Re-Rewind: Heritage, representation and music city aspiration in Southampton

Dr Toby Bennett, Centre for Culture and the Creative Industries, Department of Sociology, City, University of London

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Abstract

What kind of a city is a Music City? This chapter holds on to the common-sense notion that there is no single, final answer to this question; no blueprint or original. Nonetheless, the argument made here takes place against a backdrop not only of the proliferation of Music City discourse, but also of its increasingly precise definition. Focusing on the UK, it begins by outlining two distinct economic imaginaries, where UNESCO's "Cities of Music" development frame is increasingly paralleled and challenged by a more recent incarnation, "Music Cities", aligned more closely with the normative aims of mainstream national and international music industries. It then moves to explore the relevance and the negotiation of these two imaginaries in the specific case of Southampton, a medium-sized port city on the south coast of the UK. Southampton presents an atypical example – lacking a distinctive or widely-recognised cultural identity – yet an aspirational one: the city's recent cultural development strategy has evolved to include an aim to become a recognised "Music City." It is thus an intriguing case to explore how such a project might be constructed from scratch. Doing so raises the challenge of recognising the cultural embeddedness of local music economies, particularly through the common frame of "heritage." The aim here is not to assess whether these designations are legitimate in this case but to consider the difficult and diverse work of recognising and remembering local music histories, beyond calls to "celebrate" and "promote" them, in unfolding a present-day cultural economy.

Biography

Toby Bennett is a Research Fellow at City, University of London. His research explores cultural production at different scales, in relation to issues of: work and organisation, policy, knowledge production and the role of critical/social theory. This has predominantly concerned music. He has a background working in and with recorded music industries and is currently converting his doctoral research – on employee experiences of digital transition in UK major record labels – into published work. Having completed a project exploring Southampton's popular music history in relation to its contemporary cultural development, he currently works on the CICERONE project (EU Horizon 2020) looking at creative economy flows and production networks across the European continent.

What kind of a city is a Music City? This chapter holds on to the common-sense notion that there is no single, final answer to this question; no blueprint or original. Despite energetic attempts to do so, no templates, indices or prescriptive formulae can capture all eventualities: as many "music cities" exist as there are possibilities of encountering, interpreting, nurturing and remaking music itself. Nor is this necessarily a novel formulation. Popular music has long been "a vital aspect of the construction of distinctive urban cultural identities", to the extent that "the cultural or creative city cannot be imagined without music" (Homan et al. 2015, p.87). This chapter uses the term to talk about a set of mechanisms relating urban planning to music sector governance where, as with the "Creative City", what is described is a "field of policy, rather than a policy per se" (Pratt 2010, p.16). Nevertheless, if the field is not (yet) fixed, the argument made here takes place against a backdrop not only of the proliferation of Music City discourse, but also of its increasingly precise definition (Baker 2019). "Music City" rhetoric has long been marshalled in focused destination-marketing projects, as in Chicago or Austin, as well as various attempts to reimagine and regenerate urban space; it also runs through the "Creative Cities Network" of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), with places such as Bogotá, Glasgow, Kinshasa or Seville designated "Cities of Music."

Focusing on the UK, the present chapter begins by outlining two distinct economic imaginaries, where UNESCO's "Cities of Music" development frame is increasingly paralleled and challenged by a more recent incarnation, "Music Cities", aligned more closely with the normative aims of mainstream national and international music industries. It then moves to explore the relevance and the negotiation of these two imaginaries in the specific case of Southampton, a medium-sized port city on the south coast of the UK. Often negatively compared with Liverpool, in the northwest of the country, Southampton's local cultural identity, if mentioned at all, is often characterised as frustratingly neglected. Southampton presents an atypical example – yet an aspirational one: the city's recent cultural development strategy has evolved to include an aim to become a recognised "Music City." It is thus an intriguing case to explore how such a project might be constructed from scratch. Hence, I detail: first, the local authority's very recent turn to culture to combat an underperforming economy deemed to lack "stickiness"; and, second, the city's rather longer history of popular music activity since the mid-twentieth century. Finally, I turn to the potential and the challenge of recognising the cultural embeddedness of local music economies, particularly through the common City of Music/Music City frame of "heritage." The aim here is not to assess whether these designations are legitimate in this case but to consider the difficult and diverse work of recognising and remembering local music histories, beyond calls to "celebrate" and "promote" them, in unfolding a present-day cultural economy.

A tale of two music cities

Notwithstanding the plural and shifting semiotics already mentioned, two dominant conceptions are in play, aligned with distinct temporal and policy orientations. In UNESCO's designation, "Cities of Music" are given a basic impetus to celebrate local projects and heritage to stimulate tourism, civic pride, inward migration and investment. Glasgow was recognised in 2008, Liverpool in 2015 – both following experiences as European Capital of Culture (in 1990 and 2008 respectively). In line with UNESCO's development objectives "culture" is viewed here as regenerative resource, rather than a sustainable economic sector in itself, and so it is unsurprising that it should be viewed through the lens of the subsidised arts (Campbell 2011). Increasingly, a contrasting vision is being constructed, of Music Cities, led by advocates and representatives of commercial music industries. Undoubtedly, urban live music has been at the forefront of this shift, accompanied by proliferating reports on music venue closures and online ticketing issues, working to influence urban regulatory and planning

regimes (Baird and Scott 2018; Behr et al. 2019; Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee 2019). In both cases, effective governance relies on forging "economic imaginaries", that is, endowing mechanisms of strategic coordination with the semiotic power to enrol a range of actors tasked with realising and maintaining that economic project (Sum and Jessop 2013) – as happened, for example, when municipal socialist visions of "cultural industries" became increasingly reimagined through the "creative economy" lens of globalised information and innovation flows (O'Connor 2013). Seen in this light, strategic frameworks, written evidence, place-branding guidelines, marketing images, spokespeople, the sounds and opinions of musicians themselves, all act as "technologies of economic governance" giving material weight to Music City imaginaries: collating ideas, models, rhetorics and statistics that "seek to (re)define specific subsets of economic activities as subjects, sites and stakes of competition and/or as objects of regulation and to articulate strategies, projects and visions oriented to them" (Sum and Jessop 2013, pp.166-167).

For Cities of Music, economic imaginaries are structured and propelled by the competitive bidding process. Hence, it is typically aligned, in Cloonan's (2014, p.133) assessment, with the established "cultural milieu" of the "bureaucrats and quangocrats" for whom such paperwork is home territory – in Glasgow's case, this oriented the semiotic focus towards the past achievements of "those forms of musical activity which have to a greater or lesser extent been reliant on the public purse for their continued existence", minimizing the influence of grassroots popular music scenes. Indeed, for such programmes "local creative production and local creative industries are in fact a marginal agenda" (Campbell 2011, p.516). This agenda has been taken up by the Music City which, with no formal application required, is declared from within rather than conferred from on high (Behr et al. 2019, p.16). This requires a combined commitment on the part of local authorities and business actors to invest – time, energy, publicity, cash – in the city's musical identity. Strong allegiances between state and market forces must be forged in order to achieve a more calculated mode of coordination. Hence, dedicated Music Offices and Night Tsar roles have been instituted to monitor and mediate the presence, or disappearance, of those venues (sometimes also rehearsal spaces and recording studios) considered to be part of a city's night-time economy. Making a case for action through such institutional means, this Music City imaginary typically emphasises, first, the economic possibilities of music as industrial engine (for employment opportunities, say, or foreign direct investment), especially of those venues on a national touring circuit said to constitute links in a 'mainstream' industry value-chain, or 'talent pipeline'. This is bolstered by, second, the civic or social value music appears to offer (improving well-being and contributing to social cohesion) alongside, third, music's display value, as part of the city's 'cultural offer' (e.g. using heritage for tourism and branding). The aim is that such definitions and articulations can be given more stable, material weight (in financial interventions, tax incentives, planning and licensing regulations) through the performative work of a number of intermediaries (local strategists, community representatives, consultants, policy entrepreneurs).

Whether internally motivated or externally consecrated, interventions at the local level are being pursued at similarly international scales. In Cities of Music, the coordination role of UNESCO or the European Commission are clear. By contrast, the Music City economic imaginary is refracted through the worldviews of representative lobbying bodies such as the IFPI and, at the national level, UK Music. Conveyed by consultants and intermediary actors operating through the global assemblage of cultural economy knowledge and expertise (Prince 2013), a plethora of advocacy reports and action plans, commissioned by a variety of city planners, 'task forces', and specialist agencies move these policy paradigms through global networks of business and state expertise. This new imaginary has been catalysed by the influential document *Mastering a Music City* (IFPI and Music Canada 2015) – a report produced in collaboration between the International Federation of Phonographic Industries

(IFPI) and Music Canada, the national trade body – but most voraciously pursued through consultancies such as Sound Diplomacy. In addition to offering government and business advice, and producing regular publications on the topic (e.g. Sound Diplomacy 2019), the latter also convene an international Music Cities Network and touring events series that rivals UNESCO's. The emphatic endorsement of a governance approach to *local live music* by the representative lobbying body for *worldwide recording industries* (the IFPI) seems counterintuitive. Nonetheless, it reflects the growth, over the previous two decades, of networks and institutions connecting state and music business actors. In the British context in particular, and in line with the general thrust of Creative Industries policy discourse, UK government and music industry representatives have developed a much closer working relationship: the former moving from a benign, hands-off stance towards a more promotional and interventionist regulatory approach (Cloonan 2007); the latter consolidating its lobbying capacities, through formal bodies such as the BPI or PRS and ultimately via the formation of the umbrella organisation, UK Music. While local development aims are still present, they are typically folded into a future-facing industrial strategy, highlighting the infrastructural work needed for economic growth and cultural sustainability – although typically viewed, from the perspective of those who act on behalf of the most powerful national and international commercial music industry, simply as links in national value chains and talent pipelines.

In all this, as the economic imaginary concept reminds us, there remains a need to be attentive to how such economic projects are embedded in webs of meaning that are historically situated in particular localities and social attachments. Commonly this is achieved through an emphasis on "heritage": museums and archives have emerged as central to understanding and narrating urban or national identities (Baker et al. 2019). Sites with celebrated music mythologies are increasingly excavated to strategic ends: in image-based urban regeneration programmes responding to deindustrialisation (Bottà 2015), often tied to tourism imperatives (Lashua 2018). In Liverpool, for instance, The Beatles' heritage value played a direct role in achieving European Capital of Culture (ECoC), and subsequent UNESCO, status (Baker 2019, pp.19-20). However, where there is little or no such legacy – in those unexceptional places that are commonly framed by normative cultural policy metrics as "cold spots, crap towns and cultural deserts" (Gilmore 2013) – a different strategy may be required. Yet, though it speaks the language of local and regional planning, the more recent version of a Music City tends to align with normative visions and spatial scales of international lobbyists, such that heritage appears only gesturally: where such contributions to industry circuits anchored in the commercial hubs of global cities should be "celebrated" and displayed on plaques and in guidebooks (Sound Diplomacy 2019, pp.19-21). The authorisation of official sites of popular "heritage" is not without controversy, however: disputes over the legitimacy of commemorative plaques indicate a potential disconnect between celebratory heritage discourse and the more ambivalent sense of "personal and cultural memory" that entwines localised popular music histories (Roberts and Cohen 2013). While the vitality of popular music as cultural form is constituted through interactions between local and imported practices (and participants), orthodox heritage framings such as these can crystallise into accepted authenticity narratives that foreclose the possibility of reinvention (Knifton 2018).

The remainder of the chapter explores the valency of such imaginaries in Southampton, drawing from a recent project which aimed to explore relationships between local music histories and current cultural development objectives, through participants' memories and attempts to preserve it in amateur collections.[1] Following McRobbie's (2016) reflections on the implications of increasingly

[1] The project is indebted to a prehistory of other work carried out by or with colleagues, whose knowledge and efforts have also been crucial. In 2017, with Paul Rutter and Sian Campbell, I conducted an initial "participation

reflexive creative economies for research methods, this project combined practitioner interviews, with an "event research" strategy (mobilising the project-oriented missions of both researchers and practitioners to participate in the sharing of knowledge and contacts), and immersion in large quantities of secondary source material that now exist (including archived local news reporting and online communities of music heritage interest), especially the volumes of media interviews prompted by the dynamics of building personal and professional reputations. The role of citizen or activist archiving has grown, especially via online blogging and video platforms (Collins 2018), and the following narrative is indebted to a number of websites, social media channels and informal conversations with participants in Southampton's music history – remaining, of course, incomplete and subject to my own interpretive errors.

Re-re-wind Southampton

> *Culture is regarded with suspicion within the M27, the motorway which encloses it and connects it to Portsmouth. Southampton is a thousand-year-old nowheresville. Yet this, after all, might be what distinguishes it. I used to be annoyed by the way that whenever my home town was mentioned in a work of art – from Lennon's 'Ballad of John and Yoko' to Wyndham Lewis's travelogue Snooty Baronet – they never said anything about the town itself. It was only a place to pass through. Off the boat, onto the train and into Waterloo in one hour fifteen. Southampton was Heathrow before Heathrow, and has never quite known what to do with itself since the ship was succeeded by the jet. I was missing the point though: Southampton is the city as terminus. (Hatherley 2011, p.2)*

Economic problems; cultural solutions

Clustered around a well-established port on the Solent estuary on the UK's south coast, and caught somewhere between large town (population around 250,000) and fragmented, semi-rural city-region, Southampton boasts neither a reputation for a particular scene or sound, nor any notable record of investment in the music economy's innovation infrastructure. The port and universities, alongside public, retail and services sectors, have established Southampton as a regional hub that has been economically cushioned from the worst effects of deindustrialisation, in a narrative that moves "from shipping to shopping", providing stable productivity and employment prospects (Pinch, 2002). This is not the decline-and-renewal story of somewhere like Liverpool, with which it has an indirectly shared lineage as two of the most important British ports – each, for instance, a nineteenth-century "Gateway to Empire" (Cohen 2007, p.35; Taylor 2007). Southampton's proximity to London won the business of lines such as White Star and Cunard away from Liverpool in the early twentieth century, assuring its place as the nation's primary passenger port. More recently, that same geography is frequently blamed for enticing homegrown creative talent, and the spending power of mobile and culturally-engaged residents, away from the city – compounding a sense that the city fails to hold on to high-value workers, students and tourists (SCC 2017). Despite recent recognition as a cluster for hi-tech firms (Nesta 2016) and sustainable growth (PWC and Demos 2018), high-ranking appearances in less respectable national indices, such as those listing the UK's "crappest" and "most dangerous" towns (Franklin 2013; Hatherley 2011, p.7), reinforce this lack of stickiness. Such issues cement a lamentable local reputation for "culture", whether high, low,

in music" survey (2016-2017), while Chris Anderton led the Southampton strand of the UK Live Music Census (see Behr et al. 2019). In 2018-2019, Chris Anderton, Martin James and myself liaised regularly with Southampton Cultural Development Trust regarding music sector auditing and Martin James co-founded the "So: Music City" festival.

rarefied or everyday. As the Sotonian architecture critic Owen Hatherley remarks, amongst others, representations invariably highlight the ease of passing through – "standing on the dock at Southampton, trying to get to Holland or France" (Lennon and McCartney) – while neglecting the character of the place itself. In many respects, this neglect reflects reality well. By the early years of the new millennium, according to Pinch (2002, p.71), the city was lacking "the glamour and glitz and violence and vice that seems necessary before a city can aspire to paradigmatic status", such that, "although many residents – including contemporary pop idol Craig David – champion the merits of their city, it cannot be denied that in many peoples' eyes Southampton lacks a certain something – urban character, style, dynamism or whatever." A 2015 study to scope the viability of a Business Improvement District (BID) noted strong dissonances, between: a generally good quality of life in the city, valuable arts and heritage "assets", and a "significant licensed night-time economy"; and a sluggish economy and bland image associated with a lack of local awareness, wider marketing and maintenance of these aspects (The means 2015, p.19; p.39).

Attempts to combat such assessments have commonly sought to harness the cultural sector. If Liverpool's rather more dramatic rebirth is well storied (Cohen 2007), that of Southampton is decidedly not. Amongst those living, working and creating in the city, it is not uncommon to raise an eyebrow at these ambitions and local commentators have often looked to their northern cousins for inspiration. So, when a local "cultural consortium" delivered Southampton's "first cultural strategy" in 2003, "World within the city", it consciously echoed Liverpool's successful ECoC bid that same year, under the cosmopolitan slogan "The World in One City." A strategy motivated by envy, perhaps – but only one that echoes the national popular imagination. Riffing on the title of the song by John Lennon, UK Music (the sector's umbrella agency) asked readers of a 2014 report to "Imagine" what it would be like if places across the whole country were as productive as the "music city" of Liverpool in capitalising on their musical heritage and tourism – ultimately advocating a set of scene-based planning and visitor strategies to "animate the historic public realm and [current] buzz" (UK Music 2014, pp.2-3; p.21). From 2015 to 2019, Southampton's local authority endorsed a city-wide "cultural development" plan (widening participation, improving liveability, delivering milestone events, supporting businesses), spearheaded by the arms-length Southampton Cultural Development Trust (SCDT).[2] 2018 saw the long-delayed opening of the Studio 144 complex, containing the Nuffield theatre, University of Southampton's John Hansard Gallery and City Eye film charity, in a newly-renovated Guildhall Square (part of the officially designated Cultural Quarter) – completing a space also lined by the Civic Hall, the city's art gallery, archives, SeaCity museum, O2 Guildhall venue, Solent University's Showcase Gallery, and further university buildings and restaurants like, notoriously, Nandos (Wainwright 2018). A proposed music industries strategy was inserted Into SCDT's portfolio, with aspirations to reverse a trend of venue closures and help creatives and enterprises in the city to "professionalise" (Southern Daily Echo 2019), as well as consult on the kind of issues felt to characterise the city's contemporary music infrastructure and support mechanisms that might ameliorate them. SCDT commissioned a "Music City Review", citing and working explicitly in the IFPI/Music Canada mould, that sought to "audit a series of key areas within the city's existing music infrastructure" – including venues, events, employment, local audiences and broader recognition – "in order that informed decisions can be made on the needed support for the sector, and to ensure advocacy and lobbying for the industry is supported by a solid data set" (SCDT 2018), with a view to eventually establishing Southampton as an acknowledged Music City. In recent years, the region can claim artists like Band of Skulls, Delays, Aqualung,

[2] After securing local authority commitment to bid for the UK City of Culture award in 2025, SCDT was earmarked to be replaced by a more focused delivery mechanism.

Creeper, Foxes and Birdy, a strong network of venues and recording studios, and a celebrated festival and event promotion calendar, while Southampton's universities are celebrated for their music provision. Yet a proposed working group of stakeholders (from local commercial recorded and live music sectors, night-time economy businesses, universities, and BID) has proven difficult to formalise. Moreover, the imperative to "imagine" a reinvigorated, professionalised and locally distinctive music economy into existence is arguably unconvincing without much in the way of a visible "historic public realm" to "activate." It is this to which I now turn.

Shifting styles, scenes, clusters

Post-war Southampton can stake a claim as something of a crucible for early British pop. Its dynamic coalescence of jazz, folk and American rhythm and blues styles, rising in tandem with national media industries, was conditioned by an urban geography positioned between the country and the sea. Clubs like the Concorde for jazz, established in 1957, or the Foc's'le Folk Club, tracing its origins to 1963, are regarded as among the longest-running and most important of their kind (Hooper n.d.; Stafford 2009). Foc's'le – a product of the folk revival, named after the songs sung for pleasure in a ship's forecastle (as opposed to the more functional shanty form, which accompanied work) – harks back to a Hampshire singing tradition that, while rich and diverse in repertoire, is steeped in seafaring culture (Staelens and Bearman 2010). Beyond the city itself, the festivals held between 1956 and 1961 in the stately home at Beaulieu, in the nearby New Forest, fostered an association wherein activist and beatnik counterculture benefited from (and was in turn fascinated by) the benevolence of an aristocratic establishment, before being cut short when "trad" and "modern" jazz fans clashed and rioted on the site (McKay 2015). At the other end of the decade (1968-1970), the folk-rock festivals held on the Isle of Wight (just off the Southampton coastline) were equally, if not more, iconic – both for their performances and for the organisers' failure to contain the audience at the final event, leading (in a pre-echo of future concerns) to government tightening licensing law (Hinton, 1995). Events like these became something of a blueprint for later festival culture.

Southampton's port has long provided a natural stopping point for musicians from the United States (the Fisk Jubilee Singers' tour in the 1870s, Louis Armstrong sailing from New Orleans in 1932). Likewise, as in Liverpool (Cohen 2007, pp.78-84), it played an important role in importing exotic sounds from the United States via merchant seamen, as reported by former players in Southampton's skiffle and beat scene. And as with the spread of British rock'n'roll nationally (Frith et al. 2013, pp.29-30) these young men, unimpressed by the wholesome musical offerings endorsed by state media, were inspired by films like *Blackboard Jungle* (1955) and *Rock Around the Clock* (1956). These were shown in The Gaumont, a regional cinema-cum-ballroom (now The Mayflower theatre), which also hosted fondly-remembered performances from international artists fresh off the boats, like Bill Haley (1957) and later Jimi Hendrix (1967). Local impresario Len Canham started his career on the Red Funnel Isle of Wight steam-ferries before building a reputation managing the Royal Pier ballroom, subsequently establishing the long-running Avenue Artistes agency in 1964. He and the similarly entrepreneurial Reg Calvert established artist stables, cultivating local acts who could emulate American counterparts (Elvis became "Eddie Sex"; "Buddy Britten" for Buddy Holly), and booking them for ballrooms, cruises and nationwide tours. Calvert later moved away, while Canham remained in Southampton.[3] Yet many of their acts would find their greatest success away from the

[3] Famously, Calvert masterminded the 1963 promotional campaign that saw singer Screaming Lord Sutch contest a parliamentary by-election, thereby launching a career in political satire – and the pair went on to play a crucial role in professionalising offshore pirate radio stations in the Thames Estuary (Johns 2011, pp.145-158).

UK. Exemplary here are Ricky Brown & the Hi-Lites – uncommonly for the time a multi-racial group – who moved, as was common, to Hamburg. Releasing several singles that were enormously popular in Germany, their 1964 album was tellingly titled *The Liverpool Beat!*

The specific relationship between popular music and port cities, as in Liverpool, Hamburg, Glasgow or New Orleans, is understudied. Nonetheless, it is clear that the internal economies they support, both official and illicit, as well as flows of people, sounds, images and ideas they facilitate, are equally crucial to the contemporary Music City imaginary (Watson 2008) – a relationship that complicates any local authenticity narrative. In Rod Stewart's 'Maggie May', the themes of an older folk and skiffle standard telling the tale of a seaman's encounter with a Liverpool prostitute, once performed by The Beatles (as 'Maggie Mae'), are adapted to evoke his own teen experience at the 1961 Beaulieu jazz festival, near Southampton (Myers 2015). The origin myth is a neat microcosm of how maritime regions provided felicitous conditions for young people to express an emergent postwar experience through the adoption, reinvention and hybridisation of musical styles and social configurations – both imported and homegrown, urban and rural, traditional and shockingly new – in ways that are strikingly similar from port to port. Cruise ships continue to provide employment opportunities for locally-trained musicians and tourist footfall for such cities (cf. Cashman 2014), including Southampton (Avenue Artistes being a case in point), but this association has become less clear over time. Musicians no longer rely on passenger ports to get around and there is no longer a strong musical culture associated with the kind of professions that port cities attract. Nevertheless, this history has shaped the city's present-day demographics and spatial arrangement, just as it has the broader music industries. Michael Denning (2015) argues convincingly that the formation of a global recording industry in the years leading to the Great Depression of 1929 is predicated on the recording expeditions and trade routes facilitated through "an archipelago of colonial ports", unintended echoes of which set the conditions for one of popular music's important cultural effects through the twentieth century: the "decolonisation of the [Western] ear." Before air-travel, ports were informal trading zones and places of intensified (not always happy) cultural exchange. Denning describes "the peculiar social and cultural formation of the colonial port":

> *a volatile mix of millions of new migrants living in waterfront neighborhoods imbricated with the racial and ethnic logics of settler regimes and imperial conquests; a population dense enough to provide the critical mass to support the emerging institutions of commercial musicking, the urban industry of theaters, brothels and dance halls; a physical and cultural distance from the cultural capitals and centers of artistic prestige and power; and finally, a peculiar encounter and alliance between the 'ear' musicians among the rural migrants … and the 'reading' musicians among the port's subordinated but educated elite (Denning 2015, p.39)*

These words resonate with any history of Southampton – into which the present chapter can give only a very brief and partial insight.

In particular, the St Mary's district – the site of the original Anglo-Saxon Hamwic market settlement in the east of the city – became established, relatively organically, as what would now be recognised as a thriving cultural cluster. Henry's Records opened on St Mary's street in 1956 – the start of an institution lasting over thirty years – its owner, Henry Sansom, enthusiastically catering to mushrooming local demand, and rising teenage affluence, through requests and imports. Along with instrument stores and clothing outlets, the Joiners Arms pub was prompted to reestablish itself as a music venue in 1969, becoming host to regular folk, jazz and blues clubs (Gray 2006). In some senses, this built on an existing 'night-time economy', the area then being (in a familiar port city

story) well-known as a red-light district. It was also the most ethnically-mixed part of Southampton, much of which related to waves of post-war immigration from former Caribbean and Asian colonies. Shaped by these diasporic connections and the unfavourable predilections of sailors and dockers, St Mary's became in equal parts a residential area for mixed communities and vibrant hub for creative activity. Blues parties, shebeens and soundsystems set up in houses and community centres were common at this time, introducing reggae, ska and soul music (often imported via Henry's) to Southampton, particularly to those black and white audiences who could not afford a trip to London. Disparagingly known as "the jungle", tensions ran high in the area, where social problems – high unemployment, housing problems, police searches – disproportionately affected black youth. Community support officers were employed to address such issues (in the wake of Race Relations Acts of 1968 and 1976), although with a remit loose enough for one such individual, Don John, to find himself managing the reggae and soul group Ebony Rockers. These had met and rehearsed using the resources of a St Mary's youth centre, touring extensively and releasing two singles under the EMI label (1980) under John's guidance. After fading from the public eye, they continued to perform and produce music as an evolving local collective. Through this period, as well as The Joiners' Arms, the West Indian Club (also in St Mary's) emerged as a crucial space of alternative culture and political resistance. Prominent Jamaican or Trinidadian artists (for example) might perform there while visiting friends and family in Southampton. In turn, local and visiting punk bands could find refuge in the Club. The two subcultures shared a common enemy in far-right skinheads associated with an emboldened National Front, often leading to abuse and violent attacks (Babey 2013; O'Brien 1999, p.193). This shared agenda would continue into the next decade, as a more sustained post-punk and new wave scene endured, later turning to anarcho-punk and hardcore.

Crucial to note here is how this particular production cluster was embedded in a dense web of close social relations. Chivallon (2001) writes that Southampton's Caribbean churches created spaces in which complex transnational versions of community and domesticity could be enacted. Likewise, homes and community hubs were crucial spaces, forging distinctively local cultural lives that were nonetheless open to the difference and movement of postcolonial conviviality (cf. Gilroy 2004). Arguably it was such hybridising spaces, rather than any narrow place-based mythology, that led to the city's most successful period as a thriving music economy in the 1990s. This becomes clear when considering the emergence of a UK Garage scene to rival London's, with the singer Craig David as its most infamous consequence. Parental mentoring and community projects amid an established social patterning were central here: George David, Craig's father, had been a member of Ebony Rockers and managed the West Indian Club, where his son would attend and gain performing experience. He would attend community singing workshops along with his schoolfriend, Aaron Anyia (later known as Aaron Soul). These were led by the latter's mother, Pauline Catlin, who had previously sung with a popular Lovers' Rock trio called Brown Sugar in the 1970s, after which she moved to Southampton, joining the church choir (BBC 2007). It was on a community project for Southampton Football Club that David first met the producer Mark Hill, recording a song for 1995's national *Let's Kick Racism Out of Football* campaign, set up in the face of heightened moral concern over discrimination and far-right "hooliganism." Hill had arrived in Southampton as a music student and opened a recording studio with another musician, Neil Kerr, who introduced him to the DJ Pete Devereux (Point Blank 2013). The pair established the Artful Dodger DJ and engineering outfit, which became the production vehicle for a number of local performers who went on to achieve chart success, either solo or collaboratively. After his breakthrough hit with the pair, *Re-Rewind (The Crowd Say Bo Selecta)*, Craig David swiftly gained international celebrity. Kerr continued to work with charting acts through local studios (Reddin 2006). Less widely celebrated, the regional rave subculture was also an influential force. This was clustered around record shops like Movement and Tripp2, both serving

and employing DJs playing clubnights in Southampton and other cities along the south coast, like Portsmouth and Bournemouth. Although not household names, producers like Stu-J, Jon Doe, MC Marley, Ramos, Supreme and Sunset Regime, drove forward dance music at both local and national levels, especially pioneering the intense and upbeat, piano-led "happy hardcore" sound. This they achieved through a network of enterprises, including record labels, pirate radio stations, event promotions and club ownership. In particular, the Movement shop employed and nurtured a younger generation, including the virtuoso progressive house DJ James Zabiela (Frankland 2016) and producer/promoter Gavin Foord. With hardcore producer Jon Doe, the latter formed the FooR collective who, alongside other locals like grime producer Royal T, had established themselves at the forefront of a nationwide garage revival sound by the tail end of the 2010s (Considine 2018). Another veteran of the south coast happy hardcore scene, Chris Grayston, was a producer, promoter, label and record shop owner. Later he ran the Open Mic UK talent search competition, which the internationally successful New Forest-based singer Birdy credits with kickstarting her own career.

Heritage and the politics of urban representation

There is, then, a rich history of popular music to celebrate in Southampton as judged in normative industry terms. Yet a music industries strategy sits uncomfortably within a cultural development portfolio, since these suggest distinct economic imaginaries. The 'heritage' frame suggests one way of bridging these. For example, The Joiners Arms offers an exemplary case where cultural memories attached to the so-called "Toilet Circuit" of small venues – those "dingy pubs and sweat-soaked clubs that used to be the lifeblood of the music industry" – are repurposed as "heritage", thereby raising awareness that "[s]eedy environments are the bedrock of cultural production" (Miller and Schofield 2016, p.160). Under the guidance of the late promoter Mint Burston, The Joiners became the place to catch "a cool, newly-signed buzz band from out of town" in the early 1990s (Gray 2006, p.13), famously playing an important role in nurturing Britpop with early performances from Oasis, Radiohead, The Verve, The Manic Street Preachers and The Charlatans. The venue continues to support early-stage bands, as it always has. Yet it is largely the value of its Britpop past – inscribed both in the building's graffitied walls and an official published history (Gray 2006) – that has been leveraged in news coverage several times in soliciting support from artists and the public when the venue has come into financial difficulties (Reddin 2013; Southern Daily Echo 2017). Nonetheless, it remains precarious, not least thanks to a reputation as "the place where bands play twice: once on the way up and once on the way down", rather than an important venue in its own right; "in the eyes of those who run the [national] industry", it is thought, the Joiners offers "a convenient stepping stone, to be discarded when no longer needed" (Gray 2006, p.13; p.223). Tellingly, perhaps, when the West Indian Club – by then renamed the African-Caribbean Centre – pursued a similar crowdfunding strategy in 2013, its version of local music heritage received little support and it closed soon after (Stilliard 2014).

This is not simply an "economic" problem, then, but also a "cultural" one; indeed, much of the disconnection manifests as a politics of representation – a matter of struggle over meaning, legitimacy and participation which maps strikingly onto a geographic divide. Local authority support for creative production has been largely absent, with perhaps its biggest contribution being accidental: in paying the salary of Don John, the race relations officer who inadvertently became an artist manager. More recently, Craig David's global achievements earned local recognition in the form of a plaque from Black History Month and an honorary doctorate from Solent University. Nonetheless, the most visible statement of Southampton's celebratory cultural agenda remains Guildhall Square in the Cultural Quarter. This part of the city has few residents and receives little passing trade. Despite its central location, reportedly the BID work hard to attract locals at

weekends. On the other hand, St Mary's remains a densely concentrated mix with a contested identity. Derby Road, a central artery in the area, was chosen as the location for the Channel Four documentary Immigration Street – infamously decommissioned after one episode, amid visceral resistance from the communities concerned (Khaleeli 2015) including a protest gig at The Joiners (Babey 2014). The episode highlights the city's continued cultural allegiances and divisions. Without recognising this complex representational politics, heritage initiatives that are driven by place-branding initiatives risk superficiality. A common way of describing Southampton, as with many port cities, is as "a multi-cultural cosmopolitan city", as Craig David put it in 2003 (BBC 2008). Beyond the "World Within the City" document, the city tourist board has sought to highlight cosmopolitan culture – but in terms of a "world of cuisine including Italian, Thai, Cajun and Indian [restaurants]", such as those around Guildhall Square, which "sits uneasily", writes Kushner (2007, pp.185-186), with "the past reality of migrancy and transmigrancy." Part of a recognisably turn-of-the-century New Labour lexicon, the word tends to obscure, if not actively legitimate, the continuing challenges and tensions of postcolonial urbanity (Gilroy 2004). Instead, it offers the decorative cosmopolitanism of the cruise ship, which imagines music's role as a means to construct an air of the exotic within more domestic comforts (Cashman 2014). In distinct contrast with the Cultural Quarter's rather hygienic vision, however, St Mary's far messier brand of cosmopolitanism is equally open to sentimental misrepresentation: as 'vibrant' and 'diverse', with a hinting of 'edgy' iniquity. Such romanticism, continues Denning (2015, p.45), "misses the historical contingency of this cosmopolitanism" and "the violence that constituted these [port] cities."

In this light, it is worth reflecting on the long shadow cast by Southampton's biggest musical export. It is unfortunate, but revealing, for both the singer and the city, that his phenomenal global celebrity was met by an outpouring of ridicule in the popular media. In interviews, David was unfailingly polite and focused, even to the point of blandness, gaining something of a reputation for being not simply sanguine about, but positively embracing, self-marketing: speaking freely of key demographics and referring to himself in the third person as 'Craig David the Brand'. Such language, for Hatherley (2011, p.20), reflected the kind of aspirational social mobility (as opposed to class consciousness) that Tony Blair's New Labour sought to capture and indicated the ongoing shift away from a "stridently red" pre-war Southampton. The cover to Melody Maker's 11th October 2000 issue lampooned the artwork to his debut album, *Born To Do It*. Headlined "UK Garage my arse! The alternative nation fights back!", it depicted a Craig David lookalike clutching headphones to his ears while seated, trousers around ankles, on a toilet. For former Melody Maker writer Simon Reynolds, this was a joyless response to "the bursting of Britpop's bubble" (Reynolds 2007, p.277) as the national spirit began moving on from the 'alternative' Cool Britannia moment, both of which were conspicuously white (Huq 2010). Market research, cited at the time, linked black cover stars with poor magazine sales and the purpose of the image was to corral a rich semiotics of "discontents and repugnances" attached to wider UK Garage culture – feminine-coded sonic aesthetics, classed performances of conspicuous wealth, underpinned by racist undertones ("more on the level of ignorant, stereotyped ideas about black music cultures than hatred") – marking out the contours against which Britpop defined itself (Reynolds 2007, pp.277-278). Shortly after, David became widely ridiculed as the unremitting punchline to the surreal barbs of British comic Leigh Francis' television series, *Bo' Selecta!* (referencing David's early hit), contributing in large part to his own slide from public view (Trendell 2016).

The episode goes some way to explain how a case of enormous commercial success has morphed into an unlikely heritage burden for the city, obscuring a host of diverse, and implicitly more 'authentic', acts (as in "for every Craig David there's a Band of Skulls, Delays, Men They Couldn't Hang" (Babey 2014)). At the same time, it reveals how the singer's image might be conditioned by a

difficult and febrile national politics of cultural representation that resonates throughout the city's history, to present day. Southampton's social issues had frequently found their way into the music itself, which articulated frustration, neglect and constraint: for punk band Strate Jacket, Southampton was simply "Boredom City" (Babey 2013). Ebony Rockers, meanwhile, would sing plaintively about the need to "try so very hard to get out of this human jungle." This political aesthetics was captured, aided and abetted in the DIY sounds, images and writing of fanzines and tape labels like *Stick It In Your Ear!* and later *Suspect Device*. By contrast, *City Walls*, a more formal Sotonian New Wave compilation organised by Richard Williams (later to become leader of the city council) drew on the city's mediaeval history to present the city in a more positive light. Similarly, much more recently, FooR have showcased original Southampton garage vocalists Aaron Soul and MC Alastair on new productions. and even seemed to confront the challenge of place-marketing the city. The homegrown video for their first single, "I'm Sorry" (remaking a garage hit from 1999), consciously "shot Southampton in a positive light" (McKeown 2014).[4] Yet tensions remain. In 2016, local activists, preparing for a promised march of far-right groups on an anti-immigration protest, pasted the city with stickers featuring the star. Above yet another détourned version of the Born To do It cover art – David this time sporting a photoshopped Anti-Fascism t-shirt – reads the slogan, "Smashing Racism 7 Days A Week", in reference to the singer's hit single, "Seven Days" (Southampton AntiFA 2016). The apparent need for antifascist protest in the same year the city voted to leave the European Union evidences other kinds of heritage: its profound reshaping by the movements of Empire and the Luftwaffe; and that of heated conflict over race and immigration. Given this, the creative appropriation of local music heritage using a young musician of proud Caribbean and Jewish heritage as its international avatar seems not just appropriate but also more inventive and sensitive to local concerns than any comparable place-marketing initiatives on the part of the authorities. Rather than merely subcultural nostalgia, this is the contemporary city drawing on its urban music culture to evolve and remake ideas around its identity. If heritage plays a part here, it does so in partnership with a sustained material infrastructure, and a network of individuals and collectives, embedded within the city-region.

Concluding comments

Southampton is, at the time of writing, caught between two economic imaginaries: a vision of cultural development tied to inhabitants' wellbeing, regeneration aims and a national City of Culture bidding process; and Music City imperatives based on local touring infrastructures, creative talent and product, successfully feeding into and supporting national economies, to be exported through global networks. Without wishing to speculate on future outcomes here, the city might make productive use of these frames to navigate complex issues concerning: the multiple spaces and geographies across which the subjects and objects of music economies and policies flow; and tensions of a more temporal nature, between normative popular music heritage and localised cultural memory. It is undoubtedly important to be attentive to supporting music economies and infrastructures but these must also be embedded within the specificity of place. Not doing so risks conflating perceived benefits of different scales, from regional to national economies, and insensitivity to a cultural politics, including histories of shifting identities and uneven distribution of resources. There is clear potential to reinforce such problems through urban music heritage frames, especially where Music Cities' apparent capacity to generate inward migration and investment and support the visitor economy, incentivises the consecration of places bearing auratic traces of great

[4] Craig David also fondly referenced his Southampton childhood on 2016's garage-inflected 'One More Time' (albeit in a video shot in his adopted Miami), returning to the city the following year for his first visit to the Mayflower theatre (formerly the Gaumont).

acts that have passed through. The veneration of star acts and iconic venues is an obvious way to make use of heritage – yet it may also obscure the conditions from which such people and spaces emerge, as well as the failures. Such initiatives would likely reinforce a reputation as a place of transience and neglect in Southampton, whereas its most visible success stories bear the traces of intricate connectivities between local cultural spaces and changing residential communities, forged over long periods of time. These urban histories have often catalysed creative expression – alongside a politics of representation that resists easy memorialisation. Contemporary cultural practitioners can struggle to connect to, or distinguish themselves from, officially-sanctioned history; meanwhile, marginal counter-histories can struggle for legitimacy to participate in reshaping the city's cultural identity. Cities with 'crap', 'cold spot' reputations need their own imaginaries in order to chart a course between the economic imaginaries of place-marketing and global creative industries. Music City frameworks would do well to explore how new archival infrastructures might recover and proliferate local histories and memories, opening them up to be remade as living cultural economies.

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