

Week 7 – Music and Politics

- Used by political authorities to build national identities.
- **National Anthems**
 - Obvious way music is used by the state - generates a sense of national identity
 - All nations involve this notion
 - Feel emotional when hear our national anthems at sporting events
 - Bind the nation together
- **Sex pistols - God Save the Queen**
 - During queen's jubilee year
 - Dig at the institution of the British state

Introduction

- How music is used in movies to create emotions e.g. suspense
- Can inspire people
- People express their identity through music
- Relationship between music and politics has existed for centuries
- Songwriters confronted with social and political unjustness, give birth to songs that seek to shine a light on the perceived inequities of the day.
- Protest songs, voter campaigns, campaign rallies, musical endorsements, musical campaigning, national anthems.
 - Politicians use singers and artists to perform for campaigns in order to gain their fan's votes.
 - Trump struggled to get campaign music.

Music and Identity

- Who are you?
 - Identity is always changing and what it makes it change is your interaction with the world
 - Who you actually are and what the society think you are
 - How do you present your identity to other people?
 - What music do you listen to - a mechanism to identity
 - Music can bring people close
 - Identity doesn't exist until is performed.
- Music not only expresses your identity, it shapes it.

Music and Protest

- Challenge on authority
- To insight change
- Speak up about political issues
- Comment on the present day
- Music fits topics to give emotion

Music in the Service of the State

- Politicians use artists to create a sense of nationalism

Campaign Music

- Politicians have always seen the power of music through a way to get people involved
- They link themselves to musicians for support
- Music parodies used to mock politicians

Pop Celebrity

- Concerts for raising money for worldwide famines
- Celebrities use their fan base and power to try and communicate political means
- Address current political inequalities

Punk: A Case Study

- Musical movement initially - born in England.
 - The country was going through an economic crisis post WWII (no employment)

- Music had stagnated
- It was a reaction to the political turmoil and stagnation in music.
- Myth: all about politics
 - e.g. The Clash was about politics
- **Influence: changed politics and music business as well as British society.**
- Complexity: they'd take symbols and use them like the Nazi symbol in a satirical way

'Fight the Power': The Politics of Music and the Music of Politics

Popular Music as Propaganda

- It serves to evoke particular images and associations. In choosing suitable songs, it is not just a matter of going for the right demographic. It is also about branding.
 - The sounds are there to establish an emotional response to the party/product.
- The USSR in 1938, created the State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR at a cost of some two million roubles. During WWII, the USSR funded bands and other forms of entertainment in its bid to maintain military morale.

Music in Opposition

- Resistance through music does not have to be given verbal form. The German youths who danced to swing defied the Nazis just by the way they looked.
- Popular music provided a space in which acts of resistance could be articulated. Subcultures, it was argued, made sense of their marginal status by appropriating and re-interpreting popular culture. The young fans engaged, in Paul Willis's words, in 'symbolic creativity', forging counter-hegemonic accounts of their world.
- At the Sydney Olympics in 2000, the Australian rock band Midnight Oil performed to an audience of millions. On their T-Shirts was the single word 'Sorry', a deliberate attack on the Australian government's refusal to issue a formal apology for the treatment dealt to Aboriginal peoples.

Music and Movement

- **Mark Mattern's *Acting in Concert*:** he regards popular music as a form of communication which allows groups to establish shared meanings and interests: 'By expressing common experiences, music helps create and solidify a fund of shared memories and a sense of "who we are".'.
 - He maps musical forms onto different types of community action
 - **Confrontational:** conforms to the idea of protest music, where one side pits itself against another; the music frames the opposition.
 - **Deliberative:** the use of music which involves debates within a community about its members' identity - rap. Mattern suggests, contains competing visions of the African-American community.
 - **Pragmatic:** the pragmatic use of music occurs when a common identity and interest already exist, and music is deployed to advance these pre-established aims.

Conclusion

The importance of music as a policy object derives from the arguments that connect to ideas of free speech and identity. But these in turn lead to questions about how music forms and shapes the feelings and passions which animate political action. In thinking about the politics of music, it is important to see how it comes to matter, both to the states that manage it and the citizens who enjoy it. The pleasures of music are part of its politics, not an incidental feature of them.

"Fear of a Black Planet": Rap Music and Black Cultural Politics in the 1990s - Tricia Rose

- The politics of rap music involves the contestation over public space, expressive meaning, interpretation and cultural capital.
- The social construction of rap and rap-related violence is fundamentally linked to the social discourse on Black containment and fears of a Black planet.

Popular Music, Popular Politics: Unbwogable and the Idioms of Freedom in Kenyan

Popular Music - Nyairo and Ogude, 2005

- It uses Gidi Gidi Maji Maji's song **Unbwogable**, to work out the relationship between popular music and politics.
- **The dramatic entry of Unbwogable**
 - Released in September 2002.
 - The song became a conduit of political expression and a symbol of resistance and determination.
 - It became one of the main vehicles within which Kenya's efforts towards political transition were being transported at full speed into urgent demands for complete change
- **The politics in music**
 - 'State intervention can turn a work of art into a political gesture'. The intervention took place in two ways.
 - Act of censorship - Obege was fired because she aired the song. Censorship however, generates curiosity, instantly propelling to new fame that which has come under state attack.
 - In trying to censor the song, the government's action of sidelining the song gave it the kind of political resonance it might never have acquired at any other moment in history.
- **Remembering the heroes**
 - The song gains emotive power by initially employing anger to fight off the sensation of being dragged down into oblivion by a decayed economy; the persona then tempers the outburst of anger with the playful invitation to dance.
- **NARC's emergent choruses**
 - NARC appropriating the song was a conscious intervention. The song producer is candid in admitting that licensing fees were paid for NARC's use of the song as its party slogan. However, Gidi Gidi and Maji Maji never received the money.
- Unbwogable provided the terms with which the articulate personal emotions and wider political implications. It provided an idiom and harnessed the prevalent mood for change and rebirth in the nation.

United as ONE: Live 8 and the Politics of the Global Music Media Spectacle - Michael Elavsky

- Live Aid in 1985 serves for many as the benchmark and pinnacle moment framing the relationship between music, media, and social advocacy.
- **Feel the World - Live Aid**
 - Goals were to stimulate awareness and donations to fund immediate famine relief efforts in Ethiopia and donations to fund immediate famine relief efforts in Ethiopia in 1985.
 - It generated between 40 and 50 million euros in one day.
 - The event was criticized from several quarters as a superficial "feel-good" endeavour serving more to assuage the collective psyche of populations in the industrialized world.
 - The irony of the song titled "Do They Know It's Christmas?" was meant to illuminate the cultures, hardships, and perspectives of a Muslim population was lost on far too many.
 - Live Aid was largely celebrated in the popular press for triggering a dramatic outpouring of global charity, demonstrating the financial potential of the global media spectacle, and highlighting the humanitarian impulses within global popular culture.