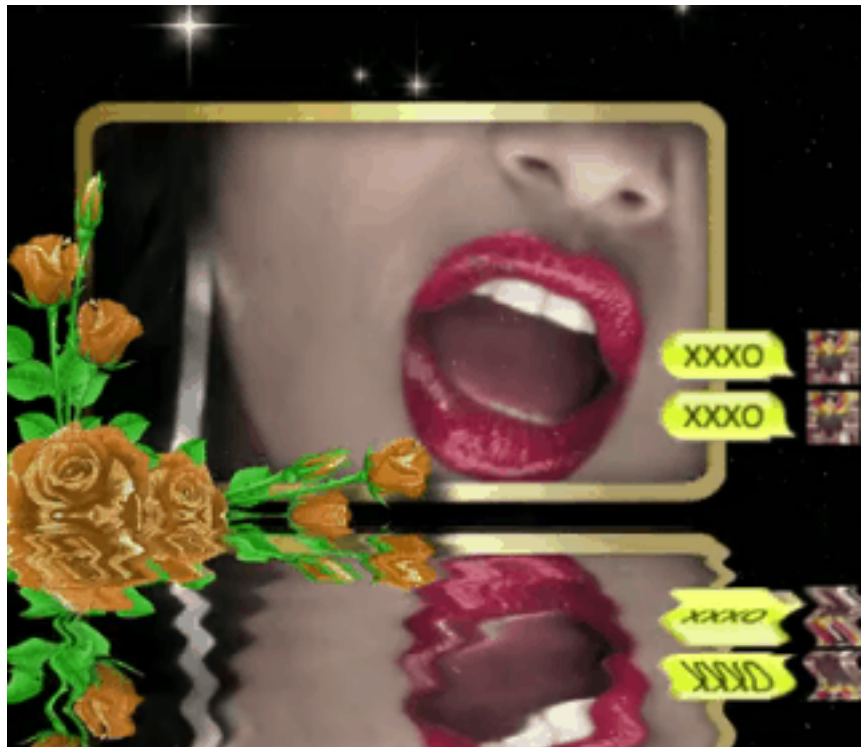# music / media / politics symposium (#mmp14)

department of media, film & communication

16th April 2014

music / media / politics symposium
programme

2.00 – 3.00: *panel one: policy, beats, identity*
- Massimiliana Urbano 'Hip Hop and Radical Politics in Italy'
- Oli Wilson 'Tiki Taane: motivations and representations'
- Jennifer Cattermole 'Cultural protectionism in a deregulated and diversifying broadcasting environment: Getting more Māori music on air'

3.00 – 4.00: *panel two: representing music & politics*
- Peter Stapleton '"Backstage Pass: Audiovisual Double Address and the Two Audiences of *Gimme Shelter*"
- Jonathan Marshall 'Staging Critical History within the Space of the Beat, Or, What Cultural Historians Can Learn From Public Enemy, NTM, MC Solaar and Picasso'
- Paul Ramaeker 'Radical Retro: Stereolab and rock culture in the 1990s'

4.00 – 4.30: *afternoon tea (in the MFCO tearoom)*

4.30 – 5.30: *panel three: music, space, class*
- Henry Johnson 'Anthem for Jersey: the cultural politics of island identity in a European setting'
- Rosemary Overell 'Lorde and Miley: class politics and contemporary girlhood'
- Sarah Williamson '"The Art of Vandalism": the degenerate music of *The Threepenny Opera*'

music / media / politics symposium
panel one: policy, beats, identity

Hip Hop and Radical Politics in Italy

The paper consists of a case study of the Hip Hop subculture in Italy. Specifically, it will analyze Italian Hip Hop between late eighties and nineties. Hip Hop had already arrived in the country around the beginning of the eighties but it is only at the end of the decade that it meets the student protest movement, known as the *Panther Movement*, and merges with radical politics. The bond between Italian Hip Hop and radical politics, was strong throughout the first half of the 1990s, then slowly decreases in intensity during the second half of the decade, leading to a substantial change in the relation of Hip Hop to radical politics and politics in general.

The main aim of this paper is to offer an interpretation of the specificity of the Hip Hop phenomenon in Italy by analyzing a particular historical bloc in which national actors, such as mass parties, trade unions, and the church, which – in the past – performed the function of social and cultural aggregators, were gradually losing their strength. Although this has mostly resulted in a withering of civil society, it has also generated unique moments of resumption of social and political activism such as the *Panther Movement*, where Hip Hop has been an important vehicle of expression and communication.

Finally, the paper will analyze how specific social and cultural behaviours, and consumption practices – performed by the members of this subculture – are strictly determined by a social, political and cultural context that differs from those of American Hip Hop, born in the Bronx in the 1970s.

Massimiliana Urbano (massimiliana.urbano@gmail.com)

Massimiliana is a PhD student in the department of Media, Film and Communication at the University of Otago

Tiki Taane: Motivations and Representations

This paper seeks to provide a counter-narrative to the way music and musicians that are labelled 'Māori' have been represented in both the national media and the extant academic literature on popular music in New Zealand. Specifically, this paper focuses on Tiki Taane, a multi-platinum selling producer, songwriter and performer, and explores Taane's often-paradoxical media profile. The study also draws on textual analysis of Taane's solo releases, which combine signifiers of Māori culture (including visual signifiers) with electronic production, and is informed by ethnographic research undertaken with the artist in February 2014.

This research explores the strategies Taane employs to express his cultural heritage, both Māori and Pākehā (New Zealand European), the latter of which is often ignored in media representations. These strategies are an attempt to construct what Taane describes as a "non-threatening Māori" image and personality that appeals to Pākehā audiences. This paper therefore critiques racially-oriented media preconceptions and representations about Māori music and musicians, which I argue, are also reinforced in semiotic studies of indigenous popular music, and draws attention to on-going issues concerning power, cultural-representation and indigenous self-determination in contemporary New Zealand society.

Oli Wilson (oli.wilson@otago.ac.nz)

Dr Oli Wilson is a lecturer in popular music and ethnomusicology in the music department at Otago University. His research areas include New Zealand and Australian indigenous popular music, music production, and popular and traditional musics of Papua New Guinea.

(http://www.otago.ac.nz/music/ourpeople/otago030558.html)

Cultural protectionism in a deregulated and diversifying broadcasting environment: Getting more Māori music on air

As Wilson and Stewart (2008: 3) note, "industrialized, mass-produced messages and images – and accompanying technologies – in most cases have represented the perspectives, values and institutional structures of empire." While radio broadcasting in post-colonial New Zealand exemplifies this global trend, Māori have challenged Pākehā dominance of the nation's airwaves in recent decades, having successfully carved out a space for themselves within the New Zealand mediascape. Nevertheless, getting more Māori music (especially songs with *te reo* lyrics) on radio and other forms of broadcasting media remains a challenge – especially in the New Zealand commercial broadcasting sphere. It has been 30 years since a *te reo* song last topped the charts.

This challenge has been addressed in various ways by the two organizations mandated to promote Māori language and Māori culture via broadcasting: Te Māngai Pāho (TMP) and New Zealand On Air (NZOA). This paper will describe and evaluate TMP and NZOA's responses to calls for more Māori music (especially songs with *te reo* lyrics) on air, and suggest further measures that could be implemented to increase the broadcasting of such music. It will also place TMP and NZOA's strategies in the context of broader NZ cultural-political shifts, and in the context of changes in the NZ broadcasting environment. It asks whether, or to what extent, cultural protectionism is needed today in NZ's deregulated and diversifying broadcasting environment.

Jennifer Cattermole (jennifer.cattermole@otago.ac.nz)

Dr Jennifer Cattermole currently lectures in the University of Otago's Department of Music. Her research focuses on indigenous Oceanic musics, and issues relating to place and identity, politics and policy. She has previously researched Aotearoa/NZ roots reggae and Fijian sigidrigi, and was recently employed as a research assistant for Shane Homan and Martin

Cloonan, working on a project comparing and contrasting government interventions in the music industries of Australia, NZ and Scotland. (http://www.otago.ac.nz/music/ourpeople/otago030545.html)

music / media / politics symposium
panel two: representing music & politics

"Backstage Pass: Audiovisual Double Address and the Two Audiences of Gimme Shelter*"*

Gimme Shelter (Maysles, Maysles and Zwerin 1970) has been widely regarded as the last of the "rockumentary" subgenre of the music documentary. It documents the 1969 US tour by British rock band the Rolling Stones, including their disastrous Altamont concert which appears in retrospect as a flashpoint for all the social and political contradictions of the 1960s. While there have been close analyses of the represented dynamics between backstage, onstage and offstage spaces within the film, what has been overlooked is the film's *mode of representation,* which through forms of audio-visual double address works to divide the cinematic audience from the onscreen concert audience—folded together by previous rockumentaries in the construction of an idealized counterculture. It is in this context that I wish to explore how Mick Jagger's performance of self within the film also stages a confrontation between the ideals of the 1960s counterculture and the demands of social spectacle. Specifically, I wish to read the dystopian shift represented in the film's Altamont scenes as a result of the denigration of the counterculture from social movement to media spectacle, in relation to which *Gimme Shelter* stands as both document and symptom.

Peter Stapleton (peter.stapleton@otago.ac.nz)

Peter Stapleton is a PhD student in the Department of Media, Film and Communication at the University of Otago.

Staging Critical History Within the Space of the Beat,
or
What Cultural Historians Can Learn From Public Enemy, NTM, MC Solaar & Picasso

NTM's "That's My People," echoes through the Paris metro, whilst director Mark Pellington stages a history of Black resistance across a New York wall. Images of "le graff" flick over as though on an antique slide projector, while Chuck D reminds us of when "Black people died" and "the other man lied." Hip-hop and related sample-based musics inhabit a world, which is deeply historicised—indeed *historiographic.* What then might we learn from hip-hop, what kind of historical relations does it make possible? The syncopation of beat stages the gap between now (get up on the down beat) and then (get down on history). Funk as history. MC Solaar's "Nouveau Western" does not simply comment on the past and Americanism. Rather director Stéphane Sednaoui's fluid, tunnelling montage moves us through space and time faster than a train bearing the latest tag, than the iron horses linking America's Westside with the East, or even the TGV joining Les Halles to the *banlieue*. Hip-hop is less a narrative project, than a spatial one. It enables us to rethink history (and music) as spatial juxtaposition: the aesthetics of the montage. NTM's bass and Terminator X's noise bounce off and penetrate concrete, bodies (do you feel it?), history and location. Hip-hop as acoustic dialectics. Expanding on Kodwo Eshun's model of AfroFuturism, I characterise hip-hop's spatio-acoustic project as ethnographic Surrealism (James Clifford), in which juxtapositions defy normal narrative time and space, producing new insights and confluences, from the Mothership to Ancient Egypt, from Mississippi to the GDR, from Picasso to the Ivory Coast. In George Clinton's words, this "shines the spotlight on 'em!" onto various non-dancing subjects, placing them into a shifting acoustic space wherein all things dance and clash.

Jonathan W. Marshall (jonathan.marshall@otago.ac.nz)

Dr Jonathan W. Marshall is an interdisciplinary scholar with a background in history. He teaches theatre and performance at the University of Otago, New Zealand. Marshall has published on sound art and aesthetics, contemporary opera, and interdisciplinary art practice in outlets ranging from the "World New

Music Magazine" (International Society for Contemporary Music, 2010), to "Sound Scripts" (Australian Music Centre, Tura New Music and the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, 2006-2011), "Australasian Drama Studies" (2001, 2004, 2008), and "TDR: The Drama Review" (MIT, 2013). Marshall's research also includes work on photography, landscape, Modernist theatre and culture, dance, butoh, art history, and other topics. (http://www.otago.ac.nz/theatrestudies/staff/otago016263.html)

Radical Retro: Stereolab and Rock Culture in the 1990s

In *Retromania*, Simon Reynolds describes Stereolab as "the ultimate record collection rockers," indicating both the band's relationship with antique musical styles and a kind of hermetic insulation from, and rejection of, contemporary music and culture. Indeed, the idea of "retromania" in pop music generally is taken to indicate a nostalgic escape into the past, and thus a conservative response to a sense of the increasing exhaustion of postmodern popular culture. For critics like Reynolds, this tends to occasion a bemoaning of a loss of originality and radicalism in pop.

In this presentation, I will argue that in particular cultural contexts, "retro" tendencies can be rooted in and capable of radical possibilities. Far from the reactionary retreat from the "new" that Reynolds implies, pop artists have frequently rooted their aesthetics and politics in the use of seemingly obsolete musical forms as a critique of the contemporary, a reclaiming of unexplored expressive potential in a counter-practice more progressive than comforting in its aims. Stereolab's fusion of postwar electronic music, '50s/'60s easy listening and bossa nova, '60s yé-yé, and '70s Krautrock with explicitly Marxist lyrics is not just experimental in its aesthetic, but also forms a critique of rock culture, specifically in the 1990s. Their music and imagery should be understood not only in relation to the fetishization of analogue electronics and the revival of "incredibly strange" lounge music, but also as counterposed to grunge. Their internationalist mélange was opposed to the insular nationalism of Britpop; their music emphasized a femininity opposed to rock masculinity, especially that of grunge; and it showcased explicit politics in an era when few did so outside of rap. The field of influences the band drew on, and the self-conscious artifice of its synthesis, constituted an implicit rejection of rock's hegemonic taste culture, and the discourses of authenticity that dominated "alternative" music culture in the 1990s.

Paul Ramaeker (paul.ramaeker@otago.ac.nz)

Dr. Paul Ramaeker is a lecturer in the Department of Media, Film and
Communication at the University of Otago.
(http://www.otago.ac.nz/mfco/staff/otago052277.html)

music / media / politics symposium
symposium
panel three: music, space, class
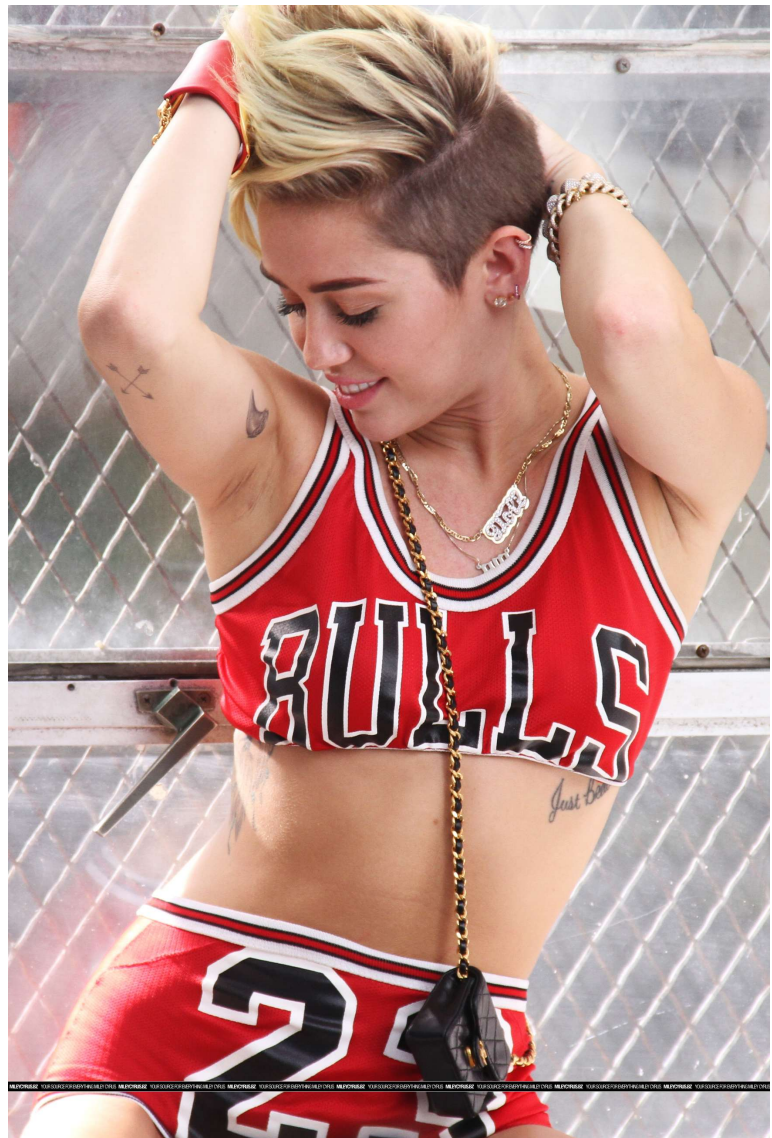
Anthem for Jersey: The Cultural Politics of Island Identity in a European Setting

In 2007, Jersey's government launched a competition in search of an anthem to celebrate island identity. Even though the island uses "God Save the Queen" because of its constitutional status and allegiance to the British Crown, there are increasingly more occasions for the island to have its own anthem, such as at the Island Games and the Commonwealth Games. "Ma Normandie" ("My Normandy") and "Man Bieau P'tit Jèrri" ("Beautiful Jersey") are particularly well known and often used at times of celebration, but in recent years there has been increased discussion regarding the place of these songs because neither was originally composed as an island anthem. Over the last decade, Jersey has re-thought internal cultural policy towards island identity, something that has seen increased reflection on Jersey's heritage as well as its place in the wider world. While exploring the cultural politics of island identity in a European setting, this paper looks at the challenges Jersey has faced in recent years in an era of European Union expansion. The discussion helps show how islanders are rethinking identity across several spheres: as an island, a British Island (not part of the UK), and as a European island (not as part of the EU). By studying the process of finding its own anthem, the politics of local identity construction are highlighted and provide examples that help explain why a unique anthem is needed in the present-day, and how the island was represented through song in the competition.

Henry Johnson (henry.johnson@otago.ac.nz)

Henry Johnson is Professor in the Department of Music, University of Otago, New Zealand. His research interests are in the musics and performing arts of Asia and Europe and its diasporas, particularly in the fields of popular music, ethnomusicology and island studies. He has carried out field research in a number of small island cultures in Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and has published in *Shima*, *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, and *Island Studies Journal.*
(http://www.otago.ac.nz/music/ourpeople/otago010100.html)

Lorde and Miley: class politics and contemporary girlhood

This paper looks at how mainstream media representations of young female popstars, Lorde and Miley Cyrus, present a class discourse wherein Lorde is framed as 'good' and bourgeois and Miley operates as 'bad' and working class.

Since the ascent of both popstars' careers in 2013, mainstream media has regularly pitted Lorde – a self-proclaimed feminist – against Miley, who is framed as a 'trashy', talentless, teen.

Using Bourdieu's ideas around taste, class and modalities of cultural capital I propose that the discussion around the two women's worth in terms of 'good' and 'bad' feminism masks the constitution of a class-based hierarchy.

For all the hyping of Lorde's apparent critique of capitalist consumer culture, we see the same old class positions rehearsed. Lorde is indie – original and authentic. Miley and her ilk are not. Middle classness remains the status quo.

Rosemary Overell (rosemary.overell@otago.ac.nz)

Rosemary Overell completed a doctorate, majoring in cultural studies and Japanese studies, at the University of Melbourne in 2012. She is currently a lecturer in the Department of Media, Film and Communication at The University of Otago, New Zealand. Her book, *Affective Intensities in Extreme Music Scenes* will be published by Palgrave in mid 2014.
(http://www.otago.ac.nz/mfco/staff/rosemaryoverell.html)
(twitter: @muzaken)

"The Art of Vandalism": The Degenerate Music of The Threepenny Opera

Theodor Adorno, who wrote on the radical music of the Weimar period that negates the values of the culture industry, described Kurt Weill's music as "the only music of genuine social-polemic impact". As the leading representative of what Adorno termed "Surrealist" music, Weill wrote music that had shock value not through sounding totally unfamiliar, but rather by distorting and juxtaposing various styles of music. He shared with playwright Bertolt Brecht a vision of defamiliarising the familiar to expose constructs that are taken for granted as "nature" and reveal them as illusions - Brecht focusing on the social (e.g. capitalism), and Weill on the musical (e.g. conventional Western tonality and form). Their best-known collaboration, *The Threepenny Opera*, vandalised both musical and social norms. Condemned by the Nazi Party as "degenerate art," it was a direct attack on bourgeois morality and values, addressing corruption, religion, marriage, romance and war. Rather than attempt to convey an overtly political message, *The Threepenny Opera* compelled its audience to view the political and social situation critically through satire and irony, exposing the absurdity of the status quo. Much of the effectiveness of this assault lay in the discordant relationship between the text, music, and purported art form of opera. The music interrupts the text, the text undermines the music, the music sabotages itself, and both text and music desecrate the opera. I will show how this is realised through composition, instrumentation and text setting in *The Threepenny Opera*.

Sarah Williamson (wilsa948@student.otago.ac.nz)

Sarah Williamson is a postgraduate student in the Department of Music at the University of Otago, New Zealand. With a background in energy and sustainability, she is an environmental and political musical activist both in her solo work as Mrs Joyful and MC Delta T and with her band, Kill, Martha!. She is currently writing a Master's thesis on Theodor Adorno's concept of "Surrealist" music, exemplified by Kurt Weill's music for the theatre. This follows on from her Postgraduate Diploma dissertation, which explored

expressions of freedom in the music, lyrics and iconography of the Weimar-inspired "Brechtian punk cabaret" duo The Dresden Dolls.
(http://mrsjoyful.bandcamp.com/)

CULTURE

JAMMING

music

culture

politics

**SUNDAYS
12NOON-2PM**

**twitter n
facebook
@cultjamming**

91 FM