

THE MUSIC INDUSTRY AND CANADIAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

by

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## Abstract

The links between national identity and the music industry in Canada are too diverse to be understood with any simplistic model of the nation. In early twentieth century Italy Antonio Gramsci examined the consumption of serialized stories written by foreigners. He developed an view of popular culture which focussed upon the role of the State in maintaining national unity. Since the federal State in Canada has intervened in the country's music business in recent years, Gramsci's schema provides us with a useful framework for that case. Moreover, his work avoids an orchestrated view of the nation or a narrow specification of the contents of culture. It allows us to take a view that Canadian culture is *whatever* Canadian's choose to write.

Due to its inductive beginnings and theoretical shortcomings, the schema is not applied rigidly to music made by Canadians. Rather it has been kept on the sidelines to explore representations of Canadian music, the broadcasting, sound recording and concert promotion industries, and finally the future of music made in Canada.

Gramsci's schema is one way to distinguish between the *cause* and *uses* of the nation in particular arguments. His ideas also explain why popular culture matters, without specifying its content or giving it artificial coherence. A

framework is provided which admits that, in a society based upon exchange, the nation is fully implicated within a wider social fabric, so frequently cultural differences cannot be simplistically aligned with national borders. It allows us to reject essentialist nationalism and therefore the possibility of using the nation as a reason to suggest Canadian musicians are falling short, by not doing something *different* from their foreign counterparts. In its place the schema enables us to celebrate Canadian artists for what they have done in *contributing* to a wider sphere, and allows us to praise environments in which Canadian talent can be recognized and allowed to grow, whatever forms it takes.



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## Chapter One

### Introduction

"Hip hop, Doo wop, got to rock this difference in." - 54.40<sup>1</sup>

At first sight the sheer availability of popular music suggests that, due to its ubiquitous presence and universal audience, rock is a form of culture alienated from any geographical context.<sup>2</sup> Musical styles, such as reggae, which have traditionally been associated with people of particular places and cultures now appear in record shops virtually anywhere in the world. This suggests that popular music is a rootless global commodity and so it becomes relevant to ask whether there is anything about the music which can contribute to particular place-bound cultures. As music also exists in a wide system of exchange, we can also ask whether, and in what senses, it is reasonable to consider rock music as an agent of cultural imperialism.

It could be contended that arguments claiming the ubiquity of rock fail to consider that popular music arrives from a specific geography of production and contributes to another specific geography of exchange and consumption. In fact if we choose to consider music industries at the national

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<sup>1</sup> From the song 'Nice To Luv You' on their album 'Dear, Dear' (Sony Music Canada 1992).

<sup>2</sup> I am using the term *rock* here, like Grossberg (1992) to apply to any type of popular music, although I realize that musically it means something more specific. Also the words *act*, *artist* and sometimes *band* have been used interchangeably for variety.

scale, we find that countries are in various predicaments. The political economy emerging from Canada's geographic configuration is a key reason that the country's music industry, like many other cultural industries, suffers from being both regionally fragmented and globally marginal. Given that current industrial predicament, the potential for Canada's music industry in helping to build a national culture is questionable. The central goal of this work is to consider what has been done in spite of the country's difficulties. Thus an outline of the environment for making music in Canada and the attempts of the federal State to influence it form the first parts of the introduction. The way in which other people have studied the situation is accordingly explained and finally a new theoretically informed approach, based upon one aspect of the writings of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, is suggested.

Although this work primarily focuses upon the national predicament of music made and heard by Canadians, it is worth introducing the question of regional cultures briefly to consider how much they detract from the possibility of Canadian citizens forming a sense of identity with music based at a larger scale. The existence of regional cultures within capitalism societies means that questions concerning how they affect national unity, culture, and resource allocation in the music industry become important. Key issues include how much of the State is organized on a

regional level, the size of imbalances between different regions, and what the federal State is doing for the regions which could upset its wider project of national unity. Music played and heard in Canada arrives from a specific geography of production which is unevenly developed. Consequently questions of cultural homogeneity and the openness of particular regions, and the spatial distribution of resources in entertainment industries, are worth raising in any study of the nation's popular culture. The country's small, scattered population and vast, regionally entrenched geography matters not just as an obstacle to touring bands. The bulk of the music industry is located in and around Toronto. The city not only receives many of the resources allocated for the music industry, and arts funding in general in Canada, but it also puts particular slants upon the way Canadian music is recognized and interpreted. Furthermore the strong lobbying power of Quebec allows that province to be recognized as a separate society in federal arts policies, which results in special treatment. So when we discuss 'national' policies, resources, talent pools or anything similar, where the main beneficiaries reside and other such facts of location must be taken into consideration.

While discordant regions may be an internal threat to Canada's unity, because the country's music industry is situated within a wider fabric of global exchange, the

consequent predicament of Canadian musicians is an equally significant cause for concern. Specifically the production of music exists in nothing approaching a free market: the power of foreign record labels run as branches of larger corporations (and called majors), State intervention, and the underwriting of concerts by large corporations are some of the factors which make this term inapplicable. One example relates to serving of the consumer market for recordings in Canada. Canadian independent record companies have much smaller promotional budgets than majors based outside the country. While the domination of the Canadian record buying market by external majors (and their artists) may be a consequence of consumer preferences, the market is uneven because the majors are in a position to dominate and they help construct those preferences in the first place. To complicate matters further both Canadian artists and labels are facilitated by the major labels.

After the Dutch, Canadians are the second highest record buyers per head of population in the world (Can. Composer no.229, 1988, p.20). Yet, with a population of around 27 million, they form only 3% of the global market for popular music (D. Osborn, *pers. comm.*). South of the 49th parallel the USA has a population ten times bigger, one which speaks the same language and forms the world's largest national market for popular music. By 1987 record sales in the USA totalled over \$8 billion in comparison to around \$1 billion



in Canada (*Can. Business* v.60/10, 1987, p.32). Inevitably, a much larger recording and broadcasting industry has developed to serve the US market.

If we choose to see culture in national terms, then one avenue is to consider different frameworks for appraising the relationships between national cultures. *Structural imperialism* is the idea that one country's culture can penetrate another territory *solely* because the invading country controls a larger, more capitalized machinery of media and cultural production. The idea specifies that culture is materially transmitted but ignores its content. However, the empirical circumstances outlined above (a fragmented, small domestic market) mean that for Canadian artists to release records and promote them abroad is more than a temptation; it is an economic necessity. Since Canadian musicians and other cultural producers see the USA as a target market, they may have to tailor their work to the tastes of foreign listeners. Furthermore the US market not only affects the production of Canadian music itself, but also the consumption of such music within Canada. Concerns about national identity have prompted the Canadian federal State to address structural weaknesses in its country's cultural industries. One seminal body furthering this process was the Massey Commission, which reported on

the basis of a series of surveys, hearings and briefs between 1949 and 1951.<sup>3</sup>

According to Litt (1991, p.380) not only were the Commission's hearings dominated by "intellectuals, cultural bureaucrats, artists and voluntary associations" but "the commissioners themselves were drawn exclusively from what could be called Canada's cultural elite". To reinforce their particular view of what the nation should support in Canada, the notion of popular culture as being an American cancer was taken up from the USA. The main thrust came from the American middle class Left studying their nation's popular culture, whose discourse became an export commodity, taken up by Canadians, then the British a little later.<sup>4</sup> At Massey Commission hearings, organizations representing Canada's cultural community blamed America for a lack of identity North of the US border, as both countries shared a continent and language, but the USA had economies of scale. It was argued that having a large national market meant US programmers could specialize in techniques to increase ratings. The fact that niche markets could also be targeted was ignored in attempts to portray US popular culture as monolithic. High culture was conflated with Canadian

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<sup>3</sup> Information on the Massey Commission used here is drawn from Litt (1991).

<sup>4</sup> One classic text from Britain based on these ideas was Richard Hoggart's The Uses of Literacy (1957; see Hebdidge, 1988, p.50).

culture, so to be recognized as Canadian culture any activity *had* to be highbrow. Litt (1991, p.381) has suggested "Cultural elitism buttressed nationalism by providing it with a distinct identity and a conviction of moral superiority. For the cultural elite, on the other hand, nationalism offered the popular appeal necessary to overcome public suspicions of elite culture. It was a potent ideological brew."

The Massey Commission's report assumed that Canada could set an example to the USA and that cultural elitism was a worthy way to build a nation. The first paradox created was that ideologically the elite of America were more associated with the particular way in which Canadian nationalism developed than working class Canadians were, while the second was that average citizens *appeared* to have a contradictory response since they were both nationalist and fervent consumers of American popular culture. Elites in Canada walked a fine line between blaming the masses for betrayal and co-opting the cause of the nation for their own chosen projects. However, if the Massey Commission played upon a kind of hiatus in national identity, within the country Canadians had always had some of their own popular pleasures. One crucial example has been *Hockey Night In Canada*, a weekly institution (dating back over thirty years) and traditionally the most popular television program in the country (Woods, 1983, p.299).

Some of the cultural policies formed in recognition of the Massey Commission's findings were unusual in that they actively set up (rather than passively preserved) cultural institutions in the face of perceived US penetration. The Massey Commission persuaded the government to subsidize Canadian arts at a time of prevalent post war growth and with an ethic of Keynesianism. The Commission wanted agencies at arm's length from the state to encourage and build but not direct and specify Canadian culture. Additional federal funding for the country's universities, the Canada Council and extended public broadcasting were amongst the results. Thus early cultural policies both conserved some institutions and actively constructed others. The actions of the Massey Commission may have facilitated education and television broadcasting, and promoted minority and high cultures, but they avoided pop music. If those citizens influencing the Massey Commission saw high culture as the only form of Canadian cultural expression worthy of support, then their policy implied that anything perceived as both foreign and a form of popular culture, such as rock, was an unsuitable way to build the nation.

Difficulties latent in this way of thinking were highlighted when commercial television became regulated to increase Canadian content following the 1958 Broadcasting Act. Cheap Canadian quiz shows were generally popular and

increased audience ratings (*Maclean's* v.75/3, 1962, p.54). Yet, although the shows had been made in Canada and became popular, they were frowned upon since their contents did not associate Canada with high quality programming (*Maclean's* v.83/4, 1970, p.111). Consequently the Fowler Commission was established to investigate Canadian broadcasting. In 1965 that Commission argued that Canada's public broadcaster, the CBC, had to shoulder too much of the weight of the nation by itself, especially in the context of competition from an array of private broadcasters.<sup>5</sup> Designating the airwaves as public property and the broadcasting system as a unified field could balance competition between the CBC and other stations (Russell, 1966, p.261). In a climate of centennial nationalism, discussions peaked and in 1968 the new Broadcasting Act was established. As a result it allowed a new arms-length state body, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to be created. In 1971 the CRTC began a radio regulation which specified that a proportion of selections played on air had to be Canadian in content. It became popularly known as '*Cancon*'.

While the CRTC's radio regulations were for any kind of music (classical, traditional or popular) on radio, they *de facto* marked the first step towards supporting a specifically Canadian popular culture in relation to music.

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<sup>5</sup> CBC stands for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

They formed a way to encourage the replacement of imports with home product, and could potentially allow Canadian rock in general to improve upon its marginal predicament. Perhaps more importantly, they were also a recognition of the lobbying power of an embryonic music industry at the time (Yorke, 1971). If the Canadian music industry has become implicated within a national project, especially since the end of the 1960s, it is important to explore the relationship between music and the nation.

This thesis aims to explore the social relations around music production and consumption in a context of nationalism. It looks at how facts of mattering have begun to alter matters of fact. As such, it is more selective than anything claiming to be an objective report on the music industry in Canada. Concern here focuses on disputes over how Canadians are represented, who claims the right to speak for the nation, who qualifies who as 'Canadian' and to what that gives them access. A grounding consideration is therefore to clarify who is influencing whom by using the name of the nation and what reasons exist for them to do so. Each chapter highlights a different industry integral to the production and consumption of music in Canada and its export abroad. These industries form the grounds for debate because they are terrains of struggle over which the content and use of national identity are negotiated.

Academic sources in this particular area are relatively scarce. Outside the country, Canadian music or the industry behind it has rarely been examined, except by a small handful of researchers specifically looking at nations on the margin of large markets (Wallace and Malm, 1984). However, since it is an area of concern in Canada, the empirical predicament of national culture in general has been studied widely. Yet it is only recently that academics have paid serious attention to the music industry, rather than other media such as television and film. So far the work produced (Grant, 1986; Wright, 1988; and several articles in Cultural Studies v.3/5, 1991) has been exploratory and, with a few exceptions (Gill, 1993; Shepherd, 1993) lacking theoretical foundations. In fact some of it has been distinctly *essentialist* in tone, meaning that it expressed the idea that Canadian music has an *essence* which determines that it should be a particular way.

Such studies assume that Canadian music has a unifying quality and search for that sound, only to encounter definitional difficulties. For example ex-video jockey Laurie Brown wrote an essentialist piece about Canadian music for the journal Cultural Studies. She argued "country-flavoured pop is essentially Canadian pop music" (1991, p.351). Brown then had to extend the definition musically

and exclude certain acts.<sup>6</sup> Consequently the work insulted certain musicians by making a particular (re)definition of Canadian identity and assuming the US owns all popular formulas. Brown went on to say about Quebec, "disappointingly, much of their own pop music is in English" (p.352). This phrase acted to restrict what some people in Quebec could feel comfortable doing because it imposed the author's own disappointments on to fellow citizens. In such ways material for academic audiences based upon an ethos of uncritical nationalism often contain the biases of popular writing, and they are often *less* informed and more obviously project orientated than popular sources. The aim of this thesis is not to place Canadian bands uncritically upon essentialist scales which rate them as more or less Canadian, since the whole point is to demystify that way of thinking as supporting a narrow and unfair project of national identification. Seeking out the betrayers and defenders of national identity is also a flawed exercise because it could be argued that the notion of national identity is itself a fluid one.

Even the more heartening and well informed academic work on the Canadian music industry comes to an impasse because it cannot justify supporting Canadian culture. For example

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<sup>6</sup> "The Band took the music of the folk scene and soaked it in Arkansas rock ... [other] people [Loverboy, The Spoons, Honeymoon Suite] had no Canadian voice at all; they were made to fit the US formula" (Brown, 1991, p.351).



Wright (1991, p.310) attacked William Watson's analysis *National Pastimes: the economics of Canadian leisure* (1988) because it used the essentialist idea of "Canadianess" to vet the material produced as a way of measuring the efficiency of Cancon. However, Wright (1991, p.315) went on to celebrate protectionism for increasing the "volume and range of Canadian recorded product available for Canadian consumers" without saying *why* that fact is important. Work such as Wright's borders on a structural imperialist position and so reaches an impasse because it specifies that culture is materially transmitted but ignores its contents.

Writing in early twentieth century Italy, Antonio Gramsci examined popular culture and the nation. Rick Gruneau (1988, p.17) has suggested that since "representations of Nation were fundamental to the social and cultural struggles of the 1960s and 1970s and were sometimes articulated in surprisingly progressive ways", it is odd that Gramsci's ideas have not been taken up in studies of popular culture in Canada. It could be argued that Gramsci's conception of the *National Popular* provides a useful framework for the scrutiny of the predicament of popular music made by Canadians in relation to the State and national identity. To clarify that claim, the context, details, more recent uses, and relevance of his work will be explained.

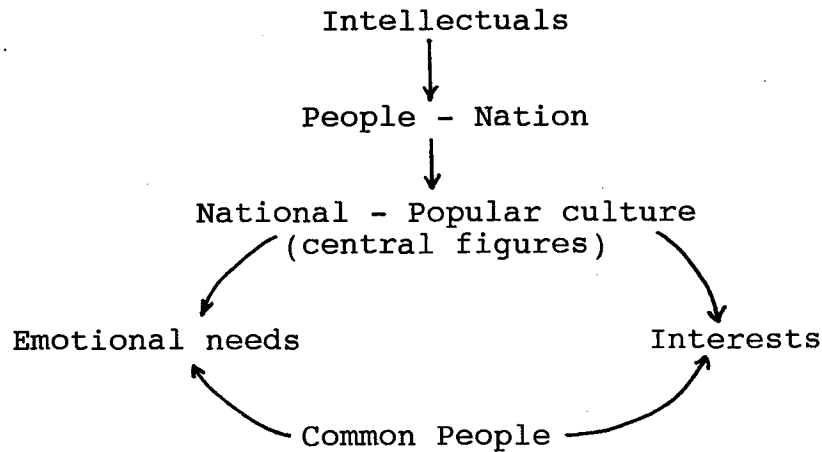
Gramsci grew up in one Southern province of the newly unified nation state of Italy, late in the nineteenth century. The country had been formed from a collection of separate territories in 1861 (6 years before Canada) and in Gramsci's lifetime was undergoing social, cultural, geographic and political transformations. Italy had a large relic peasant population, strong regional cultures, and an industrializing urban heartland in the North which all pulled it apart in different directions. Against this turbulence an emergent fascist party took control of the nation during the 1920's (Forgacs, 1990, p.26). As a young man Gramsci migrated from his home in the South to a Northern industrial city and became actively involved in Communist politics. He became a founder and then general secretary of the Italian Communist Party and as a result was arrested in Parliament in 1926 and imprisoned until he died in 1937 (Femia, 1975, p.30).

Through more recent recognition of his work, Gramsci has been acclaimed by some as the most important figure in twentieth century Western Marxism (Femia, 1975, p.29) and the most acclaimed Marxist writer on popular culture (Dombroski, 1978, p.168). However, anybody directly interested in Gramsci's writing faces a daunting task for a number of reasons. Before his confinement Gramsci followed a course of *praxis*, actively engaging theory with his actions and experience in the real world to improve the

effectiveness of his politics. Once in prison, although he became less militant and more reflective (Dombroski, 1978, p.169), he continued to engage theory and empirical information through an interest in culture. From prison he wrote down his thoughts on Italian culture and other topics in a series of 33 notebooks, *the Quaderni* (Hartley, 1984, p.171). They were a fragmentary, provisional and incomplete record of his ideas, which provide outlines for further study. Gramsci's method of praxis meant that his ideas took shape rather than appeared as systematically expounded works. Moreover, to circumvent the prison censors he is believed to have frequently used code words and euphemisms (Femia, 1975, p.30).

Through his notebooks Gramsci developed the notion of 'hegemony'. This term means *leadership*, the domination of one group by another with the consent of the dominated group. Gramsci's project was an empirical exploration of capitalist societies in order to uncover the modes of hegemony which made them function smoothly. As such, the term was used in different ways in his work to explore culture, education and party politics. However, our attention here can be focussed upon ways in which his exploration of hegemony became concerned with popular culture.

Figure 1: The National Popular within cultural hegemony



(Source: Compiled from Forgacs and Nowell-Smith, 1985)

Gramsci became concerned with cultural politics to further his Marxism because he realized that popular culture spoke to *the common people*, but could be written and appropriated by anybody interested in leading them. Figure 1 shows how the National Popular fitted into Gramsci's concern with the cultural side of hegemony. He was certain that progressive political and cultural development required a national phase (Rosa, 1978, p.111), during which the National Popular was constructed and put to use. At the lowest level he realized that popular culture spoke to the interests and emotional needs (p.300) of the common people.<sup>7</sup> The distinction between interests and needs was made because Gramsci saw the former as time and place specific (p.347).

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<sup>7</sup> Page numbers directly attributed to Gramsci are drawn from Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith eds., 1985).

For Gramsci the term 'intellectual' was used in different ways (Rosa, 1978, p.107). In fact Gramsci's notion of what is meant by the label intellectual constitutes a radical break from tradition and suggests a more encompassing definition than is commonly held. While we normally think of an intellectual simply as an academic scholar, Gramsci used the term 'intellectual' to describe any person producing something meaningful and therefore speaking to the people. In Gramsci's work intellectuals could be cultural producers working in entertainment, education, or party politics. Gramsci's method was radical because he threw these categories into flux and therefore politicized areas which we do not normally consider as warranting political attention.

In the political dimension of hegemony an intellectual is any person appropriating the National Popular in order to speak for the people. To show how that took place Gramsci included the example of *Jacobinism* in the formation of France as a nation. Jacobinism was the name given to a type of populist politics in which one elite could wrest power from others contesting the right to rule the nation by aligning with the common people. Gramsci argued that in a similar way a constituency which he called the people-nation (p.293) was bonded together by the National Popular and could be appropriated for political ends.

Gramsci was concerned with hegemony because it was a mechanism which could move a country in different political directions depending upon the intellectuals involved. Therefore he made a distinction between bourgeois and 'organic' (working class) intellectuals (Rosa, 1978, p.107). Bourgeois intellectuals could only write culture from a bourgeois point of view, which meant that the consciousness of the working class would be hidden by a culture constructed around the *similarity* of individual middle class experiences (p.291). Gramsci thought that in reality this would create a *hierarchical* National Popular and in a more progressive situation an *egalitarian* National Popular could be produced by organic intellectuals (p.209). The class consciousness created could provide an environment in which a vanguard party could lead the workers and peasants into revolution.

The net result of these over-arching concerns was that Gramsci took an immense interest in the internal workings of the popular culture in his own time and place. Gramsci's concern with his country came from its role as an arena for his own praxis. His concern with any Italian National Popular was that it could become drawn into such praxis. Thus Gramsci carefully managed to avoid an empirical quagmire of regional and peasant cultures (Rosa, 1978, p.111) by choosing particular popular entertainments which included the theatre, popular fiction, opera and concerts

(Forgacs and Nowell-Smith, 1985, p.20). What he found was Italy had little celebrated material in most aspects of its National Popular because of the hegemony of foreign cultural producers upon the Italian people. He developed his key ideas from the example of popular literature. Gramsci suggested that because the public preferred to read the serialized popular fiction of foreign authors they underwent the moral and intellectual *hegemony* of those authors. Thus, while the Italian State planned for hegemony over its citizens it was itself subjected to hegemony, in that its own people liked foreign literature.

At the same time, although bourgeois Italian intellectuals were writing material which most of their fellow citizens did not like, they claimed their work was what defined the culture of Italy as a nation. Italy's bourgeois intellectuals had co-opted the cause of the nation so as not to feel the weight of the people against them: claiming to do something in the national interest was a way to avoid the label of dissent and regressive consequences it entailed (p.255). Yet by doing this the bourgeois intellectuals were claiming to know and define the people; they were speaking for the entire corpus of citizens rather than just themselves. Gramsci argued Italy's own literary culture was not national, since it was not popular and had no central figures (p.264). In effect, the common people had imported their popular culture. Italy had no separate *National*

*Popular* element in fiction, since what was claimed as Italian literature was not popular with most of the country's citizens. However, the public were not totally prone to exoticism, since they preferred Italian music (p. 255).

Gramsci thus presents a view of culture which is based at the national scale and suggests that both the content of culture and the cause of the nation *matter*. Moreover, it is a (consenting) victim's view of culture. As a collective group, the nation is a victim of certain forms of foreign popular culture, a weak State and (if that social group considered nationalism important) bourgeois Italian intellectuals. The State is a victim of its accountability to the common people, its own free trade policy and both Italian and foreign bourgeois intellectuals. The foreign writers and Italian intellectuals appear to benefit the most from the whole situation. Gramsci implies that the situation matters most to the Italian State, whose effort to make its country separate is undermined by allowing the import of assumptions embedded in foreign popular culture. Thus it must be realized that Gramsci's schema is not a panacea of studies of popular culture since it has too narrow a focus. While it does not dwell on consumers' views of culture, what the schema can explore well is the role of the State.



The whole schema presents Italy as the stage for a play teeming with *ironies*; it is a farce for which the readers are the audience. In research for the chapters which follow, numerous ironies emerged, so perhaps the notion of *irony* itself needs further examination.<sup>8</sup>

Muecke (1988) argued a situation is ironic if the audience gets a painful and comic feeling from viewing characters who do not understand the full context of their actions and cannot see beyond the immediate environment to find they are mistaken. That feeling stems from a discrepancy between immediate appearances and a wider reality (Muecke, 1988, pp.5, 30). The first thing irony suggests is a *distance* between the observer from the situation involved; a distance from which writers and intellectuals have drawn their authority, position, and power to explain something. Historically irony was used as a ploy to change world views by showing that with distance the universe no longer

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<sup>8</sup> Many commentators have found that irony is a defining feature of Canadian culture. For example Linda Hutcheon (1991) has found irony to be the key feature of a certain genre of Canadian writing. Similarly Barry Grant (1986, p.124) has argued irony may be the "most distinctive feature" of Canadian popular music. The study of that characteristic is avoided here because to claim that Canadian culture is *essentially* ironic is to potentially influence the style of music that Canadians can make while feeling comfortable as citizens. We are enquiring about irony here because Canada's cultural industries are riddled with ironies stemming from their international and historical predicaments. However, in so far that individual cultural producers are also subjected to these circumstances it is not surprising that they sometimes produce ironic work.

appeared cosmologically orchestrated (Muecke, 1988, pp.35, 80).

In the current context irony serves to take the conspiratorial edge off *cultural imperialism* hypotheses which suggest that foreign media are colluding to prevent the formation of a Canadian national identity.<sup>9</sup> As a political device the secret of irony is that while it *appears* to stem from a distanced objectivity, it puts the audience in a concealed moral position towards the selected situation by raising the issue that particular things *matter*. Theodore Adorno thus advocated the use of irony as a strategic political tool (Rose, 1978, p.18), yet Gramsci makes us more sympathetic with each group involved in his schema by showing the contexts within which they operate. Nonetheless his schema is still full of ironies which imply that the content of culture and nation matter. It repositions concerns about imperialism *within* the nation rather than looking outside; yet it does not step back far enough to let us see the full implications of cultural interaction for more than one country. To see how Gramsci's idea is orientated to this national scale it needs to be clarified by returning to his own writings.

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<sup>9</sup> See Tomlinson (1991) and Laing (1986) for critiques of the discourse of cultural imperialism, the latter concerning the music industry.

For Gramsci the National Popular as a whole entity was a consciousness, a "reality" (p.247), a "spirit" (p.319), a "deeper cultural substance" (p.123) which created a "bond of democratic solidarity" (p.325) between the people and intellectuals. So, given the grounds for Gramsci's concern with culture, it is possible to argue that the National Popular was a vital foundation of his theoretical structure. The concept contained different forms of entertainment and these were internally divided into sections, so for example commercial literature was a section of literature which was part of the National Popular (p.348). Just as his own interest in theatre pushed him towards fiction and then across a range of pastimes, Gramsci insisted that people studying the National Popular should broaden their horizons to look at the popular culture of each country as a whole (p.209). In reality, he suggested that if a country is lacking in one National Popular pastime, its citizens may make up for it by celebrating other types of entertainment which were produced by their nation (p.378).

While Gramsci has provided grounds for discussion by both subsequent Western Marxists and students of popular culture, his views on the National Popular have not been widely explored. However he became a champion for Marxist humanists concerned with the dissolution of working class culture as Britain changed in the 1950s. In fact both 'Hegemony' and the 'Popular' are included as entries in Raymond Williams'

Keywords (1976). The concern from such founding fathers of cultural studies was partly a conservative and romantic attempt to dismiss an emergent ideology of classlessness and partly an exploration of their own working class backgrounds. When Gramsci returned as a focus for the Birmingham school in the late 1970s, emphasis was upon the way in which his ideas put popular culture into a progressive framework. An opportunity was created which allowed history to be written from *below*, including working class pleasures, and creating a standpoint from which the subaltern could speak (Hall, 1978, p.8-10). This was part of a wider reactivation of Gramsci's ideas in order to explore their potential for uniting Marxism with other struggles (Gruneau, 1988, p.25).

The British concern with Gramsci did not explore the imperialist aspects of hegemony for at least two reasons. Firstly Gramsci's ideas on imperialism had been marginal within Western Marxism, as writers wanted to address other issues explored by Gramsci within the rubric of hegemony (Hartley, 1975, p.176-178). Secondly Gramsci's specifically cultural writings had not been collected in any English translation, and were dispersed over his prison notebooks until Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith eds) appeared in 1985. The Open University's *Popular Culture* Course team had taken up the an interest in Gramsci from the Birmingham school, and a year

after his new collection of writings were translated, published a book reflecting the results of their concern for his work (Bennett ed, 1986). Again Gramsci's notion of hegemony as a mechanism of imperialism was ignored. One reason could have been that the international aspect of hegemony was not thought relevant to studies of Britain's situation. Also, explorations of Gramsci's ideas in the UK stumbled upon the problem of *defining* the popular (Gruneau, 1988, p.22). To summarize, Antonio Gramsci's writings are based around the ironic case of a nation which remained coherent in spite of the influence of foreign intellectuals upon most of its citizens. The close study of his work shows that Gramsci was forging a particular notion of cultural imperialism which hinged upon the question of who wrote the country's National Popular. For various reasons academics have neglected to address that question with the framework which Gramsci constructed. In fact they have usually taken up other aspects of his work.

If we are to use it as a theoretical foundation, the legitimacy of taking Gramsci's imperialist notion of hegemony and using it for our own aim is important to consider. To Gramsci, an organic intellectual was a leader from the working class who could emerge to make cultural products charged with the unifying consciousness of that class. Patterson (1975) has shown that in Country music organic intellectuals changed as they became incorporated

into a capitalist framework of musical exchange. Since Anglo-American rock was *always* within that framework, and not produced by organic intellectuals, our interest in the music is not aimed to redeem it for any socialist project. This brings up the question of how legitimate it is to tear out one part of Gramsci's overall schema. Gramsci himself borrowed ideas from different sources. He followed Lenin in his belief in a vanguard party and he followed Hegel in an intense concern for empirical matters. Moreover, his views on nationalist politics can be traced back to Vincent Gioberti and Italian Democrats who took up the idea of Jacobinism by analyzing French politics (Rosa, 1978, p.109). Given the way he took on other influences and was deeply concerned with well informed empirical work, the current use of Gramsci's work is not necessarily a problem, especially if we realize his immediate goal was to understand the interests of the State in popular culture as a way of building the nation. Hence the question of whether we can address 'the people' as a coherent and working class entity is not relevant in this context. The people are national citizens whatever class they come from because our interest is an immediate one of building national culture rather than working class culture *per se*. Furthermore the current study leaves wide open any political directions in which the nation could go. What is artificial is the *limiting* of this thesis to popular music.

One advantage of using Gramsci's framework is that one can avoid unrealistic theoretical assumptions which treat popular culture as a monolithic entity or as something outside the fabric of society. Gramsci claimed that for some people popular pleasures are more than just individual obsessions, since they relate to a context of collective identity. The idea appeals because it does not specify the contents of national identity yet moves beyond structural imperialist concepts by both avoiding external specters and explaining how the contents of culture matter. The result is to open up popular culture and its key vehicle, the media, as sites of struggle.

Especially since the secondary literature is so limited, Gramsci's scheme allows us to look at primary sources of material in Canada in order to understand popular culture on its own terms. Concern is therefore with the internal workings of culture, but this use of sources has several disadvantages. Nearly all the material written about rock in English have been Anglo-American in both assumptions and application, since historically the bulk of popular music made and sold since the early 1960s has originated from America or Britain.<sup>10</sup> However, within Canada a small but

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<sup>10</sup> Difficulties of access and referencing meant that television and radio programs have rarely been used here in anything but a cursory way. However, this is not to deny that shows such as *'The New Music'* and *'Good Rockin' Tonight'* have a large impact on current collective interpretations of Canadian music.

growing stream of eulogies has begun to appear linking Canadian bands to essences of national identity or tracing out histories which function in the same way by searching for a common thread between bands (Yorke, 1971; Goddard and Kamin, 1989; Fetherling, 1991). For example, in the middle of an excellent, comprehensive dissertation on The Band in his book 'Some Day Soon', Douglas Fetherling (1991, p.94) states that Garth Hudson was the member of the group who "looked the most Canadian". Hence Fetherling's romantic tones smuggled in an insult which implied that people can look more or less Canadian. A more objective and industry-sensitive body of writing about Canadian music has been in trade magazines. The country manages to support several music industry and specialist periodical publications (*The Record*, *RPM*, *Canadian Musician*, and SOCAN's *Canadian Composer*) but no longer has any national newsstand consumer magazines.<sup>11</sup> However, articles in "Canada's National Magazine", *Maclean's*, have provided a largely Torontocentric, nationalist view of the country's culture while daily newspaper stories and reviews also represent a prolific primary record.

These sources have been drawn upon extensively as they are both widely circulated and form a detailed archive of the

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<sup>11</sup> SOCAN is Canada's current main performing rights society for songwriters, the acronym stands for the Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers of Canada.



history of popular music made by Canadians. However, critical interpretations of their contents are limited because their own reporting is selective; hence there is a limit to the amount of cross-referencing possible between these sources. Furthermore, while reports on individual bands are common, discussions which include more than one Canadian act are relatively rare. As such, it is difficult to call the occasional and fragmentary comments on Canadian music as a whole something approaching a discourse. So any choice to examine Canadian popular culture through the lens of the popular press implies its own difficulties. Nonetheless *Maclean's*, Canada's daily newspapers and the trade magazines are vital sources of information on an otherwise largely neglected industry.

However, if we are to use Gramsci's ideas it is necessary to examine their immediate advantages and shortcomings for this project. In order to do this we must explain how the unifying potential of nationality can be understood. For its citizens, Benedict Anderson (1983) described nation as a kind of imagined community, which means that while nobody knows everybody else in their nation, citizens usually feel some form of allegiance with one another. As a basis for identity, what is important about the nation is not so much that it is imagined (as all large communities are) but that most people are born into their national citizenship. Crucially, although citizenship is a fundamental and

recognized aspect of personal identity, certain aspects of what it means to be a member of the corpus of citizens are perpetually open to negotiation. For anyone with a separate but non-contradictory project, national unity is an invaluable resource as it can be co-opted to further those other, external aims.

For example Hebdidge (1988, p.219) has suggested that the *Live Aid* famine relief concert, organized by a pair of British people (Bob Geldof and Midge Ure), showed that what it meant to be British was to care for people of other nationalities. Importantly, this took place at a time when politicians in that country implied that to be British was to care foremost about oneself and one's family. Hence, as citizenship is something which members of any constituency are likely to have in common, in one sense the nation forms a kind of outer container for many diverse projects. It forms what could be called a *foundational resource*, a position from which to speak advantageously about other matters. Lawrence Grossberg (1992, p.381) has shown how, in the USA, right wing politicians have latched on to such apparent absolutes as bases from which to build their arguments. Opposing their arguments makes one appear to oppose the mutually agreed premise (the nation) and thus feel guilty.

Returning to Gramsci's schema, a problem which dogs both the Italian scenario and other concepts of cultural imperialism is the possibility of people *reinterpreting* what they read or listen to in the light of their own nationality. In a sense cultural identity must be weak in the first place for foreign material to appeal in an all embracing way. Furthermore Gramsci saw any hegemonic culture as *consented*: Italians read foreign novels (usually serialized in newspapers and magazines) because they liked them. Foreign writers somehow appealed to them, when Italian writers did not. Also he implied that for the exporters of culture the needs of the foreign market are not purposefully factored in to the process of cultural production, which only applies to producers who have export as a secondary concern. This may apply to American cultural products in relation to Canada, since from the US Canada is seen as a secondary market. Gramsci reasoned that if a country was highly susceptible to foreign influences its citizens would have no market for their own cultural products. Hence he assumed that any nation involved in prolific cultural production was autonomous, since its culture was not significantly affected by outside influences.

In the realm of consumption, Gramsci argued that imported cultural products contained intellectual and moral assumptions from their country of origin. Allied to this, with the example of popular fiction, Gramsci assumed a

simplistic division between foreign and indigenous literary content. While foreign works would not be read in Italy if they did not appeal to the people, this appeal acted to carry foreign assumptions to those Italian citizens. The question is where we can draw the line between these two elements of content, if at all. Thus a problem immediately appears because it could be those very imported assumptions which both sell the product abroad and unify the customer nation's culture. It appears that Gramsci considered imported hegemonic assumptions were influential enough to prevent the internal formation of a national identity in certain spheres of popular culture, even though the country's other cultural industries (in his case, opera) were strong enough to export Italian products.

This brings us back to the role of the State. In democratic societies, the term 'nation' denotes the *hegemony* of a State over all the inhabitants belonging to a certain geographical space. In Gramsci's schema the importation of cultural products matters specifically to the State because of the cross border transfer of moral and intellectual assumptions involved. Thus it seems clear that we can talk about a *national project* in the singular: the need of the State to build a separate culture constructed and accepted by most of its citizens. In its widest sense this can involve mechanisms which include the promotion of model citizens, and the presentation of the nation as a coherent

and prestigious entity (ready for recognition by foreign countries) for example during the Olympic Games.

If we rule out essentialism, the option of rejecting Gramsci's framework would only leave us with job and revenue creation as criteria for judging cultural policies. This actually amounts to the State itself using the nation as a foundational resource to further its aim of balancing the budget and restoring accountability. Since in the cultural industries a very high proportion of the money spent turns directly into wages (*Maclean's* v.98/11, 1985, p.53), it could have strong Keynesian implications. Also any policy creating jobs in Canada's cultural industries could have the spin off of building cultural unity. Nonetheless, using job creation as the sole criterion from which to judge is to misunderstand the State's interest in culture. The test is to see whether State intervention into the nation's recording and broadcasting industries has created more jobs, and in what quantity. It would seem strange that the State would both choose to invest in the cultural industries (rather than those with more potential for job creation with a larger market) and use its policies to celebrate the nation if it was *only* interested in job creation.

Gramsci implies the ultimate goal of the State is to encourage indigenous production in as many cultural industries as possible. In the schema, he presented the

State as ineffective (p.349). This suggests that, as a democratically elected and accountable body, it did not have the power to change the predicament of the nation. However, Gramsci felt it might be possible for radical groups to castigate the State for its inactivity on matters of national unity. If the State decided to act more severely the implication is that it would either have to censor imports or stem the flow of literary free trade, which could prove unpopular with the masses, or channel the energies of Italian writers towards popular fiction. That would be difficult for Italy's writers, who had already co-opted the national cause for their own purposes. Either path would thus be nearly impossible to follow. Furthermore, the Fascist State was in the 1920's presenting Italy as an ageless nation when the country was only recently built out of a collection of provinces (p.201). Because the government aimed to draw on tradition and the people's choice was part of that tradition (p.349) authorities could not successfully change the people's taste by the criticism of popular culture.

His focus on the State meant that Gramsci tended to make the structure of the media a marginal concern. In Italy that was the machinery which serialized and presented foreign novels to the Italian public. In Canada one part of the media takes the form of broadcasters who bring American, Canadian and other music to the people. In capitalist

societies the media operate in order to make a profit. However the unusual thing about the media in Canada is that struggles for control have also become *both* a bid by intellectuals to co-opt the cause of the nation in order to avoid feeling its weight and an attempt by the State to realign the National Popular. It could be argued that such a duality has effectively shifted the dilemmas involved from the state to the citizens themselves. Initially, unlike Gramsci, the Canadian State took a coherent view of the popular which had no room for the production or export of particular forms of the country's popular culture. Fears of Americanization formed the cornerstone of an argument which suggested Canada's culture made it different and could be talked of as a coherent entity. Later, effectively following a strategy which Gramsci recognized, the government began to view Canadian musicians and record labels as significant cultural producers. Yet the Canadian State has been sensitive to something that Gramsci did not explore: the danger of regional cultures *rejecting* the cause of the nation.

In this thesis each chapter examines different facets of the process by which music made by Canadians is facilitated, heard and appropriated. Chapter one aims to question views of Canadian music presented to consumers and to ask whether we can identify a unified Canadian sound and thus support an essentialist position, or whether Canadian artists should be

seen as part of a different type of unity, a National Popular. This chapter uncovers how Canadian artists achieving popularity are appropriated, remembered and collectively represented by the media. It begins by introducing and clarifying the specifics of a musical National Popular, interrogates the notion of a Canadian sound, explores the role of Canada's regions and finally examines various historical candidates for a musical element of the National Popular.

It has been shown here that the Canadian State has changed its policy orientation towards popular culture and in a sense become more active than the Italian State in Gramsci's schema. While, in various ways, the State is included in all the chapters of this thesis, chapters two and three aim to highlight its central links to the music industry. Chapter two is concerned with relations between Canadian broadcasters and the CRTC, which determines what qualifies as Canadian music and how much of it can be played. If representation forms the central topic of the first chapter, that concern also forms part of this chapter due to the public nature of recent debates around Cancon. Thus the story of how one central figure in Canada's National Popular, Bryan Adams, publicly called the CRTC to account is analyzed.



In Chapter three we move away from public issues to look at the way in which the sound recording industry determines whether artists are recorded and promoted in the first place and how popular they become. Then a link between the federal State and the music industry outside of the CRTC's realm is examined; aid to the recording industry through the Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent On Record (FACTOR). While most chapters are written in Gramsci's spirit, facing popular culture on its own terms, the material in chapter three contains issues outside the realm of debate for most consumers. Thus we can explore new aspects of the relationship between the State and music industry. For instance, in chapter three we can deduce whether FACTOR has created significantly more jobs than before the music industry received external funding.

Part of the pleasure of music is that it is also a symbolic resource; bands can play with identity at the same time as playing their tunes, and audiences take meaning from songs not just through the lyrics but from the context within which they are presented. Chapter four inverts the concerns of chapter one to examine how Canadian bands actively participate in representations of the nation. It investigates the concert promotion industry, sponsorship and the operations of various bodies recognizing Canadian musicians, in order to show how Canadian music is placed into contexts of spectacle glorifying the nation.

The chapters thus form a series of inter-related Gramscian farces in which context has been stressed over irony, although most readers will undoubtedly find irony as they interpret events from their own positions. What Gramsci provides us with is one schema which, given its inductive specifications and shortcomings, will be positioned on the sidelines for most of the following discussion. The concluding chapter brings what has been found back to the schema and applies the result to a question hanging over the future of Canadian popular culture in general and Canadian music in particular: that of free trade.

## Chapter Two

### It Sounds Canadian

[*Blue Rodeo's* Greg] Keelor explained his frustration as a kid watching television's *Captain Kangaroo*, a program filled with American references. Said Keelor "I'd ask my mother why I didn't swear the pledge of allegiance and she'd say 'Because you're Canadian.'" "'What's that?'" said Keelor, in a child's voice. "'We're not sure,'" replied [Jim] Cuddy, imitating Keelor's mother.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter aims to clarify what is being looked for in Canadian music as an element of the National Popular. We will begin by examining some of the ways in which songs recorded by Canadians have been lumped together by commentators in particular ways for specific reasons. These can be seen as essentialist collective appropriations of Canadian music. Next, the potential regional obstacles to a musical component of the National Popular are explored. Finally some trends which might be worthy of consideration as candidates for the rock element in Canada's National Popular are scrutinized. The trends which are considered as significant include Coffee house folk, hoser rock and the latest roots and format crossing trends.<sup>2</sup>

In order to consider Gramsci's ideas against more essentialist viewpoints, the notion of a Canadian sound can

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<sup>1</sup> From '*Urban Cowboys*' by N.Jennings in *Maclean's* (v.102/16, 17/4/89, p.59).

<sup>2</sup> A format is a musical ghetto on radio creating a particular sound identity, often around a particular genre of music. It is one way for broadcasters to target audience segments and appeal to particular advertisers.

be explored. The term *sound* suggests a degree of heard coherence and therefore a shared musical project or production environment. The idea of a national or regional sound assumes an association between that sound and the geographical area it comes from and, by implication, the population belonging to that area. Here the group of people is the Canadian nation; a national sound thus relates to the subjectivity of *being* Canadian. Presuming that a Canadian sound forms part of Canada's cultural identity, the notion of such a sound appeals to those seeking to build an industrial infrastructure (to create or preserve a Canadian sound) and critics of free trade (who wish to protect a Canadian sound and industry).

One danger of defining any sound is the exclusive nature of such a definition's inherent logic. Since a Canadian sound would have to be distinct, in theory it may also be possible to define an Un-Canadian sound, somehow less tied to the nation. If the notion rests on more than a binary division, it may also be possible to label other sounds as being more Canadian, too Canadian or conversely not yet Canadian.<sup>3</sup> If a Canadian sound is defined by music rather than common production, other sounds made in Canada could be

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<sup>3</sup> Artists and Repertoire (A&R) staff at record labels function to discover and sign new bands. One A&R person said to Halifax folk singer Lenny Gallant that his songs sounded "too Canadian" (*Halifax Chronicle Herald* 9/5/90, p.C5). However, A&R people are notorious for finding suitable excuses not to sign acts.

ignored, submerged within a cacophony of everything we have not chosen to define as Canadian. Alternatively, it is possible to move away from the need for any definition to include a common sound if we take Gramsci's notion, that a National Popular culture has simply to be made and liked by the citizens of the country concerned. Yet in Canada sounds made by foreigners could be more popular with listeners than those made by Canadians.

Usually it is assumed that a sound is somehow endorsed by its listeners; but in this case the question becomes which listeners we use to gauge the degree of endorsement. Paradoxically, Canadians have traditionally recognized their own sound through its popularity with American listeners (*Can. Musician* v.8/3, 1990, p.40). Yet it seems unlikely that Americans realize they are hearing a different sound from their own when they hear Canadian music and whether they even differentiate sounds in this manner is open to question. One dangerous implication of defining a Canadian sound by its Canadian makers and overall popularity is that given the political economy of the music industry, such music depends upon the exotic requirements of the American market. Another is that bands which do not gain success outside Canada only get the chance to be part of this sound by association and they cannot alter the sound of their own accord. This dilemma prompts us to enquire who can claim ownership to a Canadian sound identity.

This dispute can be demonstrated by the issue of lyrics. If we really examine the qualities which could bind together music made by Canadians, it could be argued that the coherence such criteria suggest is illusory. For example if lyrical content is centrally at stake rather than music it is possible to create a list of artists who have sung about geographic themes common (and sometimes specific) to Canada.<sup>4</sup> Yet these artists can hardly be lumped together simply by age, integration with the industry or type of music produced. Also the marginal nature of Stompin' Tom and Stringband attest that the majors tend to disown less established acts centrally using "Canadian" themes, especially if the labels do not hear their music as hits.<sup>5</sup> Further, it is possible to trace a thread of Canadian bands more or less ironically celebrating America for the pleasure

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<sup>4</sup> Any reasonable list of such themes would include Canada's vivid regional geography (Stompin' Tom Connors, Gordon Lightfoot, Quebec's Chansonniers); mystical rural and native themes (Bruce Cockburn, Robbie Robertson, Blue Rodeo); small town and prairie issues (Grapes of Wrath, The Tragically Hip, Randy Bachman, Stringband, kd lang) and urban environments (Murray Mclachlan, Martha and the Muffins).

<sup>5</sup> Few people have been able to make local geographic themes work well in Canadian popular music. As Claire Eamer said in 1978 "Living in Saskatchewan and writing songs about gophers and old battlefields is a sure way to avoid the attention of the major record companies" (*Can. Composer* no.201, 1985, p.22). However certain folk artists, and one or two others (including Randy Bachman) have made such themes work at times by linking senses of place to other feelings.

it brought them.<sup>6</sup> As such, arguments that Canadian music is based upon 'Canadian' lyrical themes show more about the goals of the people making them and the bands they have chosen to consider important than it does about the entire body of music made by Canadians. However, that does not mean we must abandon all enquiry. Asking questions about why most music made by Canadians does not contain these themes can tell us about Canadian songwriters, the media and music industry.

If, for whatever reason, Canadian audiences do not listen to sounds made by fellow Canadians, then any attempt to define a Canadian sound by who produces it could result in the paradox of the national sound being perceived as a minority interest. However it may be that such a strategy might be useful in helping, or hindering Canadian musicians. So if the notion of a Canadian sound is something to be drawn upon for specific purposes, enquiry should be directed towards how and why different groups make use of that concept.

A common argument which can be analyzed in relation to this query is that Canadians, as musicians, are *imitating* foreign (usually American) sounds. That argument is hard to

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<sup>6</sup> Such songs include 'America' by Kim Mitchell, 'American Music' by Prism, 'America is Sexy' by Paul Hyde and 'From New York To LA' by Patsy Gallant.

place in relation to ideas about a Canadian sound.<sup>7</sup> Yet it could be argued that this accusation implies no Canadian sound has been created as yet, so it can be used to both criticize the industry (if we privilege more over less originality, whatever the results) and suggest that the industry has potential. The cornerstone of this idea is that Canadian audiences, raised on media bled over and imported from the USA, will not accept home product. It is assumed America is a homogeneous market in which consumers reject anything exotic or original, in preference for music made by US citizens drawing on influences from within their own country. If imitation is necessary to penetrate the American and Canadian markets, by aping US sounds Canadian bands are playing to the audience's taste.

The imitation based argument attests the power of rock as popular music; if rock did not somehow *speak* to us we would not bother to make or listen to it. However, it does this in a way which tends to over-simplify and is therefore naive on several counts. Firstly it ignores external antecedents to American music (*Maclean's* v.85/8, 1972, p.70). Also it implies a false degree of coherence to American sound, which thus functions as something separated from Canada (rather than embedded in the same capitalist social formation), neatly dividing the nations rather than asking about *which*

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<sup>7</sup> If Canadian bands do have something in common, some critics assert it is their lack of originality.



Canadians are imitating *which* American sounds. Thirdly it subsumes other foreign sounds, not least the huge influence of music from Britain on Canada.<sup>8</sup> Also, the idea that people want imitative music is insulting to audiences on both sides of the US border in suggesting neither want anything original. The imitation argument is essentialist in assuming prior use is somehow *ownership* of a cultural practice. If Canadians chose to reject all the cultural practises which have come into Canada there would probably be very few left.

It seems that a line is being drawn by some nationalist critics between older and more recent cultural practices, the latter having a potential role in nation building. This chain of thought leads to a query: if rock is imitative of foreign styles, and thus has no role in nation building, why should it be supported and funded by those with nationalist interests? This was the question which the CRTC's Report of the Taskforce on Broadcasting Policy (1986) began to examine (*Financial Times of Canada* 18/2/91, p.12). Yet even if we treat rock as an industry like any other, there are economic gains to keeping it within Canada. Moreover there are industrial justifications for signing and promoting economically viable but imitative bands. These aspects of political economy include the need to fit in with particular

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<sup>8</sup> Also it ignores the common function of rock in different countries, as a form of pleasure and (largely in the past) a symbol of rebellion.

(often nostalgic) formats to get airplay; the small size of the market in Canada and the branch-plant structure of the majors; and the cost of making records with videos, which lead to conservative signing decisions stressing the export potential of the artist.

Sometimes the imitation argument is used by bands themselves, paradoxically, to show that *they are different* from the rest by being both original and Canadian.<sup>9</sup> Yet their use of the argument seems odd since the artists themselves should know that *all* bands imitate others, as music is mostly imitative. In fact some of the best bands began as garage or bar bands doing cover versions, since young bands often find their identities by imitating others. We traditionally celebrate those who put their own stamp on cover versions and/or are eclectic in where they draw from, and those who are considered too slavish in their imitation usually receive criticism. So the Beatles were praised for their use of diverse musical strands, but The Guess Who were panned for their plagiarism. In a sense, then, the imitation argument could be used as a way of saying no Canadian sound exists *as yet*, because the bands are still learning the techniques of their vocation; at worst it may indicate they

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<sup>9</sup> For example Mark Gane of Martha and the Muffins stated "Unlike a lot of early Canadian rock bands we're not posturing as American or British" (*Maclean's* v.94/47, 1981, p.70).

are not progressing since they cannot take the risks associated with innovation.

The rock critic Chris Dafoe's pointed article in the *Globe and Mail*, coming just before the 1992 Juno awards, was a timely discussion of the question of Canadian music (and the reputation of the industry) for a middle class, adult audience.<sup>10</sup> By writing in a high profile national newspaper, we can infer that Dafoe was not particularly aiming to speak to young rock fans, but to the people who run, fund and officially recognize the music and broadcasting industries. In fact Paul Burger, at that time the head of *Sony Music Canada*, speaking at *The Record's* industry conference the next day, said he found the article embarrassing and depressing, partly because the discussion was on separate pages so good news about the music was tucked at the back of the entertainment section.<sup>11</sup>

It must be realized that Dafoe's article has not been the only one in its field. For example Barry Grant (1986) had previously put forward a similar line of argument in *The Journal of Canadian Studies*. He perceived a tradition of poor and imitative Canadian rock music and placed the blame

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<sup>10</sup> Dafoe's article was called 'Pop's The Question' (*Globe and Mail* 28/3/92, pp.C1,C9).

<sup>11</sup> Paul Burger's comments on the "clouded vision of the success of Canadian artists that exists out there" can be found in *The Record* (v.11/35, 20/3/92, p.9).

for it squarely upon the CRTC's Cancon radio regulation policy. However, it could be argued that Grant tended to over-simplify the issue, although the controversy around Cancon will be examined in the next chapter of this thesis. Rather than investigate that limited dimension of the predicament of Canadian music, what Dafoe said will be explored here because he provided the most current and sophisticated popular exposition of an essentialist viewpoint. Furthermore the article has been singled out for its author's efforts to influence an important target audience.

Dafoe took an aesthetic approach in order to stress imitation. He began by saying that he did not want to admit the mediocrity of the Canadian music, since he is a Canadian himself. This first step was a bid to link the industry to the question of nationalism at its broadest in order to lobby for change; ie. *as Canadians* the mediocrity of *our* music industry is uncomfortable to us. He went on to outline the contents of two categories of Canadian music, suggesting that most Canadian music (by which he implied anything which did well in the USA) has been mediocre: "the bland leading the bland from generation to generation". Moreover, artists emulated the "worst" trends in American music. There was Paul Anka (who appeared at a "boring" time in pop history), the bubblegum kitsch of The Guess Who, and more recently Bryan Adams (described as a capable craftsman with nothing

to say, who could only speak through clichés). Obviously, this is a subjective commentary.<sup>12</sup>

Next Dafoe described the artists in his more innovative category: the group of early 1970s introspective singer songwriters we might call the *Coffee House crowd*, the current spate of more ironic artists and even Rush (an unusually cerebral hard rock band from Toronto).<sup>13</sup> In essence Dafoe drew the lines between the bands that should be celebrated and supported as *Canadians*, and those who have copied styles from the USA. This functioned to push the reputations of particular artists. But it may have also functioned to transfer guilt on to readers who may feel, for example that they are proud Canadians but also like The Guess Who.

Dafoe then outlined the reasons why he thought Canadian music has been mediocre in order to find the cause of the on-going malaise. First he denied the idea that the CRTC's Canadian content regulation has been the main problem, since that cannot *alone* define the *content* of Canadian music. Then he flatly rejected the essentialist notion that Canadians,

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<sup>12</sup> Dafoe was choosing the worst trends, ignoring the fact that Anka was actually unusual for his time in being a teen star who wrote his own songs, perhaps also misconstruing the role of clichés in hard rock and other such issues.

<sup>13</sup> "The instances of ironic comment upon American popular culture are so numerous in Canadian music that they may be its most distinctive feature" (Grant, 1986, p.124).

by nature, have an *imitative psyche*. His approach here may have been helpful, but he failed to explore the reasons *why* such an attitude developed (such as the attraction of tailoring one's music to as large an audience as possible). He blamed the marginal geographic location of Canada adjacent to an American market ten times its size. Yet later on in Dafoe's article it is shown that such a location can work in the opposite way; as a place particularly able to facilitate innovation, so the relevance of geography depends upon other circumstances. Also he blamed the structure of the industry: the branch plant organization of the majors, small size of the Canadian market and difficulties in getting US parent companies to release Canadian artists in other territories. Certainly these are important and will be elaborated upon in chapter three of this thesis.

Dafoe went on to celebrate a current spate of artists, such as kd lang and The Tragically Hip, who have begun to spring out of Canada. He noted that these artists all have certain things in common: a North American sound which is of the US at the same time as being in ironic relation to it. Also they are all signed directly to US majors and are more orientated to European rather than US markets. In Europe, Dafoe suggests, being Canadian may be an advantage since

Canadian bands are both exotic foreigners and a select minority compared to the US bands who come over to tour.<sup>14</sup>

While Dafoe appeared to be simply outlining his particular description of the Canadian music scene, his argument has distinctive implications if we relate it to the present political context. What Dafoe implicitly did was to arrange middle class consent for a celebration of emergent music made by Canadians signed to stay popular in a potential future context of Free Trade. It was a way to focus readers' attention upon artists distributed back into Canada by majors making decisions in the US, rather than on artists signed either to Canadian independents (such as Kim Mitchell) or to the majors within Canada (such as Anne Murray or Colin James). Dafoe's implicit conclusion was that these two latter structures are, of necessity, adopting a strategy of signing popular bands which will not experiment. While that may certainly be one possible way to remain viable, such a signing policy implies that the Canadian bands whose records get released never autonomously produce their own *interesting* sound. The whole argument ignored the efforts of Canadian independent labels (begun in Canada without orders from the majors) to secure releases for their

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<sup>14</sup> He thus attempted to define and celebrate a new trend, despite the facts that these bands tend to avoid Canadian lyrical themes, they are not especially orientated towards a Canadian market, and (their own remuneration aside) the profits they create go to the US.

artists in other countries. Of these both *Nettwerk* in Vancouver and *True North* in Toronto have looked for alternative artists (L. Burshtein, *pers.comm.*).

Even if we reject Dafoe's approach and conclusions, some of the points he raised are worth exploring and will be examined in chapter three. Certainly the political economy behind Canadian music is important enough to its content to warrant further discussion.

To return to the question of sounds made within the nation, when studios improved and proliferated (arguably as the consequence of Cancon and FACTOR), the low quality of recorded Canadian music improved and attention was focused on the content of the music itself.<sup>15</sup> Major labels are looking for bands with the ability to sell outside of Canada because the costs of recording and video promotion mean that acts with hit records only in Canada can rarely make a profit (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*). Due to the demands of the majors and the devalued image of Canadian sounds, some artists themselves have been trying to avoid aligning themselves with Canadian music as a category.<sup>16</sup> If many

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<sup>15</sup> Prior to the 1980s Canadian music tended to be associated with hickish vocals and poor quality production, so it had a bad and backward reputation (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*).

<sup>16</sup> Now artists bring material to A&M, at least, saying proudly that they *do not* sound Canadian (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*).



labels and acts do not consider the issue of a Canadian sound relevant, it becomes important to reconsider the reasons for thinking in that way.

One central question which puts the existence of a Canadian sound in doubt is that we have to ask whether it is there in the first place.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, the concept is also problematic because some people restrict Canadian sounds to particular genres.<sup>18</sup> Also frequent comparisons in the press between up-coming Canadians and popular American artists fuel the imitation argument. This reinforcing occurs because journalists use more famous artists as a way of locating and building up the reputation of artists to their readers. Since Canada lacks well known role models the central figures in America's National Popular are used instead (J. Bateman, *pers. comm.*).

These press comparisons are another indication that Canadian music does not exist in a vacuum. In fact it has

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<sup>17</sup> This relates to the apparent fact that when surveyed Canadian consumers do not care about the issue of Canadian identity in relation to music (*Maclean's* v.101/1, 1988, p.45), so without incentives or penalties neither would radio programmers.

<sup>18</sup> These styles include Celtic music (related to migrational roots) and Country (related to themes explored and loose Canadian Country radio formats). Similarly there are genre specific arguments against Canadian sound: a lack of material in AC (except Anne Murray) and dance formats, and the argument that hard rock copies American music and themes (E. O'Day; D. Buote; B. Phillips, *pers. comm.*).

been shown here that, for various reasons, Canadian music relies frequently on foreign listeners. If Canadian sounds are particular musical trends which are produced by Canadian musicians *and recognized abroad*, then it makes little sense to talk about a Canadian sound identity in isolation.<sup>19</sup> While a geographical approach moving beyond the local is likely to exclude some bands who are unpopular within or untypical of the places studied, it seems more reasonable to situate Canada within a global social fabric. It could be argued that trends recognized as particularly significant to Canada's National Popular music really represent important moments in an international history of rock in which Canadian musicians have made significant contributions. A 'dialectic' is an ongoing tension between two things which produces a fruitful result. Canadian musicians have dialectically reacted to influences which at particular times were more widely recognized as significant, and in turn they have contributed to globally recognized styles. That idea of an interaction between Canadian musicians and others does not specify the source of these influences: sometimes they have come from the USA, sometimes from Britain, and potentially from within Canada itself.

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<sup>19</sup> While essentialism is dismissed here, other voices still rely upon that position because their interests are more parochial than those of this thesis. The State has an interest in fostering the industry, so Prime Minister Brian Mulroney has suggested Canadian music is "truly distinctive" (The Record, v.12/4, 1992, p.10).

Having created a framework which transcends essentialist arguments, before we can talk about the musical component of Canada's National Popular we are left with the question of regional cultures, because it appears at first sight that they may be an obstacle to a national sound. Regionalism was glossed over in Dafoe's arguments by stressing the position of the country as a whole in relation to other markets. However regionalism is difficult to ignore since the vast size, insular geography and scattered population of Canada mean that the structure of the media, production and distribution systems, and demands on State resources are largely regionally organized. Just as with the national scale, however, it could be argued that regional identity is actively reconstituted *through* modern social formations in the light of wider global developments and that these influences break across the country with differential effects.

For example the invasion of the Mersey Sound spearheaded by The Beatles had a profound effect across the whole of North America in the mid-sixties. On the west coast of the USA it quickly replaced surf sounds. Further to the north crude reworkings of R'n'B had flourished which, fronted by bands such as The Kingsmen and The Wailers, became known as the North West sound. Slowly in Seattle and Vancouver bands writing their own songs for high-school dances and bar gigs changed their sets to include Beatles covers (Gill, 1993,

p.128). Further east, in Toronto the tunes of the Liverpool group stimulated a melting pot of highly fashion-conscious acts, in a trend known as the Toronto sound headed by The Paupers and The Kensington Market (Maclean's v.81/2, 1968, p.34). In Quebec songs by The Beatles influenced party bands like Le Classels in a trend which became known as *Le ye-ye* (Maclean's v.78/5, 1965, p.47).

If regions fragment foreign influences coming into Canada, we need to find out how this can possibly begin to create nationally popular artists. However, since regions are themselves embedded in a wider social fabric, artists from particular places can attain wider scales of popularity. The process occurs through a variety of mechanisms that give distributors in a wider area confidence in stocking the act's records. The mechanisms include the artist's home region sales, their own promotional efforts, recognition from inside the industry, and media interest. A shifting framework of constraints and opportunities caused by the industries involved has been integral to this process.

One mechanism which helped to push smaller artists into the national spotlight was the growing significance of television. In the 1960s Canadian bands got early national exposure on the publicly owned CBC network. The CBC could not guarantee fame, but was nonetheless a national forum for talent. More recently City-TV's show '*The New Music*' and

then the nation's rock video channel Much Music have had a similar function (*Can. Business* v.58/4, 1985, p.75).

Table 1: Early artists on CBC-TV shows

Act	CBC Show	Year of show	1st Year of fame	<i>Maclean's</i> Reference
<u>Paul Anka</u>	<u>Paul Anka</u>			
	Special Country	1962	1957	v.75/1, 1962, p.52
<u>Gordon Lightfoot</u>	Hoedown	1960	1965	v.84/6, 1971, p.56
<u>Anne Murray</u>	Jubilee	1966	1968	v.85/5, 1972, p.30
<u>Guess Who</u>	Let's Go	1968	1965	v.84/6, 1971, p.56

As Table 1 shows, several of Canada's most famous earlier artists began their careers, or got further recognition, on CBC shows.<sup>20</sup> While the evidence is not clear cut, the table suggests that television was important before radio was regulated for Canadian content, as one way in which certain Canadian acts were exposed to the nation.

Different regions have made various contributions to the National Popular at different times. For example, in the 1960s the Maritimes was a crossroads for a wide spectrum of sounds including tunes from Louisiana, Cape Breton fiddling, Celtic soul and local Black Sea chanties. Country radio had

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<sup>20</sup> Yet despite their special mandate, funding and these early shows, CBC-TV have a history of both ignoring pleas for more Canadian popular music programming and claiming exceptional status in relation to paying Canadian artists their copyright dues (see *Can. Business* v.58/4, 1985, p.75; *Music Scene* no.344, 1985, p.2).

also proved influential upon the locality.<sup>21</sup> Younger people in the area found a forum on television, particularly with Don Messer's *Jubilee* which had begun in 1956 on a local network and 'Music Hop', which showcased the emergent Halifax blues scene in 1965.<sup>22</sup> Messer's show became Canada's second most popular TV program (as *Singalong-Jubilee*) in the 1960s and acted to shunt Nova Scotian talent into the national spotlight. The most famous act to emerge was Anne Murray who signed to *Capitol-Canada* in 1968. Another of the first acts was Catherine McKinnon who became seminal in the early 1960s Toronto folk scene.

The candidates for a musical component of the National Popular cited in sources such as *Maclean's* are Coffee House folk, Hoser rock and the latest, ironic, 'roots' revival (retro-bands, grunge rockers, and format crossers such as cowpunk and reworkings of British blues). However before we

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<sup>21</sup> Out of the 1920s depression Hank Snow emerged through CHNS in Nova Scotia as a country singer in the old tyme fiddle tradition who went to Nashville to record for RCA-Victor. One of his fans was Stomping Tom Connors who also drew on American country star Jimmie Rogers to create simple country tunes celebrating the place names and lived traditions of corners of the nation he had hitchhiked to in his youth. He emerged from the Martime bar circuit into the Toronto spotlight a year after Canada's 100th birthday to enjoy some national success, marking the start of a long, marginal career (*Maclean's* v.85/5, 1972, p.30; v.85/8, 1972, p. 30).

<sup>22</sup> Music Hop showed the CBC had a roots-upward strategy of building the nation; the show came from a different province each week night (*Maclean's* v.85/5, 1972, p.64). This was the same strategy used many years later by Molsons at the Great Canadian Party, explained in chapter four.

can discuss any of these it is important to return to rock and then Gramsci's notion of the National Popular in order to gain a clear and more detailed insight into what we are looking for.

The history of rock has been one of particular generations and places taking basic elements of popular music and reworking it to serve their needs. Undergoing wide swings in form and content the music has changed with its economic, historical and geographical context. Rock emerged from the USA not only because it was fully implicated within a capitalist system of exchange shared by other countries, but because it *spoke* to one social group attempting to define itself wherever it was: youth. As such, it was policed, disowned and criticized *within* the USA by a range of people not allied to the project of that demographic group. As Martin and Segrave (1988, p.76) point out, since America itself initially disowned rock, criticism of it from other countries was as much a way to demarcate their socioeconomic spaces as it was a reflection of concern for their young people.

It could be contended that arguments akin to Gramsci's, but directed specifically *against* rock, have been voiced more often when the music's contents have been perceived as

dangerous.<sup>23</sup> Rather than focusing solely upon that body of criticism, which itself rests on an imported framework, this chapter aims to examine indigenous interpretations of rock being made in Canada and how they *represent* the music in the context of the nation. One of the problems of importing an idea from Italy to look at the importation of cultural practices into Canada, is that Gramsci avoided the thorny topic of the indigenous production of popular culture by stressing that the local intellectuals were not from the common people, since they were from the bourgeoisie.

To Gramsci a National Popular culture was made by the citizens of the country concerned and contained central figures. By default, it did not contain assumptions which would be imported if citizens consumed foreign popular culture. The potential for export and state involvement is left open rather than specified, but to be a National Popular whatever was produced had to be liked by most people in that nation. Gramsci's own concern with the people of Italy drew attention to what was going on in his own

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<sup>23</sup> Opposition from Canadians to rock has sometimes used the nation to dismiss music more generally perceived as undesirable in content. For example, in the 1950s *Elvis's* Christmas album was seen as a profanation of sacred carols. Opposition to it was "even more irate" in Canada than in the USA (Martin and Segrave, 1988, p.66). In the late '60s Jon Ruddy of *Maclean's* argued that young people in Canada were being influenced by Americans and taking on their "vocabularies and ethos of drugs, psychedelia, [and] sexual liberation... for most Canadian youth, where US teen agers go there will they go also." (in the article '*How To Become American Without Really Trying*', v.82/11, 1969, p.60).



country's popular culture during his time. It is tempting to argue that entertainment has changed considerably since then, to the extent that audiences have fragmented beyond any hope of constructing a National Popular. However, if we realize that the notion is itself a theoretical and strategic political construct, the question becomes whether *in each instance* the citizens of a nation are writing their own culture. In terms of Canadian music this means that there is no necessity of a single national sound since nobody likes all sounds. Rather, any candidate for part of a musical National Popular must arouse the interest of listeners who would follow that type of music. Yet to have any constituency the music must speak to a significant number of listeners, rather than become a minority interest, or as Gramsci called it a "closed caste".

Any attempt to look at a National Popular becomes a selective endeavor. Here selection has been based upon the popularity of each genre within Canada at particular times since the music industry began to specifically cater to the youth market which emerged in the 1950s. For example, although some Canadian jazz musicians are world famous for what they do, because jazz has not been associated with the youth market or (consequently) the highest selling type of music during the period under examination, jazz trends are not dealt with here. Yet other types of minority music which

have become popular at particular times since the 1950s, such as folk, are mentioned.

For Gramsci each element of the National Popular had to be written and liked by citizens of the country involved to the extent that consequently the citizens consuming it did not take an interest in foreign culture. This leaves us with the notion which he left relatively open, that of central figures. To become a National Popular any pastime had to have "eminent personalities" creating a hierarchy of public attention. So for example Gramsci showed that some Italian writers were popular, but not well known, and so did not constitute central figures within their canon (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith, 1985, p.210). Also with fiction he outlined the added problem that fictional characters, rather than the writers themselves, were the currency of the National Popular (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith, 1985, p.350) and their antics were popular because they aroused the moral concerns of the people. Gramsci is rarely specific about the value of central figures. However we could surmise that they are important because they are memorable, act as markers in discussions and controversies about particular arenas of culture, and furthermore they have a citizenship which can be made relevant by parties concerned with the nation.

Rock becomes easier to deal with than popular literature, because frequently the writers are also the performers, who

therefore act as centres of attention. More of a danger is that, if each element of the National Popular speaks to too small a demographic group, central figures will not become a common currency across the nation. However, in Canada there have been a few rock musicians, notably Bryan Adams who, while they may not have made music appealing to all age groups or tastes, have become widely recognized.

Returning to folk, the music included in that category has historically transformed and varied in popularity as society has changed. As a consequence the term 'folk' itself is disputed. Purists argue folk songs are those that are at least a century old and in their descent have lost their author's name. However, in the 1920s depression a strain of nomadic US folk artists wrote their own songs of protest (Scheurer, 1991, pp.171,189; *Maclean's* v.95/28, 1982, p.53). By the 1960s the folk audience expanded into middle class North America (Scheurer, 1991, p.181). Softer groups emerged, including Ian & Sylvia from Canada, and the Mariposa festival near Toronto became a key forum for singer-songwriter acts. These singer-songwriters emerged at various scales of popularity to become famous in a trend we can call Coffee house folk. The aim here is not to discuss that trend in detail, but provide an outline which we can use to consider its role as part of the country's National Popular.

As a candidate for one moment in the musical part of Canada's National Popular, not only were different combinations of the artists popular at the time linked together by different connections within the music industry, but also the popular music made by Canadians was linked to developments in the US. The vibrant folk activity in Canada was at least in part a result of American folk music and its trappings becoming popular north of the border during the early 1960s. Conversely Canadians played a significant role in the next phase in North American folk: As the Toronto folk scene began to decline the artists associated with Coffee House folk began to gain US success by the early 1970s. In New York, Albert Grossman had managed not only Ian & Sylvia and Bob Dylan, but also Canadians The Band and Gordon Lightfoot. Two Canadians who left Toronto for the US, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell, were also both managed by Elliot Rogers and eventually became label mates on Warner's (Maclean's v.86/3, 1973, p.80-81; v.87/6, 1974, p.28). Also Bernie Finklestein, who owned the Toronto-based *True North* label, had close ties to Grossman and managed two folk acts that were nationally successful within Canada, Murray MacLauchlan and Bruce Cockburn.

In contrast to the purist definition of the genre, Folk music emerging after the mid 1960s came from a celebrated bunch of individual singer-songwriters. It created a circle of famous names which gave Canada a kind of National Popular

music. Yet within the trend itself, musical directions were highly diverse and even the core artists had real differences.<sup>24</sup> Moreover several Canadian acts which we cannot label as folk had an unprecedented degree of US success at the time as well. These acts included Anne Murray (whom nationalists claimed as *Our Anne*), rockers The Guess Who and The Band (who had been assembled by Ronnie Hawkins in Canada, then backed Bob Dylan in the US for a period when he took to electric sounds).

Another problem with Coffee House folk as part of a National Popular was that Canadian reporters sometimes had an ambivalent attitude towards the acts involved because artists did not easily fit into a nationalist framework. For example Neil Young and Joni Mitchell became expatriates, while Gordon Lightfoot (and other artists with US followings) denounced Cancon.<sup>25</sup> Coffee House artists emerged at a time when folk was popular because audiences readily

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<sup>24</sup> They included the prairie folk turned hard rock of Neil Young, the jazz elements in some of Joni Mitchell's work, the Dylanesque folk-rock and ballads of Gordon Lightfoot, the softer, christian inspired tones of Bruce Cockburn and gritty street influences of Murray McLauchlan.

<sup>25</sup> For example, Ralph Cox explained "Young has become an expatriate, a creature of California. If he's a barometer as to whether money can bring you happiness, the new Canadian stars who aspire to replace him had better take heed. Neil Young can't handle it. He even shies away from the recording studio, and as for live performance he'd rather not." (*Maclean's* v.87/4, 1974, p.88). In his efforts to position Young, perhaps Cox spoke too soon! For Lightfoot's comments on Cancon (and his need to contribute to Canadian culture) see Markle (in *Maclean's* v.84/2, 1971, p.28).

accepted political statements within the songs themselves.<sup>26</sup> They contributed with socially conscious songs making reference more often to America than Canada: for example 'Ohio' (about the Kent State massacre) by Neil Young, 'Woodstock' by Joni Mitchell and 'Black Day in July' (about the Detroit race riots) by Gordon Lightfoot (Wright, 1987, p.28). From any position which suggests Canadian music has to be different from other sorts this seems undesirable, yet within Gramsci's framework it can be read as a success story in which Canadians contributed to American popular culture at the very time it articulated social unrest as the voice of a concerned generation. Moreover, the popularity of many Canadian musicians in the USA almost guaranteed their records as hits in Canada. Furthermore some of the Coffee House artists brought an emotional introspection to many of their songs which gave longevity to their careers. Thus they have been more stable central figures within Canadian National Popular music than many other Canadian acts famous in the USA, such as 1950s teen idol Paul Anka, who went through more erratic phases in bidding for popularity.

While Coffee house folk thus fitted the mould of a National Popular it only represented one cohort and moment

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<sup>26</sup> Rock history was at a remarkable juncture in the late 1960s and early 1970s because song lyrics became timely and direct in their social commentary. Previously North American popular music was dominated by songs about love and teenager's pastimes such as surfing.

in recent history. However, into the early 1980s a plethora of Canadian hard rock bands became popular in the USA, in an export trend which began to attract press attention. Writers for *Maclean's* called the sound exported from Canada Hoser rock. The magazine ran two articles that pegged this as a new *Canadian* sound, in contrast to the country's previous musical export commodity.<sup>27</sup> They were fair in linking the trend to changes in the media and music industry.

*Maclean's* articles about Canadian rockers touring the USA began by stating that several bands from Canada had found fans touring the Mid-West USA, and then noting the irony that American fans probably did not realize that they were watching a *Canadian* band. This was likely the obvious way to go about writing such a story, but the *unexamined* logics with which such stories were written served nationalistic ends. The opening gambit grouped Canadian bands into a movement somehow beyond the control of the USA: an "invasion" or "flood" (typically also used in anti-immigration rhetoric). Next, the use of this irony acted to conceal the imitative nature of Hoser rock, presume the ignorance of US fans and present the attitude that the nationality of the bands *mattered* (when it may not have to their fans). In reality famous bands were sometimes

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<sup>27</sup> '*Workingman's Rock*' by Bart Testa (v.93/11, 1980, p.54-56) and '*Canadian Rock Rolls South*' by Thomas Hopkins (v.95/24, 1982, p.44-48).

introduced by announcing their home town: adding to the difference, exoticism and rootedness of the act.<sup>28</sup>

*Maclean's* was certainly not obviously biased at all times; their celebration of foreign acts suggests the magazine has no simple or fully coherent nationalist position. However Hoser rock was put forward as a new cause for nationalistic celebration built upon renewed recognition from the media. The spate of bands was suitable because it could be portrayed as an "anti-trend" which contrasted the *authenticity* of Canadian music against the fickle demands of the US industry.<sup>29</sup> Other trends recognized in popular music around that time included disco dance music, which was originally rooted in the lifestyle of black and gay American communities, and then a strain of punk influenced pop music which became known as the New Wave. Canada could be aligned with the authentic, ahistoric, and yet dynamic and heterosexual, because Hoser rock had none of the "fey new wave keening" of disco or the New wave, or even the slowness of Anglo-American pomp-rock which had been popular in the early 1970s. The Canadian bands which were recognized in the

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<sup>28</sup> "From Winnipeg, Canada, the *Guess Who!*" (*Maclean's* v.84/6, 1971, p.55) and *Bryan Adams* as "the Groover from Vancouver" (*Life & Times*, 21/7/92, p.2).

<sup>29</sup> The argument went essentially that certain heavy bands had built up a base of younger fans by touring until the press and industry could no longer ignore them. Also some FM programmers had begun to loosen playlists as an experiment in recession and discovered hard rock found them a younger audience.



Hoser style were especially suited to success for several reasons. It was argued that Cancon had summoned up an infrastructure of slick studios in which to hone their sound.<sup>30</sup> Also the industry North of the 49th Parallel was more buoyant in recession; the bands were smart investors since they had tight profit margins and were used to working a small market by avoiding fancy stage shows.

While Canada already had a legacy of Hoser type bands (such as BTO) favoured by the industrial pre-conditions outlined above, the unprecedented number of Canadian bands in the genre getting recognition was a new occurrence. *Maclean's* writers added the artistic assertion that Canadian rock in particular was more "pared down" and "harder travelling", meaning it was somehow simpler and more direct than any American equivalent. These last claims are interesting because, given the other imperatives, one would expect they would not be needed. They may have related to an aim of differentiating Canadian product, by the magazine rather than the bands.

However the writers for *Maclean's* also presented (but rarely answered) criticisms of Hoser rock: that it was bland

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<sup>30</sup> While certainly Bryan Adams profited early on from the songs he sold to others which qualified as Cancon (E. O'Day, *pers. comm.*), it is hard to see how the rule could have "stimulated the success in the 1970s and 1980s of bands like Rush" (Mills and Dickson, 1987, p.2659).

(imitative) franchise rock, pre-packaged for teens yet made by older men and safe for radio.<sup>31</sup> They noted critics also said it could have been a fortuitous combination of lucky bands, rather than a coherent trend.

While many of those criticisms are true it is also important to note that they are selective. Centrally critics made the assumption that Canadian sounds they could consider were defined in relation to US demands. This means that Canadian New Wave bands who only became popular north of the border were neglected by the magazine in its attempts to define Canada's nationally popular music. Those bands played with personal identity while Hoser rockers usually reinforced their identity. The rocker's appeal to some young American (post-baby boom) fans and certain Canadian nationalists alike was through their lack of experimentation; or so it seemed. Yet the rock bands being lumped together in an attempt to show them as a Canadian trend were otherwise too diverse to easily aggregate, as Table 2 demonstrates.

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<sup>31</sup> Nationalists pointed out the music was American in themes and style.

Table 2: Some differences between Canadian Hoser rock bands

Area of Origin	Band	Lyrical themes <sup>32</sup>	Record label	Fans	Reason for fame
Toronto	<u>Rush</u>	Sci.fi.	<u>Anthem</u>	US+Europe	US tours
	<u>Saga</u>	Sci.fi.	<u>Polydor</u>	E. Europe	Euro-tours
	<u>Triumph</u>	Love	<u>Attic</u>	Can. + US	Can. fans
Winnipeg	<u>Street-Heart</u>	Love	<u>Warners</u>	Can. + US	Can. fans
Montreal	<u>Aldo-Nova</u>	Love	<u>CBS</u>	US	Aggressive Publisher
Vancouver	<u>BTO</u>	Work+love	<u>Mercury</u>	Can/US/UK	AM airplay
	<u>Lover-boy</u>	Love	<u>CBS</u>	Can. + US	Can. fans
	<u>Bryan-Adams</u>	Love	<u>A&amp;M</u>	Global	MTV video (in 1983)

The music of many Hoser bands may have been quite similar, but they were very different in other ways. For example, in terms of their labels, while most were signed to majors, Triumph remained on a Canadian "indie" despite their US success.<sup>33</sup> Many other differences could be pointed out, such as the way Bruce Allen almost manufactured Loverboy (*Can. Business* v.57/9, 1984, p.68) compared to Rush who doggedly refused commercial pressures (*Maclean's* v.91/2, 23/2/78, p.26-30).

<sup>32</sup> Lyrical themes are greatly simplified here. For example, while Rush did write songs about outer space, they also sang critiques of suburbia, introspections on the meaning of fame and songs about relationships, amongst other things. Another example is Bryan Adams, who made a foray into social criticism for his 'Into The Fire' album, but has otherwise largely sung songs about relationships.

<sup>33</sup> An indie is an independent record label, run solely to release records, and organized on a smaller scale than a multi-national corporation (eg. *Nettwerk Records*). Also Rush are unusual in that they are signed to *Mercury* through their manager's sub-label *Anthem*.

As a candidate for Canada's National Popular in music Hoser rock suffered from the opposite problems to Coffee House folk. Musical similarities between the bands were swamped by other trends with national and regional repercussions at the time.<sup>34</sup> Most Hoser rock bands attracted a young, male audience, so it is difficult to say that the trend appealed to a wide spectrum of listeners. Apart from the start (with BTO) and end (with Bryan Adams) of the decade or so in which Canadian rock of that sort peaked in popularity, it was hard to say that the trend had central figures with high profiles.<sup>35</sup> Claims about Hoser rock, which admittedly came at a certain time (for example before female

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<sup>34</sup> From 1975 to 1985 several "international" trends broke across Canada and stimulated acts signed to the majors with limited success. Punk bands The Poles and The Diodes emerged from Toronto, while the scene in Vancouver spawned DOA and The Subhumans. Early disco music became popular by being played for the dance floors rather than on radio or via tours, so acts signed to the majors such as Canadian Gino Soccio were not well known. A few Canadian balladeers had hits in the US, including Patsy Gallant, Dan Hill and Gino Vanelli. Grant (1986) argues that the early 1980s ironic pop of the New Wave was a time when Canadian music became especially popular in the US. However I believe the New Wave was a time of relative isolation for Canada. Outside acts could not sell well on tour (see *Maclean's* v.95/34, 23/8/82, p.48). From Toronto Martha and the Muffins managed a UK hit while Rough Trade, famous in Canada on *True North*, failed in the US with poor distribution. Only The Nylons gained some US fame, through their tours. From Vancouver the Payola\$ and party band Doug & The Slugs found national success. Finally The Spoons were Canada's only major electro-pop signing, but they had no foreign success.

<sup>35</sup> In *Popular Music Since 1955*, of Bachman-Turner Overdrive Paul Taylor (1985, p.185) notes "The importance of the band in Canada is difficult to appreciate for the British reader." This clearly suggests they were recognized across the country as central figures in the musical part of Canada's National Popular for a period.

rockers grew in number) ignored Canada's diverse and rich heritage *within* rock by quickly packaging the music too tightly into a nationalist framework. Bands which only found fame at the national level, but for various reasons had less success penetrating the US market, were ignored, as were women.<sup>36</sup> This neglect of female rockers is important because punk, New Wave pop and rock allowed female artists to play with the identities handed to them. For example they could express aggression within the traditionally male dominated style of hard rock.<sup>37</sup>

In the 1980s several factors encouraged the emergence of the latest phase of bands to have potential as a National Popular. It could be argued that the interplay of dominant radio formats and the structure of labels have been the two most crucial influences upon music emerging within Canada in recent years. *Adult Contemporary* (AC) is the dominant format (*Can. Musician* v.7/2, 1986, p.41) and it consists of vocal ballads. Yet there are many types of AC which lean between easy listening instrumentals with a few songs with vocals

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<sup>36</sup> Some rock bands were only nationally successful. They included Max Webster (whose singer Kim Mitchell later went solo on the *Alert* label) and Trooper (the Vancouver party band who failed to get US airplay). Prism had the talents of Bruce Fairbairn, Jim Vallance and Bruce Allen, but floundered in the US because their label in America, *Ariola*, could not find enough promotional money (B. Fairbairn, *pers. comm.*).

<sup>37</sup> Women in rock around that time included Lee Aaron and Darby Mills.

mixed in, through soul and pop, to softer classic rock. AC airplay is important, but not all bands want to do AC type material. One result is that, especially with the majors, acts are signed and songs are released for their AC and format crossing potential. It could be argued that the emergence of more female artists both on indies and majors is associated with this policy. While these Canadians work in a variety of genres, it seems fair to conclude that many have been signed for their appeal to AC listeners and potential to get played on more than one format.<sup>38</sup>

Many hard rock bands now include more ballads on their albums since these can get them wider airplay. Whether any particular rock band records songs in ballad style depends on their musical preferences and the amount of pressure from their label. Certainly it is a potentially lucrative strategy, but not one confined to Canada. The important point about this policy is that the structure of the music does not alter because acts including such material on their

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<sup>38</sup> These artists include Celine Dion who signed direct to the USA for her first soulful anglophonic album. Also Sarah McLachlan is beginning to become popular in the US, singing her soft harmonies on the Nettwerk label (L. Burshtein, pers. comm.). With more of a rock edge, Sue Medley toured with Bob Dylan whilst signed to the Mercury label, but was relegated to a less promoted position after a label staff shake-up (J. Bateman, pers. comm.), while Sass Jordan signed to Aquarius, has remained popular at a national level only. Other female artists have gained national success on AC and country formats, including kd lang, Mae Moore, Loreena McKennitt, Jane Siberry, Rita Chirelli, Michelle Wright and Rita MacNeil.

albums are doing two *associated* types of songs. However, a newer and more relevant trend is that format crossing songs get recorded especially to subvert the division of radio sound identities. Such format crossing hits in Canada have included '*Lost Together*' by Blue Rodeo and '*Superman's Song*' by The Crash Test Dummies.<sup>39</sup> These records are begun in their home formats and then *worked* across the others by label promotion staff. It must be realized that the trend does not mean artists who have changed format during their careers, such as Elvis Presley who gradually moved between country, rock and AC formats. Even artists such as Lyle Lovett, who records material suitable for either AC or country formats, are not strictly included. The type of format crossing music referred to in this context comes from acts which regularly release discs able to traverse more than two formats. Although the CRTC's Cancon policy may mean broadcasters in formats which cannot find much qualifying material stretch the limits of what they are willing to play, the crossover trend relates more to the aim of the majors to sign bands and release material which appeals to as many formats as possible, in order to continue viable operation by saturating the small Canadian market. Hence the crossover material is also marketed to stations in formats which have no shortage of Cancon material.

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<sup>39</sup> Blue Rodeo is the first group Warner's have shipped across all 5 radio formats (*Marketing* v.95/47, 1990, p.1).

Thus it could be argued that this trend is restricted to countries like Canada, where the small size of the market means that the majors need access to as many fans as possible to make their promotional effort worthwhile. While we could question the Canadian nature of the trend because the foreign majors are responsible for it through their signing and single release policies, many other popular musical trends that could be considered Canadian were perpetuated in that way. We can only say format crossers make a Canadian sound in the sense that such music is more encouraged in less populated countries and Canada is one of those.

Again, like Hoser rock, format crossing is also a slim trend compared to the amount of Canadian music getting made because there are plenty of freshly signed Canadian artists who are highly format driven (J. Bateman, *pers. comm.*). They include heavy metal bands such as Slik Toxix and Sven Gali and rappers like Devon and Maestro Fresh Wes. Many of the recent format oriented signings in Canada have been made by independents distributed through the majors. Artists on their rosters include Alanis, Mitsou and Love & Sass in dance. For the independents with limited marketing budgets format targeting makes sense as an export strategy which selectively reaches fans of particular styles. Hence different types of bands get signed depending on the imperatives upon and policies of particular labels. The



result is that while format crossers may be a minority of signings, they are unusually popular with consumers.

If we look at bands *signed* with an ability to play songs with inherent ambiguity in relation to formats, it becomes important to explore whether they have anything more in common. It could be argued that one thing such bands share is their *generational* predicament. Since they are reworking dominant structures of identity handed down by babyboomers, the bands emerging within this trend have an experimental but retrospective quality. For example, nostalgic radio formats have helped reposition blues as a popular interest amongst white North Americans. Canadians have been signed in a variety of ways. Jeff Healy was signed direct to the US label Arista; Colin James struck a deal with *Virgin*; and at a much smaller scale Paul James showcases his own vanity material in Toronto (*Maclean's* v.101/47, 1988, p.55; v.100/9, 1987, p.35).<sup>40</sup> Furthermore rockers moving in other musical directions have emerged. 54.40 signed to *Warners* in 1986 following several Vancouver indie releases and tours of the West coast college circuit. They have become popular in Canada through a more recent deal with *Sony Music* (*Can. Musician* v.4/7, 1986, p.42). Similarly from Kingston, Ontario The Tragically Hip have become a band with a loyal Canadian following, but limited US success. They began by

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<sup>40</sup> A *Vanity release* is any recording released by the band itself rather than an outside label.

reworking British Blues, sounding similar at first to the Rolling Stones. After releasing an EP on *BMG-Canada* in 1989, they signed to *MCA* for the release of subsequent albums (*Can. Musician* v.10/3, 1988, p.45).

The *Cowpunk* trend, a loose amalgam mixing the music of country, blues and folk with the attitude and approach of punk, developed out of New York and Toronto. The bands associated with it tend to have a musically innovative sound with AC or format crossing potential. One important group are the Cowboy Junkies, whose cheaply recorded but highly acclaimed '*Trinity Sessions*' album was released in most of *BMG's* territories in 1987. Blue Rodeo are another band allied to the trend who came from Toronto and signed to *Warners* in that year (*Maclean's* v.102/16, 1989, p.58-59). Also an associated artist is kd lang, from Alberta, who recruited the Reclines in 1984. She released a single the next year and signed her brand of country direct to *Sire-Warners* (*Life & Times* 11/5/92, p.2). Although she began in country music, becoming a controversial figure with talent recognized in Nashville, by her fourth album kd had moved on to a crooning torch sound. Compared to the eclectic country pop of Blue Rodeo and darker mixtures of The Cowboy Junkies, kd lang has warped the genres she chose from within. Both of the latter artists have found fame in Britain, the US and Canada. Similarly Winnipeg's Crash Test Dummies, were setting their sights abroad once their 1991 debut album on

BMG sold well at home (*Can. Musician* v.14/1, 1992, p.42). This is another band very difficult to categorize by their music, if anything leaning away from cowpunk towards Celtic folk influences.

Export imperatives may create a situation in which few bands have an interest in proclaiming that they have a Canadian sound. However, a degree of Darwinian competition exists between those bands which have not yet managed to access the best help the majors can offer. When anybody stands to benefit from it, their roots in the national or one of its provinces suddenly count. Roots are used as a marketing device, if not by the act themselves then by the staff who peddle their singles to radio stations for the label. The place an act comes from becomes part of their "story" (Riordan, 1988, p.289). If a band is relatively small or exclusively playing to Canadian audiences it has an interest in stressing this commonality. Smaller bands do this through their names and songs (exoticism is produced in press-kits by stressing their home region) or by mentioning icons of popular culture such as the sport of hockey, in and between songs.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Hockey has *central figures* which Canadian music sometimes lacked. One early 1960's surprise hit by a Canadian was 'Gordie Howe' by Bob Davies (*Maclean's* v.73/4, 1963, p.63).

The current situation allows no simplistic conclusions but one important element is that national attitudes have begun to turn around. Thirty one years ago Paul Anka was nearly jeered off the stage at his first homecoming gig (*Maclean's* v.72/1, 1962, p.36).<sup>42</sup> More recently artists popular abroad were reclaimed more or less successfully depending on where they had chosen to live. Now, not only are homecoming tour acts like Bryan Adams celebrated, but so are some artists most people know will not do well abroad, such as the Barenaked Ladies. Canada's popular acts may be too musically diverse to allow us to label them as a coherent sound. This is a potential problem for essentialists who insist that to be relevant Canadian music has to be somehow different from foreign artists.<sup>43</sup> Yet in terms of a National Popular, it does not matter that these artists are diverse in their musical styles. In fact that could be an advantage because, as central figures, they collectively cater to a variety of tastes. Perhaps more important is that most have the backing of foreign major labels; they show us that Canada is therefore implicated within a wider industrial milieu.

To conclude, the discussion in this chapter has shown that Canadian artists are now making a diversity of music liked

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<sup>42</sup> A Gig is a live rock show.

<sup>43</sup> An example of this position is Barry Grant (1986, p.125) who argues "For a Canadian song to say in some way 'I am not American' is a tentative but progressive step forward toward defining our own popular music".

by audiences both inside and outside the country. While their music has become too diverse for us to find unifying qualities which bolster an essentialist position, to an extent their work can be fruitfully reappropriated using Gramsci's notion of the National Popular. So far it has been explained that traditionally not only do Canadians largely listen to foreign sounds, but they use foreign success as a criterion for good music and make music which suits that criterion. At first sight this seems a problem for national character. However, it has been argued that if we reposition Canada within the global social fabric it becomes irrelevant to suggest *a priori* that Canadian music has to be unified, and different from anything written abroad. In his own context, Gramsci explained reasons that the people did not like Italian literature and thus a way that indigenous writers could be reorientated to become *more* like foreign writers in order to reach their fellow citizens.<sup>44</sup> If regional cultural strength is a forgotten component in the history of Canadian rock, it is also a debatable one. For example Appendix one shows that music made in Quebec is actually subject to mediation from outside the province.

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<sup>44</sup> Bearing in mind his interest in creating a national culture, the following statement from Gramsci can be interpreted as a suggestion to Italian writers: "Literature must be at one and the same time a current element of civilization and a work of art. Otherwise, instead of artistic literature there will be a preference for serial literature." (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith 1985, p.264)

Nevertheless in Canada the demands of foreign markets, changing significance of airplay in beginning trends and different degrees of regional retrenchment have been important in developing trends in the nation's music. These factors mean that while we can talk about the popularity of foreign artists within Canada and the difficulties faced by Canadian acts, we cannot simplistically speak of the cultural domination of Canada by the USA. Nonetheless that concept of domination has provided the grounding for some national cultural policies, such as the CRTC's Canon regulation examined in the next chapter.

### Chapter Three

#### Cancon: Doing it for You?

"I don't think I'd ever walk away from Canada."- Bryan Adams<sup>1</sup>

Having examined the difficulties of finding and defining a National Popular in relation to Canadian rock, it is now important to explore some industrial aspects that Gramsci did not consider. The discussion in this chapter explores the wider context, origins and consequences of the CRTC's Cancon radio regulation, situated within a dialogue between broadcasters and the State. The motives behind State regulation related to the CRTC's own concerns over national culture and the structurally marginal position of Canada's sound recording industry. As a central figure in the musical element of Canada's National Popular, Bryan Adams stimulated the CRTC to question its rule. Integral to this process, it is argued, was the attention drawn to his own nationality, citizenship and representative status as someone with the image of a regular guy. Finally some implications of the changes which resulted from Adams' protests are examined.

Antonio Gramsci's emphasis upon consumer choice marginalized the framework which delivered that choice by assuming a kind of literary free trade. The case of music in Canada is more complex because not only are there two

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<sup>1</sup> From 'Bryan Adams Off The Record' by W. Deverell (in *Saturday Night* v.107/9, 1992, p.82).

industries behind the delivery of music, recording and broadcasting, but also the Cancon policy of the CRTC has been one small barrier against musical free trade in the latter. Furthermore, while the CRTC has moved beyond the model of the lame State set out by Gramsci, its policy has actually been to an extent in line with his work. The CRTC is only mandated to delve into Canada's airwaves, and with the tacit approval of the sound recording industry it has regulated the broadcasters. This chapter aims to explore the goals of Cancon, the dialogue between the CRTC and broadcasters over its operation, and the consequences of this regulation. Finally the way in which one artist (Bryan Adams) prompted a change in CRTC policy is discussed.

Radio airplay now brings most forms of music to wider audiences and has even boosted sounds, like disco, which began as minority interests propagated in other ways. Even in an age of national television and video, radio reaches a maximum audience, so labels still see airplay as 70% of the way to popularize a record (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*). Record company executives target their marketing budgets to videos, trade magazine advertisements, paraphernalia and whatever other acceptable ways they can find to pique the interest of station programmers. Thus the Canadian music industry supports two regular trade publications aiming to reach radio staff, even though there is no market for consumer magazines. Furthermore, even if a band does not



sell many records, if they secure extensive airplay they are guaranteed some remuneration from performance royalties.<sup>2</sup>

While the central aim of most radio programmers is to improve audience ratings in order to draw in more advertising revenue, it is also true that some stations are just as concerned with keeping a loyal core of listeners. Oldies stations fall squarely within the logic of maximizing audience ratings but they do little to promote new bands. By 1987 15% of Canadian Stations played nothing but old hits (*Maclean's* v.100/9, p.32). This development demonstrates that the use of radio as a vehicle to promote bands is an economic coincidence stemming from the music's saleability rather than a matter of destiny (D.Osborn, *pers. comm.*).

Yet the popularity and consequent commercial value of rock allowed the music to spread across Canada in the first place during the 1950s. Young people formed an expanding cohort which in a boom economy became an affluent radio audience. Their emergence as a significant consumer group prompted many stations to shift programming towards rock and roll. Some programmers (in the environment of the Massey Commission) disapproved, because the new music aired was both American and youth orientated. Another trend from

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<sup>2</sup> Unlike sales, royalties from airplay offer regular payment and are one of the only ways in which non-performing songwriters get paid.

America which Canadians adopted was the division between AM and FM programming set up in the USA by the Federal Communications Commission in 1967 (Denisoff, 1986, p.247) to promote diversity. Since FM had a smaller audience it became a community of musical outsiders, difficult to mix together. Loyal audiences, segmental programming and target advertising eventually developed into radio formats, which stayed as FM grew to entertain more listeners, both in the US and in Canada.

In the 1960s radio broadcasters were modelling themselves on the USA (Yorke, 1971, p.2) because the large market of that country proved the effectiveness of techniques developed by their programmers. Furthermore, Canadian music itself was in a difficult predicament because Canadian artists were rarely signed or had hits in their own country. Those who received airplay were either expatriates signed direct to US majors, or artists such as Gordon Lightfoot, who had built up a fan base by touring Canada or exceptions such as The Guess Who.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Starting out as Chad Allen and the Expressions, The Guess Who changed their name in order to trick radio programmers into thinking they were the English band The Who. The ploy got them airplay for their 1965 single 'Shakin' All Over'. Three years later they secured airplay again by recording a promotion for Coca-Cola. Stations which advertised the soft drink played for the resulting single 'These Eyes' partly out of courtesy to their sponsors, but that began a series of US chart hits for the band (Yorke, 1971, pp.21,44).

As the 1960s drew to a close, in an environment of centennial patriotism, broadcasting policy underwent considerable change.<sup>4</sup> By 1967 the Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts hence argued that a single body was needed to control the country's communication system, since they believed it was "the central nervous system of Canadian nationhood" (Foster, 1982, p.241).<sup>5</sup>

The resulting body, based upon the expedient if unrealistic notion of a unified Canadian media, was mandated by the 1968 Broadcasting Act and called the CRTC. Its hold over radio licenses allowed the Commission to regulate the entire programming environment within which broadcasters could operate with a gamut of stipulations. Crucially, after nearly a year of preparation, on the 18th of January 1971, regulations for AM stations required that 30% of the songs played in every 4 hour period qualify as Canadian content

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<sup>4</sup> The 1958 incarnation of the Broadcasting Act may have allowed the Board of Broadcast Governors to create Canadian content rules for television, but nationalists complained that their cause rested too heavily upon the shoulders of the CBC.

<sup>5</sup> This metaphor of the media as a central nervous system was a co-optation of the terminology of Canada's most significant intellectual export at the time, Marshall McLuhan. However, he had argued that communications had exploded "abolishing both space and time as far as our planet is concerned" (McLuhan, 1964, p.3). So the artificial bounding of the media for nationalist causes hid the source it drew on and thus the contradictions arising from its own parochialism.

(*Can. Composer* no.200, 1985, p.22). This measure prompted the governments of other countries with relatively small music markets to consider using their national airwaves for the cause of cultural protectionism.<sup>6</sup>

It could be argued that if the Massey Commission had been a moment in which Canada's intellectuals had used the name of the nation in order to assert their need for funding, the emergence of Cancon resulted from members of the sound recording industry laying claim to the nation as a way to alter the activities of broadcasters. In both instances the State was what gave force to these claims; it intervened in the media in a way which was unlike the Italian State earlier in this century. Unlike the USA, the Canadian constitution contains no freedom of the press clause (Hindley *et al*, 1977, p.90).<sup>7</sup> A strong State could intervene

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<sup>6</sup> Before Cancon was established, some extremist regimes such as Nazi Germany and fascist Spain had controlled their national airwaves (Etzkorn, 1973, p.191). These governments had fostered cultural nationalism because it was conveniently allied to their extreme politics. However, in more liberal nations impulses for the control of radio for cultural protectionism began to come from representatives of marginalized music industries. For example, before British pop began to dominate foreign markets in the mid-1960's, British musicians agitated for governmental protection of the their national airwaves (Frith, 1991, p.264). The Canadian regulation was an unprecedented measure of that sort for a developed country. It paved the way for other marginal nations to follow suit. For example, Australia began a quota system for its airwaves in 1973 (Jonker, 1992, p.26).

<sup>7</sup> In the USA the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) deals with radio station licensing. Since the First Amendment guarantees freedom of the press the FCC cannot *a priori* censor stations. It can, nonetheless, remove a

in broadcasting by claiming to act in the interest of a public who were otherwise consuming foreign music.<sup>8</sup>

In their complaints about the erosion of public choice under Cancon (*Can. Composer*, no.200, 1985, p.22) broadcasters were really decrying the reduction of their own options. Stations had provided a limited choice of music for people before the regulation. They ignored the fact that the public was still free to do other things such as retune or turn off their radios. Yet audiences did not leave and, possibly due to the national cause behind Cancon, they had not complained in general. However, when in 1975 the Commission decided to ban FM stations carried by American cable services into Canada because they did not encourage diversity, there were enough listener complaints to make them relent (Hindley *et al*, 1977, pp.92-93).

The immediate consequences of Cancon were numerous. As CAPAC argued, publishers, producers and promoters now had reduced risk and a burgeoning home market to build upon

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station's license if what they broadcast is not in the public interest. The threat of such action, coupled with vague directives, induces stations to police themselves over drug related lyrics (Denisoff, 1986, p.272).

<sup>8</sup> While the Commission was made up of ex-broadcasters (*Maclean's* v.83/4, 1970, p.111) and so was likely to respect the imperatives upon them, within reason it could do as it pleased. The new regulation was *supposed* to impose upon Canadian broadcasters on behalf of the country's embryonic recording industry.

(*Can. Composer* no.200, 1985, p.22). A distribution system was already in place within Canada (*Can. Business* v.60/10, 1987, p.128), made possible by tariffs on imported records and cassettes. Coming at a time of relatively low recording costs the Cancon regulation stimulated the majors into using Canada as a *test bed* for Canadian bands with export potential. It turned the nationality of Canadian artists from something to hide into a marketing technique at home, stimulating an immediate spate of compilation albums which programmers could select from.<sup>9</sup> For the government, the policy was an effective and cheap way to reduce free trade in the sale and marketing of music.

As such, Cancon was successful in its aims of introducing Canadian music to Canadians and through this stimulating the Canadian sound recording industry. In its first aim the CRTC was adhering to the spirit of Gramsci in *not* specifying the content of music made by Canadians. This was similar to what Spain had done before and what Australia did after Cancon began. While Cancon has allowed the Canadian recording industry to attain a level which it would not have done in a free market, the music produced remains export orientated since the US market remains a larger one. Gramsci's schema can accommodate this situation with more realistic

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<sup>9</sup> Canadian artists as a whole were now guaranteed more royalty remuneration, a degree of national recognition and potential sales.

assumptions than viewpoints suggesting Canadian music has to be different in some aspect of content. In line with Gramsci's ideas, a lack of specification regarding the *content* of Cancon (beyond who made it) allowed the CRTC to escape essentialist arguments. Yet Cancon also proved useful in controlling content at particular times.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps a more difficult dilemma for a Gramsci type of interpretation of Cancon has been the tension between its first aim of helping Canadian artists and second aim of helping the industry. In other countries content policies not only avoided appearing an undemocratic imposition (by specifying how they were helping the public, or their targeting of the radio programmers), but they also kept their aims cultural.<sup>11</sup> The dual aims of Cancon were met through the implementation of what became known as the MAPL system. This meant that each selection (individual song

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<sup>10</sup> When CAPAC wanted 5% or more of daytime selections to have music and/or lyrics written by a Canadian (Foster, 1982, p.306) cover versions of foreign songs could be screened out. When averaging periods were at their narrowest the CRTC effectively prevented programmers from broadcasting the American charts, or ghettoizing of Canadian music by playing large blocks of it at once (Foster, 1982, p.335).

<sup>11</sup> In Spain Franco's 1969 radio content law reflected Gramsci because it aimed to stop the "growing foreignism" of the airwaves and give the people "a style that is closer to their own customs" (Martin and Segrave, 1988, p.156). The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's aim in creating its Auscon rule was similarly to secure airplay for Australian artists in order to develop an Australian musical culture commensurate with the quality and diversity of music available (Jonker, 1992, p.26).

played on the radio) would be judged against the four following criteria, and (after 18th January 1972) if it met at least two of the four the song qualified under Cancon rules:

- M) Music composed by a Canadian.
- A) Artist principally performing the music or lyrics must be Canadian.
- P) Performance recorded in, or broadcast live from, Canada.
- L) Lyrics written by a Canadian.<sup>12</sup>

With this system the CRTC were defining the ownership and nationality of each song in order to create optimal social and industrial consequences for their regulation. Their definition of Canadian talent goes beyond the artist singing the song, into its writers and place of recording.<sup>13</sup> However, to the public all that is seen or heard is the artist in question. Since it is possible that a foreign song

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<sup>12</sup> Basic MAPL information is taken here from CRTC Factsheet: *The MAPL System* (CRTC, R1-02-92). The CRTC liberally define a "Canadian" person as a Canadian citizen, landed immigrant or person living in Canada for at least the last six months.

<sup>13</sup> The 'P' criterion makes the location where a song was recorded an important consideration. It is one example of the international nature of the recording industry being denied by Cancon: bands often leave Canada to record with producers they like (*Nite Moves* 10/92, p.13) or to avoid the pressure, disturbances or boredom of recording at home (*Can. Musician* v.1/5, 1989, p.92). Conversely bands who come to Canada, for example to work with producer Bruce Fairbairn in Vancouver, get that point in the Cancon system. This configuration of MAPL creates revenue and puts Canada on the map for fans abroad, but whether its benefits relate to the overall aims of Cancon is questionable.



sung by a Canadian may fail to meet the other criteria, the system has always faced problems of public accountability.

To the broadcasters the problem with new Canadian music, like a lot of other music, is its unproven potential. As such Cancon was seen as a danger to audience ratings, particularly in border stations where the blanket coverage of the rule broke down and Canadian stations competed with ones from the USA for the same listeners (Can. Composer v.57/2, 1971, p.30).<sup>14</sup>

After some initial enthusiasm (Foster, 1982, p.336) few stations have exceeded the criterion, so it seems likely that abolition of the rule would reduce or maintain current levels of Canadian music. Furthermore, those stations concerned with attracting more listeners without breaking the quota practice the "stuffing" of Cancon material into less popular times of day such as the late evening or small hours of the morning (D. Buote, J. Johnston, *pers. comm.*). The time period during which each station takes an average measure of Cancon controls the legality and popularity of stuffing. For example if the quota is averaged for logs across the whole day then the bulk of songs meeting the criteria can be stuffed into unpopular times. Yet if the averaging period is four hours then each four hour block

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<sup>14</sup> Yet once it operated there was minimal public outcry, so the CRTC continued as usual.

during the day must meet the required level of Cancon. Since stuffing means songs qualifying as Cancon are played at unpopular times, the result is to reduce the audience listening to qualifying acts.

Even if narrow averaging periods can make the public blind to differences in what they listen to, the Cancon regulation means that radio programmers cannot forget they are dealing with two types of music. Many of them mentally ghettoize Canadian music (J. Johnston, *pers. comm.*). Therefore when records come in programmers put them into two pools, Cancon and foreign artists. The format and market of a station effects what it receives in terms of the quantity and type of input into each pool. What proportion of each pool gets played depends upon the station's format, how often it plays oldies and under what rotation or repeat factors a station operates. Conflicting stories about the nature and viability of Cancon exist (*Can. Composer* no.200, 1985, p.28) not only because of the growth of the industry since the rule began, but because the regulation cannot be considered without its context alongside, for example, rules governing the width of formats.

The format rule governs what genre of music a station has stated it will play on its *promise of performance*.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> A *Promise of Performance* is the document each radio station uses as part of its license application to the CRTC, specifying what it intends to broadcast.

Narrower formats mean less stations per format, so labels can target promotional budgets to stations likely to play their particular acts. For musicians working outside minority genres, the narrower the format the smaller the audience they can reach. The net result is a reduced audience as potential record buyers, but a more efficient way to target advertising and label promotion dollars. Table 3 shows how radio is currently divided in Canada:

Table 3: The popularity of different radio formats in Canada

<u>Format</u>	<u>% of Stations</u>	<u>% of Listeners</u>
Adult Contemporary (AC)	61	28
Middle of the Road (MOR)	15	20
Album Oriented Rock (AOR)	7	11
Others	17	41

(Sources: *Can. Musician* v.7/2, 1986, p.41; *Focus on Culture*, Stats Canada v.2/4, 1990, p.2):

So AC is currently the dominant format in Canada, but the category targets a relative minority of listeners and includes a wide variety of music. The Canadian recording industry does not provide a lot of material in the AC, Dance and Country formats, so Cancon material is added to their playlists as soon as it comes into the station (D. Buote, B. Phillips, *pers. comm.*). Labels orientating themselves to those formats within Canada have the benefits of Cancon and less of a need to devote money to promoting their wares to stations. The stations may search a little outside their formats, so those genres get defined more loosely in Canada than in the flooded market of the USA. Also album tracks,

old hits or the frequent repetition of songs can be used to fill up the Cancon quota. Of these formats, only AC provides artists with a strong incentive to tailor their products, through its dominance. The other genres are minority interests containing records made by enthusiasts or those more concerned with export.<sup>16</sup> In formats which have no shortage of Canadian music to choose from, such as AOR (hard rock), some bands may either be not good enough or too late to make the quota. Thus on occasion stations have turned away hopeful young bands with the excuse that they had already filled out the quota for the week (J. Ufton, pers. comm.).

Appendix two shows a history of changes to Cancon and the other rules related to it, including widening format definitions. What this demonstrates is that the CRTC has been attentive enough to the lack of Cancon material in many formats to loosen its rules.<sup>17</sup> For example, if a single

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<sup>16</sup> For example country music in Canada is a thriving minority interest. Country releases in Canada collectively contain amongst the highest percentage of Cancon compared to other types of music (Sound Recording Statistics Canada, 1988, p. 29: 1989, p.29). However these releases are relatively few in number and played on a distinct minority of stations.

<sup>17</sup> While stations within the most liberal regulatory framework of rules outside Cancon are the most free to play foreign material, they also have the potential to remain viable while playing more Cancon material. In Valleyfield, Quebec, KOD 137 AM began in 1991 as a francophonic station which decided to play only Cancon tunes. This is possible because, as an AM station, they do not have to specify a format on their *promise of performance* and can play anything

makes the top forty charts in *The Record* or the USA trade magazine *Billboard*, the CRTC defines it as a *hit* (*Can. Composer* v.1/2, 1990, p.17). As part of the policy to differentiate AM and FM programming and encourage diversity, FM stations could only play hits eighteen times per week. As FM took over audiences from AM, programmers became irate about the rule, particularly because of their growing chart orientation. The repeat factor rule had existed for many years along side Cancon, but as audiences moved from AM to FM, programmers following them complained about the rule because it prevented FM playlists from being filled with proven hits. When broadcasters felt a need to question the rule, they argued that it prevented the formation of a Canadian star system and as a result it was eliminated for Canadian material in 1986 (*Regulations Respecting Radio Broadcasting* CRTC, 1986-1230, p.22-23). This paved the way for the complete elimination of the rule in 1992 (B. Phillips, *pers. comm.*).

However, far from tightly controlling the daily operations of stations, the CRTC lets the system largely police itself. Right from the start, after clearing up their queries, the Commission trusted the broadcasters about what met MAPL criteria. At first the CAB compiled a book of Cancon material with 7000 entries (*Can. Composer* no.57, 1971, from *Gordon Lightfoot*, to *Renee Claude* to dance acts like the *West End Girls* (*Probe* v.3/1, 1992, p.8).

p.32), but due to the logistics of maintaining such a book a MAPL rating was soon displayed on each record's label.<sup>18</sup> Record companies were willing to do this since they saw it as a marketing technique in Canada (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*).

Further policing of the broadcasting system operates through two streams of complaint. Firstly the public can complain to the CRTC about stations. However this process has little potential: the CRTC can question the representativeness of individual complaints and access to some documents is limited. The system is set up so that public complaint is orientated towards holding stations to their promises of performance, and therefore the CRTC to the Broadcasting Act (Glustein and Aston, 1981, p.3-5). The parochial conception of the media upon which the act rests is rarely questioned. Listeners usually address verbal complaints to the station concerned or tune to something else, rather than attend CRTC meetings.<sup>19</sup> Public ignorance means that complaints from the public tend to compare Canadian stations to those in the USA without realizing

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<sup>18</sup> CAB stands for the Canadian Association of Broadcasters.

<sup>19</sup> In reality "public" hearings held by the CRTC become forums in which broadcasters and lobby groups express their views; neither the Commission nor the broadcasters sees their role as that of public educator (D. Buote, S. Alexander, *pers. comm.*) despite their supposed accountability.

their different regulatory environments (D. Buote, pers. comm.).

The second stream of complaints addressed to the CRTC comes from broadcasters concerned about other broadcasters. Sometimes the CRTC grants more than one station the same format if a local market can support them.<sup>20</sup> The tight competition gives an extra incentive for stations to monitor their competition. Typically one may complain about another local station drifting towards its own format.<sup>21</sup> Another issue of complaint is compliance with the Cancon rule. One broadcaster may find fault with a competitor thought to be counting songs meeting only one of the MAPL criteria as Cancon or failing the quota (E. O'Day, pers. comm.). In its wisdom the CRTC usually pulls the log books of both broadcasters to assess the complaint, which means that only stations with clean records make complaints. Also the CRTC

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<sup>20</sup> The CRTC decides which stations can get licenses at a local scale by taking into account the financial security and market for proposed ventures, as well as what kind of music each proposed station will play. Thus in Vancouver they have turned down alternative rock station Coast 1040's application for an FM license even though it is probably the only one to play over the Cancon quota minimum and encourages diversity with a very large play list (J. Ufton, pers. comm.). The reason is that the station has low audience ratings and has been in financial difficulty (*Globe and Mail* 5/4/93, p.A9).

<sup>21</sup> For example Easy Listening stations have begun to add vocal ballads and creep into AC formats as they lose listeners, yet AC stations complain because they have higher quotas to fill up (J. Bateman, pers. comm.).

makes occasional further random sweeps; in 1989 it caught about fifteen stations by this method (*Financial Times of Canada* 18/2/91, p.10). Yet no station has ever lost its license solely over Cancon offences. The worst that has happened has been the reduction of license tenure down from a potential 7 years to 18 months, which represents a punishment since it takes a long time to prepare each license application (S. Alexander, *pers. comm.*).

Complaints about the Cancon system have come from a variety of viewpoints.<sup>22</sup> What we shall concentrate upon here are those from artists themselves, as popular figures have perhaps proved the most publicly troublesome to the Commission, straddling the boundary between the public and recording industry and thus questioning to whom the CRTC is

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<sup>22</sup> From the USA, *Time* magazine argued that Cancon nurtured a weak and doubtful Canadian culture as a barrier to free trade (*Maclean's* v.85/8, 1972, p.70). This view is ignorant of the industrial and media configuration around Canada and assumes a false degree of coherence to the nation's culture. Others argue that the music business is too large for Cancon to be effective (M. Laba, *pers. comm.*). Yet the rule meant US record companies could no longer avoid signing Canadian bands with the excuse that the bands failed to have a hit in their home country. Cancon allowed foreign majors to release Canadian acts using Canada as a test bed. Furthermore the CRTC directly promoted Canadian bands (eg. *Canadian Feature Segments* were encouraged in return for an advertising amnesty on FM 1986-1991) and most Cancon comes from independent labels. The idea that Cancon quotas are imposed upon the public forgets *who* they are really imposed upon: broadcasters. Those who blamed sustained broadcaster apathy for the limited success of Cancon (*Maclean's* v.85/8, 1972, p.70) ignored economic imperatives facing stations.



accountable. Artists did not always like the way in which their exposure had come about.<sup>23</sup>

To qualifying acts, the situation suggested doubts about their talent, which sales figures could not always dispel. The problem was that such doubts assumed that station programmers were impartial judges of unproven talent in the first place. As a forum for talent, inevitably Cancon had mixed results. Doubts about Canadian talent from all sources grew as it was realized that while the quota increased the airplay devoted to Canadian music four fold, from 8% to 30%, sales figures remained constant at around 11% of all the popular music bought in Canada (*The Record* v.12/4, 1991, p.22). Again what this selective statistical foray ignored was the fact that since most Cancon was provided by independent labels, there was a large imbalance in the money spent to promote and market Canadian releases compared to those from foreign artists.

While most artists were thankful for the benefits Cancon could give them, a trio of popular Canadian artists working abroad, Bryan Adams, Anne Murray and Celine Dion have not

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<sup>23</sup> In formats with less Canadian material, Canadian acts were getting played because of their nationality rather than how good they were. If things like promotional dollars and time of airing are held equal, low sales could show a band was given an artificial break by Cancon, but sceptics could also dismiss high sales as a result of guaranteed exposure (Wright, 1987, p.30). As competition to fill quotas became tougher, the reason for this feeling began to disappear.

qualified as Cancon in their later careers. Whether they avoided qualification deliberately or by accident, these artists have sacrificed their position in the smaller pool of releases meeting Cancon requirements for the knowledge that their success cannot be attributed to the regulation or be used in praise of the Commission.

Of these it was Bryan Adams who created unprecedented change in the MAPL system by publicly holding the CRTC to account for his perceived miscategorization as a non-Canadian, even though none of the songs *co-written* for his '*Waking Up The Neighbours*' album qualified under Cancon rules. While he had complained for some time, up until Adams protested late in 1991, the CRTC had rarely examined the structure of MAPL because they had received little public complaint and the industry itself had put on a united front in favour of maintaining the regulation.<sup>24</sup>

Adams himself had attained a level of success difficult for the Commission to ignore. Though not always a favourite

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<sup>24</sup> For example the Canadian Songwriters Association found threats to Cancon a key worry for their members (*Probe* v.2/6, 1987, p.2). Also Al Mair of *Attic Records* believes that in the discussion over Cancon between labels, the CRTC and radio programmers, emphasis should be shifted from quota percentages to patriotism and the right of citizens to hear Canadian music at reasonable times of the day (*Can. Comp.*, no.235, 1988, p.26). Finally performing rights society magazines contained editorials mobilizing Canadian writers against the erosion of Cancon (eg. *Music Scene*, no.345, 1985, p.2).

with the critics, in the past Adams had set a series of precedents with his success. By September 1991 he was arguably the best known Canadian outside the country, like Paul Anka had been before him. Yet unlike Anka, his success abroad made him a national hero back home as well as a rallying point for the Canadian recording industry.<sup>25</sup> He had been the first Canadian to sell over a million copies at home with the album '*Reckless*' (*Halifax Chronicle Herald* 28/3/87, p.36) and one of the only Canadians to appear at the Live Aid international famine relief concert. Moreover, he was fresh from having the biggest selling single in the world since the American '*We Are The World*' collaboration, '*(Everything I Do) I Do It For You*' (*Saturday Night* v.107/9, 1992, p.80).

This level of success made his own musical roots a *site of struggle* within the rock press. While it was the airplay of videos from his 1983 album '*Cuts Like A Knife*' which began to break Adams across North America, the release of his *Reckless* album in October 1984 and a tour with Tina Turner

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<sup>25</sup> Bryan Adams had co-written most of his hits with Canadian songwriter Jim Vallance. The team were members of PROCAN, the Performing Rights Organization of Canada, a leading performing rights society which was merged with CAPAC to form SOCAN as it exists today. Editorials in *Canadian Composer* co-opted Adams as Vallance joined PROCAN's staff (*Music Scene* v.3/5, 1987, p.2; *Probe* v.2/4, 1987, p.1). Yet in 1991 personal differences between the rocker and their president, and possibly Adams' international view of songwriting, meant he defected to an American performing rights organization (D. Osborn, pers. comm).

finally made him known globally as an anthemic rock star. Adams' success followed a path that had just recently been forged by American Bruce Springsteen who had turned to rock anthems and unlimited marketing with his 'Born in the USA' album and tour. Writers often use more famous acts to situate upcoming artists for their readers.<sup>26</sup> Artists compared to Adams were usually American, yet as Table 4 shows many of his influences (acts he covers on stage, says he likes, or saw while young) were British:

Table 4: Comparisons between Bryan Adams and other acts

<u>Nationality of acts</u>	<u>No. of Comparisons</u> <sup>27</sup>	<u>No. Influences</u>
American	34 with 10 acts	3 Acts
British	11 with 5 acts	7 Acts
Australian	1 Act ( <u>AC/DC</u> )	1 Act ( <u>AC/DC</u> )
Canadian	1 Act ( <u>Corey Hart</u> )	—

(Source: this is an non-exhaustive, but extensive, search of the *Canadian Musician*, *Chatelaine*, the *Globe and Mail*, *Maclean's*, *Melody Maker*, *Music Scene*, *New York Times*, *Rolling Stone*, *Saturday Night*, *Spin*, the *Toronto Star*, the *Times*, and *Variety*)

<sup>26</sup> When Adams was compared to Canadians they were usually national figures rather than musicians. For example at least three times he has been compared to hockey star Wayne Gretzky (*Vancouver Sun* 5/10/85, p.A1; *Maclean's* v.100/27, 1987, p.32; *Globe and Mail* 13/9/92, p.C1).

<sup>27</sup> Separate figures are given for the total number of comparisons made between Adams and acts from a particular country, and also the number of acts from each country with which he was compared. For example, Adams was compared to 10 American acts, but because writers collectively compared him to many of these acts more than once, he was compared to American artists a collective total of 34 times. In that particular case he was compared to Springsteen 17 times, and the remaining 17 comparisons were distributed between 9 other artists.

While Adams was almost a generation younger than Springsteen and his songs were simpler, half of the American comparisons were with Springsteen. If their music, aims and style were a different, what Adams and Springsteen did have in common was a way of dressing down for live shows in plain tee shirts and jeans which denoted them as regular guys.<sup>28</sup> This style was not new in rock; writers in *Maclean's* had noticed middle class Canadians dressing in manual work clothes in 1972 (v.85/3, 1972, p.32) while earlier Canadian rockers like Neil Young and The Guess Who had done so (v.84/5, 1971, p.41; v.84/6, 1971, p.54). Springsteen made the timeless style popular once more to associate himself with working class Americans. His message was that the things Americans are told to hold dear (such as blind patriotism and the American dream) need questioning in light of the predicament of poorer people. Yet the way he conveyed this was through songs which reinvested everyday life with hope. So his success was latched on to in a way which detracted from (or even inverted) his message: as a regular guy being successful and thus proving the American Dream, as a patriotic American and as a sex symbol. Attention was

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<sup>28</sup> Adams manufactured this image for himself. "He's a regular guy, he insists" (Kamin, 1985, p.1). He demonstrated it in different ways which became part of his story. These included everything from the fact that he buys his own plane tickets to the lack of long guitar solos in his songs (*Guitar Player* v.21, 1987, p.26). While not unusual in themselves, they became relevant as things not associated with rock stars.

focussed upon the man himself rather than those he pointed to.<sup>29</sup>

Bryan Adams' songs were effective emotional vehicles, usually more concerned with relationships rather than the plight of the working poor. Nevertheless his dressing down meant that, in order to make good copy, press reports would play upon elements of his visual identity.<sup>30</sup> The British press in particular caught on to his Canadian hoser image and used his national identity for some lighthearted stereotyping.<sup>31</sup> So Adams was seen as a regular Canadian abroad. Furthermore, Simon Frith (1988, p.94-101) has begun to demystify Bruce Springsteen by showing the inauthenticity of his image. For example while posing as a manual worker

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<sup>29</sup> See 'Making A Loud Noise' by J.Miller (in *Newsweek* 13/4/87, p.74).

<sup>30</sup> Stressing the dynamism of his live shows as work sessions (*Life & Times* 21/7/92, p.2; *Globe and Mail* 12/2/92, p.E2); giving him manual occupations to suit the occasion such as Okanagan fruit picker (*Vancouver Sun* 8/9/92, p.C1); exploring his masculinity as a sex symbol (*Chatelaine* v.59/9, 1986, p.71; *Creem* v.19/2, 1987, p.49) or as a mark of his ordinariness like a roguish boy next door (*Rolling Stone* 10/9/87, p.42).

<sup>31</sup> British associations were with Canadian stereotypes such as the bar circuit. For example "I can't quite make out what he's advertising, Canadian lager perhaps?" (*Melody Maker* v.62/14, 1988, p.22). "It was quite possible to imagine oneself in a sawdust-floored tavern watching the Adams group perform under a neon sign advertising Labatts beer." (*Life & Times* 21/7/92, p.2). Also, upon learning that Adams had recorded an album in his Vancouver house, one reporter suggested his next was to be "recorded with the assistance of a pack of huskies and a squad of mounties" (*Melody Maker* v.62/15, 1987, p.17).

and employee, Springsteen is literally 'the boss', employing his own band. In a similar way it could be shown that, for example, Bryan Adams comes from a middle class background. In fact this forms a typical section of Adams' press biographies (*Toronto Star* 25/2/92, p.A1; *Saturday Night* v.107/9, 1992, p.82). So it could be argued that many fans know, but do not care, that these rockers are not what they seem. The question is why young middle class audiences have a need for this kind of image.

Whatever the reason, at homecoming gigs, it has become clear that Adams' image as a regular guy has become centrally important. At one Toronto show Adams' reportedly aroused patriotic frenzy comparable to a young Trudeau (*Toronto Star* 23/9/85, p.D1), while at another in Vancouver crowds cheered when Adams told them he had once lived in the working class suburb of Surrey (*Vancouver Sun* 3/2/92, p.C3). So, following 'Reckless' Bryan Adams was a unique central figure in Canada's musical National Popular. This put him in a privileged position from which to speak for - and to - Canadians. With the late 1980s growth in socially conscious rock events and under pressure from the critics, Adams made the relatively unsuccessful yet less innocent album 'Into The Fire'. Finally he reverted to the party rock image, and regular guy status, for 'Waking Up The Neighbours'.

After its rush release, the unrepresentative initial single '(Everything I Do) I Do It For You' sold 6 million copies worldwide and became the most successful tune in Canadian history (*Vancouver Sun* 27/1/92, p.24; *Toronto Star* 14/1/92, p.B1). Following on its tail, as the 'Waking Up The Neighbours' album was released on the 23rd of September, the CRTC had *de facto* made its ruling. All 15 songs on the new album had been co-written with *English* producer Robert "Mutt" Lange, giving each song just one of the two MAPL points needed to qualify it as Cancon. As part of the 70% of non-qualifying selections each song could only be played a maximum of 18 times per week on any FM station (*Toronto Star* 14/1/92, p.B1). There were various mechanisms Adams could have used, even at the last moment, to have made the album qualify as Cancon.<sup>32</sup> Jeff Bateman (*pers. comm.*) suggested that manager Bruce Allen may have simply forgotten to correctly file the songs with A&M. Yet that label puts the MAPL logo on its discs as a marketing device within Canada (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*), so they probably would not have let such a mistake slip through. It could be argued that mis-filing was a deliberate act on Allen's part for Adams.

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<sup>32</sup> For instance, since some of the initial single's lyrics were taken from the 'Robin Hood' film script and Michael Kamen wrote the melody they could have fudged the credits so that Adams appeared to write either the music or lyrics, giving the song 2 MAPL points. Furthermore, Mutt and Adams had reworked Adams ideas for many of the songs (*Vancouver Sun* 27/1/92, p.C4), so this fudging could have been done on other songs. Also as some of the album was recorded in Canada, some songs could have got the 'P' point.



Broadcasters kept out of the dispute, but it seems likely they would have liked to have seen Adams new material qualify as Cancon, since his songs would be played on most formats anyway as proven hits. In fact neither Adams nor his manager planned to fight the CRTC decision by directly contacting the Commission (*Winnipeg Free Press* 13/9/91, p.31), since they knew that as a proven star Adams would receive plenty of Canadian airplay. Adams' unprecedented success and representative status as a regular guy put him in a particularly powerful position from which to criticize Cancon and call the perceived bureaucratic tendencies of the CRTC into account. What Bruce Allen and Bryan Adams were doing was holding the CRTC up for public *accountability*.

Firstly Allen took the opportunity to question Cancon as a system of allocation of musical privileges (*Globe and Mail* 13/9/91, p.C1). He noted how other acts could qualify who were not Canadians, such as The Osmonds with 'Puppy Love' written by Paul Anka, but did not examine the industrial aim of Cancon. Then he implicitly compared Cancon to another allocation system, by pointing out that Canadian hockey star Wayne Gretzky had an American wife, lived in Los Angeles and paid taxes to America yet he qualified to play on the Canadian national team. Interestingly he did not choose to look at other such systems within the music industry, such as the Junos or FACTOR, or examine the reasons why different

selection criteria arose in different contexts. Next Allen set in train a semantic manipulation of the issue towards Adams' own citizenship. The CRTC implied that Adams' new songs did not qualify as Canadian content. At the album release party Allen then said "Try walking up to Bryan and saying 'Hey, guess what Bryan? You've lived here all [sic] your life but you're not a Canadian artist'" (*Calgary Herald* 13/9/91, p.F2).

Adams himself chose the start of his Canadian tour early in 1992 to attack Cancon in a series of interviews with Canadian newspapers.<sup>33</sup> He began by attacking essentialism: "If they think my music's un-Canadian that's their problem" (*Montreal Gazette* 14/1/92, p.C27), but he went on to say "Who wants to have an international record and then be declared un-Canadian?" (*Toronto Star* 14/1/92, p.B1). With a slight of hand usually practiced by politicians Allen and his act had turned around interpretations of the Cancon ruling towards Adams' status as a Canadian, yet nobody had ever said he was not one (S. Alexander, E. O'Day, *pers. comm.*). In fact that was the one MAPL point he had received.

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<sup>33</sup> Since the new album resulted from 3 broken collaborations and had been 4 years in the preparation, the press were eager for fresh news. At one stage he decided to scrap 18 months worth of studio recordings (*Saturday Night* v.107/9, 1992, p.80).

This perceived miscategorization created a stream of press criticism, largely in favour of Adams and angry at his plight. The Commission was labelled as self-indulgent and self-perpetuating (*Financial Times of Can.* 18/2/91, p.10), even though only a tiny fraction of its staff deal with radio Cancon.<sup>34</sup> Also attention was focussed upon why Adams should have qualified: he had a Canadian passport, was already recognized by the State (with the Orders of BC and of Canada), had unprecedented successes and did things which contributed to the nation (*Winnipeg Free Press* 13/9/91, p.39). Certainly these are all true. From the rumoured single for Canadian unity with Celine Dion (*Toronto Star* 2/7/92, p.C4), to the way Adams used his nationality against the odds as a foreign marketing technique, to his central efforts in the Canadian famine relief single '*Tears Are Not Enough*' (O'Hara, 1989, p.32), Bryan Adams had done good things which frequently contributed to the cause of national unity, and he exercised an unusual degree of moral control over the use of his songs. Moreover, the notion of Adams as a regular Canadian guy was drawn upon: he had lived in Canada most of his life, was not a politician, but was "very" Canadian (*Performing Arts* v.27/2, 1992, p.16).<sup>35</sup> Anne

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<sup>34</sup> The CRTC has 375 staff (S. Alexander, *pers. comm.*) and 9 of them deal with Cancon on radio (*Financial Times of Can.* 18/2/91, p.10). Thus because stations largely police themselves only 3% of staff need to administer Cancon.

<sup>35</sup> "Although he claims to feel 'very Canadian', Adams says that he has never thought of his music as having a national sound" (N. Jennings, *Maclean's* v.100/27, 1987, p.35). This

Murray, who had been in a similar predicament for years also lent her support (*Vancouver Sun* 16/1/92, p.D6). However, if an artist's Canadian citizenship alone was enough to qualify as Cancon, the industrial aims of the regulation might be in doubt; yet the public hardly knew or cared about them.

Adams himself used the opportunity to put forward his views on the role of the State in Canada.<sup>36</sup> He argued that the government does not belong in the music business and Cancon should be abolished so that Canada could compete on the same footing with the rest of the world. The fact that Canadians consumers only supported him once he broke in the USA was used to suggest the system is ineffective with them. In addition he claimed that Canada had its best artists [those biggest in the USA] before the regulations began. In order for Canadian artists to rise from the street they should be rewarded solely on the quality of their music. Adams argued Canadian artists cannot get signed elsewhere because Cancon breeds mediocrity. Labels at home can safely sign acts in the knowledge that those artists will receive airplay. Since Cancon does not support bigger Canadian artists who use music industry support outside the country, the regulation provides limited opportunities for career

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is what makes him so interesting in relation to Gramsci's ideas.

<sup>36</sup> His argument here is drawn from interviews in the *Toronto Star* (14/1/92, p.B1) and *Vancouver Sun* (27/1/92, p.C1+C4).

growth. Adams continued that mediocrity can never be erased by penalizing excellence, but because the audience cannot be regulated real talent always wins out. He said if Cancon must stay, anybody with a Canadian passport should automatically get two points but perhaps direct support, limited to 2 albums per artist, would be better.

While some of these comments contained a grain of truth, most were naive or hypocritical.<sup>37</sup> This hypocrisy related to the fact that Adams was flexible in pushing for whatever he could get. As a national hero decrying his perceived miscategorization, to many members of the public Adams had a case. In a Gallup survey held at the time 76% of those interviewed said Bryan Adams was wrongly disqualified and right in his complaints (*Halifax Chronicle Herald* 5/3/92, p.B1). The Commission was in trouble: it knew the industry wanted Cancon kept and Adams had lost credibility with smaller musicians (*Vancouver Sun* 16/1/92, p.16), yet members of the public began phoning up to air their views (S.

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<sup>37</sup> Naive, for instance, in that he ignored how programmers formed and picked from pools in their different formats. He was hypocritical in querying the whole system but focussing attention upon getting one rule changed (D. Osborn, pers. comm.). He stressed quality while using the charts as an arbiter. He claimed to be a-political whilst beginning a change many politicians would not have had the power to make. Furthermore Adams is far from being against any State involvement in cultural industries, in that he supports the CBC as "a form of government subsidized entertainment that actually does some good." (*Saturday Night* v.107/9, 1992, p.84).

Alexander, *pers. comm.*). An added problem, to the initiated, was the CRTC's own incoherence.<sup>38</sup>

In British Columbia former Environment minister John Reynolds wrote to prime minister Brian Mulroney about the CRTC disqualifying "a full time ambassador" for Canada (*BC Rpt. v.3/5, 30/9/91, p.39*). At that time Commission Chairman Keith Spicer and Secretary General Ferdinand Belisle were on a tour of Canada soliciting the wishes of broadcasters and minority groups in informal closed sessions (S. Alexander, *pers. comm.*). Mulroney quietly prompted Spicer to decide to set up a committee of music industry representatives to look into the issue. A date was set for review of submissions on paper, and newspapers and regional offices were told about the issue.irate callers were advised to write to the CRTC, because unlike the initiation of MAPL, the process of this review was on paper, without any public hearings (S. Alexander, *pers. comm.*). Effectively the CRTC had decided to grapple with the least radical but most embarrassing of Adams' complaints.

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<sup>38</sup> As acting director for radio at the CRTC Anne Marie Desroches told the press that Adams' album had missed by half a point, due to its foreign co-writer. Yet the CRTC never gives out half points (*Winnipeg Free Press 13/9/91, p.39*). Further Susan Alexander (*pers. comm.*) and the CRTC factsheet (R1-02-92) both use the confusing shorthand of selections qualifying as "Canadian" rather than meeting Cancon requirements.

Before the decision of the CRTC was announced, some 16 months later, two significant incidents took place. On March 26th came the Juno awards, which are partly State funded, and nationally televised on CBC.<sup>39</sup> Adams had won numerous Junos in the past, including 6 of them for songs on 'Reckless' in 1984 (*Winnipeg Free Press* 6/12/84, p.43). As a rather stuffy award system, there never seems to be room at the Junos for more than one star of each type. In the past Adams had fended off Corey Hart, but in 1992 Red Rider veteran Tom Cochrane was nominated against him in 5 categories. The atmosphere was tense because the awards could become a forum for the industry to publicly comment on Adams' views, since they represented the votes of members of CARAS. Cochrane had achieved success only within Canada, and with his latest album 'Mad, Mad World' seemed a strong contender. Adding to the tension was the fact that Bruce Allen had formerly managed the new contender without financial success (*Can. Business* v.57/9, 1984, p.74), and Allen was rumoured to have threatened to pull his current star unless guaranteed an award (*Globe and Mail* 30/3/92, p.A2).

As it turned out, in the categories where both had been nominated, Cochrane won three awards (Album, Single and Male vocalist) and Adams won two (Songwriter and Producer). Of

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<sup>39</sup> The Junos are discussed further in Chapter four.

these Cochrane's awards were all selected by CARAS votes while Adams' Producer award was chosen by a CARAS panel. Adams also got a Special Achievement Award for his best selling single and he reverted to regular guy status by thanking CARAS for "putting aside the politics".<sup>40</sup> The net results were that the industry had shown itself to disagree with Adams' views; a CARAS survey taken on the night showed that only 12% of members thought Cancon should be changed (CARAS News, 2/92, p.2). Also, as a result of his recognition, Cochrane's label, Capitol, gave his album a new impetus in the USA (B. Fairbairn, pers. comm.).

The second incident occurred on April 6th, just before a three day conference on the music industry in Canada, when *The Record's* managing editor Martin Melhuish published his examination of how well Canadian artists had done on *Billboard's* US single and album charts. Melhuish used Joel Whitburn's archival reference book and [staying] power points system to "get a perspective" on the "international" effects of Cancon.<sup>41</sup> He showed that, in general, Canadian artists had greater success on the US charts prior to

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<sup>40</sup> Backstage he added "If politics are going to be involved then let it be the way it's going to be" while Cochrane said at one point "Anyone who thinks Canadian music is mediocre can go to hell" (*Globe and Mail* 30/3/92, pp.A2, A1).

<sup>41</sup> Information on the Melhuish statistics is taken from *The Record* (v.11/33, 6/4/92, pp.1, 16-17) and the *Globe and Mail* (27/3/92, p.C2).



Cancon, which effectively provided evidence to bolster Adams' views in front of the industry.

While Melhuish admitted his figures had "nothing to do with the domestic industry" he was quick to conflate international with American performance. Moreover he simply selected bands in which at least half the members were Canadian, rather than keeping a focus on bands meeting MAPL criteria. Also, though Melhuish did not concoct the formulas himself, their representativeness is open to question. For example the top individual singles he found seem to have been from "one hit wonders".<sup>42</sup> Also, if one looks at the collective powerpoints for Canadian artists in the singles and album charts, while some artists did well before Cancon, overall the total certainly did not, especially in the 1960s. What this suggests is an ignorance of industrial obstacles to the progress of Canadian artists, such as the larger dynamics of the economy and recording industry.

Finally, late in January 1993 the CRTC announced its decision about how international co-written songs would be interpreted under the MAPL system. Ever since Keith Spicer had called upon music industry representatives the general view was that Cancon was a good rule, but it would need some fine tuning to avoid more cases like that of Adams

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<sup>42</sup> The top three were Percy Faith, Sheriff and The Diamonds.

(*Vancouver Sun*, 16/1/92, p.D6). Cancon had the advantages of a blunt instrument in that it was cheap, effective and easy to use. The option of awarding half points would be difficult to assess and administer, and could ruin the MAPL logo. What the CRTC decided was to award one whole point if it could be shown that the Canadian co-writer contributed at least 50% to both music and lyrics. Since the ruling only applied to albums made after September 1991, '*Waking Up The Neighbours*' had effectively been the stimulus to change, but did not qualify (*Vancouver Sun* 1/2/93, p.D8).

This rule will mean that the CRTC once more has to trust an external party over adjudication and also faces the problem that frequently nobody can be exactly sure how much each person contributed to any co-written song (B. Fairbairn, *pers. comm.*). Perhaps more important is that the new rule shows changes are occurring. Firstly, while Cancon quotas could be changed on a station by station basis, this new rule is unprecedented as a historic change in the MAPL system itself.<sup>43</sup> Also it effectively enlarged the pool from which programmers could draw Cancon, making more contributions to Cancon possible from the majors. For

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<sup>43</sup> MAPL may have been applied differently but until the co-write rule it was immutable. For example, although in its first year 1 MAPL qualified, the CRCT made it clear that changes of a writers citizenship would not alter the MAPL rating of their previous songs (*Can. Composer* no.57, 1971, p.32).

example *Sony Music* has a policy of encouraging international co-writes (J. Bateman, *pers. comm.*).

To conclude, for their part, broadcasters are beginning to use Cancon *in the name of the nation* as a lever to loosen other rules, many of which have helped smaller bands. Further, the MAPL system holds an ambivalent status in relation to Gramsci's ideas. In terms of the popular celebration and assumptions transmitted, music is more complex than writing because the songwriter and performer can be of different nationalities. If we believe the transmission of assumptions is *solely* in the writing then only the 'M' and 'L' in MAPL (supporting its industrial aim) prove sound.<sup>44</sup> Yet Canadian artists singing songs written by foreigners are acceptable to the public. The problem actually rests with the umbrella definition of what constitutes Cancon, yet this is fine as a broad support of the industry. Also the new ruling makes this definition even more liberal.

As with any policy, it seemed that Cancon cannot please all the people all the time, and as an attempt at intervention has created its own set of problems. Yet it is also true that Bryan Adams was, despite his continual protest, an inconsistent figure. However, stimulated by his

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<sup>44</sup> It is difficult for the public to celebrate foreign artists as their own and they do not care about songwriters.

efforts, it seems that the CRTC has (as a nationally accountable organization) had to consider something beyond its scope: the international nature of the sound recording industry.

## Chapter Four

### Playing The Game

*START From the basement or garage... Get a bankloan and start a band. Miss a turn... Good music. No gimmicks. No promo! Miss a turn!... Plane crash! Out of game.*<sup>1</sup>

Historically the major record companies have been created and controlled by conglomerates that diversified into sound recording to produce demand for their hardware sales (Denisoff, 1991, p.2). On the margin of this organizational structure, the Canadian sound recording industry is unusual not only because it has survived at all, but also because it has been fundamentally shaped in a particular way by interventions at the national scale from the State and broadcasters. The Toronto based heavy rock group Triumph once released an album called '*Just A Game*'. On one side of the gate-fold sleeve was a board game about negotiating the music business. It showed that the band treated the industry (on one level at least) like a game, with all its rules, perils and opportunities. Being in a band is, after all, about *playing* with music, style and identity.

If Canadian bands also treat the industry as a game this chapter directs attention to how they fared as its players. Firstly the music business is examined as a ladder for rising artists. Second, selected national public and private initiatives are explored which help bands at particular

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<sup>1</sup> From the sleeve of the '*Just A Game*' LP by Triumph (Attic, 1979).

points in their careers. These topics build upon the last chapter by indicating more ways in which the State influences the sound recording industry.

Most acts seek the largest audience possible, so it is no wonder that artists with fans in more than one country would prefer nationwide popular recognition to being positioned as nationalists by sections of the press if they were given the choice.<sup>2</sup> In chapter three it was argued that Canadian artists have contributed to wider developments because they have been able to emerge from the local scale. Yet it is naive to assume a smooth ascent into larger markets based on the recognition of talent, because signing may suddenly allow an act to be distributed at a national scale at least without emergent steps. Furthermore, for acts signed to the majors subsequent growth implies a coherent chain of decision making within the label influenced from the roots upwards. Even though an international market exists for songwriters, the return of royalties and the distribution and promotion of some acts, top artists are still implicated within differentiated geographies of taste and control.

For artists the industry is set up more like a *ladder* in that the opportunities associated with signing and touring

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<sup>2</sup> Arguments about cultural imperialism seem naive when one realizes that the whole aim of most artists and the machinery behind them is to export music from Canada.

leading to different rungs. However, the notion of a ladder is a poor metaphor since those bands given special opportunities can find themselves on higher rungs while for some the difficulties of ascending from one rung to the next are almost insurmountable. In economic terms the benefits for the artists are greater further up the ladder. Yet, as we shall see, in Canada this means more of the profits made from successful bands go abroad.

At the bottom of the ladder is the bar circuit, problems with which include that owners find it cheaper to play *canned* (recorded) music on less popular nights of the week (E. O'Day, *pers.comm.*) and audiences frequently expect bands to do cover versions.<sup>3</sup> Added to this is the expense of touring across the country; the small scattered population means that frequently it is more viable for bands to remain in their home region (B. Fairbairn, *pers. comm.*). Artists outside Ontario face the practical problem of living in that province on tour when the cost of living, particularly staying in hotels, is more expensive than in other areas of the country (E. O'Day, *pers. comm.*), while Toronto bands going outside their home region have sometimes been given unfavourable press coverage due to the perception that their

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<sup>3</sup> This problem seems to be a North American phenomenon, since in Britain there is less of an expectation for covers and pub rock bands are more free to write for themselves. Folk clubs never had the problem, because audiences came *expecting* to hear something original.

province drains music industry resources (*Georgia Straight* v.26/1292, 1992, p.33). Even if a band gets put into clubs which support their style, the problem is that touring has to be within a framework which *further* promotes them. Tours can build up a loyal fan base, especially if fans are given other ways to *already* know the songs. Jeff Healy, for example, spent three years touring the bars of Canada to no avail before his trio signed to *Arista* in the US (*Melody Maker*, 19/11/88, p.21). Outside their home region, bands can have problems getting recognized. A video aired on Much Music can give upcoming bands the national exposure they need to embark on a national tour, but for that the band must have already made a quality demo tape.<sup>4</sup>

A more costly way to recruit fans is to release a vanity record. How successful this will be at attracting further interest depends on what sort of live reputation an act already has and how fast their release sells. Thus while Paul James and Stringband were both successful with their vanity albums in the long run, it was Stompin' Tom and Rough Trade who managed to push themselves up the ladder with faster sales of their own releases (*Maclean's* v.90/11, 1977, p.59). As vinyl records these had the potential of getting airplay, at least on local and college radio. Bands can sell tapes to fans but material distributed in that recording

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<sup>4</sup> A *demo* is an unreleased recording made by a band demonstrating what they do.



format is not liked by radio programmers, yet the cost of manufacturing CDs is prohibitive. One way around the dilemma of how bands can optimally distribute their music has been to participate in a growing proliferation of indie compilation CDs, some of which are now produced by FACTOR (FACTOR Annual Report 1992, p.9). Since bands pay to include the demo material, these are lucrative for their compilers. Moreover, if radio has shown a mixed reception to these compilations, depending on each station's format, the majors have said they are useful for A&R meetings since they are sufficient in quality and many bands can be compared at one sitting. As yet none of these CDs has led directly to any signing, but as might be expected, they have led at least to requests by A&R teams for bands to supply more material (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.6).

The next rung of the ladder is to sign to what could be called a *true indie*, which is an independent record label not orientated to any one band and organizing its own distribution. True indies have survived in Quebec and Ontario and they subsist in Vancouver, but the country's vast size and difficult terrain prohibits cheap, easy national distribution. Such labels have no significantly proven hits, so the option of joining cartels abroad to release material outside Canada is difficult, making these labels of limited benefit to bands seeking increased international exposure. Independent labels which are

distributed by the majors are of more significance in Canada, but it is important to outline their unusual historical predicament before we can assess what they offer to Canadian acts.

In America during the 1980s the majors began to scoop up independent labels for distribution.<sup>5</sup> The indies had actually proved more aggressive with their product marketing than some majors, attracting young record buyers fed up with mainstream radio programming aimed at the babyboom generation. For the majors the risks of re-releasing independent albums were low since the costs of recording had already been covered by the indies and the success of particular small labels could be used as an indication of how viable they were for partnering in redistribution deals (*Probe*, v.3/1, 1992, p.3).

In Canada there has been a much longer running relationship between the majors and indies, founded upon a particular distribution system. In the calculated view of the majors, due to its population size, the country did not constitute a separate centre of demand or therefore warrant a separate distribution system. However, the federal government kept a tariff on imported commercial recordings

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<sup>5</sup> Redistribution deals appeared because REM's 1983 album '*Murmur*' proved that indie albums were a good investment that could sell well.

even before rock and roll became popular. It meant that any foreign label had to pay duty on each record or tape coming in to be sold in Canada. Once Canadian record sales were large enough for the tariff to seriously reduce profits available to the majors, they created branch plants, regional offices and a more localized distribution system to sell their wares from within the country. This system was in place by the late 1960's.<sup>6</sup>

Especially after Cancon was created, a *symbiotic* relationship emerged between the indies and majors. In Toronto Bernie Finklestein established *True North* in the late 1960s linked to *Epic-CBS*, and in 1973 Gordon Lightfoot's old manager, Al Mair, began *Attic Records* (*Can. Composer* no.235, 1988, p.24). A proliferation of other national indies linked to the majors included *Duke Street*, *Alert*, *Aquarius*, *Daffodil* and more recently in Vancouver, *Nettwerk* (*Can. Musician* v.6/2, 1985, p.49).

Given the relationship between the indies and majors in Canada, it has been argued that the country did not experience the rapid incorporation of alternative sounds

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<sup>6</sup> Tariffs on phonographs coming into Canada began in 1952 (M. McClintock, *pers. comm.*). We can surmise that the majors set up their distribution system around the mid 1960s: Paul Anka's signing direct to *United Artists* in the USA in 1956 suggests the major's system was not in place that early, but Anne Murray's signing to Capitol-Canada in 1968 showed it existed by then.

taking place south of the border in recent years. Relationships had already been struck up whereby national indie labels exploited the major's distribution system (*Probe*, v.3/1, 1992, p.3).

The advantage of this rung of the ladder is that since Canadian national indies have diverse rosters of talent, there is a relative lack of competition when it comes to getting signed, compared to the USA.<sup>7</sup> Many Canadian national indie labels do not have either specialist or alternative signing policies, so they are more like sub-labels.<sup>8</sup> Also if stars on these labels have hits across the country, deals can be potentially engineered with other indies, cartels or majors abroad. Acts on the indies may find foreign distribution *easier than their counterparts on the majors*, because they are often more free to seek such distribution.

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<sup>7</sup> As a whole the US has a much larger market which can support less popular types of music due to audience sizes alone. However, this means American national indies, and the departments of the majors, are specialized in particular types of music. This creates sharper competition within genres, although the benefits are great to those who can sign at that level (*Can. Composer* no.235, 11, 1988, p.26).

<sup>8</sup> A sub-label is one in-house division of a major label which signs and develops bands; sub-labels *can* create particular sound identities by signing particular types of artists, but equally they may sign musically diverse acts brought together in other ways. The grounds for comparing Canada's national indies to them are due to their degree of administration, legal control and autonomy in signings from the major label. The most notable exceptions to this are *Nettwerk* in Vancouver and *True North* in Toronto, who both set out to sign alternative acts. A few national indies, such as *Stony Plain Records* from Edmonton, specialize in particular types of music.

Major labels frequently deny their less successful acts access to their in-house foreign distribution system and those acts can find contractual difficulties if they seek independent foreign distribution.

However, while it may be contractually easier for Canadian bands on indies to make deals distributing their music in foreign territories, this remains a difficult feat, since they face a different problem. Touring and releasing put bands backed by poor promotion in a chicken and egg situation: tours are only effective if a release is popular and the confidence for a release comes from showing support by foreign tours. Acts have used a variety of strategies to stimulate the interest of foreign labels so they can get signed for release abroad.<sup>9</sup>

Some bands try to build up foreign fan bases solely by touring target areas, but most acts already have foreign releases. Yet even once a release is made, the foreign distributor may still leave promotion completely in the hands of the band and their manager (Can. Composer v.3/3,

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<sup>9</sup> One option some acts follow is to make a video made especially for the head of a foreign record company, narrated in his or her own language. Also some managers and publishing houses aggressively seek out foreign distribution deals for their bands, especially at international conferences. However, since many foreign distributors do not assume that a successful record in Canada will be one in their territory, another strategy is to stage a small tour showcasing the band to demonstrate local support for them in places where they have not yet been released.

1992, p.16). Moreover, less famous foreign bands interested in touring the USA face an environment of tightening immigration rules (*Can. Musician*, v.13/5, 1991, p.12).

Another problem of nationally distributed indie labels is that they can only offer their bands relatively limited recording budgets. So, despite their flexibility, such labels do not give their artists the all round backing a major can offer which make it easier to reward good music with high sales. High sales profits are important because they not only build confidence in a band, but buy the ways which facilitate further growth: bands with national contracts have expenses (for basic costs, videos and tours) deducted in advance from sales profits via recoupable accounts.

The next rung on the ladder is to get signed to a branch of one of the majors within Canada. For a band already signed to indies the possibilities of signing with a major are limited. However, some of the national indies (and sub-labels) are run by top managers and if a band is on their manager's own indie label, it may be possible for him or her to help them sign direct to a major. Unsigned bands also have an opportunity because each major label operating within Canada currently has regional offices with A&R staff who will scrutinize unsolicited demos or videos. In fact they are inundated with demos and are notorious for not

signing acts which have gone on to be picked up and sold millions of records.<sup>10</sup> The national modules of the majors are not fully integrated in their policy decisions regarding the release and promotion of particular bands. Unfortunately those modules in Canada working with such a small market carry less weight than their counterparts elsewhere. Canadian branches of the majors are therefore not in an advantageous position since they do not have full decision making status within their own companies. They actually form satellites, administrative training grounds for executive staff on their way up corporate hierarchies (D. Osborn, *pers. comm.*). Especially given the conservatism of radio and the costs of videos, they can rarely afford to sign new acts.<sup>11</sup> Those with a sound which can sell globally (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*), any ability to cross formats, and more commercial music are prioritized.

Furthermore, the Canadian branch of each major must convince its parent company to release recordings in other

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<sup>10</sup> Blind blues guitarist Jeff Healy was told he did not have any gimmicks by one of the major's Canadian offices (*Melody Maker* 19/11/88, p.21). Loverboy had 22 rejections from the majors before *Columbia-CBS* released their first LP, which sold over 100,000 copies nationally (*Can. Business* v.57/9, 1984, p.21). Haywire received a rejection letter from one concerned with their low market potential two weeks after their first album (released by *Attic*) had gone gold at home (*Music Scene* no.354, 1987, p.8). Rush were refused by all the majors in Canada, yet they have gone on to sell the most albums of any Canadian band (*Maclean's* v.91/4, 1978, p.30).

<sup>11</sup> In fact one major, *Warner's*, is currently purging its Canadian roster. (*The Province* 26/6/92, p.C5).

countries. While this sometimes happens, it is rarer that Canadian recordings are made a promotional priority elsewhere in the world. So bands with reasonable recording budgets and promotion at home can be frustrated abroad. Unlike acts on the national indies, those artists signed to branches of the majors do not really have the option of striking up additional deals abroad.

The major labels prioritize and highly promote any foreign releases of acts on their rosters they believe will sell well abroad. However, different territories are known to prefer particular types of music.<sup>12</sup> If a major record company has limited confidence in an act signed to their Canadian branch they may wait to assess the success of that artist in Canada. This accounts for the time lag of around a year between home and foreign releases for many Canadian bands. One exemplar case was the group Loverboy, who were released in the USA by their parent major *Columbia-CBS* only when their first album was a hit in Canada (*Can. Business*, v.57/9, 1984, p.71). It is important to realize this route has not been followed very often in recent years, since either bands have signed with enough confidence for immediate foreign release or they are not popular enough for

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<sup>12</sup> For instance Japan is known to prefer its own stars, female dance artists and hard rockers. Music with a folk or country flavor does not do well there, so for example *BMG* released the *Crash Test Dummies* in all of its territories except for Japan and Eastern Europe (*Can. Composer* v.3/3, 1992, p.17).



foreign distribution. Perhaps the test policy is more frequently used as an excuse for *not* releasing material abroad, because the staff controlling releases outside Canada but *within* another branch of the major label do not always use a Canadian artist's previous success to estimate their potential in larger markets (B. Mink, *pers. comm.*). These staff may need further persuasion from a band's manager, publishing house or colleagues at the Canadian division of their label. Therefore, Canadian bands face the biggest difficulties when such staff continue to ignore them.

Even if their ownership and financial control is based elsewhere, the major labels usually have centres of decision making located in the USA, especially in Los Angeles and/or New York. Such centres did not sign the bands that Canadian branch plants want them to release. They have their own priority US acts with grassroots support from well populated home regions.<sup>13</sup> In their bid to get a US deal, some Canadian acts have found themselves signed to labels with too little promotional money. For labels, backing bands is more like gambling than investing because, although very large profits

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<sup>13</sup> Presumably US artists can enter Canada without any support there because they have already sold well in their own US home regions to have venture capital for releases. The problem for Canadian bands wishing to expand out of the country is that Canadian regional audiences are not large enough to make such support significant and their help does not count on the US charts.

are sometimes made, there is very little certainty regarding the return upon their investment. Even in the USA, under 15% of bands break even on their first album (*Rolling Stone* 21/9/89, p.33), so the majors rely on profits from top acts to sustain their lower selling artists. The majors will not reduce promotional dollars allocated to their top acts in order to promote unknown ones. Furthermore, the costs of making records with videos have escalated to reduce the total money available for remaining signings. The net result is that fewer acts are signed, but each one is better promoted.

Perhaps more often the problem for Canadian bands is that they are not priorities within their major labels. Canada has a legacy of acts popular across the country, especially from the early to mid-1980s, who either did not get released or prioritized abroad by their parent majors. Some of these bands had enlisted famous producers. For example the Payola\$, who signed to A&M, had worked on one album with Dave Foster, but it was relegated to national release (*Music Scene* no.346, 1985, p.20). Similarly The Spoons, also on A&M, worked on an album produced by Nile Rogers which only got a Canadian release (*Can. Musician* v.8/3, 1990, p.40).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> At present A&M only sign Canadian acts that they can market internationally and they try to guarantee priority releases with their parent (A. Williams, *pers. comm.*). Also their publishing company, Almo-Irving, has aggressively sought out custom for songs written by Adams and producer John Dexter, so indications there are that Canadian acts will no longer be relegated national releases only (*Music Scene* no.355, 1987, p.10).

Also M+M, who signed to *RCA*, made an album with top producer Daniel Lanois and their label never released that record abroad (*Can. Musician* 9/3, 1987, p.14).

Furthermore if bands are released and initial US sales are low they can be downgraded to Canadian-only status.<sup>15</sup> Even when labels appear to have innovative policies, things may not be so simple. For example *Sony Music* have a specific company policy to push bands from outside the USA and Australia, but it means promoting the acts *they think* will do well on the local chart listings. There is no guarantee they will prioritize Canadian acts abroad (*Music Week*, 7/11/92, p.24).

The expatriation of artists became a sore point for nationalists in the late 1960s, yet it was not a new way for Canadian talent to escape from the apathy of labels and radio stations. Leaving the country could also mean lighter tax constraints, better opportunities and proximity to the decision making centres of the majors. The disadvantages it incurred included being away from roots, friends and family,

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<sup>15</sup> For instance *Platinum Blonde* were tipped as Canada's next big export in 1985 after their first album sold very well at home, but their career faltered with poor US sales (*Can. Musician* v.8/3, 1990, p.40). Conversely, despite a well received tour of the USA with *Bob Dylan*, *Sue Medley* was downgraded for her next album by her label *Mercury* after an internal shake-up in the parent major (J. Bateman, *pers. comm.*).

and potentially feelings of guilt in betraying Canadian fans and attacks from Canada's nationalist press. While expatriation has become rarer for artists, it has not stopped.<sup>16</sup>

One reason for relocating in the US is to reach the top rung of the ladder by getting signed directly by a US parent major. The benefits for acts signed in this way include high recording budgets (often moved up after a previous successful album), guaranteed releases in different territories, and priority promotion. Furthermore, a US hit can bring its writer \$150,000 in airplay royalties while it is in the top forty (*Maclean's* v.100/9, 1987, p.36) and prove an artist for airplay in other territories, including Canada.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Despite having a number one dance hit in Canada, the nucleus of Martha and the Muffins, M+M, decided to go to England to renew their career after their Canadian RCA contract expired (*Can. Musician* v.9/3, 1987, p.14). Also some of Canada's top writers have either become expatriates (including Dave Foster and Eddie Schwartz in Los Angeles) or have gone into jingle making. Although good songs can be sold abroad, a scarcity of connections, poor royalties and problems faced by writer-performers in Canada may be causing the trend.

<sup>17</sup> Sometimes bands on poorly coordinated majors face additional problems when released back home. For example Pure, a band signed to Warner's in Los Angeles after showcasing at the *Music '91* show in Vancouver, have had problems getting tours and promotion in Canada due to their lack of recognition by Warner Music-Canada (J. Bateman, pers. comm.).

While previously Canadian acts signing direct to the US head offices of the majors usually had to make their homes in America, the important thing about direct contracts now is that any participating bands can remain in Canada. As a consequence the predicament of artists signed directly has become more difficult to describe in simplistic nationalist terms because the only things which need to be expatriated as a result of the contracts involved are profits that the parent majors make on their investment. Interesting and talented acts, such as the Barenaked Ladies and kd lang, have made deals in this way; but the question is *how*, and by whom, these people will get positioned vis à vis the nation.

Signing directly to parent companies makes economic sense to the acts involved and successful acts are hard to relinquish as national figures since their position *is a mark of their achievements as Canadians*.<sup>18</sup> Thus the presence of directly signed Canadian acts in foreign markets serves to bolster pride for them back home.<sup>19</sup> The future of such

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<sup>18</sup> Communications minister Perrin Beatty thinks "when Canadian musicians have to be signed in the US first before they get recognition here, there's something fundamentally wrong" (*Probe*, v.2/7, 1991, p.1). Yet Barenaked Ladies manager Nigel Best has stated "I don't think that a band necessarily signs a record deal in an particular country because it's that country. I think you make... the right deal for you...but, every time it happens in the music business that a band signs a record deal in America, there are many vocal complaints" (*The Record*, v.11/35, 1992, p.9).

<sup>19</sup> Directly signed artists are also distributed in their own country with all the national promotional forces of the parent majors, frequently through the vehicle of American

acts is only in question if they fare poorly in foreign markets, in which cases such bands can be seen as test cases revealing the policies of their labels.<sup>20</sup>

To those concerned with the industry direct signings can neither be ignored nor simply celebrated since profits made from their talent go abroad. As with expatriates and cases such as Anne Murray (who works abroad, but lives in Canada and was signed to *Capitol-Canada*) the music industry and State are left to sort over the dilemmas: what award categories to put them in, how much FACTOR support to give them, whether they qualify as Cancon.

This brings us to Gramsci's notion, that the morality of central figures was one thing which made the common people interested in the National Popular (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith, 1985, p.300). In Canada, for the nationalist press the battle is fought over how top acts position their Canadian identity; that is, as Canadians, what things they consider important. Sections of the press *claiming* to speak for the nation can deflect industrial problems stemming from Canada's marginal position into personal moral quibbles

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media. As a consequence Canadian fans themselves often celebrate direct signings more than many other artists.

<sup>20</sup> At the moment Toronto's Barenaked Ladies are crucial and unprecedented in this respect, because they have been signed directly to a major in the USA but have gained most popularity within Canada, while also being aimed at the US college circuit.

about the artists concerned *as role models*. Artists signed for their international potential are co-opted as national symbols because of their success and then called to defend what they do *as Canadians*. They may feel forced to define their links with Canada more obviously and personally than other acts. For example, Paul Anka sent two magazine editors photocopies of his passport to show them he was still a Canadian (*Maclean's* v.88/2, 1975, p.50). Such debate diverts attention away from criticism of the industry or the suggestion of alternatives to the way in which labels are structured. The result is a battle to define who has the right to say what being Canadian is about, rather than why particular circumstances should somehow matter.<sup>21</sup>

Canada now has a diversity of artists strung between the different rungs of the recording industry ladder, from those still doing small tours and seeking record contracts, to those commanding secure contracts with the head offices of multi-national major labels. Attention can now be turned to the operations of the Canadian State and other organizations which are working to improve the conditions for Canadian artists. The CRTC does not form the only link between the Federal State and the music industry. The Department of

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<sup>21</sup> For example journalist Tom Harrison has said of Bryan Adams "He's from Vancouver, but he's never been satisfied with being a Canadian" (*Maclean's* v.100/27, 1987, p.35). This implies Harrison has a specific view of what being Canadian means with which he can call Adams to account.

Communications (DoC) is the most important other government body which deals with Canadian musicians.<sup>22</sup> Structurally, the DoC connects with the music industry through its projects and the settling of copyright issues.<sup>23</sup> The Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent On Records (FACTOR) has been a way for the DoC join in with Canadian radio broadcasters in channelling funds from the radio broadcasting to the sound recording industries. FACTOR has assisted Canadian independent labels by allowing artists to climb certain rungs of the industry ladder. Also, being run within the Canadian music business, the organization has demonstrated the solidarity of an industry made up of diverse structures when faced with a common concern. In fact, it could be argued that such a degree of coherence is actually one of the strengths of countries on the margin of the world music industry.

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<sup>22</sup> A third area of linkage is the *recognition* of artists: for example the Order of Canada has been given to Gordon Lightfoot and Bryan Adams while the Juno Awards and the Anne Murray Centre in Springhill have received federal State funding (*Maclean's* v.91/9, 1978, p.30; v.102/52, 1989, p.36).

<sup>23</sup> It is important to realize that although the DoC has helped Canadian musicians with policies such as increased funding for FACTOR, in the area of copyright it has been slow to update archaic laws. Thus Canadian music makers are still denied remuneration in ways which have become legislated rights in many other developed countries (for example see *Can. Composer* no.231, 1988, p.2; *Probe*, v.2/7, 1991).



While early attacks on rock saw it as a form of American cultural imperialism (Martin and Segrave, 1988, p.76), only more recently have different nations begun to support *their* own music industries. In the 1970s and 1980s the KGB funded bands in the USSR that it found politically favourable (*Globe and Mail*, 15/3/93, p.A13). As a less extreme, but still marginal market, Australia has a very coordinated industry. They support Auscon, strong provincial schemes and Export Music Australia (EMA) which emerged more recently than FACTOR, but is an almost identical endeavor (E. Jonker, *pers. comm.*). Schemes like these attract attention not only from other cultural industries, but from poorer countries who cannot afford to experiment with the money set aside for their arts programs (*Can. Composer* no.200, 1985, p.16). What concerns us here is whether FACTOR has provided a successful prototype for enhancing the music of a nation on the margin or, for example, has been more motivated by the ulterior aims of broadcasters who established the project.

Before Cancon radio broadcasters were generally too conservative to play Canadian songs unless proven as hits in the USA, the key complaint of station music directors being the poor quality of Canadian sounds. Because of this some programmers had begun to make initiatives to improve the quality of Canadian material in order to meet their standards, in some cases well before Cancon was introduced. For example Standard Broadcasting began a major reference

system for its stations called the Canadian Talent Library (CTL) in 1962. These initiatives increased once Cancon was the law since programmers were forced to play more Canadian music than ever before.<sup>24</sup> The established sound recording industry feared that such schemes would defeat the industrial purpose of Cancon: if broadcasters filled up the quotas by drawing upon material recorded at the stations themselves there would be no significant boost to the independent Canadian record business (Yorke, 1971, p.214).

Cancon contained no quality stipulation and the assumption was that increased airplay would result in enough increased sales to boost the indigenous recording industry. What the CRTC did not take into account was that groups with hit records solely in Canada have problems in financially breaking even, so unless they had external funding or generous parent labels, they could only afford to pay low recording costs.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, as mandated by the

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<sup>24</sup> Early initiatives included live concert simulcasts, the *Maple Leaf System* (a phone network between stations to popularize Canadian artists, which its critics claimed was a gesture made to the CRTC in order to avert Cancon) and various record labels such as the Rogers *Candlelight and Wine* series, and the CAB's short-lived *Astra* label (The Record v.12/4, 1992, pp.20,22)

<sup>25</sup> One broadcasting corporation, Rogers, argued that it was dollars and not guaranteed airtime which Canadian culture needed (Maclean's v., 1979, p.30). Further, the CAB suggested that the government tax incoming cultural products and use that money to aid the industry (Foster, 1982, p.307). It would have reduced the burden on broadcasters but also enraged the major labels, who already gave the Canadian recording business some of their lucrative custom.

Broadcasting Act of 1968, the limit of the Commission's realm was to oversee the airwaves in Canada as public property; they could not regulate the sound recording industry.

What they could do was to put further pressure on broadcasters, turning their complaints about quality into penances at license renewal time, by asking stations on a case-by-case basis what they were doing for the development of Canadian talent. At first, due to the vague rubric of the question, answers were generic.<sup>26</sup> The money could be spent on live shows, lyric contests, or within reason anything else a station thought was relevant. For stations centrally concerned with audience ratings and freshly burdened by Cancon, the issue of talent development was not a priority. Another possible problem was that bands could benefit from a station's money and then sign direct to US record companies (*The Record*, v.11/35, 1992, p.9).

The biggest problem with Canadian talent development was that each station was relatively powerless to do much for Canadian bands except at the local scale. In 1981, Richard Hahn's Report to the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) suggested an industry taskforce be set up to examine

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<sup>26</sup> Soon stations began quoting dollar figures to demonstrate their commitment, but this money was frequently squandered just to meet the target.

the ways of pooling funds (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.22). Thus two broadcasters, CHUM and Moffat, approached the CRTC and DoC. The CRTC was in favour of a sound recording initiative, but could not provide any funding (as it was beyond its mandate). The DoC had previously ignored pleas from the Canadian Independent Record Producers Association (CIRPA) for years (*Probe* v.2/3, 1987, p.3).<sup>27</sup> As the DoC's spokesman, John Watt told the industry to help itself before it could hope to get any help from the government. Hence representatives from the music industry met with some of the broadcasting corporations in 1982 to form FACTOR. The first sponsors were CHUM, Moffat and Rogers. Soon more broadcasters joined and the initial \$240,000 FACTOR had to allocate began to rise every year. In 1985 FACTOR approached Standard Broadcasting, who agreed to incorporate its Canadian Talent Library into the project (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.26).

FACTOR had begun with the intent of securing DoC funds, but the national economic climate was against them: in late 1984 a severe round of federal government cuts removed over \$80 million from the budget of the CBC and \$3.5 million from the Canada Council (*Can. Composer* no.200, 1985, p.46). Furthermore, the organizers of FACTOR knew any scheme would

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<sup>27</sup> CIRPA did not have the power to demand more airtime from stations on one hand and more dollars from them on the other; the initiative had to come from the broadcasters themselves (*The Record* v.12/4, 1990, p.26).

have to be a nationwide operation to get any money from the DoC. So in 1985 their representative approached a key Quebec music industry organization, Le Association du Disques et Spectacles (L'ADISQ), who decided to set up a parallel body called MUSICACTION. The Quebec operation agreed to take 30% of any forthcoming DoC funds, distributed through a holding company set up for the purpose (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.26).

In early 1986 the DoC announced a new package for the sound recording industry in Canada, called the Sound Recording Development Program (SDRP), on a funding commitment of \$5 million annually for five years. As well as the timing of this move, in an environment of intense cuts in arts funding, the other surprising thing about it was that FACTOR-CTL/MUSICACTION was to receive the bulk of the money involved, the rest going to the Canada Council to support minority music.<sup>28</sup> It was an unprecedented venture not only because the federal State was joining the broadcasters in funding Canadian popular culture, but also because the DoC was usually skeptical of projects which were not government controlled (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.26).

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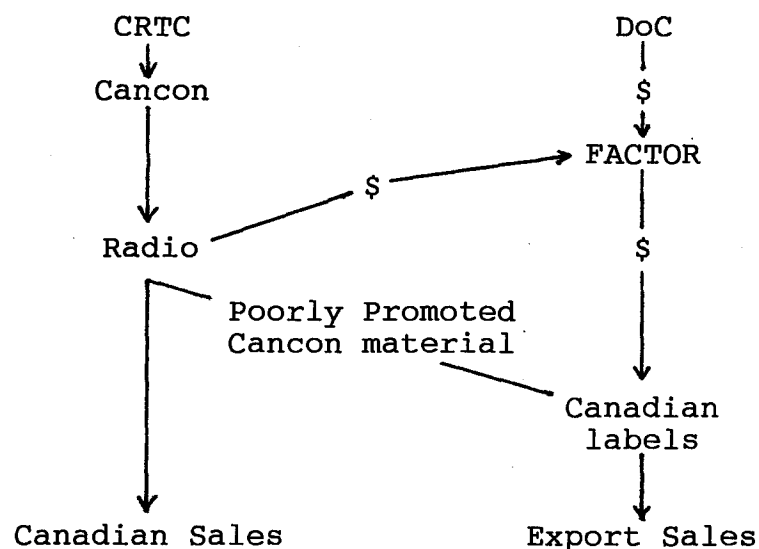
<sup>28</sup> *The Report of the Task Force on Broadcasting Policy* (1986, p.410) had suggested to the CRTC that, as broadcasters stepped in with more funds for commercial music, public funds should be diverted towards minority genres. However, with FACTOR the government still provides as much as sponsor contributions and loan repayments put together (FACTOR Annual Report 1992, p.20).

It seems likely that the DoC invested in FACTOR as a preferred way to help the Canadian independent sound recording industry for several reasons. Firstly they got a project tailored to the demands of labels and musicians without having to pay the cost, or take on the task, of setting it up. Secondly, despite the DoC's misgivings over joint ventures mixing public funding and private administration, government contributions to FACTOR were in keeping with the ideology of the State in the Mulroney era since they were a way to show that private initiatives deserved full support. Finally, by providing dollars, the DoC could have some control over FACTOR/MUSICACTION and its beneficiaries, and share in the success of the project. One indication of this control was that any changes to the program now had to be agreed upon by everybody right up to the prime minister, so the scheme became less flexible (*Can. Composer* no.231, 1988, p.28).

Yet contributing to FACTOR was also a way for the government to show musicians it cared about their predicament as the scheme received a three fold increase in funds. Furthermore the DoC were especially keen to help francophone acts and insisted that 40% of the entire money allocated would go to MUSICACTION. Since it was agreed each organization could receive financing from broadcasters using their language, the distribution of DoC funds helped even

up the proportions of funding available for English speaking and francophonic acts (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.26). Also, separatists had previously refused financial help from the Canada Council (*Maclean's* v.82/6, 1969, p.45), so the new scheme both put Quebec's music into a separate self-administered category and tied it into the nationalist project of the federal State. In terms of the relationship between the State and music industry the new circumstances formed a pattern shown in Figure 2:

Figure 2: The relationship between the State, broadcasting and sound recording industries in Canada



The aim of FACTOR has always been to "further the development of the Canadian independent recording sector" (FACTOR Annual Report 1992, p.1). Potentially it could also create Cancon material. Although the CRTC could not steer the sound recording industry themselves once FACTOR existed they could make contributions a condition of license for

broadcasters, rather than merely a voluntary scheme.<sup>29</sup> An added benefit was that the Commission could maintain local Canadian talent development requirements as well. To reach its goal FACTOR was dedicated to meeting the demands of bands and labels making up the industry. The most basic strategy was to fund the recording of quality demo tapes by up-coming bands so they could shop them around to labels in a bid to get signed.

At a higher level FACTOR stepped into the financial manoeuvres of the labels themselves. In the early 1980s recession, lower record sales forced most record companies to find new cost effective release strategies. One was to pass the risk of having a hit album on to the artists by charging all recording costs to an account recoupable against their record sales. This meant that at the beginning of their recording career, a band could be famous without being rich. It was a major incentive for them to reduce experimentation and tailor their songs to the dictates of commercial radio. FACTOR has extended this procedure by giving independent Canadian record companies recoupable

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<sup>29</sup> In the preface (p.17) to Radio Regulations 1986 the CRTC told stations it had decided not to count advertisements within special foreground programs as part of each stations advertising quota, allowing broadcasters to make more money by taking on more sponsors. Significantly the Commission said it expected any additional new revenue should be used on to schemes such as FACTOR, local initiatives or networked programs. Instruction continued; "The Commission intends to review licensees' commitments in this regard at the time of their license renewal".



loans so that they could make albums and videos, and granting awards to Canadian bands going on foreign tours.<sup>30</sup>

Applications for FACTOR support are sent to the organization's head office in Toronto and divided into their genres. Each of these is then divided between panels of "experts" in the relevant field and assessed against the market place, so that bands selected will not be a waste of money (E. O'Day, *pers. comm.*). Since April 1992 FACTOR has farmed out most assessments to regional panels.<sup>31</sup> This regionalization is relatively superficial: FACTOR is still run from the boardroom in Toronto, while about half of the applications come from Ontario.<sup>32</sup> What the move has allowed is an increase in the number of panels, a new awareness of FACTOR for applicants in hinterland provinces and a hushing

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<sup>30</sup> FACTOR loans are repaid with minimal interest of around 5% through each act's record sales (*Halifax Chronicle Herald* 4/3/88, p.2-E). Artists get to keep any royalties and any additional sales profits.

<sup>31</sup> Regional affiliates exist to represent Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta (FACTOR Annual Report, 1992, p.5).

<sup>32</sup> By 1986 Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island together contained 9% of the country's population and contributed 8% of FACTOR applications. As a result of FACTOR advertising in trade magazines in those provinces, their collective total was pushed up to 26% the next year (*Halifax Chronicle Herald* 4/3/88, p.2-E). It would be unfair for FACTOR to dictate where their applicants come from, yet it seems the organization may be aiming to equalize the regional representation of awards when population differences mean that would make little sense.

of criticisms attacking the incestuous nature of the project.

In many ways FACTOR has been a resounding success. The DoC liked the project so much that in 1991 it renewed financial commitments indefinitely. Furthermore, the scheme has become a model for their Book Publishing Development Program, announced early in 1992 (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.20). On its tenth anniversary the organization could boast that for the \$17 million it had ploughed into Canadian independent music, bands receiving the money had grossed ten times that figure. If total FACTOR input is divided between the 1,400 acts the scheme has supported over its lifetime (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.20), we arrive at a tiny average of \$1,200 per band. Since even the lowest award is now \$1,500, and bands can be granted up to \$25,000 (FACTOR Annual Report 1992, pp.6, 12) that average shows how the funding has snowballed and how total figures can hide a lot of variation.

The bands involved welcome this money and have sometimes produced interesting and controversial work as a result. Acts including Bruce Cockburn and Blue Rodeo, using FACTOR loans, have recorded songs implicitly criticizing the federal government over native issues. For well known

artists setting their sights abroad, such as kd lang, FACTOR has made extensive foreign tours possible.<sup>33</sup>

However, FACTOR has a number of disadvantages and problems for the parties involved.<sup>34</sup> Since the organization devotes a bulk of its money to sound recording, this will be the area examined first.<sup>35</sup> As it is driven by the demands of musicians, with increased funding FACTOR has seen an increase in the number and variety of awards given in its most basic categories, which go direct to artists making demo tapes. Yet paradoxically, as Table 5 shows, these are still the hardest awards to get.

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33 Blue Rodeo's song was 'Fools Like You' (*Marketing* v.95/47, 1990, p.1). FACTOR is liberal enough in its definition of Canadian independent music to include artists signed direct to the USA using their own sub-labels (such as kd lang signed to *Sire-Warners* via *Bumstead Productions* and Rush on *Mercury* who use their manager's sub-label, *Anthem Records*).

34 Problems which are important, but not explored here include that a reasonably high quality demo is needed just to approach FACTOR. Also funds run out annually in certain categories like tour support (E. O'Day, *pers. comm.*). Given its power, the board of directors lacks artists or ordinary consumers (3 of its 7 members have to be broadcasters). Furthermore some panel members have felt they were the wrong people for their roles (B. Mink, *pers. comm.*).

35 Of the FACTOR \$3.3m total 1991 budget, \$0.3m goes to syndicated radio programs, \$0.5m to foreign tours or showcases and \$0.5m to videos. The remaining \$2.2m is spend on sound recording (FACTOR Annual Report, 1992).

Table 5: The Success of FACTOR applicants in different projects

<u>Project</u>	<u>First Year</u>	<u>%Successful 1992 Applicants</u>
New Talent Demo (EP)	1982	20
FACTOR (LP) Loan	1982	25
Songwriters Demo (EP)	1986	33
Compilation CD	1991	33
Producer's Demo	1991	66
Direct Loans (to labels)	1992	95

(Source: FACTOR Annual Report, 1992)

The Canadian Songwriter's Association (CSA) has approximately 30,000 members and it recently carried out a survey (Probe v.2/6, 1987, p.2) which found that 19% of the members asked did not pay for their own demos. Of those who sought funding 46% applied to FACTOR. In other words around 9% of those surveyed had approached the body. That could mean there are nearly 3,000 applicants seeking FACTOR awards from amongst the CSA's membership, assuming most members produce demos. To select from these applicants each panel of three people is obliged to contain one broadcaster. The panels are required to select more commercial music, so unusual artists experimenting *within* rock are rarely accepted.<sup>36</sup> Also FACTOR has tougher Cancon criteria than the CRTC and can look into the accounts held by artists as a

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<sup>36</sup> For example one panel accepted a "third rate *Foreigner*" style hard rock band, but not a black East coast artist who sang a song with a rocking Calypso beat, about working in fish canneries (*Can. Musician*, v.10/3, 1988, p.7).

condition of contract, so help from the organization comes with strings attached.<sup>37</sup>

For those selected, the possession of a quality demo tape is no longer the sign of commitment from a band or faith in them by private financial backers that it once was. FACTOR may have made talent more audible to Canada's independent labels, but that does not mean that labels will automatically undertake more signings. Although FACTOR now has its own CD compilation project, bands possessing FACTOR funded demos are forbidden to release that material themselves as a condition of their award. The New Talent Demo Awards application (p.2) says that any songs recorded are therefore "...NOT intended for commercial release... or airplay". FACTOR thus works conservatively with labels already in existence, which means it is unlikely to create more jobs in the recording industry. This lack of an industry multiplier is visible in recent recording industry data from Ontario. The data suggests that when FACTOR got its first DoC funding late in 1986, there were more wages circulating in the province, but not more employees.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> For instance, the New Talent Demo Award application (p.2) specifies the artist must be Canadian and at least 50% of the songs must have *full* MAPL rating.

<sup>38</sup> Between 1986 and 1987 the increase in FACTOR funds contributed to a number of changes measured in the music industry. In Ontario's part of the recording industry there was a small rise in wages, from \$34.7m to \$35.5m. Yet associated employment fell from 1323 to 1250 people. Nationally, radio royalties (termed leasing revenues) for records released by Canadian labels increased from \$6m to

Moreover, FACTOR's help has altered the infrastructure of the recording industry in Canada, and arguably affected the final product released by the independent sector. While the organization has financially supported the country's studios, 148 of them now subsidize the project by supplying half price studio time. The scheme is really furthering a proliferation of low budget studios, since the bands and labels that it funds cannot usually afford time in more up-market establishments. It could also be argued that FACTOR has actually made Canadian independent music on the whole less interesting, by reducing some of the pressure on the independent scene to create viable material.<sup>39</sup>

Even for the radio programmers who initiated the project the results have judged as been mixed. In Country music, a

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\$11m, but sales revenues for that music fell from \$229m to \$206m (*Sound Recording*, Statistics Canada, 1986, pp.17,18; 1987, pp.20,32). So if the new material was selling well in Canada, under Cancon it was being played.

<sup>39</sup> FACTOR panels only deal with smaller awards and loans direct to artists for demos. So when FACTOR decides to loan money to independent labels, it usually leaves the release material on those labels up to the label staff. In other words, FACTOR generally vets demos rather than final releases. It could be argued that FACTOR loans thus result in the release of material in which independent labels might otherwise have little faith. Country music has a low volume of record releases, so Canadian Country music radio stations play a relatively wide variety of artists because they need to. Some Country labels have become adept at maximizing radio airplay for their releases, profiting from the associated royalties and also taking money from FACTOR (J. Bateman, *pers. comm.*).

style which suffers from a lack of Canadian product, broadcasters asked the CRTC to trade off reduced Cancon quotas for increased FACTOR support. The Commission refused their request, arguing that both things were necessary and that FACTOR would gradually provide material (*Probe*, v.2/4, 1987, p.1). Yet it is also true that since the scheme is supply-driven by musicians and labels it cannot create product on demand for radio stations of particular formats. Thus, because of the popularity of hard rock amongst Canadian musicians, although AOR (hard rock) stations are just 7% of the total in Canada, 25% of the material assessed by FACTOR in 1991 was in that category (FACTOR Annual Report 1992, p.5).

FACTOR backed material is not tailored to suit Canadian radio, because it is really aimed at larger markets in other countries. In fact two thirds of the ten-fold return on their initial investment has come from outside the country. To the DoC, FACTOR is specifically supported as an export initiative. Award money is restricted to supporting bands who tour abroad. The DoC does not allow its contribution to be spent by FACTOR on the assistance of Canadian rock bands who wish to tour their own country (E. O'Day, *pers. comm.*).<sup>40</sup> This aspect is a total reversal of the CRTC's aim

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<sup>40</sup> While bands playing minority or traditional music can get help from the Canada council, provincial tourism initiatives provide the main possible source of government funding for Canadian rock bands wishing to tour their own country. These initiatives often take the form of regional festivals, but

of introducing Canadian music to Canadian audiences. It works with the mentality outlined in chapter two and illustrates that the demands of the recording industry, rather than the public, are paramount.

In minor ways FACTOR opposes the Cancon regulation, since it does not increase Cancon material especially for needy Canadian radio formats and is actually export oriented. Yet, on balance, the scheme's continued private funding is effectively an admittance by radio broadcasters that Cancon is here to stay. With MUSICACTION's help in Quebec, production increased so much that the CRTC's goal to raise francophonic quotas became a possibility. These quotas went up by 10% during 1990 in accordance with the Commission's aims for the province (*Probe* v.1/1, 1990, p.3). In general FACTOR-CTL/MUSICACTION makes Cancon harder to remove, since the broadcasters are joining in with the CRTC in enabling the industry to undergo growth which would not have occurred in a free market. They can no longer argue without hypocrisy that the industry should stand on its own two feet without Cancon, while funding material to suit the regulation through FACTOR.

Also the independent labels which benefit from FACTOR supply 72% of the material which qualifies as Cancon (*Probe*

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that means bands requiring help with national tours have to look for private funding.



v.2/4, 1987, p.4), make up 11% of home sales and account for 2% of all the money labels use on marketing in Canada (*Focus on Culture* v.3/3, 1991, p.2). Cancon means that radio programmers play independent material; its removal would probably mean that these labels would have to devote much more money to marketing.<sup>41</sup> Rock videos are one area of marketing in which FACTOR helps labels. Currently FACTOR allocates 15% of its funds to help finance videos (FACTOR Annual Report 1992, p.22). It is not, however, the only organization financing rock videos in Canada. When it began in 1984, Much Music agreed with the CRTC that as a condition of license it would put 2.4% of its gross revenue towards starting a body called VideoFACT which would fund Canadian videos (*Music Scene* no.342, 1985, p.10). Soon this became 5% and Musique Plus (Quebec's rock video channel) joined in 1986 to contribute 2.4% of their gross (J. Thorburn, *pers. comm.*). The project is administered by a geographically and industrially mixed board of directors who *subjectively* assess the songs and proposals of applicants.

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<sup>41</sup> Most of the radio personnel interviewed could not immediately say which artists they played had FACTOR support. This can be interpreted as one indication of the poor promotion involved which has become possible under the Cancon regulation.

Table 6: The differences between FACTOR and VideoFACT

	<u>FACTOR</u> <sup>42</sup>	<u>VideoFACT</u>
Funding (in 1991)	\$0.5m pooled from broadcasters	\$1.2m from Much Music + Musique Plus
Geographic coverage	English Canada	All of Canada (20% for Quebec at minimum)
Eligibility	Canadian independent national release, meeting the required Cancon criteria.	Pleasing video idea + song on Canadian owned master recording (will deal with unsigned acts or vanity releases but not with majors).

As Table 6 shows, VideoFACT is run with a different philosophy than FACTOR, but the two complement each other in allowing Canadian artists at various stages of their careers to work with the medium of video. In fact VideoFACT is similar to FACTOR in that it provides material qualifying as Cancon for use by sponsoring broadcasters. By their third year the CRTC insisted Much Music play 30% Cancon, which is well below what is usually expected of television broadcasters. The rock video station could have feasibly put old hits into high rotation until qualifying songs filled enough of their logbooks. Also Much Music is in the dangerous position of having limited control over its basic raw material, since videos are supplied virtually for free by the record companies (*Maclean's* v.102/36, 1989, p.66). If

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<sup>42</sup> This comparison would be more valid if MUSICACTION were included; however no information on their funding is available in English. It seems likely that the entire FACTOR/MUSICACTION budget for videos would be less than the money provided by VideoFACT.

labels or publishers ever decided to boycott the channel, VideoFACT would provide material for it to play.<sup>43</sup>

Both VideoFACT and FACTOR award up to \$12,500 as half the cost of each video project they support. Private spending on Canadian videos doubled in 1990 to reach \$1.6 million (*Focus on Culture* v.3/3, 1991, p.2), which together with awarded money totals \$3.3 million to make about 130 videos at \$25,000 each. In our discussion of the music industry as a ladder it was noted that a good video of a good song can play a crucial role at certain points for a band: as a calling card for attracting A&R attention, and as a primer for airplay or a national tour. Yet the total spending in Canadian videos is a tiny part of the \$80 million spent marketing acts in Canada (*Focus on Culture* v.3/3, 1991, p.2). It is likely that the bulk of all money spent on acts is devoted to the radio promotion of foreign artists that already have videos. Airplay reaches a large audience and is still the crucial medium for creating sales, since only 5% of the population watch Much Music for an average of just 2 hours per week (*Focus on Culture* v.3/3, 1991, p.2).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> One boycott has already occurred: Warner-Chappel Music Publishing told it's artists not to appear on the channel since it perceived Much Music were not fairly remunerating songwriters via the copyright system (see *Probe* v.2/2, 1991, p.4).

<sup>44</sup> Much Music are particularly supportive to Canadian acts because they do not restrict airplay of Canadian videos only to unpopular times. However, the channel will not change a policy of three daily rotations to make the most of advertising dollars by working with audience turnover. 5% of

To conclude, our discussion in this chapter has shown that the music industry in Canada is not a monolithic entity. It contains different scales of organization, different types of structure and a variety of agents. Furthermore, the Canadian artists currently celebrated in their own country occupy a wide range of structural positions within the industry. Yet although certain aspects of it are replete with conflicts of interest, the discussion of FACTOR showed that (spurred on by broadcasters and the State) *Canada's music industry could* be united by common problems.

While FACTOR is neither an essentialist project, job creation scheme, nor charity, it does fit into a Gramscian schema since the organization encourages the export of Canadian music, and acts which do well abroad are celebrated as part of the Canadian National Popular. FACTOR has helped to raise the profiles of selected acts in a limited way, so perhaps the scheme ought to redirect some of its money from basic awards into the radio marketing of music in formats with no shortage of Cancon in Canada and to all categories

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the total programming (or 15% of Cancon) is filled with francophonic videos, as a bargaining measure on the license (T.D. Mulligan, *pers. comm.*). These may make a visual contrast to English Canadian material, but they have not produced hits and may cause viewers to change channels. Also the francophonic acts thus take up air time that could be used for anglophonic indie and/or VideoFACT videos (J. Ufton, *pers. comm.*). Appendix one deals further with the issue of francophonic material.

abroad. Yet its control by both the recording industry and government means the scheme forms mainly a recording and export initiative. Paradoxically the organization helps with videos but is of no direct help with live tours back home; another source of financial help for musicians in this area will become apparent in the next chapter.

Finally, through its exploration of the unusual predicament of Canada's sound recording industry, this chapter has shown that being on the margin of a large market has both benefits and problems. Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of the benefits of this marginality, such as the unified nature of the sound recording industry as a lobbying group and the actions of the State directly augmenting funds for independent labels after it paved the way toward a distribution system for them.

Nonetheless, it is also true that if the Canadian music industry was not in a relatively marginal position these things would not have been necessary. Gramsci's schema has been used to suggest that one of the dangers of these circumstances is that disputes over the shape of the industry get transferred on to queries about the morality and actions of central figures. While the Cancon debate in the previous chapter showed that such a process of transference has been manipulated by one top artist to change the industry, in this chapter we saw the opposite and more usual

case: the press questioned the morality of some artists in relation to their citizenship whilst ignoring the things which facilitated their success. Such debate seems in danger of ignoring what is being done to help smaller artists across the country because it keeps attention focussed upon top acts.

## Chapter Five

### Going Down Like A Song

"It's smooth. It's mellow. *And it goes down like a song.*" -  
Advertising for Molson Canadian beer, 1970<sup>1</sup>

Live shows offer performers an immediate gratification which many artists claim is the most rewarding part of being in the business. They can also create loyal record buying audiences (Riordan, 1988, p.53). Under a commitment to the DoC, it has already been mentioned that FACTOR does not fund Canadian bands touring at home, so it becomes relevant to shift focus to see how the concert promotion industry makes tours possible in spite of this lack of encouragement. This chapter examines that business and its intertwining with sponsors, focusing on two instances which have brought representations of the nation into the foreground: the Great Canadian Party and national award ceremonies.

Although they have devoted considerable attention to corporate advertising and rock music as separate topics, academic writers concerned with popular culture have ignored the issue of rock sponsorship. In modern western societies popular music is fully implicated within the framework of capitalism, so it is hard to easily dismiss sponsorship as *selling out*.<sup>2</sup> As such, sponsorship does not fit well into

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<sup>1</sup> From *Maclean's* (v.83/9, 1970, p.26).

<sup>2</sup> Bands are paid by their labels, remunerated by SOCAN, funded by sponsors, sometimes swap free equipment for album cover credits or make money on the side doing jingles.

frameworks used by those hoping to rescue rock for utopian political projects. Yet rock sponsorship has practical implications for the audience and, as music is a symbolic resource, it may become a site of struggle over what is represented to the audience. This means that it can be questioned.

Engagement in sponsorship has both advantages and disadvantages for all parties concerned. The corporations are able to associate with the image of the band playing and pitch their product to a large, clearly defined psychographic target group of young people who may not yet have built up brand loyalty.<sup>3</sup> This *only* makes sense in the context of consumers of music being likely to consume specific products. For example while it would rarely be feasible to try to sell them false teeth, the brewing industry views rock fans as a crucial target group.

Sponsorship creates a particular reputation for a firm. A portfolio of interventions to facilitate cultural events builds up a corporation's image in the minds of customers, share holders, lobby groups and the State. It can sometimes divert attention away from public relations problems in other areas. Finally, sponsorship allows a company privileged access to a particular form of entertainment for

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<sup>3</sup> *Psychographics* is way to segment the market based upon the lifestyle and attitude of different groups within it.



its workers. Executives get to meet stars back-stage and promoters can reserve the best tickets for use by sponsors and the media. For employees this can act as an incentive to join or stay in a particular firm and to be more productive in the workplace. It can help a smooth reproduction of the labour force and enhance paternal employment relations within the firm.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand corporations contemplating rock music sponsorship face problems. Fans perceive sponsors go too far if their logo appears actually on the stage or on things such as tee shirts sold of the band because they feel they should not have to pay for tickets or garments already paid for by the sponsor (*Can. Musician* v.9/3, 1987, p.49). If a corporation invests heavily in one act they could lose out if that group splits up, radically changes direction or, worse still, does something which ruins the firm's reputation.

For audiences the sponsorship situation has had mixed results. Corporate sponsorship has helped promoters put on several shows close together.<sup>5</sup> Also corporations have given

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<sup>4</sup> Certain aspects of the utopian planning operations of Robert Owen, Cadbury's and the Lever Brothers in Britain have found a modern day echo in corporate ventures such as the contest Pepsi organized for its Canadian employees around Triumph's 1985 national tour (*Can. Musician* v.6/2, 1985, p.10).

<sup>5</sup> Previously promoters faced liquidity crises from rising production, transport and newspaper advertising costs,

financial support for larger, more frequent or prohibitively expensive tours. These include national tours of Canada for artists with large operations.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand very large shows have sometimes been the target of the fans' complaints because the possibility of seeing and relating to the band (which makes each show *personal*) is reduced, while ticket prices have remained stable or gone up. Further, sponsorship has altered the fundamental nature of touring for artists who have not become so popular. Big acts still tour, aided by inter-brewery competition, but in recession smaller promoters have been squeezed out. Much of the middle tier has fallen out of the concert promotion business and, perhaps, fewer intermediate level shows have been presented (*Music Scene*, no.354, 1987, p.8).

Another drawback of sponsorship for many fans has emerged with recent ticket allocation practices. While the pre-emption of tickets by promoters has been common for a long time, Paul Simon's 1991 show in Montreal was the first one

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rising performers fees, and union dues. To reduce their exposure to financial loss, promoters tended to schedule concerts with sufficient time lags between them to pay off loans and assess their stocks of working capital.

<sup>6</sup> For example the deal that Anne Murray struck with Ford allowed her to make her first national tour of Canada in 1987, nearly two decades after she had become a national figure (*Can. Musician* v.10/6, 1988, p.47). Similarly Bryan Adams' unprecedented *Waking Up The Nation* tour in 1992 was seen by 146,000 Canadians in 13 cities, many of which Adams had never been to before, sponsored by both Molsons and Coca-Cola (Molsons Annual Report 1992, p.13).

in the country which privileged audience members who were customers of the sponsors. In that case early seats were made available to American Express card holders who were allowed to buy tickets before they were released to the general public (*Montreal Gazette* 7/7/90, p.F1). This situation not only demonstrated what sort of fans Simon now has in general, but how certain types of sponsorship can have elitist ramifications. Furthermore, one Chicago market research firm has found that 70% of people questioned were willing to buy a particular product in return for a rebate on ticket prices at concerts. In the USA Barry Manilow has already held shows using this method (*Billboard* 22/2/92, p.86). Even if it has not yet arrived in Canada, rebate schemes set another precedent in restricting who gains access to concerts and on what basis.

For the artists sponsorship comes with some strings attached. There may be restrictions placed on acts; certainly most sponsors expect band members to use the products they endorse (or at least not use those of the competition). Whether bands should associate with particular breweries was questioned when one report to the brewing industry suggested a majority of American adults saw it as uncaring about such issues as underage drinking.<sup>7</sup> However,

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<sup>7</sup> Information about the Wirthlin Group Report appeared in *Billboard* (7/9/91, p.28).

the single report was insufficient to deflect the bands and sponsors involved from continuing their relationship.

Bands potentially feared they would be asked to change their image to suit sponsors, but most corporations involved have an arms length relation to their acts. Bands are really picked by sponsors because of their popularity with particular audiences (*Can. Musician* v.9/3, 1987, p.47). Yet their relationship with sponsors could put bands in danger at two extremes. Firstly, acts successfully committed to sponsorship deals could run the risk of over-exposure.<sup>8</sup> Conversely those without the kind of audience a sponsor is looking for are not solicited by corporations. For example teenybopper idols are not seen as desirable by companies trying to sell cars. Since in Canada the breweries are the prime sponsors of rock acts, there is competition over a limited crowd rather than concern for other types of audience. In the extreme, acts with reputations that could damage the image of sponsors have been avoided by both major breweries (*Toronto Star* 29/11/86, p.F1). At first, although they realized that corporate funding could bring considerable benefits, promoters and bands became suspicious about the possible consequences of large scale sponsorship. They speculated about what could happen to the concert

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<sup>8</sup> For example The Spoons deal with *Thrifitys* in the early 1980s meant that they were on television and radio so much that viewers began to complain about seeing too much of them (*Can. Musician* v.9/3, 1987, p.49).

promotion industry, the disadvantages of transforming it in particular ways, and how much control over important decisions the sponsors could obtain.<sup>9</sup>

Although a few bands still oppose sponsorship and use that stance itself as a marketing device, most bands get involved and take advantage of the benefits offered by sponsors.<sup>10</sup> Concessions to backers are usually minimal so sponsorship is effectively free money. Thus acts involved with any sponsor face the potential moral problem of taking extra money without doing anything for it. Yet if sponsorship money is going to expand the scale and number of live shows rather than directly pay the bands, the increased exposure they gain helps, but they still have to perform well enough to persuade fans to buy their records. In Canada inter-brewery competition has bid up the money that bands can take from sponsors (*Toronto Star* 29/11/86, p.F1). With more and larger

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<sup>9</sup> The fear of who had control over musical performances was a previously expressed back in the 1970s, as part of the debate surrounding the private sponsorship in Canadian classical music (*Maclean's* v.84/2, 1961, p.71).

<sup>10</sup> This may be in songs like 'This Note's For' You by Neil Young in 1986 which was banned by MTV, but not Much Music, for its product placement (*Vancouver Sun* 19/7/88, p.F7). Also a bands image may convey their anti-sponsorship attitude. For example Lowlife, an up-coming Canadian band, have put on showcase gigs wearing tee shirts with anti-corporate slogans on them (*Georgia Straight* v.26/1292, 1992, p.33). Furthermore, one member of Rough Trade unsuccessfully sued Pepsi for misappropriation of character when they used an image like his in their advertisements (*Canadian Musician* v.6/4, 1985, p.13).

tours possible, artists have the potential of building up bigger fan bases.

The image a sponsor gives to the artist depends on *who* that sponsor is and how they treat the act involved. The careful selection of a sponsor may help an up-coming band, not least because they may be joining a particular roster of other acts. Their association may actually make them more acceptable to different audiences who trust the breweries to pick good bands. For smaller bands looking to maximize their fan base that association may be an advantage.

Since sponsorship has so many advantages it can be treated as a resource, at least for those bands that can obtain it. While sponsors benefit more from acts with large homogeneous audiences, there is also the possibility that smaller acts can get sponsored by any corporation that cannot afford to bid for top stars. Nonetheless, unsigned acts with small followings seem unlikely to be a viable proposition. Yet sponsorship also potentially creates more funding for less commercial music, since the sponsors do not have to profit from the concerts *per se*, but from the sales of their product associated with the show. In theory, sponsors have the potential to promote acts with low record sales but large live followings.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The way in which Molsons stepped in to help the Mariposa folk festival in 1987 suggests that this is the case; the

Although sponsorship gained significant momentum in the 1980s, various companies have used rock to bolster their advertising campaigns ever since the music became popular. Rather than initiating relationships, in the 1980s corporate deals merely renewed them on a bigger scale.<sup>12</sup> In the USA sponsorship had become a way of life for top bands by the middle of the decade. As a result a consulting firm, Rockbill, emerged to match up appropriate sponsors with bands. In Canada manager Joe Owens, by 1985, found himself a similar niche. After securing sponsorship from Pepsi and the shoe manufacturers Converse for his band Triumph, he found sponsorship deals for several other acts (*Can. Musician* v.9/3, 1987, p.47). The rush of different corporations into the fray stimulated Canada's two top breweries, Labatts and

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music may not sell well on record, but it attracts a drinking crowd (*Montreal Gazette* 28/1/1987, p.F5).

<sup>12</sup> In the USA, in the 1950's local civic groups paid bands at dances (*Noebel*, 1974, p.61), and television shows such as Dick Clark's *Bandstand* found sponsors (Martin and Segrave, 1988, p.97). The CBC competed for advertising in the same way as other channels, so it is likely that their pop shows were also sponsored. In the 1960s rock took on other themes and the entanglement with sponsors was reduced. Independent concert promotion took off as it reached a bigger market. While the music changed again in the 1970s, the industry still stood largely without support. Exceptions included the series of shows across Canada sponsored by Imperial Tobacco in 1971 (*Maclean's* v.84/2, 1971, p.61). By the 1980s the aging and increased affluence of baby boomer fans meant that if bands were willing, rock was ripe for a re-attachment with sponsors on a larger scale. In 1981 the Rolling Stones paved the way by making a deal with Jovan. Bruce Allen was quick to get a Canadian tour for Loverboy with Nissan Automobiles the next year (*Can. Business* v.57/9, 1984, p.73).

Molsons, to look at music as a way to promote their leading brands, *Labatts Blue* and *Molson Canadian*. To do this they entered sponsorship deals and then the concert promotion business itself.

Concert promotion is a highly competitive business. While promoters sometimes put on events in other countries, they do not see the situation in terms of Canadians invading other places, or in the opposite case foreign excursions into Canada. Rather, like radio stations, promoters have their own territories which frequently spill across national boundaries but can be encroached upon by rivals. In Canada Concert Promotions International (CPI) was established by Michael Cohl and Bill Ballard in 1973. Through its grip on the Toronto market and subsequent diversification, CPI grew to be the cornerstone of one of the largest and most successful conglomerate operations in rock in North America. In Montreal Donald Tarlton's Donald K Donald (DKD) company has put on shows for a similar amount of time. On the West coast, Vancouver was the territory of promoters from Seattle until, in 1977, Norman Perry set up Perryscope productions, with the backing of both CPI and DKD (I. Nobel, *pers. comm.*). Appendix four shows that when Labatts bought a portion of CPI, of which Molsons were already a customer, the relationship between the promoter and that particular allied sponsor began to deteriorate and two national concert promotion giants were created. Canada's two top breweries



had evolved from being the customers of concert promoters to becoming their partners.

If at first there was some suspicion as to what would happen from promoters and bands, more recently Donald Tarlton has argued "We have singlehandedly saved the brewing industry" (*Music Scene* no.345, 1987, p.8), while Mark Norman of Perryscope has stated to the contrary "without sponsorship I wouldn't even be in the business" (*Calgary Herald* 31/3/91, p.F1). Which one of these claims we consider correct depends upon what we think the concert promotion industry should be. The conglomerates now battling to put on shows in Canada have also diversified into concert merchandising.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, both concert promoter-sponsors (if we can now separate the two) have come to control and inflate the scale of pop culture events within Canada. They

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<sup>13</sup> Promoters only distribute merchandise, and most profits go to merchandising companies. Usually bands only make royalties from merchandise sales, but when Loverboy found they were selling an average of \$9 worth of paraphernalia per fan at some shows, the group formed their own merchandising company (*Can. Business* v.57/9, 1984, p.73). Canada's concert promoting conglomerates bought out independent merchandising firms to give them exclusive rights to market the products of top acts. Through its ownership of firms such as Brockhum (which cost them \$6 million and is now run by Norman Perry) and Krimson, BCL owns the rights to merchandise all products for Michael Jackson, Prince and other artists (*Can. Business* v.58/2, 1985, p.69). MCA owns Winterland Products, which is an important rival merchandising firm.

do not just present music shows, but other *types of* events as well.<sup>14</sup>

What these events have in common is that they are all spectacles, as opposed to festivals. A spectacle is "a specially prepared or arranged display of a more or less public nature (especially on a large scale) forming an impressive or interesting show or entertainment for those viewing it" (OED v.16, 1989, p.164). Thus spectacles are a very particular form of entertainment. To compare, the root of the word 'festival' means "Of or pertaining to a feast, benefitting a feast day" (OED v.5, 1989, p.852). Spectacles are unlike festivals in that they usually appeal to fewer of the senses and rarely involve active participation on the part of those in attendance. They leave less room for differences in experience and reinterpretations in the minds of people attending, and spectacles directly address individuals with particular messages rather than construct more fluid senses of community. Rock concerts are spectacles because the division between the stage and audience remains, yet they are also unusual in that audience participation is often encouraged in particular ways that are frequently spontaneous. One key line of enquiry is the context within

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<sup>14</sup> Perryscope does not just deal with rock music but puts on Country music shows, ballet, comedy and theatre events (I. Nobel, *pers. comm.*). Molsons, Labatts and CPI (but, as far as I know, not Molsons-MCA Concerts Canada) are also investing in sports sponsorship, ownership and broadcasting.

which these spectacles occur, and the degree of festive community that arises. However, before we can examine those issues in relation to Molson's Canada Day celebration, the Great Canadian Party, it is important to explain the current framework of rock concerts in Canada.

Large popular rock acts usually contract booking agents to arrange tours. Canada's most successful agents are S. L. Feldman & Associates in Vancouver and The Agency in Toronto (I. Nobel, *pers. comm.*). Booking agents orchestrate tours by contacting promoters in each location targeted for a show in order to arrange venues. Canada's top breweries are building some of their own concert venues, such as Molson Park in Barrie Ontario, and have engineered exclusive deals with other venues. Those exclusive deals mean that smaller promoters cannot get access to the big venues, so agents tend to work with CPI or Molsons-MCA Concerts Canada when arranging tours for popular artists.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, these larger promoters sometimes bypass booking agents by going straight to managers. Although agents dislike being circumvented, promoters maximize potential profits by engineering such direct deals.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Parties outside the sponsor/promoter/band nexus which we will ignore for brevity here are SOCAN (who collect around 2% remuneration for gigs from promoters), radio stations (who swap free airtime with promoters for the prestige of "presenting" gigs of bands in their format) and ticket agents (who sell tickets to the public).

<sup>16</sup> Notably CPI went straight to the Rolling Stones manager to get their *Steel Wheels* world tour in 1989 (I. Nobel,

Acting as concert promoters can be lucrative to sponsoring breweries since they can still profit from gigs where they are not allowed to advertise. Previously Labatts sometimes underwrote gigs that were not helping beer sales. By owning a stake in CPI's parent company (BCL) the brewery could profit from any gig put on by the promoter even if other, non-alcoholic sponsors were solicited by CPI to help fund the shows. Secondly, in effect, various corporate moves have allowed Molsons and Labatts to access specific rosters of artists.<sup>17</sup> While bands cannot endorse alcoholic beverages, once a band is with a particular agent and promoter they join a roster of acts sponsored by one of the breweries.

The brewing division has been the back bone of the Molsons corporation partly because it is has performed consistently well, even in recession (Molsons Annual Report 1992, p.1). At such times while the breweries may have the money to put

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*pers. comm.*). It grossed \$250 million by drawing 6.2 million fans on 3 continents (*Maclean's* v.104/44, 1991, p.69).

<sup>17</sup> Labatts bought a 50% stake in the International Talent group, which handles top US and UK acts in North America. It gave them a roster of artists for CPI's operations (Labatt Annual Report 1991, p.36). Molson's partnering of MCA similarly allowed access to acts on the MCA, Motown and Geffen labels (*Montreal Gazette* 9/8/90, p.D6). However, although Molson MCA-Concerts Canada is aligned to the MCA family of labels, since sponsorship deals for Canadian bands are worked out with managers this does not mean that the acts on MCA have automatically been sponsored by Molsons. For example *The Tragically Hip* are signed to MCA, but are on the Labatts live roster.

on large concerts, lowered consumer spending means that the public has less ability to pay for tickets. While bands themselves can reduce staff on tour or do smaller acoustic sets if they have strong enough songs, promoters have been forced to adjust their operations considerably.<sup>18</sup> The 1990s recession has meant that both major concert promoters in Canada are now carried by their corporate backers, who hope for long term profit and a continuing link to their customers.<sup>19</sup>

If placing musical events at the mercy of sales of other products can be a blessing, it is also a potential danger.

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<sup>18</sup> In recession, promoters still face usual problems such as trouble with security, potential riots following curtailed sets by favourite acts, City Councils refusing the use of certain venues, and a problematic relationship with local liquor boards. As extra measures they must turn down managers asking too high a price for their band, changing venues or cancelling shows if bands do not sell many tickets in advance, refusing guaranteed fees for bands before concerts and reducing ticket prices. Some are spending advertising dollars more creatively, putting on double bills or festivals or including surprise guests, and negotiating production cost caps between the agents first estimates and actually seeing the bands. (See for example *Maclean's* v.95/34, 1982, p.48; *Montreal Gazette* 18/8/90, p.H9; *Billboard* 22/2/92, p.1).

<sup>19</sup> The Labatts 1991 Annual Report (p.39) shows BCL constituted most of the \$9 million lost by their partly owned businesses. Similarly Molsons Annual Report (1992, p.4) shows that of the \$8.3 million made by the Sports and Entertainments Group \$7.4 million was made by the expansion of the National Hockey League. Molsons stress the "high quality", "well planned" nature and "impact" of their gigs (p.13). Their wording denotes the aim of putting on the shows and is also a repositioning of *rock vis a vis* popular culture, which is not usually considered high in quality because that associates it with high culture.

The selling of beer at gigs is a separate deal to sponsorship (I. Nobel, *pers. comm.*), but *de facto* it has usually been the sponsor's brand. As the national market lead of *Labatts Blue* began to slip to *Molson Canadian* in 1991, it was announced that the former beer was no longer going to be aimed at young, party-oriented drinkers which Molson's still targeted (*Globe and Mail* 9/5/91, p.B4). Slowly, though they helped in the *Music '91* Canadian talent showcase held in Vancouver, Labatts began to reduce sponsorship commitments. Some of its contests (such as *Guitar Warz*) and help with the CASBY awards came to an end (*The Province* 26/6/92, p.C5; N. Raskin, *pers. comm.*). With their youth oriented brand selling well, Molsons were in a better position to host a celebration.

The sponsors wished to enlist a variety of Canadian acts for this celebration, so from the outset it is important to realize that a co-operative effort existed. Therefore it is relevant to consider what degree of moral involvement we can attribute to the artists in their participation. Artists exercise a degree of moral control over their songs which prevent the use of them in undesirable ways and/or promote desirable interpretations. For example, as the owner of copyright, a songwriter can determine whether his or her work will be broadcast.<sup>20</sup> This means that artists have some

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<sup>20</sup> Thus for example while Bryan Adams could refuse the use of one of his songs in the war film *Top Gun* (*Can. Musician* v.8/6, 1986, p.36), he could not veto the use of another of

control over the contexts within which their work gets heard.

Theodore Adorno explained this issue by saying that the meaning and function of a piece of music could oppose each other if the context of the work contradicted its content (Rose, 1978, p.113). Thus, to argue that rock and politics have parted company since the 1970s would be the result of only focussing on the lyrics to most current songs.<sup>21</sup> In the 1980s, whether we look at protest songs played on nostalgic radio formats, old hits used in advertising or seemingly apolitical songs played at benefit gigs, changing the context of popular songs was *one of the main* ways in which they were used politically.<sup>22</sup> So it could be argued that

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his tunes by racist politician David Duke's campaign, since it was used for a non-broadcast slide show. All he could do was ask Louisiana radio stations not to play the song until after elections, which lost him royalties (*Vancouver Sun* 14/11/91, p.A1).

<sup>21</sup> This does not mean that there are no acts still writing politicized songs outside genres such as rap and folk. In fact acts such as Sting, Billy Bragg and REM remain popular. Furthermore songs which are ambiguous can become significant in particular contexts. For example lines from the chorus of a song by Canadian singer-songwriter Andrew Cash go "There is a time and place: it could be today." While remaining open to interpretation on record, such lyrics have a lot of potential to raise audience consciousness if they are sung at events focussed upon particular issues.

<sup>22</sup> An interesting example was Keith Richards show for the blind, put on by order as a penance after being found guilty of drug trafficking by a Toronto court (*Maclean's* v.92/19, 1979, p.62). Another facet of the entanglement of rock and morality was the use of old hits in advertising. A Toronto journalist suggested boycotting Molsons for using songs by The Beatles, since she felt things she associated with the songs at the time they were hits had been appropriated

artists are still central to the politics of rock, because they can decide whether to use the appeal of their songs for particular ends by allowing them to be put into certain contexts.

Canada Day, as the official cause for a variety of nationalist celebrations, has become such a context. The naming of the holiday came about through a private member's bill rushed through parliament in 1983; renaming Dominion Day as Canada Day and fixing the date on July 1st (previously the day had been celebrated on the first Monday in July).<sup>23</sup> Ironically, the inherent change of emphasis was accompanied by a cut in federal funding for celebratory events, from \$5 million to \$3.7 million. The province of Quebec received most of this money (*Halifax Chronicle Herald* 30/6/83, p.1), possibly to neutralize the growing voice of separatists in that province. Yet the reduced funding for Canada Day opened up new possibilities for private initiatives to play a role in financing events and therefore

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(*Maclean's* v.100/9, 1987, p.32-33). This aligns the bands and sponsors together against the consumers in a dispute over the ownership of popular memory. One problem is that the advertisement may be the first context in which younger people hear the song.

<sup>23</sup> This renaming was important because it denoted the State's intent of emphasizing the future of Canada as a unified nation in the minds of the people, rather than dwelling upon the country's past. The policy is a modern parallel to the way that the Italian State represented Italy as a unified and timeless nation to its people, which Gramsci described (Forgacs and Nowell-Smith, 1985, p.201).



associating with the day. In the next decade annual festivities continued and in 1988 Pepsi, the soft drink manufacturer, set a precedent by asking to sponsor a Canada Day festival in Toronto (*Globe and Mail* 28/6/88, p.A14).

Canada Day 1992 was used by different people for different ends, drawing upon the significance of the fact that it was the country's 125th birthday as a nation. In Vancouver demonstrators burned flags, protesting against "125 years of genocide against natives and the oppression of coloured people in Canada" (*Globe and Mail* 2/7/92, p.A6), but in general the day was marked by patriotism unseen since 1967. On the only official speech of her visit to the country the Queen urged the nation's leaders to keep national interest paramount during constitutional negotiations (*Toronto Star* 2/7/92, p.A1). The DoC used the day to promote the winning song of its \$10,000 contest, open to SOCAN's members, which they specified had to be about the land, people and future of Canada (*Probe* v.1/3, 1992, p.2). Across the country the public sphere came alive with citizens showing that, despite political differences, a sense of community associated with the national project was intact. A diversity of performances showed that music was a way to demonstrate (and potentially construct) this sense of community.<sup>24</sup> Although the Great

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<sup>24</sup> In 1987 Bryan Adams had played Ottawa on Canada Day (*Maclean's* v.100/27, 1987, p.32). Three years later Kim Mitchell, Luba, Murray Maclauchlan and Michel Paqliaro, amongst others, had played that city after the Meech Lake attempt at constitutional reform collapsed (*Toronto Star*

Canadian Party only represented some of the musical activity going on that day, for those people in attendance, listening on radio, or watching it on TV, the Party became a focus for the occasion.

Molsons had been through an erratic recent history which affected how they could legitimately place themselves in celebrations of national unity. Their merger with Carling-O'Keefe, owned by Elders, gave the Australian brewing giant a 40% share in the enlarged corporation, which allowed Labatts (Molsons main competitor) to advertise itself as Canada's *only* national brewery. For Molsons this was a severe challenge. Staunch in their support of free trade, the firm replied in advertisements that they were "proudly brewing your Canadian beer" abroad (*Financial Post* 2/2/89, p.3). Furthermore both companies brewed foreign beers under license in Canada and were among the most successful exporters of beer to the US market. Yet after negotiations with the US over free trade, by 1992 Molsons executives perceived it in their interest to view the national scale of economic organization as paramount.<sup>25</sup>

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26/6/90, p.A17). In 1991 in Toronto Stringband had invited the prime minister to their 20th reunion gig (*Toronto Star* 26/6/91, p.D16). Similarly Canada Day 1992 was an occasion for music. In Montreal at the end point of a procession of around 20,000 people, Mitsoy sang on a stage with the Maple Leaf flag draped behind it in a concert followed by a firework display (*Montreal Gazette* 2/7/92, p.A3).

<sup>25</sup> They focussed on the nation by shifting attention away from other geographical scales: in their report the brewery argued any notion of an integrated international market was

The corporation was well aware that the year of Canada's 125th birthday could become part of their project and they were in a good position to engineer a celebration. Because Molsons public relations problems have been regional rather than national in scope, it seems unlikely that their reason for hosting a party was to divert attention away from problematic public issues connected with the corporation, aside from Labatts claim to being Canada's only national brewery.<sup>26</sup> Any argument that Molson's used the Great Canadian Party to divert attention away from issues unrelated to the celebration of national unity are difficult to make.

Also if Molsons sole interest was in selling their product, it is hard to fathom why they would have chosen to celebrate the nation as well, rather than holding the event

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a myth and that the removal of provincial barriers could only benefit their operations (Molsons Annual Report 1992, p.10). Yet being a Quebec-based firm the brewers were also cautious in their nationalist optimism: "Based on Canada's considerable experience at resolving our differences, we have reason for confidence in our ability to renew our innovative form of federalism in this 125th year of confederation" (Molsons Annual Report 1992, p.14).

<sup>26</sup> In 1991 the lobby group Mediawatch had complained to the Toronto Transit Commission over Molsons sexist advertising (depicting "The Long Haired Fox"). As a result the poster was removed from the underground (*Globe and Mail* 19/7/90, p.A1). Similarly their merger with Carling-O'Keefe resulted in 1400 jobs lost in two years. Many radio stations refused an advertisement made by workers complaining about what happened, but neither dispute was national in scale (*Globe and Mail* 29/8/89, p.B1).

in a more neutral context at any other time when rock fans could attend. It seems fair to say that *as well as* being a way to direct the attention of consumers *towards* their beer, the Great Canadian Party (held on Canada day) was another indication of the company's views on Canadian unity. The claim of Labatts seems likely to be one reason that Molson's were eager to associate themselves with the nation, but they had to find another way to lay claim to that source of pride.

The idea of throwing a party had actually been suggested by Jay Marciano, the Vice President of MCA-Concerts Canada, who had proposed a series of big concerts across the country (E. Lefko, *pers. comm.*). The money was to be raised via sponsorship and initially it was proposed that sponsors would pay \$36,000 each. As it turned out, Molsons signed up quickly, then the A&A Record retail chain and Much Music joined the project. Once Much Music was involved they decided to connect the different concert places in various ways to make it a unified national celebration (T.D. Mulligan, *pers. comm.*). The idea was to sell Molsons beer, the music of the bands involved, and celebrate Canada's birthday at the same time. The Party integrally involved a network of 25 AOR radio stations, which were nearly all the broadcasters in that format across the country. They got an unprecedented simulcast of some 13.5 hours of Cancon. The sponsors got two thirty second radio advertisements per hour

Figure 3: A Poster advertisement for the Great Canadian Party



(Source *Georgia Strait* v.26/1278, 1992, p.2)

across the network, billboard space and options for merchandising and program advertising at the shows (*Marketing* 97/24/92, p.4).

The advertising campaign leading up to the shows was extensive but did not focus on the nation. Instead stress was placed upon singling out the subject (individual audience member) and emphasizing *who* was going to be there.<sup>27</sup> Both mechanisms pointed towards the *spectacular* nature of the event. Figure 3 shows a poster for the concert which illustrates that these were designed to emphasize the concert's construction as a spectacle as well. There was not a Maple Leaf in sight, except the one unobtrusively built in to the *Molson Canadian* logo.

The bands were selected by Marciano, Molsons and booking agent Sam Feldman for their popularity, ability to draw a crowd and appeal to the *Molson Canadian* demographic profile (E. Lefko, *pers. comm.*). Their estimates proved right, the spectacle attracting a collective total of about 100,000 people, mostly in their twenties, to shows in St. John's (Newfoundland), Barrie (Ontario), Landsdowne Park (Ottawa)

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<sup>27</sup> A written advertisement for the party stated "Be there live, in person... Watch it live... Hear it live... IT'S COMING FOR YOU" (*Georgia Straight* v.26/1278, 1992, p.2), while one on radio cajoled "Don't miss out: you've waited one hundred and twenty five years for a celebration like this!".

and the Thunderbird Stadium in Vancouver (British Columbia) (*Marketing* v.97/24, 1992, p.4). Other shows, for example in Edmonton, were part of the Party, but were not televised (*Edmonton Journal* 2/7/92, p.B1). The sponsors made an effort to represent as many areas of Canada as possible, as a way to prevent people from particular regions from feeling left out (T.D. Mulligan, *pers. comm.*). At each show a drape hung behind the bands to show the radio and television signals beaming from each venue. Also all the provincial flags were hung across the tops of the stages.

Yet it is important to realize who was being left out of the celebration and why. The event was for anglophone television and radio; so because most Quebec acts do not draw audiences outside their province, except for Nicholas in Ottawa they were not included (E. Lefko, *pers. comm.*). Why Molsons did not put on an equivalent show in Quebec is open to question, especially since they had selected one act from each language for their nationwide *Take Care* campaign the year before (*Playback Strategy* v.2/22, 1991, p.7). Moreover, selecting the bands meant selecting the audience, so obviously the show was a narrow demographic interpretation of who constituted the nation. Many of the acts which were not booked already had tours organized.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Toronto's Barenaked Ladies and Vancouver's Spirit of the West were playing the Glastonbury Festival in England at the time (*Georgia Straight* v.26/1280, 1992, p.27). Similarly Bryan Adams was on tour in Europe on the day. Also Bruce



Bands such as Vancouver's 54.40 came off the Labatts roster for this event because Molsons MCA-Concerts Canada paid them much more than for a normal gig (I. Nobel, pers. comm.). Acts on either brewery's roster do not usually play at the other brewery's events, so the managers of bands from the Labatts roster who were asked to play had to explain to Labatts that their acts were not altering their contractual (Source: *Georgia Straight* v.26/1278, 1992, p.2) agreements in any long term way. So while the event itself can be seen as a tribute to the organizing power of Molsons, tacitly it was also thanks to the co-operation of Labatts.

Hence when Neil Osbourne, lead singer of 54.40, emerged in a home made tee shirt emblazoned with "Corporate beer says HAPPY BIRTHDAY CANADA" the statement was as much a truism as it was a demystification. If the aim of the day was the grass roots unification of a nation which could not seem to unite in other ways, then it is fair to say most bands attending celebrated that cause. However, possibly because of their awareness of the need to export music, some bands were in general quieter or more ambivalent about the nature of the event. Some acts played cover versions of foreign songs (probably without giving that issue consideration) such as David Gogo who did a version of 'Voodoo Chile' by Jimi Hendrix. Others selected their songs more carefully. Cockburn and Tom Cochrane already had tours organized (E. Lefko, pers. comm.).



For example, co-headliner Kim Mitchell avoided his latest single, 'America' (*Ottawa Citizen* 1/7/92, p.2).

Gord Downie, lead singer of headliners The Tragically Hip, was particularly extreme in his commentary. The band is usually sponsored by Labatts, and like several other bands on the day flew between different venues adding to the atmosphere and connectedness of the event. Downie came across on stage as a kind of demented genius and used that persona as a front to criticize both Molsons and to reconsider the spirit of the celebrations.<sup>29</sup> His asides, from the very centre of the spectacle were important given that the band had a highly loyal following.

The Tragically Hip were scheduled to play Molson's specially constructed park in Barrie, Ontario, and then fly to Vancouver on the same day for a second show. After losing their instruments on the way to Vancouver, they came on stage an hour late. Of his previous venue, Downie said "Barrie, Toronto, Ontario. You don't want to go there: Molson World". At another time, when one over-excited fan

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<sup>29</sup> Making references to the sponsors seems to have become almost a duty at this event. At the second annual gathering the next year on Canada day in Vancouver, the Canadian Party 1993, Steven Page of headliners The Barenaked Ladies said "Welcome to the great Canadian beer commercial... Now we know what being Canadian means - it's drinking carbonated beer-flavoured soda pop!" (*Georgia Straight*, v.27/1333, 1993 p.39).

was forcibly led off stage Downie said "We're under the iron curtain here in Molsonia".

In Molson Park in Barrie, Downie said on stage "Stupid Day... Who are we kidding?" (*Globe and Mail* 3/7/92, p.C7). In an attempt to show the difficulties of the nation at one point he said "Have you heard my new Referendum question. If you're in be silent. Are you with us or what?". Also in one instrumental interlude Gord made a garbled analogy between hounds tearing their prey apart and what provincial ministers were doing to the country.

Furthermore, for patter between one of the songs, Downie put the recent trade of hockey star Eric Lindros from the Quebec Nordiques to the (American) Philadelphia Flyers in the context of a betrayal of kinship. He implicitly criticized the apparent betrayal of their own national identity some Canadians make for the rewards of going elsewhere.<sup>30</sup> Also Downie made a point of humming or singing parts of songs by other Canadians such as Mary Margaret O'Hara while on stage, demonstrating his alignment to Canadian musical traditions. As such it seems that Downie's collected comments showed not that he was against the idea of the nation, but felt uneasy with any premature or

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<sup>30</sup> Similarly The Skydiggers also dedicated the song *We Don't Talk Any More* to the Lindros Family.

insincere celebration of national unity and with being part of a corporate advertisement.

Molsons could do very little about Downie's comments, which were an act of resistance allied to a particular view of national identity. However, Downie's comments and all the real problems of the day, such as the bad weather in Ottawa, the heat collapse victims and stage crashers in Barrie, the lack of sanitary facilities in Vancouver and the ambivalent attitude some Canadian fans had towards Spinal Tap, were neglected by the TV coverage.<sup>31</sup> Much Music emphasized the revelry and the nationalism by asking bands where they came from, getting the crowd to sing patriotic songs and finding peculiar patriots. In fact the day got surpassingly little media coverage elsewhere, since some entertainment writers considered the channel had already sufficiently covered the event (J. Bateman, *pers. comm.*) and it was considered as merely a Molsons promotional event (E. Lefko, *pers. comm.*). Yet the fact that it was *both* a Molsons promotional event and a party celebrating a very particular representation of the nation makes it worth special scrutiny for our purposes. Also as the viewing figures for Much Music that day were not particularly impressive, and no attempt was made to sell television coverage to the USA because the bands involved

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<sup>31</sup> Spinal Tap were the spoof headliners at the Great Canadian Party. They are a group consisting of three American actors posing as British pomp rockers their venture was (as we shall see) controversial.

had few US fans (E. Lefko, *pers. comm.*), what was really important about the event was how the audience themselves perceived it.

In Vancouver some crowd members were entering in to the spirit of the celebration by waving flags, wearing them or appearing with faces painted or (temporarily) tattooed with Canadian symbols. Molsons themselves provided free temporary "Molson Canadian Rocks" tattoos, attempting a form of brand association only so far attained by Harley Davidson motorcycles. Still other crowd members wore the merchandise they had bought at the show. At about 8.30pm in the Grandstand the crowd did several spontaneous collective waves of the sort usually reserved for euphoric sports events. In the fringes of the stadium grounds people less concerned with the music formed clusters of friends, and played with frisbies and hacky sacks. Molsons MCA-Concerts Canada had turned the area adjacent to the stadium into a festival ground and had organized a video screen to see link-ups with other Party sites in Canada.<sup>32</sup> Line ups for beer, food concessions and washrooms frequently allowed strangers to exchange spontaneous comments or spark up conversations. In sum the event had an air of festivity to

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<sup>32</sup> They made room for two beer gardens, a video arcade, a Vancouver Canadians pitching contest, two volley ball courts, a trampoline, concessions and a smaller musical stage sponsored by local AOR radio station C-FOX (*Vancouver Sun* 2/7/92, p.C1).

it which was as much created by grass roots activity as it was engineered. It broke down some social barriers and formed a sense of community in celebration of the day's project.

Moreover, the fact that most people appreciated the festive atmosphere was evidenced by the way people volunteered to participate in our series of audience interviews. Thirty sheets with the same seven questions on each were used as the basis of short, structured interviews to survey various members of the audience during the event.<sup>33</sup> The results of these were frequently obtained from small groups of friends, which is why there are different numbers of answers for each question. When questioned about where they found out about the concert, most said either from friends or the radio.<sup>34</sup> This shows not only the power of AOR radio to select particular fans (and also sell them shows) but also the *sociability* of those going. In Vancouver some 27,000 young people showed up and, just as Ley and Olds (1988) found at Expo '86, they usually came in groups of two to four people. Like most rock concerts, the idea of the Great Canadian Party as a *spectacle* for those attending it

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<sup>33</sup> I would like to thank Stacy Warren for fieldwork services rendered and also Barry McPherson of Molsons for being so hospitable.

<sup>34</sup> Of the 34 answers given 39% said they found out from the radio, 39% from friends, 11% from Much Music and 11% from written advertisements.

can be questioned, because it had festive tinges and was interpreted by groups.

To the question of why, exactly, people were attending, a variety of answers was received. If they could be divided at all, people coming for the music and festivity of the party were evenly matched, while a further 10% came for other reasons.<sup>35</sup>

The preliminary questions were followed by others focused more on music and the nation. Firstly audience members were asked what bands they would have liked to have seen if those playing had been unavailable that day.<sup>36</sup> Frequently the most rash member of the cluster of friends answering would begin reeling off their favourite bands regardless of their nationality until another interviewee would say "Hey: they have to be Canadian because it's Canada Day" and then a more selective listing would follow. This suggests that frequently people do not think of bands in terms of their nationality, but the criteria emerged from negotiations

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<sup>35</sup> Of the 54 answers given, 45% said they came for a festive time. This category included most activities seen in Molsons beer commercials, such as drinking and flirting. In this respect Molsons were again successful. However another 19% mentioned the music in general. Furthermore 28% of answers mentioned particular acts by name, and in fact several fans said they would not have been there if The Tragically Hip were not playing.

<sup>36</sup> The 102 answers given were as numerous as the different groups on AOR radio. 62 acts were mentioned, of which 42% were Canadian, 26% British, 25% American and 8% from elsewhere.

between friends. The social interpretation of the spectacle reinforced its relationship to the nation.

The national question was further broached by asking (given that it was the Great Canadian Party) what missing Canadian bands anyone wanted to see there. To this there was no single or circle of Canadians chosen much more than others. Most acts got one, two of three 'votes'.<sup>37</sup> Interestingly, while Bryan Adams got two, so did Roch Voisine from Quebec and also Loreena McKennit got one. This latter pair of artists are anomalous, since even well informed listeners who preferred hard rock stations would probably not have heard or thought about them. In fact both were mentioned in Tom Harrison's preparatory article in *The Vancouver Province* (26/6/92, p.C5). It seems possible that a minority of fans may have been using it as a text with which to interpret the event. This is important because, far from being an uninformed and uncritical piece, Harrison actually questioned some of the paradoxes of the industry and of the Day, before it began: from the role of sponsorship in rock, to who was and was not there, to whether Canadian music should be associated with the project of nationalism.

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<sup>37</sup> There were 41 answers specifying 28 groups. 25% of the groups mentioned, and thus 32% of the answers given were for groups playing elsewhere at the Party (as were 42% of the Canadian acts mentioned in the previous question).

The presence of Spinal Tap was one of the issues which Harrison had raised and some audience members had a problem with on the day. As spoof headliners of the entire event, the group shared top billing with Canadians Kim Mitchell and The Tragically Hip. They flew across Canada with a group of Much Music contest winners. The three American actors posing as British rock stars formed a thread uniting the country on that day. At least six other Canadian acts had flown in order to play two venues, but only Spinal Tap had been to all the televised places. Given that they were a spoof group and that a relative minority knew they were Americans, the audience apparently had no qualms about supporting them.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, in order to find out whether the Great Canadian Party had put activities into a more patriotic and sociable context than the people attending would have organized for themselves that day, they were asked what else they might have been doing.<sup>39</sup> Even if we combine the people attending

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<sup>38</sup> Of the 47 answers received to the question of whether it mattered that not all of the bands playing Vancouver were Canadian that day, 36% gave an unqualified "No". Another 13% gave qualified negative answers such as "No American bands". Yet a further 11% gave answers which admitted Spinal Tap only, such as "They're a joke, not a band". On top on that 41% of answers given said that it did matter, such as "It's better if all the bands are Canadian" or "On this day, yes, you have to have Canadians here".

<sup>39</sup> Of the 59 answers given, 10% said they would have otherwise been working on that day, while another 28% specified solitary home oriented activities such as watching television. A further 26% said they would be have been going out to public open spaces such as the beach or park, but not celebrating and the same amount said they were going to party at home. Just 10% said they would have been attending



patriotic events with those partying at home, only 36% of those in attendance would have been actively engaged in patriotic activities if they had not attended the Canada Day concert.

So, then, it seems clear that Molsons were successful in the immediate aims of their project. In 1988 Pepsi had attempted a smaller project in Toronto, but their negotiations with city administrators broke off over their potential rights to soft drink sales in Nathan Phillips Square. The Chairman of the 1988 Toronto Canada Day Committee said "Corporations should be falling over each other to get involved in Canada Day to show they are good corporate citizens" (*Globe and Mail* 28/6/88, p.A14). Certainly Molsons proved themselves as good corporate citizens, especially since some of the shows they supported that day actually made a loss (E. Lefko, *pers. comm.*). If spectacles are an exact form of semiotic closure, preventing reinterpretations of the themes they focus on, then Gordon Downie's comments could have been as undemocratic as the corporate nationalist emphasis of the event. Nevertheless the cause of the nation formed a realization of imagined community, but at the same time it was in a very particular context. It showed that the pleasure of music, the efforts of a television station and the corporate organization of a public patriotic celebrations, such as the events at Canada place or the associated firework display.

brewery could unite (one demographic part of) the nation when in other important times and locations other such attempts had failed.

Another type of representation of Canada boosted by the initiative of private sponsorship has been constructed through Canadian music award ceremonies. The function of such events is to recognize the achievements of bands, inspire them to new heights and through that to market the music industry. In relation to this the Junos, CASBYs and other well publicized national awards can be scrutinized as a background (their history is explored in appendix five).

The Junos developed in a nationalist environment, under the wing of the trade magazine *RPM*, and then became involved with the Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) who represent the industry, and then televised. CARAS is modelled on the USA's music industry organization, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), but the Junos are not based upon their Grammy Awards (*Can. Musician* v.6/5, 1985, p.14). While nearly all the Junos are awarded to Canadians, the Grammys are for citizens of any nationality. The acts are voted on by NARAS (usually based on their American sales).

So while the Americans might make the mistake of thinking their awards are international in scope, Canadians receive a

telecast of the Grammys, and celebrate their artists getting awards as if the event was like the Olympic games. More parochially, the Junos have acted as a perpetual area of concern for those interested in the cause of national culture. As Canada's oldest and most established pop music awards, the Junos are seen on the CBC. The 1992 awards demonstrated, with obvious references to Cancon, that unlike the Grammys the Juno ceremony can act as a mouthpiece for a unified industry. This may be possible because CARAS only has 1500 voting members (D. Falle, *pers. comm.*), which is likely to be a fraction of the membership of NARAS.

There are several mechanisms by which the Junos represent a particular interpretation of the nation in the nature of the awards themselves. The first one is by having an international award (for the foreign entertainer of the year), which is not needed in the Grammys, yet appears odd in the context of the Junos. Given the size of the audience in Canada, it seems likely that the award means little to any artist receiving it (M. Laba, *pers. comm.*). One possibility is that, like having a foreign presenter, this award markets the show: CARAS have been trying to sell telecasts of the Junos to the USA for some time and they have not been successful because the bands involved rarely have US fan bases (D. Falle, *pers. comm.*). The 1992 ceremony was the first show to contain no foreign acts performing (*Globe and Mail* 30/3/92, p.A2), but the award in question

was kept. As Table 7 shows, particular awards are chosen in different ways and the foreign entertainer award is the only one to be both nominated and selected entirely by CARAS votes.

Table 7: Junos are chosen by different groups

Numbers of Awards	Who Chooses 5 nominees	Who Selects winner
14	CARAS Panels	CARAS Panels
7	CARAS Panels	CARAS votes
7	Sales	CARAS votes
3	Sales	Sales
1 [Foreign Ent.]	CARAS votes	CARAS votes
1 [Canadian Ent.]	CARAS + Media	Public votes

(Source: *Juno Awards Fact Sheet, CARAS, 1993*)

This table show us that any debates about choosing the foreign entertainer award take place within CARAS, rather than in public. Since the problems with other possibilities have already been mentioned already, an alternative argument could be made: having a foreign entertainer of the year award draws a line which *isolates* Canada as a nation and shifts attention away from incoherences *within* it. The award positions the sounds listened to by Canadian consumers in a context emphasizing the artist's citizenship as a basis for identity, rather than stressing another geographical criterion (such as the act's home region) or a non-geographical criterion (such as their gender). It implies that foreign artists are different enough from their Canadian counterparts to warrant separate consideration, but

since the award cannot be given to Canadians it also unifies and categorizes Canadian entertainers as national citizens.

The foreign entertainer award shows the Canadian music industry making a unified choice about who to celebrate, rather becoming an issue of public debate. Such debate could expose rifts in the general public based upon divided loyalties outside the nation, or show that Canadians regularly prefer artists from a particular country; neither possibility would reinforce national pride.

Another interesting award is the Canadian entertainer of the year award, recently created by CARAS with input from their brewing sponsors. Molsons had a history of either sponsoring particular individuals or teams, like those at the Olympics (*Maclean's* v.101/4, 1988, p.100), or taking over organizations they became involved with, such as the concert promotion business. When CARAS approached them in 1985 the brewery helped in various ways, but allowed the sponsored organization to retain control.<sup>40</sup> One crucial thing Molsons did was put ballots into 100 Cineplex cinemas across the country to give the public a chance to participate in the selection process. The result was the

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<sup>40</sup> Molsons have helped CARAS with advertising, public relations, promotion and sales initiatives. They fund a CARAS scholarship to train entertainment managers, subsidize the show itself and set up a series of new talent showcases in the week leading up to the ceremony (*CARAS News* Winter 1992).

only award directly sponsored by Molsons: the Canadian entertainer of the year award. This was a particularly shrewd move by the brewery. CARAS chose the nominations so they were not left out of the new award, but since the public selected it Molsons could not go wrong in terms of associating with anyone unpopular with their potential customers.

Another way to give the nation coherence has been to base awards on musical genres, rather than regions. As a forum for talent, like the Grammys, the Junos have grown steadily, usually by recognizing genres of music which have already gained enough popularity and recognition in the industry to warrant their own awards. New awards are decided within CARAS once the issue arises and administrators see them as an indication of the maturation of the industry. In a sense, then, CARAS is a body open to criticism about how it represents the industry and can be compared to a political party swayed by lobby groups. By 1992 the awards had grown to 33 categories and thus 165 nominations (*Juno Fact Sheet*, CARAS, 1993).<sup>41</sup>

For example, songs played by Canada's black musicians have often been rejected by labels who assumed they could not sell to the rest of the nation, even at times when foreign

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<sup>41</sup> To make a comparison, the Grammy awards already had 64 categories by 1985 (*Canadian Musician* v.6/5, 1985, p.14).

black acts sold well in Canada.<sup>42</sup> In the early 1980s the Black Music Awards of Canada were set up by concerned musicians, labels and others making up the black musical community. In 1985 the Junos were augmented by two new editions: the best r'n'b/soul recording and the best reggae/calypso recording (which has now been dropped). The black Canadian musicians may have deserved recognition, but CARAS was then faced with how to present this to a largely white audience. The result was that small panels of CARAS members chose these awards; the black music industry was invited to recognize *itself* within CARAS to avoid other members of the academy neglecting or misrepresenting it.

In 1985 the organizers of CARAS fended off criticism that they had no separate award category for francophone music, by saying that any song sung in French could win if it sold well enough in all of Canada (although CARAS voters were English Canadians) and that such a divisive award would undermine their project. Yet L'ADISQ has included an anglophone category in their awards since well before 1985 and more recently CARAS have relented and included a francophone album category. This may have been done as a gesture to recognize the efforts of L'ADISQ by reciprocating

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<sup>42</sup> For example, in 1975 Producer John Capek said "Canadian record companies keep saying they don't know what to do with a black artist, that there's no market - and yet half the top ten in Canada these days is by people like The O'Jays and The Jackson Five" (Can. Composer no.200, 1985, p.14).

their gesture, but whatever the reason, CARAS were again faced with the dilemma of creating a new award to represent a minority group within the nation. However, the way the new award was chosen contrasted to the way awards for black musicians were picked.

CARAS resolved the problem of suitably representing this sensitive minority group by basing the award for francophones solely on sales. They were not collectively forced to choose from a type of music they knew little about. Having an award based upon sales criteria was a different policy to reciprocally acknowledging the efforts of L'ADISQ within the Juno ceremony. Even if L'ADISQ accepted decisions made solely by CARAS members about who received the francophone's Juno, autonomously choosing a winner could reinforce the *separation* of the two industry bodies. The use of a neutral, common criterion such as sales figures was more suitable than choosing criteria which would expose the dichotomy between francophonic Canada and the rest of the nation.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The SOCAN awards, which began in 1989 to recognize members of that organization who were played the most on Canadian radio, avoided this type of problem by having two award ceremonies. The francophonic Montreal ceremony was held a week after the Toronto event with an international artist and a Canadian of the reciprocal language recognized in each (*Can. Composer* v.1/3, 1990, p.11).



Like the Molson's award the choice was put in the hands of the people concerned. Unlike the Molson's award it acted to tell one part of the country what was popular in another part. Also, it could be argued that the award for francophones pulled Quebec's inhabitants into CARAS's project. Many francophones from Quebec see their collective history and position as much more than that of a province. Yet if we treat that area in the way it is currently recognized, as a province, Quebec has found representation *within* the Junos when other provinces have not done so.<sup>44</sup>

Since the Junos represent the nation to itself from the viewpoint of the music industry, their televising has been important to CARAS and cultural critics alike. Luminaries not only attend but also present awards. For example Pierre Trudeau once gave a *Hall of Fame* award to Joni Mitchell (*Maclean's* v.92/14, 1979, p.47), thereby lending weight to the construction of a particular history of Canadian popular music engineered by CARAS. The debate around the awards in the late 1970s focused upon their amateur presentation. On

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<sup>44</sup> British Columbia has been unique as a province which not only set up its own chapter of CARAS in the late 1970s, but also its own awards. The West Coast Music Industry Awards began in 1980 and survived that decade in various forms with help from labels, CARAS and local music industry philanthropists. In 1992 the awards died with no government funding, little interest from the labels and a withdrawal of CARAS funds (*Nite Moves* 11/92, p.30). So now all of Canada's big anglophonic awards (the Junos, CASBYs, SOCAN and Much Music Video awards) are Toronto based, although CARAS located the Junos in Vancouver in 1991, arguably as a concession to the region.

one occasion a reunited Guess Who were cut short. On others poor lip synching, misunderstandings and other mistakes were made (*Can. Musician* v.10/2, 1988, p.52). In 1981 Anne Murray refused to appear on the show because of its history of problems (*Can. Musician* v.10/6, 1988, p.46). The ceremony itself was constantly in danger of ruining not only the reputations of the stars and public figures who attended, but worse still it had the potential of driving them, audiences and respect for what Canadians had done, away. The invented tradition of the Junos rested, then, on a rather precarious base.

On top of this problem were two rather misplaced complaints about the Junos. Firstly the criticism that the awards were put on for the television audience, rather than those actually attending, underestimated the importance of who the Junos were being staged for. CARAS is not simply putting on awards and recognizing particular stars, but their aim is to be seen to do so.<sup>45</sup> A similar complaint has been that the awards are too predicable because they are based upon sales (*Maclean's* v.92/14, 1979, p.46). This is less relevant when one realizes that CARAS has to speak to

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<sup>45</sup> At one ceremony the live audience were told not to get in the way of the cameras (*Maclean's* v.92/14, 1979, p.46). In 1993, with a viewing figure of 5 million (around 20% of the national population), people were employed to sit in the seats previously occupied by anyone who arose from the audience. In this way an effort was made to show viewers that the O'Keefe Centre was packed (*Globe and Mail* 23/3/93, p.A10).

the nation in a language that it can understand. The Junos are not critic's choice awards based upon criteria which only an initiated minority can appreciate, but a way in which the industry reflects and attempts to align itself with the nation.

In comparison to the Junos, Toronto alternative rock station *CFNY's* CASBY awards are voted on entirely by public ballot, CASBY standing for *Canadian Artists chosen By You*. These awards have negotiated the problem of representing particular genres by dividing categories up by both the format of product and geographical area (eg. *Album of the year from Western Canada*). The Junos are aimed at helping to sell Canadian artists abroad. As the CASBYs do not have enough profile to help with this, they help to expose regional acts to the nation and get them signed to labels allowing wider distribution deals.

To emphasize the alternative nature of the CASBYs there are no acceptance speeches. A non-mainstream award promotes diversity because bands which would not have otherwise been recognized get a chance. Yet at the moment their organizers see their awards as *both* non-mainstream and a precursor for bands who may end up at the Junos (N. Raskin, *pers. comm.*), which are slightly divergent aims. Throughout their history they have undergone a reorientation away from being alternative towards helping smaller acts, in order to

survive as an awards system. Their success peaked in 1985 when CBC televised the show, yet more recently times have been harder.<sup>46</sup> While the CASBYs have avoided the kind of lobbying received by the Junos, they have been criticized for their selection criteria, since nominations were at first chosen from the CFNY playlist and consequently has a southern Ontario slant (*Can. Composer* no.201, 1985, p.14). Currently CFNY asks the music industry itself to choose nominees. Like the way that Molsons got the public involved with the Junos, the implication is that the Junos and CASBYs are moving closer together.

The Junos, CASBYs and SOCAN national ceremonies deliver a total of 87 awards available each year for Canadian acts, covering recognition from the public, radio programmers and recording industry. The longer the list of awards grows the more it implies a collective lack of confidence and need to prove Canadian talent. If the value of each award is not known in the first place, as awards proliferate their worth seems reduced. This saturation has led Mordecai Richler to

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<sup>46</sup> Into the 1990s the CASBYs were dropped by CBC, so their organizers created a radio network with the help of one or two alternative stations in each province. CFNY use the awards for Canadian talent development. The stations involved received 3.5 hours of cheap Cancon programming and information about the grassroots support of various upcoming acts. In 1992 a further blow came when Labatts withdrew their sponsorship (as part of their restructuring) so organizers found Asuna Automobiles to replace them. Furthermore, the awards run at a loss (N. Raskin, *pers. comm.*), while the Junos are supported by their ticket sales, government funding and sponsorship (D. Falle, *pers. comm.*).

argue that the proliferation of awards within Canada represents a "burgeoning celebration of non-entities" (*Maclean's* v.91/10, 1978, p.78).

While different music awards have different functions, in the Junos in particular a select few artists get nominated in several of the same categories. The result is a *showdown* between similar types of artists which, if the results are uneven, builds up only a proportion of the acts in the running. It means that CARAS is not only helping to throw away many of its own exports, but it is doing this in front of the nation. The Great Canadian Party was a limited representation of Canadian rock, but it showed that Canadian fans do not think of the country's music in terms of a tiny handful of acts.<sup>47</sup> In selling acts abroad, the Junos make good copy, but that does not mean that foreign writers have anything more than a cursory knowledge of their value. The Junos obviously have an important national function, so perhaps it is time to open them up more by restricting the number of times an artist can be nominated or win an award. That could prevent the kind of over-investment which leaves the fate of representing the nation on the shoulders of a few artists.

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<sup>47</sup> This was demonstrated by the way that those in attendance answered one question in our survey (associated with footnote 37) and gave their support to the many acts performing across the country that day.

In conclusion this chapter has looked at two collective, public ways in which the musical aspect of Canada's National Popular is constructed. It has shown that rock sponsorship is a way of life in Canada and deserves further study as one of the main contexts within which rock reaches the people. The Great Canadian Party and award ceremonies in Canada are important to the National Popular because they both associate Canadian bands with the cause of national unity in very specific ways. Together with various television channels these two types of events are actively exposing a new generation of Canadian bands to a nationwide audience, even though those bands are neglected by radio stations aimed at babyboomers. It could be argued that if national award ceremonies are to recognize Canadian acts for what they have done, the Great Canadian Party shows what these bands *can do* as part of a wider co-operative effort.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

"The music industry is not, in fact, monolithic... there are music *industries* which are always partially fractured and contradictory, opening up new spaces in their constantly shifting and conflicting formations"- J. Shepherd<sup>1</sup>

As the above quotation suggests, the music industry is not a structurally coherent entity but rather a vehicle which has emerged (and transformed) via historical contingency to convey rock to consumers. Thus it would be wrong to conclude by emphasizing the interrelationship of previous chapters on the basis of their empirical contents alone, since it is our theoretical standpoint that has unified them. Thus, to conclude, we shall return to Gramsci's schema to reconsider the related questions of nationalism, cultural imperialism and how to assess the potential consequences of free trade measures.

The cause of national unity has been an undercurrent throughout this thesis. Gramsci's schema situates the coherence of the nation within a progressive framework, as a prerequisite to the emergence of a national working class culture. However, this is only one relatively narrow and specific reason for nationalism. Any pure nationalist stance can become dangerous if it is put forward blindly, without a consideration of what it means in relation to the context, since the context and therefore consequences of

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from Shepherd (1993, p.180).

national unity are not fixed. For example nationalism may mean something different in peacetime than in war time.

Even more difficult to deal with is that different social groups simultaneously draw upon national unity for different reasons. Thus Gramsci's schema does not allow us to endorse or reject national identity in any simple way in relation to music, because it avoids an orchestrated view of what the nation is. One way the schema demonstrates that view is by showing class divisions within the national population, while in this thesis the divisions have been seen in instances involving conflicts of interest between different groups making up the elements, overseers and customers of Canada's music industry.

The advantage of such an open framework is that it gives each reader the possibility of *considering his or her own* identity and position in relation to arguments which call upon the nation for particular ends. This takes us from a viewpoint that calls culture to account in the name of the nation towards one which critically examines the ways in which the rallying cries of national unity are used.

As a country, Canada is in a potentially difficult predicament; it contains citizens with cultural identities rooted in diverse backgrounds which on occasion create the context for disputes. Yet this plurality opens up



opportunities for redefining what it means to be part of a nation in new, progressive and exemplary ways. The actions of the Canadian federal State have helped increase the quantity of music being made and heard by its citizens and thus shifted and diversified the National Popular. However, the types of sounds being made did not develop in unique ways because any nation is also implicated within a wider international social fabric.

Moreover, discussions in the third chapter and first appendix here demonstrate that the regions of Canada do not significantly prevent the coherent development of a musical component to the National Popular. Like the nation, but at a smaller scale, they rework and contribute to wider influences.<sup>2</sup> In rock perhaps the biggest difficulty caused by the regional geography of Canada is not one of cultural differences, but the way that the scattered population presents an obstacle to national exposure for touring bands. Furthermore, while Canada has these special problems, that does not mean that other countries with less fragmented geographical configurations and different political economies have no problems.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In the late 1970s a regional musical revival in the Maritimes prompted Ron Hynes of the *Wonderful Grand Band* to say "Newfoundland has always been subjected to Canadianism and Americanism, in terms of culture and music" (*Maclean's* v.92/1, 1979, p.5).

<sup>3</sup> Some countries face an opposite problem to Canada, of becoming too dense in terms of music produced. For example the UK may have produced around one third of the world's

Gramsci's schema allows us to begin with the assumption that popular culture is implicated within a wider framework of exchange, which helps put the music made by Canadians in a new light. Rather than policing the music back into a parochial conception of Canadian distinctiveness which has never been defined, or worse still pretending it has followed a canon which does not exist, the schema allows us to celebrate the diversity of sounds made in a country where talented people have been given a forum to express whatever they choose. This is not to say that the nation is irrelevant, but simply to celebrate it more liberally, without the paranoia sometimes associated with nationalist sentiments. In other words notions of the nation should not be used as an excuse to control the wealth of Canadian talent in existence or bemoan the efforts of the country's artists. Rather those acts should be facilitated and celebrated, as music may be one of the best ways for Canadians to share common feelings and experiences.

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popular music, but it now has its own share of dilemmas. One is that A&R staff tend to sign acts in accordance with national trends in dance music, such as techno and rave sounds, which have marginal export potential. This is important because the British singles market is now becoming comparable in size to that of Canada, even though the UK has a much larger national population. Another problem is that the singles chart is so saturated that singles have a hyper-sales pattern: their short chart life-cycles give foreign labels or branch plants little confidence in them as proven hits (*Music Week* 7/11/92, p.25).

One problem with using Gramsci's schema as a way to examine the contents of Canadian popular music is that Gramsci was not very clear about the criteria for defining central figures. It is also hard to qualify whether these figures are *liked by most people*. Certainly a diverse pantheon of central figures has emerged to become part of Canadian popular memory. Chapter two showed that Canadian audiences have historically accepted Canadian acts if they fared well in the USA. The first and perhaps only period to spawn several central figures at once was the early 1970s. An array of characters emerged from the Coffee House phase, including Anne Murray, Neil Young and The Guess Who. Most of these people have survived as successful figures within the industry. They have been joined by Bryan Adams, a champion from the tail end of the Hoser rock era and finally by direct signings from recent years such as the Barenaked Ladies, kd lang and Celine Dion. Also this collection of people has been augmented by other reasonably popular acts, such as Kim Mitchell and Sarah MacLachlan. The Canadian rock scene has always been too open and effervescent to form any kind of popular canon, which is only a problem if we follow the essentialist notion that a nation's music should be easily aligned with its borders.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> From the viewpoint of Gramsci's schema, the potential problem with Canadian music may be that famous Canadians are not making particular types of music. As a consequence Canadian listeners may seek out foreign artists in those styles. Further, successful young Canadian acts playing in those types of music may be compared to famous US musicians or other famous Canadian citizens, sometimes from sports.

However, it is also true that Canadians have also celebrated foreign acts. This leads us to questions of cultural imperialism. On that subject Communications Minister Perrin Beatty has said recently (*Probe* v.2/7, 1991, p.2) to Canada's songwriters:

"My concern is that there is no other country in the world where there's a higher penetration of foreign culture. My goal isn't to shut others out but to ensure that Canadian voices can be heard... I intend to make it clear to our [free trade] negotiating partners that while Canadian cultural products are for sale, Canadian culture is not."

Like Gramsci, from his quotation Beatty implies that he supports national unity. Yet he does so in a particular way that contains a number of contradictions. The most important one comes in the final slogan. If we replace "for sale" with "implicated within capitalism" the problems become clear in that Beatty is implying Canadian culture is an entity outside material society. If we replace "Canadian" with "American" (ie. 'while American cultural products are for sale, American culture is not', which suggests American products can be purchased without cultural attachment) it becomes clear that this logic also opposes the tenets of structural concepts of media imperialism, or at least treats Canadian culture and foreign culture in very different ways. As a way of saying Canadian culture matters and is an export

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That was certainly the case with Bryan Adams because he suddenly became famous in an area which Canadians had less success in before.

priority, the statement brings us nearer to Gramsci's ideas, in that it specifies that, psychologically, cultural trade matters more to the country subjected to it.

If America is an exporting machine, a cultural dynamo, then it is also true that Canada is a smaller dynamo creating anti-imperialist media material. What both of these claims relate to is the size of the markets for these two types of product. In other words it could be argued that the amount and rate of output of popular culture from America is caused more by that country's logistics than anything more conspiratorial. This thesis has not aimed to look at the undeniable international success of American artists, but to focus upon what Canadian artists mean to Canadian audiences and perhaps more importantly whether the exposure of those artists has been facilitated by the actions of record companies and the State. In order to fully explore that issue we have to return to the industry backing Canadian acts.

As the trickle of artists signing before tariffs, and current direct signings show, Canadian artists can become popular internationally without any industry existing in their own country.<sup>5</sup> Many Canadian central figures have had

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<sup>5</sup> Yet these artists are a distinct minority and have to grapple perpetually with dilemmas of mistaken national identity. For example Paul Anka went to New York and signed direct to *United Artists* in 1956. Despite living in the USA, he did not give up his Canadian citizenship and was proud to

the power of the majors not only to promote them in their own country, but in other suitable territories. So if we could transfer what has been explained about the majors into the language of Gramsci's schema, we would find that foreign publishing houses were employing reorientated Italian writers to write the Italian National Popular partly because their writings were so successful abroad. In fact, the parallel with Gramsci's Italy is much closer if we consider Italian symphonies, which were popular both within their own country and abroad. Their foreign appeal actually reinforced their place in an otherwise weak National Popular.

While the major corporations have centres of control (but often not ownership) in the USA, what is interesting about their trade in music is that each label deals in the salability of its artists whatever their nationality. The majors do not foreground their own corporate image.<sup>6</sup> So it becomes difficult to complain about the invasive power of American owned and controlled recording and broadcasting industries in a nationalist context when they begin to export the talents of Canadian artists all over the world.<sup>7</sup>

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say so when Canadian magazine editors accused him of being American (*Maclean's* v.88/2, 1975, p.48).

<sup>6</sup> The *majors* are owned by companies based in Japan, Germany, Holland, England and the USA (see glossary).

<sup>7</sup> For example Bryan Adams single 'Everything I Do I Do It For You' was number one in the UK for an unprecedented period. English protest singer Billy Bragg joked "People asked me if I wanted to leave the country after the Tories got re-elected, I'd rather have left when Bryan Adams was

By using Gramsci's schema this articulation of Canadian artists within export oriented American media should not trouble the citizens of Canada, because Canadian acts could not be sold anywhere if they had no appeal. What it means is that the media have a facilitative role in building national identity within a wider context. As successful Canadian cultural products, the recordings of Canadians signed to the majors are exported to other countries and that serves to reinforce their own country's National Popular because Canadians recognize the foreign achievements of their fellow citizens.

At the national level, the State in Gramsci's framework is against the unregulated trade of cultural products *only* if it means that foreign producers supply indigenous demands. However, whether Gramsci's schema can be used as an argument for the Canadian ownership of Canadian talent depends upon whether the nationality of ownership changes the exposure of Canadian acts (and thus the content of culture) in Canada. If we believe Canadian popular culture is fully implicated within the fabric of society, then the structure of its ownership is likely to matter to the country's National

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number one for sixteen weeks". Joel Parks corresponding from Britain for *Nite Moves* (v.7/84, 1992) said "... such longevity is looked at as kind of freaky over here. Almost an imposition... This town, this country does not like the idea they should become 'American', and that means they do not like bland pop excess as part of their musical diet."

Popular. Chapter four showed that the Canadian recording industry consists of diverse but symbiotic structures. This means that we can neither use any single artist as representative of the whole industry in Canada or expect any blanket cultural policy to have the same consequences for all Canadian artists.<sup>8</sup> However, less proven Canadian artists negotiating with the majors or on smaller labels have faced difficulties because of their citizenship. In many ways it took the efforts of the federal State to summon up national recording and broadcasting industries for Canadian acts in spite of a prevalence of, and often preference for, foreign cultural products.<sup>9</sup> As we have seen, although Cancon and FACTOR have different goals which do not simplistically match up, often they have ended up complementing each other. In this context, on balance, it seems clear that State policies have positively influenced the musical element of Canada's National Popular.

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<sup>8</sup> Chapter three showed how Bryan Adams was central in stimulating an alteration in Cancon. There are two important points about this. Not only did he have unusual status as a Canadian rock superstar, but the incident suggested that central figures are not just *victims* of the agents popular culture; they can be protagonists.

<sup>9</sup> It could be argued that Gramsci's schema assumes a degree of coherence to the State which may not exist in Canada but the information is conflicting. While the DoC has "responsibility" for the CRTC and its funding (*Probe* v.2/7, 1991, p.2), as a body at arms length to the government the Commission is not directly accountable to any particular department (S. Alexander, *pers. comm.*).



While the State has said it will keep culture "off the table" (*Can. Composer* no.229, 1988, p.18) in free trade negotiations, under the General Tariff and Trades Agreement (GATT) it has already been agreed that tariffs on imported commercial recordings will be phased out (*Can. Composer* no.229, 1988, p.18). Historically the 14% import tax placed by the Canadian government on imported reproduced recordings for consumers has been too high to allow imports to continue once the market reached a significant size.<sup>10</sup> As we have seen its main result was to set up a manufacturing and distribution system in Canada. Since then 95% of the units bought within the country have been manufactured at home (*Can. Business* v.60/10, 1987, p.128). Thus an industry was created, providing Canadian national indies a chance to develop and for the quantity of Canadian releases to be increased. If the majors (as opposed to the national indies) can do a better job of exposing Canadian talent, Gramsci's schema could not be co-opted by the Canadian independent recording industry, unless we could demonstrate that indies facilitated the majors in their aim.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, in one statement to the 1970 Standing Committee on Broadcasting, Films and Assistance to the Arts, the CAB argued the government should impose an import tax on foreign sources of supply and on foreign recordings, with the revenue going to developing Canadian music (Foster, 1982, p.307).

<sup>11</sup> It may be difficult to show that Canadian indies are exposing talent to better signings with (rather than simply distribution by) the majors, but they do allow more Canadians to get signed at all, and therefore heard, and so these small labels have themselves given some exposure to a diverse constellation of talent.

As a result a distinct question mark hangs over the future of music made in Canada. Our examinations of FACTOR and the Juno awards showed that, despite structural diversity, the music industry within Canada is a unified lobby group. Most people in the industry are not looking forward to free trade.<sup>12</sup> Yet no representatives of the Canadian music industry have been consulted over either GATT or the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) package (*Can. Composer* no.229, 1988, p.20), even though the removal of the tariff barriers and other issues seem likely to have profound implications for them.

Since it has too small a population to be counted as a centre for demand, after tariff walls crumble the majors are likely to once again see Canada as a territory requiring no special manufacturing or distributional provisions. GATT therefore has the potential to remove manufacturing jobs, avenues for signing and control over distribution from Canada back into the USA. Once branch plants no longer have to operate from within Canada, majors may re-centralize their manufacturing and A&R divisions. These changes are

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<sup>12</sup> For example, despite his views on Cancon, even Bruce Allen sees the current distribution system as a safety net that he and other managers signing acts with US majors can come back to if they fail (*Can. Composer* no.229, 1988, p.22).

likely to considerably effect Canada's national indie labels.

From the point of view of the independent recording industry, essentialism may be an appealing way of aligning the exposure of Canadian talent and the welfare of the industry. Yet it can only work if Canadian bands are signed for their *alternative* sounds.<sup>13</sup> To an extent this is the case, but that does not mean the majors are not interested in such music.<sup>14</sup> Yet this type of argument restricts the criteria by which we recognize good Canadian artists. Essentialist ideas also provide a context for the notion that any need to prove Canadian artists in the USA may disappear once people realize the Canadian artists they celebrate are *different* from those South of the 49th parallel. While it is wrong to dismiss any such arguments which are not opposed to free trade without considering them, the problem with this particular scenario is that it

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<sup>13</sup> Bernie Finklestein has made an argument akin to Beatty's, that "Culture is not something a country owns, it is what a country is... This free trade deal isn't about competition, its about Canada" (*Canadian Composer* no.229, 4/88, p. 22). This is easy for him to make because he runs *True North Records* successfully with an alternative mandate. Other Canadian independents have no such policy.

<sup>14</sup> Rhian Gittins (pers. comm.) has suggested "There is a distinctive Canadian sound - notably French Canadian, and our college rock such as 54.40, Grapes of Wrath, Roots Roundup, Barenaked Ladies etc. etc. Someone somewhere is listening to it." It could be argued that the popularity of this trend is partly a result of the signing policies of the majors which allow such bands exposure on a large US alternative/college circuit.

overestimates the power of consumer demand in Canada. As one answer to this, the CRTC have suggested that Canadian broadcasters will be central in constructing and maintaining a separate Canadian sound identity in the future.<sup>15</sup> They have thus made an essentialist argument (but one in which distinctiveness will be actively constructed), by suggesting that the music heard and played in Canada will have to be different to survive. Yet when alternative stations appear the Commission cannot help them if they are not seen as viable.<sup>16</sup>

Ironically the latest generation of Canadian bands already fits this mould as many of them are unusual and few have had success outside the country. It is important that these upcoming Canadian bands are given a fair opportunity to express themselves. Their main problem is that because they do not appeal to the large, lucrative babyboomer audience, they are selling to a relatively small record buying audience and hold little appeal to radio programmers or their advertisers. Even with exports, many young bands still face difficulties. Luckily the needs of sponsoring breweries

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<sup>15</sup> David Colville, as acting chairman of the CRTC, has argued that it is in each station's own interest to provide "unique and distinctive Canadian programming. Otherwise they won't survive in this market" (*Probe* v.1/2, 1991, p.4), Also Keith Spicer has said the same thing (*S. Alexander*, pers. comm.).

<sup>16</sup> *Coast 1040* are a distinctive broadcaster and have been refused an FM license (*Globe and Mail* 5/4/93, p.A9).

and some niche product advertisers to reach a youth market led to their co-operation with music industry bodies such as CARAS, CPI and Much Music and has helped support this new generation of Canadian bands.

Yet these sources of help have their own difficulties, not least because they put future help for rock at the mercy of sales of other products. From a Gramscian viewpoint perhaps the major problem with sponsorship is that foreign acts are usually the largest draws, so it is likely they will be sponsored if necessary in preference to Canadian artists (*Maclean's* v.95/34, 1982, p.48). Furthermore, Canadian television may have a rather precarious future as forum for Canadian talent.<sup>17</sup> If these mechanisms play a smaller role in supporting Canadian acts in their own country in the future, institutions such as the FACTOR and CRTC may be encouraged to step up their activities.

The possible implications of free trade packages such as GATT and NAFTA upon this whole situation are difficult to

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<sup>17</sup> For television free trade in the guise of Bill-C130 has already become a problem. Disputes over the remuneration of non-broadcast cable services meant that one large publishing company, *Warner Chappell Music Canada*, instructed its artists to boycott Much Music (*Probe* v.2/2, 1991, p.4). Much Music has proven an invaluable forum for new talent, letting the nation embrace artists at a national scale when previously acts successful in America were more commonly praised. The channel itself may thus attest structural imperialist theories. However, unfortunately, it could soon revert to being a pay TV station again (*The Record* v.11/35, 1992, p.9).

assess in the abstract, since their effects could depend on a whole variety of factors. These include the burgeoning role of Europe as a market for Canadian acts, US signing demands, and the aggressive enterprise of particular publishers and other industry players. In fact, any possible re-centralization in A&R decisions might mean further increases in direct signings, with more Canadian artists going from independent to major labels, allied to an already falling roster of US acts on those majors. There is a possibility that less restricted trade may benefit *some* Canadian artists. Although free trade measures provide some interesting grounds for speculation, perhaps it is better to study countries freely "trading" with the majors and their successes with indigenous acts. In terms of the National Popular it is important to realize that the calibre of Canadian talent is not in question; that is citizenship and talent are separate things. Even if smaller countries have more problems in getting their artists recognized, such places do not automatically create more or fewer talented people per head of population.<sup>18</sup> Examinations of these

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<sup>18</sup> The argument that Canada is a small country and this handicaps the *quality* of Canadian artists has been used by certain people. This is flawed because it confuses the quality and quantity of exposure of Canadian talent. Perhaps the worst thing is that it is an argument made in attempts to protect Canadian music. For example CRTC chairman Keith Spicer has described American music a "seductive product" (*Probe* v.1/1, 1990, p.3) and when he was in charge of CAPAC John Mills once likened the country's music industry to a small team at the Olympics which "cannot win a large number of gold medals" (*Can. Composer* no.201, 1985, p.22).

countries reveal that, helped by historical contingency, some have great success with their cultural exports.<sup>19</sup> Structuralist views of imperialism become difficult to sustain in such instances.

Once GATT is phased in, Canada may no longer be a special case for the majors and the future of Canadian labels may depend upon whether they can survive by export. If other free trade agreements are made Canada's remaining insinuations upon cultural sovereignty, such as Cancon, could become highlighted as objects of dispute by foreign trading partners (*Nite Moves* 10/92, p.16).<sup>20</sup> Fundamentally, aims of upholding the notion of public (Canadian) control of the airwaves may come into conflict with new imperatives.<sup>21</sup> As

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<sup>19</sup> *Ad hoc* comparisons between Canada and Holland or Australia are difficult because both of those countries have their own major labels. Australia's major, *Festival* (*Jonker*, 1992, p.24), is not mentioned in the glossary because it does not export to Canada. Yet Australia has proved its ability to export via other record companies through excellent co-ordination of different aspects of the industry and some vigorous indie labels. As in Canada, acts have a hard time getting airplay in the face of nostalgic formats at home, despite Auscon (*Billboard* v.101/4, 1989, p.A8).

<sup>20</sup> Presently American bands asking how they can get FACTOR funding are told they have to become Canadian citizens (*The Record* v.12/4, 1992, p.50).

<sup>21</sup> If Canada does not sign such a free trade agreement, the potentials for retaliatory protectionism by the USA remain unexplored. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC), which is the American body with the same job as the CRTC, has no equivalent to Cancon since presently it does not need it. Although it does not have the same official mandate as the CRTC in terms of protecting airwaves as public property, it has immense power as a "sword of Damocles" over broadcasters and has previously used the public interest to circumscribe its activities (see Denisoff, 1986, p.279).

such cultural policies deserve further attention as potential stakes in free trade negotiations.

The current role of Cancon depends upon what format we examine. The rule has not summoned up much material for Canada's dominant format, AC. This may be because of the pre-existent export imperative of Canada's indie labels rather than a lack of promotional dollars. In short those labels are engineering export deals to make whatever music they want to, and often they prefer to promote artists who make music outside AC formats. Yet as we have seen about three quarters of the material qualifying as Cancon is currently provided by Canadian independents. As Canadian independents spend only 2% of all promotional dollars but account for around 11% of the market share, Cancon is undoubtedly a help to them. That does not mean that stations which want to meet the minimum of qualifying songs allowed by the regulation with (more popular) artists from the majors have to play any independent material. For many programmers an unproven hit is a record less likely to get played, whatever label it comes on. Thus if the majors simultaneously release Cancon material both inside and outside Canada, and it becomes a hit outside the country, it is more likely to be included on the play lists of Canadian stations than other unproven material. Independent labels

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cannot always promote artists abroad with the powers of the majors and may therefore loose out in that instance.

If Cancon is kept, there are two more immediate problems for the Canadian indies. Firstly Cancon forms part of a broader environment of rules that the CRTC negotiates with radio stations. Within that environment broadcasters themselves use the cause of national unity (in the guise of the Cancon rule) as a foundational resource with which to lever other regulations out of the way, to give them a less impeded broadcasting environment.<sup>22</sup> It could be argued that while abolishing Cancon may be to the detriment of Canadian artists, allowing broadcasters to use it as a bulwark to break other rules is not helping smaller Canadian acts a great deal.

Secondly the co-write rule (ie. the change to the MAPL system brought about in the wake of Bryan Adams' protests) may allow radio programmers to select more of their Cancon quota from material released by the majors. In relation to Gramsci's schema, cultural production in music is different

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<sup>22</sup> The Canadian broadcasters have also used a version of the national interest to maintain an archaic system of copyright flows. For example, the government's concern with a version of the nation portrayed by broadcasters has lead to it's procrastinate over particular copyright issues. If the government cannot co-operate with the IPFI on international exchange deals of rights packages, Canadian artists will not be fully remunerated for the use of their songs in other nations.

from written literature because the performer, who forms the focus of public attention, may not be the same nationality as the songwriter. In such circumstances, if we follow a strict Gramscian analysis, the National Popular cannot be constructed from central figures who use foreign songwriters. The net result of the new co-write rule is an increase in these foreign writers and that is also likely to mean an increase in the proportion of well-promoted Cancon material provided by the majors.

Despite these problems, the present circumstances allow Canadian independent labels an environment from which they can expand. Even though it is not easy to draw common conclusions about Canadian indies, since they are diverse in signings and financial abilities, those labels are important in providing a diversity of artists to write the musical component of the country's National Popular. The indies show that Canadians can celebrate their fellow artists whether those acts are seen to be doing well abroad or not. This was one thing attested by the Great Canadian Party. Yet artists on independents who are respected nationally within Canada but unsuccessful outside it, such as Kim Mitchell, may lose their distribution facilities once tariffs are phased out. That consequence really depends upon what the majors decide to keep in Canada and whether they renegotiate with national indies. It may be that the majors stop distributing lower

selling labels, or offer to upgrade certain artists while dropping others.

Perhaps a way to further encourage the independent sector would be to extend the Small Business Development Act to the recording industry, creating an influx of private investment which would follow the definition of tax breaks (Can. Musician v.9/2, 1987, p.38). It would then be up to the industry itself to supply the talent to keep itself viable, even after GATT.

In sum, foreign majors are already providing much of Canada's National Popular and it is likely they will continue to do so after GATT, albeit with a potentially smaller roster of well promoted bands. The future of Canada's independent sector is not so certain. While this may not be a problem from the viewpoint of Gramsci's schema, economically it could be a problem for Canada.

Rock may have originated from diverse (and foreign) musical strands which were fused and transformed to entertain young people in the USA. Yet, even if in retrospect American rock has been an excellent cultural artifact of its time and place, the important thing is that rock music actually provides an excellent forum, as an opportunity to express whatever is on a songwriter's mind. Although songs written on the theme of national identity are

relatively rare, that does not mean that the efforts of musicians cannot inspire their fellow citizens to feel national pride. Pride in national identity does not have to come intrinsically through the content of the music itself, but that content must be inspiring in some ways to fellow citizens.<sup>23</sup> If (for structural reasons) a free market is not the best way to facilitate this process, it may not be to the best way for Canadian music to advance.

As such rock music can facilitate Canadian unity (as it can facilitate any other type of unity) because it is an opportunity for Canadians to be inspired with *whatever* their fellow citizens have done. It could be argued that encouragement and the promotion of diversity are therefore vital ingredients which will help Canadian acts to make the best music that they can. Artistically GATT could be a problem for anybody interested in maintaining a diverse environment in which sounds made by Canadians can flourish.

Unlike the Italian State in Gramsci's schema, the Canadian federal State has acted to realign its country's popular culture. The diversity of structures gathered under the umbrella of the music industry makes it almost

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<sup>23</sup> For example, perhaps Canadian fans of Bryan Adams' music should not be encouraged to say "I like Adams' music and so he makes me proud to be Canadian, because he shows what we Canadians can do", rather than "his music does not sound Canadian to me, but I like it anyway".

inevitable that any State policy will have unintended consequences. However, free trade measures may mean that the Canadian federal State has to please foreign trading partners as well as Canadian citizens. This thesis has shown the ways in which Canadians have taken up and promoted rock within their own country. While it is not easy to outline what they will gain in free trade agreements it seems likely that the country's National Popular will be transformed once again.

In the preceding pages Gramsci's schema has been used to provide a novel viewpoint from which to explore the links between Canadian music, the industry backing it, the State and the nation. We have seen how and why Canadian artists have become famous and sometimes the ways they (and others) have used that fame. Perhaps one of the most important things about that process is that it has been made possible by citizens working hard within the industries associated with music right across the country. Yet the period from the late 1960s to the early 1990s may be an anomalous phase in the nation's cultural history in which nationalism prompted the State to help many aspects of the music industry. Since the federal State is still an accountable entity, it remains up to the citizens of Canada to decide whether this facet of their culture is something they want to keep. The investigation presented here suggests that allowing it to

disappear would represent a distinct loss to Canadian national culture.

## Glossary

**AC:** Adult Contemporary - a format of radio stations playing soft pop, rock and soul ballads.

**AOR:** Album Oriented Rock - a format of radio stations playing hard rock bands.

**A&R:** Artists and Repertoire - The division of a record company responsible for finding and signing new acts.

**Auscon:** The Australian Broadcasting Tribunal's regulation which specifies that 20% of songs on Australian radio have to be Australian in content (E. Jonker, 1992, p.22).

**L'ADISQ:** (Le) Association Du Disques et Spectacles (A Quebec music industry association).

**Baby Boomers:** The large generation born just after World War II who have become a key consumer group sought after by acts, broadcasters and advertisers alike due to their collective size.

**CAB:** Canadian Association of Broadcasters.

**Cancon:** The CRTC's regulation which specifies that a certain proportion of broadcast programming in Canada has to be Canadian in content.

**CAPAC:** Composers, Authors and Publishers Association of Canada - along with Procan, it was a recent predecessor of SOCAN.

**CARAS:** Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (A music industry academy of peers, based on NARAS).

**CBC:** Canadian Broadcasting Corporation.

**CIRPA:** Canadian Independent Record Producers Association.

**CPI:** Concert Promotions International.

**CRTC:** Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

**Demo:** An unreleased recording made by a band demonstrating what they do.

**DoC:** (Federal) Department of Communications.

**Essentialism:** The idea that something has an essence which determines that it should be a particular way. (eg. That Canadian music has a unifying quality).

**FACTOR:** Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent On Record.

**Format:** A musical ghetto creating a particular sound identity, often around a particular genre of music. It is one way for broadcasters to target audience segments and appeal to particular advertisers.

**Francon:** A CRTC regulation in Quebec which specifies that francophonic radio stations must play a certain proportion of francophonic songs.

**GATT:** General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

**Gig:** A live rock show.

**Hegemony:** Leadership - the domination of one group over another which exists with consent from the dominated group.

**Indie:** An independent record label, run solely to release records, and organized on a smaller scale than a multi-national corporation (eg. *Nettwerk Records*).

**Major:** A large record company run as part of the operations of an even larger conglomerate. They are:

From Japan Sony - *Sony Music* (was *CBS*)

From England Thorne - *EMI*

From Holland Phillips - *Polygram*

From the USA Warners - *WEA: Reprise*

From Germany *BMG* (was *RCA/Ariola*)

Due to a tariff on imported tapes and CDs, the majors presently have Canadian branches, usually suffixed with "-Canada" (eg. *Sony Music-Canada*).

**MAPL:** The rating system, based on the writer of the music, the artist performing it, the place of production and writer of the lyrics, which determines whether a song qualifies as Canadian content.

**MCAG:** Music Copyright Action Group.

**MOR:** Middle Of the Road - a radio station format for older listeners playing music of a style which was popular before rock began to dominate the charts in the late 1950s.

**Much Music:** Canada's national rock video TV station.

**MUSICACTION:** Quebec's sister organization to FACTOR.

**Musique Plus:** Quebec's rock video TV channel.

**NARAS:** [American] National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.



*PROCAN*: [The] Performing Rights Organization of Canada - along with CAPAC, it was a recent predecessor of SOCAN.

*Promise of Performance*: The document each radio station uses as part of its license application to the CRTC specifying what it intends to broadcast.

*Psychographics*: A way to segment the market based upon the lifestyle and attitude of groups within it.

*SOCAN*: Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers of Canada.

*Structural imperialism*: The idea that one country's culture can penetrate another *solely* because a larger machinery of media and cultural production is controlled by the invading country. It specifies that culture is materially transmitted but ignores its contents.

*Vanity release*: A recording released by the band itself rather than an outside label.

*VideoFACT* : Foundation to Assist Canadian Talent on Video (started by Much Music).

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(i) Personal Communications came in by two means:

The following people were interviewed, *most specified they were giving their own opinions rather than those of their organizations:*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>
Susan Alexander	Regional Officer for Vancouver, CRTC
Jeff Bateman	Journalist for <i>The Record</i> , etc.
Dale Buote	Program Director, <i>KISS FM</i>
Lynn Burshtein	A&R/Publishing, <i>Nettwerk Records</i>
Bruce Fairbairn	Producer
Warren Gill	Executive Director, Harbour Centre SFU
Jim Johnston	Program Director, <i>CFMI</i>
Sharon Kelly	Production Assistant, MuchWest
Martin Laba	Professor, Dept. of Communications, SFU
Ben Mink	Songwriter + Musician with <u><i>kd lang</i></u>
Terry D Mulligan	Presenter, MuchWest
Ian Nobel	Talent Buyer, Perryscope Productions
Ellie O'Day	Exec. Dir., Pacific Music Ind. Assoc.
Don Osborn	Member Relations Representative, SOCAN
Brad Phillips	Program Director, <i>Z95.3 FM</i>
Julie Thorburn	Program Director, VideoFACT
Jamie Ufton	Assistant Program/Music Dir., <i>COAST 1040</i>
Alfie Williams	Promotion, <i>A&amp;M Records</i>

The people below sent written information:

M. D'Attanasio	Communications coordinator, FACTOR
Daisy Falle	Executive Director, Juno Awards (CARAS)
Rhian Gittins	Little Mountain Sound Studios

Elliot Lefko	Alt.Talent Buyer, MCA-Concerts Canada
M. McClintock	Revenue Canada Excise Library, Ottawa
Nony Raskin	Dir. Marketing/Special Projects, CFNY

(ii) The following journals, newspapers and magazines have been referenced within the text.

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 The Globe and Mail  
 Halifax Chronicle Herald  
 Maclean's Magazine  
 Marketing  
 Montreal Gazette  
 Music Scene (Procan's discontinued publication)  
 Ottawa Citizen  
 Performing Arts and Entertainments in Canada  
 Playback Strategy  
 Probe (a supplement to Canadian Composer)  
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The Record  
Toronto Star  
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Winnipeg Free Press

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Creem  
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### Appendix 1 : QUEBEC As A Strong Region?

Many francophones from Quebec see their historical role and identity within Canada as more than that of just another province. As a strong region, it could be argued that Quebec can be seen as a microcosm of the problems faced at a larger scale by Canada. However, to see it *only* like this ignores the way in which the wider context of Canada *impinges* on to the Province and serves to depoliticize it as a separatist force in Canada.

Quebec is a tiny market for music, with a total population of 6.5 million people in 1992 (Canada Travel Guide, Tourism Canada, 1992, p.10). Yet this market is also loyal due to its relative homogeneity in language and culture. Sales figures in the province for francophonic hits can be comparable to those for hits in all of English Canada. For example in one year alone 7 francophonic records sold over 100,000 each in the province (Maclean's v.82/6, 1969, p.46).

One Maclean's article by Wayne Grigsby described what was called the "Americanization" of Quebec's artists and suggested that essentially the province was losing its distinct content.<sup>1</sup> Crucially, his claims were addressed to an English speaking audience: it could be argued this was a way to represent music in Quebec and slot it in to a model of Canada, as a distinct element and something to be *preserved*. Being unified by a particular language and less known outside the province, Quebec culture provided an important chance for nationalist writers to portray a cultural microcosm in a particular way as an example to the rest of the nation, and also to play down the possibility that it could be a threat to national unity.

Grigsby argued that reductions in lyrical themes paved the way for anglophone music and finally English lyrics. This process was seen as perpetually on-going. In the 1970s the creative and industrial precedents were pointed out: the collapse of the *chansonniers*; Robert Charlebois shifting of attention from rural themes to urban street talk; the borrowed music of pomp-rock. The change accelerated between 1979 and 1982, when soulful pop singer Dianne Tell and folk-rocker Daniel Lavoie became popular. Finally by the 1980s singers were beginning to turn away from their own styles and language. All of the presented evidence may have been true but it could also be argued that the picture was a *selective* portrayal interpreting history in a certain way.

In the early 1960s trends, such as the *vedettes* (imitative francophonic teen idols like Michel Louvaine) and *le ye-ye*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Hewers of Funk, Drawers of Glamor' by Wayne Grigsby (Maclean's v.95/16, 19/4/82, p.63-64).

sound show that in Quebec music was not a diminishing resource outside the wider social fabric and separate from anglophone influences. At the same time American folk not only stimulated a Toronto scene, but paved the way for a strong articulation of Quebec separatism by the *chansonniers*. The *chansonniers* began as a group of young singer-songwriters who found a forum in the first *Boite à Chansons* (coffee house) which opened near Montreal in 1964. The next year *Le Patriote* in Montreal became a key centre of activity. The idea was to end the trend of copying music, lyrics and themes from foreign sources. For Grisby this influence had already been erased.

Folk provided a vehicle to express the concerns of *Le Québécois* with stars such as Gilles Vigneault, Monique Leyrac and on the *Select* label Raymond Levesque (*Horizon Canada* v.10/111, p. 2656). They drew on the legacy of historic *chansonniers* and poets to form the first modern stand for autonomy in song in Canada, even before anglophone artists with centennial fever began exploring patriotic themes. In Quebec the *chansonnier* movement died out into the 1970s due to a lack of key figures and the political mainstreaming of separatist politics. Many Quebec artists followed Dylan in going electric in a trend which became known as the *Mountain Street* sound. Robert Charlebois emerged as a hero.

What Grigsby's article did was *reposition* the artist. Charlebois had actually made subjects more relevant and less romantic to urbanites, while (despite attempts at airplay outside Quebec) retaining a strong belief in separatism.<sup>2</sup> When there were attempts to export his music, such as the nonsensical francophonic single *Lindberg*, they failed. By 1975 he had developed a regular sales pattern of 50,000 records in Quebec, the same number in France and none outside. So it is hard to describe him as abandoning the culture of Quebec. Also it must be noted that there were comparisons made between Charlebois and Dylan, but these were made by the *English speaking press* to situate an unknown artist for its readers.<sup>3</sup>

In the early 1970s British bands such as Genesis put on theatrical sets in large arenas and outdoor festivals to showcase their complex and indulgent albums in a style that became known as *Pomp rock*. Fans in Quebec began to support a handful of pomp rock outfits including Offenbach, Harmonium

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<sup>2</sup> In one interview at an ale house he even turned over coins he had left on the table to make sure the Queen's head was not showing (*Maclean's* v.87/9, 9/74, p.82).

<sup>3</sup> See *Talent* by Jon Ruddy (in *Maclean's* v.82/6, 6/69, p.48).

and Beau Dommage who rejected the soft music, strong themes and rural orientation of the chansonniers.

Like Charlebois, Offenbach was a very popular act which was repositioned by Grigsby's anglophone version of Quebec's rock history. They began in 1971 and disbanded in 1985 after twelve albums and a career which was a clear cut example of a band taking up the power of rock and making it their own. Like other acts in Canada they began by doing covers of American hits, but then moved into singing in French and, like Charlebois, explored Quebec themes in *joual* (french street slang). They showed that rock could be sung well in French and thus became a real cause for Quebec fans.<sup>4</sup> Offenbach, then, had actually been part of an unusual two decades in which Quebec pulled itself away from anglophone influences. Rather than *selling out* to anglophone influences they actually put them to use in co-opting Quebec fans. Moreover, the 1970s had been marked by a reactivation and exposure of outposts of francophonic culture in other areas of Canada such as *Acadie*, the French name for Cape Breton.

In the 1980s the trend Offenbach had sparked off continued; bands took the type of music originally played by anglophones and sung in French over it. Some stayed in rock, such as Nuance and Les BB, while others took on dance styles. These acts included Top Sonart and more recently Mitsou. Also there have been up-coming acts in the same vein including Bogart, Madame and Manu Manu.

It is important to realize the industrial context within which these bands operate. Quebec has had a strong history of it's own labels, such as *Select* which released material from the *chansonniers* and more recently *Isba* and *Traffic*. In recession a number of low budget operations have been able to sign more acts in the province than the majors. While the industry may have declined into the 1980s, it grew again after receiving DoC funds after 1985. Also the arrival of the provincial rock video station *Musique Plus* in 1986 helped generate exposure for artists on local labels.

While Quebec has a low number of young people playing or watching music the artists there appeal to all ages and form part of an interlocking *monde du spectacle*: the same stars appear in advertising, television dramas and other entertainments, as well as on video and record (*Maclean's* v.82/6, 1969, p.45). Also it has the highest weekly hours of radio per listener of any province in Canada. As a means of exposure, radio in Quebec is a site of struggle. There are

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<sup>4</sup> So much so that in the year the band split up lead singer Gerry Boulet could argue that the Quebec music industry was now dead since youth were abandoning their culture in favor of that from the USA (*Globe and Mail*, 25/7/90, p.C1).

many anglophonic radio stations in the province and the majors blanket distribute their anglophone products there as elsewhere. The most successful acts in Quebec are English speaking visitors and Quebec city at least had no local club circuit or press interest.<sup>5</sup>

Yet stations which are francophonic on their *promise of performance* are regulated by the CRTC's francophonic content regulations (known from now on as *Francon*). The effect of *Francon* on francophonic music is difficult to separate from sponsorship, separate charts, a radio promotion week and federal funding. Certainly while the net result is positive, it is also limited. Francophonic records only form 6% of all releases in the province, yet the *Francon* quota is now set at 55% of the songs played. Even when the quota was higher, in 1982, francophonic material formed 20% of requests and around 11% of final sales (*Maclean's* v.95/16, 19/4/82, p.64). What this shows is that while the tastes of a province cannot be legislated, francophonic music is disproportionately successful, especially since francophone labels often have low promotional budgets. Thus francophonic music continues to form a vigorous minority in Quebec.

Furthermore, francophonic music in Quebec had been traditionally kept alive by finding a larger audience for it in France. For example Grigsby noted that Daniel Lavoie, influenced by Joni Mitchell and The Beatles, had recorded one of his albums (and sang some live songs) in English to a positive response from francophonic fans, implying a snowballing loss of culture. Yet Lavoie actually went on to do very well in France, but not in the anglophonic world.<sup>6</sup> French audiences in the 1960s and 1970s loved the exotic accents and songs of Quebec singers. However while Wallace and Malm (1984) argue that France has proved resistant to foreign music due to its size, the country has transformed from being a cultural exporter (especially of films) in the 1960s to a major importer of music from the Anglophonic world in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Francophonic Quebec artists are now

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<sup>5</sup> Francophonic audiences are so used to anglophonic rock, that as with Canada, having a hit abroad usually made the possibility of a hit at home more likely.

<sup>6</sup> For many artists like Lavoie the Quebec scene has proven too limiting since the area's press and audiences tire of any local star popular in the province for too long a period, yet welcome local acts coming back from foreign successes.

<sup>7</sup> This was so much so in fact that in 1990 an undersecretary for rock music was appointed to both capture the youth vote and decry the influence of Anglo-American rock (*Calgary Herald*, 11/1/90, p.C2).

beginning to *remix* their material to fall within the conventions of Anglophonic rock ready for export to France. This certainly shows that the cultural force of a country is not solely related to its size.

The structure of the music industry and the appeal of the particular acts means that Quebec faces a problem: it is easier to import anglophonic music than it is to send francophonic music out of the province. Moreover, as the copy trends showed, Quebec is frequently welcoming of significant Anglophonic trends and groups, to the extent that sometimes it has celebrated anglophonic groups before the rest of Canada. These are as diverse as *Skinny Puppy*, *Supertramp* and *The Gypsy Kings* (Lynn Burshtein, *pers. comm.*; *Can. Musician* v.13/4, 1991, p.36). Also efforts by English Canadians to enter with messages of conciliation have been common and accepted. These included short tours by *Bruce Cockburn*, the Canadian centennial song, 'Ca-na-da' by *Bobby Gimby* and proposed duet for unity single by *Bryan Adams* and *Celine Dion* (*Toronto Star* 2/7/92, p.C4).

Nearly all attempts in the opposite direction have failed: *Charlebois's* single was played only in the small hours by anglophone radio programmers; the tours of *CANO* (a francophonic group from Sudbury Ontario) and *Michel Rivard* (ex-*Beau Dommage*) were unpopular and even Francophonic superstar *Roch Voisine's* album sung in English failed (*The Province* 26/6/92, p.C5). Only Frenchman *Plastique Bertrand's* New Wave single *San Plain Pour Moi* was a francophonic hit on both sides of the provincial border (*Maclean's* v.94/6, 9/2/81, p.32). The song's rhythmic urgency complemented its nonsense lyrics to shift attention away from its language.

Certainly for francophonic groups to sing in English was one major trend of the last decade. The imperatives to sing in English became so strong in the late 1980s that bands such as *Madame* which sung in French were perpetually questioned by the press as to why they did (*Can. Composer*, no.232, 1988, p.28). The primary reason to sing in English was economic: anglophonic songs could potentially access a larger market and thus one with enough support for rare genres. The problem with this was that the efforts of such groups rarely sold well in anglophonic territories. Further, the most commercially successful groups from the province (*Corey Hart*, *Men Without Hats*, and *The Box* in the late 1980s) had all sung in English.

Some bands would bolster their arguments for singing in English with artistic reasons: French had been associated with traditional and *middle of the road* (mor) songs of their parent's generation; English was apparently an easier language in which to write and sing rock. However, *Offenbach* had sung in *joual* and made it work, so it could be that these bands, including *Time Capsule*, were looking for

creative reasons to justify those of economics (*Can. Composer*, no. 220, 1987, p.26). Despite this, they all faced common problems due to their choice of language.

Michel Rivard bought up the dilemma that Acts from quebec singing English lyrics are giving up an element of their culture; Rivard justifies his songs as sung in French due to their feel and that French is a less cliché laden language (*Calgary Herald* 8/12/88, p.C4). This argument is disputable: it essentializes aspects of art and "giving up" one difference may allow others to be communicated. These groups are learning to communicate their concerns to a wider audience. In fact the majors in Toronto considered these bands' accents too strong and their themes too regional, although the majors usually find excuses to turn away anglophonic acts too. Moreover, they do distribute francophonic acts, such as Mitsou on *Isba-Sony*.

It is likely the reason for so few significant signings from Quebec is partly a matter of low sales: Anglophonic Canadians have traditionally ignored Quebec records, and not only due to their poor promotional budgets. Radio was reluctant to play francophonic music, since they did not hear it as hits and assumed anglophonic audiences would be both confused and driven away by it. This ignored the power of the beat in foreign records which had influenced the preferences of francophonic fans. The anglophonic press tended to ignore Quebec's artists until those acts did well in their own province. The two videos shown per hour on *Much Music* may show the rest of the country what francophonic acts are doing, but the exposure has not significantly increased their sales. Anglophonic Quebec bands rarely get played; Celine Dion was a lucky exception in this respect since she signed direct to a US major (*Financial Times of Can.* 18/2/91, p.10).

In effect, there are various mechanisms in Canada operating to keep Quebec culture *in its place* and therefore keep Quebec bands francophonic. Francon itself is more essentialist than Gramscian since unlike Cancon the CRTC do specify an element of the content of culture. Francon is particularly important because, unlike Cancon, it really does relate to the content of an album rather than who is making it. While it may benefit those artists wishing to sing in French, it could be argued that Francon is a constraint on Quebec artists wishing to take their music outside the province and into the anglophonic world. A lack of funding from both *Musique Action* and *FACTOR* are less obvious constraints, as are various contests and award ceremonies. In the mid eighties these only affected a spate

of relatively unsuccessful bands, but now they are causing dilemmas for some relatively major artists.<sup>8</sup>

It seems unfair to say that artists have brought their predicament upon themselves when really they are both working with a set of economic opportunities and should be free to choose whatever cultural identity they want. The interesting thing is that some mechanisms from the *national* level are in effect. The CRTC is the arms length agency of the federal government which oversees the airwaves in Canada form a unified system of public property. It interprets the public as the local rather than national community; yet it answers the question of who francophone culture is for and who decides over it in a national way. That does not mean that the CRTC regulates airwaves in the province without encouragement (or at least consent) from members of the Quebec government, or other provincial inhabitants. What it means is a that Francon may be against the wishes of some of the people it directly effects: local musicians, broadcasters and their listeners. Unfortunately the rhetoric of *distinct society* tends to assume away both the way the provincial social formation is integrated in a wider fabric and the opportunity for personal choice in this case.

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<sup>8</sup> At the 1992 Juno awards Mitsou failed to even get nominated for the francophonic album category since her album just missed the 80% Francon required. Celine Dion's bid for fame in the USA with her anglophonic album Unison meant she fell foul of not only Cancon and Francon, but received the L'ADISQ award for best anglophonic album of the year; which she refused on stage (*Montreal Gazette* 2/7/92, p.A3).



## Appendix 2 : Changes In CRTC Radio Regulations

The first column shows the month and year each regulation changed. The second records the percentage of *selections* required to meet the Cancon quota on AM and FM. The third column shows the number of MAPL points a song needed to be counted as Cancon. The fourth column contains the period over which Cancon could be averaged for station logs. The fifth column records the percentage of hits programmers are allowed play over all and the sixth column shows how many times per week they can play each hit song. Finally the seventh column contains the number of formats on AM and FM; a larger number means more, therefore more narrow and highly specified, formats. It is important to realize that wide formats give broadcasters the opportunity to play a wider variety of music. AM formats are specified on each station's promise of performance but, unlike FM, they are not policed in the station's daily activities.

Date M/Y	% Canc. AM FM	MAPL pts.	average period	% Hits on FM	Rpt.s /week	Formats AM FM
1/1971	30 00	1	4hr	50%	18	10 10
1/1972	↓	2	↓	↓	↓	↓ ↓
1/1975	20	↓	↓	↓	↓	4 4
4/1986	↓	↓	↓	↓	Gone for Can. Music on FM	↓ ↓
11/1986	↓	↓	↓	Remove after 2y?	↓	↓ ↓
1990	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓ ↓
1991	30	↓	Per week	Exemptions on request (eg. for charity weeks)	↓	3 ↓
1/1992	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓ ↓
12/1992	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓ ↓
2/1993	↓	co-writes given 1 pt. extra	↓	↓	Eliminated	↓ ↓

(Main Sources: Radio Regulations 1986, Amendments to... 1991  
CRTC; *Can. Composer* v.57, 1971, p.30; Susan Alexander, Radio  
staff of Coast 1040, CFMI, KISS FM and Z95.3 AM, pers.  
comm.)

Appendix 3 : CPI, Molsons and Labatts in the 1980s

<u>Year</u>	<u>CPI</u>	<u>Molsons</u>	<u>Labatts</u>
81		Begins Awear and buys out Brockhum Merchandise firms.	
82			Labatts sponsor Perryscope.
83	Pushed out of the Kingswood theatre near Toronto by US firm Nederlander.	Sign four year sponsorship deal with CPI for "7 figures" with film + radio broadcast rights	
84	Buys out Krimson (merchandising) corp. and partners US promoter Chuck Sullivan to finish <u>The Jacksons</u> tour. CPI attempts but fails to go public and is taken on by a smaller promoter, the Garys, over its hold on Toronto's Maple Leaf Garden.	Adopt a youthful advertising strategy for Mol. Canadian beer. Molson also join with Rogers in bidding to the CRTC for a music video TV network.	Approach CPI but their deal fails, so they promise to begin concert promotion using independent promoters.
85	Courts rule that other promoters can use the Maple Leaf Gardens but they must pay CPI.		Uses Jim Skarratt Promotions for a <u>Platinum Blonde</u> Canadian tour in which <i>Labatts is the promoter.</i>
86	Steps in to help CARAS, begins venue sponsorship and is rumoured to be partly buying out CPI.	Sets up Labbatts Blue Live Entert. Promo. Corp. with Skarratt, but cannot get big venues, or hence, acts.	

<u>Year</u>	<u>CPI</u>	<u>Molsons</u>	<u>Labatts</u>
87		Underwrites the Mariposa Folk festival for 5y, hires Toronto's + National PR to publicize concert series, and sets up another 5y CPI sponsorship deal.	(Late in 1987) Labbatts pay \$25m to partner Cohl in CPI = Brockhum (BCL). Yet CPI has just over 4y left with Molsons as a customer.
89	<u>Rolling Stones</u> Tour arranged by going to see their manager; talks them into making IMAX film.	Start the <i>Take Care</i> campaign + merges with O'Keefe, which begins Molsons v.s Labbatts advertising struggle over who's for the nation.	Stay as partners in and sponsors of CPI.
90	BCL regain full use of Maple Leaf Gardens, sell Davis ticket printing.	Wins court support and partners MCA as Molson-MCA concerts Canada. promo. firm; by September they begin with Robert Plant's tour.	Attempt Supreme Court injunction against Molsons, to stop them from starting separate concert promotion firm while still a BCL customer.
91		Enlist <u>Colin James</u> + Quebec's <u>Evil Penguin</u> for <i>Take Care</i> message and build Molson Place in Toronto. Late in the year Molson Canadian beer sells more than Labatts Blue in Ontario.	Step in to join BC government in funding <i>Music '91</i> in Vancouver area (in the middle of which is Molson's Juno awards!)
92		CPI sponsorship contract comes to an end and Molsons promote + sponsor The Great Canadian Party + <u>Bryan Adams</u> .	

(Main Sources: *Toronto Star* 3/8/85, p.A3; 29/11/86, p.F1; *Can. Business* v.58/2, 1985, p.64; *Can. Musician* v.6/5, 1985, p.14)

Appendix 4 : The History Of Awards In Canada

<u>Year</u>	<u>Junos</u>	<u>CASBYs</u>	<u>Other Awards</u>
1964	RPM magazine readers poll.		
1970	Gold Leaf Awards presented at a ceremony.		
1971	Renamed Junos following a contest.		
1975	CARAS set up, and awards on CBC telecast.		
1978	CARAS take over.		
1979			L'ADISQ Felix awards gala night begins.
1980	BC-CARAS begin West Coast Music awards.		
1981		CASBYs begin as CFNY's "U Knows" = Spoof Junos in a Toronto disco.	
1982		CASBYs go formal in Royal hotel.	
1983		No radio support for U Knows.	
1984			Felix awards throw 3 main categories open to public vote.
1985	Molson is approached by CARAS and agrees to sponsor Junos.	Renamed CASBYs + get national ballots in <i>Graffiti Magazine</i> ; radio network makes national.	
1987	Molson sponsor Can. entertainer of the year award chosen by public.	Late 1980s: CBC televise CASBYs.	
1989			SOCAN awards begin.
1991	Junos held in Vancouver during Music '91.	CASBYs return to radio network only.	
1992	First all-Canadian Juno awards ever.	Labatts drops but Asuna+Sam's adopt.	

(Sources: Juno Fact Sheet; CASBY Press Kit; *Can. Composer* no.201, 1985, p.12; v.1/3, 1990, p.10)