

Sociology and Music Recommendation Evidence from the Literature

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Musical Meaning Differs from Place to Place

Bennet 137 “Moreover, such appropriation have in each case involved a reworking of hip hop in ways that engage with local circumstances. In every respect then, hip hop is both a global and a local form.”

Zach 63 “Many foreign authors claim that his [Chopin’s] works were really cosmopolitan and international, inspired by personal, romantic emotions rather than by something in the outside world. For Poles, to cite Norman Davies, ‘Chopin’s works were built on his experiences in the formative years in Warsaw, distilled from the Polish melodies, harmonies and rhythms that he heard in his youth, and inspired by a bitter sweet nostalgia for the land of his birth; they represent the quintessence of “Polishness” (1981: 27)”

Musical Similarity is Relative to a Culture

Zach 66: ‘... He [Chopin] also combined Polish and French elements in one Harmony (Junien 1921: 5-6)’ a pre-Communist perspective

Zach 68: ‘He created simple and beautiful forms in the manner of folk song, and unlike the complicated, decadent music of the bourgeoisie. Chopin, according to Bierut, was a Slavic composer.’ Polish president during communist Poland.

Bennet 167: ‘[Finnagin]... Music is thus defined in different ways among different groups, each of whom have their own conventions supported by existing practices and ideas about the right way in which music should be released (ibid.)’

Media has a role in constructing musical meaning

Hodkinson 183 “Just to be clear, the point is not to assess the accuracy of such accounts, but merely to emphasize that by what they [media] choose to include and exclude, they played an important gatekeeping role in reinforcing and developing the value system of the subculture.”

Thorton 117 “Rather, media and other culture industries are there and effective right from the start. They are central to the process of subcultural formation, integral to the way we ‘create groups with words’ (Bourdieu 1990:139).”

Subcultural Capital

Subcultures are maintained by the restriction of knowledge about the subculture. As a result, knowledge of the ‘in’ and ‘hip’ is carefully controlled by its owners.

Thorton 90 “... its [the club scene in London’s] main antagonist is not the police (who arrest and imprison) but the media who continually threaten to *release* its cultural knowledge to other social groups.” italics in original.

Hodkinson 180 “The following respondent ... found it hard, initially, to get anyone to respond to his messages because he had not learned what sort of topics and modes of behavior people were interested in:”

References

- Bennet, A. 2000. Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place. London: Macmillan.
Hodkinson, P. 2002. Goth: Identity, Style and Subculture. Oxford: Berg.
Thorton, S. 1995. Club Cultures: Music Media and Subcultural Capital. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press.
Mach, Z.. 1994. National anthems: The case of Chopin as a national composer. In Ethnicity, Identity, and Music: The Musical Construction of Place. Oxford: Berg.

