirce 1960: 2.228).[76] For Saussure, by contrast, semiology is limited to the study of intentional, artificial devices, hence his primary interest in the linguistic sign (Eco 1976: 15-16).

A further difference is that Peirce pragmatically simplifies the very idea of signification: the meaning of a sign becomes, at its most straightforward, its effect upon the person who perceives it. Stimuli are thus examined under the rubric of semiosis and treated as signs along with more conventional 'symbols'. The precise nature of the responses they elicit are not merely single and unitary but form chains of signification, the effect of one sign or stimulus becoming a sign for something else and eliciting its own effects in turn. In Peircean semiotics, then, 'a sign is not a self-evident idea or entity but is the catalyst for an effect' (Turino 1999: 223). As will be seen, Peirce's conception of meaning as a cascade of effects has significant ramifications for an understanding of affect. His semiotic is more amenable in this regard than Saussure's narrower interest in conventional, consensually-created meanings as typified by natural languages.

Whereas for Saussure the sign is a dyad, for Peirce it is a triad or trichotomy made up of 'sign', 'object', and 'interpretant', 'this tri-relative influence not being in anyway resolvable into actions between pairs' (Peirce 1960: 5.484).

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                                          sign
                                           /\
                                          /  \
                                         /    \
                                        /      \
signifier ——— signified              object    interpretant
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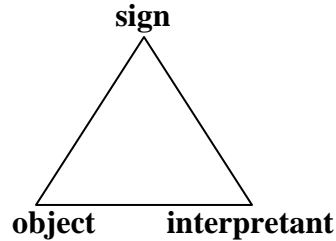Figure 1: The Saussurean sign   Figure 2: The Peircean sign

The relationship 'sign-referent' in the Saussurean register, i.e. the relationship between a sign and the actual thing it refers to, roughly corresponds to that of 'sign-object' in Peirce's work. One can refine this comparison and say that 'signifier-signified' corresponds to 'sign-*immediate* object', i.e. the relationship between a sign and the concept it arouses, while 'sign-referent' corresponds to 'sign-*dynamic* object, that is to say the relationship between a sign and the actual thing outside of the sign that is being referred to. The notion of the 'interpretant', however, is unique to Peirce's semiotics and, as such, warrants further comment. In simple terms, the 'interpretant' is the effect of a sign upon the person perceiving it or its meaning for them.[77] In this regard, the interpretant can be considered an 'equivalent' or secondary sign, 'create[d] in the mind' of the one who perceives the original sign (Peirce 1960: 2.228). There is thus a chaining of signs and interpretants, with interpretants functioning as signs in their own right together with their own objects and interpretants, and so on in a significatory cascade.

   The initial sign establishes a chain of meanings and effects, many or even most of which will not be registered intellectually but will nevertheless play an important role in the semiotic process. A single stab of Hammond organ, for example, might have a deep gestural impact on the listener, scarcely capable of being verbalised. It might even set off sympathetic resonances in parts of the body. It could also have half-conscious synaesthetic meanings, sounding in some indefinable way 'brown' or 'beige', or like the texture of corduroy or velvet. Virtually simultaneously, vague cultural connotations might occur to the listener, such as 'the 1960s' or '1970s' or 'progressive rock'. Perhaps the title of a specific song will then come to mind: 'Carry on my wayward son' by Kansas. This could, in turn, be the trigger for a further chain of associations, including personal reminiscences, perhaps relating to the discursive content of the song lyrics.
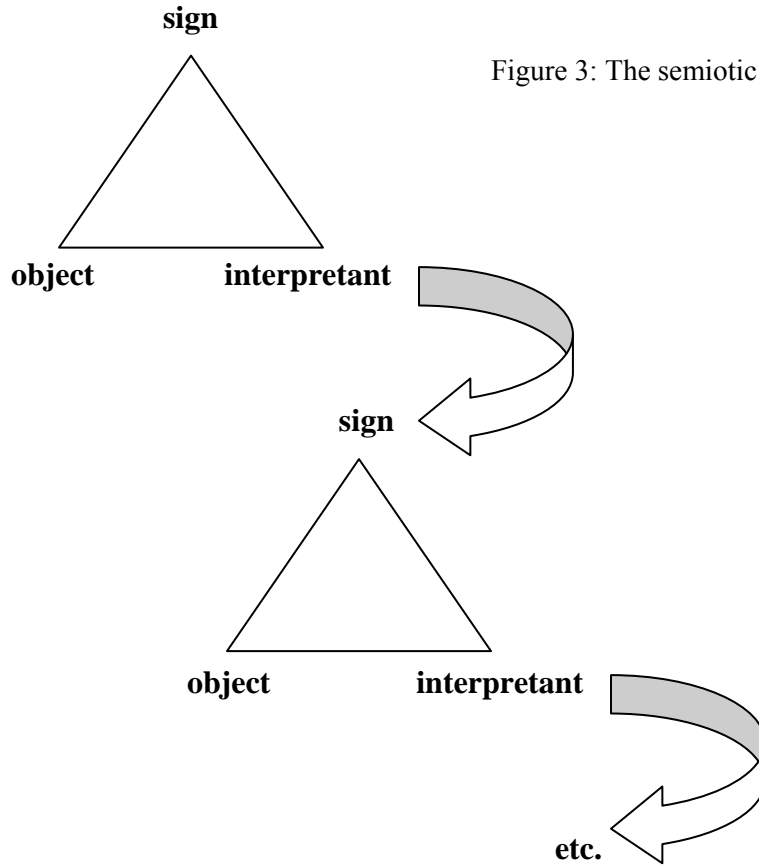
Figure 3: The semiotic cascade

In this example, three main types of interpretants as outlined by Peirce are readily observable. They are as follows: (i) 'emotional interpretants', i.e. unreflected-upon feelings or affects; (ii) 'energetic interpretants': physical reactions to a sign, such as a disposition to movement or an acceleration in the heartrate; and (iii) 'sign-interpretants', i.e. linguistic-based concepts (Turino 1999: 224). Because the meaning or effect of a sign – that is, the interpretant – is conjoined with other meanings and effects, there are, in operative terms, sign complexes or sign clusters. Peirce puts it thus: 'In consequence of every sign determining an Interpretant, which is itself a sign, we have sign overlying sign' (Peirce 1960: 2.94). Semiosis in Peircean terms is, then, a dynamic and potentially infinite process.[78] Experientially, this means that clusters of signs will often produce very dense layers of signification-affect, or what could be called a 'phenomenology of the sign', with signs and their meanings being embedded in the sign user's lived experience.

There is a connection to be made here between clusters of signs that operate at the level of lived experience and the model of the body outlined by Massumi – a model, in many ways, derived from the work of Bergson (1908/1988).[79] Massumi (1996) claims that '[t]he body is as immediately virtual as it is actual'. He describes this virtual realm as a 'pressing crowd of incipiencies and tendencies, […] a realm of *potential*' (224; italics in original).[80] For Massumi, the virtual body belongs to a level of affect that is not part of conscious experience but can be inferred from it. It is a 'quantum' level of 'undecidability' prior to the manifestation of experiential outcomes. On the face of it, this might seem at odds with a Peircean notion of the sign, as it would seem that a sign that is not perceived or experienced is, in Peirce's terms, not really a sign at all. It should be remembered, however, that many of the signs within Peirce's semiotic lie on the threshold of conscious experience or even beneath it, as a kind of physical and affective undertow beneath our thoughts and impressions. This is to suggest that signs might have effects via the chaining of one sign to another but without intermediate signs in the chain being perceptible.

Another important difference between Peircean semiotics and Saussurean semiology is that the latter establishes the relationship between a sign and the thing or concept it refers to on a much more formal and contingent basis. This is to say that, in Saussure's schema, the relationship between 'signifier' (the material aspect of the sign) and 'signified' (the concept referred to by the signifier) is arbitrary. It is a matter of convention, for instance, that the sound of the word 'dog' – its 'acoustic image' as Saussure termed it – refers to a furry, four-legged canine. Language and, by extension, other systems of signs studied under the Saussurean aegis are thus governed by relational differences rather than any intrinsic connection between a sign and what it refers to. In Peirce's work, the kinds of signs just outlined belong to a particular category of sign defined by this conventional or arbitrary relationship between sign and referent; Peirce calls them 'symbols'. There are, however, in Peirce's semiotics, two other main categories of sign, 'icons' and 'indices', both of which are only arbitrary in their relationship to their referents to a certain degree.

Peirce's trichotomy of the three basic types of signs – 'symbols', 'indices', and 'icons' – opens up the semiotic field to a much more capacious array of significatory-affective phenomena than Saussure's semiology and its narrower concern with the linguistic sign.

The first type of sign, a 'symbol', is a sign that is arbitrarily connected to its 'object' or referent. Symbols, which 'include all general words, the main body of speech, and any mode of conveying a judgment' are, in Peirce's own description, 'abstract', 'general', 'conventional' and 'arbitrary' (Peirce 1960: 3.360). The link between a symbol and its referent 'depends upon a habit' as, otherwise, there is nothing in any way obvious about the connection between the two (ibid.). As schoolchildren, we have to learn, for example, what the following means: $5 + 8 = 13$. But with a little practice, we quickly learn to read the numbers and we substitute the words 'plus' and 'equals' in our mind's ear for their corresponding symbols.

The second kind of sign, an 'index', is physically, spatially, or temporally connected with its object through causality, contiguity, or co-occurrence. In Peirce's words, it is a sign which 'marks the junction between two portions of experience' (Peirce 1955: 108). Peirce sometimes limits his definition of an index to signs that are directly affected by the objects to which they refer, as in the example he cites of a weathervane (109).[81] In cases such as this, there is a causal connection between a sign and its object, for example, between the direction in which a weathervane is pointing and the direction of the wind. At other times, Peirce defines the index in much broader terms as '[a]nything which focusses the attention', e.g. a 'pointing finger' or a sudden cry to alert someone of danger (1955: 108, 9). Elsewhere, he defines it as a sign whose action 'depends upon association by contiguity' (108). Peirce includes in the category of indices 'all natural signs', e.g. dark clouds as a sign that rain is imminent, as well as 'physical symptoms', e.g. jaundiced skin and eyes as a sign that one might be suffering from a liver condition such as acute hepatitis (Peirce 1960: 3.361). An index is often related to its object via temporal reference as when a footprint or fingerprint indexes the fact that someone has been present; most of the clues that a detective will look for are of this kind as they retrospectively link a suspect to a crime scene.

The third type of sign, an 'icon', is similar to its object or referent. Peirce defines this type as 'a sign which stands for something merely because it resembles it […]. Icons are so completely substituted for their objects as hardly to be distinguished from them' (3.362). He gives the example of a naturalistic painting, perhaps a portrait or still life: 'there is a moment when we lose consciousness that it is not the thing, the distinction of

the real and the copy disappears, and it is for the moment a pure dream' (ibid.). The level of resemblance between an icon and its object can sometimes, however, be quite weak. Words which we use to mimic the sounds of animals – 'woof', 'miaow', 'cock-a-doodle-doo', etc. – are of this kind, as evidenced by the fact that they tend to vary from one language to another even though there are recognisable similarities. By contrast, an animal sound produced by a skilled mimic is a much more accurate copy.

As can be seen, Peirce's work encompasses a much greater range of significatory phenomena than Saussure's. The semiologist Émile Benveniste (1981) defines Peirce's project as that of 'distributing all of reality, the conceptual, and the experiential into various categories of signs'. This involves the construction of a potentially vast and unwieldy theoretical scaffolding. We have already seen how each element in the basic trichotomy of sign-object-interpretant can be subdivided into further trichotomies. Peirce continued the process until he arrived at well in excess of a hundred different permutations. Perhaps, then, because of the scale of Peirce's taxonomical ambitions, there needs to be a certain amount of pruning of his analytical system. As another semiotician, Robert Scholes (1983), notes: 'the great usefulness of semiotics […] will not be found in its elaborate analytical taxonomies, but rather is to be derived from a small number of its most basic and powerful concepts, ingeniously applied' (xi). This is the approach I aspire to throughout the current work, including the section that follows, where I turn to the semiotics of music.

Before I do so, it would be well to highlight the fact that the choice between semiology and semiotics, between Saussurean and Peircean notions of signification, is a choice that cultural theorists haven't yet made or even considered to any great extent, in part because the affective turn has led to a suspicion of what, in Peirce's case at least, is wrongly seen as a preoccupation with language as an explanatory model. Peirce's work presents the possibility of maintaining the critique of texts, discourse and ideology, which was enabled by the Saussurean moment, while at the same time, expanding our notions of 'signification' to include areas of experience such as affect, or the 'neglected' senses of sound, touch, smell and taste, which have not proved amenable to analysis by linguistically-orientated methodologies.

Musical semiotics, musical affect

The differences between Saussure's and Peirce's models of signification become quite stark when we apply them to music. Many critics have noted that Saussurean analysis, i.e. analysis in terms of the arbitrary relation of signifiers (sign vehicles) to their signifieds (the concepts they refer to), is unsuitable for the study of music.[82] The reasons for this unsuitability can be briefly stated as follows. Firstly, the musical sign presents the problem of being a signifier without a readily identifiable signified, i.e. music is syntactic without being obviously semantic. This is neatly expressed by Lévi-Strauss (1969): music, he says, 'is the only language with the contradictory attributes of being at once intelligible and untranslatable' (18).[83] As a non-propositional form of communication, music's referential powers are almost entirely connotative rather than denotative, which makes the question of musical meaning oblique and elusive. Another way of putting this is to say that music 'is not, logically speaking, a language, for it has no vocabulary' (Langer 1957: 228). A second reason why Saussurean semiology is poorly suited to the task of musical analysis is that, in music, there is no stable minimal unit of signification, i.e. no equivalent of the phoneme. Instead, the 'museme', as it is sometimes called, continually shifts between musical parameters so that signification occurs via often-simultaneous alterations in pitch, rhythm, tempo, timbre, and dynamics.[84] In this respect, music is closer to paralanguage than language itself, this being a third reason for the inadequacy of Saussurean musical analysis. In musical communication, as with tonal and physical gestures, many things are capable of being 'said' at the same time, without reliance on a system of arbitrary and differentially-governed signs. To quote Mendelssohn, 'If you ask me to explain a piece of music, I can't do it, not because music is too vague, but because words are too vague' (quoted in Chanan 1999: 131).[85]

In keeping with a view of the efficacy of a trimmed-down version of Peirce's semiotics, I would now like to give a summary of the three main types of signs that he identifies, as applied to music. It should first be noted that 'icons', 'indices', and 'symbols' often function together in a single semiotic system, and the example provided by music is no exception. As will be seen, however, icons and indices greatly predominate.

Examples of 'symbols' in music are contentious as, strictly speaking, music does not possess the denotative function that is the distinguishing characteristic of this type of sign. Roland Barthes tentatively suggests Bach's *The Art of a Fugue* as one such example, in that its series of fugues and canons, each in a different key, constitute a quasi-mathematical commentary on the entire system of diatonicism: a sort of meta-music. In reality, though, Bach's final work merely 'feigns self-interpretation' as, like all music, it cannot be used to formulate propositions in the way that words or mathematical symbols patently can (Barthes 1977: 179). Umberto Eco (1976), for his part, moots 'trumpet signals in the army' as an example of a musical sign with 'an explicit denotative value' but this is a rare case (11). Fanfares might seem to be a similar example, whether they are of the regal and brassy kind or of the chintzy sort that announces the arrival of a guest on a television chat show or awards ceremony, but on closer inspection they are not 'symbols' but 'indices' (as too, I suspect, are most of the trumpet calls that Eco alludes to). In other words, they 'index' a person or event by habitual co-occurrence rather than by being part of an abstract code. The semiotic distinction between connotation and denotation can be invoked here: such bursts of music 'connote' the events or people they accompany or presage but do not, in any real sense, name or describe them. Leitmotifs are a similar example.

Although music does not, other than in very limited cases, function 'symbolically' in the Peircean sense, it is often entwined with a semiotic system that does: language. A combination of words and music often results in what the musicologist, Richard Norton (1984), refers to as 'semantic domination', whereby the meaning of a piece of music is circumscribed by its title or by the text it sets. Norton uses the example of the Renaissance *caccia* or hunting song to illustrate how this works:

> Without words, we are of course impressed with the vigorous melodic and rhythmic activity of the two upper 'hunting' voices, as they proceed apace in canon over a steadily moving bass line: some physical thing or event is being set forth in musical gesture. Without words, however, it is difficult to identify this activity with any precision. Is it a quail hunt, a sailing party, or a house on fire? All of these events are busy affairs, with a lot of running or moving about. But with the addition of the text [...] we discover that a particular human behaviour is being imitated in music (174-5).

Here the iconic and symbolic levels of signification function in unison, so that music which sets verses about a hunting party actually sounds like one. Norton also cites the example of John Dowland's *Lachrimae, or Seaven Teares Figured in Seaven Passionate Pavans* [sic] (1604), an instrumental piece written for viol consort and lute, which reflects the cult of melancholy that had been so prevalent in Elizabethan court circles. Dowland gave each section of the sequence its own title: 'old' tears, 'renewed' tears, 'sighing' tears, 'sad' tears, 'forced' tears, 'lover's' tears, and 'true' tears. The opening motif of a falling fourth recurs throughout the sequence of seven variations, thus functioning as the tonal embodiment of the falling tears of the title. As Norton notes, 'The music is for instruments, but the title secures an affective state for the listener', helping to establish the work's reputation as among the saddest pieces of English music ever written (175).

Especially poignant examples of the intertwining of words and music occur when song lyrics draw explicit attention to the form of the music, as in the Cole Porter song, 'Ev'ry time we say goodbye' (1944). The line, 'But how strange the change from major to minor' does indeed occur on a modulation from a major to a minor chord, producing an effect of lilting sadness and tender regret. A similar effect is to be found in 'Hallelujah' by Leonard Cohen (1984).[86] The first verse describes each of the song's harmonic changes one by one:

> I heard there was a secret chord
> That David played and it pleased the Lord
> But you don't really care for music, do ya?
> Well, it goes like this, the fourth, the fifth,
> The minor fall and the major lift –
> The baffled king composing Hallelujah.

Such devices, at their most successful, suggest an uncanny sense of a song composing itself as we hear it.[87]

We have already mentioned musical 'indices', the next type of musical sign. Turino (1999) refers to them as 'signs of experience and emotion', in that a musical index refers to its object via their co-occurrence as part of the actual events of one's life (234). Later, when one hears the music in a different context, the presence of the sign, i.e. the music, is enough for their objects to be recalled. So, for example, the theme tune from a familiar

film or television programme is enough to trigger a recollection of the latter, even in its absence. The epitome of a musical index is music for special occasions: birthdays, weddings, funerals and other rites of passage. The collective nature of these rituals helps to emphasise the strong emotional significance that can attach to such pieces of music. Turino stresses that indices are signs *of* experience rather than signs *about* experience, like symbols. This can lend them an unreflected-upon sense of authenticity:

> Indices are experienced as "real" because they are rooted, often redundantly, in one's own life experiences and, as memory, become the actual mortar of personal and social identity. When given indices are tied to the affective foundations of one's personal or communal life – home, family, childhood, a lover, war experiences – they have special potential for creating direct emotional effects because they are often unreflexively apprehended as "real" or "true" parts of the experiences signified (229).

The reader will remember that the next type of sign, the 'icon', resembles in some way or other the object to which it refers. The primary iconic connection in the present context is between a musical sign and the human voice. Music's processual shapes and mobile forms are analogous to the sounds of emotional speech. As Turino (1999) suggests, 'common musical devices such as a rising melodic line, accelerando, and crescendo may create tension and excitement in a listener because they sound like so many human voices we have heard rising in pitch, speed, and volume when the speaker becomes excited' (227). It is important to stress that the perceived likeness between a section of music and the 'musicality' of speech – its 'prosody' to use the proper linguistic term – is a 'felt' connection; that is to say, it is not usually registered in terms of language-based thought but is experienced instead as a chain of affects.[88]

Another iconic connection can be perceived between music and gestures or other physical movements. The tempo-marking *andante* (literally 'going') draws attention to this link, as it is supposed to be walking pace. Obviously, rhythm is a key component of the connection here, but the correspondences between music and bodily movements encompass other musical parameters too (Middleton 2000: 105). For example, in virtually every musical culture there is a perceived link between pitch values and physical space, so that a 'movement' in pitch suggests a corresponding movement in physical space, though it should be mentioned that the assignation of values can vary quite

markedly from one culture to another: pitches that are heard as 'high' in the Western musical tradition are perceived as being 'low' in Arab, Greek and Jewish music, and vice versa (Nattiez 1990: 122).

A further object to which a musical icon can refer is an emotional state, hence Susanne Langer's description of music as 'a "logical picture" of sentient, responsive life' (Langer 1957: 222). Langer's point here is that music does not *express* the inner life of our emotions so much as *formulate* and *represent* it: 'Because the forms of human feeling are much more congruent with musical forms than with the forms of language, music can *reveal* the nature of feelings with a detail and truth that language cannot approach' (235; emphasis in original). This iconic process via which music is able to represent emotional states has a long and complex history, which I'll return to in a moment.

When a piece of music functions intertextually, evoking for the listener the memory of other pieces of music, this too is an iconic connection as there is a perceived resemblance between sign and object, between the piece of music being listened to – or a fragment of it – and part of another piece of music. This kind of connection could be at the level of any one of a number of musical parameters – the particular timbre of a singer's voice evoking the sound of their voice on other recordings, a melodic or rhythmic phrase, a harmonic progression, etc. – or a combination of them. These kinds of relations between pieces of music are very common in popular music, in which musical materials are continually being recycled, and they are sometimes acknowledged by performers when they segue between one of their own songs and a similar song.[89] In the classical world, musical quotations establish similarly iconic links between separate musical materials.

Musical icons also operate *intra*textually. This is to say that part of a piece of music can sound like another part of the same piece. These kinds of connections are almost universal in all styles of music as they are essential in order to establish the identity of a piece, i.e. its formal characteristics as well as its distinctive set of timbral qualities. A typical example would be when a melody is introduced and then taken up by a different instrument, or when a melody is repeated but inflected in various ways. Only in very rare cases, when repetition is rigorously avoided as in some serialist compositions, does a piece of music not refer to itself in this way, yet even in such cases, it is more a question

of degree as some repetition is inevitable, for example, repetition of timbre, as in one of Schoenberg's *Piano Pieces*.

An 'archaeology' of musical signification

The icon is a sign that establishes a connection with its referent via the similarity of pertinent features. While not being arbitrary, this perceived similarity is, to some extent, culturally coded (Eco 1976: 204).[90] In music, the connection between an icon and its referent can feel immediate, spontaneous, and natural, but there often lies beneath such meanings a submerged history or cultural unconscious that requires 'unearthing' if the ideological ramifications of musical signification are to be perceived.

The example given earlier of the iconic connection between height and pitch is instructive in this regard. The French composer and musicologist, Jacques Chailley (1963), notes that in the early history of Western music this connection had not yet been fully established. He compares two liturgical chants from the Middle Ages, both of which set the text *ascendit Deus* as part of the Ascension Day mass. One might expect both to make use of 'ascending' pitches in setting this phrase but, in fact, only the later example does. When the first chant was composed, the linguistic convention by which a high pitch is called 'high' and a low pitch 'low' was not yet firmly in place, probably in connection with the fact that a system of notation representing the relationship between pitches in spatial terms – the precursor to staff notation – was still a relatively recent innovation (411).[91]

What, then, seems like a 'natural' connection is, in fact, a culturally acquired one. The music psychologist, Robert Francès (1958), claims that 'before getting any musical education, children do not in any way situate high and low sounds in space' (310). I remember a song I learnt at nursery or primary school (or perhaps from the television?) in which the words for different parts of the body were set to music: 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes'. As we touched the various parts of our bodies, the melody we were singing mapped, albeit in rough terms, their relative vertical positions, so that the higher notes were sung on 'head' and 'shoulders' while the lowest notes were reserved for 'knees' and 'toes'. This type of icon is referred to by Peirce (1960) as a 'diagram', in which an analogous relation of the parts belonging to sign and object is the

basis for their similarity, as in the example of a map (3.361-3). In this sense, the song is a rudimentary version of the African-American spiritual, 'Dem dry bones', which uses successive modulations to go from the lower body to the upper body and back down again: 'Your knee bone connected to your thigh bone / Your thigh bone connected to your hip bone / Your hip bone connected to your back bone', etc. As Nattiez (1990) comments regarding the implicit sense of 'musical spatialism' inculcated by such songs, 'we never believe so strongly in the naturalness of things as when we have become totally conditioned to them' (121).

The conventions governing the perceived resemblances between styles of music and emotional states have a long history, going back at least as far as the ancient Greeks. As with Medieval plainchant, Greek music was organised around the 'modes': a set of scales, each with its own distinctive arrangement of notes. (Only two such 'modes' remain in today's diatonic system, albeit with slightly altered tuning: the 'major' and the 'minor' keys). The doctrine of mimesis held that each of the modes imitated a mood or emotional state. Plato and Aristotle, for instance, claim that the Mixolydian mode is sorrowful while the Dorian, by contrast, sounds courageous and grandiose.[92] The act of mimesis was two-fold in that the mode would imitate a discrete set of emotions while arousing in listeners an emotional state which was, in turn, an imitation of the music.[93] One suspects the Greeks would have been responsive to the Peircean notion of a sign as a catalyst for a chain of effects.

Similar analogies have been made between emotional states and the various keys of the diatonic system, but this is an altogether more fanciful procedure, seeing that the relationships among notes within all major scales follow the same pattern, and likewise for all minor scales. This has not stopped composers such as Charpentier, Lavignac, and Rameau from making such analogies, though the epithets they attach to the same key often vary quite markedly: G minor is described by Charpentier as 'severe', whereas for Rameau it suggests 'tenderness', while for Lavignac it sounds 'melancholy' (Nattiez 1990: 125). Nattiez (1990) notes that 'tonal codes are quite numerous in Europe up to the twentieth century, and depend for their essence on a process of mental analogy' (124). On closer inspection, such codes often appear to derive from pre-existing associations between famous pieces of music and the titles given to them: another example of

'semantic domination'. Lavignac describes F major as a 'bucolic' and 'pastoral' key, no doubt because Beethoven chose it for his Sixth Symphony, the 'Pastoral'. The tuning of instruments, making them easy or difficult to play in certain keys, also contributes to these kinds of associations. For instance, the most 'pastoral' of instruments, the horn, was best played in a key around F major prior to the invention of its valved version, hence Beethoven's decision to name his Sixth Symphony in the way he did (Hewett 2010).

Undoubtedly, the most important moment in the codification of emotion in Western music occurred during the Renaissance when composers of madrigals were formulating the tonal 'language' that would be used in the first operas. The Cuban music critic, Alejo Carpentier (1972) writes: 'the madrigal composer managed to create a whole rhetoric of expression which consisted, for example, in causing the voices to rise when singing about heaven and to fall when singing about hell, in weaving "chains of love" with intervals of a third, or in writing in a silence for a "sigh" ' (1097). This new musical 'language' was based on relations between tonic and dominant, that is to say between a chord constructed on the first note of the home key and a chord built on the fifth note of that key. A return to the tonic represented emotional and dramatic resolution, whereas moments of tension were signified by movement away from the tonic, especially when dissonance was employed, as in the work of Gesualdo. In the dramatic settings of early operas such as *L'Euridice* (1600) by Peri or Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607), the singers' physical gestures allowed for the emotional content of musical phrases to be rendered even more explicitly. Christopher Small (1998) argues that the type of iconic musical phrases just described did not represent emotional states per se but rather the kinds of physical gestures, both bodily and vocal, with which they were associated (148). Once the connection with music was firmly established, audiences could understand the significance of such 'musical gestures' outside of the textual and dramatic settings of madrigal and opera within which they'd first been heard. The foundations were thus laid for the more 'abstract dramas' of concert music, including the nineteenth-century symphony (147).

In the twentieth century, classical Hollywood cinema continued these processes of iconic semiosis, installing late romanticism as the de facto style for the signification of a range of emotions in screen entertainment. The origins of this extend back to the erroneously-named 'silent' era, when musicians in the movie theatre would accompany

the action on screen, partly in order to divert attention from the whirring noise of the projector. A system of music cue sheets proved to be the most reliable way of synchronising music with the moving picture. These cue sheets plundered popular song and the classical repertory in order to provide pianists, organists and small orchestras with suitable music for accompanying narrative films. Chanan (1996) notes that '[t]he cue sheet system […] institutionalized what had already become an established informal practice, in which a repertoire of well-known music was coded by a loose impressionistic iconic association' (263). Familiar music, he writes, 'provide[d] a ready-made emotive vocabulary […], used to trigger off established response patterns, to reinforce the conventionality of the plot and the genre' (265). He adds that '[t]he effects of this kind of classification of music for the screen would reach beyond the cinema. It has created a way of hearing which insists on associating music forever with pictures; and a way of hearing which annihilates listening' (265). In being co-opted in order to render the affective meaning of moving images less ambiguous, classical or classical-style music has itself been rendered less ambiguous. For those who never hear it in any other context, it has become a monolithic set of conventional signs which is usually there, as such, in order to be ignored. The distinction introduced earlier between affect and emotion is apt here, as it would seem that the kind of signification produced by a classical Hollywood score tends towards the production of emotion rather than affect, i.e. a 'socio-linguistic fixing of the quality of an experience which is from that point onward defined as personal' (Massumi 1996: 221). In eliciting an audience's identification with the subjective experience of the characters on screen, such scores thus tend to reproduce an ideology of the bourgeois humanist subject: the individual as bounded, unitary, transparently self-aware, and autonomous. This occurs in spite of the ostensibly collective nature of consumption within the cinematic medium.

Musical signification, especially the culturally-coded connection between music and emotional states, therefore has a very 'sedimented' history, with the result that musical meanings often appear 'natural' or 'obvious', or as unmediated effects directly caused by the sound stimulus itself rather than via its cultural construction. What I have presented here is – in the Foucauldian sense – an 'archaeology' of musical signification, in which I have attempted to lay bare some of the normally submerged historical foundations and

dense genealogies determining how music produces meaning for us today. The parallels with everyday life are apposite in this regard. Like musical signification, the everyday hides its own history, and thus explicitly ideological meanings are lost to those long processes of semiotic coalescence and sedimentation via which culture is able to pose as nature. In both cases – music and everyday life – this sedimentation is a form of deep or implicit cultural memory, a cultural unconscious, which needs to be 'dug out' if its meanings are to be examined in the light of day.

CHAPTER 3

Involuntary Musical Memories

*

Music is playing inside my head
Over and over and over again –
My friend, there's no end to the music.

Carole King,
'Music' (1971)

Involuntary memory

To talk of 'involuntary memory' is to already be within the discourse of psychology with its attendant construction of the bounded individual – an individual who has commonly, though problematically, been taken to be the repository of memory (Radstone and Hodgkin 2003: 3). It was Hermann Ebbinghaus, in his book, *On Memory*, published in 1885, who first made the formal distinction between voluntary and involuntary remembering (Rose 2003: 122-3). Ebbinghaus' emphasis on quantitative precision marked his work off from the more speculative and introspective psychology that had preceded it, and indeed, from the ancient *ars memorativa* or 'art of memory', which had had a pervasive influence in Western culture since at least the time of the Greeks and their designation of Mnemosyne as the mother of the Muses (Yates 1966: xi, 6).

   Ebbinghaus (1885/1964) notes that while some 'mental states' must be 'call[ed] back into consciousness by an exertion of the will', others return, 'even after years, […] with apparent spontaneity' (1-2). As an example of one of these 'mental states' that are 'reproduced involuntarily', he cites the spontaneous recall of music: 'Melodies may become a source of torment by the undesired persistency of their return' (2-3; original emphasis removed). Clearly, Ebbinghaus was interested – albeit bemusedly so – in the peculiar susceptibility of

the human nervous system to spontaneous musical activity. He contrasts music with visual stimuli in this regard: 'Forms and colours are not so importunate; and if they do return, it is with noticeable loss of clearness and certainty' (3). His explanation for this falls back on a somewhat hackneyed distinction between the visual arts as representational and the musical arts as expressive: 'The musician writes for the orchestra what his inner voice sings to him; the painter rarely relies without disadvantage solely upon the images which his inner eye presents to him; nature gives him his forms, study governs his combination of them' (ibid.). On the related subject of emotions, he notes that some kind of sensuous trigger, such as a piece of music, is usually needed for their recall: 'It is with something of a struggle that past states of feeling are realized; when realized, […] this is often only through the instrumentality of the movements which accompanied them' (ibid.).

Ebbinghaus' concern with the interiority of experience, as reflected in this passage and throughout his treatise on memory, marks him out as a man of his age: someone who, in responding unconsciously to the twin forces of industrial and urban modernity, helped to construct our now taken-for-granted view of the fragile, buffeted individual as their correlate. His nascent conception of involuntary memory as an internalised response to stimuli in our immediate environment was greatly expanded upon in the work that followed in the early twentieth century.

Proustian memory

The actual phrase *mémoire involontaire* appears for the first time almost thirty years after Ebbinghaus' study, in the work of Proust.[94] And it is with Proust that the concept of involuntary memory is usually associated; indeed, it is often referred to as '*Proustian* memory'. Proust's grand theme throughout the eight volumes that comprise *À la recherche du temps perdu* is the notion that sensuous experiences can prompt spontaneous reminiscences and thus aid the recovery of 'lost time'.

The most famous of these incidents is described in the first chapter of the first volume. Returning home one day, cold and tired, the narrator is given a cup of lime-blossom tea by his mother together with a little cake called a *madeleine* in the shape of a scallop shell. He dips a morsel of the cake in a spoonful of tea and raises the mixture to his lips. A moment later he feels '[a]n exquisite pleasure […], something isolated, detached, with no suggestion

of its origin' (Proust 1913/1992: 51). The sensation is overwhelming, 'filling' the young Marcel 'with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it *was* me' (ibid.). He tries to recapture this feeling of being lifted out of time and freed from 'the vicissitudes of life', but in vain (ibid.). Each successive mouthful produces a diminishing sensation, and he is unable to force the memories associated with the taste of the tea and cake to arise in his mind even though he can feel them as an inarticulate 'essence' in his body. Eventually however, involuntary remembering takes over again and 'the memory reveal[s] itself': 'The taste was that of the little piece of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray […], when I went to say good morning to her in her bedroom, my aunt Léonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of tea or tisane' (53). In being able to suddenly feel again the aura of the days he spent as a child staying with relatives in the countryside, the narrator marvels at how 'taste and smell' encapsulate 'the vast structure of recollection' (54).

The other instances of involuntary memory in the novel share a similar degree of sensuous specificity. Only one of them is a visual memory per se, providing a clue as to the peculiarly embodied nature of involuntary remembering. The visual sense tends to play, at best, a supporting role in such spontaneous reminiscences, no doubt because it is the most objectifying of the senses and is thus unsuited to the sudden recall of memories in which remembering subject and remembered object are fused into a single 'essence'.

The 'little phrase by Vinteuil' that so obsesses Charles Swann in the first volume of *À la recherche* acts as a trigger for a set of involuntary associations, though it is not an involuntary musical memory of the kind I will be examining later (262). This is to say that we are not given to understand that Swann hears the phrase from Vinteuil's sonata 'in his head'; only that it prompts various reminiscences of his love for Odette when he hears it performed. Once the connection is established in Swann's mind between Odette and the little phrase, it becomes 'the national anthem of their love', especially in that Swann asks her to play it for him (ibid.). It functions as 'a token of his love', suggestive of intense emotions, both happy and sad, hopeful and disenchanting, its meaning changing depending on how Swann is feeling in relation to Odette, the object of his obsession (ibid.). In the different ways just described, the phrase belongs to the two categories of signs that Peirce terms 'icons' and 'indices': it refers via its resemblance to the intensity of his feeling for Odette, to Odette herself via its contemporaneity with her, as well as to the era in his life when he

became so infatuated by her. It is at this complex, implicit, and highly suggestive level of signification – in contrast to the explicitness of language – that the snatch of music operates upon Swann. We are told that 'he sought in the little phrase for a meaning to which his intelligence could not descend' (285).

The catalysts for involuntary reminiscences in the other volumes of the novel are as follows. In *À l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleures* (1919), 'the cold, almost sooty smell' of a public lavatory on the Champs-Elysées reminds the narrator of his uncle's little sitting room at Combray, 'which had […] exhaled the same odour of humidity' (Proust 1919/1960: 93). He describes the initial sensation as 'a pleasure not at all of the same character as other pleasures, […] a consistent pleasure on which I could lean for support, delicious, soothing, rich with a truth that was lasting, unexplained and certain' (90). In spite of its profound impact on him, he postpones at this still-early stage in the novel 'the attempt to discover why the recollection of so trivial an impression had given [him] so keen a happiness' (ibid.). Involuntary memory offers an experience of repletion but, as yet, remains mysterious for the young Marcel.

The next spontaneous reminiscence occurs in a later volume, *Sodome et Gomorrhe* (1921), and demonstrates the increasing intellectual, emotional and artistic maturity of the narrator. In a state of exhaustion, the narrator returns to his hotel room and reaches down to take off his boots when he is suddenly reminded of how his grandmother had removed his boots for him when they were staying in the exact same room of the Grand Hotel in Balbec. A vivid memory of his deceased grandmother coincides with the ineluctable realisation that she is gone: 'I had only just, on feeling her for the first time, alive, authentic, making my heart swell to the breaking-point, on finding her at last, learned that I had lost her for ever […]. I felt that I did not really recall her save by grief' (Proust 1921/1929: 220, 222). He breaks down in sobs of tears, able fully to mourn her passing for the first time in spite of her having died more than a year previously. His two trips to the hotel – the first accompanied by his grandmother, the second without her – exist in a superimposed, synchronic relationship, so that the 'peculiar odour of the over-scented soaps', for example, 'seem[ed] to belong at once to the present moment and to my past visit' (229).

In the climactic volume, *Le temps retrouvé* (1927), the narrator's involuntary reminiscences come in quick succession during a visit to the Guermantes mansion. Upon

arriving there for an afternoon party, the narrator stumbles on some uneven paving-stones in the courtyard outside and is returned to the baptistery of St. Mark's in Venice, where he had also stood on a paving stone that was slightly lower than its neighbour. Once inside the mansion, he has to wait in a little sitting room used as a library until the end of a piece of music which was being played in the main reception room, 'the Princess having given orders for the doors to be kept shut during its performance' (Proust 1927/1970: 224). He describes how 'A servant, trying unsuccessfully not to make a noise, chanced to knock a spoon against a plate and again that same species of happiness which had come to me from the uneven paving-stones poured into me' (224-5). For Marcel, the noise is identical to one he had heard during a trip back to Paris when his train had broken down: a hammer being struck against one of the huge iron wheels. In spite of the very different settings, he experiences the same sense of 'heat combined with a whiff of smoke and […] the cool smell of a forest background', and feels himself 'to be in the railway carriage again, opening a bottle of beer' (225). In the midst of these reveries, a butler brings him a glass of orangeade and a selection of little cakes and biscuits. The starchiness of the napkin that he wipes his mouth on is enough to transport him once more. The texture of the napkin recalls that of a towel he had used to dry his face on during the first day of his arrival at Balbec. Another memory of the coastal resort of Balbec is brought back to him by 'the shrill noise of water running through a pipe'; it reminds him of the sound emitted by a pleasure steamer (232).[95] Then, while browsing the Prince's collection of first editions, Marcel discovers a book by George Sand – *François le Champi* – which his mother had read to him as a child: 'This was a very deeply buried impression that I had just encountered, one in which memories of childhood and family were tenderly intermingled and which I had not immediately recognised. […T]his book which my mother had read aloud to me at Combray until the early hours of the morning had kept for me all the charm of that night' (248).

This 'trembling chain of memories' is decisive in affirming the narrator's vocation as a writer. He realises that the subtle, delicate motions of the self that accompany spontaneous memories parallel those of artistic inspiration (ibid.; 238). Here, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary remembering is crucial: 'the truths which the intellect apprehends directly in the world of full and unimpeded light have something less profound, less necessary than those which life communicates to us against our will in an impression which

is material because it enters us through the senses but yet has a spiritual meaning which it is possible for us to extract' (239). Each of the sensuous objects that the narrator chances upon during the novel allow for the recovery of 'a fragment of time in the pure state', 'something that, common to the past and to the present, is much more essential than both' (230). Such involuntary memories represent 'the discovery of our true life, of reality as we have felt it to be, which differs so greatly from what we think it is' (242). Here again, Peircean semiotics helps make the contrast sharper. Whereas voluntary memories typically rely on some kind of verbal formulation, and are thus remembered via recourse to those abstract and arbitrary signs that Peirce terms 'symbols', involuntary memories are 'iconic' and 'indexical': a spoon chinking on a plate resembles the distant sound of a hammer being struck against the wheel of a train; via this connection, this sound refers also to all the other sensuous details associated with the original experience of sitting in a railway carriage as a train pauses next to a forest on its way to Paris. During the course of such reminiscences, Marcel experiences a semiotic cascade, as the meaning or effect of one sign becomes the catalyst for further meanings, effects and reminiscences, and so on. In addition to forming chains of signs, these spontaneous memories also arise as tightly-bunched clusters, more palpable than linguistic signs:

> An image presented to us by life brings with it, in a single moment, sensations which are in fact multiple and heterogeneous […]. An hour is not merely an hour, it is a vase full of scents and sounds and projects and climates, and what we call reality is a certain connection between these immediate sensations and the memories which envelop us simultaneously with them (253-4).

Our experience of the present is inevitably suffused with intimations of the past. At certain moments too, when past and present share the same identity, the Proustian rememberer is offered a sensation of 'pure' time: time as a synchronic structure folded back on itself, yet vivid, sensual and immediate, releasing one from the meaningless continuum of time conceived of in linear terms.

Proust & Bergson

Critics sometimes used to speculate that Proust was introduced to the concept of involuntary memory by his cousin-in-law, Henri Bergson. Such a connection is now thought to be unlikely; in any case, Proust strenuously denied Bergson's influence. In an interview, Proust

insisted that the distinction between voluntary and involuntary memory was one that Bergson had not made (Loshitzky 1995: 215). Nevertheless, there are certain parallels between their conceptions of memory. As Walter Benjamin (1973) notes, 'the *mémoire pure* of Bergson's theory becomes a *mémoire involontaire*' in Proust's work (111). Bergson's view is that memory, in its 'pure' form, is inaccessible to consciousness; it can only be grasped in the form of 'images', which arise as a result of one's active engagement in the sensuous world:

> that a recollection should reappear in consciousness, it is necessary that it should descend from the heights of pure memory down to the precise point where *action* is taking place (153). [M]emories need, for their actualization, a motor ally, […] they require for their recall a kind of mental attitude which must itself be engrafted upon an attitude of the body (Bergson 1908/1988: 120).

Thus, in Bergson's work, the ground is already laid for a phenomenology of memory: a conception of remembering as a sensuous and embodied activity in which subject and object interpenetrate. This conception, on the face of it at least, would appear to feed into the work of Proust, and certainly does into Benjamin's work, as well as that of Deleuze.

However, there are certain differences between Bergson's and Proust's conceptions of memory. In his book on Baudelaire, Benjamin criticises Bergson for failing to attend to the historically-constructed nature of memory while praising Proust for avoiding this failing. For Benjamin (1973), there has been 'a change in the structure of […] experience'; fleeting and contingent forms of reminiscence become, for him, emblematic of urban and industrial modernity (110). In his eulogy to Proust, he claims that the concept of *mémoire involontaire* 'bears the marks of the situation which gave rise to it; it is part of the inventory of the individual who is isolated in many ways' (113).[96] Benjamin acknowledges that the very notion of 'experience' implies 'certain contents of the individual past [being] combine[d] with material of the collective past' so that, in the final analysis, an individual's experience is found to depend upon a collective support (ibid.).[97] He notes, however, that, in Proust, one doesn't find overtly collective forms of remembrance – 'rituals', 'ceremonies', 'festivals', etc. – so much as solitary reminiscences arising as 'a matter of chance' (112-3).

I'll return to the work of Bergson, Benjamin and Proust in order to look for clues as to how and why we spontaneously remember fragments of music but, first, I'd like to give some examples of what, in a literal translation from the German *Ohrwurm*, have also been referred to as 'earworms' (Sacks 2007: 42).

Involuntary musical memories: two examples

I'd like to recount two celebrated examples of involuntary musical memories, separated from each other by a period of some eighty-odd years. The differences between them illustrate the unprecedented changes, both to memory and to musical culture, that occurred during the intervening period.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud recalls an incident that had happened immediately prior to his so-called 'revolutionary' dream. He was at Vienna's *Westbahnhof*, waiting for a train to take him to Aussee for his summer holidays, but had arrived while an earlier train was still standing in the station. Suddenly, Count Thun, the aristocratic head of government, barged onto the platform, curtly brushing aside the ticket inspector, who hadn't recognised him, and boarded the train for Ischl where he had an audience with the Emperor. The Austrian politician had recently been ridiculed by opposition journalists, who had branded him *Count Nichtsthun* or 'Count Do-nothing', *Thun* being the German word for 'do'. The train for Ischl pulled out and Freud, having already purchased a first-class ticket for his train but without a reserved compartment, scrutinised the platform in order to see if anyone else would claim preferential treatment, in which case he had decided he would loudly protest and claim equal rights. Keeping a look-out in this manner, he became aware that he had been humming a tune, which he recognised as being from *The Marriage of Figaro*: 'Se vuol ballare, signor contino / Il chitarino le suonerò' ('If the Count wants to dance, I'll call the tune'). Freud's unconscious resentment towards the aristocracy had surfaced from his lips in the form of Figaro's aria (Freud 1953: 208-9; Chanan 1994: 89).

In this example of Freud's hummed reprise of a Mozart aria, the association with Count Thun and his imperious behaviour resided in the lyrics attached to the melody. Freud cites similar instances in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1917), such as that of a young man who had been 'absolutely haunted' by the song of Paris from Offenbach's *Helen of Troy* until it was pointed out to him in analysis that, at that time, a 'Helen' and an 'Ida' were rivals for his affection. Freud avers that 'the tunes which suddenly come into a man's head can be shown to be conditioned by some train of thought to which they belong, and which for some reason is occupying his mind without his knowing anything about it. […T]he connection with the tune is to be found either in

the words which belong to it or in the source from which it comes'. Freud goes on to speculate that in the case of musicians, however, 'the musical value of the tune may account for its suddenly emerging into consciousness' (Freud 1917/1933: 89-90). If one is to make the admittedly rash analogy with language, music, on this account, would possess both a syntactic level and a *semantic* one, quite apart from any programmatic setting or lyrical content it may have (Osmond-Smith 1972: 31).

By his own admission, Freud had little personal interest in music, though a large measure of professional curiosity with regard to musicality. Like many a good Viennese, however, he was a regular opera-goer. Occurring just before the turn of the century, his own psychoanalytically-inflected incidence of involuntary musical memory belongs to an era in which music was heard in specific social contexts and supported by various sets of culturally-embedded meanings and associations. The solitary listener had yet to be invented, although the apparatus that would facilitate its construction, Edison's phonograph, had already been patented back in 1877.

Our second example of involuntary remembering brings us much closer to the present day. In 1985, two young but experienced climbers, Joe Simpson and Simon Yates, set out to ascend the unclimbed West Face of the remote *Siula Grande* in the Peruvian Andes. Their ordeal, after Yates was forced to cut the rope on his fellow climber or almost certainly die with him, is the subject of the docu-drama, *Touching the Void*, based on Simpson's book of the same name. The preternatural lucidity of Simpson's delirium as he spends the next three days struggling back to base camp with a broken leg and no food or water holds a particular fascination due to the way it unsettles the calm psychological insights of the first-person narrative. Simpson experiences an eerie sense of dissociation from his own internal dialogue, feeling himself guided by what he refers to as 'the *voice*' (italics in original). And he, of course, experiences frequent involuntary musical memories:

> I awoke with a start – '*Get moving…don't lie there…stop dozing…move!*' The *voice* came through the wandering idle thoughts of pop song lyrics, faces from the past, and fantasies of empty value (Simpson 2004: 157; emphasis in original).

Here again, as with the examples that Freud cites, song lyrics figure prominently in Simpson's tortured reverie, but now they are bereft of all association and social context. Instead of presenting a psychoanalytical puzzle that can bring to light the submerged contents of the unconscious, these snatches of pop songs are merely puzzling, their very arbitrariness and contingency eluding interpretation. In spite of their occasional vividness, there seems to be no reason why Simpson should remember these particular song lyrics and not others. He even has an active dislike of one of the songs that pops into his head:

> Somehow I couldn't get its insistent chant out of my mind as, irritably, I set to work […], trying to forget the words,… '*Brown girl in the ring…Tra la la la la…*' A part of me performed tasks without conscious decision, as if already told what to do, while the other part insisted on vocalising a stupid meaningless song through my every thought (161).

With Simpson's absurd self-imposed aural torture, we are now firmly in the era, not just of solitary listening, but of what Anahid Kassabian (2002) has called 'ubiquitous listening'. Whether or not we choose to fill our lives with it or not, music assails us from every quarter. Significantly, Simpson's most nagging musical reminiscence is of a song that, we must assume, he hadn't chosen to hear or learn. As Simon Frith (2001) has astutely remarked, pop music, such as Boney M.'s version of 'Brown Girl…', is 'the music we listen to without meaning to; the songs we know without knowing how we know them' (104). Simpson (2004) surprises himself at his capacity for the recall of another pop song, this time one more to his liking: 'I found that I could vocalise all the lyrics word-perfectly, yet I was sure I had only been able to remember the refrain in the past' (160).[98]

In traversing the passage from Freud to Simpson, from performance to recording, and from ritual listening to ubiquitous listening, the nature of involuntary musical memories has changed. Introspective analysis has, to some extent, been replaced by inexplicability; and tradition, by contingency. Yet, in spite of this changed context characterised by flux and heterogeneity, the question still arises of how, why and with what significance melodies are spontaneously remembered. Two theories can be posited: one historical, the other broadly ahistorical. Firstly, the ahistorical one.

Unconscious musical icons

In spite of a strongly formalist strand within writings on music, as exemplified by Hanslick's claim that 'the beauty of a musical work is *specifically musical*', a lot of research suggests that music is intimately bound up with somatic and affective rhythms, and not just as a matter of convention (Hanslick 1854/1974: 12; emphasis in original). Reflecting upon his own experiences, the psychiatrist, Anthony Storr (1992), observes that 'the music which comes unbidden to my mind usually has physical and emotional effects of a positive kind. It alleviates boredom, makes my movements more rhythmical, and reduces fatigue' (125). He draws the speculative conclusion that music in the head might be biologically adaptive. It is certainly possible that it played a role in the survival of Joe Simpson, goading him on as if it were his own internal muzak.[99]

In his book, *Music and Communication*, Terence McLaughlin (1970) agrees with formalists such as Hanslick that musical structures are 'strictly speaking meaningless', but adds that 'the fact that they are translated in the brain into the general *lingua franca* of all other patterns [i.e. electrical impulses] allows us to see the similarities between […] musical patterns and […] the more personal ones which form the constant undercurrent of our thoughts' (87). Involuntary musical memories would, on this view, be partly synaesthetic in origin, occurring as a result of musical patterns having previously activated and synthesised non-musical patterns stored in our brains. In this regard, David Osmond-Smith (1972) describes music as an example of what he calls an 'unconscious icon': 'an abstract form standing in close relation to the basic patterns to which a wide variety of experiences have been reduced in the brain, and thus effecting a synthesis among them' (40). This accords with Freud's intuition that the *musical* value of a tune

rather than its lyrics may sometimes account for its suddenly popping into consciousness, except that, unlike Freud, one would not expect this phenomenon to be confined merely to those with a special aptitude for music, especially in an era such as our own in which, due to mechanical reproduction, music is so very much more widespread.

So 'earworms' can partly be explained as being 'unconscious musical icons', i.e. they unconsciously resemble and are triggered by patterns of stimulation within other sensory modalities. Without our being aware of it, such musical phrases are similar in some way to a feature of our immediate environment. The spontaneous recall of fragments of music is, then, part of that cross-talk of the senses known as synaesthesia. This explanation accords with the growing body of evidence pointing to the 'multisensory organization' or 'integration' of the brain (Howes 2006: 382). As Calvert, Spence and Stein (2004) claim in their introduction to *The Handbook of Multisensory Processes*,

> even those experiences that at first may appear to be modality-specific are most likely to have been influenced by activity in other sensory modalities, despite our lack of awareness of such interactions. [...To] fully appreciate the processes underlying much of sensory perception, we must understand not only how information from each sensory modality is transduced and decoded along the pathways primarily devoted to that sense, but also how this information is modulated by what is going on in the other sensory pathways (xi-xii).

So, just as listening to a piece of music can evoke vague impressions of people, places, physical movements, colours, etc., it would seem that these same things qua stimuli are able to evoke memories of music, especially when there is something overtly rhythmic and/or gestural about them. I have noticed, for example, how a tune that pops into my mind while I am walking down the street usually corresponds in its tempo to the tempo of my steps. One is reminded here of Bergson's description of 'memories need[ing], for their actualization, a motor ally, and [...] requir[ing] for their recall a kind of mental attitude which must itself be engrafted upon an attitude of the body' (Bergson 1908/1988: 120).

The fact that these kinds of iconic processes are usually unconscious can be explained by the idea introduced in interlude I: that a sign is a catalyst for a chain of meanings and affects, the intermediate 'links' of which are sometimes imperceptible – though their existence can be inferred from the actual effects they produce, i.e. the other signs they give rise to.[100] Resurfacing memories of pieces of music might then 'signify' without the

object they 'refer' to being immediately obvious: the resemblance between sign and referent, between musical response and non-musical stimulus, is not consciously perceived.

Unconscious musical icons are strongly conditioned by the musical culture into which one is born. This is to say that not just any musical phrases are able to be remembered spontaneously but only those that have been internalised at a deep affective and gestural level. Hence, for the spontaneous rememberer in Western musical cultures, involuntary musical memories will be almost exclusively diatonic, perhaps simpler even than this: limited to harmonic progressions between the tonic, dominant and subdominant, as in a typical nursery rhyme.

This would explain why Joe Simpson had 'Brown girl in the ring' stuck in his head during his ordeal in the Andes. The song originated as part of a children's game in Jamaica, and has been sung for centuries.[101] Players form a ring by holding hands and one girl or boy goes into the middle and starts skipping around to the song. The girl or boy is then asked 'Show me your motion', at which point the child in the centre does a little dance. If asked 'Show me your partner', he or she picks a friend to join him or her inside the circle (Lomax et al 1997). Such simple melodies, together with the gestures that accompany them, form a musical bedrock: a 'harmonic background' as it were, which is spectrally present throughout all of a person's subsequent musical experiences.[102] It is not surprising then that Simpson, soaked in his own urine, and in a state of almost infantile helplessness, should be psychically stripped to his musical core: in this case, a melody that modulates in the most naïve fashion between tonic and dominant, before a simple turnaround (on 'she looks…') through subdominant, dominant and tonic. In this way, the different levels of Simpson's identity in *Touching the Void* roughly correspond to Freud's tripartition of the psyche: the disassociated '*voice*' Simpson hears in his mind is his *superego*; the narrative voice is his *ego*, mastering experience retrospectively; while the tunes he hears in his mind are his *id*.

Simpson's experiences are also explained by what Julia Kristeva, borrowing from Plato, terms the *chora*: the bodily site of the first signifying processes of the foetus. As Kristeva (1986) states, 'the *chora* precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm' (94). This 'kinetic

functional stage […] precedes the establishment of the sign' in that there is not, as yet, any meaningful distinction between subject and object (95). '[T]he linguistic sign is not yet articulated as the absence of an object', which is to say – simplifying somewhat – that the referents of any potential signifying system have not yet been experienced as absent so there is therefore no need for signs which refer to them. Kristeva hypothesises 'that certain semiotic articulations are transmitted through the biological code or physiological "memory" and thus form the inborn bases of the symbolic function' (96). In other words, language is founded upon a type of prenatal semiosis. If one can talk validly of unborn infants being inducted into some kind of signifying system while still in the womb, it seems reasonable to assume, as Kristeva does, that this primordial semiotic is comprised of movement and sound. Indeed, there is a substantial body of evidence suggesting that babies are able to recognise pieces of music they have heard in the womb (Levitin 2006: 223-5).[103] For example, a young infant will turn his or her head towards a speaker playing a song he or she heard in the last three months of gestation, but will disregard a song that wasn't heard during that period. As musician and neuroscientist Daniel Levitin (2006) observes, 'It appears that for music even prenatal experience is encoded in memory, and can be accessed in the absence of language or explicit awareness of the memory' (225). Those other ambient sounds that are filtered through the amniotic fluid play a key influence as well: the tonal and rhythmic gestures of the mother's voice, for example, her conversations, and all the other patterned sounds of her daily life. In the absence of any visual cues, these assume a proto-musical significance. In her study of poetic language, Kristeva (1986) detects the *chora* in the 'air or song beneath the [literary] text' (97). For the involuntary rememberer such as Simpson, the *chora* is the incessant song beneath his thoughts and actions.

Unconscious cribbing

The reader will remember Proust's claim that involuntary remembering is akin to artistic inspiration. Sometimes in musical culture, the boundaries between the two blur and what is at first thought of as an original composition is later revealed to be an unconsciously cribbed version of an already-existing piece. An anecdote from a biography of Manuel de Falla illustrates the ease with which this can happen. When Falla was composing *Nights*

in the Gardens of Spain (1911-15), the opening theme apparently came to him quite spontaneously, yet one day, he met Amadeo Vives, who told him that, oddly enough, he had written a *zarzuela* which began in exactly the same way. This coincidence troubled Falla until the explanation suddenly came to him:

> he and Vives lived on two different floors of the same house in the Calle Serano in Madrid. On the pavement below, an aged blind violinist had every day come and played these notes on a badly tuned violin. Constant repetition had fixed the notes in their minds so that, without realizing it, they had both written them as their own (Pahissa 1954: 94).

We have here another example of a 'stray refrain' as described in chapter two – a mobile musical fragment, the quotidian or 'everyday' character of which allows it to circulate between different social and artistic contexts. In such cases of unconscious cribbing, one is tempted to assign agency to the musical meme itself rather than to the composers who were its more or less passive conduits.[104]

In the music industry, unconscious cribbing, or 'cryptomnesia' as it has also been called, can result in legal wrangles over alleged plagiarism. Paul McCartney was so surprised at the ease with which he composed the melody to 'Yesterday' (1965) – apparently while dreaming – that, before finishing the lyrics, he sang it to several friends and others in the business to be sure he hadn't inadvertently 'stolen' it from someone else: 'Eventually it became like handing something in to the police. I thought if no-one claimed it after a few weeks then I could have it' (quoted in Cross 2005: 464-5). Rod Stewart was less fortunate with his song, 'Do ya think I'm sexy?' (1978), for which he was successfully sued by the Brazilian singer, Jorge Ben. Stewart denied intentionally copying the refrain to 'Taj Mahal' (1972), claiming that he must have heard Ben's song while at the Rio carnival but without consciously registering it.

One of the most interesting disputes of this kind was that concerning George Harrison's 'My sweet lord'. In the 1976 court case, Harrisongs Music Ltd. versus Bright Tunes Music Corp., the latter claimed that the former Beatle had infringed upon the copyright of a song called 'He's so fine', originally recorded by The Chiffons back in 1963. Harrison lost the case and was ordered to pay £260,000 in damages. The judge conceded, however, that Harrison had probably copied the combination of motifs, including a distinctive grace note, unconsciously. The case established a legal precedent

for copyright cases in the United States whereby alleged cryptomnesia is treated no differently from deliberate plagiarism. Embittered by the decision, Harrison claimed that if 'My sweet lord' was a copy of 'He's so fine', then it was a copy of numerous other songs too. Quite candidly, he admitted modelling his song, not on The Chiffons' hit, but on what certainly seems to be a more likely source, the gospel number, 'Oh happy day' by The Edwin Hawkins Singers (Riley 2006).

Harrison's comments highlight the underlying similarities between a vast array of Western music across different genres. The roots of all pop music, for example, are often said to be found in the twelve-bar blues which itself derives from a 'Gregory Walker' or *passamezzo moderno* chord progression dating back to the fifteenth century. More concretely, the chord progression in Pachelbel's *Canon in D Major*, composed around 1680, has since been used in countless pieces of music, including many contemporary pop songs (ibid.).

The boundaries, therefore, between unconscious cribbing on the one hand and the replication of generic 'deep structures' on the other are far from clear. The introduction in some sectors of the recording industry of 'hit-prediction software' takes advantage of this ambiguity. Companies such as the ominously named Platinum Blue Music Intelligence and their chief rival, Polyphonic HMI, claim to be able to predict whether or not a song will be a hit using a method called 'spectral deconvolution' (Burkeman 2006: 57). Platinum Blue's software can allegedly ' "listen" to a song and, within 20 seconds, extract 40 pieces of information about its deep structure – its "fullness of sound", the instruments it uses, its chord progression, the cadences of melodies and more' (ibid.). Having done this for hits spanning the entire history of recorded music, Platinum Blue found that about four-fifths of them belonged to clusters of other hits, thus sharing observable though not always immediately obvious characteristics. In other words, '80% of all pop songs that had ever been hits shared a relatively small number of underlying structures' (ibid.). The likelihood of a song being a hit is thus determined by whether or not it belongs to clusters of hits from the past. Such software was used to foretell the success of the first single to top the UK charts on download sales alone, Gnarls Barkley's 'Crazy' (2006), as well as that of the James Blunt song, 'You're beautiful' (2005), described by journalist Oliver Burkeman as 'a song that manages to burrow itself into

your brain, where it circles eternally, despite a relatively unexciting chord sequence and the odd, unpromising timbre of Blunt's voice' (59). Interestingly, hits from different genres frequently share the same cluster, confirming what musicologists have long claimed regarding the common roots of much Western music.

The point to stress is that, when we listen to a piece of music, there is, to some degree, an unconsciously-evoked spectral presence of all the other music we have heard to which it is similar. Rather than being aberrant, this kind of thoroughgoing intertextuality is fundamental to how we listen and respond to music, especially in terms of the patterns of expectations it sets up, and how deviations from these patterns – often quite minute ones – are able to trigger affective responses.[105]

A culture of overstimulation

Thus far, we have examined one main theory as to why involuntary musical memories occur: the idea that they are triggered by analogous patterns of stimulation in other sensory modalities. In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to examine a second, complementary theory, which emphasises to a much greater extent the historical constructedness of involuntary remembering. The theory hinges on the idea that involuntary recollection is, as Walter Benjamin (1929/1999) proposes, 'much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory' (238). This is to say that a spontaneously remembered tune results from having heard a melody in a state of distraction – certainly without committing it to memory – and then, in effect, forgetting that one has heard it. When the tune returns unbidden, it is all the more uncanny because we don't properly remember hearing it before (Mowitt 2006: 17).

This notion finds support in the work of Freud. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), he draws a radical ontological distinction between memory and consciousness, claiming that the two are incompatible. For Freud (1920/2003), 'consciousness arises instead of a memory trace', acting in effect as a shield against excessive stimuli (64; emphasis altered).[106] This means that we involuntarily remember that which consciousness has been unable to screen out. Memory fragments are thus, for Freud, 'often strongest and most enduring when the process that brought them into being never entered consciousness at all' (ibid.).[107] In an age of ubiquitous and deconcentrated

listening, this would explain why the music in our heads can be so random, banal, and annoying: it represents the internalised reflection of a culture of overstimulation.

For Benjamin, in his book on Baudelaire, this process follows a dialectical logic. Consciousness becomes better at registering the nervous shocks of urban existence, thus neutralising their traumatic effect, and allowing for stimuli of yet greater intensity (Benjamin 1973: 115-7). I would argue that what is at issue in this shock-training is the symbolic transformation of sense impressions, from raw sense data into ones for which we have some pre-existing schema (Langer 1953: 127). To know something in the abstract, whether it be via language or some other semiotic system, is to be at least partly protected from it in the concrete. For example, the clarinet wail that opens Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (1924) is an iconic sign in that it sounds like the thing it represents – an ambulance- or police-siren – yet it is also abstract in that it transforms its source material into music. To hear a siren after Gershwin is not the same experience.[108]

To conclude, I wish to make a slight modification to Benjamin's comments. Sensory overstimulation might result in a heightened consciousness which can better parry nervous shocks, but perhaps consciousness can only do so much. The excessive stimuli of urban life might also result in an increased volume of involuntary memories, our overburdened minds becoming saturated with the resurfacing memories of unregistered impressions. Yet perhaps these unbidden rememberings are themselves a form of protection against external energies. Involuntary musical memories would therefore be a kind of psychic buffer, establishing rhythms of body and affect – an interior soundtrack – amidst the ever-encroaching rhythms of social reality.

CHAPTER 4

Recorded Music & Nostalgia

∗

> Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,
> That old and antique song we heard last night;
> Methought it did relieve my passion much,
> More than light airs and recollected terms
> Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times.
> Come, but one verse.
> (Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, act II, scene IV, lines 2-7)

Pan & Syrinx

In Ovid's version of the myth of Pan and Syrinx, the forest nymph Syrinx is fleeing from Pan but is forced to stop at the bank of a deep river.[109] Unable to cross, she beseeches her sister water-nymphs to change her form so that the lustful goat man will not be able to steal her highly-prized maidenhood. When Pan tries to grab her, he finds nothing but reeds in his hands and, sighing in disappointment, the soft air of his breath stirs in the hollow tubes and produces the first music. Charmed by these sweet tones which recall the sound of Syrinx's voice, the god exclaims: 'hoc mihi concilium tecum […] manebit' ('This union, at least, shall I have with thee') (*Metamorphoses* I, 710).[110] Pan joins together these reeds of unequal length with wax and, in so doing, fashions the first example of the instrument that will bear Syrinx's name, both for the Greeks and for Romans such as Ovid. For us, the instrument is known as the pan pipes.

   As part of a brief meditation on the origins of tonality, Ernst Bloch (1959/1986) finds evidence in this myth that 'music begins longingly and already definitely as a *call to that which is missing*' (1059; emphasis in original). Yet, at the same time, '[t]he vanished nymph has remained behind as a sound' (1060). Thus, music is, at once, an invocation to the absent beloved and a fantasy of her presence. As with Orsino in *Twelfth Night*, it both

satisfies and stimulates the lover's wistfulness, binding him ever more surely within the nostalgia that was already present at music's inception, when Pan first blew across the open tops of a handful of reeds.

A history of the concept of nostalgia

The word *nostalgia* suggests classical roots, its two component parts being derived from ancient Greek: *nostos* means 'return home', while *algia* is 'pain' or 'longing', hence the rough translation 'homesickness'. However, the term was actually coined in Switzerland in the early modern period, and thus the word's pseudo-Greek provenance was itself the expression of a certain wistfulness for a more Arcadian world. 'Nostalgia' originally referred to a medical condition suffered by Swiss mercenaries who were stationed for long periods away from their homeland. Johannes Hofer, the physician who coined the term in 1688, identified nostalgia as a disorder of the imagination in which the patient incessantly fantasises about home. The condition, according to Hofer's diagnosis, was organic in origin, resulting from the constant motion of nerve fibres that stored impressions of one's native land (Wilson 2005: 21-2). Outbreaks of nostalgia were induced by sensuous reminders of home, especially gastronomic or auditory ones: a bowl of soup reminiscent of one that mother used to make, or a folk melody originally heard resounding among crystalline Alpine valleys. An epidemic of nostalgia among Swiss soldiers serving in France was allegedly triggered by their exposure to 'a certain rustic cantilena' that would normally have been sung by Swiss shepherds as they drove their herds to pasture (Boym 2001: 4). The Swiss were not the only soldiers to be adversely affected by musical reminders of home: Scottish highlanders who heard the sound of bagpipes were said to be prone to such crippling bouts of nostalgia that their military superiors decided to ban them from playing, singing or whistling any native tunes.

   Such early diagnoses of nostalgia depended on there being an indexical link between a folk tune or some other potent sensuous trigger and a sufferer's home. Rather than leading to a Proustian sense of 'time regained', such sensuous reminders of home evoked a powerful sense of what, in the process of migration and exile, had been lost. In a passage from his *Dictionary of Music* (1755-1767), Jean-Jacques Rousseau reflects on the relationship between auditory impressions and nostalgia, particularly the latter's origins

not merely as *mal du pays* but *mal du Suisse*. Rousseau notes that certain rustic sounds such as cowbells are, for a Swiss person, associated with the joys of youth but that, once he or she has been transplanted from their native mountainside to the lowlands, these same sounds are apt to fill him or her with a sense of bitter regret. Rousseau perceptively points out that, in such instances, music 'does not act precisely as music, but as a memorative sign': it is attended to not so much because of what it is but because of what it stands for due to its prior embeddedness in the everyday life of the Alps (Rousseau 1779: 267).

Hofer's codification of nostalgia as a medical condition in the early modern period was itself a symptom of modernity. Though his diagnosis of nostalgia as a neurasthenic illness might seem eccentric to us now, Hofer's concern with the effects of a change of environment upon the individual's nervous system places his work in a long line of psychiatric and psychological studies extending up to the present in which governmental concern with the physical and emotional regulation of the self is a key dimension.[111]

There were other co-existing notions of nostalgia – such as the romantic nationalism of the eighteenth century, which took the form of a hankering after an allegedly more authentic and organic identity rooted in the geography of one's native land – but the prevailing definition of nostalgia was that it was a disease and this remained the case until towards the end of the nineteenth century. At this point, doctors claimed that nostalgia had been 'cured', and attributed its disappearance largely to technological progress – in particular, advances in transportation and communication. The term was subsequently de-medicalised and '[n]ostalgia […] moved from a pathology to an emotion of wistful longing for the past' (Wilson 2005: 22). In broad terms, then, the meaning of nostalgia changes during the period in which Western societies industrialise and their populations become chiefly urban. It ceases to mean 'homesickness', a longing for a particular place, and becomes instead, a longing for a particular time. This is to say nostalgia loses its spatial meaning and gains a predominantly temporal one (Wernick 1997: 219; Wilson 2005: 22-3). Svetlana Boym (2001) traces the origins of this temporal aspect of nostalgia back to the era in which Hofer first coined the term: 'The diagnosis of the disease of nostalgia in the late seventeenth century took place roughly at the historical moment when the conception of time and history were undergoing radical change' (8).

Among these changes was the diminished importance of Christian eschatology. Various dates had been prophesied for the end of the world – among them 1660, 1666, 1673, 1688, 1694 and 1697 – but they came and went more or less without incident so that, after a clutch of inflated warnings, the arrival of doomsday no longer seemed imminent and time instead seemed to stretch out to infinity (Danelek 2009: 37-8). What filled the gap between the present moment and eternity was 'progress': economic, industrial, social, and scientific. A crucial change in Britain, for example, was that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the population didn't fall back as had always happened before due to plague or famine but kept growing – as it has continued to do ever since. Boym (2001) makes the point that 'progress' and 'nostalgia' are interrelated, both being 'dependent on the modern conception of unrepeatable and irreversible time' (13). 'Nostalgic manifestations are side effects of the teleology of progress' (10). In this way too, nostalgia is symptomatic of modernity. More specifically, it is, as Catherine Cameron and John Gatewood (1994) argue, 'a psychological adaptation to circumstances of rapid cultural change during which individuals fear becoming obsolete' (11).

As belief in progress began to falter towards the end of the twentieth century, nostalgia increased but, as a concept, it also underwent subtle changes. Rather than being just a response to the headlong pace of change, it became a form of mourning for hoped-for change that never occurred. As Boym (2001) writes: 'The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia. Optimistic belief in the future was discarded like an outmoded spaceship sometime in the 1960s' (xiv). This trend can be understood as part of a pervasive cultural shift from a future-orientated perspective to a past-orientated one. Andreas Huyssen (1995) describes this as a 'transformation of temporality in utopian discourse', a 'shift from anticipation and the future to memory and the past', which he dates from around the 1960s (92).[112] He claims that '[n]ostalgia […] is not the opposite of utopia, but, as a form of memory, [is] always implicated, even productive in it' (88). Similarly, Boym (2001) writes, 'Nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed toward the future' (xiv). Nostalgia has thus become a continuation of utopian thought but via a retrospective orientation rather than a prospective one.

Running throughout all these different inflections of nostalgia is the attempt to establish a stable sense of identity – both privately and publicly, individually and

collectively (Davis 1979: 105). When nation-building is at stake, this can take the form of the construction of a mythical past, which often intersects with more private and personal dreams and ambitions. Agnes Heller (1979) describes 'a typically bourgeois feeling: the problematic individual looks back with painful yearning and respect to the [allegedly] non-problematic individual' of earlier times (184). As in all such fantasies, the image of oneself existing in a previous historical era has a pleasing unity and wholeness about it, which is at odds with the vagaries, vicissitudes, and mental and emotional flux that characterise day-to-day living. In this regard, the nostalgic person wants what cannot be had – the continuity of identity, a kind of frozen permanence extending from the past into the present and beyond into the future. Nostalgia is, then, to quote Susan Stewart (1993), 'a sadness without an object, a sadness which creates a longing that of necessity is inauthentic because it does not take part in lived experience' (23). Yet if we accept the argument that there is now a surfeit of nostalgia in our culture, it might be claimed that nostalgia is today an integral and intimate part of lived experience, indeed part of the temporal structure via which everyday life and the subjects who experience it are constituted.

Tonality, colonialism, and nostalgia

The conception of nostalgia as a longing for a particular place, i.e. as 'homesickness', is roughly contemporaneous with the rise of tonality. This, I would argue, is no mere coincidence. In broadly the same early modern period, tonality developed as the musical analogue of nostalgia, in which a tonal 'centre' is understood as the 'place' to which all subsequent thematic developments eventually return. In a similar way, the later conception of nostalgia as a longing for the past is roughly contemporaneous with the introduction of sound recording at the end of the nineteenth century. Phonography offered the nostalgic possibility of bringing back the past – or a literal aural reproduction of it. It is notable that, in its early years, Edison's phonograph was used not only to listen to music but to hear again the voices of the deceased, whether they were famous writers reading from their works or the orations of presidents and prime ministers. It can be seen therefore that each of the two main conceptions of nostalgia – longing for home, longing for the past – overlaps with each of two major changes in musical culture: firstly, the

widespread adoption of tonality in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; and, secondly, the introduction of recording towards the end of the nineteenth century. While these changes in the conception of nostalgia are not causally linked in any direct way to the corresponding changes in musical culture, they are nevertheless part of the same episteme or order of knowledge – the same overall conception of time, history, and identity. In what immediately follows, I'd like to examine the first of these changes in musical culture and its relation to nostalgia understood as 'homesickness', and in a later section I'll look at the second change.

The rise of tonality in western European culture brought with it an explicitly spatial conception of music distinguished by the existence of a 'home' key in relation to which other keys are subordinate or peripheral. In producing a 'yearning' to return to the harmonic centre or tonic, tonality mimicked nostalgia. The sense of forward movement produced by the progression from one harmony to another was understood as ending in a cadence that returned the listener to where he or she had begun. In large-scale forms, this manifested as the 'recapitulation' that rounded off a sonata form, or the conventional return to the 'home' key for the final movement of a symphony. In order to better understand how this new musical system was able to evoke a sense of longing to return home, a brief excursion into music theory is needed.

Tonality could more precisely be described as 'triadic harmony': a musical system based on the relationship between a central chord or harmony known as the 'tonic', and the chords or harmonies which it is most closely related to – the 'dominant' and the 'subdominant'. If one takes the example of a keyboard instrument, a chord can be built on the note middle C in the middle of the keyboard by adding the notes E and G, thus making the 'triad' C-E-G. In the key of C, this becomes the harmonic centre or 'tonic'. The 'dominant' – a triad built on the note G, hence G-B-D – represents a movement away from the tonic; on a piano or other keyboard instrument, it would be played on keys found to the right of those keys used for the tonic. The 'subdominant' is the mirror image of the dominant in that it is played on keys found the same distance to the left of the tonic. In our example of the key of C, these notes would be F-A-C. When these chords are played in sequence, the subdominant and dominant create a sense of expectation of a return to the tonic, especially if a fourth note is added to the dominant triad. Thus, in the

key of C, the chord G-B-D-F or 'G7' will set up a very strong anticipation of a return to the triad C-E-G. ('Seventh' chords such as G7, so-called because they contain the seventh note above the chord's root note, exaggerate the sense of propulsion already implicit in the Western tonal system. Such chords are very common, for example, in rock 'n' roll.)

It should be pointed out that this new system of tonality generated a much greater sense of forward movement than the modal system that preceded it. The medieval 'modes', deriving from the tuning systems of antiquity, were a set of unrelated musical scales. Because each mode had its own unique or 'untempered' system of tuning, it was impossible to 'move' or modulate from one mode to another in the course of a single piece of music. Furthermore, separate wind instruments had to be made for each of the different modes. Medieval modality, then, to ears such as ours, accustomed to centuries of tonality, produces a curious sense of stasis: it doesn't seem to 'go' anywhere but instead – and this, perhaps, is part of its charm for us today – it appears to be trapped in time, as if it were waiting for modernity to begin.

In the tonal system, by contrast, the dominant and subdominant are closely related to the tonic so that one can easily change key, for instance, from the key of C to the key of G. This will involve a new note being added – one not found in the home key; in our example, this note would be F sharp. Because this note is not found in our original key, an element of tension or ambiguity is introduced. As successive modulations are performed, changing to keys that are ever more 'distant' from our original home key, containing more and more notes that are alien to it, the sense of tension and uncertainty increases; we have, as it were, moved further away from the harmonic 'centre' of the tonic and our 'position' is now unclear. The resolution of this tension or ambiguity via a return to the tonic will be perceived as all the greater for the extent of the 'movement' away from it, the overall result being a more narratorial sense to the music. This adding of extra notes in order to represent a movement to the harmonic peripheries is called 'chromaticism' (literally, 'colouring').

In the way it defines a 'home' key or harmonic centre in relation to which other tonal regions are considered distant, alien, or exotic, the history of tonality is, in a certain sense, unthinkable outside of the history of colonialism. As Timothy Taylor (2007) writes, 'tonality is as informed by modern western notions of center and margins,

dominant and subordinate, as any other cultural form in western culture' (29). Spatially, then, the stable centre of the tonic functioned as the analogue of the imperial metropolis in contrast to the chromatic peripheries of the colonies. Chromaticism – the use of notes not normally found in the 'home' key – became a much favoured device for representing the racialised and gendered other. In Bizet's *Carmen* (1875), for example, exotic-sounding melodies and harmonies are employed in order to signify the tragic heroine's sexual and racial alterity; the threat to Western hegemony and patriarchy posed by Carmen is dealt with symbolically by the return to the tonic, and literally by her being murdered by her jealous lover (McClary 1991). In this manner, tonality provided a means of (mis)representing colonial subjects at the same time as it helped to construct a specious identity for Europeans as their superior counterparts.

The attempted dissolution of tonality in the work of Arnold Schoenberg and other arch-modernists has ambiguous or ambivalent consequences in relation to the history of colonialism. Rather than subverting the binary opposition of centre/periphery, coloniser/colonised, atonality has been interpreted as potentially effacing the cultural memory of colonised peoples for whom the tonal language of the coloniser became – for better or worse – a way of preserving distinctive elements of their own cultural traditions (Lewis 2006: 279). This can be heard very vividly in the music of African-Americans whose West African ancestors had been brought across the Atlantic as human cargo on slave ships. Although the melodies that the first slaves brought with them were modal rather than tonal, these melodies gradually became encoded within the structures of tonality while retaining distinctive inflections of pitch such as blue notes, as well as a rhythmic subtlety and sophistication, both of which echoed the music's origins. Therefore, in spite of – or, rather, because of – tonality or triadic harmony having arisen in conjunction with the history of slavery and colonialism, it cannot simply be erased without also erasing in certain cases the often fragile histories of (post)colonial subjects. The recycling of musical materials remains a key element in African-American music, whether this takes the form of improvisations around a pre-existing jazz melody or a sample of a James Brown track, yet this musical recycling has little to do with nostalgia as it is usually understood, and more to do instead with the preservation of cultural heritage via its constant reinvigoration.

Music continues to encode migration, exile, and diaspora: a sense of the place that has been left behind, and the values and lifestyle that obtained there, as well as the uncertain process of adaptation to a new environment. This is part of what Edward Said (1991) describes as 'the transgressive element in music': 'its nomadic ability to attach itself to, and become a part of, social formations, to vary its articulations and rhetoric depending on the occasion as well as the audience, plus the power and the gender situations in which it takes place' (70). Such music is nostalgic in the original sense of expressing a certain homesickness, but will not often be recognised as such unless there is a collective effort to remember. Tango, for example, though nominally an Argentinian style of music, is actually a much more complex historical hybrid, encoding, on one level, the passage of European migrants across the Atlantic and the circumstances of their arrival as an underclass in Buenos Aires, and, on another more indirect but no less profound level, the enforced migration to the Caribbean and the Americas of West African slaves, with whom the word *tango* and the genre's habanera-style rhythm seem to have originated. Perhaps for this reason, tango tends to elevate nostalgia to a transcendent idea, preserving a poignant sense of the irretrievability of prior places and eras save in symbolic guise.

Recorded music, nostalgia, and autobiographical memories
As we have seen, the meaning of nostalgia changes during the period in which Western societies industrialise and their populations become chiefly urban, ceasing to mean 'homesickness', a longing for a particular place, and becoming instead a longing for, or a fond reminiscence of, a particular time. Nostalgia, in other words, gains a predominantly temporal meaning rather than a spatial one. Music answers to this change. An ineluctably temporal art form, the sovereign role of which is to create a sense of virtual time, it is the perfect matrix for this new temporal form of nostalgia. To quote Simon Frith (1996), '[m]usic allows us to stop time, while we consider how it passes' (149). This is all the more poignant in the case of recorded music, which, as stated earlier, belongs to the same historical order of knowledge as our still-current conception of nostalgia as a hankering after the past. In a passage from Don DeLillo's novel *Underworld*, the recently-cuckolded Albert Bronzini and his sister, the terminally-ill spinster Laura Bronzini, sit in silence listening to some piano works by Saint-Saëns on the gramophone:

> And this was the other thing they shared, the sadness and clarity of time, time mourned in the music – how the sound, the shaped vibrations made by hammers striking wire strings made them feel an odd sorrow not for particular things but for time itself, the material feel of a year or an age, the textures of unmeasured time that were lost to them now (DeLillo 1997: 229).

As with all music, a record sets forth what Langer (1953) calls 'the dynamic forms of subjective experience' but does so with greater pathos for the music not having to be played oneself or experienced as part of a social occasion (114). The solitary listener is able to reflect with greater clarity – and, perhaps too, with greater melancholy – on the experience of time passing, and indulge his or her wish for the return of what has passed.

Autobiographical memories evoked by hearing an old record again can be very powerful. As a sensuous trigger for recall, recorded music shares much in common with various smells and tastes, the specificity of which is linked to a particular time and place. The very arbitrariness of hearing a piece of music again after a long intervening period appears at odds with its ability to reactivate 'the vast structure of recollection' (Proust 1913/1992: 54). Why should we feel and remember so much from seemingly so little? No doubt the answer lies in recorded music's sensuous particularity as a medium – the way, for example, it makes it possible for us to distinguish shades of nuance between different recordings of the same song or movement. Furthermore, like an aroma, or indeed like the taste of Proust's famous madeleine cake dipped in tea, music is able to evoke so much more than its bare content might at first suggest. Its incommensurability with visually-orientated notions of representation allows music to stand for, not so much the event itself, but, instead, the environment in which we experienced it. In this regard, it seems that music is less commonly associated with a particular incident in one's life than with a rather more general mood or era. Music's potential as a trigger for recall may be quite general – it probably won't help us remember names, dates or facts however important they might be to us – yet it induces an acute sense, which we are very reluctant to dismiss, that we have been transported back to a previous era in our lives to partake once more of the precise sensuous atmosphere in which otherwise patchily-remembered events took place.

To a very large extent, these musically-evoked reminiscences rely specifically on *recorded* music. Though, in the era before the invention of the phonograph, live

performances could certainly trigger memories of the situations in which other performances of the same music had been heard, there are several factors about the nature of recorded sound that makes it much more likely to be bound up with nostalgia: firstly, the simple fact of preservation, allowing for music to be reproduced *now*, in every one of its sonic dimensions, exactly as it was heard *then*; secondly, the way in which recorded music now pervades almost every sphere of everyday life, thus making a specific recording much more likely to be heard and heard again, both out of choice and by chance; and thirdly, the fact that, via compilations, re-issues, and the licensing of already-existing music for use in film and television, the record industry actively promotes nostalgia almost as much as it does novelty.

For all of these reasons, autobiographical musical memories assume greater importance in the era of recording. Reminiscences of this kind are often accompanied by intense emotions, especially when they are connected to the memory of loved ones who have passed away. In a BBC documentary, an elderly woman, Monica Smallwood, reflects upon how the song, 'Till the clouds roll by', seems to 'encapsulate' the whole of her childhood. Her mother had once sung it to her during a family picnic as she sheltered Monica from a passing storm. Upon hearing the song again after an interval of many years, Monica says 'I recognised it straightaway. It took me right back to that particular day […]. I think I felt almost on the verge of tears'. Since her rediscovery of the song, it has become invested with seemingly magical powers: 'I can't go back in time, literally, but I can when I hear that song, briefly, in my imagination' (Savage 1994). Another interviewee recalls her deceased husband's last birthday when they listened together to a song she had requested for him on the radio, 'How great thou art' by Elvis Presley:

> It was a golden moment, […] a kind of reward for our lives together […]. I knew he wouldn't be with me much longer but that was a highlight of the whole life that we spent together […]. You get some music that you listen to and you forget but not that. If ever I hear it, I go through that lovely feeling again (ibid).

As first-hand witnesses discover when they compare their version of events with the divergent testimonies of others, autobiographical or 'episodic' memories are 'highly susceptible to distortion, especially with repeated recollection' (Snyder 2000: 75). There is a well-observed tendency for stories to become embellished in the retelling but, more

than this, it would seem that in remembering personal experiences, we don't remember the original event but the last time we remembered it: 'recalling an episodic [or 'autobiographical'] memory is itself an episode that becomes remembered, and this copy of the memory replaces the original. There is, after all, no way to distinguish between a memory, and a memory of a memory' (ibid.). A difference, however, does seem to be evident in the way that frequently recollected memories are accompanied by a diminished emotional reaction. In terms of musical memory, this means that songs associated with a particular event or era in one's life, if heard repeatedly, will cease to trigger a strong affective response, whereas ones heard by chance after a long intervening period will. Instead of the regurgitated 'golden oldies' played ad nauseum on commercial radio, it is the lesser-known album tracks and obscure 'one-hit-wonders' that open the floodgates of reminiscence, hence the appeal in Britain of TV shows like *Top of the Pops 2* (which outlived its parent chart show): it stuck solely to hits that time and radio playlists had forgotten. The banal, the naff, the cheesy – and the sometimes rather good – had never been so evocative.

    As we can see, music – and recorded music in particular – acquires extra layers of meaning via the listener's emotional and autobiographical interaction with it during the course of his or her life. Association or connotation in this regard constitutes a secondary layer of musical meaning, superimposed upon a primary layer which, in itself, has no literal meaning. This is true other than in cases where the meaning of a song is drastically reduced to its lyrical content. As if to illustrate music's connotative powers, the former BBC Radio 1 DJ, Jo Wylie, had a slot in her show called 'Changing tracks' in which listeners were invited to request songs which had special associations for them. The idea was that the listeners' stories added an extra layer of significance to songs whose meaning and affective force might have been dulled due to their being overplayed. Listeners were thus able to share in music's autobiographical function by hearing familiar songs through the filter of other listeners' life stories. This tendency for pieces of recorded music to accrue associations based on the circumstances in which we (re-)hear them can be illustrated more concretely with reference to a couple of famous films. In *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), Alex begins as a devout, if debauched, Beethoven aficionado. By the end of it, there is a certain piece of the German composer's work that he can't

listen to without feeling violently ill. In the intervening period he has, of course, been 'brainwashed' or subjected to 'aversion therapy' but what does this consist in? He has been taught to associate violence – and, by accident, Beethoven – with convulsive sickness or overwhelming nausea. This has been achieved by his being forced to watch violent images – accompanied by a soundtrack of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony – after being injected with drugs that induce a debilitating sense of ill-being. After repeated 'treatments', this acute sickness returns when triggered by merely the suggestion of violence – or a few bars of Beethoven. In other words, the 'Choral' Symphony and violence carry different associations for Alex now. Their meaning for him has changed, though, of course, they are substantively the same.[113] Similarly, in *Casablanca* (1942), a song once associated by Rick with his most impassioned romance has been transformed into one associated with the most bitter heartache and regret. It is an association that he does not wish to be reminded of, hence his injunction that Sam should never play 'that song'.

The connotative meanings that pieces of recorded music acquire over time are never entirely private but enfold within them public meanings too. This is particularly true of pop songs, which, because of their time-bound nature function very effectively as markers or indices of historical eras and events: 'Rock around the clock' (1954) by Bill Haley and the Comets as the inaugural moment of British post-war youth culture, for example, or The Sex Pistols' 'God save the Queen' (1977) as the proscribed soundtrack of Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee. In remembering where, when and with whom we first heard historically significant recordings, we locate our life story within an historical framework, imbuing our personal reminiscences with the significance of public memory. An apparently straightforward example, but one that, I suspect, contains its own intricacies and complexities smoothed over by frequent re-telling, was related to me by a friend. Her parents met for the first time one evening in June 1967 at a party where her dad was working as a disc jockey. Eager to show off his record collection to the young woman who would one day become his wife, he put on his copy of The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which had just been released that week. Thus, an album that, in retrospect, has been constructed as being emblematic of the 'summer of love' also serves in this case as an index of the beginning of a relationship. The apparent

ease with which such memories can be recalled belies the actual complexity involved in such retrieval, especially in terms of the intertwining of different kinds of memory: personal and collective, internal and external, real and false. What, on the face of it, appears to be an individual memory or at least a familial one, relies, on closer examination, upon a much broader foundation. As a mass-produced artefact with an indexical relation to the summer of 1967, *Sergeant Pepper* provides a strong collective and external basis for the retrieval of personal, autobiographical memories: an aide-memoire of the kind that Soviet neuropsychologist A.R. Luria (1973) likens to a knot in a handkerchief (31). This collective and external support for such reminiscences is reinforced by the frequent revivals and reappraisals of The Beatles' eighth studio album in the media. The most orchestrated and intensive of these was on 1 June 1987, a date that, as journalists were quick to note, chimed with the album's already-nostalgic opening line: 'It was twenty years ago today…'.[114] The sustained critical acclaim and discussion that the album has generated over the years thus serves, in mnemonic terms, as a powerful trigger or 'cue' as well as a form of 'rehearsal', eliciting and strengthening memories of previous media coverage and, indeed, previous listenings and their associated personal reminiscences. The mediatised rehearsal of *Sergeant Pepper* as a significant cultural site dovetails quite neatly with the numerous recapitulations by my friend's family of their tale, giving wider technological support to what for them are already well-established collective memories amongst their circle of intimates. But here I must sound a note of caution regarding the veracity of these kinds of memories, if not this particular one. In urban industrialised societies, in which love matches and their contingent origins – or star-crossed destiny for the more romantic – are the norm, the story of 'how we met' has become one of the most frequently recounted tales among groups of friends and their families. Such rehearsal makes it one of the easiest of stories to recall but also among the most prone to embellishment and distortion as what we tend to remember is not the event itself but the last time we recounted it.

Pop music, nostalgia, and the absent rememberer
As mentioned above, pop music has a particularly strong relation to nostalgia. Simon Frith (1996a) makes an illuminating comparison between pop music and art in this

regard. Whereas 'art' is supposed to have lasting value, most 'pop' is intended to be ephemeral, yet this often means that 'time-bound pop is, paradoxically, more evocative than timeless classical music' (3). Frith is particularly interested in why 'some [pop] records are more obviously "nostalgic" than others' (ibid.). He prefaces his answer to this question by delineating a particular conception of nostalgia:

> Nostalgia describes a mood – a way of thinking about the past, a regret for the present, a mixture of pleasure and loss, an indulgence in the wish that things were different […]. It is the essence of nostalgia to remember – or fantasise – a time of innocence, a time when we didn't know what would happen to us, a time before disappointment (ibid.).

'To be nostalgic', Frith writes, 'music doesn't just have to be old – to have associations – it must articulate those associations in the right way' (ibid.). (He cites much of The Beatles' output as nostalgic 'even on first hearing'.) 'A nostalgic judgement' is, in Frith's conception, 'a historical judgement', framed both 'personally' and 'socially' in terms of regret and disappointment or, at the very least, a certain surprise at the way things have worked out. The point he is making is that certain recordings are able to represent 'a time of innocence' better than others because we couldn't have known then what we and the music would later become. This relates to the particular trajectory of pop history, which, as Frith notes, 'is always a matter of decline, not progress', at least, that is, when seen from a 'folk' or romantically-inclined point of view: 'Music that bursts through from "the people" inevitably loses its power and sweetness as it becomes self-conscious and ambitious, more "knowing" both commercially and artistically' (5). This can be seen in the career trajectories of individual performers. From the moment at which he or she enters public consciousness, a pop or rock artist is perceived as gradually losing the naïve spontaneity and élan with which they were once credited. When we chance to hear one of their early recordings, we thus feel a sense of innocence that serves as a poignant reminder of what has changed – to them, to us and to the world around us.

Recollected experience often feels more real or authentic than it did at the time. Nostalgia in this pejorative sense of a romanticised view of one's own past is intimately connected to our sense of identity, our ability to project back on the past an unchanging inner self who was there, in some sense, to record what happened. This, I wish to argue, is an illusion but it is an extraordinarily compelling one and is integral to processes of

recollection rather than a distortion of them. This is to say that human memory is essentially reconstructive rather than representational. To quote the neuroscientist, John McCrone (2008), 'Long-term memory is effectively a myth':

> A memory is anything but static. Resurrecting a memory trace appears to render it completely fluid, as pliable and unstable as the moment it was first formed, and in need of fixing once again into the brain's circuitry […]. Simply retelling a tale may be enough to change that memory for good (267).

In order to present this argument regarding the illusoriness of a stable rememberer and how this relates to nostalgia, I am going to refer, firstly, to a note by Freud on an apparatus which he invokes as a metaphor for memory and, secondly, to a commentary by Derrida. It should be signalled at the outset that both Derrida and Freud continue a long tradition of invoking writing or inscription as a metaphor for memory. Plato (360 BC/2009), for example, describes the mind as a wax tablet ready to receive impressions, and Locke (1689/1996) presents the similar formulation of the mind as a *tabula rasa*, while Nietzsche (1876/1997) characterises memory as a palimpsest: a single manuscript that has been etched over innumerable times with different texts. Freud's metaphor for memory is similar to these but is ingenious in that it accounts for both the storage of older memories as well as the inscription of new ones on a surface that remains pristine in spite of the repeated etchings upon it. The apparatus he has in mind is a *Wunderblock* (or 'mystic writing-pad' as it is translated): a wax tablet over which is laid a sheet of waxed paper plus another sheet of transparent polythene that one etches on with a stylus, the grooves being 'visible as dark writing upon the otherwise smooth whitish-grey surface of the celluloid' (Freud 1925/1961: 229).[115] When the double covering-sheet is raised from the wax tablet, the writing disappears, and the device is ready to receive new impressions. The transparent sheet is analogous to perception and the wax tablet underneath it to memory and the unconscious. In spite of the ingenuity of his metaphor, Freud acknowledges that it is imperfect: 'once the writing has been erased, the Mystic Pad cannot "reproduce" it from within; it would be a mystic pad indeed, if, like our memory, it could accomplish that' (230).[116]

In his commentary on Freud's essay, Derrida (1978) stresses the fact that the originary experience itself – i.e. that which, later, is recalled – lies outside of the logic of

inscription, representation, and signification; hence, it does not have any explicit meaning for us until it is remembered. 'Everything begins with reproduction', he writes. Memories – as inscriptions or engrams – are 'repositories of a meaning which was never present […]. The "perceived" may be read only in the past, beneath perception [i.e. beneath the transparent sheet of the *Wunderblock*] and after it' (211, 224). The original event cannot be accessed by the subject, the 'I', who experiences it, even while it is happening. This is because it 'happens' outside of the logic of inscription – outside of language – within which a subject could arise. All that can be accessed is the engram or memory trace left behind.[117] In a certain sense, then, all autobiographical or episodic experience is 'always already' nostalgic, the retrospective projection of an illusory rememberer being its necessary condition.

It is important, I would say, not to interpret Derrida's argument as implying a position of extreme nominalism or anti-realism. According to my reading of him, Derrida is not claiming that the originary experience – the object of memory – never happened. Instead, he is suggesting that it cannot be accessed save via its inscription or translation. This is because originary experience – such that can be inferred, anyway – is prior to or askance from subjecthood; it is a space of 'non-"I"-ness', prior to inscription, and hence outside of the logic of signification, i.e. 'without meaning'. It is a space of oblivion but before there was anything to forget – the casual, unthinking becoming of day-to-day life.

Of retro and revivals

The tendency for experience to feel more real or authentic when it is recollected extends to vicarious experience, when, for example, we dwell nostalgically on how much more enriching and fulfilling it might have been to live in an earlier decade. This kind of nostalgia as it manifests in popular culture is encapsulated by the word 'retro'. Retro, in all its many guises, is a way of coming to terms with the modern past, including that which extends into one's own lifetime. Yet it also implies a radical break between past and present: it typically makes the modern past seem innocent, naïve, optimistic; a time of unbounded promise, which, however, we have not been able to live up to in the present (Guffey 2006: 163-4). Its kitsch and playful exterior notwithstanding, retro is, then, like

other forms of nostalgia, a type of mourning. If it is to be considered a 'rebirth' or 'revival', retro is stillborn.

Post-1945, there have been many revivals in popular music. For two early examples, one might cite the folk and trad-jazz revivals of the 1950s and early 1960s, but it is perhaps the rock 'n' roll revival of the 1970s that set the pattern most clearly for subsequent revivals. The first point to emphasise is that it was a revival of an entire decade, the 'Fifties' – albeit with a certain amount of overspill either side into the late 1940s and early 1960s. This raises certain historiographical questions regarding the inherent simplification and homogenisation of this mode of periodisation. Elizabeth Guffey (2006) points out that 'Historians had sliced epochs of time into decades since the early nineteenth century' (115). Cultural histories of the 1920s, for example, casting it as an era of flappers, foxtrots and bobbed hair, were published a mere year or two after 'the Jazz Age' had ended, proving that 'chronological decades could be used to chart the recent past, and especially its popular culture, without having to digest its complex character' (ibid.). Similarly in the late 1960s and 1970s, the 1950s could be evoked via a shorthand of monumentalised iconic tropes: Brylcreemed quiffs, leather jackets, hot rods, Hula Hoops, and high school hops. These tropes draw attention to the extent to which retro is, in essence, a fetishisation of youthful consumer goods (109). As Guffey remarks, '1950s retro was […] oblivious to McCarthy hearings and "duck-and-cover" bomb drills' (116). As a result of such simplification, 'many of those who lived through the period had difficulty reconciling the revival with their own memories' (ibid.).

A second point to stress is that the timing of the rock 'n' roll revival was significant, coming as it did a mere fifteen to twenty years after the original moment. (One can cite two inaugural moments: the first, Bill Haley's 1968 tour of Britain culminating in his rapturous reception by a sell-out audience of teddy boys at the Albert Hall; the second, the appearance on the last day of Woodstock in 1969 of the rock 'n' roll group Sha Na Na, with their greased ducktails and tightly choreographed performance of fifties hits.) To quote Guffey, 'the revived past began to collapse into the present' in a way that has become the norm ever since (105). Although it is tempting to see this incessant recycling of popular culture as part of a postmodernist narrative within which it is implied that revivals follow ever closer on the heels of what is being revived, I would argue that retro

nostalgia has a more stable temporal rhythm. I term this the 'fifteen- to twenty-year thesis': the notion that a period of approximately two decades, i.e. one generation, needs to have elapsed for a revival to begin in earnest as the most enthusiastic proponents of retro culture will usually be those who were born just after the original historical moment.[118] By contrast, those who had been young adults at the time are apt to be 'astonished that this is the past already' (116).[119] A further point that the rock 'n' roll revival demonstrates is that, in spite of a certain campness as evidenced most clearly by the group Sha Na Na, the popular culture of the past, when seen through the lens of retro nostalgia, often appears to be more vibrant and authentic. In the case of rock 'n' roll, this 'authenticity' equates to an identity that was taken to be white, working-class, heterosexual and overtly masculine, in reaction to the more racially- and sexually-diverse culture of disco. By the end of the 1970s, there was in this respect a certain amount of overlap between the rock 'n' roll revival and punk, such as in the music of rockabilly groups like The Stray Cats.

Retro revivals begin as an articulation within present-day culture, expressing uncertainty about the future as much as they do wistfulness for the past. In this respect, the 1950s revival must be seen against the backdrop of the 1970s: in the US, defeat in Vietnam and the Watergate scandal; and more widely, recession, rising oil prices, and a reactionary unease vis-à-vis the progressive social movements of the 1960s. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that retro revivals are always conservative or rearguard. Nostalgia is an intervention within culture and politics that can be used by both the Right and the Left – as acknowledged, for example, by E.P. Thompson (1963) in *The Making of the English Working Class*. Commenting on the situation of the proletariat in the mid-nineteenth century, Thompson identifies their 'deep-rooted folk memory of a "golden age" or of "Merrie England" ' as deriving 'from nostalgia for the pattern of work and leisure which obtained [three or four generations earlier] before the outer and inner disciplines of industrialism settled upon the working man' (357).

Revivals in popular music are part of larger cultural cycles. The emergence of new artists, their movement from the musical margins to the 'mainstream', is inevitably followed by a waning of interest in them once they have become established stars. A generation later, however, when fashions in hairstyles, clothing, songwriting, and

production have come full circle, and the old records begin to sound surprisingly fresh again, they achieve an unlikely rehabilitation (Frith 1996a: 5). Remarking on one such comeback – that of Burt Bacharach in the 1990s – Geoffrey O'Brien (2004) writes:

> In such a process, the myth of the original career is amplified by the myth of the return. Each step of the comeback is charted as part of a legendary progression: years of glory, years in limbo, years of triumphant return. The past is symbolically brought into the present so that […] latter-day devotees can gain access to a realm of lost bliss. By a back derivation typical of pop revivals, the fantasy glamor of the original songs is translated into a description of the era in which they originated, as if life in the early '60s had been a live-action Dionne Warwick song, with deft periodic accentuation by oboe, xylophone, or celeste (8-9).

One might argue that pop music has become more retro or historicist in recent decades, referencing prior musical styles via various forms of quotation, allusion, and pastiche. A symptom of this is the fact that new artists are increasingly described in relation to the artists from other eras that they sound like, rather than in relation to the 'scene' which they are a part of; historicism has, to some extent, trumped geographical rootedness. In the globalised world that phonography has helped to produce, pop musicians are less easy to define than they were in terms of location – 'Merseybeat', 'Madchester', etc. – as their music will almost inevitably breach spatial (as well as temporal) boundaries. In reflecting upon his career as a music journalist and theorist of popular music, Frith (1996a) identifies 'the sense that all pop music is a matter now of recalling the past. We distinguish between […] current British acts […] by tracing the past pop sounds and figures to whom they variously refer' (5-6). One might add that an assumed knowledge of influences and lines of descent has become a firm part of what it means to be a fan of a certain kind of popular music, albeit sometimes in an atomised way devoid of genuine social and historical context, as evidenced by the 'top 10' or 'top 50' lists of 'seminal' singles and albums to be found occupying the pages of the popular music press.

This view that pop music has become more nostalgic or historicist might, however, be an effect of age. Perhaps pop music itself is not more backward-looking, it's just that it appears to have become so to the ears of listeners who have lived through previous 'musical life cycles' (Frith 1996a: 5). Younger pop audiences are often only dimly aware of the precursors or influences upon the current sounds that they are listening to. Being

only ten years old in 1984, for example, I couldn't have realised how indebted a song like Wham!'s 'Wake me up before you go-go' was to Motown records of the 1960s. But as pop audiences approach middle age, they become aware – sometimes painfully – of how current musicians have drawn upon records from the past. There is thus a certain nostalgic condescension or hypocrisy in the reaction of an older generation (thirties, forties, etc.) towards a younger one (teens, twenties). One thinks of Jack Black's character in the film of *High Fidelity* (2000), berating customers at the record shop where he works for not owning a copy of *Psychocandy* by The Jesus and Mary Chain or Dylan's *Blonde On Blonde*, or how his milder colleague, Dick, gets the desired reaction from one of the store's younger customers when he puts on a song from the 1970s by Stiff Little Fingers: 'Is this the new Green Day?'

Cultural dementia, commodified nostalgia, and pop music

At the heart of the phonographic technologies introduced in the late nineteenth century and the musical culture of the succeeding century which they played such an important role in shaping, there is a paradox: recording functions to preserve musical performances but, in doing so, it makes them seem more evanescent by linking them to particular historical moments. We now routinely assume that a popular song encapsulates a distinct era in our cultural history whereas, before the advent of recording, a song was much more likely to represent the continuation of a tradition and was, as such, a defence against transience rather than its embodiment.

Musical recordings are, then, a means of preserving and remembering but are equally implicated in the manufactured processes of obsolescence and forgetting, and this is especially so in the case of pop music. To quote Jonathan Sterne (2003): 'Inasmuch as we can claim that it promoted permanence, sound recording also helped accelerate the pace of fashion and turnover in popular music' (288). In what follows, I wish to demonstrate the productive interplay that occurs in the culture of pop music between preservation and obsolescence, novelty and nostalgia, remembering and forgetting. In order to do this, I'd like to make an analogy between the status of memory in popular culture and the findings contained in one of the ground-breaking works of clinical psychology.

The study of modern diseases of memory begins in 1881 with the publication of *Les maladies de la memoire* by Théodule Ribot. A pioneer of French positivist psychology, Ribot noted that sufferers from the condition he termed 'senile dementia' lose their most recent memories first and their oldest ones last. His findings were counter-intuitive in this regard. One might expect that the older the memory, the harder it would be for a person with memory loss to recall it, yet the reverse turns out to be true: old memories are preserved while recent ones are lost (Ribot 1887; Rose 2003: 127). Ribot explained this phenomenon in terms of the stronger associative links between older memories which are often reactivated and therefore more closely linked with other memories (Ribot 1887; Draaisma 2004: 234). When applied to popular culture, 'Ribot's law' – that the oldest memories are the least prone to loss – offers an explanation for the widespread tendency for people to value more highly the cultural products of their youth.[120] As one gets older, the music of one's youth inevitably exists within a richer and more developed network of autobiographical associations than today's instantly 'forgettable' sounds. Reissues, revivals, and 'oldies' radio-programming reinforce this process, functioning as a form of rehearsal whereby a relatively limited repertoire of hits from yesteryear are made yet more memorable via their periodic repetition.[121] The upshot of this is that we are all affected, to a greater or lesser degree, by what might be called 'cultural dementia'.

This tendency for people to value more highly the popular culture of their youth can also be explained by the so-called 'reminiscence effect', which in many ways extends Ribot's model in order to take into account how people without any obvious pathology remember their lives. The 'reminiscence effect' refers to the fact that a person's most significant memories in later life will tend to cluster around the period when he or she was about twenty years of age, a time when young people often invest very heavily in musical culture – financially, psychologically, socially, and affectively (Draaisma, 2004: 173).[122] Thus, certain songs or genres of popular music come to be associated with, what in retrospect, tends to be felt as the most vibrant era of one's life: a time when a greater concentration of memorable events occurred, including events that shaped our personalities for the rest of our lives. Turino (1999) emphasises the fact that, at a semiotic level, such pieces of music are not simply signs *about* our lives, they are signs *of* them, and as such, are sometimes uncritically granted a value denied to other music (236).

This retrospective shaping of how we hear and respond to 'our' music neatly dovetails with the economic imperatives of the record industry. As in other industries, record companies actively encourage obsolescence via the creation of new musical fashions and playback formats. Yet at the same time – and in this respect the record industry is fairly unique – recording companies expect to make a loss on most of the products they issue. In other words, most new artists fail to make a profit for their paymasters. This means that, in order for their business to be viable, record company executives must recoup profits from a handful of economically successful artists. It is at this point that nostalgia enters the frame. Profits are maximised via numerous compilations and reissues, often targeted at a demographic who are perhaps not expected to buy very much new music but instead want to 'relive' their youth. There is a sense, then, that the record industry is Janus-faced in promoting, on the one hand, novelty, obsolescence and forgetting, and on the other, nostalgia, preservation and reminiscence. Our experience of pop culture throughout our lives, in particular our identification with the music we hear, occurs via the dialectical interaction of these two sets of principles.

Music & Mimesis

*

They said, 'You have a blue guitar,
You do not play things as they are.'

The man replied, 'Things as they are
Are changed upon the blue guitar.'

(From 'The man with the blue guitar' by
Wallace Stevens (1937/1953: 42).)

A mimetic art

As we saw in chapter one, mimesis is the innately human urge to copy, mimic, or imitate
in such a way that what is copied is actively remodelled in the process. Mimesis is thus
creative imitation and is the primary means through which reflective self-consciousness
engages with and transforms the sensuous world. Furthermore, mimesis is what connects
humans most intimately to the non-human world, via relations of reciprocity and mutual
recognition. In this 'interlude', I would like to trace the origins of mimesis and its
connection to music, and then make a case for the usefulness of the term, arguing that it
deserves to be a key concept in cultural studies.[123] The reason why it has not already
become so appears to be due, in part, to the Frankfurt School's somewhat oblique usage
of it.[124] Though it is clearly an important concept in their work, it is slotted into their
writings in the midst of already convoluted arguments, debates and theoretical work, and
is rarely given conceptual space of its own. This has hampered the application of it to
other objects of study not of immediate interest to Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, et al.

In chapter one, I demonstrated how the phonograph can be understood as a mimetic
technology in common with other forms of mechanical reproduction introduced in the
nineteenth century such as photography and moving pictures. Even in the absence of

phonographic devices, there are – I wish to argue – good grounds for claiming that music is an essentially mimetic art. Certainly, this was a view that held enormous sway in antiquity from the fifth century BC onwards. Of particular importance in this regard is Damon, an Athenian musical theorist whose ideas were to have a marked influence on Plato and Aristotle. In spite of there being much uncertainty regarding the details of Damon's life and work, it is generally agreed today that he inaugurated a system of theorising in which a specific character or *ēthos* is ascribed to musical works, as well as to the tunings, scales, and melodic patterns from which they are derived (Halliwell 2002: 238). According to this kind of theory, a melody might summon up for the listener an impression of courage or fortitude, for example, at the same time as it made him or her feel more courageous. There is thus a two-fold mimesis here: firstly, the music is mimetic of the physiological, emotional, and gestural qualities associated with, in this case, courage; secondly, the listener recognises and responds affectively to the patterns of sound that constitute the music, in a deeply introversive sense, 'mimicking' it.

For many writers coming after Damon, though not all, the mimetic qualities of music – its power to evoke the complexity of psychological experience – were self-evident and unquestioned.[125] Yet closer to our own time, in the era of art music's ascendance in the Western world, it has frequently been claimed that music has no such powers of representation, imitation or expression, and that its defining feature vis-à-vis other art forms is its abstract nature as a pure form without a content.[126] The signal example of such an argument is provided by the nineteenth-century critic Eduard Hanslick. Hanslick was something of an éminence grise in Vienna's musical circles, and the infamous 'Rogue's gallery' appended to his major publication *On the Musically Beautiful* (1891) functions as a series of sharp raps across the knuckles of those with the vulgarity to suggest that music has a content or expresses something. Hanslick's polemic is succinctly put by one of the chapter titles in this book: 'The representation of feeling is not the content of music' (Hanslick 1891/1986: 8). In case the reader is in any doubt as to his position, he continues thus: 'The representation of a specific feeling or emotional state is not at all among the characteristic powers of music […]. The ideas which the composer produces are first and foremost purely musical ideas' (9-10). To a degree, his formalism was justified by the overliteral interpretations of composers' works that had abounded

throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and were only just beginning to loosen their verisimilitudinous grip by the time Hanslick sat down to write the first edition of his book in the 1850s. In particular, pieces of music suffered from what the musicologist Richard Norton (1984) has termed their 'semantic domination' by the titles and texts ascribed to them.

Whereas I would agree with Hanslick and others that music is not a representational art in the sense that it cannot denote extra-musical referents in the way that visual or literary arts clearly can, I would preserve music's designation as a form of mimesis on the grounds that what it connotes most powerfully is precisely that which cannot be seen: experience itself. Music's referent is our life as thinking, feeling, embodied creatures shaped by the forms of sociality we inhabit. The problem with perceiving this referent is that we are it. To quote Adorno (2004) on the matter: 'We don't understand music, it understands us' (x); or, similarly, Lévi-Strauss (1969): 'music has its being in me, and I listen to myself through it' (17). Musical mimesis, unlike visual representation, offers no gap between subject and object. There is no distance or perspective. Instead we are immersed in the myriad patterned waves of air molecules, or else the music is 'in' us, resonating within an auditory apparatus and nervous system acutely attuned to its vibrations. Furthermore, the connotative possibilities of musical meaning are too shimmeringly evanescent for us to be able to grasp them with anything approaching denotative certainty. At best, we ourselves – as individuals and as a society – become the meaning of a piece of music.

The origins of 'mimesis'

The shadowy origins of the term *mimēsis* have given rise to a certain amount of confusion concerning music's relationship to it. While we may still, for other reasons, wish to claim that music is a mimetic art, we cannot – as was once the case – afford it a uniquely privileged status in this regard by seeking recourse to linguistic history. In a 1954 book, *Die Mimesis in der Antike* ('*Mimesis in Antiquity*'), the historian of aesthetics, Hermann Koller, performed an etymological sleight of hand that made it seem that the word *mimēsis* in ancient Greek had specifically musical roots.[127] Based on early usages in Delian hymns, as well as in the work of Pindar and Aeschylus, Koller was led to give the

rather too narrow definition of *mimēsis* as 'to represent through dance' (Gebauer and Wulf 1995: 27). From that starting point, he made the assumption that the term originated sometime between the seventh and fifth centuries BC with the emergence of the Dionysian cults, for which the island of Delos was an important site. *Mimēsis* in this context would have referred to the ritual acts performed by the priest and other devotees – dancing, music, and singing. In addition to these speculations, Koller took the unwarranted step of placing Damonist music theory at the centre of his account of *mimēsis*'s origins: a move that has been strongly rebuffed by Koller's critics.[128]

If *mimēsis*'s roots are not to be found in the cult worship of Dionysus and its ritual interweaving of music and dance, then a clue to its real origin is given in the word's spelling. In their magisterial study of the term's history, Gunter Gebauer and Christoph Wulf concur with Koller's critics that *mimēsis* in fact stems from *mimos* or 'mime'. More specifically it originates with the mimes that were performed in Doric Sicily, probably as entertainments at banquets for wealthy men. Although the details are sketchy, it seems that these performances consisted of portrayals of somewhat stereotyped personality traits: Gebauer and Wulf (1995) offer cowardice as an example (29). In this regard, they were intended to present the more humble actuality of commoners rather than the world of the aristocracy. *Mimos*, in this context, refers specifically to the gestural depiction of character traits, though such presentations were often accompanied by music and rhythmic movement. In spite of this artistic origin, albeit a somewhat lowly one, Gebauer and Wulf downplay the aesthetic importance of the word family to which *mimēsis* belonged. Instead, they stress that, by the fifth century BC, the concept still referred to the adoption or emulation of the characteristics of another person or thing, rather than the notion of art as imitation: the first clear aesthetic usages only begin with the work of Xenophon and Plato (ibid.).

So music is present at *mimēsis*'s inception but as an auxiliary to mime rather than as something significant in itself. This early connection between music and mime was perhaps not entirely arbitrary, and might go some way to furnishing an understanding of precisely what it is that we value in music that we don't normally value in ambient noise. Before we explore this further, however, it should be pointed out that the term from which our contemporary word 'music' is derived – *mousikē*, meaning literally, 'art of the

Muses' – had a much wider range of meanings in ancient Greece, encompassing dance, recitation, the work of Homer and Hesiod, lyric poetry, and more besides. In his pre-history of 'the Western European world-view', *Logological Investigations*, Barry Sandywell (1996) writes that, in the fifth and sixth centuries BC:

> 'Music' had a meaning that is close to what eighteenth-century Germans intended when they spoke of *Bildung*, the cultivation of the arts and, more especially, the cultivation of the self. Thus Aristotle speaks of the '*anthropon mousikon*' – literally 'the musical man' – in the sense in which he would refer to the 'civilized' or 'cultivated individual'. Here 'becoming civilized' is synonymous with becoming 'musical' (1, 232).

The quite different meaning of *mousikē* makes sense when one remembers that 'music', as we are accustomed to think of it today, would have been inseparable from a range of other artistic practices, most obviously poetry and dance, but also mime. In fact, one single practice often combined what we would now consider to be many separate aesthetic elements. For example, religious hymns and tragic choruses took the form, in effect, of slow circle dances in which the rippling movements of the participants were as one with the cadence of the words they sang (232). Thus, in such rituals, the meaning of the 'text' was supported by a very considerable gestural and affective undertow, and would have greatly surpassed the meaning of those written remnants that have come down to us in the work of Homer for example.

Music, the body, and gesture

This early intertwining of music with poetry, dance, and mime still informs many of our commonplace, yet all-too-often unexamined, notions of what music means. At root, what we hear in music is a gestural language, whereby patterns of sound mimetically trace the still deeper patterns of human physiology, thought, and social relations. To quote anthropologist John Blacking's addendum to Varèse's famous definition, music is not merely 'organised sound' but '*humanly* organised sound' (Blacking 1995; emphasis added). This anthropological organisation of airwaves is fundamentally mimetic in that what music reproduces are the 'processual shapes' we all inhabit (Middleton 2000: 105).

The mimesis involved here takes several forms. Firstly, music is mimetic of the autonomic rhythms of the body – heartbeat, breathing, muscular tension and relaxation –

especially as entailed by the manifestation of affect (Chanan 1999: 131). In certain pieces of music, this type of emulation can be quite overt or, what often amounts to the same thing, is established by convention so that it can be hard not to hear a mimetic connection. For example, critics have heard in the slow final movement of Mahler's last symphony, the Ninth, the faltering rhythms of the heart condition that would kill him, hence the movement's slightly fanciful status as Mahler's 'farewell to life'.[129] To take a similar instance from the world of pop music, the effect of lulling intimacy to be heard in The Beach Boys' 'Don't talk (put your head on my shoulder)' is achieved, in large measure, by the song's languorous 'lub-dub' bass line, which – together with the song's lyrics – evokes the sound of a lover's heartbeat heard while resting one's head on their chest. Perhaps what is most curious about these kinds of examples is, not the fact that music can mimic certain functions of the autonomic nervous system, but that, in doing so, it has a direct effect upon them. One's pulse and respiration rate are particularly susceptible to musical influence, quickly altering in response to the rhythmic and melodic contours of what one hears.[130] Furthermore, music puts one's breathing rate and heart rate in sync with those of other listeners, hence the uncanny experience of a concert hall full of people all holding their breath at the same time. In situations in which the musicking takes an overtly collective form, such as an audience clapping along in unison, the synchronising effects can be even more marked. In cases such as these, then, music is properly mimetic – as opposed to passively reflective – in the sense that, in imitating internal bodily rhythms, it also acts upon them.

A second example of music's mimetic powers is in connection with what is broadly termed paralinguistic communication: gesture, facial expression, intonation, etc.[131] The word 'prosody' preserves this primordial connection: deriving from the Greek for 'a song sung to music', it now refers to the 'musicality' of spoken language, its patterns of stress and intonation. Simply put, music mimics – albeit in a way that differs markedly from one musical culture to another – non-lexical social interaction, those primordial modes of communication that take place in the absence of words or in addition to them. Moreover, music itself is an important example in its own right of precisely this kind of communication. In his wonderfully polemic book, *Musicking*, Christopher Small (1998) argues for a definition of music, not as a neo-Platonic abstraction, but as a paralinguistic

exploration and affirmation of human relationships, in which an extended circle of participants or 'musicants' – not just musicians – are engaged. Music, in Small's view, should be treated primarily as a verb – 'to music' – rather than as a noun. He produces the following distillation of musical communication in all its evocative grandeur and kindred expression:

> The language of musicking is the language of gesture that unites the entire living world, and unlike verbal languages it has no set vocabulary or units of meaning. Being gesture-based, it can deal with many concerns, even apparently contradictory ones, all at the same time, while words can deal with matters only one at a time (184).

An example from the life of Beethoven serves to highlight this connection between paralinguistic and musical communication. The anecdote in question was recounted by one of Beethoven's former piano students, Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann, to a young Felix Mendelssohn while Mendelssohn was on a visit to Milan, and may have inspired his later claim that 'If you ask me to explain a piece of music, I can't do it, not because music is too vague, but because words are too vague' (quoted in Chanan 1999: 131). The baroness related to Mendelssohn – who, in turn, related to his sister in a letter – how Beethoven had shrunk from visiting her after the death of her last child, no doubt finding it impossible to summon up adequate words of condolence.

> [B]ut at length he invited her to visit him, and when she arrived, she found him seated at the piano, and simply saying, 'Let us speak to each other by music', he played on for more than an hour, and, as she expressed it, 'he said much to me, and at last gave me consolation' (Letter of 14 July 1831 as given in Marek 1973: 190-1).

Our induction into music's gestural language begins early in life with the elegant ritual dance of communication between adults and babies. The exaggerated intonation and rhythmic emphasis of echolalia, or 'motherese' as it has been called, might well be the bedrock of musical communication, displaying certain parallels, for example, with the animated to-ing and fro-ing of jazz musicians when they improvise off each other (Storr 1992: 8-9). While we might be reluctant to describe baby talk as 'music', it nevertheless possesses a musicality that extends far beyond ordinary speech, perhaps serving as evidence for an innate musical communicability (Service 2008). Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that such intensive play in the art of sound gestures continues to

inform our responses to music throughout the rest of our lives, reinforcing, for example, the connection between patterns of sound and emotional states. In this regard, it is significant that echolalia is usually accompanied on the part of adults by exaggerated facial expressions so that the affective 'meaning' of the various vocalisations is rendered visible. For instance, a rising 'ooh' sound might be accompanied by raised eyebrows in order to signify surprised delight. It is interesting to further note that one theory of why music is able to induce such powerful emotional states is that it reminds us of the prosody of emotional speech (Service 2008). Perhaps music taps into an affective-expressive foundation laid down in early infancy.

The exquisite babble that is exchanged between adults and babies might seem far removed from the Western art-music tradition with its rigorous notation of pitches, rhythms and timbres, yet there have been some curious parallels. One of the most notable of these is to be found in Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), which calls for the soprano to employ a singing style midway between song and speech, known as *Sprechgesang* – literally 'speechsong'.[132] In his foreword to the piece – a setting of poems by Albert Giraud – Schoenberg instructs that rather than maintaining a constant pitch through a note, the singer 'immediately abandons it by falling or rising'. He adds that '[t]he goal is certainly not at all a realistic, natural speech […]. But it should not call singing to mind, either' (Schoenberg 1994: 54).[133] Two further examples of music that approximates to echolalia are György Ligeti's *Aventures* (1962) and *Nouvelles Aventures* (1962-5). As the Russian musicologist Marina Lobanova (2000) writes, 'The idea behind the *Aventures* was to write a composition in which words and sounds, i.e., bearers of affects, would be at one and the same time both a verbal text and a musical composition' (101). To this end, Ligeti employed a 'non-semantic, imaginary language' consisting of 119 sounds pronounced or sung in different ways, combined with 'extra-linguistic elements, such as laughter, coughing, groaning, muttering, whispering and sighing' (ibid.). The result has been described as a 'phonetic composition which is constructed from a musical one and forms an organic whole with it' (Salmenhaara quoted ibid.).[134]

The link between prosody and music might, to a degree, explain why people often claim to hear in pieces of orchestral music a distinct national flavour – the Russianness of Tchaikovsky, the Frenchness of Debussy, or the Englishness of Elgar, for example. The

importance of variations between musical traditions in terms of pedagogy and practice cannot be discounted, yet it seems reasonable to assume that the rhythms and cadences of a composer's native language should also exert an influence on the character of their musical phrasing.

Mimetic culture

So far, in discussing the connection between music on the one hand and prosody, gesture and facial expression on the other, we have been concerned with the ontogenetic development of musical and linguistic faculties, that is to say their development in the individual. The matter, however, has also been considered phylogenetically, i.e. at the species level. In *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin (1871/2007) famously posits that music preceded speech in human evolution, arising as an elaboration of mating calls:

> it appears probable that the progenitors of man, either the males or females or both sexes, before acquiring the power of expressing their mutual love in articulate language, endeavoured to charm each other with musical notes and rhythm […]. The impassioned orator, bard, or musician, when with his varied tones and cadences he excites the strongest emotions in his hearers, little suspects that he uses the same means by which his half-human ancestors long ago aroused each other's ardent passions, during their courtship and rivalry (478).[135]

In addition to Darwin's speculations on the role of music in sexual selection, a common argument is that music, or a prehistoric prototype of it, contributed to the development of human cognition.[136] In *Origins of the Modern Mind*, the neuroscientist, Merlin Donald (1991), argues that there have been three major transitions in the cognitive evolution of humans: the first, from the 'episodic' life of apes to a 'mimetic' culture, in which emotions, external events and stories could be represented by means of gesture, movement and sound – but not yet language; the second, from 'mimetic' to 'mythic' culture, in which the language adaptation emerged; and the third, from 'mythic' culture to the final phase: that of 'theoretic culture and external symbolic storage', in which writing and other forms of external memory – such as the phonograph – have been invented. Each of these stages represents a significant advance on what went before, both in terms of culture and cognition, but the defining transition in human evolution is, for Donald, that from 'episodic' to 'mimetic' culture:

mimesis forms the core of an ancient root-culture that is distinctly human. No matter how evolved our oral-linguistic culture, and no matter how sophisticated the rich varieties of symbolic material surrounding us, mimetic scenarios still form the expressive heart of human social interchange (189).

Donald attaches particular importance in this regard to the 'combination of vocal and facial expression', which, he claims, 'might have played a paramount role in mimetic culture, as it still does in modern society' (180). The inference is that our hominid ancestors employed a sing-song language consisting, not of arbitrary phonemes, but of tonal (and gestural) shapes that bore a sensuous similarity or 'iconic connection' to their referents. He argues that this type of communication was crucial because of the very much larger and more complex social groupings that *homo erectus* – the first decisively mimetic culture in the fossil record – had to negotiate compared with their 'episodic' ancestors (137, 163).[137] 'Mimetic skill' was, according to Donald, the means by which our hominid forebears modelled, explored and affirmed social structure (173-4). He adds that '[l]anguage is not necessary for the development of complex social roles and rules, but mimesis is essential' (175). Thus, auditory-gestural-affective ritual and play may have provided pre-linguistic hominid cultures with the means for both conceptualising and reinforcing social bonds. This would correspond to Christopher Small's account of the role of 'musicking', which he describes as 'an activity by means of which we bring into existence a set of relationships that model the relationships of our world […]. [T]he sound relationships of a musical performance stand in metaphorical form for ideal human relationships as imagined by the participants' (Small 1998: 50, 129).

Mimetic culture, of which something akin to music was an integral part, may have flourished and endured 'for tens, perhaps hundreds of thousands of years before language and conceptual thinking evolved' (Sacks 2007: 246-7). In cognitive terms, it is the 'missing link' between ape colonies, devoid of abstract symbols, and human societies, characterised, among other things, by the spoken word (Donald 1991:162). There is clearly something romantic, indeed, Rousseauvian about this notion. In his *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, Rousseau (1781/2006) propounded the 'musical protolanguage hypothesis', as it has come to be known, some ninety years before the publication of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. Rousseau's claim is that, long before the divisive intervention

of logocentric reason, humans existed in prelapsarian – or at least pre-Babelian – harmony. Another recent elaboration on this idea is to be found in Steven Mithen's *The Singing Neanderthals*. Like Donald, Mithen argues that our hominid cousins communicated via vocal and physical gestures rather than language. He hypothesises that, in some respects, Neanderthals may have been more musical than *homo sapiens sapiens*. This argument is based on studies of pitch discrimination in infants, which suggest that we are all born with perfect pitch but 'unlearn' it in favour of relative pitch during language acquisition, relative pitch being a far more useful aptitude in linguistic terms, allowing for the recognition of syntactical units of meaning regardless of what pitches they are transposed to. According to Mithen (2005), only one in every ten thousand adults fulfils the criterion for possessing perfect pitch – 'the ability to identify or to produce the pitch of a sound without any reference point' – but this proportion is much higher among professional musicians, whether because of innate ability, intensive training, or both (76). The notion that Neanderthals, who almost certainly didn't possess language, having bequeathed no indisputably symbolic objects to the existing fossil record, were nevertheless able to recognise and produce absolute pitches is an intriguing one, and may well merit our hominid cousins with the 'singing' epithet from the title of Mithen's book.

According to this romantic view, our distant ancestors, as well as extinct lines such as the Neanderthals, were cognitively like early infants in their reliance on the iconicity and musicality of pre-linguistic speech. Mimetic communication on this account precedes linguistic communication at the level of both individual and species, and remains fundamental to forms of human interaction today. To quote the dramaturgical theorist, Paul Woodruff (2008): 'Mimesis and ordinary life are not divided by clear boundaries. Our lives are laced with mimesis' (124). Woodruff gives imitative behaviour as an example, arguing that 'to live without any form of mimesis would be impossible for a human being' (ibid.). With these issues in mind, I would like to argue that mimesis remains fundamental to human sociality – and, indeed, fundamental in our sociality with non-humans – and that, as a concept, it deserves much wider uptake in cultural theory. As indicated in chapter one, the work of Michael Taussig (1993) has provided a significant starting point in this regard but much more could be done.

Mimesis and cultural theory

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer (1944/1979) claim that, over the centuries, there has been a decline in, and taboo on, the mimetic impulse. This decline is in inverse proportion to the rise in instrumental reason, via which humans assert their difference from nature in order to control and subjugate it. The result of this is self-defeating, however, as the suppression of the urge to imitate non-human nature, and thereby express our correspondence and reciprocity with it, ends up being a form of self-subjugation:

> Civilization has replaced the organic adaptation to others and mimetic behavior proper, by organized control of mimesis, in the magical phase; and, finally, by rational practice, by work, in the historical phase. Uncontrolled mimesis is outlawed […]. For centuries, the severity with which the rulers prevented their own followers and the subjugated masses from reverting to mimetic modes of existence, starting with the religious prohibition on images, going on to the social banishment of actors and gypsies, and leading finally to the kind of teaching which does not allow children to behave as children, has been the condition for civilization (180-1).

For Adorno and Horkheimer, the taboo on mimesis is, then, a form of alienation from nature – and a more primary form of alienation than that outlined by Marx, which is an alienation from the labour process. The capitalist mode of production is to be understood in these terms as an intensification of mimesis's decline in which 'the indelible mimetic heritage of all practical experience is consigned to oblivion' (ibid.).[138] Writing in the context of Nazism, Adorno and Horkheimer see the suppressed mimetic impulse as erupting in acts of violent hatred in which the anti-Semite unconsciously mimics his internal image of those whom he hates (184). The Jew is accused of being uncivilised or, more specifically, of unconstrainedly mimicking bestial nature, and thus the Nazi behaves in like manner towards him or her. 'Anti-Semitism', in this sense, 'is probably the morbid expression of repressed mimesis' (187).

   Adorno and Horkheimer's use of the concept of mimesis in this passage owes much to Benjamin's work of more than a decade earlier. In a short monograph that remained unpublished in his lifetime, Benjamin (1933/1979) also diagnoses 'the increasing decay of the mimetic faculty' (160). He defines mimesis, in its strong form, as 'the powerful compulsion in former times to become and behave like something else', observing rather

more optimistically than Adorno and Horkheimer that the mimetic impulse still lives on in childhood games: 'Children's play is everywhere permeated by mimetic modes of behaviour, and its realm is by no means limited to what one person can imitate in another. The child plays at being not only a shopkeeper or teacher but also a windmill and a train' (160). Similarly, in his memoir, *A Berlin Childhood*, composed over a number of years in the 1930s, Benjamin (2006) recalls a butterfly hunt in which he and his prey become sympathetically bound together via the ancient magic of mimesis: 'Between us, now, the old law of the hunt took hold: the more I strove to conform, in all the fibers of my being, to the animal – the more butterfly-like I became in my heart and soul – the more this butterfly itself, in everything it did, took on the color of human volition; and in the end, it was as if its capture was the price I had to pay to regain my human existence' (51). We can, in this short passage, detect a subtle mimesis of feeling which gets at the heart of what Benjamin and his friends in the Frankfurt School intend by the concept. The feeling we have when perceiving the physical or tonal gesture of another agent or creature – the soaring arc of a bird in flight, the tumbling whoosh of a waterfall, the gentle swaying of the branches of a tree, the caress of the wind – is mimetic of that gesture. That is to say our feelings are creative imitations of what we perceive, affective analogues of the sensuous world in which we are embedded. In turn, gestures evoke the world of feeling, they give mimetic expression to what is within, making it external and manifest.

This mimesis of feeling is inherent in music too, which, like other art forms, is a continuation of the mimetic impulse in contemporary society. To quote Raymond Williams (1961): 'rhythm is a way of transmitting a description of experience, in such a way that the experience is re-created in the person receiving it, not merely as an "abstraction" or an emotion but as a physical effect on the organism – on the blood, on the breathing, on the physical patterns of the brain' (40-1). The ethnomusicologist, John Blacking (1977), emphasises the socio-biological nature of this kind of mimetic experience: 'Crucial factors in the development of cultural forms are the possibility of shared somatic states, the structures of bodies that share them, and the rhythms of interaction that transform commonly experienced internal sensations into externally visible and transmissible forms' (9). Musical communication can, in this way, be understood as a process of transduction in which each stage is mimetic of the one that

preceded it. Initially, the musician's body movements – bowing, strumming, hitting, etc. – are transduced into sound, i.e. into the oscillating contraction and expansion of waves of air molecules.[139] This sound can then be transduced back into bodily movements – most notably dancing but also a range of other more or less unconscious and involuntary movements such as swaying, toe-tapping, and the rhythmic contraction and relaxation of musculature. In the case of recorded music, there are obviously many more intermediate steps, such as the transduction of sound waves into an electrical signal and its inscription in analogue or digital form but, here too, the process can be understood as a sequence of imitative steps.[140]

I would like to round off this interlude by making an argument for a more sustained engagement in cultural studies with the concept of mimesis. This can be proposed, in the first instance, as a way of complementing semiotic analysis. As can be seen, mimesis understood as creative imitation overlaps with the Peircean notion of iconicity, i.e. signification involving signs that are taken as resembling the objects they refer to, sometimes in quite conventionalised ways. Culture understood mimetically is not just an arbitrary play of signifiers but neither is it a set of monolithic signs with an innate meaning. Rather it is a series of delicate mimetic adjustments between ourselves as humans and between us and the whole of the sensuous world. These 'adjustments', in the sense of sympathetic gestures, are universal and transhistorical yet the precise forms they take are historically specific and local. Mimesis is to be understood, moreover, as an imitative *process* via which gestural and expressive meanings circulate, often in quite subtle ways, this being related to Peirce's notion of the sign as a catalyst for a chain of effects.

The concept of mimesis also complements affect theory. Indeed, it could be argued that mimesis is one of the primary mechanisms by which affective states spread. Shame in this regard is a particularly 'contagious' affect, in which there is a painfully exact process of recognition and imitation between, on the one hand, the person who feels ashamed and, on the other, the person who feels the shame of another while simultaneously revulsing from it. This kind of exchange is described by Jennifer Biddle (1997) as 'the mimetic interchangeability of ourselves with others as subject *and* object', a 'symbiotic bond of mirroring and mutuality' (228, 229; emphasis in original). 'Shame',

she writes, 'is a direct mimetic introversion of the other's negation' (229).[141] A musical parallel can be observed in situations in which we respond negatively to music we 'don't like' because, at a mimetic level, it impels us to 'become like' it, or 'become like' its performers or 'like' those who 'like' it. Identification with a pop song or performer is, in this sense, essentially mimetic, while the refusal to identify in this way is the attempt to extricate oneself from this kind of mimetic entanglement.[142]

The recent discovery by neuroscientists of so-called 'mirror neurons' gives the ancient concept of mimesis an abruptly contemporary relevance. Mirror neurons are neurons that fire both when performing a certain action and when watching someone else perform that same action. Thus, the neurons 'mirror' the behaviour of the other as if the observer herself were acting. They were first detected in the early 1990s by a team of neuroscientists at the University of Parma, headed by Giacomo Rizzolatti, who were studying macaque monkeys. The scientists noticed that certain neurons in the brains of the macaques fired not only when the monkeys grasped food, but when they saw the experimenter grasp it. In April 2010, researchers at UCLA reported the first direct recordings of mirror neurons in humans. The neurologist V.S. Ramachandran predicts that this discovery 'will do for psychology what DNA did for biology' (quoted in Frampton 2011). In a sense, mimesis is cultural theory's pre-emptive answer to neuroscience's mirror neuron. As a concept of signal importance, it can be elaborated with reference to a literary and philosophical tradition spanning more than two millennia, from Plato and Aristotle in antiquity, through Erasmus, Montaigne, and Shakespeare in the Renaissance, to the Frankfurt School in the twentieth century, and beyond. In its attention to the language of gesture, mimesis puts mind and matter back together again. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) asserts:

> It is through my body that I understand other people; just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things'. The meaning of a gesture thus 'understood' is not behind it, it is intermingled with the structure of the world, outlined by the gesture, and which I take up on my own account. It is arrayed all over the gesture itself' (186)

Furthermore, mimesis connects the human and non-human worlds. It allows us to consider the ways in which meaning is socially constructed but without positing nature as an inert sphere without meaning – the binary opposite of culture. An anecdote from the

life of Mozart illustrates this very nicely. In a manner that embodies many a romanticist trope, Mozart kept a starling as a pet and musical companion. While Mozart was composing the *Piano Concerto in G Major, K. 453*, the starling is said to have mimicked the theme of the piece's variation finale but turning a G-natural to a G-sharp. This audacious harmonic detail so impressed the composer that he wrote out the bird's version of the theme in his notebook, naming it 'The Starling's Tune' (Kinderman 2006: lxv). As the ecologist and philosopher David Abram (1996) observes, 'We are human only in contact, and conviviality, with what is not human' (22). It is mimesis which grants us this conviviality.

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CHAPTER 5

Recorded Music, Mimicry, & Self-Oblivion

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> The ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of
> the usual limits and borders of existence, contains for its
> duration a lethargic element in which all past personal
> experience is submerged [… T]his chasm of oblivion
> separates the world of everyday reality from that of Dionysian
> reality (Nietzsche 1872/2000: 46).

Diegetic performance in the pop soundtrack movie

The film of *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) opens with a sequence in which the
thirtysomething singleton is lying on the sofa of her one-bedroom London flat, smoking a
cigarette and wearing red, penguin-emblazoned pyjamas with grey woollen socks. The
scene is set for what is clearly a lonely night in: Bridget listlessly watches an episode of
Frasier, browses through a magazine, and fruitlessly checks her answerphone messages,
accompanied all the while by the female country artist Jamie O'Neal singing the refrain
to 'All by myself'.[143] As the song's chorus gives way to a gentle but highly chromatic
piano interlude, Bridget gulps down a large glass of red wine and gives a slight,
convulsive shake of her head. Clearly drunk, she plays air guitar along to the song's
instrumental section, picking out the delicate notes of a classical guitar, her right hand
still holding the empty wine glass, and a rolled-up magazine in her left standing in for the
instrument's fretboard. As Jamie O'Neal reprises the song's first verse, Bridget sings
along, her melancholic state underpinned by the song's interesting modulation between
major and minor keys: 'When I was young, I never needed anyone, and making love was
just for fun – those days are gone…'[144] She starts sobbing as she reaches the words of the
title but, rather than break down in tears and so transform this into a moment of pathos,

her arm gestures become comically expansive and expressive, as if she herself were O'Neal, astride the stage of a football stadium, belting out the penultimate chorus in what would normally be the song's sparsely-accompanied 'confessional' moment. As the power-ballad sweeps to its inevitable strings-laden crescendo, Bridget alternates between using the rolled-up magazine as a microphone and as a drumstick – miming along to the final chorus and head-banging to the backing track's huge, reverb-driven snare.

Bridget's demonstrative and histrionic physical response to 'All by myself' is typical of what Simon Frith (1981) identifies as one of the key pleasures of rock music. Frith observes that 'one of the effects of the music is the vicarious experience of producing it, as listeners mime the movements of the guitarist, the drummer, or the singer' (15). He adds, however, that 'rock *pleasure* is a cultural as well as a physical matter', so that the impulse to play air guitar, for example, as with most of our responses to music, is learned rather than innate (ibid.; emphasis in original). Writing in 1981, Frith notes that, among rock fans, acts of consumption are gendered: 'if male consumers identify with rock performers and do so publicly, collectively […], female consumers are addressed, by contrast, as individuals, the potential objects of the performer's private needs' (228). Interestingly, Bridget's response to the film's opening power ballad represents something of a post-feminist reversal: significantly, we hear Jamie O'Neal's cover of the song and not Eric Carmen's original 1975 version, and Bridget acts in much the same way as Frith would have expected young men or boys to have behaved, though crucially perhaps, she – unlike them – is alone and in the privacy of her own living room. Indeed, much of the humour of the scene derives from the fact that we are witnessing what we are led to assume would normally be a very private act. By being performed for the cinema screen, Bridget's mime is ambiguous in terms of the public/private dichotomy, this of course being the key feature of the film's 'diary' trope.

Another romantic comedy, *The Holiday* (2006), also by a female director and writer, reproduces almost identical scenes of pop-rock mimesis and catharsis. Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet play upper-middle-class media professionals – very much like Bridget Jones – seeking to forget about their failed relationships with male ex-partners by swapping homes via an internet chatroom and spending Christmas on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Safely ensconced in Winslet's cottage in the Surrey countryside, Diaz's

character unwinds by drinking a glass of red wine of similarly copious proportions to the one drunk by Bridget Jones, and proceeds to caterwaul along to The Killers' 'Mr Brightside', clearly identifying with the lyric's account of sexual jealousy and eventual optimism, before head-banging, punching the air, and jumping up and down as the song reaches its rock-anthemic climax. In a more or less parallel sequence, Winslet is shown using a pillow as a guitar as she mimes along to her chosen song while sitting on the bed of Diaz's deserted Beverley Hills mansion.

These examples of pop-rock mimicry in contemporary cinema represent moments of heightened performance and intensity, interrupting a film's narrative in the way that the show tunes of a classical Hollywood musical used to. Estella Tincknell (2006) observes that

> the classical film musical's use of diegetic musical performance to express dramatic developments or emotional intensity has been effectively replaced by a 'postmodern' model of the film score in which a pre-recorded soundtrack is foregrounded, a soundtrack which may also be ironised through parody and distanciation. [...T]he relationship between popular music and popular cinema remains central even if it is differently mediated (132-3).

Characters in such 'soundtrack movies' engage with songs that are already familiar to the audience and in everyday settings that evoke the audience's own active consumption of pop music, eliciting comic self-recognition. Such musical mimicry often interrupts a film's narrative and marks a rupture, too, in the everyday – its temporary transcendence or oblivion, a physical and affective release from the constraints and dissatisfactions of one's personal situation and identity.

Pop-rock mimicry

Although impromptu hairbrush or tennis-racquet performances no doubt still abound, vicarious acts of musical pleasure have become more formalised and commercialised in recent decades, as the industry which spawned such actions has found new ways of re-appropriating them. Since its introduction in Japan in the early 1970s, karaoke has become a global phenomenon. Tōru Mitsui (1998) questions the usual, supposedly literal, translation of 'karaoke' as 'empty orchestra', suggesting instead that something like 'an orchestra *void* of vocals' might be less misleading, as the word karaoke refers to the fact

that the first tapes used for that purpose were specially recorded so as not to contain vocals, the singing to be supplied later via a live performance (37-8; adapted). In fact, as Mitsui points out, the word 'karaoke' predates karaoke as we know it now, referring to tapes recorded minus a lead vocal track that would allow a record company to send an artist out on a promotional tour without the added expense of a live backing band (38). In the international scope of its influence, coupled with its adaptation to local differences, karaoke is a signal example of the interpenetration of the global and the local or, more precisely, their mutually constituting effects – a process known somewhat awkwardly, and with reference to what was originally a marketing term, as 'glocalization' (Robertson 1995). Akiko Ōtake and Shūhei Hosokawa (2005) observe this process in the genesis of the karaoke machine:

> None of the basic parts of the karaoke apparatus – microphone, magnetic tape, video, laser disc, PA system – is a Japanese invention: what Japan created is a new combination and style of use in a certain spatial setting. In this, it resembles the Walkman whose uniqueness is clearer in its outdoor use of headphones than in its mechanism itself. Street use of headphones was possible before the ground-breaking release of Sony's Walkman in 1979. But nobody thought to do so because street walking and listening were conceived as two different acts […]. Both karaoke and Walkmans doubtless use Western technology, however, far from the realm of Western desire and imagination. These inventions and the image evoked by their use in public space are certainly modern but not necessarily Western (56).

When one looks, therefore, at the Japanese invention of karaoke and its subsequent global uptake, it is a case neither of homogenisation nor heterogenisation but rather their existence as two tendencies that have become a feature of life across much of the world in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Robertson 1995: 27). Kōichi Iwabuchi (1995) suggests that karaoke and Japanese culture more generally has a broad appeal across East Asia because it 'indigenises' the West, actively constructing an assimilated Asian image of Western culture, i.e. 'a Japanized version of the "American way of life" '. This, in turn, is domesticated by Asian people in other countries, becoming, for example, 'a Malaysian version of a Japanized American way of life' (103; adapted). This constitution of local cultural differences via the global spread of karaoke is particularly evident in the specificity of karaoke's modes of consumption. The differences between karaoke in different countries 'reflect the pre-existing culture of

people's singing and socializing, and the organization of the entertainment industry (music, television, restaurants, sex, and so on)' (Ōtake and Hosokawa 2005: 51).

As well as traversing the divide between the global and the local, karaoke traverses the divide between the personal and the public. Karaoke performances mould public conduct via participants' adoption of different personae. To quote the ethnomusicologist Charles Keil (1984) in one of the earliest English-language descriptions of karaoke, '[t]he goal of each singer seems to be a perfect replication of a specific star in a specific style' (94). Karaoke understood in this way is an example of mimesis – never quite in actuality a 'perfect replication' but more a 'creative imitation' of the voice and mannerisms of a famous performer. Karaoke's role as a resource for gendered acts of display should be emphasised in this regard. In an ethnographic study of karaoke in England, Tia DeNora (2000) notes that men and women's choices of karaoke material diverge quite sharply, with women more likely to select romantic ballads or other songs dealing explicitly with relationships, while men tend to opt for a wider range of material – hard rock, rap, Elvis, Sinatra – but in ways that consciously construct quite specific and limited notions of masculinity (119).

Karaoke formalises and makes public something that almost all of us do from time to time, that is to say sing along to a song we know. Another way of taking vicarious pleasure in musical performance is to mimic playing a rock or heavy-metal guitar solo, and here too an industry has emerged in order to facilitate this fantasy. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, air-guitar competitions became an annual fixture in most cities, with Oulu in Finland establishing itself as the global capital of this unlikely subculture: the Air Guitar World Championships have been held there every year since the event's inception in 1996 (Watson 2007). A team of Finnish scientists even went so far as to invent electronic 'data gloves' that link the movements of your fingers to a computer in order to produce a user-generated imitation of a guitar solo (Knight 2005). It is, perhaps, apt in this context to quote Robert Walser (1993) from his book on heavy metal: 'The music is felt within as much as without, and the body is seemingly hailed directly, subjectivity responding to the empowerment of the body rather than the other way round' (45). The experiments of a few Finnish eccentrics did not go unnoticed by the wider gaming industry, and in 2005 the *Guitar Hero* series of computer games was

launched, allowing gamers to use a guitar-shaped game controller to simulate playing lead, bass, and rhythm guitar. Although the series has helped spur greater physical interactivity in gaming culture and has opened gaming up to a wider demographic, it seems possible that, with hindsight, the air-guitar/*Guitar Hero* craze will be seen as a passing fad – a turn-of-the-millenium equivalent of the 1950s hula hoop.[145] It is significant in this regard that the craze coincided with the rehabilitation of heavy metal as a genre in popular music, albeit on decidedly 'postmodern' terms. The 'cock rock' once derided by Frith and McRobbie (1978/1990) took a more ironic and parodic turn at the beginning of the new millennium, with rock fans both male and female demonstrating a greater knowingness and detachment even as they engaged in performative displays of masculinity.

Mimicry in classical music

It would be a mistake to assume that acts of mimicry such as the ones I've described are a wholly recent phenomenon or that they are confined to rock or pop music. In what is, admittedly, an improbable connection, Jean Sibelius seems to have anticipated the activities of his Finnish compatriots at the Air Guitar World Championships by playing a curious sort of air fiddle when listening to recordings of violinists. As a youngster, Sibelius had dreamed of being a violin virtuoso along the lines of Paganini, and, much later in life, his son-in-law noticed that as the elderly Sibelius sat and listened to violin music, he often mimed the fingering and bowing that he heard on the record (Macleod 2009a).

   While not being an altogether recent phenomenon, such musical mime-play is clearly dependent upon the advent of sound recording and the opportunity it presents for listeners to physically complete the performances they hear. In 1926, the Minneapolis Phonograph Society reported that some of its members had taken to 'shadow conducting', described – in careful terms so as to avoid even the slightest taint of femininity – as 'that most exhilarating of indoor sports' (quoted in Katz 2004: 59). The musicologist, Richard Crawford, offers a personal recollection:

> Fairly early in my life, I became aware that my father would go into a room of our house that was glassed in, with opaque glass, and I would hear music coming out of that room. If I

stood outside, I could see shadows moving inside the room. Now, my father… was not a musician in any sense at all. [He was a foundry supervisor by day.] But I eventually put together what he was doing in that room when I saw him walk into the house one day with a baton. He was going into that room, turning on the record player and conducting. I imagine it must have been a very important experience for him (ibid.).

As Mark Katz (2004) notes in his history of recording, the phonograph gave non-musical men such as Crawford's father 'the possibility of self-expression through music, permitting them to do in private what they could not or would not otherwise do' (59). This is to say it offered the average American man a way to enjoy music physically and sensually without incurring the risk of being unmanly.[146] It should be remembered that in the bourgeois drawing-rooms of the preceding century, music had centred around the piano and had been largely the preserve of the females of the house.

The blurring of musical production & consumption

Acts of musical mimesis and the vicarious, often cathartic, pleasures they offer are, of course, not confined to music fans or overweening amateurs, but are central to the *production* of musical culture. The somewhat vulgar and nationalistic spectacle of the Last Night of the Proms, held in London's Royal Albert Hall, has seen fledgling conductors practising their art by addressing the orchestra but standing behind the real conductor, the seriousness of their youthful intent suggesting that they have become absorbed in the fantasy of omnipotence and authoritarian rule that the figure of the conductor embodies. Such occasions give these would-be conductors an opportunity to experience something of the nervous ordeal that established conductors go through when faced with an orchestra full of world-class musicians in a major metropolitan venue.

   As far as popular music is concerned, its entire history in the recorded era could be characterised as one of more or less deliberate plagiarism, pastiche, and imitation. Frith (1993) notes that '[r]ock history has always been about musicians finding their own voices in the process of trying *unsuccessfully* to sound like someone else' (6; emphasis in original). One thinks, for example, of a teenage Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, rehearsing in Jagger's bedroom in the home counties, and making his family laugh with their earnest attempts to imitate Chicago bluesmen. Frith (1996) underlines the intimate connection between musical consumption and production by drawing attention to the

innervated muscularity of many of our modes of listening: 'we listen by performing, by reproducing (even if only silently, tentatively) those muscular movements for ourselves, "sympathizing" with a singer by pushing the words up against the top of our mouths when she does' (192). For Frith, there is a literal 'physical sympathy' with the singer, due in large part to the fact that, as organisms with the same glottises and tracheas, we can identify with singers to a greater extent than we can with other musicians, whose dexterity greatly exceeds our own: 'we can sing along, reconstruct in fantasy our own sung versions of songs, in ways we can't even fantasize instrumental technique – however hard we may try with our air guitars – because with singing, *we feel like we know what to do*' (ibid.; emphasis in original). Even as non-musicians, most of us have an extraordinarily precise level of control over the muscles in our voice boxes, the position of our tongue against the palate, and the flow of air from our windpipes, enabling us to produce passable imitations of a range of singers whose records we're familiar with. And for professional musicians, who have developed a high degree of muscle memory in relation to their chosen instrument, listening to recordings of an artist who shares the same specialism can trigger peculiar sets of involuntary motor responses, as in the case of the sax-player whose lips twitch and quiver when he or she listens intently to another saxophonist playing a solo.

The extended transatlantic dialogue that constitutes the history of rock 'n' roll marks perhaps the most significant example of creative imitation in the history of twentieth-century music. The crucial act of mimesis was that carried out by white artists in order to appropriate the movements and sounds of black artists. The ambiguous tribute paid by white musicians to their black counterparts – ambiguous because black artists were often never properly remunerated for their work, and what was often being celebrated was their imagined otherness – has, of course, a much longer history than that of rock 'n' roll, stretching back at least as far as the minstrel shows of the nineteenth century and the other 'blackface' performances that preceded them. Frith (1996) observes that '[t]he racism endemic to rock 'n' roll was not that white musicians stole from black culture but that they burlesqued it' (131). In similar terms, Bernard Gendron (1985) has argued that it seems 'reasonable to place [Jerry Lee] Lewis's "Whole Lotta Shakin" in the tradition of black-faced minstrelsy':

> If 'Whole Lotta Shakin' was to succeed in advertising itself as *white-boy-wildly-sings-black*, it had to do so quickly and simply. The result had to be a coarsely outlined cartoon of what it means to sing black. That is, the result had to be a caricature (7, 9).

In tandem with this, 'gospel and r&b and doo-wop' were themselves '*blacked-up*' (Frith, 1996, p 131, italics in original):

> The black pioneers of rock and roll were also driven to produce caricatures of *singing-black*. Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Ray Charles […] quite radically changed their styles as their audience shifted from predominantly black to largely white. Though all three began their careers by singing the blues in a rather sedate manner (at least by rock and roll standards), they later accelerated their singing speed, resorted to raspy-voiced shrieks and cries, and dressed up their stage acts with manic piano-pounding or guitar acrobatics (Gendron 1985: 10; emphasis in original).

The tensions inherent in what Frith (1981) calls 'the relationship between black performance and white pleasure' are thus a tangle of projected otherness and identification with that otherness (22-23). As we shall see later, there are parallels here with the history of possession rituals, in which, a participant typically allows him- or herself to be possessed by a deity who is viewed as foreign or exotic.

Identification, expressivity, & song lyrics

In chapter one, we saw how the introduction of recording has marked effects upon the act of musical communication, privileging some aspects of the musical code over others. In order to compensate for the fact that the performer is no longer physically present, his or her emotivity or expressivity becomes more pronounced. At the same time, there is a more overt attempt to maintain contact with the listener by addressing him or her directly, and by eliciting physical, emotional, or psychological responses. This means, firstly, that it becomes easier for the listener to identify with the personality of the recording artist, which manifests on the phonograph recording through very precise and discrete musical qualities. These can be melodic or rhythmic but are, above all, timbral. Secondly, it becomes easier for the listener to be 'interpellated' in the song-text, i.e. for him or her to imagine themselves as either the addresser in the musical act of communication or as its addressee. This is particularly the case with songs that contain the words 'I' and 'you' in their lyrics. At the beginning of this chapter, we saw how Cameron Diaz's character in

The Holiday identifies very closely with the lyrics of 'Mr Brightside', having recently discovered that her boyfriend has been cheating on her. The song's account of sexual jealousy chimes with her own experience, so that as she drunkenly sings along with Brandon Flowers, she assumes his role as the 'I' or addresser of the song: 'Jealousy, turning saints into the sea / Swimming through sick lullabies / Choking on your alibis…'

The lyrics of pop songs, almost without exception, encourage these kinds of fantasies through their modes of address. The subject of what is being enunciated, i.e. of the words themselves – as opposed to the enunciating subject, i.e. the singer – is overwhelmingly an unspecified 'I' that the listener can imagine him- or herself being. Similarly, the 'you' that is addressed is an empty cipher which the listener can easily fill. In a survey of lyrics from the top fifty songs in English from the 12 September 1987 edition of *Music & Media*'s Hot 100 chart, Tim Murphey (1989) found that forty-seven out of the fifty contained an unspecified 'I'-referent, and thirty-two an unspecified 'you'-referent. Thus, from a sample, the date of which was chosen ahead of time in order to be as representative as possible, it was confirmed that pop songs almost exclusively have an open mode of address that facilitates auditor identification and role play. Murphey is understandably cautious about the extent to which listeners may or may not place themselves in the role of either the 'you' that is being addressed or the 'I' that is doing the addressing, but he suggests that such role play might occur via the song's ability to circumvent rational responses: 'Although our logic tells us that it is not possible that we are being addressed directly, subconsciously (and perhaps illogically) we may receive the messages as directed toward us' (186). Thus, 'to the extent that the auditor is permeable to the song's influence, the 'you' and 'I' take on personal meaning for present, remembered, idealised or desired affective relationships, consciously or unconsciously' (190). Murphey takes the example of a song belonging to the era in which he was writing: 'every American youth knows Bruce Springsteen sings "Born in the USA", [but] when they hear it and sing along they also are exclaiming that they were "Born in the USA"' (187).

In Jakobsonian terms, the 'I' of song lyrics is 'emotive', acting as a vehicle for self-expression, whereas the 'you' has a 'conative' or vocative function, addressing the auditor directly. As Richard Middleton (1990) has demonstrated, these communicative

functions work in conjunction with the non-lyrical features of the song. For example, a pronounced vibrato or melisma on the word 'I' will be heard – according to the coding implicit in Western genres – as more emotive than a single, unwavering tone, and a 'you' on the downbeat is liable to have more conative force than one on an unstressed beat. Whitney Houston's version of 'I will always love you' gives ample evidence of the use and abuse of these two musico-lyrical modes of communication, to the point where the song title almost becomes a threat. These musicological, as opposed to purely literary, features of the text help to explain a song's subconscious force in eliciting identification and role play. We commonly respond to popular songs at an affective level that we would struggle to notice, let alone explain in words, yet, precisely because of this fact, 'silly love songs' and their ilk engage us all the more. In simple terms, we are most conducive to adopting other subjectivities – and the ideologies implicit in them – when we relax and desist from the arduous process of constructing and maintaining our own.

Dave Laing (1970) associates the personal mode of address, typical of ballads such as 'I will always love you', with the attenuated emotional life of late bourgeois society and its regressive flight into sentimental fantasy (57-60). Within this possessive individualist milieu, collective modes of address are usually disdained in favour of the first- and second-person singular. Murphey's sample of chart hits from a single week in 1987 certainly evidences the continuation of this trend. Laing cites rock 'n' roll and other 'subcultural' styles as notable exceptions, with their plural terms of address such as 'come on everybody' and 'we all shine on', etc. (ibid.; Laing 1985: 68-73). Similarly, Frith (1988) comments on The Beatles' characteristic use of the third person throughout their careers: 'I saw *her* standing there', '*She* loves you', etc. (100). Unlike many of their peers, The Beatles frequently declined to objectify their fans as the addressees of the group's songs, opting instead for a more narratological approach that included rather than cajoled their listeners.

What these different modes of address have in common is the function of 'interpellation', whereby listeners are designated varying subject positions within the musical text (Middleton 1990: 242). Obviously, this occurs more readily within the personal mode of 'you' and 'I' as the open-endedness of such emphatically employed referents invites completion by the auditor. As Murphey (1989) writes, 'the listener

would seem to be able to complete the message, or make sense of the song, through using the persons, times and places from their own physical and metaphysical situation' (185). In spite of this apparent hermeneutic freedom, pop lyrics exert considerable ideological influence due to the fact that their message is completed within certain parameters: the listener (mis)recognises him- or herself within the terms set by the song. Moreover, the subject position that he or she discovers for him- or herself in the musical text has a pleasing unity, which ordinary subjectivity, by its intermittent and fragmentary nature, cannot supply. So, in a sense, identification at this level is about the adoption of a ready-made personality: one whose specious authenticity and affective charge is able to temporarily supersede our more humdrum notions of selfhood.

Pop-rock mimicry & possession rituals

We have already seen how playing air guitar or singing along to a favourite song can be an emotionally-charged experience in which a person often transcends or 'forgets' his or her own identity and temporarily takes on that of another. It is my contention that such examples of mime-play can be understood as secular possession rituals. For Gilbert Rouget (1985) in his book *Music and Trance*, '[p]ossession is essentially identification with another' (225). Among the many contemporary and historical examples of possession that he looks at, he examines the available literature on the Dionysus cults of Ancient Greece. In such accounts of music's role in possession and other trance states, Rouget identifies a common misconception extending back to the work of Aristotle: the belief that music in itself is the direct cause of trance. For Aristotle, the Phyrgian scale – probably heptatonic – was 'the mode of madness' whereas the Dorian – probably pentatonic and without semitones – was the mode of 'serenity' (223). While not denying that music, particularly amplified music, can have immediate psycho-physiological effects, Rouget draws attention to music's role as 'a coded signal' and its status as a semiological system (205). In spite of the fact that 'the music of enthusiasm or Dionysiac *mania* was strongly felt to be Phyrgian', he argues that it was not any innate quality of Phyrgian harmony that contributed to ecstatic states but rather its association with Asia Minor, from whence it was also believed the Dionysiac cult itself originated (91; emphasis in original). (The Dorian mode, by contrast, was considered stoutly Hellenic.)

Similarly, it didn't much matter what kinds of instruments were used in the ceremonies: the *aulos* or double clarinet was most commonly employed, but the pan pipes or *syrinx*, and the lyre were also played (76-7). What was required was something that sounded suitably exotic, for the God that the maenads, or revellers, sought to invoke was, in simple terms, a foreigner. In this regard, Rouget asks:

> [W]hat in fact is possession other than an invasion of the field of consciousness by the *other*, that is, by someone who has come from elsewhere? Insofar as he is the other, Dionysus is at the same time an elsewhere; whether he is or not *really* is of little importance (93; emphasis added).

Interestingly, Rouget suggests that 'Beatlemania' and other forms of contemporary idol-worship might represent a continuation of 'the poetic tradition of mania', in which states of enthusiasm and hysteria are the norm (241).[147] One should stress in this regard Barbara Ehrenreich's point that Beatlemania was not about teenage girls' blind adulation or sexual objectification of John, Paul, George and Ringo so much as their identification with them as oppositional figures (Ehrenreich 2007: 213). The first Beatles film, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), presented the four musicians as young, Northern, working-class men at odds with a largely middle-class and London-based media. They were cheerful and exuberant but also witty and sardonic, and it was arguably the combination of these qualities that teenage girls identified with. The sequence towards the end of the film in which the fab four evade the police after Ringo's wrongful arrest parallels their fans' attempts to do the same – preserved for posterity in the glorious images of teenage girls wrestling with uniformed police officers on the streets of England.

One of the most important and influential accounts of the Dionysian cults is, of course, Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* or, to give it its full title, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music*. By putting music at the centre of his account of the rise and fall of Greek tragedy, Nietzsche (1872/2000) was following the classical Aristotelian theory that 'tragedy emerged from the tragic chorus', this chorus being, in essence, a continuation of the Dionysian possession rituals (42; emphasis altered). In privileging the dithyrambic chorus, Nietzsche was writing within an established dramaturgical tradition though he objects to the view held by the German Romantic critic A.W. Schlegel 'that the chorus represents the ideal spectator' (ibid.). For Nietzsche, as it was for Schiller before him,

the chorus was not an intermediary between the actors and the audience, or between art and empirical reality, but a bulwark intended 'to shut out the real world' (44). The members of the chorus were not therefore representatives of the Athenian citizenry or *demos*, but witnesses to the quasi-supernatural manifestation of the 'Titans and heroes' who prowled the stage (32). This is to say, the masked actors did not merely play the role of these superhuman beings, they invoked them and were possessed by them. Nietzsche thus restores to tragic drama its status as ritual, arguing that, far from being 'political' or 'social' as Schlegel had suggested, the origins of the chorus were in fact 'purely religious' (42).

Significantly, the Greek tragic chorus is a 'Dionysian chorus' as opposed to an 'Apollonian' one (50). This important distinction merits further attention. As Douglas Smith (2000) explains, 'The Apollonian takes its name from Apollo, the god of light, dream, and prophecy, while the Dionysian takes its name from Dionysus, the god of intoxication' (xvi). Apollo is associated with rational knowledge, society, individuation, and order, Dionysus with mysticism, nature, merging, and self-abandonment. In artistic terms, Apollo is the representative of the 'art of the sculptor' whereas Dionysus presides over the 'imageless […] art of music' (Nietzsche 1872/2000: 19). This difference between representational Apollonian art and non-representational Dionysian music can also be couched in terms of a distinction between 'appearance' and 'essence', between that which presents itself to the senses but has no more reality than a dream, and that which is intangible yet forms the very core of existence (20, 37; original emphasis removed).[148]

Nietzsche is careful to stress that the Dionysian and the Apollonian exist together 'in a relationship of reciprocal stimulation and intensification' (33). He urges that 'we must understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which again and again discharges itself in an Apollonian world of images' (50). This is to say that 'the shattering of the individual' which lies at the heart of the 'Dionysian state' is objectified via theatre's Apollonian ability to give Dionysian chaos and flux a form and order (51). The 'chorus parts which are interwoven through tragedy' are, for Nietzsche, 'the maternal womb of the whole so-called dialogue', yet, to continue his metaphor, the Apollonian images and

dialogue are its offspring (50). 'Thus drama is the concrete Apollonian representation of Dionysian insights and effects' (51).

The transcendence – 'annihilation' even – of the chorus members' identification with their own thoughts, and along with it, the transcendence of their everyday identities, is crucial to an understanding of why Nietzsche values the early Attic tragedies so much more highly than the later Euripidean ones (23). He argues that in 'the dithyramb', the ecstatic hymn dedicated to Dionysus, the chorus 'stands before us' as 'a community of unconscious actors […] who even among themselves regard themselves as transformed' (50). 'Under the influence of' dramatic art's 'spell', 'the Dionysian enthusiast sees himself as a satyr, and as satyr he in turn beholds the god' (ibid.; original emphasis removed). It should be pointed out that for Nietzsche, the Titanic demigods such as Prometheus, who challenged their usurpation by the Olympian gods, are essentially Dionysian figures. As such, it is the same god that is being invoked and worshipped throughout the Attic tragedies. Dionysus, as one who was persecuted by those who refused to accept his divinity, is a fitting embodiment of the pain and suffering which Nietzsche claims is at the heart of existence. This pain, he claims, is the pain of individuation: 'we should regard the state of individuation as the source and original cause of suffering, as something objectionable in itself' (59). The chorus, which played such a distinctive role in early tragic drama, is therefore to be understood as being at the forefront of the Dionysian struggle to overcome individuation. The wild ecstatic song of the chorus is able to transcend the pain of separation, albeit temporarily. The 'overpowering feeling of unity' that results constitutes part of tragic drama's 'metaphysical consolation': 'that life at the bottom of things, in spite of the passing of phenomena, remains indestructibly powerful and pleasurable' (45). This immersive sense of unity with both fellow humans and with nature is achieved via the temporary suspension of individuation and, along with it, the social and moral claims upon oneself that individuation implies. Nietzsche writes that '[t]he ecstasy of the Dionysian state, with its annihilation of the usual limits and borders of existence, contains for its duration a *lethargic* element in which all past personal experience is submerged' (46; emphasis in original). '[*L*]*ethargic*' here is to be understood in the sense of 'forgetful', 'amnesic', or 'Lethean'. Similarly, Nietzsche describes 'the dithyrambic chorus' as 'a chorus of people

who have been transformed, who have completely *forgotten* their past as citizens, their social position' (50; emphasis added). The 'displacement of the chorus' in Sophocles's work, and its eventual 'annihilation' via Euripides, Agathon, and the New Comedy represented for Nietzsche an eclipse of the Dionysian impulse (79). This, according to Nietzsche, was to have important consequences for music. As the old Dionysian chorus gave way to 'the New Dithyramb', the 'myth-creating power of music' was lost (94). Music degenerated from representing the primordial unity at the heart of existence to the mere 'imitation' of 'superficialities' or what in Nietzsche's own time was known as 'tone-painting' (ibid.).

   In positing possession trances as a form of 'forgetting' or 'self-oblivion', Nietzsche introduces themes that will be taken up in his later work. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, he famously subverts the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3-11) by declaring, 'Blessed are the forgetful, for they get the better even of their blunders' (Nietzsche 1886/2008: 89; adapted). And in his essay 'On the uses and abuses of history', he claims:

> it is always the same thing that makes happiness happiness: the ability to forget […]. He who cannot sink down on the threshold of the moment and forget all the past, who cannot stand balanced like a goddess of victory without growing dizzy and afraid, will never know what happiness is – worse, he will never do anything to make others happy […]. Forgetting is essential to action of any kind (Nietzsche 1876/1997: 62).

Echoing these sentiments, Jane Bennett (2001) argues that 'in small, controlled doses, a certain forgetfulness is ethically indispensable. Occasions during which one's critical faculties are suspended and one is caught up in the moment can produce a kind of enjoyment – a sense of adequacy or fullness – that temporarily eclipses the anxiety endemic to critical awareness of the world's often tragic complexity' (10). This kind of Nietzschean forgetting or self-oblivion can be understood in semiotic terms as belonging to what C.S. Peirce (1998) designates as the most rudimentary level of signification, 'Firstness'. This level consits of signs that are barely recognised as such, producing more or less direct, unreflected-upon feelings via qualities inherent in the sign rather than via what it refers to (268-9).[149] Turino (1999) makes explicit the links between Peircean Firstness and self-oblivion:

A state of Firstness is when there is no consciousness of self, other, or world – when 'trains of thought', or 'chains of semiosis' have not begun or are kept from beginning. Such states are achievable, for example, through certain meditation practices as well as other activities including dance and musical performance. This state can not be apprehended until after the fact, *in memory*; recognize it and you are already outside of it, and it is gone […]. States of Firstness […] are often deeply satisfying and relaxing because the self and mundane matters of the world are temporarily transcended (252; emphasis added).

To reiterate my earlier point, examples of pop-rock mimicry and identification – such as singing along, playing air guitar, head-banging, 'wild' dancing, etc. – can be understood as contemporary versions of the possession ritual. In our more secular world, these actions do not occur as part of religious rituals per se but rather 'rituals of relaxation and abandonment', this being the characteristic mode in which much popular culture is consumed (McRobbie 2006: 68). These types of mime-play, understood as possession trance, can be located within a long tradition of using music for healing purposes.[150] According to Rouget (1985), the role of music and dance is 'to reconcile the torn person with himself': 'healing is achieved by the reinsertion of the individual in society as a result of the movement of music and dance, which provokes identification with the [possessee's] god' (206, 212). Music's role in pop-rock possession trances is, as Rouget's work would suggest, not that of direct cause but rather that of a 'coded' sign, signalling that what would normally be considered bizarre or even psychotic behaviour – flailing one's arms about, jumping up and down, head-banging, making incoherent noises, etc. – is, in the current circumstances, socially acceptable. Music, in other words, provides an appropriate environment for people to 'let go'.

Mimicry, subjectivity, & the habitus

The 'healing' effected by overtly physical forms of musical mimicry can be better understood in relation to the concept of 'habitus': a sociological term salvaged from scholastic philosophy by Marcel Mauss and later extended by Pierre Bourdieu in order to provide a theory of social reproduction. Habitus refers to a deeply ingrained set of tendencies and dispositions, structuring the movements, choices, and lifestyle of an individual in accordance with his or her social position. For Mauss (1926/2007), habitus is 'the sum of bodily habits' (25). Similarly, in the work of Bourdieu it is 'a system of dispositions' which is 'inscribed' in the bodies of social agents 'by past experiences'

(1996: 265; 2000: 138). 'Habitus', he writes, 'is the basis of an implicit collusion among all the agents who are products of similar conditions and conditionings' and is therefore part of what 'keeps people in their place', in spite of the fact that they may have accumulated a certain amount of economic capital, which, on the face of it, should allow them a degree of autonomy and social mobility (Bourdieu 2000: 145; adapted). Habitus is thus closely related in Bourdieu's work to his notion of cultural capital: socially-valued knowledge or expertise, which also extends to one's comportment or the way one 'carries' oneself. I wish to argue that the kinds of wild ecstatic mimicry that listeners to recorded music often indulge in provide a way of departing from deeply-ingrained physical habits and tendencies, to change – albeit temporarily – their physical comportment, the way they 'hold' themselves. As secular possession rituals, such actions are a means of unselfconsciously modelling our movements and overall disposition on those of another in order to temporarily transcend the invisible constraints and accumulated tensions that we store in our bodies. In mimetically taking on a different personality – often that of a charismatic performer whom we wish to emulate – we 'forget' to be ourselves for a moment or two and, in the process, we subtly alter our habitus, changing our relation to the social meanings inscribed in physical comportment.

The connection between self-oblivion and unrestrained physical responses to music can be understood more clearly by considering the opposite scenario: the inhibition of physical responses and the attendant increase in one's own subjectivity. To a large degree, the inhibition of immediate physical responses is what produces an 'aesthetic' mode of reception, not just to music but to other art forms too. Bergson (1908/1988) argues that 'perception as a whole has as its true and final explanation in the tendency of the body to movement', so that when we suppress such tendencies it gives rise to a sense of inwardness or what he calls 'the indetermination of the will' (45, 41). In this way, 'consciousness', for Bergson, 'means virtual action' – it is what arises when we inhibit our tendency to real action (50). In a similar vein, Eric Clarke (2005) writes:

> In the circumstances of entertainment and aesthetic engagement, […] overt manifestations of the perception-action cycle are often blocked or transformed […]. Watching films and television, looking at paintings or sculpture in a gallery, and listening to music in a concert hall deliberately place perceivers in a relationship with the objects of perception that prevents them from acting upon or exploring those objects in an unhindered fashion. Many

of the reactions that people have to these special circumstances (reaching out to touch a sculpture; approaching or standing back from a painting; laughing, crying, or flinching at a film; foot- and finger-tapping in response to music) are a residue of the more usual relationship between perception and action, as are the specific conventions that regulate these reactions (ritualized audience participation at pantomimes, socially enforced silence and immobility at concerts, applause at regulated moments) (20).

As Clarke recognises, 'The interruption or suspension of the perception-action cycle that characterizes some forms of aesthetic engagement is, of course, culturally specific', and 'is at its most extreme in some of the "high" art forms of the West' (ibid.). It is illuminating in this regard to consider the change in concert audiences towards the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. In the opera houses of Paris, for example, spectators reported something new in audience behaviour in the 1770s – genuine attentiveness – though it would take several decades before enthusiastic whoops of approval mid-performance or idle chat to one's neighbour would be replaced by silence and physical immobility (Johnson 1995: 59). In policing their own behaviour, the newly-emergent bourgeoisie sought to assert their moral superiority over the aristocracy, whom they often perceived as decadent and effete, while reassuring themselves regarding their social standing vis-à-vis others of their own class. James Johnson (1995) describes the situation thus:

> Audiences reasoned on some level that if politeness was necessary to succeed, its absence signaled inferiority. Policing manners thus became an act of self-reassurance. It confirmed one's social identity by noticing those who didn't measure up (232).

Self-policing – in theatres and opera houses and, later, the purpose-built concert halls of the nineteenth century – was not simply repressive, therefore, but the expression of a will-to-power, an assertion of moral and social superiority and the channelling inward of mental and physical energy resulting in a heightened sense of one's own individual experience. The inhibition of immediate physical responses to Western art music is thus an important factor in the emergence of the bourgeois humanist subject: 'In labeling a range of responses unacceptable, and defining when the acceptable ones could be expressed, politeness directed musical responses inward, carving out for social reasons a private sphere of feeling that in earlier generations had been public' (235-6). This explains, to a large extent, the intensely subjective turn that composition took in the

nineteenth century, reaching its apogee in the unresolved, suspended harmonies of late romanticism.

Set against this, twentieth-century popular music was disseminated largely via recording, and thus in the physical absence of the performers or producers who made it and in a variety of physical spaces, and it was partly for these reasons that it was able to produce such a heightened sense of physicality in those who listened to it. Whether it be jazz, rock 'n' roll, disco, house, or techno, this music is distinguished by overtly physical responses as well as a corresponding self-oblivion, a sense of 'losing oneself' in the music via the intensity of one's bodily engagement with it. While not being quite 'Dionysian' in any literal sense nor a simple 'liberation' of the body and its powers, it nevertheless represents a re-claiming by young people of their bodies, and a deployment of them for explicitly hedonistic purposes in which it is not immediately clear to outsiders what is being produced nor what is being consumed. In such experiences, what matters most is the feeling of 'being played by the music' (Waters 2008).

CHAPTER 6

Everyday Reveries

*

What form do you suppose a life would take
that was determined at a decisive moment
precisely by the street song last on everyone's
lips?
Walter Benjamin (1929/1999a: 210).

The history of a dream

'Reverie' means not only 'a dream-like state' but also an instrumental passage of music suggesting such a state. Musicians as diverse as Claude Debussy and Elton John have used the word to designate otherwise unnamed compositions.

'Reverie' entered the English language in the fourteenth century as a term for 'wild or uncontrolled behaviour', 'wantonness', 'rejoicing', or 'revelry' (OED). It derives from the Old French *rever* meaning 'to be delirious'. To be under the sway of 'reverie' or 'raverie' – a variant form – was thus 'to rave'. The definition bears a similarity to descriptions of people in the grip of possession trances, such as the Maenads ('ravers') of ancient Greece: devotees of Dionysus who worshipped him via wine-fuelled circle dances in which their everyday personalities would be forgotten and they would attain union with their deity. By the 1830s, 'reverie' had been domesticated, taking on the sense it still retains: 'daydream'. A word that once had carnivalesque meanings to do with the expression of outward, collective joy has come to be associated with an individual and interior psychological state. Nineteenth-century paintings on musical themes often portray this more inward, atomised meaning of reverie. A painting by Frank Dicksee, for example, first exhibited at the Royal Academy in the 1890s and simply entitled *A Reverie*, depicts a morose Victorian gentleman slumped in an armchair in a dimly-lit

parlour, imagining that the ghostly form of his deceased wife is playing the piano just next to him, as she was wont to do when she was alive. In the original exhibition-catalogue, Dicksee included the lines: 'In the years fled, / Lips that are dead / Sang me that song' (quoted in Leppert 1993: 144).

Moving into the age of recording, music gives rise to a different kind of reverie. Still inward and individual, it is, however, distinguished by much greater contingency, synchronicity, and serendipity. Recorded music frequently irrupts unexpectedly in the midst of everyday life, transforming for a moment or two its character. The actor Dominic West recalls driving from the set of a BBC period drama to the hospital where his wife was about to give birth to their first child (Berkeley 2009). The drama in question is called *The Devil's Whore* (2008) and is set during the English Civil War though it was filmed in South Africa. West's character Oliver Cromwell had just been made Lord Protector on set so he mischievously put on Handel's *Zadok the Priest*, a piece which has been played at every English coronation ceremony since 1727, its repetition of hierarchical subdivisions an homology of social hierarchy. As the introduction to *Zadok the Priest* climaxed with the entrance of the choir and trumpets, the car crested the hilltop and the sun burst through the clouds. West and the passenger who was accompanying him burst out laughing.

Everyday reveries: two examples from cinema

The everyday reverie is, by definition, a very subjective experience but one whose contents are mediated by the social totality. This is to say its meaning is determined by the sum of meanings available in the social formation and our positioning as subjects within that formation. Contemporary films that use pre-recorded music on their soundtrack are sometimes able to reveal the objective contents of subjective musical experiences. In doing so, they allow us to re-experience approximations of our own reveries but from a third-person perspective.

The first of the two examples I'd like to discuss comes from *The Shawshank Redemption* (1994), a film charting the perseverance and ingenuity of Andy Dufresne in his bid to escape from a penitentiary after he has been wrongfully convicted of the murder of his wife and her lover. Dufresne is a stoic and taciturn banker played by Tim

Robbins. In the scene in question, he has just taken receipt of a collection of books and 'sundries' from the state library on behalf of the other inmates, after a protracted letter-writing campaign. Among the 'sundries' is a recording of Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Left alone for a moment by one of the prison's more trusting guards, Andy seizes the opportunity to do something extraordinary: he locks himself in the office of the prison's tyrannical warden and uses the warden's gramophone player and PA system to broadcast the duet *Sull'aria…che soave zeffiretto* ('On the breeze…what a gentle little zephyr') to every one of his fellow inmates. Scenes follow of slack-jawed prisoners in grey uniforms breaking off from what they are doing in order to contemplate the sound of two female voices singing in Italian. In the prison hospital, in the workshop, and outside in the yard, all are transfixed by what they hear, as Morgan Freeman's honeyed voiceover delivers a somewhat heavy-handed but nonetheless moving interpretation of events: 'It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away. And, for the briefest of moments, every last man at Shawshank felt free'. Obvious objections can be raised to this scene: its over-demonstrative sentimentality; the way the inmates are presented as noble savages suddenly graced by the magic of high culture; the way the freedom associated with the aesthetic realm is gendered as female in contrast to the realm of harsh social and political realities that the male prisoners normally inhabit. These criticisms notwithstanding, the scene retains unusual force and beauty in depicting what, in the midst of everyday life, a musically-inspired reverie can feel like.

The second example gives an impression of reverie via its deliberate breaking of realist cinematic conventions. Towards the end of *Magnolia* (1999), the film's cast of lonely and deeply-troubled characters are assembled via a montage sequence accompanied by the Aimee Mann ballad 'Wise up'. What makes the sequence so striking and affecting is that each of the characters sings along to the words of the song in spite of there being little indication that it is playing diegetically, i.e. from a sound source within the narrative world that each of them inhabits. The slow tempo of the song is matched by the slowness of the cuts via which their isolated worlds are traversed. Similarly, Mann's subdued vocal accords with the dimness of the mise en scène, her voice breaking at certain moments in correspondence with the emotional fragility of each of the characters. The sequence as a

whole produces a sense of resignation yet also redemption, reinforced by the lyrics of the chorus: 'It's not going to stop / Till you wise up / It's not going to stop / So just give up'. Through their unexpected sing-along, each of them painfully alone yet united in their pain, the film's main characters are lifted for a moment from the squalor and confinement of their personal circumstances. The sequence is a lot like a diegetic performance from a Hollywood musical but with each of the characters isolated from each other. The union of each of them is initially only with the pre-recorded voice of Aimee Mann but is extended via the temporal rhythm of the sequence to a union with all of the film's other characters: a chorus of atomised individuals whose individuality – and loneliness – is temporarily transcended. In this sense, the song achieves eloquence and catharsis on their behalf yet there remains the suggestion that it is really the audience's catharsis. It is we who perceive the similarity between their different modes of suffering (and between theirs and our own); by contrast, each individual character, so we must surmise, only perceives the idiosyncrasies of his own painful predicament, matched for a moment in mimetic, musical form by Mann's plaintive piano and vocals.

Attention, distraction, and the everyday reverie

The everyday reverie is, in simple terms, a movement from distraction to absorption. It occurs when we put 'background' music into the 'foreground' and, in the process, renew our sensuous connection to our lived environment. The significance of such moments lies in the fact that they make concentrated listening possible again. When a piece of recorded music catches us by surprise – because of its uncanny transformation of one's immediate environment, or because we haven't heard it in a long time and it brings back a flood of memories or else a vague, tantalising sense that it holds the key to unlock the past – it makes us stop in our tracks and pay attention.

   As a contemporary mode of musical reception, the everyday reverie is to be understood more precisely as arising from the dialectical interplay of attention and distraction. Drawing on the ideas of the Frankfurt School and Benjamin in particular, Jonathan Crary (1999) argues that experience in late modernity is characterised not solely by the dissipation and diminution of awareness but, in certain circumstances, by its intensification and augmentation.[151] This is partly because overstimulation necessitates

new forms of concentration that can isolate objects of perception from amongst the incessant flux of urban life and from its psychological correlate, the 'stream of thought' (James 1890/1950: 224). In other words, distraction and attention exist in a reciprocal relationship with each other, one which, furthermore, is historically produced. Crary (1999) assigns particular importance in this regard to the rise of the human sciences: 'modern distraction was *not* a disruption of stable or "natural" kinds of sustained, value-laden perception that had existed for centuries but was an *effect*, and in many cases a constituent element, of the many attempts to produce attentiveness in human subjects' (49; emphasis in original). Crary's concern here is with social and moral regimes, and the policing of the attention-distraction continuum. In the previous chapter, we saw this in the example of audiences in the nineteenth-century concert hall: how physical immobility and attentive silence gradually became the norm. Among the many examples cited by Crary is the contemporary practice of diagnosing certain schoolchildren as suffering from an 'attention deficit disorder' or ADD (35). Amid a culture of intensive stimulation via various forms of media consumption, Crary is suspicious of claims that such diagnoses identify a 'natural' or 'genetically-inherited' condition, suggesting instead that the concern of those who medicate 'hyperactive' children is with 'rule-governed conduct' (ibid.). In confirmation of his wider thesis of the reciprocity that obtains between modern forms of attention and distraction, Crary quotes an educational study in which the author notes that 'Many, if not most, hyperactive children are apparently able to sustain attention for a substantial period of time in high interest situations, such as watching television or playing video games' (37).

In the context of such normative regimes aimed at the management of attention and distraction, Crary identifies reverie as a 'domain of resistance' (77). 'The daydream', he writes, 'has always been a crucial but indeterminate part of the politics of everyday life' and is 'internal to any system of routinization or coercion' (ibid.). This returns us to chapter two and the idea introduced by Lefebvre and the other everyday-life theorists: the idea of the everyday as its own critique. This notion will be explored further in what follows, with particular attention being paid to the role of recorded music in day-to-day life.

For now, I would like to pursue Crary's comments regarding reverie's function in late modernity. Crary argues that in the twentieth century, television became the main way of organising the attention-distraction continuum. The importance of TV's role in everything from entertainment and relaxation to advertising and 'public relations' is axiomatic. One of the ramifications of this is that reverie, previously understood as an experience askance from, or in direct opposition to, regulatory forms of attention/distraction, now has to compete with the manufactured reveries of screen media. As Crary puts it, 'in the twentieth century, both film and television […] entered into a "functional competition" with daydream' (77). This means that 'what once might have been called reverie now most often takes place aligned with [the] preset rhythms, images, speeds, and circuits [of radio, television, video games, the Internet, etc.] that reinforce the irrelevance and dereliction of whatever is not compatible with their formats' (78). Crary raises 'the question of how and whether creative modes of trance, inattention, daydream, and fixation can flourish within the interstices of these circuits' (ibid.). The present study, and the present chapter in particular, is intended as one possible answer to this question.

In terms of the model just proposed, the everyday reverie is a means of wresting back moments of inactivity and contemplation from the kind of media-orchestrated rhythms of (in)attention outlined by Crary. Seeing that this occurs, however, via one's engagement with the medium of recorded music, it is a highly dialectical process. As a creative daydream triggered by exposure to music in day-to-day life, the everyday reverie is closely related to nostalgia, and, more broadly, to memory. As Huyssen (1995) argues, a concern with memory and the past becomes a way of slowing time down, a way of (re)discovering meaning in temporality and in the Bergsonian impression of duration (101). This meditative reflection on the experience of time stands in contrast to the collapse of past and present into one another, a collapse that is driven by media and communications technologies and the effects they produce of synchronicity, simultaneity, and 'hyperreality' (Baudrillard 1981/1994: 67).

As already mentioned, the everyday reverie is born not simply of attention or inattention but of the dialectic between the two. This sometimes consists of being fully present to one's environment but lost to oneself, as in the types of musical self-oblivion described in the previous chapter. At other times, it consists of becoming *distracted*, in

the sense of being lost in thought or reminiscence, but as a result of one's *attentiveness* to a familiar piece of music that one has chanced upon hearing. The everyday reverie is, then, in its most general lineaments, concentrated listening but in the midst of an environment of distraction. It might take the form of *involuntarily* becoming absorbed in a piece of music, perhaps because we recognise it and it holds for us intimate associations, or, it can be a practice: an active *choice* to attend to the music we hear in public spaces. In this latter case, such attentiveness relies on our not cramming every available moment of our lives with music but, instead, allowing periodic silences to intervene. Just as the first notes of a symphony signify in relation to the silence which precedes them, music in everyday life signifies more powerfully when punctuated by moments in which sound is, to a relative degree, absent. A rudimentary but nevertheless important observation is that the meaning of music for us will be diminished if we only ever hear it in the background. Attentiveness to music in everyday life therefore implies a certain economy or self-regulation of our listening habits. It is apposite in this regard to quote the founder of the 'acoustic ecology' movement, R. Murray Schafer (1973/2004): 'the soundscape will not again become ecological and harmonious until silence is recovered as a positive and felicitous state in itself' (38).

Schafer's Pythagorean conception of the cosmos as an immense musical composition or 'soundscape' can be related to the notion of bricolage-listening introduced in chapter two: the idea that recorded music is but one element in a collage of elements to be found in everyday life, the whole being greater than the sum of its parts. This kind of interpretative melding of apparently heterogeneous elements is implicit in the experience of listening to music in everyday life: a way of inviting and exploring the chance confluences between the music we hear and the environment in which hear it, exploring, too, the moods and memories that we as bricoleurs bring to such musical experiences. The everyday reverie is in this sense a Certeauvian 'tactic' for searching out new kinds of meanings in our sonic environment: an act of bricolage in the sense of 'making do', using what is close to hand – and even closer to our ears – as a critique of everyday life from within its midst.

In what follows, I would like to examine in more detail the different dimensions of the everyday reverie through a critical engagement with the work of a range of artists and

authors, all of whom in their various ways posit the relation between attention and distraction as being fundamental to a politics of everyday life.

Cagean listening

The Cagean reverie is that in which ambient noise – traffic, birdsong, the humming of a refrigerator – is listened to as (if it were) music. The result is a renewed effort of attention, an expanded awareness, and a glimpse of new possibilities. This kind of reverie has its origins in John Cage's *4′ 33″*, a piece which nominally consists of four minutes and thirty-three seconds of silence.[152] Instructions are given for a pianist to signal the start of the piece by closing the lid of the keyboard. He or she then opens it at the end of the first 'movement', before closing it again at the start of the next 'movement' and so on until all three of the piece's movements have been 'played', the duration of them adding up to the *4′ 33″* of the title.[153] At its premiere in 1952, the audience could hear birds singing outside the auditorium – in addition to the accumulated hubbub of shuffling and coughing from inside, and, shortly after, the clamour of a few outraged members of the audience getting up to leave. The duration of silence denoted by the piece's title is thus not really silence at all. Instead, the piece is an invitation to listen with rapt attention to the ambient sounds of everyday life that we normally fade out of our awareness. As part of a transition that is indicative of Cage's influence on sonic art and music in the twentieth century, 'noise' becomes sound, and 'sound' becomes music.

Cage's life-long project was to make audiences more sensitive to and enraptured by our phenomenological immersion in a world of sound. Listening to – or at least hearing – ambient noise goes on all the time, as David Toop (2004) notes in a way that is clearly indebted to Cage:

> We hear, not just through the ears, as a conscious activity, but through the whole body, in a mixture of fully conscious, peripherally conscious and unconscious awareness. Hearing more like feeling: a multiplicity of impressions at the edge of perception. We hear space all the time, not just its echoes and foreground signals but also its subliminal undertow (47).

The everyday reverie has to be understood in terms of the unfolding dialectic between recorded music and the everyday: the way the presence of recorded music in everyday life has become increasingly ordinary over the decades yet retains something of the

extraordinary too – an ability to surprise, stimulate, entertain, or provoke. The everyday reverie is a conscious dialectical negation of the tendency for music in everyday settings to be ignored. By reversing the polarity of the recorded music we come across in everyday life – putting 'background' music in the 'foreground' – we invite moments of uncanniness that have a potentially transformative effect, producing a confluence of music, memory, and affect within a quotidian physical space such as a shop or café. The affective intensity of such moments can be unsettling at first but this is precisely their power: these reveries shake us from our habitual numbness, re-sensitising us to our immediate environment and those we share it with. Everyday situations do not merely retreat into the background when recorded music is attended to; rather they stand out. Not merely aestheticised, their emotional, psychoanalytical and political dimensions are revealed, and 'listening' in an expanded sense is able to occur.

Bachelardian reveries

In *The Poetics of Reverie*, Gaston Bachelard (1960/1969) presents an eccentric manifesto for the power of daydreaming. He figures reverie as a form of 'listening', both to one's environment and to oneself, especially our fleeting fantasies and intuitions: 'The subconscious is ceaselessly murmuring, and it is by listening to these murmurs that one hears the truth' (59). Similarly, he claims that '[i]n order to know ourselves doubly as a real being and an idealizing being, we must *listen* to our reveries' (58; emphasis in original).[154] Bachelard describes daydreaming as a 'mnemonics of the imagination', claiming that '[i]n reverie we re-enter into contact with possibilities which destiny has not been able to make use of' (112). Reverie is thus a 'memory' or fantasy of that which never happened but which is nevertheless able to produce in us a powerful suggestion of the contingent basis of what is real and actual. We are therefore freed by our imagination from the necessity of 'things as they are' and are able to invite other possibilities. In a sense, what Bachelard is arguing for is a particularly fertile and productive type of nostalgia – the kind of nostalgia which envisions past events having taken an alternative course, or which remembers how life felt before a time of disappointment, before we knew what would become of us and those around us. In musical terms, Simon Frith (1996a) pithily describes this as '[r]ock 'n' roll before anyone knew what rock 'n' roll

would be' (7). In part, then, reverie consists in remembering how strange and contingent things seemed at the time, before hindsight smoothed experience into a linear progression.

Bachelard (1960/1969) makes the paradoxical claim that daydreams put us in more intimate contact with our surroundings: 'From all over, coming from all objects, an intimacy lays siege to us' (162). 'Poetic reveries' are thus a form of awakening in which we are united with the objects of our perception due to the fact that an instrumental or 'means-end' relationship with them is temporarily suspended. Instead, we are able to 'listen' to what they have to tell us. Reverie is, in this manner, a means of remembering our primordial unity with the world, prior to individuation, and is thus very similar to Proustian memory. According to Bachelard, this unity manifests most powerfully in experiences of sensual delight in which we close our eyes, for example, when we savour the taste of a chocolate truffle, or imbibe the fragrance of a rose, or lose ourselves in the music in our headphones. In such experiences, the organ of our most objectifying sense, the visual, falls into abeyance so that 'our fusion with the world' is complete (136).

Bachelard's notion of reverie is similar to that of enchantment, described by Jane Bennett (2001) as an 'affective attachment to the world' (3). As such, Bachelardian reverie can be seen as a counter to the many disenchantment narratives in the Western intellectual tradition. Bennett summarises these narratives thus: 'The disenchantment tale figures nonhuman nature as more or less inert "matter"; it construes the modern West as a radical break from other cultures; and it depicts the modern self as predisposed toward rationalism, skepticism, and the problem of meaninglessness' (7). We are all, according to the disenchantment narrative, a collection of discombobulated Prince Hamlets. As suggested by the title of her book, Bennett argues for 'the enchantment of modern life', not its '*re*-enchantment'. '[T]he question' she says 'is not whether disenchantment is a regrettable or a progressive historical development. It is, rather, whether the very characterization of the world as disenchanted ignores and then discourages affective attachment to the world' (3). She starts, then, from 'the assumption that the world has become neither inert nor devoid of surprise but continues to inspire deep and powerful attachments' (4). In accordance with this, she argues that the cultivation of moments of

reverie and enchantment constitutes an ethical imperative in eliciting care for, and affective engagement with, the world:

> if enchantment can foster an ethically laudable generosity of spirit, then the cultivation of an eye for the wonderful becomes something like an academic duty […]. Without modes of enchantment, we might not have the energy and inspiration to enact ecological projects, or to contest ugly and unjust modes of commercialization, or to respond generously to humans and nonhumans that challenge our settled identities (10, 174).

To take the example of what I call everyday reveries, attentiveness to recorded music as we encounter it in our day-to-day environment parallels attentiveness to those with whom we share that environment. Being present to music as and when we hear it becomes a way of being present to the embodied and affective reality of our engagement with others while evoking surprise and delight. It is a way of honouring the Kantian injunction to treat others as ends in themselves rather than as a means to an end.

Profane illumination, dialectical images, and historical consciousness

This brings us to another figure who has been influential in the formulation of the everyday reverie. In his essay on Surrealism, Walter Benjamin (1929/1999a) introduces the notion of 'profane illumination': the process by which ordinary objects in everyday life are suddenly revealed as uncanny, irrational or phantasmagoric.[155] An experience of disorientation and estrangement is central to this process. By making the commonplace bizarre, profane illumination paves the way for the abandonment of current realities and heightens experience to a revolutionary pitch. Among the apparently mundane objects that can spark such Surrealist revelations, Benjamin lists 'the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, objects that have begun to be extinct, grand pianos, the dresses of five years ago, fashionable restaurants when the vogue has begun to ebb from them' (210). Benjamin's concern, in other words, is with the detritus of modernity – those discarded artefacts and commodities that usually get 'forgotten' during industrial capitalism's restless re-shaping of the urban landscape. Among such commodities, one can include, today, the many playback technologies that have been rendered wholly or partially obsolete during the history of recorded music: rolls of indented paper for player-pianos; phonograph cylinders; brass-horned gramophone

players with their stacks of 78s; mix tapes lovingly compiled for friends. One can also count the many hundreds of thousands of musical recordings from the twentieth century, listened to with excitement and enthusiasm in their time but now mostly forgotten. As an example of such musical ephemera, Benjamin mentions 'the street song last on everyone's lips', claiming that the genius of the Surrealists was to 'bring the immense forces of "atmosphere" concealed in these things to the point of explosion', a method that would become central in his work on the Paris arcades (ibid.). For Benjamin, this was more a dialectical and materialist procedure than a mystical one. In philosophically contemplating the sense of novelty and promise for the future that such outmoded objects once held for those who first used them, we are forced to confront the truth that social reality, especially the fact of class-based society, has not significantly altered in the intervening decades. Instead of the genuinely new, what we have gained instead is 'the new-and-always-the-same' (Benjamin quoted in Buck-Morss 1991: 209; adapted). Thus, in this way, the history of capitalist societies – embodied, for Benjamin, in the pile of outmoded commodities left behind in their wake – is to be understood as the 'prehistory' of a future society in which the injustices of economic production founded upon one class's coercion of another will have been transcended (Buck-Morss 1991: 64-5).

These ideas found their most complete formulation in Benjamin's sprawling and unfinished study of the shopping arcades of nineteenth-century Paris. At the theoretical core of the fragments that comprise the *Passagenwerk* (1927-1940), one finds Benjamin's notion of the 'dialectical image': a vivid historical impression sparked by one's philosophical engagement with an outmoded commodity or artefact. The dialectical image is a piece of subtle materialist conjuring on Benjamin's part in that he makes the commodity fetish yield historical truths. The industrially-produced artefact, which obscures the labour process that brought it into being and is thus normally considered by Marxists to be false and mystifying is, in a flash, made to reveal the precise historical and political 'atmosphere' that obtained at the point of its entry into the commodity-laden spaces of the capitalist metropolis. Such commodities, though long-since discarded or forgotten, 'ripen' or 'mature' for the historical materialist so that their meaning – 'the relation of what-has-been to the now' – suddenly reveals itself (Benjamin 1999a: 463 [N3,1]). What we experience in this revelatory moment is a sense of the past as lived

experience: the hopes and dreams, sorrows and joys that characterised life in a particular era and with which we, in the present, are able to empathise. This dialectical image – the 'flashing up' of the past into the present – provokes, for Benjamin, a strong impulse to change the course of history on behalf of previous generations, to realise what was left unrealised in their lifetimes.

The everyday reverie is intended as an aural version of the dialectical image – a moment in which past and present fuse as one listens to a piece of recorded music. Musical recordings are able to produce a vivid sense of the past, not just as an idea or image but as a lived reality. This is due to their richness of sound – all the timbral, rhythmic and melodic inflections that are unique to a particular recording. These features can only be appreciated in the here and now while one is actually listening to a piece of music – even a short while after the recording has stopped playing, the listener will usually struggle to accurately recall any of these musical nuances in his or her 'mind's ear'. Old records evoke for the duration in which we hear them a sense of 'a different now' and this, as we shall see, is crucial to their utopian appeal. The poignancy of particular recordings matures over time, i.e. they only become 'legible' in their historicity at a certain moment – what Benjamin refers to as 'the now of [their] recognizability' (ibid.). This is related to the fact that the pertinent features of historically-discrete musical genres, styles of performance, techniques of record production, etc. become more evident in retrospect. Even if we are unable to fully articulate what these features are, we can easily recognise in old recordings what is specific to their era in a way that is not the case with contemporary recordings. In Benjamin's words, we 'discover in the analysis of the small individual moment the crystal of the total event' (Benjamin 1999a: 461 [N2,6]).

Roland Barthes's notion of 'grain' helps to explain how listening to dated musical recordings is able to fuse past and present – how such records are able to produce a sense of 'a different now' via our physical sympathy as listeners with the aural traces of the performers' movements and gestures. For Barthes (1977), there is a vast area of musical meaning beyond what is explicit and articulate in the patterns of sound we hear. This level of signification – exemplified by what he calls 'the grain of the voice' – is more paralinguistic than linguistic in the sense that it consists of signs whose signifiers are not purely arbitrary but signify instead at a powerfully gestural and affective level that is

often subconscious. Understood in this way, 'grain' is very similar to Peirce's notion of 'firstness', a concept not readily available to Barthes as he was working within, and exploring the limits of, a Saussurean paradigm. Barthes defines grain as 'the body in the voice as it sings, the hand as it writes, the limb as it performs' (188). In music, it is that 'something else' which music rubs up against: 'the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue' or 'the image of the [musician's] body' heard by the body of the listener (182, 185, 189). Grain thus defines a relationship between musician and listener that, for Barthes, is 'erotic' (188). To apply this idea to the notion of records as historical archives, it can be seen – and heard – that, in phonography, every tiny nuance of sound can become an index of history and, as such, a marker of style in the sense of an historically precise set of ideas, attitudes and feelings, enfolding the material basis for their expression. To invoke an analogous concept, recorded sound embodies in aural form a finely detailed 'structure of feeling' (Williams 1977). In often unforeseen ways, musical recordings come to characterise the lived experience of the quality of life at a particular time and place, and they do this via the sensuous and bodily nature of our connection to them.

The everyday reverie and utopia

The everyday reverie is an attempt to hear in musical recordings the unrealised utopian impulses that inhere in them: the appeal to collective solidarity, for instance, or freedom of expression, transparency and equality in social relations, etc. This idea that musical recordings give expression to utopian impulses – albeit in reified form – can be elaborated with reference to the work of Ernst Bloch, in particular his ideas on the immanent utopianism of the cultural sphere. Immanent utopianism is the belief or intuition that utopia is not to be found elsewhere or else-when but is already present in the midst of everyday life, albeit in the form of utopian moments rather than utopia per se (Anderson 2002: 211). The central contention of Bloch's work on utopia – most notably, the three volumes that comprise *The Principle of Hope* (1938-1947) – is that the utopian is to be found throughout the field of culture but is only ever partially present. This contention is encapsulated in his notion of 'the Not-Yet-Conscious': anticipatory or pre-conscious elements that Bloch (1959/1986) sees as central to human thought.[156] In regard to the artwork, Bloch defines the Not-Yet-Conscious thus: 'Every great work of art,

above and beyond its manifest content, is carried out according to a *latency of the page to come*, or in other words, in the light of the content of a future which has not yet come into being, and indeed of some ultimate resolution as yet unknown' (quoted in Jameson 1971: 149; emphasis in original; Bloch 1959/1986: 127). Historically, these anticipatory elements are often carried over from unfinished political projects in the form of a utopian surplus. Thus the ascendancy of the European bourgeoisie was initially framed in terms of an attack on the feudal order for its denial of rights, liberties, class mobility, and democracy, yet once the middle-classes had established their hegemony they attempted to deny these things to the rest of the population. As Douglas Kellner (1997) observes, 'Bloch takes seriously Marx's position that the task of socialism is to fully realize certain bourgeois ideals' (84). In addition to the customary sites for Marxist ideology critique, Bloch finds evidence of the Not-Yet-Conscious in a range of other cultural phenomena including fashion, advertising, fairy tales, travel, jokes, film and theatre. A new set of clothes, for example, maintains, on the one hand, a set of distinctions in taste and thus the class structure of society but, at the same time, it gives the wearer a sense of freedom and possibility, a sense of social mobility, which might be denied to him or her under the current class structure but is nevertheless felt intuitively as part of an innately human striving for 'something better' (436). For Bloch, then, ideology is 'Janus-faced' or two-sided. To quote Kellner (1997), 'it contains errors, mystifications, and techniques of manipulation and domination, but it also contains a utopian residue or surplus that can be used for social critique and to advance progressive politics' (82). In Jürgen Habermas' words, 'Bloch wants […] to salvage whatever may be true in false consciousness' (Habermas 1983: 63).

In keeping with his idea of the Not-Yet-Conscious as the ground of utopian thought, Bloch (1959/1986) claims that music provides an anticipatory signal of profound changes in the social formation: 'Music in its unsurpassable nearness to existence is the most closely related and most public voice of this incognito'. It is 'seismographic, it reflects cracks under the social surface, expresses wishes for change, bids us to hope' (1088; original emphasis removed). This idea has an unacknowledged influence on Jacques Attali (1977/1985) in his book *Noise* in which he claims that 'every major social rupture has been preceded by an essential mutation in the codes of music, in its mode of audition,

and in its economy' (10). Richard Dyer (1977/1999) also draws on Bloch's work in his essay 'Entertainment and utopia' in which he argues that the role of music in the Hollywood musical is to produce the *feeling* of utopia without presenting an explicit vision of it. Bloch's work stands in a long tradition of utopian writing on music, most of which usually emphasises music's non-representational qualities or its 'relaxed semiotic' as Caryl Flinn (1992) calls it (8). In *Strains of Utopia*, her study of the classical Hollywood score, Flinn broadly endorses the Blochian thesis of music carrying utopian traces. She cautions, however, that these traces need to be actively interpreted by a human subject – they are not simply given by or immanent within the text in question. Furthermore, what is considered utopian and what is not depends, to a large extent, on one's subject position. She notes that in certain examples of melodrama and film noir, for instance, the musical score endorses what is, on closer inspection, a decidedly male perspective of utopia. She adds, too, that utopian signs are not necessarily progressive but can be used for any number of political agendas as evinced most vividly by the example of the Third Reich. In her role as a film critic, Flinn notes that Hollywood scores have often been employed in order to connote a sense of 'lost plenitude', as in flashback scenes (52). Ascribing music a nostalgic function, as many film composers have done, or, as Bloch does, an anticipatory one are, according to Flinn, both ways of idealising it and thus sidestepping the problems of interpretation. She is particularly suspicious of the mainly poststructuralist claims that music represents a symbolic challenge to the status quo; again, the question she would want to ask is 'For whom?'

With a similar Blochian problematic in mind, Fredric Jameson (1981) argues that all ideological expressions, all cultural texts – whether issuing from dominant or oppressed classes – contain a utopian impulse due to their implicit attempts to forge a certain class unity: 'even hegemonic or ruling-class culture and ideology are Utopian, not in spite of their instrumental function to secure and perpetuate class privilege and power, but rather precisely because that function is also in and of itself the affirmation of collective solidarity' (291). This utopian impulse is, then, the appeal to a collectivity, whether it be made up of the ruling class or those they rule. Jameson's point is that those on the Left need to harness the power of this 'positive' critique in order to have broad appeal. This entails understanding what the utopian element is within all artistic texts, even those that

might be overtly repugnant: 'a Left which cannot grasp the immense Utopian appeal of nationalism (any more than it can grasp that of religion or of fascism) can scarcely hope to "reappropriate" such collective energies and must effectively doom itself to political impotence' (298). For Jameson, then, cultural critique should combine 'positive' and 'negative hermeneutics': 'a Marxist negative hermeneutic, a Marxist practice of ideological analysis proper, must in the practical work of reading and interpretation be exercised *simultaneously* with a Marxist positive hermeneutic, or a decipherment of the Utopian impulses of these same ideological cultural texts' (296; emphasis in original). So far in this chapter, I have pursued a broadly 'positive hermeneutic' in delineating the concept of the everyday reverie, positing it as an attempt to discover the utopian element in the reified cultural products of the music industry. Yet, following Bloch and Jameson, it should be noted that questions of music's utopian qualities are inseparable from questions pertaining to its ideological content – the one implies the other. Bloch's notion of all culture being false and mystifying *and* simultaneously utopian and progressive can be understood in terms of the workings of memory. The apperception of a cultural text's utopian qualities is an act of 'strong' remembrance in that it recalls collective struggles to establish social relations on a more equitable basis and, at the same time, an act of forgetting in that it implies a momentary forgetfulness of one's immediate, everyday surroundings and a surrender to the semiotic play of the aspect of utopia that is being presented. As we saw in the previous chapter, recorded music's ability to make us feel 'something better' is closely bound up with its ability to make us forget (Anderson 2002: 212).

A final question remains: how are musical recordings capable of carrying utopian traces? The answer comes down to the fact that what we hear in the best recordings is the sound of groups of individuals *at play* in an especially intense form of *communication* with one another. In spite of the presence of economic determinants within the processes of production and consumption, and ideological factors shaping the kinds of texts that are produced and consumed, musical recordings are able to articulate remarkably often a sense of freedom and joy – or else their inverse, a sense of pathos – which we are invited to share in with the performers. Though only partially realised in the society at the time or amongst the group of musicians playing on the recording, these sounds of liberty are

carried over into our own generation and future generations as a utopian surplus: an intuition of how the pleasures and creative freedoms of unalienated labour might be developed on a more enduring and extensive scale. This, if it were to become lived reality, would be the greatest reverie of the everyday.

Notes

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Chapter One: Music & Memory in the Age of Recording

[1] Such a storybook account also neglects to mention that Edison and his staff had successfully constructed an earlier prototype – patented in Britain as a 'telephonic repeater' – some months before the one built by his engineer, Kruesi. The earlier model used paraffin paper instead of tinfoil, and Edison shouted into the instrument's crude mouthpiece, not 'Mary had a little lamb', but the rather less memorable utterance, 'Hello' (Koenigsberg 1969: xi-xii; Millard 1995: 24-25).

[2] In 1958, the chief pioneer of British electronic music, Daphne Oram, pinned this passage from Bacon's 'New Atlantis' to a wall in the newly-established BBC Radiophonic Workshop (Oram 2009).

[3] This point was evoked by a poetic rumour surrounding the music-room in the Ali Qapu palace in Esfahan, Iran (Hay 2006: 77). The upper-storey room, built in the eighteenth century as part of the lavish headquarters of the Safavid monarchs, is astonishingly ornate, the walls and ceiling being covered in deep but narrow niches in the shape of vases, bowls, and musical instruments. Legend has it that, in the past, when women were forbidden from entering while the male musicians were playing, they were able to hear the music after the men had left the room as the shapes created an echo effect. However, this romantic notion of music becoming lodged in instrument-shaped niches is challenged by other accounts that stress that the intricate hollows in the walls and ceiling actually prevent sounds from echoing excessively, rather like the peculiar swollen shapes that populate the ceilings of many modern concert halls (Ayatollahi 2003: 262). So, rather than being an early attempt at preserving sound, it seems that the room, with its harmonious proportions and heavily-ornamented stuccowork, should be viewed as an early and particularly sophisticated example of acoustic design, aimed at the isolation of brilliant timbres and pitches, un-muddied by the cavernous reverberations that characterised earlier acoustic spaces.

[4] Sterne's 'Ensoniment', the aural counterpart to the Enlightenment, occurred '[b]etween about 1750 and 1925' (Sterne 2003: 2). This period covers the development of the science of acoustics, plus the transformation of the phonograph into the gramophone, i.e. the step from a cylinder system capable of both recording and playback to a device playing shellac discs and aimed more squarely at the commodification of musical recordings within an already competitive marketplace.

[5] It should be noted that, even among cognitive psychologists, this three-fold taxonomy of 'echoic', 'short-term' and 'long-term' memory is a source of contention, particularly with regard to their interaction. In very simple terms, they are to be understood more as a loop than as a strictly linear series, so that 'long-term' memories or 'memory-schema' play a crucial role in determining which features of the auditory environment – which 'echoic' memories – are considered significant enough to be 'extracted' as 'short-term' memories, i.e. as sonic 'events' that we are aware of (Snyder 2000).

[6] Freddie Mercury's performance with Queen at the Live Aid concert in 1985 offers the superlative example of this; listen also to the live recording of 'It's gonna be a beautiful night' on Prince's album, *Sign o' the Times*.

[7] The idea of two orchestras, two choirs of instruments, was a characteristically Venetian one, imitating a style of composing for the choirs in the Basilica of St. Mark's (Macleod 2009). A special kind of antiphonal writing had been developed which exploited the many spaces of the Basilica to great aural effect, rather like a sonic mapping of the building's interior.

[8] Cf. Harrison Birtwhistle's work in which the visual spectacle of music-making is heightened by soloists changing their position in the auditorium mid-performance.

[9] The orchestra pit at Bayreuth occupies a recess under the stage and is covered by a hood.

[10] My use of *mimesis* emphasises a more Aristotelian than Platonic reading of the term.

[11] It should be pointed out that the distinction between mimesis and representation is an analytical one rather than an empirical one, i.e. a single activity such as writing could be placed in either of these categories depending on whether one wants to emphasise verisimilitude on the one hand or the active transformation of what is being 'copied' on the other.

[12] Sterne (2003) draws attention to the fact that the characteristic feature of modern technologies of sound is that they rely on devices called transducers, 'which turn sound into something else and that something else back into sound'. Hence, '[t]he diaphragm and stylus of a cylinder phonograph change sound through a process of transcription in tinfoil, wax, or any number of other surfaces. On playback, the stylus and diaphragm transduce the inscriptions back into sounds' (22).

[13] This function of recording the last words of the dying was listed among Edison's proposed uses for the phonograph, published as part of an article for the *North American Review* (Chanan 1995: 2-3). It should be noted that speech was traditionally viewed as being created by the breath of life, hence the *Scientific American*'s figuration of its preservation as a form of immortality.

[14] In fact, the era of home recording using wax cylinders was even shorter. The North American Phonograph Company didn't start producing them on a wider scale for the home market until 1892 (Koenigsberg 1969: xviii). Wax cylinders had first been developed by Edison's competitors at Alexander Graham Bell's Volta laboratory. Bell's cousin, Chichester Bell, and Charles Tainter called their machine the 'graphophone' (Millard 1995: 30-1). As subsequent modifications to the 'phonograph' demonstrated, Edison acknowledged the improvements in sound quality that the wax cylinders afforded but, when approached by the Volta associates in 1886, he refused to go into business with them, no doubt piqued by the fact that, during the years he'd spent working on the lightbulb, others had overtaken him in the field of sound-recording.

[15] In the United States, the term 'phonograph' continued to be used in order to refer to what, to be precise, was its successor, the 'gramophone', while in Europe the latter term became the norm.

[16] The term 'album' was first applied to a four-disc package of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite* in 1909 (Elborough 2008: 18).

[17] The alleged 'faithfulness' to an original performance implied by the term 'high fidelity' has always been somewhat problematic considering the numerous intervening technical decisions that have to be made. This was even more the case once multi-track recording allowed a 'copy' to be made of performances that had never actually occurred, at least not in the way the recording preserved it.

[18] In its popular form, the song goes by the name, '*Am brunnen vor dem tore*' ('At the well in front of the gate').

[19] In this regard, the trajectory of gramophone-usage echoes, in greatly compressed timescale, the changes that occurred to reading practices. In a celebrated incident from the fourth century, Augustine recalls with amazement how the Catholic Bishop of Milan, Ambrose, would pore over books in silence, even when others were present: 'When he was reading, his eyes ran over the page and his heart perceived the sense, but his voice and tongue were silent' (Augustine 1998: 92-3). The high regard in which Augustine held Ambrose is matched by the inscrutability as to what the bishop was up to: 'Whatever motive he had for his habit, this man had a good reason for what he did' (ibid.). The practice of reading silently to oneself continued to be something of an anomaly. In Medieval Europe, '[r]eading was a kind of performance. Even the solitary reader most often read aloud […], and most reading was not solitary' (Burrow 1982: 47). During the fourteenth century, however, the practice of solitary, silent reading was becoming increasingly common. The historian of private life, Roger Chartier (1989) goes so far as to claim that it was more important than the printing press in expanding intellectual horizons and making possible 'previously unthinkable audacities' (125-6). Of course, the spread of solitary reading had an uneven development. In the salons of France, for example, reading around the fireplace was considered distinctly old-fashioned by the latter decades of the nineteenth century and was being abandoned in favour of activities such as painting, singing and playing music. For the French peasantry, by contrast, reading aloud remained a traditional source of evening entertainment right up until the First World War (Corbin 1990: 535-6).

[20] Those members of the European nobility who imagined they were listening to music on their own when in fact their minstrels were playing for them often paid the price in terms of leaked secrets: musicians in the

Middle Ages and the Renaissance – including, it seems, John Dowland, who had worked in Christian IV's court in Denmark – had a significant sideline in espionage (Kirkby 2009).

[21] Twain was familiar with the rowdy, convivial atmosphere of the New York Metropolitan, which itself recalled behaviour in the Paris opera houses of the early eighteenth century, so that the '[a]bsolute attention and petrified retention' of the Wagner devotees came as a shock.

[22] Although the pianola seems impossibly antiquated to us today, perhaps because it was so quickly superseded by improvements in gramophone recordings, it nevertheless presaged, in a certain sense, the current fad for computer games such as *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* – including the Beatles edition – that give gamers a feel of what it might be like to be extremely adept at playing a musical instrument without the encumbrance of actually having to learn.

[23] At the time of writing, Nigel Kennedy's 1989 rendition of *The Four Seasons* remains the best-selling classical recording of all time.

[24] In a seven-year project undertaken for Decca in the 1950s and 60s, the record producer John Culshaw, working with Georg Solti, managed to accommodate Wagner's 14-hour *Ring* cycle on 19 LPs as opposed to the estimated 112 shellac 78s that would have been required (Elborough 2008: 18). A friend of mine recalls how, shortly after the cycle's release, he and another Wagner obsessive conspired in the almost equally epic project of listening to all 19 discs in a single day.

[25] See, for example, Hosokawa (1984) and Bull (2000).

[26] Elborough (2008) suggests that the age of digital downloads marks a return to some of the listening habits of the pre-vinyl era, 'when people collected individual tunes and did much of their listening via the radio, spinning from station to station until they found something to their taste' (18).

[27] I'm drawing here upon Nattiez's integrative approach to understanding music, whereby three fundamental categories combine to produce what he calls the 'total musical fact' (Nattiez 1990: ix). These categories are as follows: (i) the 'neutral' or 'immanent' level, i.e. the musical text; (ii) the 'poietic' level, i.e. the level of musical production; and (iii) the 'esthesic' level, i.e. musical reception.

[28] Bach's choral works may originally have been performed without a choir, the soloists themselves providing the choral sections one voice per part (Staines and Clark et al 2005: 22).

[29] Chanan (1999) alludes to the difficulty of discerning a *metalingual* function in music; if music doesn't even possess the denotative or *referential* function that natural languages clearly do, it would seem impossible for it to possess a metalanguage that could be used to comment on such a system of reference. He goes on, however, to cite Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, which comprises a set of preludes and fugues in every major and minor key, as an example of what, due to its exploration of the logic of tonality, could be termed 'metamusic'. Chanan quotes Adorno, who, in a slightly different context, asserts that 'This second language of music is synthetic and primitive' (162).

[30] Cf. Adorno and Eisler (1947/1994): 'At least two of the most important elements of occidental music, the harmonic-contrapuntal one and that of its rhythmic articulation, point directly to a group modelled upon the ancient church community as its only possible inherent 'subject' (74).

[31] Mendelssohn's 1829 revival of the *St. Matthew Passion* marks a watershed in terms of the classical repertory's shift towards old works rather than an ever-changing roster of new ones (Small 1998: 190).

[32] Today, when some of the *St. Matthew Passion*'s original Lutheran tone is injected into it by it often being staged in a cathedral over the Easter weekend, audiences can still choose how they listen, i.e. they can choose, to some extent, not to hear it as a religious piece but instead as something transcendentally beautiful yet secular (Small 1998: 7).

[33] It should be noted that there is a contrast between classical and popular music with regard to musical expressivity in the age of recording. Classical recordings, in certain respects, have become less obviously emotive, firstly, as a reaction against the romantic style, with its use of rubato and much greater rhythmic exaggeration via which performers – including composers themselves – often departed from the score; and, secondly, as a way of producing a less idiosyncratic recording in the hope that a more literal interpretation would bear repeated listening more successfully (Day 2000: 142-159).

[34] Swann's experience of being the sole addressee of a piece of music is echoed by a young woman who appears in a BBC documentary, *Memories are Made of This*. The woman in question associates the Bon Jovi rock ballad 'Broken home' with the time her parents split up and she was sent into lodgings, saying 'it's like it was written solely for me' (Savage 1994).

[35] The persistence of diatonicism – indeed its spread to other musical cultures, in spite of the efforts of serialist composers – would suggest that the *metalingual* and *poetic* functions have been less important in the history of recorded music thus far.

[36] Lévi-Strauss (1969) notes the difficulty of distinguishing between the *phatic* and *conative* functions, especially in the case of music (29). The act of checking that contact is being made often takes the form of an exhortation to respond, as when a speaker in a crowded room asks 'Can you hear me at the back?'

[37] The results of a 1993 study by music psychologist, Jane Davidson, suggest that visual cues are actually more important than aural ones in allowing audiences to gauge performers' expressive intentions (cited in Katz 2004: 95-6).

[38] In arguing that the technique of vibrato helped 'compensate for the loss of the visual element in recording', Katz (2004) quotes Robert Schumann's remark about Franz Liszt in performance: 'Within a few seconds tenderness, boldness, exquisiteness, wildness succeed one another; the instrument glows and flashes under the master's hands. He must be heard and seen; for if Liszt played behind a screen a great deal of poetry would be lost' (95).

[39] Alex Ross (2007) argues that, in recent decades, the emotive or expressive function has been suppressed in classical recordings as musicians seek a more neutral, less idiosyncratic performance that will stand up to repeated listening.

[40] The backbeat, in which the drummer uses the snare drum to accent the normally weak second and fourth beats of each bar, has been a staple of rock 'n' roll and rock music ever since Little Richard's drummer came up with it in response to the rhythmic emphasis already inherent in Richard's own piano-playing.

[41] 'Crazy frog' (2005) would be a recent example.

[42] Cf. Schafer (1977): 'Hearing is a way of touching at a distance and the intimacy of the first sense is fused with sociability whenever people gather together to hear something special' (11).

[43] Examples of 'loud' albums include Red Hot Chilli Peppers, *Californication* (1999); Arctic Monkeys, *Whatever People Say I Am, That's What I'm Not* (2006); Lily Allen, *Alright Still* (2006); and Metallica, *Death Magnetic* (2008).

[44] This lends weight to the claim of Adorno (1938/1982) and Attali (1977/1985) that recorded music functions as a monologue of power, reducing entire populations to silence.

[45] It seems strange that, writing in 1939, Halbwachs doesn't consider the impact of recording on the collective memory of musicians.

[46] At best, we can find a metaphor to describe what the music sounded like, though a metaphor invoked by one listener might diverge markedly from that of another (Sloboda 1985: 59).

[47] When the same pitch is played on two different instruments we can discern the difference between them, their different timbres, because of the presence of 'harmonics' or 'overtones', as well as 'inharmonics' or 'partials'. These are pitches that we are not normally conscious of and which are higher than the main pitch – the one we actually hear. Harmonics or overtones form part of a universally-occurring pattern of acoustic energy known as the harmonic series or overtone series. The sounds produced by different musical instruments also have distinctive dynamic waveforms, i.e. different patterns of 'attack' and 'decay'.

[48] For example, Levitin (2006) found that when he asked non-musicians to sing their favourite song, they tended to reproduce it at, or very near, the absolute pitches of the original recording (152-4).

[49] Cf. Adorno (1938/1982): 'the hit song remains salutarily forgotten in the half-dusk of its familiarity, suddenly to become painfully over-clear through recollection' (288).

Chapter Two: Recorded Music in Everyday Life

[50] 'The sun has got his hat on' comes from the musical *Me and My Girl* (1937).

[51] *Pet Sounds* is, of course, the title of the Beach Boys' 1966 album, and refers to the concrete sonic objects of North American life so beloved by the album's principal creator, Brian Wilson.

[52] The chord progression of *The Flumps*' theme tune – I | IV | I | IV | V | I – closely resembles a 'passamezzo moderno' or 'Gregory Walker' pattern: one of the most commonly found harmonic structures in Western popular music since the time of the Renaissance.

[53] Cf. Benjamin (1929/1999a): 'we penetrate […] mystery only to the degree that we recognize it in the everyday world, by virtue of a dialectical optic that perceives the everyday as impenetrable, the impenetrable as everyday' (216).

[54] Eliot (1921/2006) introduces the term 'dissociation of sensibility' in his essay on the metaphysical poets, praising Donne and Marvell for their harmony of head and heart in contrast to later poets such as Collins, Gray and Johnson, in whose work 'the language became more refined, [but] the feeling became more crude' (198).

[55] Hesmondhalgh (2002) notes, too, that in studies of popular music that have 'everyday life' as their ostensible focus, the everyday often remains an untheorised category, e.g. Crafts et al (1993) and DeNora (2000).

[56] The Queen song that uses the melody from Canio's aria in its intro is 'It's a hard life'.

[57] The rendition was in effect a double tribute to Sondheim as he had also written the lyrics for 'America' but he appears to have been singularly unimpressed by the unauthorised use of 'Send in the clowns' – U2 allegedly had to pay him $50,000 and they agreed to edit the snippet out of some of the later pressings of the album.

[58] The version of 'Paid in full' featuring the Ofra Haza sample was a re-mix by Coldcut. The original version of 'Im nin'alu' was taken from Ofra Haza's 1984 album, *Yemenite Songs*.

[59] *Triste et isolé* also recalls how the young Marcel felt at bedtime at the beginning of *À la recherche* when he would have to leave the adults and ascend the steps to his bedroom at Combray, his 'sadness' and 'isolation' relieved only when his mother would enter to kiss him goodnight (Goodkin 1991).

[60] 'Just one Cornetto' was sung by Renato Pagliari, one half of the male/female vocal duo, Renée and Renato, who had a number one single in the UK with 'Save your love' in 1982 before disappearing into obscurity.

[61] The irony of these ads is that Cornetto ice creams are not in any sense Italian. They are produced by Unilever as part of their Heartbrand ice-cream business. In the UK, they trade under the brand name Wall's.

[62] Viewers of British television in the 1970s will remember an advert with a similar cadence on the product's name: 'For mash, get Smash'.

[63] Studies of amnesic patients suggest that implicit and explicit memory operate via distinct processes in the brain (Snyder 2000: 73).

[64] For a description from another industry insider of computer games as 'the new radio', see Ito (2005), p. 36.

Interlude I: Music, Semiotics, Affect

[65] It should be mentioned that Clough's work doesn't simply disregard philosophies of language, as evidenced by her attention in *Autoaffection* (2000) to the work of Jacques Derrida. Other recent work on affect includes the following: Ahmed (2004), Brennan (2004), Grosz (1994), Kosofsky Sedgwick (2003), and Massumi (2002).

[66] Similarly, David Howes (2005) proposes to unseat the 'empire of signs' by fostering an 'empire of the senses' (1).

[67] In spite of there being broadly identifiable paradigms within cultural studies' admittedly brief history, Hall (1997) is quick to point out that there is never 'one regulative notion of culture' (25).

[68] See Gilbert (2007) for more on the idea that cultural studies is still in the grip of a linguistically-orientated model of culture.

[69] A particularly sophisticated formulation of this position appears in the work of Peter Osborne. Osborne argues that Kant's notion of aesthetic judgement already implies the intertwining of signification and affect, but has been overlooked by cultural theory. For Kant, aesthetic judgement is 'reflective', in the sense that it involves reflecting, not just on an artwork, but on one's own responses and impressions (Osborne 2000: 30).

[70] Gilbert's formulation here is informed by the meshing in Foucault's later work of discursive and disciplinary practices.

[71] See also Gilbert (2010).

[72] See, for example, Lévi-Strauss (1969) on the dialectic in music between nature and culture, physiology and signification (16-17).

[73] I follow the usual method of referencing Peirce's *Collected Papers*, whereby the first number refers to the chapter and the second number to the paragraph.

[74] One of the pioneers of psychology, William James, was a friend of C.S. Peirce and a champion of his work.

[75] Cf. the similar formulation of the Soviet linguist, V.N. Voloshinov: '*consciousness itself can arise and become viable only in the material embodiment of signs*' (Voloshinov 1929/1986: 13; emphasis in original).

[76] The study of symptoms as signs of illness was the original meaning in English of 'semeiotics [sic]' as defined by Henry Stubbes in a treatise published in 1670.

[77] The 'interpretant' is not to be understood as the 'interpreter' though this confusion does occasionally arise in Peirce's work (Eco 1976: 68).

[78] Osborne identifies a link between Derrida and Peirce in this regard. Both suggest that a sign can only be understood via recourse to other signs in a process of (potentially) infinite deferral – what Derrida calls the 'deconstruction of the transcendental signified'. For Peirce, however, the meaning of a sign will at some point issue in an action – which is itself a sign with its own effects – necessarily curtailing the process of *intellectual* semiosis, though not the processes of *affective* and *energetic* semiosis. In other words, our actions in the world have the effect of defining the logical meanings of the signs we use, so that meaning is not, as Derrideans insist, endlessly deferred (Osborne 2000: 42-3).

[79] There are certain similarities between the Peircean 'sign' and the Bergsonian 'image', the latter being neither a 'thing' nor a 'representation' but poised between the two (Bergson 1908/1988: 9). It should also be mentioned that Deleuze attempts to use Peirce's work, declaring that Peirce is 'the true inventor' of semiotics. In Osborne's view, however, Deleuze 'misreads Peirce through the Saussurean model he himself rejects'. In particular, 'Deleuze neglects the theory of interpretants', thus collapsing the triadic relations of the Peircean sign into the dyadic relation of signifier-signified. Such a reading of Peirce sacrifices 'the semiotic specificity of the subject of habitual action', i.e. a person for whom signs have meanings and uses (Osborne 2000: 47-9).

[80] Massumi's notion of the 'virtual body' is based on a famous set of experiments in which participants were asked to register the precise moment when they made the decision to move one of their fingers. The finger movement came 0.2 seconds after the decision to move, but electrical impulses in the brain corresponding to the decision to move were found to have occurred another 0.3 seconds before that. The implication is that there is 'a half-second lapse between the beginning of a bodily event and its completion in an outwardly directed active, expression', i.e. a lapse between the onset of electrical activity in the central nervous system and our actual experience of it (Massumi 1996: 222-3). Electrical impulses lasting less than half a second appear to have no actual or perceivable results: they occur with some regularity but have no outward manifestations, being 'potential' or 'virtual' activity.

[81] Cf. 'An *Index* is a sign which refers to the Object that it denotes by virtue of being really affected by that Object' (Peirce 1955: 102).

[82] See, for example, Gilbert (2007), Osborne (2000), Shepherd and Wicke (1997), and Turino (1999).

[83] Cf.: 'Language, according to Benveniste, is the only semiotic system capable of *interpreting* another semiotic system […]. How, then, does language manage when it has to interpret music? Alas, it seems, very badly' (Barthes 1977: 179; emphasis in original). Also, 'art – certainly music, and probably all art – is formally and essentially untranslatable' (Langer 1957: 234).

[84] Tagg (1982) uses a process of 'hypothetical substitution' in order to locate units of musical signification across the various musical parameters. In effect, he imagines what a piece of music would sound like if, for example, a single note had a different pitch value, or if the tempo was different, or if a rhythmic inflection was placed slightly differently, or if a different instrument was used, etc. By doing so, he is able to demonstrate the significatory effects of often very minute features within a single piece of music.

[85] The unamenability of music to semiological analysis is also evident in the attempts of those working within the Saussurean paradigm to account for the specificity of musical meaning and affect. For instance, Kristeva – and following her lead, Barthes – introduce dual forms of signification to account for the way in which semiotic systems such as music function differently from those constituted by signs with an arbitrary relation to their referents. Kristeva (1986) makes a distinction between what she terms '*the symbolic*' and '*the semiotic*', the dialectic between them being constitutive of the type of discourse, or the type of semiotic system, in question, so that a scientific paper would signify mainly via 'symbolic' communication; a poem, via the 'symbolic' and the 'semiotic' in equal measure; and music, almost exclusively via the 'semiotic'. Barthes (1977) uses the equivalent terms, 'signification' and '*signifiance*', borrowed from elsewhere in Kristeva's work.

[86] The numerous cover versions of 'Hallelujah' include those by John Cale (1991) and Jeff Buckley (1994).

[87] Cf. Said (1991): 'the best interpreters of poetry and music allow both their audience and themselves (self-conviction being not the least of the interpreter's virtues) the proposition that the work being presented is *as*

if created by the performer' (89; emphasis in original). Another example of a song that enacts the process of its own composition is the Alice Cooper song, 'School's out' (1972), in which Alice sings: 'Well, we got no class / And we got no principles ['principals'?] / And we got no innocence / We can't even think of a word that rhymes'.

[88] For more on the resemblance between music and emotional speech, see Interlude II of the current work.

[89] Bono did this during a performance of 'One' at the Brit Awards ceremony in 2002 when he added a verse from Craig David's 'Walking away' in wry acknowledgement that David's song had virtually replicated the chord progression played on guitar that opens the U2 number. Craig David returned what was an ambiguous compliment by including in his subsequent live performances a segue from 'Walking away' into U2's 'One'.

[90] Eco tends to overstate his case in claiming that icons and indices are solely a matter of convention and are thus similar to Saussure's arbitrary signifier. This is to downplay Peirce's account of the icon as a sign that, very often, is immediately recognisable, regardless of learned habit. See Osborne (2000: 24-9) for a critique of Eco's extrapolations from Peirce's writings on the icon.

[91] There are biological explanations for why we might be predisposed to associate 'high' pitches with physical height. Experiments suggest that when pitches of different frequencies are heard, they tend to resonate in different parts of the body – the chest, head, abdomen, etc. – in ways that correspond roughly to the relative 'height' of the frequencies. This phenomenon appears to be independent of formal musical training (Nattiez 1990: 121). The reason why other musical cultures sometimes think of pitches the other way round – 'high' pitches as 'low' and vice versa – would appear to stem from a correspondence found in instruments such as harps, pipe organs and pan pipes, the strings or pipes of which are arranged vertically. The notes produced by the strings or pipes that are literally higher in physical space are taken to be so at a metaphorical level too. This is true also of a choir composed of men, women and children; the tallest or 'highest' members of the group, i.e. the men, are thought to sing the 'highest' notes, while the children, as the shortest or 'lowest' members, are described as singing the 'low' notes.

[92] Plato and Aristotle disagree on the precise character or *ēthos* of the modes. In the *Republic*, Plato banishes all the modes for their deleterious effects, apart from the Dorian and the Phrygian. In his *Politics* meanwhile, Aristotle concurs with Plato in granting the Dorian a special ethical status, but thinks that every mode has an appropriate occasion for its use. See Plato (1987) and Aristotle (1996).

[93] For more on music and mimesis, see Interlude II in the current work.

Chapter Three: Involuntary Musical Memories

[94] The volumes that comprise *À la recherche du temps perdu* were first published 1913-1927.

[95] In passing, the narrator mentions that whenever he sees a horizontal ray of sunlight passing through a window, it reminds him of the bedroom of one of his family's servants, Eulalie. As a child, he slept there for a week while Eulalie nursed his aunt Léonie through a fever.

[96] Contrary to what Benjamin suggests here, Proust seems no more disposed to historicising his conception of memory than does Bergson his. Proust actually argues against what will become a distinctively Benjaminian thesis: that the sensory overload of urban existence in the twentieth century militates against contemplation. 'Some people were […] saying that the art of an age of haste would be brief […]. The railway, according to this mode of thinking, was destined to kill contemplation and there was no sense in regretting the age of […] diligence. But in fact the car has taken over its function and once more deposits tourists outside forgotten churches' (Proust 19271970: 246).

[97] This conception of memory accords with that of Benjamin's contemporary, Maurice Halbwachs (1992).

[98] Simpson doesn't mention the name of the song.

[99] One of the intended functions of the music supplied by the Muzak Corporation was to promote productivity in the workplace by the countering of fatigue (Lanza 1994).

[100] For a description of the unconscious chaining of signs in response to a piece of music, see Meyer (1956), p. 256.

[101] 'Brown girl in the ring' is another example of a 'stray refrain': a song that has criss-crossed the world, taking on a life of its own and becoming a cherished part of many different cultural traditions.

[102] Cf. Meyer (1956): 'an unstable memory trace will first tend toward stability; and, if this is impossible, it will tend to disintegrate […]. This means that we tend to remember themes as being simpler that they really are and that we remember forms as "ideal types" rather than as particular things' (89).

[103] 'The auditory system of the fetus is fully functional about twenty weeks after conception' (Levitin 2006: 223).

[104] Cf. Stiegler (1998): 'the being that we ourselves are is much less placed in a situation of mastery over nature by technics than it is subjected, as an entity belonging to the realm of nature, to the imperatives of technics' (10).

[105] Cf. Levitin (2006): 'The appreciation we have for music is intimately related to our ability to learn the underlying structure of the music we like – the equivalent to grammar in spoken or signed languages – and to be able to make predictions about what will come next. Composers imbue music with emotion by knowing what our expectations are and then very deliberately controlling when those expectations will be met, and when they won't […]. The setting up and then manipulating of expectations is the heart of music' (111-2).

[106] In a short piece entitled 'A note upon the "mystic writing-pad" ' (1925), Freud formulates the relationship between memory and perception in similar terms. He draws an extended analogy between memory storage in humans and a device known to him as a *Wunderblock*: a simpler version of an Etch A Sketch pad. The layer of celluloid on top of the pad is analogous to immediate awareness in that 'no permanent traces' are formed on it. Its function is that of a 'protective shield against stimuli'. Impressions are formed instead on the wax tablet below, which corresponds to 'the system *Pcpt.-Cs.* [perception-consciousness]'. Freud's hypothesis is that 'the perceptual apparatus of our mind consists of two layers: an external protective shield against stimuli whose task it is to diminish the strength of excitations coming in, and a surface behind it which receives the stimuli' (Freud 1925/1961: 230).

[107] Freud's view here concurs with the idea formulated in interlude I that a sign or stimulus is a catalyst for a chain of further significations and affects, some of which may be inaccessible to consciousness, though their existence can be inferred from the effects they give rise to.

[108] Aptly enough, Gershwin once declared 'I frequently hear music in the very heart of noise'. For example, the musical ideas which formed the germ of *Rhapsody in Blue* were inspired by a noisy train journey from New York to Boston: 'the train, with its steely rhythms, its rattle-ty-bang [,…] is so often stimulating to a composer' (quoted in Schafer 2001: 63).

Chapter Four: Recorded Music & Nostalgia
[109] Although the earliest surviving complete version of the myth of Pan and Syrinx is to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, written at the end of the first century BC, the story of the nymph's transformation was probably created in Alexandria at least two centuries earlier (Landels 1999: 159-160). As for the pan pipes, the invention of which is related in the tale, they seem to have originated in Eastern Asia as long ago as the third millenium B.C. (Bloch 1959/1986: 1059).

[110] I follow the usual method for referencing Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, whereby the first number refers to the book and the second number to the line.

[111] Boym (2001) cautions against smiling condescendingly at our ancestors' view of nostalgia as a medical condition, suggesting that future generations might be equally amused by our attempts to treat depression with Prozac, seeing depression instead 'as a metaphor for a global atmospheric condition' (7).

[112] Cf. Jameson (1991).

[113] In Anthony Burgess's novel, Alex's 'therapy' leaves him with an aversion to all classical music, not just Beethoven's Ninth Symphony (Burgess 1962).

[114] See, for example, the leading article from *The Guardian* for 1 June 1987. Amusingly, Paul McCartney did his best to keep a low profile in 2006, the year another of his lyrics from *Sergeant Pepper* came to journalistic fruition: 'When I'm 64'.

[115] The *Wunderblock* is similar in certain respects to what was patented in the US and elsewhere as an Etch A Sketch.

[116] Freud's comment here anticipates just such a 'mystic writing-pad', otherwise known as a personal computer.

[117] Cf. Derrida's description of memory as 'a prosthesis of the inside' (Derrida 1996: 19; original emphasis removed).

[118] When, for example, in the incipient stages of what was being touted in the music press as a 'mod revival', an angry Paul Weller of The Jam wore a sign round his neck reading 'How can I be a "revivalist" when I'm only 18?', he was missing the point somewhat: it was precisely *because* he was 18 that he was a revivalist.

[119] This was apparently the reaction among those who attended the first Broadway production of *Grease* in 1972.

[120] Middleton (1990) refers to this as the myth of 'cultural fall': the oft-noted tendency for people to believe that there has been an impoverishment or 'dumbing-down' of culture within their own lifetime.

[121] Cf. Hamilton (1977): 'life may be getting worse, but the old records, at least, stay the same' (69).

[122] Strictly speaking, the 'reminiscence effect' refers to the clustering of autobiographical memories at around age twenty in people over the age of sixty (Draaisma 2004: 194).

Interlude II: Music &Mimesis

[123] The concept of mimesis has been applied much more extensively in philosophy, anthropology, ethnomusicology, and theatre studies. See, for example, Levin and Suzukei (2006), Mora (2005), Scruton (1997), Spitzer (2004), and Woodruff (2008).

[124] Cf. Engh (1999) on 'the notorious ungraspability of this concept [i.e. mimesis] in Adorno's thought' (161).

[125] Philodemus is an important exception. See Halliwell (2002).

[4] Although, 'representation', 'imitation' and 'expression' now seem to us words with quite distinct senses, their meanings were conjoined in early usages of *mimēsis*, most notably in the work of Plato and Aristotle. See Halliwell (1999), p. 314; Scruton (1997), p. 119.

[5] For an example of Koller's misleading influence on aesthetic historians, see Tatarkiewicz (1980).

[6] See Else (1958) and Sörbom (1966).

[7] There is little biographical evidence to support such a view. The metrical irregularity of the pulse that begins the symphony is also sometimes taken as being mimetic of Mahler's heart murmur. Similarly, the slow movement that ends Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, the *Pathétique*, contains a fading 'heartbeat' that is thought to be explicitly about death.

[8] Professor Nigel Osborne has used these principles to help children traumatised by war. Such children typically have raised heart rates and their breathing patterns can also be disrupted. Music is able to bring these autonomic rhythms closer in line with what one would expect in a person who hadn't been exposed to such ordeals (Service 2008).

[131] Music is also mimetic more generally of emotion though the mimetic or iconic connection between them is culturally coded and thus owes much to convention. (See Interlude I.) A further type of mimetic connection is proposed in Adorno's writings on Beethoven. Adorno (1998) claims that Beethoven's work is imitative of thought processes, especially the dialectical unfolding of a concept, but that it refuses to make its 'concepts' literal or explicit. 'Music', he claims, 'is the logic of the judgement-less synthesis' (11; original emphasis removed).

[132] Schoenberg himself used the term *Sprechstimme* but *Sprechgesang* is the term that has stuck in order to describe such a style.

[133] *Pierrot Lunaire* is an example of 'acousmatic' music: the instrumentalists were hidden from view at the work's premiere, functioning as a 'ghostly commentary' on soprano Albertine Zehme's *Sprechgesang* (Staines and Clark 2005: 470).

[134] The closest thing to Ligeti's setting of a nonsense text in popular music is probably to be found in the ethereal melismatic swoops of Elizabeth Fraser, lead singer with The Cocteau Twins in the 1980s and 90s.

[135] Others have taken the opposite view – that the language adaptation preceded music. Among them are Herbert Spencer, the man who went on to coin the regrettable phrase 'survival of the fittest' to describe Darwinian theory; Claude Lévi-Strauss (1971/1981); and, more recently, the cognitive scientist, Steven Pinker (1997).

[136] Among those who have claimed that music preceded speech, Storr (1992) cites the Enlightenment philosopher and composer, Jean-Jacques Rousseau; psychoanalytic aesthetician, Anton Ehrenzweig; and ethnomusicologist, John Blacking (12, 15-16). To this list he adds the eighteenth-century Italian philosopher, Giambattista Vico, and Martin Heidegger, both of whom averred that poetry came before everyday language (12-13).

[137] Mimetic skill was also important in the imitation of another's manual skills, for example, in order to use tools. Donald cites the fact that, in the transmission of handicraft skills, getting a novice simply to copy one's own dexterous movements is still more effective today than giving a spoken explanation.

[138] Marx's notion of alienation can be understood in mimetic terms as the inability of the industrial worker to view the product of their labour as being imitative of, or a 'copy' of, their own self, inasmuch as this product no longer bears the authentic stamp of the worker's personality.

[139] Cf. Baily (1977): 'Music can be viewed as a product of body movement transduced into sound' (330); and Stravinsky (1936): 'The sight of the gestures and movements of the various parts of the body producing the music is fundamentally necessary if it is to be grasped in all its fullness' (122).

[140] Notated music will also involve more steps in the process of transduction but, again, each of these steps can be understood as mimetic of the one that preceded it.

[141] One of the most penetrating insights into the mimetic basis of human emotion is to be found in the work of the great French essayist Montaigne. Scrutinising himself with typical frankness, Montaigne recognises his 'aping and imitative character': 'whatever I contemplate, I adopt – a foolish expression, a disagreeable grimace, a ridiculous way of speaking […]. I often usurp the sensation of another person' (quoted in Frampton 2011: 20).

[142] Cf. Frith (2003): 'The pleasure that pop music produces is a pleasure of identification – with the music we like, with the performers of that music, with the other people who like it' (38).

Chapter Five: Recorded Music, Mimicry, & Self-Oblivion

[143] O'Neal's rendition of 'All by myself' is virtually identical to Céline Dion's 1996 version, especially in its use of a belted high note that is held for several seconds.

[144] The chord progression in the verse of 'All by myself' is based on the adagio that forms the second movement of Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No. 2*.

[145] For an ethnographic study of how *Guitar Hero* has helped open gaming up to a female demographic, see Juul (2010), pp. 145-152.

[146] Mechanical reproduction also helped to mitigate the alleged 'feminising' influence of music, especially classical music, by creating opportunities for workman-like tinkering and shop-talk, although it should be added that much of the advertising for machines such as the Victrola was targeted specifically at women in what was assumed to be their continuing role as homemakers (Katz 2004: 59).

[147] For a challenge to the view that contemporary popular music can be Dionysian, see Adorno (1932/1982).

[148] The Dionysian/Apollonian duality is based on Schopenhauer's distinction between 'will' and 'representation', which was itself based on Kant's distinction between the 'noumenon' and the 'phenomenon' (Schopenhauer 1818/1996; Kant 1781/1998).

[149] Peirce (1998) gives the example of the 'redness' of something that is red (268).

[150] See Gouk (2007) for a summary of the history of musical healing in Western Europe.

Chapter Six: Everyday Reveries

[151] I would argue that Crary (1999) underestimates the extent to which the Frankfurt School conceived of distraction and attention as being part of the same problematic in late modernity, and that they were not seen by them simply as 'polar opposites' (50). Adorno's notion of 'quotation listening', for example, emphasises that listeners' reception of a symphony on the radio typically oscillates between *inattention* to the work's large-scale formal characteristics and very focused *attention* to melodies occurring within it that are already familiar from other contexts (Adorno 1941/2002).

[152] *4′ 33″* was partly inspired by Robert Rauschenberg's White Paintings (1951) though the idea for the piece had occurred to Cage prior to his encounter with Rauschenberg's monochrome canvasses. In a 1948 lecture entitled 'A composer's confessions', Cage mentions his desire 'to compose a piece of uninterrupted silence and sell it to the Muzak Co. It will be 4½ minutes long – these being the standard lengths of "canned" music, and its title will be "Silent prayer". It will open with a single idea which I will attempt to make as seductive as the color and shape or fragrance of a flower. The ending will approach imperceptibly' (quoted in Pritchett 1993: 59).

[153] The exact instructions for *4′ 33″* are disputed. The first score was never published and is now either lost or the current existence is presently unknown (Fetterman 1996: 72). See also Pritchett (1993) and Gann (2010).

[154] There is a connection in this regard with Bachelard's work as a historian and psychologist of scientific breakthroughs. For instance, his concept of the 'epistemological obstacle' – a mental pattern that prevents scientists from going beyond what they already know – contains the suggestion that scientists too should

'listen' to the 'murmurs' of their subconscious in order to reach conclusions that might contradict established models (Bachelard 1938/2002).

[155] Benjamin (1929/1999a) chose the term 'profane illumination' in recognition that Surrealists like Aragon and Breton, as well as their forebears such as Lautréamont and Rimbaud, were lapsed Catholics who were seeking a 'creative overcoming of religious illumination' (209). Something similar is to be found in the work of James Joyce. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), for example, Stephen experiences a revelatory moment at the sight of a girl on the beach, hastening the onset of his atheism while confirming his vocation as a writer. Joyce's masterpiece *Ulysses* (1922) reads as a catalogue of such secular epiphanies in which the textures of everyday life have a radiant, numinous quality to them.

[156] Deleuze and Guattari's more recent notion of 'virtuality' is similar to Bloch's 'Not-Yet-Conscious' but is arguably less realised in terms of its political ramifications.

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