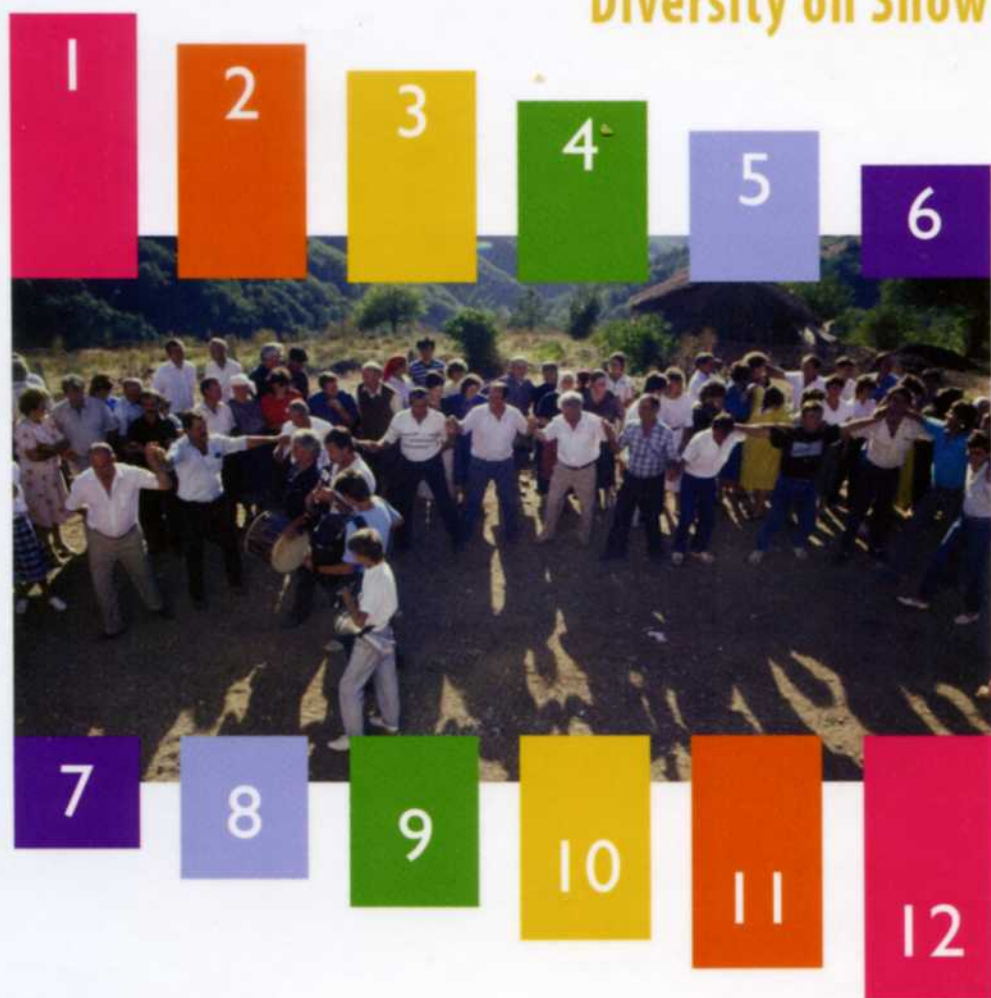




Every Day's a Festival!

Diversity on Show



Edited by
Susanne Küchler, László Kürti and Hisham Elkadi



Festivals and music

Negotiating culture, identity and place



DAVID BEYNON

Introduction

- [Zac Holtzman] *You live in Phnom Penh*
 [Chhom Nimol] *You live in New York City*
 [Together] *But I think about you so so so so*
 So much I forget to eat
 [Zac Holtzman] *It's 4 a.m. I check my email*
 [Chhom Nimol] *I'm too geared up to fall asleep*
 [Together] *So I write you back and count the days until we'll*
 be together
 [Chhom Nimol] *The first thing that I'll do*
 Is
 [Together] *Throw my arms around you*
 [Zac Holtzman] *And never let go*
 [Chhom Nimol] *And never let go*

(*Dengue Fever, "Tiger Phone Card," 2008*)

It is noted in the introduction to this book that 'Festivals are believed to recreate and emphasize relationships that are normally submerged; of being built in structures whilst following unstructured codes, of creating a separate world with its own rules, personnel and expectations; of encompassing contradictory ideas and practices while involving formal and informal institutions.' So what is this 'separate world'? What relationships, normally unseen or unnoticed, are made apparent within the space of the festival?

While the origins of festivals lie in the close relationship of the quotidian and ritual aspects of traditional communities, how do contemporary festivals relate to the diversity of multicultural societies? Conversely, how are they inflected by the forces of globalization, by the *festivalization* of culture that in recent years has become a widespread tactic for the promotion of cities and regions?

While many traditional festivals still exist, increasing urbanization, improved communications and diversified migration have meant that many contemporary festivals are of recent origin, the products of what Giddens refers to as the *post-traditional* state of present societies (Giddens 1994). This description highlights the self-conscious nature of dealing with culture in a world of competing and overlapping world views. While cultural identity and authenticity are still used to infer the existence of qualities intrinsic to communities, ethnicities or nations, the fragmentation and interconnectedness of contemporary societies have long made assertions of essence untenable. Meanings have become dependent on performativity and context. Cultural identity, while traditionally applied to those sharing a particular geographic, linguistic, ethnic or religious background, has become extended to other senses of belonging, to communities based on sexuality, physicality or simply shared experience and taste. The notion that festivals might create separate worlds suggests that part of the reason for their recent proliferation in recent times is that they provide the ideal medium for both performance and participation in this diffuse and shifting environment.

Festivals, space and music

Lefebvre posits the idea of space as being the repository of creative energy, 'stored in readiness for new creations' (Lefebvre 1984:14), and as located events, festivals are not just grounded in the spatial nature of human interaction, but explicitly provide specific *times* and *places* for performance and representation. They create *spaces* in which the worlds envisaged by particular communities and cultures can manifest themselves. Whether single happenings or recurring phenomena, festivals bring people physically together for communal celebration, enjoyment and edification for a limited time. Successful events involve providing common ground (in both a literal and metaphorical sense) between participants. Their ephemerality and occasionality provide a sense of mutual belonging amongst participants, be they performers, participants or observers. They appeal not only to people's interest in particular art forms, ethnic cuisines or musical genres, but reinforce senses of identity within communities of the like-minded. Festivals make connections that exist before, during and after their brief existence tangible. Because of this, festivals have been described as *scenes*, in which participants and performers form networks of affinity centred on their focus (Cummings

2005:5). Festivals provide moments of time-space in which they temporarily transcend other hierarchies and priorities (Duffy *et al.* 2007:4).

Music is often an intrinsic element of this transcendence. As both ephemeral and culturally translatable, it is also a useful medium through which to observe the flows of culture represented in a festival. As Duffy has noted, the study of music can be enlightening in understanding how non-representational aspects of an event can provide meaningful collective moments (Duffy *et al.* 2007:2). She uses McCormack's (2005:121) term, '*event-full* moments', to refer to the way in which collective bodily responses to sounds are critical in creating the *place* of the festival. Because of this, many festivals are dedicated to the provision of a physical and aural space and time for musical performance and participation in musical experience. Whether a festival is devoted to art, community or culture more generally, musical performance is often a vital component. Dedicated music festivals often concentrate on particular genres of music, and each of these provides the space for a certain type of community based on shared musical enjoyment. Different types of music festival serve different ends and communities, but all serve to reinforce a sense of shared identity. The *scene* of a music festival is a particular kind of cultural space that otherwise exists only virtually, through media such as radio and the internet, or that remains fragmented in the smaller dispersed spaces where musicians and audiences play their individual shows (Bennett & Peterson 2004:1).

More broadly, analysis of music at festivals has the ability to open up broader discussions on the nature of contemporary culture. Music provides an immediate means of gauging cultural flows, as it is quick and cheap to produce and disseminate. Musical rules of composition or syntax can easily be reshaped or broken, allowing it to be responsive to changes in audience, context or technology. Because of this, many of the characteristic tropes of the modern world – diaspora, migration, authenticity, identity – can be readily traced through the development of music around the globe, and festivals serve to highlight these traces as they concentrate them in particular times and places.

Sound-bites from four festivals

This chapter uses the music of four different events as a basis for discussing notions of diaspora, migration, authenticity and identity within the contexts of multiculturalism and globalization. These four events demonstrate differing ways in which music is represented and performed within these contexts, as well as the broader cultural implications of the events themselves.

The method for selecting these events draws initially on my experiences with Melbourne community radio station 3PBSfm, where since 2005 I have presented 'Enter the Dragon', a programme which focuses on contemporary Asian independent music.¹ Some of this music is what might be described as 'world' music (definitions of which are discussed later in this chapter), but also Asian rock, folk, pop and electronica. While presenting the programme, I

have observed increasing numbers of Asian musicians of many genres touring Australia, as well as a growing number of Australian musicians who are incorporating Asian musical traditions and instrumentation in their work. As well as being indicative of Australia's growing engagement with Asian cultures, these developments suggest the importance of music in the ongoing evolution of Australia's multicultural identity.

Over the same period, there has been a proliferation of music festivals and related events in Australia. In 2009 I conducted a survey to identify the range of festivals within the country, and the nature of their relationships with music, multicultural engagement and identity. Determining these aspects drew upon my research in analyzing the relationship between the Australian built environment and multiculturalism (Beynon 2009, 2005, 2002).

Three questions were asked of each festival or event. What was the nature (genre, origins of music/musicians, instrumentation) of the music played at the festival? What was the role of music at the festival (part of a series of events/shows/cultural displays, or the main reason for the festival itself)? What was the nature of the audience for the music at the festival (locals within a particular neighbourhood, a community of a particular cultural background, an audience interested in a particular genre of music)?

From this process emerged four broad types of event that related specifically to the interrelations of music, multiculturalism and identity: culturally specific festivals, which focused on the music of communities of particular ethnic/national origins; multicultural festivals, which centred on localities of diverse cultural backgrounds; festivals of world music, which gathered together musicians from different cultural backgrounds; and events that were difficult to categorize as they presented music that was globalized but arguably neither world nor Western popular music. The case studies discussed in this chapter each represent one of these types.

A culturally specific festival

The Cambodian Festival was held in the grounds of the Immigration Museum in Melbourne, Victoria in September 2008, and is representative of an ethnographically based community festival. The Immigration Museum stages cultural festivals regularly as part of its self-declared purpose to 'explore, document and present stories and experiences of immigration and cultural diversity in Victoria' (Immigration Museum 2008). In 2007–8 a Turkish Festival, a Sudanese Festival and a Cambodian Festival were held. These were selected, according to the Immigration Museum's publicity, to represent 'established, semi-established and emerging communities; to represent a range of regions, based on previous festivals and numbers of migrants from particular origins, and to commemorate special events' (Immigration Museum 2008).

The Cambodian Festival was a one-day event and consisted of a variety of performances and participatory events, involving Cambodian Buddhist

monks, Cambodian-Australian dance groups, presentations by school students of Cambodian background, demonstrations of Cambodian martial arts, Cambodian cuisine and Cambodian traditional dress. Participants were a mixture of Cambodians, Cambodian-Australians and members of the wider local community. The final musical performance for the event was provided by the Somneang Selly Phakor Band, who played Khmer folk-pop songs on electric guitars, drums and keyboards. The male musicians wore spangled jackets and were accompanied by female dancers in hybrid Cambodian 1960s cocktail dresses.

A local multicultural festival

The Sydney Road Street Party is part of the Brunswick Music Festival,² and advertises itself as 'one of Victoria's premier music festivals and the City of Moreland's biggest multi cultural and arts event' (Brunswick Music Festival 2010). The Brunswick Music Festival is staged by the local council, the City of Moreland, with the aim of celebrating one of Melbourne's most ethnically and culturally diverse municipalities. As a single-day event within the larger festival, the Street Party involves blocking Sydney Road, the major shopping street and thoroughfare for Melbourne's inner-northern suburb of Brunswick.

Music for the Street Party in 2009 was performed from several stages along the blocked-off street. There was the Afro-Iramoo stage, which combined indigenous Australian and African musicians; the Roots Stage, which had folk, country and blues artists; the Community Stage, on which performed local school bands, Bollywood dancers, Polynesian and Greek musicians; the Youth Stage, where young funk, soul and rock bands performed; and the Sydney Road Brunswick Association Stage, where gypsy, African, and other artists played.

Some of the main acts included Vardos, three women from Perth, Western Australia, who played traditional Eastern European gypsy music; Musiki Manjaro, whose African dance music reflected its members diverse origins in South Africa, Congo, Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania and Australia; Joe Geia, a Murri indigenous singer-songwriter from North Queensland who combined traditional instrumentation with guitars and lyrics that dealt with contemporary indigenous issues; and Rebetiki, who played a blend of Greek folk and blues.

A world music festival

Womadelaide is an annual event that is part of the WOMAD (World of Music and Dance) series of festivals that have grown from an initial festival in England in 1982, to a multinational series of annual festivals. Held in Botanic Park in the centre of South Australia's capital, Adelaide, Womadelaide has become the largest world music event in Australia, attracting around twenty-thousand festival goers. In 2009 over forty musicians and bands from around the globe were scheduled to play on seven stages over three days. Some of the headlining

artists were: The Bedouin Jerrycan Band, who play an adapted Egyptian folk music on a mixture of traditional instruments (lyres, flutes, reed pipes) as well as found objects left from the 1967 Israel-Egypt war (including the jerry cans referred to in the band's name); Indian musician U. Shrinivas, who adapts his training in traditional Carnatic music to an electric mandolin on which he plays a kind of Indian jazz-fusion; Chinese-Mongolian singer Sa Dingding, who applies her unique voice to a blend of Chinese folk music and electronica; Rachel Unthank and the Winterset who combine English folk sounds with jazz, blues and other globalized genres; Speed Caravan, who play a mixture of North African tunes and heavy rock; and Dengue Fever, who blend retro-1970s Cambodian folk songs with psychedelic Californian surf riffs.

A festival of alternative globalization

Tokyo Electro Invasion was an event held in early 2009 at the East Brunswick Club, a large music venue in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick, as part of a series of shows that were also staged in Sydney and Brisbane. The featured acts were Aural Vampire, GPKISM and Dj SiSeN. Aural Vampire consists essentially of a duo: Ex-Chika, a female vocalist dressed like a goth-influenced Alice in Wonderland; and Raveman, a masked figure with a small device controlling electronic sounds. GPKISM are also a duo, this time both male, but dressed in neo-Victorian widow's weeds, with full corsetry and black lace veils, who sing in a slightly operatic manner to a backing of anthemic synth-rock. Dj SiSeN, on the other hand, appears as a cyberpunk shaman in a baggy fluorescent green tracksuit. Flanked by two corseted dancers, his sound is relentless series of thudding techno beats, with occasional flurries of synthesized melody.

Diasporic sounds

All of these events involve the performing of music from places other than the West, but there are significant differences in their roles in terms of relations to locality and cultural identity.

The Cambodian Festival is the most specific in its scope, ostensibly representing the culture of specific geographic, ethnic and cultural origins. Its representation of a Khmer identity is, however, projected to two distinct groups of festival goers. One of these groups is the wider local public, to whom the festival is the reification of a particular 'culture'. The other group is Cambodian-Australians, to whom it provides a space of collective memory. This is because Cambodian-Australian identity is partially diasporic, and diasporas, following Anderson's terminology, are transnational 'imagined' communities (Anderson 1991). They involve a geographical stretching of identity, which is shaped by constant reference not only to the place of origin (Cambodia) and the place of settlement (Australia), but also to other locations to which family members have migrated, and potentially to the different places in which business is conducted and children are educated.

When the Somneang Selly Phakor Band took the stage in the Cambodian Festival, several Cambodian-Australians got up to dance and others began to sing along. However, the general audience, after being attentive through the earlier traditional dance and costume performances, started to drift away. This suggests that the band's main appeal was to the diasporic aspect of Cambodian-Australian identity, and was perhaps the part of the festival that – beyond demonstrations of culture and folklore – served to provide a particular space for them. This was not so much the space of an idealized traditional Cambodia (the image of which was projected more successfully to the non-Cambodian participants by the dance and Khmer costume performances), but a recreation of a particular time and place from which they had emigrated.

This evocation of memories was for Khmer culture that had already partially been Westernized and modernized. Cambodia became, due to its proximity to Vietnam in the 1960s and 1970s, a South-East Asian centre for popular music. Cambodian musicians absorbed the sounds brought by American radio broadcasts and adapted it to their language and local folk-music traditions. Some, like Sinn Sisamouth, Pan Ron and Ros Sereysothea, became immensely popular regional recording stars, their music becoming identified with Cambodian identity. The tragic deaths of many of them and their industry, along with, of course, many other Cambodians, at the hands of the Khmer Rouge in 1975–9 lends a particularly elegiac quality to their music today.

Perhaps this accounts for the variance in audience interest in the band. But for non-Cambodian festival-goers, the lack of appeal of the band can be traced to its obviously hybridized nature. In their outfits and instrumentation, the Somneang Selly Phakor Band just didn't seem to be Cambodian enough. Despite singing in Khmer, their songs related more to globalized pop than to any obviously 'exotic' identity. For non-Cambodians, the appeal of the festival was its provision of a window into a different culture, and the band didn't quite provide this.

When looking at unfamiliar cultural products, such as music made on foreign instruments or to different tuning systems, or architecture involving unfamiliar symbolism or rituals, we accept – perhaps too easily – that they are authentic. Yet when foreign music is encountered that contains familiar elements, it attracts suspicion. It seems inauthentic. However, the presence of the band suggests that for migrants traditions are not only altered by the experience of migration, but by engagement with the contemporary world in general. Culture has become something that might be maintained, but which can also be consciously altered and still continue to provide meaning. The music of the Somneang Selly Phakor Band illustrates some of the tensions that diasporic affiliations provoke, suggesting the persistence of the originary 'home' as an anchor for identity, at the same time as betraying the fact that global movement, both physical and technological, has become increasingly

central to human experience. For diasporas, 'homeland' is a historical trope kept alive through cultural reproductions and the imagining of collective identity. The place of settlement is made 'homely' by using this imagining creatively to establish the self. Diasporas have their own narratives and their sources of authority. Their relationship with the source alters as it recedes from individual memories into the past. It becomes more mythical or, as Ang puts it, a 'master-signifier' for their identity (Ang 2001). In this process of distancing, the question of cultural identity is based on memories of the source, even though this not an unchanging attribute.

Multiculturalism and locality

As staged by the Immigration Museum, the Cambodian Festival is an example of governmental multiculturalism in action. It showcases the Khmer community to the wider public as part of the collective mosaic that makes up the multicultural state. By contrast, the Sydney Road Street Party is a more generalized community music festival which, as Duffy succinctly points out, 'can be seen as a means of promoting a community's identity, or at least how that community would like others to see it' (Duffy 2000:51).

Duffy also notes that the connections between identity and place that are promoted through community music festivals are contingent, taking up Appadurai's description of contemporary societies as *ethnoscapes* (Appadurai 1996; Duffy 2000:52). The performers in the Sydney Road Street Party, like other such festivals, are a mixture of local musicians and those from other locations, so as to represent a particular aspect of local identity or multiculturalism more generally. The presence of indigenous musicians (The Joe Geia Band), a Greek band (Rembetiko), a Middle-Eastern gypsy group (Vardos) and local school ensembles is suggestive of the range of identities in the City of Moreland.

More generally, applying the idea of the *ethnoscape* to the area is suggestive of the fluidity of identity in contemporary societies, as traditional markers of identity – kinship, ethnicity, language – have become a matter for self-conscious identification and representation (Appadurai 1996:44). The relationship of the festival to the neighbourhood of Brunswick is part of 'the teleology of locality building', the reinforcement of certain traits that are seen as desirable within the mixture of identities available for the promotion of a multicultural neighbourhood (Appadurai 1996:183).

The notion of multiculturalism in the Australian context needs a little explanation. As Jayasuriya has suggested, the rubric of Australian multiculturalism has a tendency to use 'culture' as the trope through which all aspects of ethnic community life are understood, and this tends to elide other types of difference (Jayasuriya 1997:2). In Australia, there has always been a negotiation of identity and its relationship with place, and it has never been a simple process of arrival, settlement and adaptation to the local. There also remains a tendency to regard the impact of non-Anglo-Celtic societies

and cultures upon Australia, despite years of diverse immigration and multiculturalist policies, mainly in terms of how others might be integrated into a pre-existing and assumedly homogenous society rather than how they might transform it.

Such opinions imply a particular positionality – one in which there is a supposedly 'authentic' Australian identity from which other identities might be judged. As Hage has outlined, that such a line of thought should still be prevalent suggests that while rights to Australian citizenship may have broadened to include categories of people who in previous times were considered ineligible, their increasing presence in Australia has not really shifted perceptions of what it means to be Australian (Hage 1998:19). Whiteness and particular forms of Christianity remain at the core of Australianness, and while others may become part of the Australian nation, this remains conditional on their deferral to the implied characteristics of this core. Locals and others alike become cultural tourists in this framework. They 'associate the area with diverse cultures, they come to the street party and see such diversity and so take away with them an image of multiculturalism' (Duffy 1999:6).

However Duffy also draws on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of performance as a key element in the possession of territory, so reinforcing the festival's importance in the creation of place, not by the demarcation of boundaries, but by the provision of a 'centre of intensity' out of its concentration of performances and participants (Deleuze & Guattari 1987). The disparate nature of performers, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, means such minorities are defined by 'the gap that separates them from this or that axiom constituting a redundant majority' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987:469). In this way, they serve to represent Brunswick as a place of minorities, in which the majority is unseen within what she terms the 'polyphonous soundscape' of the locality's multiculturalist framework (Duffy 1999:2). This 'polyphonous soundscape' can be productive, providing the catalyst for what Bhabha has defined as culture's 'in-between,' both a moment and location in which existing identities combine in such a way that newness can emerge (Bhabha 1994). In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha emphasizes the importance of concentrating on moments and locations from which new signs of identity emerge. He suggests that it is the *moment* and *location* of encounter between different cultures that is important, rather than the authority of their antecedents (Bhabha 1994:35).

In the interactions between cultures, hitherto unnoticed meanings are uncovered, and newness is gradually wrought out of each moment of intercultural contact. Bhabha's aim in describing this process of hybridization as open-ended, is also to suggest that its *beginning* is equally open. There are no pure origins. Otherness has always existed within any self. All cultures are partial. Because of this, the postcolonial subject is constituted by productive ambivalence. It is ambivalent because it transgresses the boundaries which conventionally delineate the 'self' and the 'other,' so that an individual can claim

their own history by accepting the evidence of their own senses and thus elude discursive boundaries.

The space of the community festival is, in this estimation, a site for the articulation of cultural differences and the contestation of social identity. Culturally speaking, this is a matter of difference rather than diversity. Diversity implies that each culture has its own natural epistemological boundaries: its traits are given, its traditions determine action and representation. Cultural difference, on the other hand, is an ongoing negotiation. Cultural elements and traits are constantly transformed by contact and interaction.

Bhabha suggests that knowledge of cultural difference needs to 'foreclose on the Other' to shatter the fantasy that this 'Other' really exists outside the West (Bhabha 1994:31). It needs to dismantle the epistemology that the West has constructed, exposing the fallacy that the West's dominance of global culture is natural. For marginalized groups, the 'foreclosure of the other' does not mean a disavowal of tradition, but a freeing of it from externally applied framings. In the absence of pure sources, traditions do not have to be 'traditional'. New phenomena can be rendered in a 'traditional' manner and 'traditional' elements can be reinterpreted in the light of new interactions.

While festivals express a collective identity, questioning of their epistemological boundaries can be contentious. This was demonstrated during the Sydney 2008 Big Day Out, one of a series of festivals held annually in a number of Australian cities. The Big Day Out attempts to appeal to a broad range of popular music genres, from rock to hip hop to electronica, and claims no particular nationalist agenda. Despite this, the Sydney Big Day Out was the location of a series of media-driven controversies about the displaying or non-displaying of the Australian flag. The organizers, in the wake of the Cronulla race-riots of 2007, in which the flag was used by some Anglo-Australian youths as a symbol of their Anglo-Centric view of Australianness, asked festival-goers not to bring flags to the event, prompting a hostile reaction from sections of the media and the Prime Minister of the time, and a debate over whether the flag was a unifying or divisive symbol in a contemporary context (Mulvey 2007).

This event serves as a reminder that 'strategic deconstructionism' of culture is *political*. It is the battle against forms of essentialism *in practice*, looking under the apparently unified surface of postcolonial societies to find the disruptions and inconsistencies that give clues to other forms of identity. What is at stake is the power of marginalized (or indeed all) people to have agency in the construction of their identities. As Said suggests, agency is the 'residence of the power to narrate', and so the location and direction of this power is crucial in understanding music which serves to express minority identity (Said 1993:xiii). The term 'residence' is useful in this context in that it refers to the way in which power is always *situated*. Power is exercised in space; in this case, the space of the festival.

Authenticity and modernity

While the Somneang Selly Phakor Band, and the musicians of the various groups of the Sydney Road Street party are mostly Australian, Dengue Fever is a group based in California. The band's lead singer and figurehead is Chhom Nimol, who, prior to being in the group, was a local star in Cambodia; but the other members of the band are American, and their music together echoes both California (acid pop and surf guitars) and the aforementioned Khmer rock scene of the early 1970s. Aided by the power of Nimol's sublime voice, Dengue Fever remix and overlay South-East Asian and American cultures with seamless ease, re-appropriating already hybridized traditions for new audiences. Certainly the festival-goers at Womadelaide heard nothing else quite like them.

Because of this, the place of Dengue Fever and their Cambodian surf rock at Womadelaide requires a brief discussion of world music. As a label, 'world' music has its origins in the late twentieth century. While ostensibly about ethno-cultural globality in music, the history of world music is one that tracks the fascination in the West for its Others: the non-West, the South, the Exotic, the Oriental. The term was originally devised as a non-specific label for the increasing amount of music available to Europeans and North Americans in the 1960s that originated from outside the usual Western categories of classical, jazz, blues, folk, rock or pop music. This was more a commercial categorization than an academic one, allowing such disparate forms as Sufi Islamic devotional music and South African township songs to coexist in record stores, on Western listeners' shelves and, later, at festivals that brought together such disparate artists to perform (Feld 2000:148).

Because of this, notions of what might be included in the category of world music have always been fluid, subject to questions around the nature of identity. Many of these questions have revolved around issues of cultural appropriation and West/non-West power relations that lie behind a seemingly benign appreciation of minority cultures. The recurring fashions for different aspects of world music amongst the populations of the West, and the growth of specialist importers of musical styles and artists (mostly from Africa and Latin America, but also from Asia) to meet this demand, are partially a matter of straightforward enjoyment of good music, but they are also about the consumption of the exotic in the Orientalist sense.

As a result, there is a certain amount of scepticism around the topic, not so much around the quality of the music, but about whether its consumption is merely the aestheticization of difference, as Fusco puts it, as an 'antidote to a perceived absence of spirituality, vitality, or erotic pleasure in the dominant culture' (Fusco 1995:67). In a more politically charged sense, world music could be framed within Fanon's contention; 'it is not enough for the black man to be black, he has to be black in relation to the white man' (Fanon 1986:110). This perspective locates whiteness geographically, not 'in' the West necessarily,

but in its structures of influence, hegemony and outright power. The idea of world music is, of course, an aspect of globalization, which is itself often seen as a culturally limiting phenomenon. In terms of music, this is due to both the Western (or more specifically, American) origins of pop and rock music, and the 'controlling oligopoly of the major record labels' (Huq 2006:57). Writing in 1998, Hutnyk described WOMAD in these terms, as:

...a kind of commercial aural travel consumption, where the festival with its collections of 'representative' musicians, assembled from 'remote' corners of the world, are a (very) late twentieth-century version of the Great Exhibitions of the nineteenth century.

(Hutnyk 1998:402)

This statement is reminiscent of the cultural anthropologist James Clifford's argument that the West continues to see itself as the 'salvager' of the cultural heritage of the rest of the world (Clifford 1993). Non-Western 'others', considered to be without history in the progressive sense, are unable to stop their own contamination by the West's own culture, and so must be saved from the inevitable tide of modernity that has overwhelmed them. Clifford suggests that such views might be considered as part of a general Western attitude of nostalgic regret towards the vernacular cultures of the world. In this view, traditional culture is inevitably undergoing 'fatal' changes as they come in contact with modernity. He identifies what he describes as a 'salvage paradigm', which is a desire to rescue the 'authentic' cultures that are being destroyed by historical and technological changes (Clifford 1987:121). The idea of the salvage paradigm is embedded in Western notions of history and authenticity and assumptions about 'other' cultures.

History, in Western terms, is considered to be linear, going ever forwards, forever *progressing*. In nineteenth-century Europe this view of societal evolution led to consideration of societies in terms of their progress from savagery to barbarianism to civilization (with Western European industrial civilization, of course, being the most progressive). In the twentieth century, while anthropology became more relativist (dividing humankind into discrete 'cultures', each of which was considered to have its own intrinsic characteristics), some cultures, especially those viewed as primitive or tribal, were still seen to stand outside the flow of history, in what Clifford describes as the 'ethnographic present' (Clifford 1987:123). The 'ethnographic present' remains selectively pre-modern. Such communities have been assumed to have little self-generative capacity for development, as if existing in an a-historical continuum. As a result, change is inevitably seen as both detrimental (a culture that is static in nature can only 'lose' if it is altered) and externally imposed.

Clifford's view is that, on the contrary, many minority communities retain a degree of agency over their conditions and some negotiating power over the direction and character of their culture's future. While not denying

global inequalities, he allows for a more positive reappraisal of contemporary culture. Such a culture does not depend on a salvaged past. Authenticity can be produced as well as salvaged. The traditional within culture can be meaningful in the context of the present and the future. What are important are not so much the credentials of the source material, but the agency of the people whose culture it is. If they have the agency to reinvent or adapt their own traditions, then the ensuing culture is authentically theirs, whatever its relation to their past. In such a scenario hybridized music is 'newly' authentic. In the worrying about what is being lost through globalization it is sometimes hard to see, as Salman Rushdie once noted, that with translation there is not only loss but gain (Rushdie 1991:17).

Dengue Fever's music, like that of Sa Dingding and the Bedouin Jerrycan Band, can be traced to a number of sources. Indeed, many of the other musicians at Womadelaide list their origins multiply: Natacha Atlas from Belgium/Egypt; Speed Caravan from Algeria/France; Andy & George Band from Australia/Fiji; Seckou Keita Quintet from Senegal/United Kingdom; and, most extensively, Ska Cubano, with members from Cuba, Jamaica, Japan, Montserrat and the United Kingdom.

The geographical gap between colonizers and colonized has closed, and identities become blurred, to the point that their distinction is now, perhaps, more a matter of marketed difference than real otherness. Forms of music from outside the West have long been absorbed into the pantheon of Western popular music. The origins of blues, jazz and hip hop, for instance, are largely African, and much of contemporary rock and pop music is essentially derived from a combination of blues and European folk music. In the 1960s and 1970s, ska and reggae emerged from their Jamaican origins to become part of this pantheon as well; their global spread, influence and popularity leading to them, in some definitions, no longer being classified as world music. More recently, as Huq and others have noted, bhangra music is now considered to come from Birmingham, UK, rather than the Punjab (Huq 2006:88).

Further to this, new types of music continue to emerge from migrant experiences. In Trinidad, *chutney* mixes calypso, soca and Indian folk music. In Indonesia, *dangdut* blends Indonesian music with rock and Middle Eastern rhythms. In Thailand and Laos, *mor lam* combines ancient Lao folk music with modern pop. In Britain (and to a lesser extent in USA and France), the music generated by second-generation migrants of South Asian background in the 1990s became known as the Asian Underground. Mixing of electronic dance music, reggae, rock and various forms of traditional South Asian folk music (most notably Punjabi folk dance), Asian Underground groups such as Asian Dub Foundation (ADF) and Fun-Da-Mental also add lyrical content that reflect the political, racial and economic issues that concern them, giving their music meaning beyond escapist entertainment. In songs like 'Fortress Europe',

ADF use their hybridized rhythms and melodies to back up bluntly powerful lyrics.

Keep banging on the wall of Fortress Europe

We got a right, know the situation

We're the children of globalization

No borders only true connection

Light the fuse of the insurrection

This generation has no nation

Grass roots pressure the only solution

We're sitting tight

Cos asylum is a right

Put an end to this confusion

Dis is a 21st Century Exodus

Dis is a 21st Century Exodus

(Asian Dub Foundation, 'Fortress Europe', 2003)

Recentred globalization?

There's a grand tradition of misunderstanding Japan, or even worse, thinking you get it, but not really. This may be true of all cultural exchange, which is often marked by erroneous assumptions, misunderstanding, embarrassment, confusion, face-saving, frustration and inequity.

(Koop 2006)

As one of the most visible (and loudest) aspects of globalized culture, rock and pop music have often been portrayed as antithetical to tradition: an outcome of the loss of indigenous ways of doing things and an aspect of an Americanized view of the world. Rock music in particular, has long been seen by some non-Western governments as not just culturally threatening, but also, given its appeal to youthful rebellion, as socially threatening. In 1989 the song 'Nothing to My Name' by the trumpeter Cui Jian – regarded as the grandfather of Chinese *yaogun yiyue* (rock 'n' roll) became an anthem for student protestors, leading to him being refused permission to perform concerts. In 2003 Chinese all-female punk band Hang On The Box were to tour Britain, but were refused exit visas by the Chinese government for being inappropriate representations of Chinese culture. In 2006, the film *Sounds of Silence – Underground Music in Tehran*, documented Iran's underground rock and hip-hop music scene and the extreme levels of censorship that musicians have to counter to be able to play (Hamz & Lazarz 2006).

However, connections to non-Western pasts have also sometimes been made through rock music, and the medium has even been used by some musicians as a means of progressing their own society and culture in defiance of authorities that also, arguably, derive their legitimacy from imported models.

As Julian Cope relates in his account of the birth and growth of Japanese rock music, there was a belief amongst some Japanese rock musicians in the 1970s that their music could transcend what they saw as an already Westernized Japan around them, and reach back into its pre-Westernized past (Cope 2007). In this case, festivals provided the environment, the time and the space for the music to provide such transcendence. An example of this was the organization by the psychedelic rock band Gedo in 1971 of a festival (the Genya Concert) during Bon-odori, the period of Shinto ritual, to draw explicit connections between the new electrified musical medium and ancient local rituals of place (Cope 2007:131). Similarly, some of the Iranian musicians in *Sounds of Silence*, despite the antipathy of local religious authorities, draw on Iranian cultural and religious traditions. The rock band O-Hum, for instance, draws on medieval Persian poetry, while hip-hop musician Soroush quotes from the *Qu'ran* (Hamz and Lazarz 2006).

In playing what is evidently derived from Western rock, pop and dance music, the artists that make up Tokyo Electro Invasion thus represent an interesting counter to what is more conventionally understood as world music. Their sounds are essentially familiar, with no obvious aural references to Japanese traditional culture except for their use of language. Despite this, Aural Vampire and their co-performers do not sound *quite* like Western musicians, a quality that is best summed up by Momus, a Scottish musician and producer who has had a long-standing interest in Japanese popular music, in particular the Shibuya-kei (Shibuya style) movement of the 1990s.

We western pop-makers are like the Brothers Grimm. We scribbled a few fairy stories a long time ago. And now they're there, transmuted, misunderstood and built in stone at Tokyo Disneyland, and we're wandering around the theme park in our frock coats murmuring aloud in wonder Did we really start this? [*sic*]

(Momus 1998)

As Momus describes, Japanese musicians have, since their first exposure to Western culture, delved widely into the diverse mass of Western popular music, and, without preconceptions of origin, language, style, lineage or popularity, consumed it, assimilated it and recreated it according to their own desires. Thus, what is new about their own music is not the origin of its sources, but their disregard for received codes of meaning. One of Japan's most influential musicians of the 1990s, Cornelius, terms his method *ton-chi*, a Zen concept which involves looking at things from a different perspective, to find 'a different answer' (Momus 1998). It is this different answer that can be discerned in the otherwise entirely borrowed stylings of artists like Dj SiSeN and Aural Vampire. On the one hand, they are literally vampiric in their plundering of Western modes. On the other hand, there is something indefinably different in their apparently derivative sound.

While their musical and visual origins are, on the face of it, mostly derived from Western models, in their use of the sounds and visuals the musicians and DJs of the Tokyo Electro Invasion can be related to Japan's rich contemporary subcultures. While there are curiously archaic elements (the Victorian corsetry, for instance), the use of fluorescent colours and the barrage of simultaneous visual and aural stimuli at the event recall the neon-lit environments of Shibuya and Shinjuku in Tokyo.

As in other parts of the world, weakening of traditional ties to religious and family identities in Japan has been followed by a proliferation of new identities, based on shared age, experience and interests rather than ethnic background, religion or geographic origin. Publicity for the Tokyo Electro Invasion described the event as bringing Harajuku to the stage, referring to the Tokyo suburb of the Harajuku, a centre for Japanese subculture. Every Sunday, on a pedestrian bridge between Harajuku railway station and adjacent Yoyogi Park, there is a parade of young Japanese people who demonstrate their subcultural identities by dressing up in a variety of costumes, from the fetishistic gothic to cyberpunk Alice in Wonderland. One of the most distinctive of these subcultural tribes are Lolitas, mostly young women who dress – like Aural Vampire's Exo-Chika and the members of GPKISM – in what appears to be girls' Victorian mourning dress. Despite their name, as Winge points out in her writing on the Lolita subculture, this attire is not overtly sexual, but aims to be cute and child-like (Winge 2008:47).

The Lolita identity taps into a Japanese, and indeed a broader East Asian, interest in cuteness. The Japanese term for cute, *kawaii*, has been internationalized to describe a Japanese-influenced aesthetic of cuteness. However, etymologically, the word *kawaii* contains an older meaning, *kawaiso* (pitiful), which begs the question as to why an aesthetic of cuteness should be so appealing (Matsui 2005:210). One explanation is that cuteness represents a desire to extend (early) childhood, a reaction to the drudging inevitability of (particularly female) adulthood in societies that traditionally have had very strict social structures and hierarchies, but which now are offering the ways and means to avoid or subvert them. A pathological interpretation highlights the sometimes creepy qualities of cute characters, hinting, if not blatantly expressing, the abjection and angst behind apparently smiling and innocent exteriors (Brereton 2005:107). More prosaically, in East and South-East Asian societies assertion and directness are generally considered lesser attributes than smiling deference. For instance, Philip Cornwel-Smith in his survey of Thai popular culture, suggests that '*na rak* (cute) resonates with several core Thai values: *sanuk* (fun sensibility), *suay* (beauty), *sabai* (contentment) and *kreng jai* (deferential consideration)' (Cornwel-Smith 2005:120).

A broader musical connection here is with *vijuaru-kei* (visual style), which, as its name suggests, is a Japanese musical genre that is somewhat less about the music (which varies from 1980s-style glam, through to quasi-

classical stadium rock to thudding electro-pop) than the extraordinary visual presentation of many of its performers. Bands such as X Japan (considered to be the first visual-kei band), Kagrra,³ L'Arc-en-Ciel and Malice Mizer combine neo-Victoriana, anime-influenced metallic suits, punk leather, elaborate androgyny and cross-dressing, Pierrot outfits, traditional kimono, and, in the case of the band Versailles, complete Louis XVI court attire. Dressing like these bands, as with manga and anime characters, has become a popular pastime in itself, cosplay, extending the importance of imagery to the genre. While Aural Vampire, GPKISM and Dj SiSeN do not describe themselves as visual-kei, their overt emphasis on the visual aspects of their performance suggests a strong cultural connection.

This emphasis on image might make these performers seem superficial, yet this too suggests a degree of otherness. The word *superficial* is indicative of the modern Western view that the surface, be it wrapping, skin or container, is merely the covering of the essential thing inside it, not something productive in itself. However, in both traditional and contemporary Japanese terms, the surface is intrinsic to the thing that it wraps or contains. From the ritual roping of rocks in sacred Shinto places, to the elaborate wrapping of even ordinary retail items; from the artful plating of *kaiseki* meals to the presence of uniformed greeters in department stores; there is a belief that the image, impression or surface of a thing contributes to, if not helps to determine, its content. The quintessential Japanese garment, the kimono, provides an example. Kimono are renowned for their exquisite, often non-sequential or repeated decorative patterns, displayed to best effect by being hung flat, unlike a tailored garment which requires the form of a body underneath it to reveal its proper shape. When a kimono is worn, it is the body that is modified to fit its ideal: compressed in some areas, and padded out in others, so that the flat garment can be rolled around it in to form a perfect tube, an unbroken surface. This interest in the surface also has a specific history in Japanese culture, traceable through traditions of painting and drawing to contemporary popular media such as manga, anime and visual-kei music.

The presence of the Tokyo Electro Invasion event is perhaps representative, of what Iwabuchi (2002) has termed the re-centring of globalization. While it remains true that what many forms of contemporary culture have in common is that they are genres or movements that either began in the West, or have been spread by Western conquest, enslavement, colonization, or hegemonic influence over other parts of the world, there are now noticeable flows in other directions. At the Tokyo Electro Invasion, it was noticeable that several of the Anglo-Celtic members of the audience were dressed in Lolita dresses and other outfits derived from Japanese subcultures. Boutiques selling such fashion can now be found in contemporary Melbourne, along with arcades full of Asian bubble tea cafés, *anime* figurine shops and retailers devoted to Hello Kitty merchandise. More broadly, Hong Kong movies are regularly shown in

Australian cinemas. Classes are offered in Bollywood dancing. Bookshops are full of manuals about drawing manga. The suburbs of Australian cities are dotted with Buddhist and Hindu temples. As well as Chinatowns, there are now Little Saigons, Little Indias and Koreatowns. As Appadurai (1996:4) has noted, 'a mobile and unforeseeable relationship between mass-mediated events and migratory audiences defines the core of the link between globalization and the modern.' Globalization can imply both a proliferation of diversity and its loss.

Liminality and identity in the festival space

*Descendants in the future may retell these stories differently
and in more seamless, less discordant forms; for the
moment they serve as birth pangs of something new.*
(Fischer 1992:35)

All of these aspects of contemporary musical culture can be experienced during the festival, as the brief time spent at the event can be likened, both geographically and temporally, to a transitional or liminal phase. *Liminality* is one of those terms that have come to be widely used by postcolonial theorists when discussing identity, but Turner's earlier investigations into the idea of the liminal give a clearer idea of its teleological applications to the musical experience (Turner 1986). The context for his investigations were the rites of passage of traditional cultures, and the way in which they often involved the physical and social dislocation of individuals from their customary lives for a brief period of initiation, before returning them, altered, to their lives again. Turner's interest was in this middle phase, when an individual was placed in the threshold between two phases of life, and was there prepared for the expected progression between one and the other. His understanding of liminality is based on the temporary removal of self from the customary, as a necessary precursor to a matured understanding of it.

Turner's interpretation is that this period involves a necessary reminder of the deepest values of the society in question. For this process the codifications and mores that frame normal societal behaviour have to be stripped away, so that the underlying principles could be exposed. It becomes possible under this liminal condition to defamiliarize the self from the everyday so that it can be viewed from the outside. As he suggests, some propositions are not *in* these cultural codes but *about* them. They are liminal, in the sense that they are suspensions of quotidian reality, occupying privileged spaces where people are allowed to think about how they think, about the terms in which they conduct their thinking, or to feel about how they feel in daily life. Here the code rules are themselves the referent of the knowing; the knowledge propositions themselves are the object of knowledge (Turner 1986:102). Turner relates the liminal phase to the idea of *communitas*, a sense of collective responsibility that emerges in the absence of social structure (in the sense of governmental, institutionalized structure) (Turner 1969:127). *Communitas* involves a reappraisal of the

meanings that underpin societal structures, meanings which may have been lost in the ossification of codes and conduct.

Communitas is existential rather than cognitive. It is subjunctive, filled with possibilities rather than codes. This is essentially the importance that Turner places upon liminal moments, the ability of an engendered sense of *communitas* to revitalize *community*.

Being at a music festival can be compared to this. It involves movement from a familiar context to the place of the festival, a hiatus in which the spaces and sounds of the festival take precedence over all other considerations; and then a re-establishment, in circumstances of defamiliarization. The intensification of aural and physical experience provided by the festival provides the liminal space, the *communitas*, in which people's virtual connections are made tangible, reinforcing their sense of community and culture.

Negotiating culture, identity and place

As well as those changes brought about by technological advances and environmental pressures, many cities in the West are also dealing with ongoing demographic change due to immigration and cultural diversification. Consequentially, old notions of unitary nations and their assumptions of purity and coherent identity have become uncertain, and ideas assuming the sharing of cultural values and priorities questioned. As the cultural and architectural critic Kazi Ashraf has noted, 'The new battle ground is not merely between East and West, but between essence and fragmentations.' (Ashraf 2005). In this environment, traditional notions of societal urban contextuality, both physical and social, need rethinking. The orderly models of the Western Enlightenment are now overlaid with a multiplicity of other ways of living. Neither the archaic yearnings for an assimilated nationhood, nor the more recent manifestations of governmentally framed multiculturalism seem to adequately provide for the dynamism of evolving localities. Ways of dealing with culture are required that embrace fluidity as well as stability.

The diversification of music is part of this increasing fluidity. To some degree, this has been due to the decline of traditional means of distributing and selling music, via cassette, record or compact disc, in favour of internet downloading and file-sharing. While much discussion around this phenomenon has concerned copyright issues and declining revenue from music sales, an important aspect of the shift has been the proliferation of what have been termed *micromusics* (Lockhard 1998:26). Access to the internet now means that artists of any genre can distribute their music around the globe without the need for agents, record labels or touring, and that even devotees of the most specialized types of music can circumvent traditional media channels and their controls, to find like-minded others. What is slowly emerging is Huq's hoped-for world of music that is positively globalized, with 'genuine two-way traffic rather than one-way exploitation' in which many localities, in addition to the

traditionally hegemonic music industries of the West, can influence musical taste and consumption (Huq 2006:159).

Festivals are key elements in this process, in that they provide an element of the contemporary music industry that cannot be adequately provided by electronic means, live performance. Festivals provide a concentration, an experiential intensity in an otherwise fragmented and diversified world, where '[u]nfixed identities are political; subversion is temporary, alliances are fluid' (Hutnyk 1998:442).

The four types of music events discussed here provide for different aspects of this process. Firstly, the Cambodian Festival provides a space of specificity, the reification and affirmation of identity for a diasporic community, as well as representation of their culture to a broader audience. Secondly, the Sydney Road Street Party provides a localized sense of identity framed by a governmental view of multiculturalism. Its sounds and images project idealized views of harmony, both as expressions of the diversity of the local community and as a social mechanism for the representation of diversity, in which music, like folk costume and ethnic cuisine, provides both enjoyment and safely exoticized sense of neighbourhood. Thirdly, Womadelaide provides a space of diversified globalization. Its trope of world togetherness and harmony is implied through the blending of music from different geographical, cultural, religious and social backgrounds, but also implied are creative tension and, following Rushdie, gains in translation (Rushdie 1991). Lastly, the Tokyo Electro Experience provides a space of re-orientated globalization. It suggests a world that is unashamedly syncretic, involving mimesis, appropriation, consumption and the distillation of incongruous sources through creative disregard for received meanings, a *ton-chi* sense of the opportunities that are offered in a globalized environment.

In an environment where difference may be near and similarity far, festivals reinforce social and cultural identity. They are visible and audible concentrations of particularity, whether that particularity is about being a Cambodian-Australian, the resident of a multicultural neighbourhood, a world citizen, or a member of a Japanese-influenced subculture. Music festivals and other events allow participants and performers to, temporarily, be that part of themselves that is otherwise partial and often submerged, and they connect this specific selfhood to place. Music festivals provide physical spaces for groups of people to enact their sense of belonging, to subsume other aspects of their identity in favour of the immediacy of the event. Whether distinguished by a shared love of the same music, distinctive clothing, dancing, or just by communal experience, successful music festivals are self-contained and immersive environments. They provide for collective experiences of what otherwise may only be experienced individually and fragmentarily. Locality and globality meet in festival spaces, with all their contestations and

combinations. Music festivals provide scenes, intensities of creative potential within the myriad flows and interactions of contemporary culture.

NOTES

- 1 3PBSfm can be found at 106.7 FM in Melbourne and surrounding areas. PBS stands for 'Progressive Broadcasting Service' and its purpose is specifically to broadcast under-represented music (that is, music not played by either commercial or government radio stations). Such music includes blues, jazz, metal, reggae, techno, country, soul and other genres, as well as music from Africa, Latin America, indigenous Australia, Europe and Asia. PBS can also be accessed online at www.pbsfm.org.au (last accessed January 2010).
- 2 www.brunswickmusicfestival.com.au/about-festival.htm (last accessed January 2010).
- 3 Note that the second comma after Kagrara, is not a typographical error. The first comma is an intended part of the band's name.

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