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Musical Culture and Urban Change in Contemporary Marseille

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Thesis submitted for examination towards the qualification of PhD in Music

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Images on pages 17, 20, 44, 78, 91, 104, 130, 137, 140

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Introduction

This thesis considers how musical culture shapes, and is shaped by, the contested redevelopment of contemporary Marseille. Drawing on ethnographic research and documentary analysis, it investigates debates about cultural representation, struggles over the regulation of nightlife, the production of grassroots scenes, and other practices in and through which music is made meaningful. The thesis focuses primarily on the period from 2013 to 2016, when the research was carried out. A secondary frame, extending back to the early 1990s, provides the immediate historical background, and where relevant I also discuss processes and events from earlier periods. Unlike some ethnomusicological studies, the focus is not on a single genre, idiom, form or other normative category of music. Nor does the study aspire to reflect the totality of musical culture in Marseille. Instead, the prism of urban change serves to centre the thesis on moments and processes through which music informs and performs the changing city. In addition to this interest in urban change, my decisions about which aspects and locations of musical culture to focus on were, of course, linked partly to my own subject position, and I address the implications of this in the methodology section.

The thesis addresses three overarching research questions. To what extent has musical culture been restricted or marginalised in the context of urban redevelopment? How have musicians and audiences used music to narrate and negotiate the city in new ways? And finally, how are technological changes inflecting the ways in which musical culture inhabits the city? To address these questions I present four case studies. Chapter One investigates two controversies surrounding the musical programming of a major arts festival; Chapter Two examines a new initiative focused on the local circulation of post-war North African musical media; Chapter Three addresses Occitan-language music and its interface with the cosmopolitan city; and Chapter Four analyses the position of a neighbourhood's DIY music scenes in relation to the advance of gentrification. Through these case studies, the thesis seeks to contribute to broader discussions about the relationship between music and the right to the city in late modernity.

1. Background: Imagining Marseille

Why is Marseille a particularly significant place in which to examine the interrelationships between music and urban change, and why now? The second part of this question can be addressed first: following decades of industrial job losses, disinvestment and population shrinkage, the city has witnessed a dramatic wave of regeneration initiatives, underpinned most recently by its designation as a European Capital of Culture (ECOC) in 2013. Presented as a year-long programme of cultural events, the award was also linked, as in many previously designated cities, to new strategies for urban development and place branding. In Marseille, the image was advanced of a dynamic city steeped in centuries of diversity and exchange. But if Marseille is a testament to migratory flux, it has been a site of xenophobia and postcolonial tension as well as of tolerance and conviviality: in elections, an exceptionally high count is often recorded for the far-right Front National (FN) party.¹ Meanwhile, investment in award-winning architecture and redevelopment accompanies the persistent deprivation of the city centre, where 42% of households are classified as being below the poverty line (INSEE 2017a). Contradictions such as these were highlighted and accentuated in discussions during and after the Capital of Culture year, in this way helping to define a period marked by important struggles surrounding the past, present and future of the city.

To apprehend the significance of these contradictions, it is first important to introduce Marseille in more detail. It is worth emphasising at the outset that no single prism is adequate here: Marseille could be introduced as France's "second city", with a population of around 850,000. But this would say nothing of the many thousands more who journey from Algiers and Oran every week, to visit relatives or do business (Manry and Peraldi 2004). And it would be to obscure the question of spatial sprawl: Marseille's central area is larger even than that of Paris,² unfolding for two hundred square kilometres up the sides of a natural inlet in the Mediterranean coastline, and beyond as far as a ring of enclosing hills.

In other words, and like any place, Marseille can and deserves to be approached in multiple ways. Doing so offers one means of avoiding an essentialised reading of the city,

¹ Of the ten most populous cities in France, only Nice recorded a proportionally higher FN vote (25.3%) in the first round of the 2017 presidential elections than Marseille (23.6%) (Frémont 2017). The same pattern had materialised in the previous presidential elections in 2012.

² The central area of Paris (the administrative space of the 'commune', governed by one municipal council) extends for 105km² (INSEE 2017b)

its history reduced to a single, teleological narrative. At the same time, it helps us to conceptualise the city as something imagined as well as lived. In the period following the Capital of Culture, the sociologist Michel Peraldi (2015, 6) argued that the disembedded, imagined city was increasingly significant to Marseille's future:

“In this way, imaginary and symbolic issues or themes are at the heart of the urban economy, culture is now a productive force and the imagined city, that of myths and legends, becomes a centrepiece of this resurgence, when relations of power also become relations of meaning.”³

Marseille occupies a rich and complex space in the French imaginary, and during the period of my research the themes and narratives sustaining this space were staged and interrogated in particular ways. In this sense, a second reason to present not one but several intersecting windows onto the city is to register the contemporary play of its meanings. In the following section I trace a series of these windows before turning to survey Marseille's musical life in more detail.

Renewal and fracture

In 2013, Friche La Belle de Mai, a complex that originally served as a vast cigarette factory, marked the latest phase of its transformation into Marseille's major contemporary arts hub. “At the start of the 1960s”, the venue's official website states, “[the factory] was producing around one fifth of all the Gauloises then consumed in France” (La Friche 2017). In 1990 the factory closed, and soon afterwards it was occupied by a group of artists with support from the city council (Andres 2011b, 801). Over the following twenty years, through a complex series of partnerships, a derelict site was transformed into what is now described as a “place of creativity and innovation”. Among other features, La Friche hosts seventy on-site organisations including visual art studios, radio stations, communications agencies and cultural producers; an open-access media lab; and spaces for exhibitions and performances presenting around six hundred events per year (Friche La Belle de Mai 2017).

The story of La Friche, told even in the simplest of forms as above, captures something of the transition towards a post-industrial society that has marked many parts of the world in

³ Throughout the thesis, quotations from sources originally in French are presented in my own translations, except where English translations were already available. In the case of song lyrics, I have usually provided original versions in footnotes.

recent decades. In declaring that “culture is now a productive force”, Peraldi’s statement locates Marseille firmly in this reconfiguration of the urban economy, where physical manufacturing and shipping are replaced by the production of information, knowledge and cultural goods (Bell 1976). In the official literature surrounding the Capital of Culture programme, known as Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013), this transition was celebrated as the basis for an urban renaissance. In one publication the city’s longstanding mayor, Jean-Claude Gaudin, proclaimed that

Beyond [MP2013], the metropole is rediscovering its momentum and its significance, positioning itself as a Euromediterranean capital that millions of visitors will be able to (re)discover (‘La Parole aux Partenaires’ 2012, 23).

In the same document, the mayor of Arles, a nearby town partnering in the festival, linked the potential of the event to “the knowledge industry’s role as an economic force, the impact of cultural enterprise and cultural tourism in terms of job creation” (ibid, 28). To make sense of these narratives of transformation and renewal that very often inflected discussions during the period of my research, it is useful to outline the industrial past that substantially shaped Marseille’s history, and from which the post-industrial city emerges. The “système marseillais”, as it was known, had involved ship-building and tile manufacturing, the production of soaps and fats and the refining of sugar and grains (Dell’Umbria 2006, 259-291). Some industrial activities dated back as far as the sixteenth century but a peak was reached in the early decades of the twentieth century, when Marseille served as a crucial node for French colonial enterprise (Temime and Attard-Maraninchi 1990).

To a great extent, the local concentration of these industries derived from Marseille’s role as a port: it was economically preferable to locate the processing of raw materials close to their points of arrival by sea and, in this sense, the industrial city and the port city are inextricably entwined. Ancient Phocaeans founded Marseille as a port, and its topography forms a natural harbour (Hermay et al 1999). The same natural inlet remains the symbolic centre of the city today: the Vieux Port, now semi-pedestrianised and adorned with a steel canopy structure designed by the architects Foster & Partners. As a port, Marseille offers additional resonances: a site of passage not just for goods but for people; a space of creative informality (Bianchini and Bloomfield 2012) and of reckless opportunism. As a senior official at the regional Chamber of Commerce suggested in an interview with geographer Boris Grésillon:

I think we suffer, unlike towns such as Lyon, Bordeaux, Lille, from the fact that our middle classes have been merchants and traders rather than industrial middle classes. This is the original weakness which means that in terms of architecture and urban design, the region has absolutely not been shaped by the middle classes. In Lyon, Lille, Bordeaux, even Toulouse, it is clearly the local wealth, the sense of local responsibility on the part of the elites at a given moment, its local focus, which shapes the region (Grésillon 2011, 74).

This prioritising of economic expedience over civic investment is typified in the Rue de la République, a major avenue in the city centre. Conceived during a period of industrial expansion in the 1850s as a means of directly linking the original port to the new one further north, its construction involved the razing of dozens of streets and nearly a thousand homes (Borja et al 2010).

After 1945, the industrial sector declined rapidly. In the 1960s, dozens of factories and processing plants closed, and between 1975 and 1990 the city lost 20% of its population (Dell'Umbria 2012, 81). Between 1990 and 2006 "low-skilled" labour continued to shrink as a proportion of the workforce, from 25.7% to 15.2% (Lorcerie and Geisser 2011, 42). A growing hydrocarbon sector has compensated for some of these losses, and port-related industries still represent an estimated 41,500 jobs (Dégez 2017). Yet while passenger traffic and cruise liners continue to be received at the northern port, most activities are now concentrated in purpose-built facilities at Fos-sur-Mer, around thirty kilometres away. In broad terms, these shifts belonged to a well-known trajectory whose causes, while subject to much debate, can be summarised in terms of the end of European empire and the reconfiguration of the global economy after World War Two (Hardt and Negri 2001; Harvey 1991). As a result of these transformations, many cities previously reliant on heavy industry and shipping suffered long-term unemployment, population decline and the abandonment of swathes of the built environment.

This trajectory already links Marseille with numerous urban centres across Western Europe and North America, from Bilbao to Baltimore. From the 1970s, cities such as these became testing grounds for various strategies of regeneration. In Marseille, the Euroméditerranée initiative, launched in 1995 and still ongoing, occupies an area of 480 hectares bordering some of the most deprived districts of the city. To the north it stretches into the waterfront neighbourhood of Arenc; to the south it runs down the Rue de la République; and to the east it incorporates the area around the central train station, St Charles, which was substantially renovated in 2007. In total, it is said to have involved

the construction of 18,000 residences, 1000km² of office space, 200km² of retail space, and numerous other development projects (Euroméditerranée 2017). Most recently, an entirely new district known as “Smartseille” has been constructed on the basis of clean energy and high-tech amenities (Smartseille 2017).

Funded through a combination of public and private investment, Euroméditerranée has also entailed major architectural interventions in the city centre. A 147-metre tower - the city’s tallest - designed by Zaha Hadid was opened in 2012; a regional centre for contemporary art designed by Kengo Kuma was opened in 2013; and the flagship architectural project of the Capital of Culture, the Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée (MuCEM), also opened in 2013. As the Euroméditerranée website implied prior to the completion of these structures, these additions draw on the logic of “starchitecture” (Knox 2012), in which prominent architects and bold designs are engaged to help boost the media profile of the city:

Between now and 2013, these achievements will send out a strong signal and may become new symbols for the city, like Manhattan in New York, the CN Tower in Toronto or the Sydney Opera House (Euroméditerranée 2008).

Euroméditerranée is both widely known and somewhat divisive among local residents (Andres 2011b). Supporters point to its record on job creation and its commitment to social housing and green public spaces; critics argue it has meant the displacement of communities, the sterilisation of public space and “a vast exercise in property speculation” (Dell’Umbria 2012, 83). Meanwhile, the scale of the programme has made it emblematic of certain tensions around Marseille’s future, amplifying ambitions and anxieties regarding smaller-scale development projects that feature in the case studies of this thesis. These include the planned renovation of the Marché de la Plaine on the Place Jean Jaurès and the ongoing renovation of apartment buildings in Noailles.

These flashpoints are often focused on the built environment, but they also link closely to social dimensions of post-industrial change: debates about gentrification in central neighbourhoods such as le Panier, Cours Julien and Longchamp have gained increasing prominence in academic research and the public domain (Grésillon 2011; Peraldi et al. 2015, 91). In this sense, if the post-industrial city can be a space of material and economic renewal, it may nevertheless remain a divided city. Interviewed by local newspaper *La Marseillaise* in 2013, the sociologist Andre Donzel described Marseille as not so much the poorest city in France, as the most unequal: a place where gated

communities proliferate while poverty remains well above the national average (La Marseillaise 2013). In the 3rd arrondissement, where La Friche is located, unemployment is recorded at 31%, significantly higher than the city average of 18.6% (INSEE 2017a).

Most often, divisions were evoked in the severe binary of a “ville coupée en deux”, an image iterated to me countless times during my research and featuring prominently in media representations.⁴ In this version of the city, the south is the space of white, affluent suburbia, while the north is marked by intense deprivation and criminality. A particularly important factor in this sense of contrast is the city’s ongoing struggle with drug-related violence, an issue closely linked to the northern fringe - the *quartiers nord*s. Since the 1990s, the gradual decline of older, mafia-linked organised crime has been replaced by a more fragmented struggle for control over lucrative drug trafficking networks (Pujol 2017). In 2016, 34 murders in Marseille were declared to be linked to organised crime, amounting to 40% of the national total (Leroux 2017).

Intense national media coverage of these events has exacerbated the stigmatisation of the *quartiers nord*s, obscuring the important role of local community centres and support networks in mitigating the impact of gang violence (e.g. Duport 2007). Indeed, research has suggested that local residents often identify as *marseillais*, implying a more integrated form of belonging than in most of France’s marginalised peripheries where inhabitants often identify as *banlieusards* (Cesari 2001). When riots erupted in the *banlieues* of Paris and Lyon in 2005, Marseille was reported to be largely immune, a phenomenon often linked to this greater sense of cohesion (e.g. Le Monde 2005). Significantly, whereas most major French cities have cultivated affluent central districts, Marseille’s remains largely “populaire”, a “banlieue dans la ville” (Rescan 2015, Grésillon 2011). In this sense, the socio-spatial contrast with the deprived peripheries is commonly considered less extreme.⁵

Yet the image of the divided city also responds to important truths. In the 7th arrondissement, grouping together southern neighbourhoods such as Endoume, Roucas Blanc and Saint-Victor, the proportion of those living below the poverty line is 12.8% and median disposable income is around €23,000. In the 15th arrondissement, grouping together northern neighbourhoods such as Les Crottes and Les Aygalades, the proportion of those living below the poverty line is 43% and median disposable income is around €13,000 (INSEE 2017a).

⁴ e.g. Pignol and Manelli 2017; Bacconier-Martin 2013

⁵ For an analysis of social issues relating to the French *banlieues* see Fourcaut et al 2007.

Each of these mutually constitutive images of the city – post-industrial, divided, inverted - is itself shaped by the legacies and ongoing dynamics of diverse migratory flows. Notwithstanding periods of French protectionism and religious intolerance, Marseille's topography and its role as a port have entailed the passage and settlement of a range of populations throughout its history. By 1793, the date of some of the earliest reliable records, the city hosted significant numbers of Genoese fishermen, Swiss and German merchants and German Jewish shopkeepers (Temime and Echinard 1989, 62-84).⁶ In the late nineteenth century the promise, however ephemeral, of industrial employment, fuelled great waves of migration from Naples, Piedmont and other parts of Italy (Dell'Umbria 2006, 401). By 1914 Italians represented around 20% of the local population, and in the mid-1920s they were joined by many of those fleeing – in some cases exiled from – the fascist government of Benito Mussolini (Temime 1985, 46). The image of Marseille as an “Italian city” endured for much of the first half of the century, but this period also witnessed the arrival of tens of thousands of refugees from Armenia, Greece and, later, Spain: for the historian Emile Temime, “there were few events in the political or economic spheres that would not significantly reverberate on Marseille's demographics” at this time (1985, 46).

Some of these events were linked to the power struggles of other nations, but more decisive on local demographics since 1945 has been the impact of France's own colonial project. Workers from the Algerian region of Kabylie were recruited in earnest for Marseille's sugar refineries from the 1920s, and in the period after 1945, each of the major waves of immigration into the city has been bound up with French colonialism and its complex legacies: Algerian *harkis* who had fought for the French army; *pieds noirs* fleeing recrimination from independence movements; and more recent incomers from the Comoros and other Indian Ocean territories.⁷ In the contemporary city, the spatial distribution of these populations is largely polarised in line with the “divided city” described above: residents of Comorian, West and North African origin tend to live in the *quartiers nord*s or in relatively deprived districts of the city centre.

The cosmopolitan city, then, is also an emphatically post-colonial city: one whose growth was long spurred by exploitation, where colonial exhibitions were held in 1906 and 1922,

⁶ The presence or absence of families alongside this professional migration is not discussed in detail in the sources I consulted.

⁷ In the 1970s, census data suggested that 60% of foreign-born residents were from former North African colonies, while today's Comorian population is thought to number around 50,000 (Lorcerie and Geisser 2011, 49).

and where imbalances of power continue to resonate. More generally, attitudes towards cultural difference have long been considered the “dorsal fin” of the Marseille identity (e.g. Gastaut 2005): alternately a source of pride and inspiration, anxiety and shame. In 1987 the Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen characterised Marseille as “disfigured, ruined, occupied” (Temime et. al 1991, 176), and in 2016 the party still controlled a large sector of the city while exerting considerable influence on the local council.

In this context, a particularly rich, if contested, window on to the city is provided by the theme of Mediterranean. In the discourse of the Capital of Culture it was central, helping to frame notions of exchange and openness as deep-rooted local characteristics: “the position of [Marseille-Provence], between Europe and the Mediterranean, has made it a territory of mixture, diversity and tolerance”, declared the programme’s introductory text (‘Programme Officiel’ 2012, 10). Certainly, there is a rich history to Mediterranean Marseille, from its founding by Phocaeen sailors to the flourishing of its links with Algiers, Genoa and numerous other cities and territories throughout the region. Even in the twentieth century, when sources of trade began to extend throughout the world, the new populations and cultural forms absorbed in Marseille continued to emanate mostly from political upheavals in the Mediterranean region. Among many of those I spoke to, the Mediterranean city remained a significant reference point for understandings of local identity.

Yet for some, the thematic treatment of the Mediterranean in the Capital of Culture represented a convenient erasure of local and regional complexities: in a December 2013 article for the website Médiapart, journalist Joseph Confavreux wondered whether “the recourse to this vocabulary and this image of the Mediterranean might also be a means for Marseille’s public officials to avoid having to pronounce the word “Arab”” (Confavreux 2013). Interviewed for the same article, geographer Boris Grésillon suggested that “when you understand the reality of Marseille, which is a split and fragmented city, it becomes irritating to hear all these pretty speeches on the cosmopolitan Mediterranean” (ibid). If the Mediterranean city was to be a useful prism, then, it needed to be decoupled from any false sense of unity and apprehended as a space of differences and contradictions. These post-industrial, divided, cosmopolitan, post-colonial and Mediterranean images of the city all afford useful perspectives on contemporary Marseille. At the same time, navigating these city-types also reveals some of the ways in which Marseille has been rendered as exceptional in the French imaginary: the city that escaped the riots; that has its *banlieue* in the centre; that is strangled by corruption; that treats chaos as a way of life; that remains a bastion of working-class sociability. The *exception marseillaise*, a familiar

term in the journalistic domain, specifically denotes this sense of local difference. For the sociologist Jean-Pierre Garnier, it was precisely the end of the *exception marseillaise* that constituted the biggest threat of the Capital of Culture: the idea that regeneration and tourism would erase the particularities of place that were so inimitably *marseillais* (Garnier 2015). The journalist Philippe Pujol, by contrast, has sought to escape this particularism through his work on criminality and governance, declaring instead that “Marseille perfectly represents France” (Creze 2014).

Music in Marseille

Musical culture, the thesis argues, constituted a significant domain in which the themes discussed above were staged, revealed or contested. Despite dozens of busy performance venues, hundreds of active musicians, several international festivals and a strong culture of public music-making, those I spoke to did not tend to think of Marseille as a ‘musical city’. Indeed, many remarked that the idea of studying Marseille’s musical life was perplexing, even comical. There was often a sense that given its size and its exceptional diversity, the city should be nourishing a more dynamic scene. Certainly, few Marseille-based musicians have achieved widespread commercial or critical recognition in recent years.⁸ A lack of prominent media coverage was sometimes emphasised, the suggestion being that this would boost the confidence of artists and promoters. This diagnosis has been mirrored in broader journalistic and academic writing on Marseille’s cultural life (e.g Girel 2013, Grésillon 2011). By contrast, others were disappointed with the quality of local music itself, suggesting that the circulation of musical ideas within given scenes had become predictable.

Not everyone was frustrated, however. Some felt that the scene was dynamic, but that it simply wasn’t distinctive enough to form part of the city’s identity. Others went further, contending that Marseille did have a musical identity: very often this was felt to be based on themes of cultural interaction and plurality, sometimes with the Mediterranean as an explanatory device. One record shop owner suggested to me that if Marseille had a musical identity it was surely as a “world music city”, a place where people like to dance and where genres such as flamenco, cumbia and raï achieve notable popularity.⁹

⁸ Important exceptions include the rapper Jul and indie musician Oh! Tiger Mountain.

⁹ Conversation with Teddy, Galette Records, 15/5/2015

The association of Marseille with musical cosmopolitanism dates back at least as far as the 1920s, when the Jamaican writer Claude McKay devised his novel *Banjo* (1929) following a period spent living among the dockworkers of the Vieux Port. In McKay's Marseille, jazz is the binding tissue of a new and effusive pan-Africanism unfolding in the theatre of colonial port life:

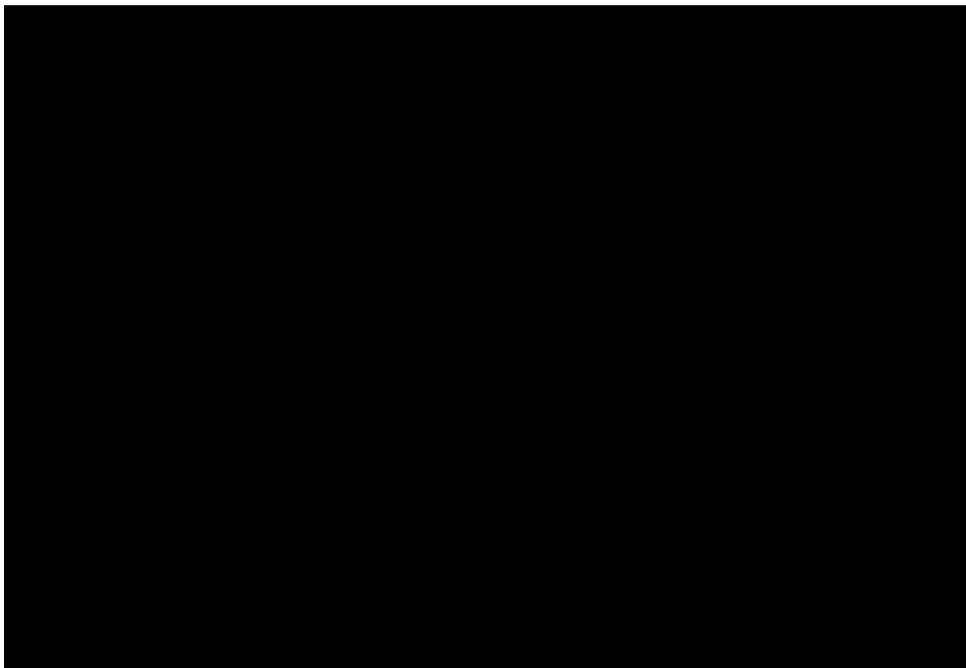
And one afternoon he walked straight into a dream – a cargo boat with a crew of four music-making colored boys, with banjo, ukulele, guitar, mandolin and horn. That evening Banjo and Malty, mad with enthusiasm, literally carried the band to the Vieux Port. It was the biggest evening ever at the Senegalese bar. They played several lively popular tunes, but the Senegalese boys yelled for “Shake That Thing”. Banjo picked it off and the boys from the boat quickly got it. Then Banjo keyed himself up and began playing in his own wonderful wild way. It roused an Arab-Black girl from Algeria into a shaking-mad mood. And she jazzed right out into the center and shook herself out into a low-down African shimmying way (McKay 1929, 47).

McKay's vivid prose registered a city at the raw edge of global modernity, though a shortage of wider documentation limits the historical reliability of his evocations of musical life (Samson and Suzanne 2012). It was in the 1990s that Marseille's reputation as a node for music's global circulation was established. Most famously, groups such as IAM and Massilia Sound System both came to prominence with music that sought on the one hand to valorise a multicultural, tolerant image of the city, and on the other to rail against corruption, inequality and racism. This emblematic period is discussed in more detail in Chapter One, but a brief outline is useful here. In the mid 1980s, a local radio show devoted to US hip-hop gained traction in Marseille and a group known as Lively Crew was formed, later transforming into the group IAM (Valnet 2013). Through albums such as *Ombre est lumière* (1995) and, most famously, *L'École du Micro d'Argent* (1997), IAM became the focus of a distinctive and hugely successful rap scene in Marseille, whose reach extended nationally and indeed across the Francophone world.

IAM and related groups such as Fonky Family and Psy 4 de la Rime championed what they described as Marseille's unique diversity, an idea embodied in turn through the multi-ethnic composition of the groups themselves. At the same time, lyrics and outspoken interviews on urban deprivation, gang crime and police violence defined this socially conscious rap as critical, not just celebratory. IAM at this time were a particularly complex group, whose relationship to Marseille was filtered through an array of Pharaonic

and afro-futurist motifs (Jacono 2002; Gasquet-Cyrus et al. 1999). Massilia Sound System, meanwhile, drew on styles such as dancehall and ragga while switching between French and the regional language of Occitan. Concurrent to the rise of these groups, Marseille also emerged briefly as a centre of pop-rai, with venues and record shops proliferating to cater for young North African audiences (Suzanne 2007).

A range of institutions have also been significant in cementing the notion of a globally conscious local scene. Marseille hosts three prominent annual festivals focusing on traditional musics and hybrid genres from across the world: Babel Med¹⁰ takes place over three days at the Dock Des Suds, and in 2016 claimed to have attracted 15,000 attendees; the Fiesta des Suds was established during the same period as the rise of IAM and Massilia Sound System, and claims to have attracted close to one million spectators since its inception (La Provence 2016); and the Festival de Jazz des 5 Continents has taken place annually since 2000. Smaller festivals held locally include Africa Fête, Global Local and Extramural. Meanwhile a number of small venues sustain culturally diverse music programmes throughout the year.



Fiesta des Suds, Marseille

Numerous other musical worlds exist and overlap locally. The hip-hop scene remains active and local artists continue to gain prominence, though there are regular calls for

¹⁰ Babel Med 2017

greater public funding to support studios and workshops.¹¹ Punk, metal, noise and related genres are well-represented, and venues such as GRIM, Asile 404, L'Embobineuse and Data foster a significant culture of experimental and improvised musics. Club music was often described as a growing scene, with an increasingly international programme at Cabaret Aléatoire and new venues such as Baby and La Dame Noire (e.g. Juglard 2016).

Perspectives on local musical life, then, depended to some extent on which genres or traditions people were involved with or enthusiastic about. In contrast, one theme that linked many music-related discussions was a widespread concern about the impact of recent and possible government cuts to artistic subsidies. As in many countries impacted by the global recession of 2008, the French government was pursuing a policy of significant reductions to public spending. While campaigning for election to the presidency in early 2012, François Hollande of the Parti Socialiste (PS) had delivered a major speech promising to protect the state culture budget, in contrast to recent cuts under President Nicolas Sarkozy:

“I reaffirm that culture must be a major priority, a common ambition. I affirm that the budget for culture will be fully protected during the next presidential term”
(Hollande cited in Roussel 2017).

Yet only months after Hollande's victory, culture minister Aurélie Fillipetti announced a 3.3% reduction for the 2013 budget, extending to 6% over two years (Roussel 2017). The sense of broken promises was widespread, even though many claimed to have had little faith to begin with. It was exacerbated in 2014 when the government passed legislation restricting the rights of those employed as “intermittents de spectacle”, a system designed to subsidise artists and other cultural workers between periods of employment. Major demonstrations were held in response, and dozens of strikes and occupations were staged by groups of workers at major venues and festivals across the country (Le Figaro 2014). For many in Marseille, the sense of betrayal was compounded when, following the relatively lavish investments of the Capital of Culture year, local organisations continued to face the same uncertainties and precarious conditions they had endured previously (Freschel 2014a).

¹¹ Some notable artists to have emerged recently from the local scene include Jul, MOH, Sch, and Lacrim.

Meanwhile, the election of the Front National's Stéphane Ravier as mayor of the city's 7th sector¹² in April 2014 emboldened local campaigns threatening artistic freedom of expression. In August 2015, Ravier railed against a small-scale exhibition hosted at La Friche on grounds of indecency (Harounyan 2015). Bringing together a pair of German visual artists, Reinhard Scheibner and Stu Mead, the exhibition had been intended to address a range of taboo themes. Ravier, however, declared it consisted of "paedophile art with taxpayers' money", and called for all funding for the institution to be provisionally halted (ibid). Days later, the FN's Marion-Maréchal le Pen gave a speech in Marseille. If elected in an upcoming regional contest, she announced, she would impose strict new funding criteria designed to exclude much contemporary art (Moulène 2015):

"Ten bobos¹³ pretending to be amazed at the sight of two red dots on a canvas, because speculators have decreed that this artist had value, is frankly not my idea of a cultural policy worth the name" (Le Pen quoted in Moulène 2015).

In response, a manifesto entitled "De la nécessité des points rouges" was signed by hundreds of senior figures from cultural institutions across the country. And in November, local artists and musicians staged a festival at La Friche in protest, assembling under the banner of a "collectif du point rouge".

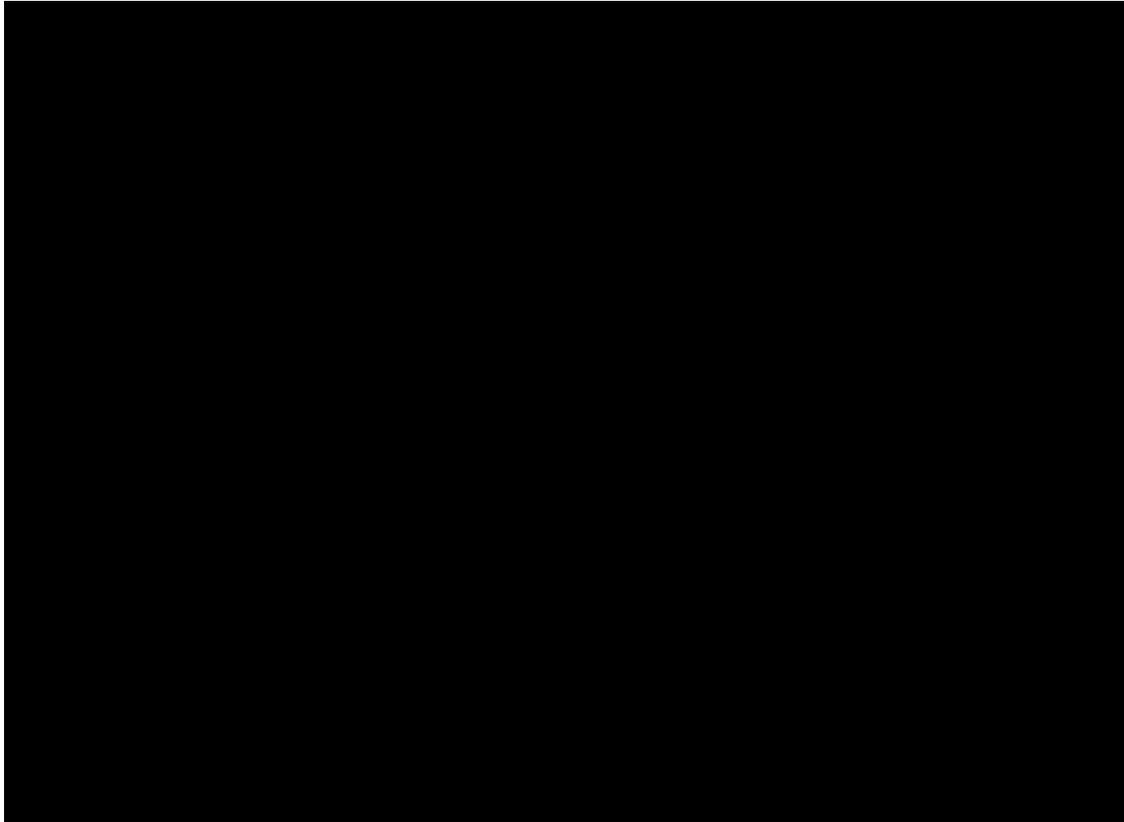
This is not to suggest that local perspectives were defined by pessimism or frustration, but simply that music and cultural life more generally were very often framed as something to be defended, whether from newly emboldened social conservatism or from the politics of austerity.

Geographically, many of Marseille's small venues, record shops and cultural centres are concentrated in the immediate zone surrounding the Cours Julien, a pedestrianised former marketplace at the south-eastern edge of the 1st arrondissement. These sites register a broad range of musical styles and subcultures, from punk and metal to Cuban and regional French music. Another hub of musical activity is the area surrounding the Rue Consolat, slightly further to the northeast. Meanwhile, several newer or recently upgraded venues are located further north: in 2013, two major new performance spaces were opened at La Friche, and its existing music venue, the Cabaret Aléatoire, was significantly refurbished; in the same year a specially designed new venue for chamber

¹² In addition to a city mayor, Marseille has eight sectoral mayors, with each sector combining two of the city's sixteen arrondissements.

¹³ "Bobo" is a contraction of "bourgeois-bohème", which in everyday French refers to a sociological type characterised by an artistic lifestyle and middle class background.

music, the Pole Instrumental Contemporain (PIC), was opened in the northern suburb of l'Estaque; in 2011 le Silo was opened in the neighbourhood of Arenc, having been converted from an industrial building into a concert hall at a cost of €30 million; and in 2017 a new outdoor music venue, Le Chapiteau, was opened in La Belle de Mai.



Some key musical sites in central Marseille

Two major music schools are located in the centre of Marseille. The Conservatoire National de Rayonnement Regional (CNRR)¹⁴ is housed in a large nineteenth century building near the Cours Julien. It has around 1800 students and, like its equivalent institutions elsewhere in France, specialises in Western classical music training. The CNRR usually require auditions for entry but carry less prestige than the Conservatoires Nationales Superieures de Musique et de Danse (CNSMD) in Paris and Lyon. In addition to the CNRR, Marseille's multi-sited Cité de la Musique also offers classes in instrumental technique and composition. The Cité is geared towards amateurs of all ages, and has around 2000 students (Cité de la Musique 2016). It also partners with local schools to support youth orchestras. Beyond conventional music education, Aides aux Musiques Innovatrices (A.M.I) was another organisation focused on supporting local musicians. Founded in 1986 and based at La Friche, it offers residencies, rehearsal studios and

¹⁴ Ville de Marseille 2017

workshops, stages major festivals, and also supports small-scale music entrepreneurs (A.M.I 2014).

Local media platforms played a significant role in publicising the city's music, alongside social media and word of mouth. Prominent websites included La Nuit, which emphasises clubbing and nightlife; Ventilo, which also exists in a fortnightly free print edition and focuses on cultural news and features spanning music, theatre, visual arts, film and dance; and Zibéline, which likewise features a range of art forms but foregrounds classical and traditional musics rather than rock, electronic music or hip-hop. Local radio stations such as Radio Grenouille and Radio Galère also provided information on upcoming music-related events. Platforms such as these, and the social media accounts linked with them, were useful reference points for my own research as well as for those involved in local music. In general, social media was a significant platform for promoting music and disseminating news, whether through the pages mentioned above or those associated with promoters, venues, musicians and others involved in the scene.

In summary, among the key themes that characterise debates about contemporary Marseille are culture-led regeneration, socio-spatial fragmentation, perspectives on cultural diversity, and the legacy of colonialism. These themes animate each other in complex ways, traversed in turn by questions surrounding local specificity. The musical life of the city, while not widely renowned at a national or international level, is highly active and varied. Its grassroots dimension was particularly dynamic, though concerns about funding and socially conservative politicians were often acute. These are among the features of local life that most recurrently marked my fieldwork experiences, and they therefore serve as a useful introduction to the main case studies of the thesis.

2. Literature review

In this section I establish some key theoretical assumptions that underpin many of the arguments made in the thesis. I begin by briefly introducing the specialised literature on Marseille, including texts related to music as well as others with a sociological, historical or cultural policy focus. I then outline existing approaches to conceptualising music's interface with the changing city, using the important work of Sara Cohen as a recurrent reference point. In doing so, I also consider wider discussions in urban theory and around the relationship between musical practices and a changing social world. It has often been

argued that the complex contingencies of the urban remain somewhat under-explored in music studies (e.g. Holt and Wergin 2013, 2), and one aim of the thesis is to contribute to a greater integration of these bodies of work.

Of the small quantity of published research on music in Marseille, the majority has cohered around the topic of the city's rap scene in general, and around the group IAM and its 1990s work in particular. The explosion of that scene during the 1990s led to substantial coverage in the French media and, in turn, a number of publications aimed at both academic and general readerships (Valnet 2013; Jacono 2002; Gasquet-Cyrus 1999). At the heart of this research was an effort to understand what, within the wider emerging phenomenon of Francophone hip-hop culture, was distinctive about the scene in Marseille. IAM proved a particularly fertile source of discussion, partly because of the group's exceptional national popularity and partly also because of its multi-ethnic composition which, it was argued, served as the basis for a distinctively local, pluralist form of creativity. For Jacono, IAM's early work expresses a "Marseille identity", its diversity of sampling sources reflecting the city's cultural heterogeneity (2002, 22).

If discussion of the rap scene has tended to focus on high-profile texts and careers, other topics have been addressed less intensively but somewhat more broadly. Research on contemporary Occitan music in Marseille, for example, has focused on the career of Massilia Sound System (e.g. Martel 2014; Haines 2004a). Likewise research by Samson and Suzanne (2012) on the history of jazz in Marseille seeks to uncover everything from legendary performances to long-forgotten cellar venues. More wide-ranging work on Marseille's musical cultures includes a study of scenes and institutions during the 1980s and 1990s (Bordreuil et al 2003) and a special edition of *La Revue Marseille* that includes articles on Marseille *chanson*, Occitan music and IAM (Echinard et al. 2007).

Other useful sources on Marseille include the writings of Temime (e.g. 1990) and Dell'Umbria (2006) on local history, Gastaut (2005) and Suzanne (2007a) on the texture of local cosmopolitanism, and Andres (2011a; 2011b), Grésillon (2011), Girel (2013) and Peraldi et al. (2015) on various issues relating to culture-led regeneration. Grésillon draws on interviews with the organising committee of MP2013 to highlight the challenges and opportunities ECOC brought to the city. As well as addressing the questions of why Marseille-Provence won the candidature, Grésillon also interrogates the stated objectives of the programme and considers its relationship to gentrification and intra-urban polarisation. For Grésillon, Marseille's cultural landscape is fundamentally polycentric, meaning that maximising engagement from the local cultural sector would prove

exceptionally demanding. For Girel (2013, 6), MP2013 should be seen as an attempt not to create a new creative dynamic with international reach, but rather to increase recognition for what “already exists but is ignored by the media”.

Music and the changing city

Music and urban life are entwined in complex ways. Cities have long provided dynamic networks of audiences, musicians and institutions that sustain musical cultures (Connell and Gibson 2003, 92; Nettl 1978). Equally, urban life involves encounters and spatial mutations that give rise to new musical forms. Blues (Oakley 1997), flamenco (Machin-Autenrieth 2016, 22) and raï (Virolle 1995) are among the many musics considered to have been decisively shaped or transformed through the tensions of rural-urban migration. The emergence of hip-hop is often linked to the spatiality of housing projects in New York’s South Bronx (e.g. Forman 2002, 69). Mythologised as powerful origin stories and “sounds of the city”, such linkages may nourish a sense of belonging or historical logic. Equally, they may nourish marketing strategies or the development of tourism (Connell and Gibson 2003). Meanwhile, if cities are often held to be crucibles of musical creativity, urban development can also constrain or marginalise precarious scenes (Gibson and Homan 2004).

In an age marked by discussions of digital nomadism and the deterritorialisation of creative agency, the relevance of cities as frames for musical research merits examination. As an analytical category, “the city” has itself been subject to profound challenges in recent years (Rickards et al. 2016). The rapid extension of socio-territorial forms into agricultural or undeveloped zones across the world increasingly challenges distinctions between the urban and the rural (Amin and Thrift 2002). Moreover, digital technologies continue to collapse assumptions about proximity and distance, presence and absence (Berry 2014).

If these challenges to the analytical stability of the city concern material and technological transformations, a second important set of perspectives relates to issues of representation. From a postcolonial perspective, urban theory is interrogated for having overwhelmingly drawn on research from cities at the heart of global power networks, with the effect of seeking to universalise their conditions and features (Robinson 2013). In this way, generalisations about “the urban” have tended to exclude a proliferation of urban

forms across the Global South and in nation-states not historically aligned with global capitalism (Roy 2016).

Research on music and urban change, however, has proliferated in recent years, particularly in relation to current debates around tourism (Lashua et al 2014; Connell and Gibson 2003), culture-led regeneration (Cohen 2012; 2007) and gentrification (Homan 2014; Holt 2013). The work of Sara Cohen has been exemplary in this regard. Beginning in the 1980s, Cohen conducted extensive research into popular music scenes in a single city, Liverpool. Initially focusing on the careers of two local rock bands during the 1980s, her focus broadens in later work to address the inter-related production of musical culture, urban space and local policymaking. Specifically, Liverpool's contested regeneration provides the context for a wide-ranging examination of the ways in which music is used to shape and challenge ideas of who, and what, the city is for.

Like a number of other authors (e.g. Holt 2013; Krims 2007), Cohen is interested in the context of what she refers to loosely as "post-Fordism". The term itself has long been subject to debate (Amin 1994), but here refers to a broadly defined set of shifts affecting many urban economies since the 1970s, including a transition from production to consumption, from manufacturing to services, and towards increasingly unregulated markets (Cohen 2007, 3). These transformations have materialised in, and impacted on, cities in a range of important ways. Celebratory narratives, typified in the influential work of Richard Florida (e.g. 2002), have hailed the emergence of the "creative class" as a means of re-activating stagnant local economies and auguring a new era of social liberalism. Critics have condemned the displacement of communities through gentrification and the commodifying, atomising impact of neoliberalism (e.g. Peck 2005; Zukin 1995).¹⁵ Though Cohen has tended not to cleave to either position, her focus on the perspectives of local musicians often foregrounds a degree of cynicism with regards to regeneration practices (e.g. 2012, 153).

At the heart of Cohen's approach is a recognition that cities, far from being homogenous and stable, tend to be spaces in which social relations are tested, transformed and diversified. In the context of urban sociology this idea emerges through early scholars such as Georg Simmel (1972) and, later, those associated with the Chicago School of Urban Sociology in the 1920s (e.g. Park 1915). For these writers the city was a prime site

¹⁵ While the critical tide has appeared to turn against the "creative class" thesis in recent years, debates persist as to the role of the creative industries in urban economies (e.g. Pratt 2008).

of modernity itself, a space in which formal social bonds had been eroded and must somehow be replaced with new forms of solidarity (Savage et al 2003, 15).

These basic concerns continue to guide much research in urban studies and, more recently, in ethnomusicology. Having historically gravitated towards rural contexts, ethnomusicological research in cities began to gather pace in the 1970s (Nettl 1978). Writing in 1978 Nettl was able to observe the beginnings of a shift towards urban settings, noting important precedents such as Keil's (1968) study of blues musicians in urban settings. Nettl concedes, though, that "the thrust of these studies has been the retention of nonurban folk traditions...rather than the roles of these traditions and the changes they experienced in the urbanisation and modernisation of their peoples" (1978, 5). A series of publications by Reyes Schramm (1975; 1982) on musical cultures in New York broke new ethnomusicological ground by explicitly addressing certain epistemological challenges faced in the urban environment. Discussing the city's various programmes of free music events, she argues that the diversity of actors and participants they involve complicates the task of identifying cultural boundaries and thus delineating the object of study (1982, 11). To meet this challenge, Reyes powerfully argues for an ethnomusicology that is not merely "in the city", in which the city "is extrinsic to the study-object and hence to its explanation", but "of the city" (ibid, 12).

One task of urban ethnomusicology is therefore to investigate the ways in which music articulates to the forms of difference and transformation that mark urban environments. For Cohen, musical change does not merely reflect changes in the city and its social fabric, but both informs and is itself shaped by them. Commenting on her research on music and kinship, for instance, Cohen observes that music "[influences] the way that the city is lived, thought about and reflected upon", pointing to "a reciprocal relationship between music and city" (2007, 35).

Music, structure and agency

This recognition of music's active, rather than merely reflective, interface with the social world has been an important feature of much ethnomusicology since the 1990s, described as early as 2000 as "an ethnomusicological commonplace" (Solomon 2000, 257). Post-structuralist approaches commonly challenge both the Adornian orthodoxy that links popular culture closely to ideology (Adorno and Horkheimer 1997), and the 1970s cultural studies scholarship that linked it to somewhat rigidly class-based conceptions of domination and resistance (e.g. Hall and Jefferson 1976). Authors such as

Willis (1978) and Hebdige (1979) had argued powerfully that subcultural practices of bricolage, including musical appropriations, were a means of resisting class domination. Yet as Middleton (1990, 164) pointed out, “in the information-saturated world we inhabit, ‘semiotic guerrilla warfare’ is not the sole prerogative of young male subcultures” but “part of a generalised practice of symbol manipulation”. Arguments such as Middleton’s pointed to the need for new ways of understanding music and agency in an increasingly complex social world, one variously described in terms of “liquid” (Bauman 2000), “reflexive” (Beck et al 1994) or “post-“ (Lyotard 1984) modernity.

Though in some senses very different, each of these frameworks seeks to describe the ways in which linkages between people, identities and places are increasingly unsettled and reimagined. Where studies of subculture had tended to assume a relatively fixed relationship between social groups and musical taste, Bennett and Peterson (2003) emphasised the fluidity of popular music’s relationship to identity, invoking the idea of the musical ‘scene’ as a more flexible, porous alternative to the homological tendencies of the ‘subculture’ model. In contrast to that paradigm, Bennett thus stresses that “most participants regularly put on and take off the scene identity” (2003, 3). In this new framework, participation in musical cultures could be resituated within the fabric of what Giddens (1991) termed “the reflexive project of the self”, of identity not as fact but as narrative and process.

The unsettling of certain structural assumptions was accompanied by a more nuanced attention to music’s involvement in the exercise and contestation of power (Averill 1997, Stokes 1994). The work of Michel Foucault (e.g. 1969) has influenced this area in a number of important ways. Foucault’s emphasis on power as relational and pervasive encourages reflections on the ways in which musical practices may reinforce or challenge hierarchies of gender and forms of religious authority (Nooshin 2009, 7). Equally, music can be mobilised to shape or destabilise dominant discourses. For Said (1979), building on Foucault, discourse is understood in terms of a range of representational practices that delineate the boundaries of truth and thus exercise huge power. Discussing events held as part of Liverpool’s European Capital of Culture programme, Cohen (2013) demonstrates how a dominant narrative of the city’s musical past was reinforced, focusing on white, male rock bands.

Questions of structure and agency also mark changing considerations around cultural geography. Proliferations of diasporic and migratory movement constitute important features of global cultural flow, and much research has foregrounded the role of music in

the negotiation of diaspora identities (Toynbee and Dueck 2011; Ramnarine 2008; Lipsitz 1994). Addressing global cultural development more broadly, Appadurai (1990) departed from Marxist and other centre-periphery models that emphasised simplistic notions of homogenisation or “Americanisation”. Instead, his influential theory of “-scapes” - “ideoscapes”, “technoscapes”, “ethnoscapes”, “mediascapes” and “financescapes” - sought to better capture multiplicities of cultural transmission. Applying Appadurai’s principles to the study of music, Slobin (1993, 16) demonstrated how, for instance, the commercial explosion of the Bulgarian State Radio Women’s Chorus in the 1980s could be illuminated through the prism of Appadurai’s converging and diverging scapes.

Cities have often been seen as privileged sites of interaction for these multiple trajectories, in which the bifurcation of a corporate globalism and an authentic locality is insufficient for capturing the texture of urban struggle. Cohen (2007) argues that in Liverpool, mythologies of popular music – linked especially to the Beatles – are mobilised in various ways for the branding of the city: thus “the production of the local is tied to developments in global capitalism”, such that “efforts to turn popular music into local culture were fraught with tension and were also contested” (ibid, 215).

Cohen’s critique of the local as a romanticised site of authenticity draws explicitly on Appadurai’s (1996) notion of the “production of locality” while building on music-focused research by Connell and Gibson (2003). It can also be usefully compared to the perspective offered by Krims (2007, 39). Like Cohen, Krims’ attention is drawn to music in the post-Fordist city, though his approach makes use of case studies from a range of geographical contexts. Discussing *tumba*, a popular musical form from the Caribbean island of Curaçao, Krims argues that the music’s apparent incorporation into the island’s tourist industry exemplifies the fallacy of linking the local to notions of authenticity and resistance. This fallacy, he suggests, rests on an attachment to reductive notions of space and place, where place is imagined as “the human-scaled world of the concrete” (ibid, 34) and space “represents coercive forces of social constraint” (ibid, 32). Instead, he suggests simply, “space is place”.

While Krims’ challenge to narratives of place-based musical resistance is potentially generative, it is impeded in at least three ways. First, its characterisation of ethnomusicological approaches to place is based on only one close reading. Second, his suggestion that “space is place”, though provocative, relies on a totalising vision of global capitalism that denies meaningful agency. And third, as Cohen argues in a later (2012) article, this totalising vision is matched methodologically in that Krims “deliberately

ignores the practices and perspectives of music-makers and audiences, and questions of individual agency” (2012, 158). While Krims accepts that, for instance, the *tumba* song Otrabanda may be experienced as a meaningful expression of local pride or autonomy, he interprets this precisely as a function of false consciousness (Krims 2007, 59).

Music and the right to the city

In contrast to Krims’ somewhat pessimistic reading of music’s political affordances, Cohen emphasises the perspectives and practices of local musicians themselves, and retains the possibility of music as a tool in urban contestation. In doing so she foregrounds the more general notion of the city as an object of struggle, recalling an important lineage that crystallised in the “new urban sociology” of the 1970s as well as in the varied social movements that immediately preceded it (Castells 1977; Lefebvre 1974). Whereas sociologists of the Chicago School had presented cities as ecological models requiring modest reform, such frameworks were strongly criticised in the 1970s on the grounds that they sought to naturalise inequalities that were in fact systemic (e.g. Castells 1977). Two themes that emerge from this Marxian lineage are of particular relevance, both of them deriving initially from the work of Henri Lefebvre.

The first is Lefebvre’s (1974) theory of the production of space, which involves a three-way dialectic of “conceived”, “perceived” and “lived” space. Cities, in this analysis, are never simply settings in which human struggles unfold, but are themselves continually produced through these struggles. In a sense, Cohen’s focus on “the production of a city *through* popular music rather than just on popular music *in* a city” (2007, 215) builds on this framework as much as on Reyes Schramm’s (1982) call for an ethnomusicology “of the city”. Furthermore, in attending to the significance of “conceived” and “perceived” space, as well as to a wider scheme of representational practices, Lefebvre’s theory also offers a useful antecedent for treatments of discourse and representation in later urban studies (Savage et al. 2003, 32). In this way, Cohen’s (2013) foregrounding of contestations over the discursive construction of the city and its heritage can also be seen in terms of Lefebvre’s urban thought.

The second important theme that emerges from this period in urban studies is that of the “right to the city”, attributed to Lefebvre’s 1967 essay of the same name (see Lefebvre 1996). Responding to what he saw as the disintegration of a Paris defined by consumerism and alienation, the “right to the city” was, Lefebvre said, like “a cry and a demand” (1996, 158). In contrast to both agrarian and preservationist movements,

Lefebvre insists that the right to the city “can only be formulated as a transformed and renewed right to urban life” (ibid, 158).

Since the 1980s, the appeal of Marxian readings of urban change has oscillated significantly. The rise of the “network society” (Castells 1996) and a growing attention to racial and gender-based forms of inequality has entailed a more decentred understanding of power relations within urban environments (Savage et al 2003, 31). Nevertheless, the notion of the right to the city has enjoyed a significant revival of interest, in part because, as Harvey (2012) suggests, it is often used in connection with issues around which coalitional movements can form. Harvey points to the emergence of the Right to the City Alliance, an international network of grassroots campaigns focused on housing and urban justice. He observes, too, the recent proliferation of protest movements in which the right to occupy urban space has proved significant, from Occupy Wall Street to Tahrir Square.¹⁶

In a seminal (2008) article, Harvey articulates his understanding of the right to the city in terms of a Marxian theory of urban development. Urban form modulates not according to competition among social groups but in correspondence with the creation of surplus value. This is because such development represents a useful means through which surplus value can be absorbed, a key requirement for maintaining capitalism according to Marxian political economy. At the same time, in reconfiguring the urban environment, those with the power to invest are able to engineer new modes of discipline and pacification. Thus in 1850s Paris, Haussmann’s debt-financed programme of infrastructural development involved the removal of the poor from the city centre and the redesign of the urban layout to afford easier surveillance. For Harvey the Paris Commune, like the student movements of 1968, involved a direct struggle against this specifically urban manifestation of state power. One challenge for today’s movements is precisely to recapture this sense of a right to the city, in the face of increasingly translocal orientations on the one hand, and the hegemony of the “neoliberal ethic” on the other.

The right to the city arguably offers a useful lens through which to read a large number of ethnomusicological studies, particularly those concerned with questions of spatialized marginality. For Bennett (2000), club music in 1990s Newcastle was in one sense a means of claiming space in opposition to the dominance of an aggressively heteronormative disposition in the city’s nightlife. In Havana, Baker (2006) sees the

¹⁶ The 2013 protests in Istanbul’s Gezi Park, catalysed partly by opposition to plans for the park’s redevelopment, constitute a more recent example.

practices of local rap artists in terms of a challenge to the socio-spatial dominance of a tourist-focused economy from which some populations are excluded. For Sakakeeny (2010), certain musical parades in the New Orleans neighborhood of Tremé serve to reclaim public spaces lost to gentrification and motorway construction. More recently, Green (2016) evokes the right to the city explicitly in his discussion of activist musicianship in Mexico City, suggesting that the concept undergirds contestations around the musical and social use of public space by campaigners.

A number of key ideas emerge, then, through this literature review: that urban ethnomusicology must apprehend the fluid intersections of the local and the global as they inhere in contemporary cities; that music is used by marginalised groups to negotiate space and power; and that cities often accommodate and are shaped by these complex struggles. In order to address the breadth of ways in which music articulates to urban change in contemporary Marseille, I am drawn, like Cohen (2012), to Georgina Born's theory of mediation (Born 2010; 2005). For Born (2005), Deleuze's concept of "assemblage" provides a starting point for overcoming the persistence of a certain dualism of text and experience in musical ontology. In Born's (2010, 88) analysis, grasping musical meaning through assemblage means accounting for its multiple mediations: "a series or network of relations between musical sounds, human and other subjects, practices, performances, cosmologies, discourses and representations, technologies, spaces, and social relations".

By way of example Born refers to Feld's (1990) fine-grained conception of music's social function among the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea, in which music is seen as "constitutive" of "[Kaluli] cosmology, environmental ecology, social relations, rituals, and collective experience of emotion, space, time and labour" (ibid, 87). Crucially, a focus on mediation reveals not only a richer, broader and more complex musical ontology, but also new tensions and causalities linking music and, for example, the city. Thus for Cohen (2012), making sense of the relationship between music and the city demands an open and absorbent musical ontology, in which an attention to music's multiple mediations in turn reveals the multiple and dialogical tensions linking it to the spaces and conditions of the contemporary city.

3. Research Methodology

The data drawn on in the thesis was acquired through a combination of observational research (at a broad range of musical events, in public spaces and online), conversations, semi-structured interviews (face to face and over email), documentary analysis (websites, publicity materials, video footage) and the use of secondary texts (newspaper articles, blogs and scholarly research). The field research was conducted over a period of 36 months, including nine field trips of between one and five weeks each. While this approach arose in part through practical circumstances, it is rooted in (and guided by many of the assumptions of) what Barz & Cooley (2008) describe as “the new fieldwork” in ethnomusicology, itself an iteration of a broader shift in ethnographic methodology over the last twenty years (e.g. Campbell and Lassiter 2014). Below I outline some of the reasons for and features of this shift, in order to situate my own approach in relation to the concerns and challenges of contemporary ethnography.

The legitimacy of ethnography itself has been subject to numerous and sustained critiques since the 1970s, when a number of radical developments in critical theory began to question its epistemological assumptions and political implications. Poststructuralist theories of deconstruction and of the relationship between knowledge and power (e.g. Foucault 1969) helped destabilise the claims to objectivity and impartiality of classical ethnography (Gobo 2008, 60). In Gobo’s words, postmodern ethnography argues that such claims are “not features of the ethnographer’s interpretative work, but fictions promoted through rhetorical strategies”.

Postcolonial approaches (e.g. Clifford and Marcus 1986) have questioned the ethics of ‘Western’ representations of ‘non-western’ subjects, arguing that researchers participate – however unconsciously – in forms of cultural imperialism. This “crisis of representation” soon came to encompass other relationships too (alone or in combination), including male-authored representations of female experience and heteronormative representations of LGBTQ experience. At the same time, the process of fieldwork itself has been criticised as a repressive intrusion into private life in the manner of Foucault’s (1975) notion of the “panoptic gaze” (Gobo 2008).

My experience was often marked by anxieties over some of these issues. My decision to conduct research in Marseille was influenced partly by a desire to distance myself from the uncomfortable power imbalances associated with more traditional ethnographic

settings. In reality, these imbalances simply assumed new forms as I became aware of the different patterns of fragmentation among the city's population. I was keen to gain insights about the musical lives of relatively marginalised groups. But I rarely had the confidence to assume I could build meaningful connections, in part since my own life experience seemed to be so different.

Moreover, I was reluctant to enter into social worlds where I could only hope to be an observer, since such situations risked being transactional and one-sided. It was partly for this reason that I ultimately chose to focus on musical culture in the central neighbourhoods of the city, rather than in, for example, the *quartiers nord*s. As a result, the thesis inevitably reproduces some of the *de facto* segregation of the city, as well as the ignorance of some inhabitants regarding life in the periphery. However, the social and cultural heterogeneity of Marseille's central neighbourhoods, which is exceptional by French standards, at least offered opportunities to observe and engage with a significant variety of social worlds. Wariness of transgressing into private matters also limited my confidence as a researcher. I knew that my professional and social lives would be mutually enhancing if closely integrated, but I often feared the feeling of manipulating others by using social intercourse for professional ends. As a result, while I was always open about my research, I tended to keep these parts of my life somewhat separate.

One overarching set of responses to the multiple challenges to ethnographic methodology in recent decades has come in the form of reflexivity, through which ethnographers give greater consideration to how their own subject positions may shape their understandings and representations of the worlds they study (Barz and Cooley 2008). In my own case, I was deeply aware of the privileges I enjoyed as a fully-funded student, with the luxury of being able to work remotely and to my own schedule. By contrast, many of those I interviewed or became close with were amateur or semi-professional musicians working other jobs to get by. My freedom to circulate within the city contrasted with the relatively regulated spatial practices of those I socialised with, whose everyday lives tended to revolve around a fixed workplace and, in some cases, the rhythms of family life. Moreover, as a non-disabled man, I could be nocturnally mobile with relatively little fear of aggression. Street crime in Marseille is considered common, and conversations with female acquaintances tended to suggest that, as in many cities, they felt more at risk and were in this sense more constrained in their musical lives.

In certain other respects, my circumstances restricted my opportunities. Unlike many ethnomusicologists, I am not a practicing musician and therefore lack what is often

thought a valuable key to ethnographic insight. I was involved in producing occasional music events in London, but while this sometimes provided a useful topic of conversation, it was too conceptually distant from my research interests to be valuable in helping me pursue those interests. In addition, my French language skills, while strong, were often insufficient for me to make the kinds of contributions to social intercourse that I felt would bring me closer into the networks I was researching.

These barriers, however, were largely my own responsibility. Certainly they did not correspond to deep-rooted structural inequalities, in the same way as did the privileges from which I benefitted. There is limitless scope for analysing the relational play of these issues, particularly in the context of a heterogeneous urban setting. My purpose here is simply to argue that, in writing the thesis, I have sought to remain conscious that the opportunities I had were not uniformly shared by participants in the worlds I was seeking to represent.

A particularly useful means of acknowledging the partiality of data gathered through ethnography is to recount and foreground our own experiences. For Geertz (1973), this “thick description” seeks to “rescue the “said” of [social] discourse and fix it in perusable terms” (1973, 318). It is necessarily interpretative but insists that the object of interpretation - the complex, multi-layered reality in which social events take place – should be emphasised. To this end, it is also “microscopic”, deriving its analytical strength from a rich attention to detail. In my case, while significant experiences or events did not always unfold in ways that were amenable to this kind of representation, where possible I have sought to capture the fine grain of my experience of local musical life.

Defining the field

If the new fieldwork is characterised in part by responses to the crisis of representation, it also negotiates the dynamics of an interconnected world. Whereas ethnography had once tended to depend on the notion of a geographically bounded field, the global flow of ideas, images and people places this assumption under increasing stress. For Barz and Cooley (2008, 15), the new fieldwork recognises that “what is local is global”, and one task is therefore to accommodate the significance of multiple, decentred global trajectories while retaining the local as a meaningful setting of human experience.

My own model of a series of short field trips was made possible partly by selecting a proximate site for my research, but partly also by the opportunities of digital

communication in general and social media in particular. As for many currently active social researchers, incorporating social media into the methods and object of my research was both instinctive – in that, as a social actor, I “grew up with” the Internet – and essential – in that Internet use was increasingly woven into the social world my research was most concerned with. As in thousands of other cities throughout the world, many of the tiniest neighbourhood venues, obscurest events and most ephemeral bands in Marseille publicized themselves through social media – a practice that barely existed even ten years previously. Many local inhabitants with active musical lives were also regular users of social media, using Facebook to find out about upcoming performances and communicate efficiently within and between overlapping, nested and mutable social formations.

Precisely because it was so instinctive, this incorporation of social media required particular kinds of criticality and reflexivity on my part. My own long history of social media usage has left me with certain assumptions about how and why it is used. Social media involves the profusion of new codes and techniques for social performance, as well as helping to further unsettle the stability of bounded localities (Pink et al 2015). As Pink et al suggest, research must bear in mind “how localities spill over between the online/offline in ways that acknowledge their partial merging” (ibid, 124). In my case, while I used social media both to interact with those involved in musical cultures and to keep up with local debates and upcoming events, I did not generally see these platforms as part of the field itself.

Evaluating the model

The model I developed for my research was therefore shaped by a number of considerations common to the “new fieldwork”: the turn to settings that are urban and that may approximate those of the researcher’s own everyday life; a strengthened reflexivity taking into account layered forms of privilege and marginality; and an engagement with social media and digital technologies as a means of helping to understand the social worlds we study.

Barz and Cooley insist that ethnomusicological fieldwork remains fundamentally “the experience of people making music” (2008, 14). Yet the growing attention to audiences and to mediation encourages us to look beyond “making”, towards other ways in which music becomes meaningful (e.g. Born 2005). My research has sought to draw non-hierarchically on the experience of a whole range of music-related phenomena: music-

making, but also, for example, discussions and controversies related to music, the histories of musical neighbourhoods, and issues relating to urban change in which musical sites and programmes are intertwined.

In structuring the research period around a series of short field trips, certain opportunities were lost and others gained. In general terms, the approach presented me with challenges when attempting to consolidate friendships and other social ties, since these had to be - and sometimes could not be - sustained over email and social media each time I returned from the field. I had initially planned to secure work placements that might help me to access relevant social and professional networks, and the fact that I was rarely in Marseille for longer than one month was one reason that I was eventually unable to do this.

At the same time, I also gained a number of opportunities. In particular, by conducting research over a 36 month period I was able to witness both specific changes and greater longitudinal variation within the scenes and neighbourhoods I was researching. For example, over this period I was able to register the advancement of gentrification in the neighbourhood of la Plaine, both through my own observations of material and social change and through shifts of emphasis in the discourse of residents. Likewise I was able to chart the gradual unfolding of different strands of opinion regarding MP2013: one musician working in experimental performance was dismissive of the programme while it was taking place, seeing it as inseparable from the extension of corporate power. Gradually, however, he came to conclude the impact had been positive in that increasing numbers of innovative cultural producers seemed to be moving to the city. By contrast, another musician had been excited by the prospect of MP2013 and attended events uncritically, but changed her mind radically when certain cultural associations suffered financially after the Capital of Culture year.

Three aspects of my research deserve further discussion with regards to the challenges they posed, and the ways in which I sought to navigate these challenges. The first has to do with the urban setting. The lineage of urban ethnography extends at least as far back as the 1920s Chicago School studies, and the work of Hannerz (e.g. 1980) helped formalise urban anthropology as a distinct sub-field. For Nonini (2014, 1), urban anthropology is perhaps the best example of a field that requires ethnography to be “a critical tool and a set of methodologies which must be problematized and reformulated even as we put it to work.”

In my own case, carrying out research in Marseille presented obstructions to the binary conception of emic-etic that continues to guide much ethnographic thinking. My own perception of my status in the field was one that oscillated between 'insider' and 'outsider' without ever settling substantively on either. Rather, I experienced moments of belonging and isolation in the field, according to self- and socially constructed assumptions and narratives. Some examples are perhaps useful here. On one occasion, I arrived in Marseille after several months' absence and while most of my close contacts happened to be away. I had no obvious outlets for socialising, and went to several concerts where I struggled to make sustained connections with the musicians or with audience members.

Of course these experiences are not uncommon features of contemporary urban life, but in experiencing my life at home as distinctly sociable, I had come to understand myself through that lens and therefore to understand any dramatic variation as a deviation from normal life. A few days later, by contrast, I went to a party where I reconnected with acquaintances and made new contacts. Many at the party were students from other cities, and I found myself in the novel situation of explaining things about Marseille. I experienced this moment and its aftermath in terms of a very definite and unexpected sense of belonging, a sense that I knew the city and that it knew me. These ambivalent experiences of the emic-etic opposition resonate with a well-established tension in urban studies, between the city as site of community and of solitude (Tonkiss 2005, 8).

A second set of issues had to do with questions of language. The vast majority of the research I carried out was with French as the dominant language, a challenge that, as a non-native speaker, I both relished and was commonly frustrated by. On one hand, having studied French to A Level and spent a year of my undergraduate degree in France, I had the sense of a solid foundation or safety net that provided me with a degree of social confidence. At gigs I could usually strike up conversations about musical taste and life in Marseille, and like many researchers I occasionally even earned respect for challenging the stereotype - however exaggerated - of the monolingual Brit. I sometimes benefited from a sense of common ground when meeting other non-native speakers, while the act of asking questions about word definitions and grammatical rules sometimes helped balance the relationships I made while conducting research.

On the other hand, the limitations of my French had important consequences. I lacked the linguistic confidence to participate fully in group situations, except where I already knew the participants well. Additionally, a good deal of the observational research I carried out was in loud music venues, such that my aural comprehension skills were sometimes

doubly compromised. In one-to-one situations, I was far better able to regulate the pace of conversation and therefore communicate fluently. But I often remained unable to recognise slang or cultural reference points, and to detect nuances of diction. Taken together, these experiences meant firstly that my readings of the perspectives I encountered were not as subtle as they might have been; and secondly that forming social bonds often required considerable time.

In general, the experience of life in a foreign language became for me a fertile source of reflection on the project of selfhood: how is my subjectivity inflected by the ways in which I adopt, avoid and make sense of the new words and colloquialisms I constantly encounter? Am I a different person in a foreign language, and am I perhaps more mutable?

Issues relating to different forms of ethnographic research constituted a third set of challenges. It is useful at this stage to outline how I approached this part of the research. I attended approximately eighty musical events, held at thirty different sites. I conducted 18 semi-structured interviews and 7 casual interviews. My interviewees included professional musicians who had lived in the city for decades, international students on exchange programmes, musicians working in jazz, experimental, rock, traditional or classical genres, and cultural sector professionals. One priority was to interview a range of people spanning different musical practices, different cultural backgrounds, and different age groups. I also sought a balance between male and female interviewees, and between those who had lived locally for a long time and more recent incomers.

While I learned a great deal from the interviews I conducted, they provided me with fewer truly revealing moments than I had hoped. There are many possible reasons for this, notably my wariness of intruding on private life and my lack of linguistic confidence. Informing myself in advance about the work of interviewees sometimes helped collapse presumed barriers of understanding, but often I was unable to avoid the sense of the interview as a contrived situation. Following Campbell and Lassiter (2014, 87), my experiences sometimes led me to doubt “the idea that individuals become more fully present and authentic selves” in the interview context. The authors remind us that conducting interviews “in and of itself does not encapsulate the doing of ethnography in any way”, and in my case, other forms of interaction were often more fruitful. In particular, informal conversations and observations often accumulated as useful sources of knowledge. While I found it much harder than expected to form meaningful social ties,

over the course of my research I did develop some significant and lasting friendships, which in turn generated opportunities for ethnographic insight.

In addition to ethnography, the thesis also draws substantially on documentary analysis and secondary sources. Documentary analysis offered an important means of analysing how musical cultures and institutions had been represented, particularly in the context of the Capital of Culture. Secondary research served a number of useful purposes. First, drawing on existing interviews with musicians and others allowed me to complement my own discussions, especially where I had not been able to gain the access I was hoping for. Second, reports from well-respected media outlets helped enrich and contextualise my understanding of events that had been referred to in my own conversations. And third, consulting published historical research often greatly deepened my sense of the tensions at play in the contemporary city. I always approached secondary sources with a critical lens, seeking to consult at least two or three sources on each topic in order to determine possible misinformation. I also sought the maximum possible information about sources themselves, so as to be able to evaluate their reliability.

Ultimately, and like many research models, my approach emerged through an ongoing interplay of theoretical assumptions and pragmatic solutions. While there were numerous barriers, some of which I was never fully able to transcend, I nevertheless gained substantial insights in the field. Many of these did not, in the end, prove relevant to the topics that form the focus of the thesis. Others did, however, and it is hoped that the thesis illuminates a vivid sense of musical culture in contemporary Marseille.

Chapter One: Music, dissent and the capital of culture

On 28th February 2013 the national media gathered outside Marseille's city hall, as local DJ Lionel Corsini (aka DJ Oil) delivered a petition calling for the withdrawal of €400,000 in public subsidies given towards an upcoming concert by the superstar DJ David Guetta (France Info 2013). The petition, which by then had 60,000 signatories (including more than the minimum 10,000 local inhabitants), presented itself as a call to arms:

€400,000 of subsidies will be used to finance a for-profit/ticketed David Guetta concert in Marseille. In this period of crisis, let's mobilise to make sure public money isn't wasted like this!¹

Among the media outlets waiting eagerly for the verdict that day was Radio France, whose reporter noted "a large smile on [Corsini's] face" as he emerged from the building: the decision to grant the subsidy, he announced, was to be re-voted (France Info 2013). In the end, the "Commando anti-23 juin" group² - as the campaigners were known on Facebook - did not have to wait for the re-vote. Two weeks later Guetta announced that he was pulling out, declaring that he "refused to be drawn into a political debate", and above all that he was "worried that certain Marseillais felt hurt or offended by this subsidy that had nothing to do with them (i.e. didn't benefit them)" (Ipert 2013).

"Guettagate", as the controversy came to be known, represented an unusual kind of grassroots cause: a campaign by cultural actors determined to derail a huge, open-air cultural event; a local issue that within four days had become national news and attracted thousands of signatories to its petition. But it was not the only musical controversy surrounding Marseille-Provence 2013 (MP2013). Months earlier, local rap icons IAM had attacked what they saw as the festival's neglect of hip-hop in favour of "high" culture, sparking what the Capital of Culture's official report called "one of the most serious polemics of the capital year" (Euréval 2014, 23). At the same time, less widely mediated expressions of local exclusion took alternative forms: Phocéa Rocks, for example, was a festival celebrating local DIY rock and punk networks in response to what its organisers saw as the elitism of MP2013.

¹ Change.org 2013

² "Commando Anti-23 Juin." 2016. Accessed November 27. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/antisubvention23juin/>.

These developments exploded the myth of local consensus surrounding MP2013 and brought wider debates about the politics of culture-led regeneration into public discussion. Whose music belongs in the space and time of regeneration? How democratic can and should such festivals be? Did the apparent preference for prestige, spectacle and institutionalised cultural production reflect an excessive instrumentalism, a misguided belief in the arts as an “economic panacea” (Jones & Wilks-Heeg 2004) for the post-industrial city?

In this chapter I consider how and why music became a matter of such intense contestation in MP2013. I begin by situating MP2013 in relation to the history of - and debates surrounding - the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) scheme, before examining Marseille’s own ECOC project in detail. Having outlined the objectives and curatorial processes of the project, I turn to a detailed consideration of the two musical controversies. Specifically, I interpret both instances of dissent in terms of discussions around the contested status of the ‘local’ and the ‘popular’ within MP2013. Having comparatively analysed the two debates, I also discuss the DIY festival Phoecea Rocks as an alternative approach to musical dissent. Ultimately I see music as a key site in and through which competing notions of urban modernity were shaped and negotiated in Marseille’s Capital of Culture year.

European Capitals of Culture

By the time Marseille witnessed the opening ceremonies of its Capital of Culture programme on 8th January 2013, MP2013 had already acquired five years’ worth of tensions, expectations and minor scandals. In 2010 the festival lost both its talismanic artistic director, Bernard Latarjet, and the participation of a major partnering town.³ By the end of 2011, the *Le Ravi* newspaper claimed that “one sentiment is dominant a year before the opening of the capital year: disenchantment.” (Fessard and Sarpaux 2011). And yet the promise of an urban renaissance remained, driven both by the well-known ‘success stories’ of previous mega-events and the persistent policy paradigm of the “creative class” (Florida 2002). Indeed, the political terrain on which Marseille found itself had been nourished by many years of increasingly prominent international debate around culture-led regeneration in general and ECOC in particular. In order to make sense of the musical controversies at the heart of this chapter, it is useful first to outline how MP2013

³ The national newspaper *Libération* announced that Latarjet had unexpectedly quit the programme, before key festival staff had even been informed (Ecorys 2015, 83). The local council in Toulon withdrew its participation and financial support in May 2010.

came to acquire this set of tensions and expectations - to attract both the cynicism and optimism that characterised perceptions of it at the dawn of 2013.

It is helpful to conceptualise the historical development of ECOC in terms of its exemplary status in contentious practices of culture-led urban regeneration. The ECOC scheme is a multi-art form festival that launched in 1985, taking place in one, and from 2007, two cities per year.⁴ Since the early 1990s it has attracted increasing media coverage and inward investment for its host cities (Palmer/Rae 2004; Roche 2000). In 2009, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso proclaimed that “the European Capitals of Culture are a flagship cultural initiative of the European Union, possibly the best known and most appreciated by European citizens” (European Commission 2009).

In its initial form as established by the Greek culture minister Melina Mercouri, ECOC was framed as an antidote to major political disputes within the EU and the pessimism these were feared to be stoking with regards to the wider European project (Mittag 2013, 41). This pessimism, it was argued, could be offset by an annual arts festival that would move among European cities and celebrate the continent’s cultural ties and heritage. To this end, the initiative’s founding documents emphasised notions of European identity and shared citizenship. Its first editions were held in cities such as Athens, Paris and Florence, whose artistic, architectural and intellectual pedigree could be associated with the ideals of the European project. As Booth and Boyle (1993, 32) put it, the earliest awards were for culturally prestigious centres in which “the status brings the title”. By contrast, in 1990 Glasgow became the first in a continuing string of cities for whom “the title brings the status”. Having suffered from decades of industrial decline related to the growth in global economic competition, Glasgow witnessed a programme defined by sophisticated marketing strategies, an expanded scale of activity and a series of affiliations with prominent redevelopment schemes (Garcia and Cox 2013).

This transformation in focus within ECOC corresponded to wider shifts in urban policy across Europe, themselves articulating to related developments in US cities. In 1960, Rome’s Olympic Games were the first to use the event as a strategic opportunity to help develop the wider city (Smith 2012, 50). In the 1970s the so-called ‘Baltimore model’ of urban policy, derived from the transformation of Baltimore’s derelict waterfront space into a complex of hotels and tourist attractions, became a major topic of discussion among urban policymakers (O’Brien 2013, 92). Crucially, Glasgow was widely seen - by

⁴ Accounting for a special edition in 2000, ECOC has now taken place in 60 cities located in 30 countries.

policymakers and journalists - as a success story that could be repeated and developed elsewhere (O'Brien 2013, 93; Garcia and Cox 2013; Mooney 2004).⁵

The success of Glasgow's ECOC was by no means universally accepted. It was particularly questioned, in academic and journalistic contexts alike, in terms of the socio-spatial unevenness of its short and long term impacts (Garcia 2005, 846).⁶ Nevertheless, Glasgow and other "success stories" helped validate and energise an emergent strand of urban theory that, crystallised in and through Richard Florida's (2002) notion of the "creative class", has since come to dominate policymakers' understandings of regeneration. Florida rapidly acquired celebrity status in the field of urban policy with his thesis that regeneration is best achieved through investment strategies that cultivate local clusters of young technology workers and artists. These professional categories constitute the core of Florida's creative class, and they and the "bohemian" consumption spaces they purportedly generate will, Florida argued, in turn attract the large and profitable high-tech firms that can spur the economic regrowth of the city. Crucially, these clusters and spaces of bohemian activity could be quantified, measured and ultimately ranked so as to encourage competition between cities. As Pratt (2008, 109) explains, "the reasons for the popularity of Florida's methodology for ranking cities in terms of creativity are clear: who would not want their city to be scientifically ranked as the coolest on earth: the most creative city? It makes the residents feel good, politicians feel even better, and makes outsiders envious: so much so that they might even visit".

Already by the mid 1990s, voices such as Zukin's (1995, 2) were observing anxiously that "culture is more and more the business of cities", and that widely mediatised success stories of regeneration were often also tragedies of human displacement.⁷ Peck (2005) took aim at the "cosmopolitan elitism" of Florida's work, arguing its benefits could not be expected to extend beyond a privileged minority of expensively educated and globally mobile consumers. The culture of ranking and competition stimulated by Florida's approach, meanwhile, has been widely criticised both in methodological terms (Evans 2005) and in moral and political terms (Peck 2005). What Peck refers to as the "credo of creativity" that has proliferated around the work of Florida and others, is increasingly

⁵ Barcelona's use of the Olympic Games in 1992 and Bilbao's waterfront development – including the opening of the new Guggenheim museum in 1997 - were among the subsequent regeneration projects perceived as 'best practice' examples.

⁶ Boyle and Hughes (1991, 227) discuss the event in terms of "the exclusion and displacement of traditional representations of Glasgow in a new scenario fashioned by professional marketeers".

⁷ Zukin's arguments ultimately posited a direct link between culture-led regeneration and gentrification (discussed in more detail in Chapter Four).

criticised as a means of romanticising forms of labour that in fact are marked by precarity, atomisation and the entrenchment of privilege (O'Brien 2013).

Despite this criticism, support has continued to spread for the wider instrumentalist emphasis of Florida's approach. Measures were taken by the EU during the 1990s to strengthen the scheme's insistence on themes of European solidarity,⁸ but culture-led regeneration was eventually incorporated into official ECOC documentation: its official objectives now range from "celebrating the cultural features Europeans share" to "regenerating cities"; from "increasing European citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural area" to "raising [the city's] international profile, boosting tourism and enhancing their image in the eyes of their own inhabitants" (Garcia and Cox 2013, 38).

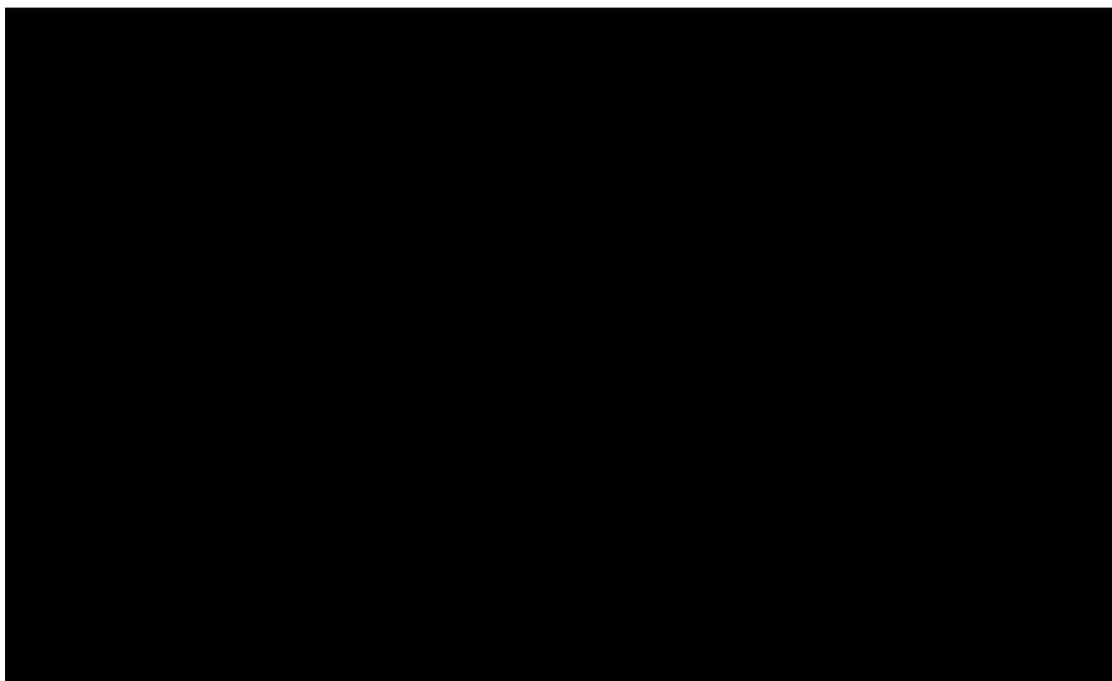
While tensions between Eurocentric and locally oriented objectives were to some extent reconciled in these adapted policy documents, ECOC has remained a key battleground for debates around the ethics, legitimacy and effectiveness of culture-led regeneration itself. With the emboldening of the creative city discourse in the early 2000s, researchers revisited the experience of Glasgow in 1990 - and its longer-term legacies - to warn against uncritical narratives.⁹ On one hand, broadly Marxist accounts (e.g. Mooney 2004) have argued that ECOC ushers in new market-driven logics of development that exacerbate inequalities by failing to address social needs. A variant of this orientation casts ECOC itself as a 'Trojan horse' that distracts from the imposition of these policies (Evans 2003. See also Sassatelli 2013, 64). One reference point has been the earlier writings of David Harvey (e.g. 1991) on post-industrial urban festivals, in which "every aesthetic power of illusion and image is mobilised to mask the intensifying class, racial and ethnic polarisations going on underneath" (ibid, 270).

On the other hand, less squarely confrontational voices insist on the need to evaluate cultural legacies alongside economic impacts (e.g. Garcia 2005) and to evaluate benefits across social divides (e.g. Miles & Paddison 2005). For Miles and Paddison (ibid. 837), "the key focus [should] not be on whether cultural investment works, but on the degree to which it works for diverse social groups". More recently, attention has turned to the shortcomings of ECOC evaluation, with O'Brien (2011) arguing for more detailed examination of governance and Garcia and Cox (2013) calling for more rigorous collection and use of evidence in efforts to measure impact.

⁸ See Mlttag 2013 for a detailed discussion of efforts to mitigate the use of ECOC in economic development strategies following the Maastricht Treaty.

⁹ Some ECOC editions, such as Cork 2005, have accumulated particularly unfavourable assessments (Garcia and Cox 2013, 155).

Outside the academic sphere, critical approaches to ECOC date back at least to 1990 when left-wing magazines in Glasgow published a range of (mostly unfavourable) responses to the project (Boyle & Hughes 1991, Garcia 2005). Since then, the serial reproduction of the controversial “Glasgow model” and the expanding budgets and mediatisation of ECOC have combined to ensure increasingly vocal cultures of dissent (Garcia and Cox 2013, 171). This long history of widely mediatised idealism and contestation formed an important component of the background to perceptions of MP2013. ECOC was framed as exemplary of culture-led regeneration, a practice that claims to improve cities but whose premises, methods and effectiveness are often challenged by academics and local actors. I now turn to consider the ways in which these challenges were materialised in Marseille’s capital year, before addressing the music-related controversies in detail.



Marseille’s renovated waterfront, 2013 (unknown photographer).

Marseille-Provence 2013 was a year-long cultural festival that took place across a territory roughly corresponding to the historic region of Provence,¹⁰ in the framework of the European Capital of Culture scheme.¹¹ It featured 931 events with an emphasis on

¹⁰ The territory included 97 communes, mostly contained within the Bouche-du-Rhône department. Marseille contains just over half of the population of this territory and hosted 80% of the festival's events, receiving 66% of all visits (Ecorys 2015, 77). Other significant population centres incorporated into the territory included Aix-en-Provence, Arles and Aubagne.

¹¹ Much of the data presented in this chapter regarding MP2013 derives from two independent evaluation reports published following the festival. One was commissioned by the MP2013 association and carried out by Euréval

visual and performing arts, and received €98m¹² in funding through local governments, national government and private sponsorship (Ecorys 2015; 85).¹³ The decision to present Marseille as a candidate for ECOC designation was made by a municipal council vote in 2004, with Lyon and Bordeaux announced as the rival bids. The following year the council began discussions with selected local arts organisations, some of whom were among those that formally presented the city's bid in Brussels and welcomed the EU's jury to Marseille in 2008 (Euréval 2014, 19). In November 2008, and with the selection of the nationally prominent cultural figure Bernard Latarjet as festival director, the city was declared to have won the jury's vote.

Of the numerous processes through which MP2013 projects were selected, the most financially and numerically significant was its official call for proposals, through which 2500 projects were received and 400 selected. These were offered various degrees of funding, as were a further 200 projects selected through other means, while 350 projects (including many rejected in the call for proposals) were eventually incorporated as *labelisé* - endorsed or affiliated (Euréval 2014, 20). Of the 600 part-funded projects, it is known that 370 (62%) were officially described in terms of "performing arts", 70 (12%) were exhibitions and 160 (27%) were "other projects" focusing on various topics such as film, literature and gastronomy.

The instrumentalist approach to cultural policy, identified earlier as paradigmatic of post-1990 ECOC editions, was openly adopted in MP2013. Specifically, the project was deeply integrated with the existing Euroméditerranée regeneration scheme – an affiliation that was widely considered to have boosted the prospects of Marseille's ECOC bid in the first place (Grésillon 2011). This affiliation was intensively publicised during and throughout the build-up to 2013. In a 2012 publicity brochure, Euroméditerranée is described proudly as an "aménageur de culture", while the Euroméditerranée director, Guy Tessier, announced that "2013 will be a chance to prove that Euroméditerranée is

(Centre for European Evaluation Expertise); the other was commissioned by the European Commission and carried out by the research company Ecorys. Their objectives and frames of reference necessarily reflect different institutional contexts, but both reports conducted extensive interviews and surveys and benefitted from access to detailed information and statistics on the governance of MP2013.

¹² One third of this figure was provided by the state and private sponsors (including La Poste, the Société Marseillaise de Crédit, Orange, Eurocopter and EDF among others), and the thirteen local area governments (including Marseille and various areas within Provence) made up the remaining two thirds. In terms of expenditure, just over two thirds was said to go towards funding the productions and co-productions, with just under one third going towards the salaries and running costs of MP2013. In addition to the budget, €600m was spent on construction projects related to MP2013, and this was again sourced from a combination of public and private sponsorship (see Euréval 2014).

¹³ As pointed out by Garcia (2005) and many others, comparative analysis of the scale of ECOC programmes is complicated by inconsistent understandings of what constitutes an event, what it means to produce or co-produce, how to measure attendance of events in public space and how major affiliated infrastructure projects should be understood in relation to ECOC. Girel (2013, 93) articulates this point in relation to MP2013.

the most cultural zone imaginable in Marseille” (‘La Parole aux Partenaires’ 2012, 10). The interweaving of the two was prominent in the festival programme itself, which featured a major contemporary art scheme entitled “Ateliers d’Euroméditerranée” (‘Programme Officiel’ 2012, 36).

Beyond the visibility of this partnership, evidence for a deep and public commitment to instrumentalism was wide-ranging. For example, the festival adopted the well-established strategic use of economic formulae, claiming in one press pack that “six euros of income are expected for every euro invested” (Dossier de Presse 2012; 5). Meanwhile private sponsorship of MP2013 was reportedly higher than for any previous ECOC, with 207 businesses contributing €16.5m (Ceser PACA 2015, 3). It was widely noted too that the festival’s President, Jacques Pfister, was also president of the regional Chamber of Commerce. His vision, as described in the official programme, was of MP2013 as “an exemplary meeting point of the cultural, the political and the economic” (‘Programme Officiel’ 2012, 10). On the eve of the festival’s opening ceremony, the Director of Mécènes du Sud - the festival’s major group of corporate sponsors - suggested in an interview that the programme would “seduce investors” and produce a “Bilbao effect” (Forster 2013).

In subscribing to the instrumentalist policies typical of regeneration projects, MP2013 was predictably subject to familiar forms of grassroots dissent. For writers on the political left such as Alessi Dell’Umbria, this very public affiliation with Euroméditerranée contributed to a sense of the city’s “transformation into a commodity” (Dell’Umbria 2012, 86). An artists’ collective called “Le Fric” became well-known in 2012 for its videos inspired by militant political movements, describing MP2013 as merely the “icing on the cake” for a ruthless regeneration initiative that would “clear out half the population” to achieve economic growth (Alouti 2013). A group known as “Marseille en Guerre” used their website to rail against what they called “the eviction of working class cultures” under the cover of a “pseudo-event”.¹⁴ Other campaign groups that strongly criticised MP2013 included Marseille Capitale de la Crevure (“Marseille Capital of Crooks”), Assemblée de la Plaine and Les Sentinelles.

Modernity and the Mediterranean in MP2013

In the introduction to the festival programme, Pfister wrote that MP2013 would “transform

¹⁴ ‘Marseille en Guerre’. Accessed 5/7/13. <http://marseille-en-guerre.org/>

our mosaic into a coherent tableau” (‘Programme Officiel’ 2012, 10). But while this phrase spoke unequivocally to modernity’s urge for order and clarity, the festival’s wider theme provided the basis for a more far-reaching project. The overarching theme of the festival, entitled “Sharing The South”, was generally explained as a focus on the idea that the territory had a Mediterranean or ‘Euro-Mediterranean’ identity.¹⁵ The theme had been developed over several years, and was partly determined through its compatibility with major existing projects that were important to the bid, such as the Euromediterrannée regeneration project and the launch of the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM) (Euréval 2014, 19; Andres 2011b). The Ecorys report (2015, 78) noted that “great emphasis was placed on developing links with other Mediterranean countries”.

The theme was strongly emphasised through the festival programme, which contained 386 references to “mediterrannée” or its derivatives, more even than for “culture(s)” (297), “Marseille-Provence” (315), or “art(s)” (196). External events producers had been encouraged to adopt the theme in their applications: 80% claimed to have applied it according to the official report, with 53% having involved artists from other Mediterranean countries in their project (Ecorys 2015, 78).

One important advantage of the Mediterranean theme was that it could provide a local basis for universalist cosmopolitanism: the introduction to the programme (2012, 10) makes the claim that Marseille’s “distinctive position, between Europe and the Mediterranean, makes it a land of mixing, diversity and tolerance”. One event is described as a celebration of the “variety and unity of Mediterranean heritage”. The festival’s official song, composed especially for the occasion, helped to animate this discursive construction of the city. “Export/Import” was written by Gari Greu of Massilia Sound System with the Brazilian singer Flavia Coelho, and was premiered at 2012’s Fiesta Des Suds. Its lyrics describe the “sun and the wind” of Marseille, a city where “we’re always singing”. The video likewise registers an inimitably Mediterranean city of informal publicness and winding sunlit streets. The song combines straightforward minor tonality with layered acoustic guitars; a light, acoustic version of the ‘dembow’ rhythm, originating in Jamaican dancehall productions of the 1980s, provides the pulse. In combination, these features helped place “Export/Import” within the wider affective regime of MP2013, its elaborate and insistent performance of a convivial and celebratory disposition.

¹⁵ See ‘Programme Officiel’ 2012

While some praised this focus on the Mediterranean as a means of reflecting critically on the era of the so-called Arab Spring,¹⁶ others saw it as a thinly veiled attempt to access intergovernmental funding reserves nominally dedicated to Mediterranean-themed research: one article in the newspaper *Le Ravi* detailed allegations of corruption centered on “le business de la Méditerranée” (Poupelin 2013). If the Mediterranean was a byword for institutional clientelism for some, for others it was an exploitative “folklorising” strategy for local tourism.¹⁷ For others still, the Mediterranean constituted a discursive hiding-place for postcolonial fears and deep-rooted inequalities: one writer wondered “whether we say Mediterranean in order not to say ‘Arab’”, while for the journalist Agnes Freschel it “allowed Marseille to get out of its face-à-face with the Maghreb” (Freschel quoted in Confavreux 2013). In the same article, the geographer Boris Grésillon decried what he saw a false unity:

[It is] a mystifying and saturated discourse which makes reference to the Mare Nostrum as a unified space in the middle of different lands, even though today's Mediterranean is above all a wall between North and South and one of the world's principal lines of fracture”.

When you know the reality of Marseille, which is a divided and fragmented city, it gets annoying to hear all these pretty speeches on the cosmopolitan Mediterranean. Behind the magic word we forget that there are violent realities.

To summarise, MP2013 was organised largely in line with the paradigmatic instrumentalist approach of other recent ECOCs, an approach for which it was both praised and criticized by a range of economic and cultural actors and local inhabitants. Thematically the programme sought to use the Mediterranean as a symbolic device for linking Marseille with cosmopolitan ideals of tolerance and exchange, arguably glossing over issues of inequality and intercultural tension. Having outlined the strategic orientations of MP2013 and some of the debates surrounding them, I now consider the two controversies in and through which music helped animate and concretise debates

¹⁶ By “Arab Spring” I refer to the wave of demonstrations, protests and riots that took place across a large swathe of North Africa and the Middle East from December 2010 roughly until the end of 2011. It featured the dramatic overthrow of governments in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen and Libya and was considered qualitatively novel in the prominent use of social media activism. By 2013, following its mutation into violent and seemingly intractable conflicts in Libya, Syria and Yemen, the Arab Spring was understood in deeply ambivalent terms in the French media as elsewhere (Encel 2014).

¹⁷ The journalist Jordan Saïssset (2013) argued that the festival was “instrumentalising Mediterranean culture” and depicted the historic neighbourhood of le Panier as one in which “hordes of tourists circulate freely now that the “Mediterranean” neighbourhood has been emptied of all substance”.

over the politics of the festival.

Hip-hop and the postcolonial politics of place

On 13th July 2012 a video interview was uploaded by the news website Infos-Marseille, in which the local rap artist Akhenaton – of the well-known group IAM - discussed his upcoming projects and his views on MP2013 (Allione 2012). For him the festival looked set to be aimed at “2% of the population”, with popular culture – most importantly hip-hop – neglected. As a figurehead of France’s most enduringly successful rap group, Akhenaton’s views carried significant media clout, and in subsequent weeks his accusations were echoed and debated by other artists.¹⁸ In another video interview from earlier that year, IAM producer Imhotep claimed that the group had been exploited by MP2013 (LCM 2012). Its members, he revealed, had been approached for various kinds of endorsement during the ECOC application process, and where the application materials had thematised “urban culture” IAM had been a key reference point. Once the candidature had been awarded, though, the organisers were “no longer interested”. Following these accusations and a series of articles and interviews,¹⁹ MP2013 officials found themselves under pressure to publicly defend the programming. The festival press secretary and Head of Programming both gave media interviews on the topic, to outlets including *Libération* and *Marsactu*.

In reality, as the festival’s representatives pointed out, hip-hop was not entirely absent from the programme. One event, entitled *Watt!*, gave prominence to hip-hop within a range of genre categories. Another event, the annual Fiesta des Suds – that year affiliated with the MP2013 programme – featured a performance from IAM. However, as evaluative judgments began to multiply towards the end of the capital year, the under-representation of rap emerged even among mainstream commentators as a rare matter of consensus: for Grésillon it was one of the festival’s biggest mistakes given the broad “creative potential” of the Marseille scene (Guion 2014); the well-known magazine *Télérama* described rap as “the great absence” of the festival (Piscopo-Reguieg 2013a); and in its official report, Euréval declared the controversy to be “one of the most significant polemics” of the MP2013 period (Euréval 2014, 23).

¹⁸ Soon afterwards the growing controversy was summarised in an article by journalist Charlotte Ayache (2012), entitled “Marseille-Provence 2013: où est-passé le hip-hop?”

¹⁹ e.g. Alouti 2013, Ayache 2012, Creze 2012.

Why was the scarcity of hip-hop so scandalous in MP2013? What tensions in contemporary urban life were brought to the surface through the controversy? One way to begin to answer these questions is to identify and consider two arguments made by those voicing criticism: first, that the scarcity of hip-hop was emblematic of a wider rejection of local cultural production by the festival; and second, that it belonged to a longstanding and politically sensitive history of antipathy towards hip-hop within the French political establishment.



IAM in 2013 (via <http://generations.fr>)

The first of these arguments has to do with locality as a frame of reference, and it is therefore useful to establish a sense of the climate of grassroots animosity towards MP2013 that gradually materialised in the lead-up to the festival. As in many previous ECOC editions, this was a climate marked by claims of elitism, nepotism and other forms of bias.²⁰ Friction surfaced as early as 2004, when some local inhabitants protested a lack of consultation on the decision to bid for the ECOC title, while others had criticised the choice of Bernard Latarjet - a “Parisian official” with close ties to the national political elite - as the figurehead for Marseille’s bid (Grésillon 2011, 64). By 2011 Andres (2011b, 72) was noting the “resentment of smaller cultural companies or spaces”. Three years on from the festival, I spoke to Samia, a jazz singer and co-owner of a recording studio in la Belle de Mai:

²⁰ In one evaluation report, Bergen, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Cracow, Stockholm, Brussels and Weimar are named as cities in which exceptional tensions arose between ECOC and existing cultural institutions (Palmer & Rae 2004, 65).

The whole thing was so misleading and corrupt – as you’d maybe expect in Marseille! Of course the new museums are nice, and yes that’s a real legacy that lasts. But people felt so ignored.²¹

Claims of exclusion often centred around local cultural actors.²² For instance, some pointed out that the project selection criteria had not been made publicly available to applicants, a move that was considered to clearly benefit those already familiar with funding applications in general and the emergent, not-yet-official themes of the festival in particular. It was also suggested that some members of the jury selection were themselves affiliated with applications (Euréal 2014, 23; Ecorys 2015, 75).

Other claims of exclusion were centred on local neighbourhoods and their inhabitants. In particular, the Euréal report (2014, 41) noted a strong sense that the *quartiers nords* and its residents had been marginalised. A frequently cited example of this failure was the partial abandonment of the “Quartiers créatifs” initiative, aimed at fostering collaboration between artists and *quartiers nords* residents. One of its projects, entitled “Jardins Possibles”, was cancelled and others suffered complications following tensions between artists and residents’ associations (Euréal 2014, 41; Ecorys 2015, 81). In this sense the exclusion of local inhabitants was perceived in strongly socio-spatial terms: as the abandonment of certain areas of the city as well as certain social groups.

In the controversy over the place of rap music, these two categories of exclusion were both exemplified. The novelist Minna Sif declared that hip-hop was “the most staggering example” of how MP2013 had “side-lined the principal actors of local cultural life” (Rof 2013), while others saw the absence in spatial terms:

The fact that there’s very little local rap music just goes to show that the *quartiers nords* have been abandoned in MP2013. If they’d gone there and tried to engage, they’d have seen how vibrant the scene is.²³

At the same time, the controversy witnessed the articulation of a third form of exclusion: that of “local culture” itself. IAM member Imhotep emphasised the significance of the absence of rap for “a city like Marseille” (Creze 2012), while another local rapper, MOH, put it simply: “if you talk about culture in Marseille, you have got to talk about hip-hop.

²¹ Interview with Samia (name has been altered), 6/4/16, Les Danaïdes

²² Note that the development of opposition to MP2013 is fairly well-documented in the Euréal report (Euréal 2014).

²³ Conversation with audience member, 4/6/13, Machine à Coudre

Everyone listens to hip-hop here, it's what brings the city together" (Ayache 2012). More explicitly, Piscopo-Reguieg (2013a) noted that "Marseille rap... is still a vibrant culture which has indelibly shaped the image of *la cité phocéenne*". In other words, the absence was of a musical idiom that was not only practiced, produced and appreciated locally, but that arguably bears a richer, more powerful symbolic connection to contemporary Marseille than any other form of cultural expression.

Why is hip-hop so closely associated with Marseille, and how has local hip-hop positioned itself in relation to debates about urban change? To make sense of the claims over rap music as deeply and distinctively local claims, it is necessary to examine some of the ways in which hip-hop has acquired significance in Marseille since the late 1980s. According to most narratives this history is inextricable from that of the city's most successful artist, the group IAM. Two of the group's founding members, Philippe Fragione and Eric Mazel, were among the earliest promoters in the city, joining a new radio show as teenagers in 1985 (Durand et al. 2002). The show's host, Philippe Subrini, had produced France's first hip-hop radio shows two years earlier and was instrumental in the French wing of Afrika Bambaataa's Zulu Nation movement, which sought to promote hip-hop as part of an Afrocentric philosophy among African diasporic populations. In 1987, following initial experiments with live performance, Fragione and Mazel made the first of several trips to New York to discover the city's burgeoning scene first hand (Arte 2004). While there they discovered artists such as Eric B and Rakim, and with help from Fragione's own New York family connections - as a member of the Italian diaspora - they met and networked with various producers, rappers and industry figures. These trips and the close early connections with the Zulu Nation helped establish an enduring sense of the Marseille scene as a point in a globally distributed translocal network, rather than a provincial outpost of a national scene dominated by Paris.

By 1989 the full line-up of IAM was complete, with Fragione, Malek Brahim and Geoffroy Mussard as rappers and Mazel, Pascal Perez and François Mendy as composer-producers. Over the following eight years the group's commercial and critical success positioned them at the forefront of the national scene, along with the Parisian group NTM. In 1994 the single "Je danse le mia" gave French rap music its first major hit, charting at Number 1 and remaining among the best-selling singles of that year (Jacono 2002).

During the early 1990s, while at what came to be regarded as the peak of their critical reputation, IAM developed and experimented with a musical discourse that questioned and reimagined the status of ethnic minorities and Islam in France as well as the history

of French colonialism and its legacies (Jacono 2002, Prévos 1996). At the heart of this reimagining was Marseille itself: “le temps du Provençal rigolo est révolu”, they declared in a 1993 track, adding that “Phocée s'est reveillée”.²⁴ In “La methode marsimil” (1993) the group tell a comical story about an American who arrives in Marseille to learn French and ends up speaking the crudest local slang. In the introduction to “Je danse le mia”, the slang and accent of a spoken line again places the (French) listener instantly in the city: “Tu es fada, je crains dégun, je vous prends tous ici, un par un”.²⁵ With the success of the song, the word “mia” itself became shorthand for Marseille’s distinctive youth culture, which forms the subject of the song’s narrative (Jacono 2004).

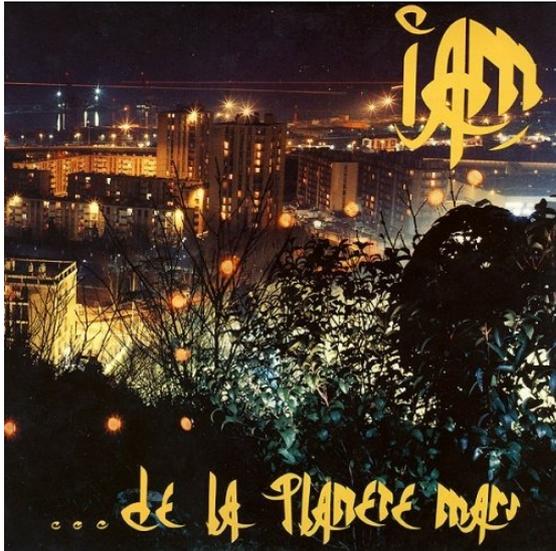
On one hand, the mere act of foregrounding and valorising the *marseillais* vernacular helped challenge both the archaic stereotype of “Provençal rigolo” and Marseille’s contemporary reputation as a home for racist Front National politics. IAM’s members represented a compelling microcosm of the city’s diasporic junctures, combining Italian, Spanish, Senegalese, Algerian, Madagascan and French origins. On the other hand, the group’s production of a complex and heterogeneous Marseille was about more than the identities of its members. It was through a collective mythology, as much as ethnic diversity, that they challenged both republican and far-right ideas of French nationhood. The Marseille imagined by IAM at this time was not just emphatically multi-ethnic but radically ‘othered’: the word “Mars”, for example, was repeatedly deployed in album titles and lyrics as a double reference to the planet Mars and to Marseille.²⁶ The cover of their first album combined the title “...de la Planète Mars” with a wide nocturnal shot of the *quartiers nord*s, rerouting the often derogatory trope of the “exception marseillaise” as one of amplified – alien – alterity.²⁷

²⁴ “The days of funny Provençal are over”; “Phocée has awoken”. Here the group refuses the dominant French stereotype according to which southerners are mocked for their accents and dialects.

²⁵ “You’re crazy, I fear no-one, I’ll get you all right here, one by one”.

²⁶ e.g. “Mars contre attaque” (1993)

²⁷ *De La Planete Mars* (1991).



Album design for IAM's *De la Planète Mars* (1991, EMI/Virgin France).

If this was an “alien” city in the extra-terrestrial sense, the trope was merely one part of an elaborate and diffuse mythology that also incorporated ancient Egyptian, Middle Eastern and East Asian themes. Fragione, Mazel and Perez adopted the monikers Akhenaton, Kheops and Imhotep respectively, while the liner notes of second album *Ombre est Lumière* famously proposed a theory whereby the deltas of the Rhône (near Marseille) and of the Nile had once been connected.²⁸ In “Je viens de Marseille” (1991), the city is cast as “la ville photique”, “le siège de l'Alliance Afro-Asiatique... ou pharaon excelle”. In the final verse, Shurik'n describes a “ville aux 10000 cités, aux mille et une filles / Où le béton des tours caresse Aton qui brille”.²⁹

These reference points were variously interpreted during the first wave of Francophone hip-hop scholarship. Prévos (1996) identified “pharaohism” as IAM's “ideological style”, unique in that it was supposedly their own innovation, in contrast to other dominant themes that borrowed from US hip-hop culture. In Prévos' interpretation pharaohism was a means of recasting the Arab world as a source of scientific knowledge and advanced civilisation, “while by-passing negative representations of North African countries gripped by Islamic fundamentalism and economic uncertainties” (1996, 719).

Swedenburg (2001) contested Prévos' claim by pointing out the existence of a long history of “Egyptian afrocentricity”, arguing that pharaohism was ultimately a means for IAM to valorise Islam. Less explored have been the parallels between IAM's mythological project and those of various musical artists associated with afrofuturism (see Eshun

²⁸ *Ombre est Lumière* (1995).

²⁹ A “city of 10,000 *cités*, of a thousand and one girls / Where the concrete towers caresses shining Aton”.

1998). Like artists such as Sun Ra, Drexciya and Lee Scratch Perry, IAM used and reshaped mythology to destabilise dominant Euro-American narratives of historical progress, recasting lost African civilisations as the bearers of long-concealed scientific and spiritual knowledge.

With 1997's *L'École du Micro d'Argent* IAM reached the peak of their commercial and critical success, and the record remains the highest selling album in French hip-hop. The album registered a legible and audible shift away from both pharaohism and postcolonial politics, towards a darker and more confrontational representation of the French *banlieue* crisis (Valnet 2013). At around the same time, and thanks partly to the success of IAM, other local groups such as Fonky Family, Psy 4 de la Rime and 3e Oeil gained huge popularity,³⁰ while IAM's own members launched parallel careers as solo artists. In 1998 this profusion of activity was captured and mediated through the soundtrack to the hit film *Taxi*, which featured tracks by IAM, Akhenaton, Fonky Family, 3e Oeil and others. The film was set in Marseille and along with the popular compilation *Chronique de Mars* (Kif Kif Productions 1998) it helped cement the emblematic status of hip-hop for the city at that time. The writer Julien Valnet has suggested that "rap contributed to fashioning the city's identity. In the space of a few years, it changed the way people look at Marseille" (Valnet quoted in Piscopo-Ruiguiég 2013a).

In contrast to the monocultural aspirations of the Front National, Marseille as mediated by rap artists of the 1990s was, in IAM's own words, a "cauchemar des xenophobes".³¹ This antithetical relation to the rise of the FN quickly became a definitive feature of Marseille rap, and was thrown into the media spotlight in 1995 following the murder of a young Comorian, Ibrahim Ali (Groussard 1995, Rof 2015). A resident of the Savine housing estate in the fifteenth arrondissement, Ali was training to be a carpenter and had formed the rap group B-Vice with other local teenagers. The group was building an impressive reputation, and had been scheduled to perform at an HIV awareness event. One evening, travelling together from La Savine to a rehearsal studio in another district of the *quartiers nord*s, the group's members encountered three men putting up anti-immigrant Front National posters near a motorway bridge. An altercation ensued, and Ali died after being shot in the back.

In one sense, then, the close association of hip-hop with Marseille emerged from the exceptional commercial and critical success of a small number of artists in the 1990s, and

³⁰ Particularly successful albums included Akhenaton's *Metèque et mat* (1995), Fonky Family's *Si Dieu Veut...* (1997) and *Art de Rue* (2001), and Shurik'n's *Où je vis* (1998).

³¹ "A xenophobe's nightmare". From "Je viens de Marseille" (1991)

from the urgent sense of contestation in which these artists participated. However, to grasp the depth and character of this association it is also useful to consider it in relation to a rich and longstanding emphasis on questions of place, space and local identity in hip-hop more broadly.

The literature discussing these dimensions of rap is considerable, having expanded in line with the wider spatial turn across humanities research from the 1990s onwards.³² In her highly influential study *Black Noise*, Tricia Rose (1994) provided an early contribution by emphasising the material - often derelict - terrain of the post-industrial city as a constitutive element of hip-hop practice. While this formulation is perhaps most apparent in the visual dimension of hip-hop, Rose also registers the territorialising function of rap, recalling Chambers' (1985, 190) notion of rap as "sonorial graffiti". "Rappers' emphasis on posses and neighbourhoods", she declared, "has brought the ghetto back into the public consciousness" (1994, 11).

If Rose's focus here was on hip-hop as a lived and performative practice, Forman (2002) by contrast attends to the discursive dimensions of hip-hop spatiality – to the affective geographies of rap as a representational medium. Dominant narratives of hip-hop's origins, Forman noted, are populated and shaped decisively by references to "the streets, parks, community centres and nightclubs of the Bronx and Harlem" (Forman 2002, 178). Emerging and initially spreading through highly territorial youth cultures, hip-hop proved a powerful medium for the discursive contestation of urban geographical boundaries. But if the "generalised abstract construct" of the 'ghetto' had initially afforded certain translocal solidarities, Forman identifies a discursive shift from the 'ghetto' to the reduced spatial scale of the "hood" around 1987. Both this reduction in spatial framing and a turn towards specific locales – from space towards place – attested to a growing equation of the local with 'the real'. Captured in idiomatic hip-hop phrases such as 'keeping it real' and in the insistence on the theme of 'representing', this tendency also corresponded, argued Forman, to a growing fixation with notions of "reality" in Western media cultures.

In a later text, Forman identifies MC Rakim's famous line that "it ain't where you're from but where you're at" as an emblematic attempt to undo this equation. Similarly, Paul Gilroy (1992) lamented hip-hop's increasing fixation with what Forman calls the "extreme local" in the early 1990s, insisting instead on the 'Black Atlantic' as a device for registering the vast and decentred networks of the African diaspora. The subsequent

³² Forman (2002) positions his own contribution to the spatially oriented literature on hip-hop in terms of the need to challenge an intensifying and racialised fixation on criminality in mainstream media coverage.

development of US hip-hop led Forman to conclude that “it does, in fact, matter a great deal “where you’re from” *and* “where you’re at”” (2012, 225). Not least because, as writers such as Matt Miller (2012) have also argued, the huge growth of hip-hop in industrial terms generated a significant profit motive for authenticity, with the performative enunciation of locale serving as a key criterion. For Miller (2012), rap’s emphasis on local identity is not simply part of an heroic attempt to narrate experiences of marginality but is also strategic, entwined in rap’s marketability (2012, 10).

But for those writers addressing hip-hop outside the US, Gilroy’s emphasis on diaspora and circulation proved a powerful reference point for understanding how and why hip-hop had taken root and been transformed in such heterogeneous contexts. In one early attempt to conceptualise hip-hop in France beyond assumptions of US cultural hegemony, Gross et al (1994, 150) argued that the music “mobilised new forms of identity” and, crucially, “reterritorialised multi-ethnic space”. Following this, Mitchell (2001, 1) argued that the geographical dispersal of hip-hop was not only “a vehicle for global youth affiliations” but also “a tool for reworking local identity all over the world”. This affirmation helped crystallise approaches to a variety of geographically dispersed scenes: Solomon (2005) and Baker (2006), focusing on Istanbul and Havana respectively, both see the discursive prominence of the “underground” as a spatial metaphor that facilitates the “re-emplacment” of rap in distinctive socio-spatial landscapes. Nooshin (2011, 108) draws on the same idea of “re-emplacment” to help explain how hip-hop “[creates] a space of its own within which local meanings can be inflected against a global backdrop”.

Like the artists discussed by these authors, IAM – in their early work – reached both towards global or diasporic affiliations on the one hand, and towards a recasting of local identity in the face of political crisis on the other. If by the mid-1990s the local in hip-hop had become firmly associated with the performance of authenticity, in contexts such as Marseille it remained an important locus of political contestation.

IAM’s critical reputation diminished through albums such as *Revoir un Printemps* (2003) and *Saison 5* (2007). While much work by both established and emerging artists continues to focus on social critique and the specificities of Marseille, it has generally been commercially overshadowed by artists looking instead to the lyrical (and musical) tropes of gangsta rap and trap. Given the reduced appeal of this paradigm to the

journalistic mainstream, it is perhaps unsurprising that the dominant history of Marseille rap has its “golden era” lasting instead between roughly 1991 and 1997.³³

In addition to this transformation of the scene’s media presence, it is often claimed that hip-hop has been abandoned by local policymakers (Piscopo-Reguieg 2013a). The Logique Hip Hop festival, combining major headliners, emerging artists and a workshop scheme, had been held annually from 1996 to 2002 but was abandoned due to a lack of funds. While a number of recording and rehearsal studios do exist, Julien Valnet argues that in Marseille, “public institutions finance hip-hop as part of the social budget, as part of efforts at social integration. Hip-hop has never been considered as if it were a cultural form” (Piscopo-Reguieg 2013a).

In summary, the representation of hip-hop in ECOC mattered in particular ways in Marseille: first because of the music’s exceptionally prominent and well-established presence in the city over the last 25 years; second because, as in numerous other geographical contexts, hip-hop’s distinctive “urge to locality” has entailed imaginative treatments of local identity that are socially and spatially reconstitutive; third because of perceptions of local policymakers’ longstanding neglect of hip-hop; and fourth because the scarcity of hip-hop in the festival could stand for a wider sense of exclusion among the local grassroots. One student in her mid-twenties exemplified this argument when I brought it up in conversation at a gig:

I’m not even a big rap fan, at least not of today’s rap artists... But it’s the one, sort-of contemporary thing that Marseille has been rightly acclaimed for, rightly associated with. IAM, Fonky Family and all that, they’re rightly acclaimed and you know something’s not right when they’re absent from this.³⁴

While the controversy provoked various accusations clustered around the theme of the local, it also spoke to politically sensitive issues of aesthetic value. One rap artist who was vocal in this regard was Keny Arkana, who co-founded the altermondialist group La Rage du Peuple in the neighbourhood of Noailles in 2004 and is among the city’s most prominent artists. In an interview with *Télérama*, she spoke of having “the impression of living under a kind of colonisation” through MP2013, which had “no other aim than to promote the dominant culture” (Granoux 2013). Meanwhile, Akhenaton declared that

³³ This designation may also have arisen in line with a wider turn away from notions of local music scenes in favour of conceptualisations based on ideas of the translocal, the virtual and the networked (e.g. Bennett & Peterson 2004).

³⁴ Conversation with audience member, 21/6/14, L’Equitable Café

“there is in MP2013 a very sad form of provincial ultra-snobbery which is exasperating” (Agence France Presse 2013). At an event as part of the Strie Dent festival of underground music in the summer of 2013, I heard a similar sentiment from a punk musician:

MP2013 doesn't represent us, obviously. It's about concert halls, ballet, that kind of stuff. It doesn't surprise me that there's no rap.³⁵

It should be emphasised that it was difficult to reliably determine whether “concert halls” and “ballet” – or any combination of spaces, art forms or musical styles – were numerically dominant in the festival, for a number of basic reasons. Official data relating to the proportional representation of artistic forms and musical styles was neither published nor offered in response to requests. Moreover, the festival underwent certain changes between the publication of the official brochure and the end of the ECOC programme, since many projects could not be finalised until a few weeks before they began. The brochure was not therefore an entirely reliable guide to the festival's content. An additional problem was that, while the festival was officially declared to consist of 931 “projects”, it was not always possible to account for the art forms contained in these through reference to the official brochure – nor, in the case of music-related projects, the precise genre category or categories. The projects were not systematically listed in the brochure, and instead were listed as a combination of single projects and larger sub-festivals which, while having the same visual presentation as the single projects, were in fact assemblages comprising multiple events whose full content was often unclear. For example, “This Is (Not) Music” was listed as a project but actually comprised forty days of events spanning a range of art forms including music, street art and urban sports. Little detail was provided as to the musical programming of “This Is (Not) Music”, and to obtain the full data concerning the proportional representation of different genres it was necessary to visit a separate website. From here, a further problem was that the music-related events within “This Is (Not) Music” included some that were described in terms of a clear genre and others that were described in terms of specific combinations of genres. Given that so many of the projects in MP2013 were populated by a similarly fine-grained combination of art forms and – where applicable – musical genre categories, it emerged that attempts to determine the proportional representation of genre categories would be extremely time-consuming. Moreover, analysis had to contend with the contemporary usage of a growing profusion of genre labels and sub-labels, as well as the familiar

³⁵ Conversation with musician, 2/6/13, Asile 404

possibility of dissonances between the categorisation of music by the festival, its partners, the musicians and the public audiences.³⁶ Categories such as “jazz”, “contemporary music”, “improvised music”, “electronic music” and “traditional music” were common, yet are each too vague, capacious and contested to belong straightforwardly to either a dominant “high” culture or a putatively marginalised “popular culture”.

Finally, an analysis based on the equal weighting of each project would have obscured the huge variety of scale between projects (and sometimes within them). Audience and participant numbers, budgets, type of affiliation with MP2013 and degree and composition of media coverage are just some of the possible variables which would have to be accounted for, through a necessarily imperfect combinatorial formula, in order to weight each project. Yet without such weighting, a project such as Mars en Baroque (eleven concerts, six public talks, part-funded by MP2013) would have to be equated with a project such as “Instruments de Musique Méditerranéens” (one exhibition held over 28 days, affiliated with – but not funded by - MP2013).

These entangled and mutually contingent epistemological obstacles begin to demonstrate the limitations of claims about the dominance of particular categories of culture within the festival. Nevertheless, the sentiment of domination was clear and can be understood partly through reference to longstanding issues concerning attitudes to rap music in France. Rap and hip-hop continue to constitute a site of anxiety for state institutions in numerous countries, often in spite of the advent of pluralist and relativist notions of cultural value (Rose 2008). In France, while notions of democratisation have been increasingly championed in cultural policy discourse since the 1970s, the reality of which forms of production are included or excluded, aesthetically valorised or socially instrumentalised, remains distinctly uneven (Martin 2014; Dubois 2011).

Hip-hop has presented particular challenges to processes of democratisation, for at least two related reasons. First, successive controversies surrounding the moral orientations of rap lyrics and music videos have continued to fuel the highly reductive notion of rap as a corrupting influence.³⁷ Second, the politics of rap music in France have been inflected by a strong sense of the music’s postcolonial associations (e.g. Looseley 2005; Krims 2002, Prévos 1996). Rappers in France often have origins in former French colonies or

³⁶ See Holt (2007) for a wide-ranging discussion of contemporary debates around musical genre.

³⁷ Early high-profile confrontations involved groups such as Ministère AMER and NTM (Durand et al. 2002). Recent debates have surrounded artists such as Orlesan (Sar 2015) and Médine (Allen 2015), as well as music videos shot in Lille (La Voix du Nord 2014) and Strasbourg (Rousseau 2015). See Rose 2008 for a detailed discussion of “moral panics” relating to hip-hop.

overseas territories such as Senegal or the Comoros islands, and many grow up in neighbourhoods populated by families tracing similar histories. That these districts are very often among the most neglected, disadvantaged and isolated in the country has emphasised the sense of a ghettoised former-colonial population 'at home', itself historically continuous with the earlier treatment of colonial peoples 'abroad'. If elite perceptions of hip-hop in the US index, in Deis' (2015, 200) formulation, "deeply rooted, psycho-social fears of Black criminality", an additional preoccupation in France is of intense and unresolved questions of history, nationhood and marginality.

France therefore has its own iteration of what Rose (2008) has called the "hip-hop wars", and in this context it is useful to examine MP2013's discursive treatment of rap in more detail. The festival press officer Lylia Abbès argued that "hip-hop very obviously has its place in MP2013" (Agence France Presse 2013), even if it was only the focus of two of the 931 festival projects. Head of Programming Claire Andries explained that rap's place in the programme was as part of "urban culture in a larger sense" that included graffiti and "contemporary artists" (ibid). The principle, she explained, was of "aesthetic enlargement". Indeed, "urban culture" served as the framework for an entire section of the programme, entitled "Villes en jeux". In the introduction to that section, it is suggested that

while hip-hop, slam and rap earned their stripes long ago, new urban aesthetics have appeared (or made a comeback) in public space: electronic music, sport (skating, rollerblading, BMX...) and performance art.³⁸

Rap and hip-hop were not only subsumed into the "enlarged aesthetic" of "urban culture", but were positioned as antecedent to 'newer' iterations of that culture. Furthermore, while rap and hip-hop are mentioned in the introductory text, it is street art (as a "visual culture") that dominates.

If "urban culture" constituted a discursive category in which rap could be subsumed, so too did the "Mediterranean" – particularly in the context of the *Watt!* event. Cited by Andries as the festival's major platform for rap artists (Agence France Presse 2013), *Watt!* was a series of live productions staged across five Mediterranean cities: Marseille, Aix, Oran, Cairo and Tunis. The Marseille performances, held at the Dock des Suds, took place in March 2013 as part of Babel Med, a renowned World Music' festival. In the festival programme, *Watt!* was described as a context in which "hip-hop, électro-chaabi,

³⁸ 'Programme Officiel' 2012, 99.

brass band and beat box collide with the flow of Tunisian, Algerian, Syrian and American rappers". Crucially, the series aimed to "amplify the sonic and musical echoes of a flourishing Mediterranean youth". The most prominent platform afforded to hip-hop, then, was one that subsumed it discursively into themes of Mediterranean-ness and musical hybridity. Discussing MP2013 with an audience member at the music venue GRIM, I found that there was sensitivity to this focus on hybridity:

Why does rap have to be part of some fusion with other genres? Can't it stand on its own? They seem to be OK with classical music standing on its own, why not hip-hop?³⁹

In this sense, the treatment of rap music emerges as a powerful example of the kind of "masking" referred to in Harvey's (1991) refusal of the post-industrial urban festival. By absorbing rap into the category of "urban culture", the narrative of Mediterranean exchange and the celebration of artistic hybridity, MP2013 avoided the discussion of persistent and racialised social inequalities that might have emerged from a more explicit focus on hip-hop.

To summarise, as one of Marseille's few widely exported and emblematic contemporary cultural forms, rap's absence became symbolic of the festival's wider marginalisation of local and popular cultural production. Two key factors combined to render rap music a distinctly potent symbol in this regard: first, its longstanding associations with the city in general and with the defence of local multiculturalism in particular; second, its well-established associations with economically, socially and spatially marginalized populations and the postcolonial dimensions of this marginality.

Guettagate: cultural boundary-work and urban spectacle

Like the polemic over rap artists, Guettagate was in one sense a response to feelings of local abandonment. In the text of the petition, it was argued that "public money [should] finance local culture and artists" rather than "international" productions, and that "this subsidy could have benefited associations or artists who genuinely contribute to the energy of Marseille and Marseille 2013 [sic], and who genuinely need financial support" (Change.org 2013). At a municipal council meeting during the campaign, the socialist Nathalie Pigamo claimed the council had "double standards concerning the small

³⁹ Conversation with audience member, 14/12/13, GRIM

grassroots groups in Marseille that are in such need of subsidy” (Bertrand 2013). As well as local cultural actors, the petition also made claims about the exclusion of local inhabitants, arguing that ticket prices of €44-59 would mean it were “not even accessible to most people”, that the subsidy “does not even make it possible to offer affordable tickets for the general public”.

The petition itself focused on these locally oriented concerns, combined with a sense of a lack of public consultation and political transparency. At the same time, just as the rap controversy combined appeals to locality with a range of other contentions, GuettaGate also brought additional questions into play. Below I address two common themes of the argument made by those opposed to the concert: first, the rejection of Guetta’s music on the basis of cultural taste; and second, the rejection of the concert in terms of Debordian formulations of spectacle.

To understand the range of associations and affordances entailed by David Guetta’s music, it is first useful to briefly outline his career. Guetta was born in Paris in 1967, and began DJing in small clubs in the mid-1980s (*Le Parisien* 2015). Initially his main musical passions were disco and funk, embodied in a love of Michael Jackson albums such as *Thriller* and *Off The Wall*. Around 1987 he discovered House music through the radio and through visits to London, and he soon became a major figure - along with Laurent Garnier and Daft Punk - in introducing House to French audiences. All three of these producers gained international prominence as artists in their own right, but while Daft Punk cultivated a reclusive image and a distinctive musical blend of classic disco and funk with modern production techniques, Guetta became synonymous with a more celebrity-seeking and commercially oriented approach. Musically this crystallised in 2009 with the global success of songs such as “When Love Takes Over” and its accompanying album *One Love*, whose tracks featured conventional verse-chorus forms and famous pop vocalists such as Kelly Rowland, Black Eyed Peas and Akon.

Here and in later work, Guetta’s combination of stylistic features from House, Electro and mainstream pop made him a pioneer of electronic dance music (EDM), a genre category associated with massive and global commercial appeal. By 2015 *Le Parisien* reported that Guetta had sold 10 million albums and 35 million singles worldwide, particularly significant figures in an era of streaming. At the same time, Guetta has been the subject of numerous controversies, including accusations of pre-recorded performances, plagiarism and cultural insensitivity (e.g. Sachs 2012; Grimalda 2012).



David Guetta live in Mexico, 2010 (via <http://www.pumpthebeat.com>)

Guetta can therefore be considered exemplary of the ambivalence of electronic dance music's global commercial explosion. While he has accumulated a huge fan base, for some he also embodies what is felt to be that music's concomitant artistic decline. During Guettagate, a range of variations on this position surfaced as reasons to ban the concert. At one gig, I fell into conversation with a couple of musicians in their mid-twenties who had gone outside to smoke, and the discussion turned to Guettagate. I asked the more talkative of the two if he had signed the petition:

Yeah I signed the petition, it's a lot of money, there was no transparency about it. But most importantly David Guetta is a musical disgrace! It's proper lowest-common-denominator stuff, it has nothing to do with "culture" however you conceive it!⁴⁰

In their references to disproportionate funding and issues of transparency, perspectives such as these were consonant with the arguments of the official campaign. But in implying that Guetta's music lacked the quality to merit inclusion in the festival, it represented a further, 'unofficial' part of the argument that recurred elsewhere. The Alter Off group, for example, described the subsidy as "yet more proof of the mediocre conception of culture that some people have" (Huffington Post/AFP 2013). At a record shop in the Cours Julien neighbourhood, I brought the topic up with a customer I was speaking to, who likewise felt the subsidy had undermined the festival's integrity:

⁴⁰ Conversation with audience member, 14/12/13, GRIM

How can they claim this to be about 'culture', about all these grand ideas of Mediterranean history and diversity, if one of the biggest, most expensive events is just a huge party, just an excuse for idiots to get drunk and listen to crap chart music?⁴¹

These perspectives were also to be found on social media. On Twitter, Szuter (2013) wondered when the "general public" would "stop fawning over such a slacker" while Singer (2013) suggested that "Marseille European Capital of Culture inviting David Guetta is like a European Capital of Gastronomy inviting Findus". As well as a question of local representation, Guettagate was therefore also a matter of deep-rooted notions of aesthetic hierarchy and cultural ontology. Guetta, according to this logic, did not belong in the festival either because his work was in some sense inferior or because, in the context of a "Capital of Culture", it did not constitute 'culture' at all. In a widely-shared article for the Gonzai website, Delahouse (2013) made the point clear after describing Guetta as "a guy who arrives on stage with a few CDs or 'two USB keys' (so they say)":

Let's not delude ourselves: even if it's not part of the accusation made by the "Commando anti-23 juin" (and fair enough), in this context the appearance of an artist like David Guetta - equally adored and decried - reveals a very particular symbolism. Clearly, if it had been a musician, group or even another DJ whose music was less idiotic, it would have been a different story. In other words, in terms of image, David Guetta *cannot* be the figurehead of this Capital of Culture: he is too rich, too mainstream, too one-dimensional. Final argument for those still think this guy is the incarnation of "popular culture": David Guetta has never operated in the field of culture. He operates in the field of *entertainment*.

These attitudes can be understood in relation to a familiar lineage of Euro-American intellectual thought that assumes or defends principles of cultural hierarchy. In its implicit refusal of mass-marketed popular music, the argument against Guetta recalls Adorno's well-known critique of the "culture industry" as a "mass deception" (e.g. Adorno and Horkheimer 1997). In Adorno's culture industry, "respect disappears...[and] is succeeded by a shallow cult of leading personalities" (ibid, 161).⁴² This position was all the more

⁴¹ Conversation with customer, 23/3/13, Galette

⁴² The Guetta campaign also shared an emphasis on profitability with Adorno's critique. The petition itself raised questions about the role of private enterprise and profit-making in MP2013 by pointing out that "the site is made available for free to Adam production, which will also keep all income from ticket sales, drinks and other

striking for how markedly it contrasted with attitudes surrounding the exclusion of rap music: where Akhenaton and others emphasised a kind of cultural relativism, some arguments against Guetta implicitly reached towards absolutism. Where IAM's Imhotep referred to MP2013 as "elitist", the Guetta campaign, conversely, became the target of similar accusations: as reported by the national magazine *Télérama*, local councillor Yves Moraine condemned the campaign as a one of "bitterness" and "cultural elitism" (Rof 2013).

It should be noted that the petition itself did not discuss questions of cultural taste. Nevertheless, it was thanks to social media coverage, saturated with strongly felt opinions on Guetta, that the petition attracted such attention: reflecting on the campaign in 2014 for an interview with the e-petition website that hosted the successful campaign, Corsini described it as a "mediatised digital revolt" (Change.org, 2014). In this sense Guettagate points to ways in which the well-established capacity of musical taste to unify and galvanise populations takes on new political affordances in the era of digital activism. If the Guetta campaign was fuelled in part by the defence of particular cultural boundaries, a second important theme - closely entwined with the first - was the rejection of its mode of presentation. An ethnographic example is useful here: in February 2013, at the height of the Guetta campaign, I met a friend for drinks at the Longchamp Palace, a bar located in the vaguely fashionable Réformés neighbourhood. The bar was a popular meeting point for artists and designers, where customers regularly spilled out on to the streets at night. I was introduced to a friend of a friend, who raised the issue in relation to a discussion about local arts funding:

For me the biggest thing is just that it's such a waste to spend so much subsidising one concert! It's this flash-in-the-pan approach, make us much noise as possible, be as visible as possible. You could do so much with that money if you worked with existing spaces and local networks.⁴³

This typified a recurrent emphasis on scale and ephemerality in discussions of the Guetta concert. During the campaign, Moraine suggested in an interview that "we have to know what it is we want: either we want these big events which serve the reputation of the city, or we don't!" (Huffington Post / AFP 2013). In foregrounding the scale of the event above other considerations, Moraine's comments resonated with the logic of what McGuigan

products sold onsite. A sum estimated at €1.1m". It continued, "this is clearly about the council gifting a present to a private enterprise."

⁴³ Conversation with musician, 23/2/13, Longchamp Palace.

(2004, 61), following Raymond Williams, calls “cultural policy as display”. For McGuigan this strand of cultural policy is best exemplified by the *expositions universelles* that reached their peak in Western European capitals around the turn of the twentieth century, one inheritor of which is arguably the ECOC scheme itself. The logic of cultural policy as display, McGuigan explains, revolves less around humanistic ideas of enlightenment and self-improvement and more around the monumental performance of power.

If the Guetta event offered a kind of contemporary populist version of cultural policy as display, a broader conceptual prism is offered by Debord’s (1967) notion of the spectacle, a touchstone for numerous researchers of mega-events. For Richards (1991, 59-66) one “major foundation of a semiotics of commodity spectacle” is the “myth of the achieved, abundant society”. More radically, Harvey (1991) proposes that the ‘new’ strand of urban festivals should be understood through Debord’s notion of spectacle as “the locus of illusion and false consciousness” (Debord 1967, 12). For Harvey, large-scale urban festivals demonstrate the key role of spectacle in the operation of capital in contemporary urban life, that is, urban life “under the regime of flexible accumulation” (ibid, 270). Since the early 1970s, Harvey suggests, “the urban spectacle... has been captured as both a symbol and an instrument of community unification under bourgeois control” (ibid., 270). Seen in these terms, the logic of the Guetta concert revolves around the spectacular performance of consensus, in which the realisation of mass participation might help legitimise the wider transformative project of MP2013. If ECOC was often described in terms of a “Trojan horse” serving to distract local inhabitants from a highly controversial urban development programme, the Guetta concert presents itself as a notable embodiment of such a strategy.

In summary, Guettagate can be conceptualised in ways that both resonate with and contrast the politics of the rap controversy. Although both disputes used music as a pivot for arguments about local inclusion, these appeals also involves somewhat different understandings of MP2013’s ideological orientation. While those criticising the paucity of rap music lamented what they understood as a false universalism, those campaigning against the Guetta concert refused what they understood as a neoliberal, market-oriented logic.

Phocéa Rocks and the performance of autonomy

While the David Guetta concert looked likely to fulfil many of the functions of Debord’s notion of spectacle, Marseille in 2013 also demonstrated, following Harvey (1991, 271),

that “the spectacle is never an image mounted securely and finally in place; it is always an account of the world competing with others, and meeting the resistance of different, sometimes tenacious forms of social practice”. While rap artists debated the politics of exclusion, other poorly represented local scenes produced different kinds of responses.

One example from the city’s DIY rock scene is exemplary here. Phocéa Rocks was a festival focusing on local bands, devised in response to MP2013 by a group of musicians, fans and other actors in the local rock and punk network.⁴⁴ It featured eight events and around thirty groups, and received some local media coverage. The bulk of the concerts took place in late June and early July, in well-known rock venues such as Machine à Coudre and Molotov. The largest event, though - a kind of preview - was held a month earlier, with thirteen local bands programmed. I was invited to come along by a friend, Philippe, who had been booked to DJ at the event, and as a newcomer to the alternative scene I jumped at the opportunity.

Philippe had his equipment set up in the entrance lobby of the venue, the Espace Julien, the largest venue in the cours Julien area. By the time I arrived the lobby was already full of people: metalheads, goths, committed rockers wearing band T-shirts and ripped jeans, but also a scattering of smartly dressed couples and even families. One man I spoke to was there to watch his son play. In one corner a merchandise table was set up, where even the youngest, most newly emergent groups had CDs, vinyl or t-shirts for sale. With so many bands on the bill, the night had to be spread across two rooms: the large main space and the adjacent bar area. In the bar area I managed to catch most of x25x, a punk trio in their late forties that Philippe had recommended going to watch. The sound was thick and noisy, the riffs straightforward, and the frontman Ben had perfected a captivating stage presence. Like the band members, the audience leaned towards the older generation and many of them knew the songs by heart. “Les 25’ was one of the big groups for us locally in the 80s”, one of the audience members said to me after the set was over. “They played all the time in squats and stuff, we really grew up with them”. In the main space, meanwhile, I caught a teenage group called The Magnets, whose musical reference points belonged to a much newer generation of indie rock and Americana.

The following Friday, at one of the weekly *apéros* held at the Lollipop record store, I met Vince, one of the organisers of the festival. Vince was in his mid-thirties, and grew up

⁴⁴ <http://laplateforme.audio/Phoceas-Rocks>

near Marseille. He was an illustrator and author of graphic novels, but also played drums in a local band, Nitwits, and considered himself a die-hard DIY music fan. Vince felt that MP2013 was an opportunity for the scene:

MP2013 has basically ignored the local [rock] scene, but in a way it's good: normally we don't make a big deal about local bands and gigs, but now we have to make some noise and show how strong we are!⁴⁵

In an interview published by Ventilo (Pascolo 2013), Vince emphasised the problem of an "elitist" festival only interested in musicians "from the other side of the world":

MP2013 is too elitist, even condescending. There is a distance between those who do the programming and those who go to see the events... We want to show that the Marseillais themselves are bearers of culture, and that you don't need to come from the other side of the world to make good music.

Where the two major scandals discussed earlier both dealt with musical absences, Phocéa Rocks found its localism in the form of a musical presence. The festival demonstrated that musical actions could be used alongside public debate as a means of defending forms of localism in the ECOC context. Indeed, for some, public debate merely represented a capitulation to the framework of MP2013:

To be honest I don't know if it's really about exclusion. Rap artists aren't always dying to be part of cultural festivals and cultural policy! The music's not about glossy brochures and elite concert halls, it takes its meaning from the streets.⁴⁶

Here, the arguments of Akhenaton and others were seen to presume the desirability of state support and institutional prestige, in contradiction to rap's anti-establishment imperative. Implicit in these perspectives was a Gramscian sensitivity to the hegemony of state institutions that, in the words of Hall et al (1976, 39), "works primarily by inserting the subordinate class into the key institutions and structures which support the power and social authority of the dominant order." Yet the outright rejection of MP2013 often seemed to emerge from scenes that, however precarious, were already served by a strong network of centrally located venues, whereas local rap generally lacked such a network. If

⁴⁵ Conversation with Vince Venckman, 3/6/13

⁴⁶ Conversation with customer, 23/3/13, Galette

Phocéa Rocks demonstrated the power of DIY cultural action in the ECOC context, it also pointed to the disparity of resources among Marseille's music scenes.

This is not to suggest that the rap scene merely protested its exclusion from MP2013 without taking creative action. While the debate unfolded in public discourse, it also made its way into musical productions, most notably in a dramatic music video released by Keny Arkana in January 2013. Filmed over the same weekend as the opening ceremonies of MP2013, "Capitale de la Rupture" rages against a "Marseille rebuilt against our will", a city "subdued" and "defeated". In her depiction, the city in 2013 is one of "dossiers beneath cocktails", mass evictions and the disappearance of the "ville du bled". As for the Capital of Culture, she exclaims, "if it was a joke we wouldn't have believed it".

The song's heavy use of arpeggiated synthesisers and its unconventionally fast tempo help imply a particular sense of urgency in Arkana's lyrics. In the video, shots of housing estates and neighbourhood scenes project the banality of the city in contradistinction to the spectacle of the Capital of Culture. The song had appeared on Arkana's recent album *Tout Tourne Autour du Soleil* (2012) but it was with the release of the music video that the track received widespread attention. "Capitale de la Rupture" constituted a vital counterpart to the mediatised accusations of rap's exclusion: it demonstrated hip-hop's capacity not only to stand for and articulate certain kinds of marginality and exclusion, but also, following Williams (2015, 1), to constitute in itself "a stump, lectern, pulpit and site of debate".

Conclusions

In September 2013 Marseille mayor Jean-Claude Gaudin declared that "the success of MP2013 is incontestable" (Piscopo-Reguieg 2013b), setting in motion a string of increasingly confident verdicts by local officials. The media, too, was overwhelmingly positive: as 2013 drew to a close, Radio France suggested that "after difficult beginnings, MP2013 seems to have generally seduced the Marseillais" (Radio France 2013). It was perhaps unsurprising that politicians and the mainstream media would come to such buoyant conclusions well before any official reports had been conducted, and the comment by Radio France typified a particularly common narrative of "success against the odds". My own discussions with local residents by no means registered a unified and polar opposite to this optimism. To be sure, cynicism around the festival's instrumentalist policies remained pronounced and was periodically re-fuelled by accounts of small

associations going bankrupt,⁴⁷ but this outlook was often tempered by hopefulness. In particular, a distinction became increasingly detectable between recollections of the festival's events programme on one hand, and the material legacy of MuCEM and other cultural infrastructure on the other. That legacy was cherished precisely in terms of its impact on the city's image, by many who had been (and continued to be) frustrated by MP2013. As the owner of a local record shop observed to me:

Marseille used to be a complete mess! I bought the shop in 2009 and things have definitely picked up in the last few years. It's partly thanks to MP2013 – I have many complaints about it, like everyone – but what it's done for the city's image nationally and internationally is really clear. You see younger tourists and they come around here [La Plaine] for example, which didn't used to happen so much.⁴⁸

Through music, Guettagate and the rap controversy exposed and animated tensions between the local, the popular and the universal: tensions that are at the heart of debates about urban modernity itself. The paucity of rap artists in the programme and the planned subsidy towards Guetta's concert became totemic for many of those who felt that MP2013 had prioritised "high culture", international prestige or commercial gain at the expense of local artists and cultural forms. At the same time, both controversies pointed to additional preoccupations: debates around the place of hip-hop resonated with the racial and postcolonial politics of rap music in France, while Guettagate exposed a particularly transparent moment of consumerist festivalisation. Meanwhile, if the anti-Guetta campaign, the rap controversy and counter-festivals such as Phocéa Rocks registered contrasting approaches to musical dissent, all three were decisively shaped by the realities of the post-digital city: its capacity to be represented, contested and disseminated "from below" with unprecedented fluidity, and for its socialities to be continuously transposed between material and virtual domains.

⁴⁷ See Freschel 2014a

⁴⁸ Conversation with Teddy, 15/5/15, Galette

Chapter Two: North African musical heritage in the postcolonial city

In January 2014, an exhibition entitled “Les Sillons de Belsunce” (“Belsunce Grooves”) opened in Marseille’s central library, charting the little-known mid-century musical history of the Belsunce neighbourhood.¹ From the 1930s to the 1970s Belsunce had been home to record labels and studios catering to a variety of diaspora audiences across France. The Algerian diaspora, unsurprisingly given its size, had represented a particularly significant market, and musicians such as Mohammed Mazouni, Salah Sadaoui, El Ghalia, Cherifa and Khelifi Ahmed had had music released by these labels. Moreover, the same labels often flourished simultaneously as distributors, taking popular recordings made in Algiers and Oran and facilitating their circulation among the growing North African populations of Paris, Lyon, Marseille and elsewhere. “Les Sillons de Belsunce” sought to document this era of migrant musical vibrancy through displays of record covers, photographs and other archival material, and digitised recordings for visitors to listen to.

The exhibition attracted considerable coverage, in local media at least, because it was deemed to be revealing a kind of ‘lost scene’, a forgotten chapter in Marseille’s cultural heritage.² Forgotten, at least, in dominant histories and representations of the city: in reality, the popular musics of this period – those belonging to genre categories such as *chaabi*, *rai* and *chanson kabyle* - continued to animate social life for an older generation of the North African diaspora. In the side-street cafés of the Belsunce of 2015, songs from fifty years ago could sometimes be seen loaded up on Youtube and heard drifting out of windows. Public performances, too, often drew on this older material: on summer evenings, musicians such as Massi Chebrek and Smail Chait busked almost nightly on the Quai des Belges, the newly pedestrianised promenade forming the entry of the Vieux Port and the historical heart of the city. It was common to hear classic songs such as Dahmane El Harrachi’s “Ya Rayah” and El Anka’s “Sobhan Allah Ya Latif” performed here in stripped-down versions for *darbuka* and *mandole chaabi*, with enthusiastic crowds drawing together Arabic- and Berber-speaking teenagers and European tourists.

¹ I was not able to visit the exhibition in person, and have drawn here on discussions with its organiser, documentation from the exhibition and existing media coverage of it. For an overview of the exhibition see <http://phocephone.blogspot.co.uk/p/sillons-de-belsunce.html>

² e.g. “Sillons de Belsunce | Radio Grenouille.”, Saïssset, 2014.

Yet the historical importance of Marseille for this music had remained largely unacknowledged by cultural institutions. Even during the era itself, Marseille's major venues had tended to ignore this flourishing milieu: the city's leading music hall, L'Alcazar, was situated at the heart of Belsunce but it had never hosted the stars of Maghrebi popular music cherished in precisely this neighbourhood.³ Symbolically, the 2014 exhibition was held in the very same building, now reconverted as the city library. In one sense, the staging of "Les Sillons de Belsunce" at L'Alcazar appeared to represent the overcoming of a former cultural segregation, the re-emplacement of North African music at the heart of an area where its existence had been so important yet so marginalised. The exhibition's organiser, Damien Taillard, also disseminated his findings online and through DJ sets at a range of local events, and in its totality Damien's work seemed to be countering a widespread cultural obliviousness.

At the same time, these new circuits of dissemination incorporated the music into contrasting spaces and discourses, such that its postcolonial orientations were multiple and uncertain. Focusing on "Les Sillons de Belsunce", Damien's organisation Phocéephone and two events at which Damien DJ'd, this chapter considers the implications of North African musical heritage in a city whose relationship with the Maghreb is historically and persistently ambivalent. In order to address the significance of these developments I begin by outlining the historical layers of Marseille's North African presence and the shifting and competing discourses surrounding it. Following this I introduce the musical idioms that populated Damien's archival findings, stressing their embeddedness in the complex experience of the North African diaspora. I also situate Phocéephone in relation to debates surrounding cultural diversity in contemporary heritage practices. I argue ultimately that Damien's DJ sets offered an embodied and fluid alternative to conventional modes of heritage dissemination, making possible a multivalent recasting of the music's relationship to notions of difference, nationhood and local identity.

³ See Creze 2014. L'Alcazar was Marseille's most prestigious music hall for much of the early 20th century, playing host to stars of *chanson* and *variété* including Tino Rossi, Yves Montand and others up until its closure in 1966.

Background

In order to grasp the significance of North African musical heritage for Marseille, it is first useful to give an account of the histories this heritage seeks to represent.⁴ The local North African presence extends back centuries and has been a focal point of shifting and competing versions of local identity in recent decades. As early as the 1100s, the city's trade with Tunis, Ceuta, Oran and other North African ports brought in visiting sailors on a regular basis (Dell'Umbria 2006, 76). By the mid-seventeenth century, Marseille's association with North Africa had already gained some discursive momentum among the French upper classes, with the novelist Madeline de Scudéry commenting in 1647 that "the proximity of Algiers has made Marseille too barbaric" (ibid., 10). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of the merchants and their families who formed part of Marseille's social elite were North African Jewish emigrés. A report from 1793 even referred to a "mini-colony of Barbary Jews" that included artisans from Tunis (Temime and Echinard 1989, 77).⁵

From the 1830s onwards Marseille's association with the Maghreb was inextricably bound up with the interests of French colonialism, including military transport and the importing of raw materials (Temime 1990). It was not until the early twentieth century, though, that this presence could be characterised in terms of a substantial diaspora. In the first years of the century, Marseille businesses began recruiting directly from the towns and villages of Kabylie in western Algeria: the Saint-Louis sugar refinery, in the fifteenth arrondissement, continued to recruit from the town of Azazga until the 1980s (Temime et al 1991, 68). Often, an aim was to provide low-wage labour that could break the strikes held by radicalised French and Italian workers (Lorcerie and Geisser 2011, 47; Dell'Umbria 2006, 400). By 1912 an estimated two thousand Kabyle workers were resident in the city, though the short-term nature of their employment often meant swift repatriation and an inherent fluidity to the structure of the local Algerian population. Nevertheless, after the interruptions of the First World War the flow of migrant labour continued and soon began to coalesce around particular neighbourhoods such as Belsunce and Carmes (Temime and Attard-Maraninchi 1990, 38).

In August 1944 two majority-North African regiments were decisive in the liberation of Marseille from Nazi occupation, and following World War Two Algerian migration was

⁴ Following the French convention, I use 'North African' here to refer to Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

⁵ Other examples of pre-colonial North African Jewish residents as cited by Temime include the Busnach family, notable in Marseille public life in the early 1800s.

opened up hugely by the French government's granting of citizenship to Algerians in France (Temime and Attard-Maranchini 1990, 159). While new levels of bureaucracy put paid to any illusion that legal citizenship would be straightforward in practice, the post-war period did see a huge growth in migration. Marseille's role as a site of passage was foregrounded here, with the establishment of huge 'sorting centres' for dealing with newly arrived workers. Among those who did stay in Marseille, many brought their families with them, initiating a largely unprecedented trend in Algerian migration. Thus in 1954 while the Bouches-du-Rhone department contained just 8 or 9% of France's Algerian population, it contained around 17% of the country's Algerian family units (Temime et al 1991, 50).



Algerians arriving in Marseille, 1950s (Institut National de l'Audiovisuel)

That Marseille, as a key beneficiary of colonial exploitation, went on to absorb so many former colonial subjects is an irony familiar to other Western European cities. An additional dimension in Marseille was the even more substantial settlement of the *pieds-noirs*, especially in 1962. These were residents of Morocco, Tunisia and, especially, Algeria, who had migrated from southern Europe (especially France, Spain and Italy) during the period of French colonial rule. Though they had benefitted from French citizenship since 1870, the affinities and political attachments of the *pieds-noirs* were, and remain, complex (Jordi 2009). As independence movements in North Africa gathered pace in the 1950s, the *pieds-noirs* began to leave en masse for fear of persecution, abruptly ending years and often successive generations of settlement.

As the most significant point of arrival, and thanks also to its Mediterranean climate and historically rooted migrant networks, Marseille unsurprisingly absorbed large numbers of *pieds-noirs*. By 1974 they numbered close to 100,000 in the city, approximately one eighth of all those repatriated in France (Temime et al 1991, 65). Other groups fleeing the uncertainties of post-independence Algeria gravitated to Marseille, too. The *harkis* were Algerian Muslims who, for a variety of reasons, had fought for the French army during the Algerian War.⁶ Unlike the *pieds-noirs*, most were not immediately offered protection by the French government: by the time the *harkis* and their families began to be granted asylum in metropolitan France, many had suffered brutal reprisals (Jordi & Temime 1996). Algerian Jews, who reportedly numbered 140,000 in 1962, likewise feared persecution following independence (Laskier 1997, 334). Following a 1963 law that granted citizenship only to those of Muslim parentage (Parolin 2009, 95), most fled to France. These repatriated and exiled populations arrived in a city where, in many cases, the same Algerian labourers who built their houses had also contributed vital funds from their French wages to the Algerian independence movement (see Temime et al 1991, 74). The fact that this same independence movement had catalysed repatriation and exile provides a compelling example of the circulating flows of labour, ideology and capital that came to characterise the postcolonial Algerian-French experience.

For Temime (1995, 61), “there is no doubt that Marseille felt the effects of decolonisation more strongly and durably than the rest of France”. Dell’Umbria, meanwhile, suggests that “the gigantic mess of Algerian decolonisation would be settled in particular in Marseille” (2006, 588). Certainly the combined presence of these populations in a new, far from neutral urban environment, threatened to reproduce the tensions of their former colonial relationships. The subsequent decades did see the occasional eruption of resentments: in 1973, the murder of a local bus driver by an Algerian man sparked a wave of reprisals and xenophobic journalism (Dell’Umbria 2006, 584; Gastaut 2005, 5). In the right-wing newspaper *Le Méridional* the following day, the editor declared that “we have had enough of this wild and uncontrolled immigration which is bringing the entire scum of the other side of the Mediterranean into our country” (Gabriel Domenich, cited in Lehay 2012). A series of retaliatory attacks culminated in a general strike later that year, called by the Movement of Arab Workers (MTA).

In the 1980s Marseille became a focal point for the rise to prominence of the political far

⁶ Recent accounts (e.g. Evans 2016) stress the complexity of *harki* motives. Many were – or had sympathies with – political opponents of the Algerian Front de Libération Nationale (FLN), while not necessarily opposing independence itself. Others were attracted by the promise either of physical protection from FLN violence or a route out of severe poverty, while some in remote regions were motivated by a genuine identification with France.

right in French civil society (Lorcerie and Geisser 2011, 254). Cesari notes how “the way these events were treated by the press (whether local or national) shaped the image of a city that was ‘sick’ from its population of Maghrebi origin, of a city that was ‘a symbol of the invasion’” (Césari 2013, 124). By 1987 Marseille had become the perfect setting for the emergent Front National to set out its vision for France. Following a minor local election victory, the party organised a demonstration where its leader Jean-Marie Le Pen described a “Marseille disfigured, ruined, occupied, but soon liberated!”:

Liberated from its enclaves that today are foreign, tomorrow will be enemies.
Marseille is...the symbol of a France that affirms its determination to be itself, its
resistance to decadence and to foreign occupation.⁷

The notion of Marseille as a “ville arabe” soon made its way to the national media, helping to normalise a range of assumptions. Dell’Umbria (2006, 11) describes how, in the late 1980s, a national TV presenter went largely unchallenged after joking that Marseille is the first “Arab city” crossed in the Paris-Dakar rally. Such pronouncements formed part of a growing, (primarily) Western European Islamophobia rooted, it was argued, in the end of the Cold War and the need for a new ‘other’ against which the West could define itself (e.g. Gross et al, 1994). In France, the sense of an unprecedented confrontation was marked by a high-profile trial over Islamic clothing in 1989 and the escalation of hostile rhetoric by the then mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac, while a 1991 survey reported that 71% of French adults believed there were “too many Arabs” in the country (Gross et al 1994).⁸

It was also precisely this context that catalysed the development of an alternative discourse encapsulated by the popular term “droit à la difference” (Phaneuf 2012). Efforts to frame Marseille’s North African inhabitants as simply one dimension of the city’s proud diversity gathered pace under the mayor Robert Vigouroux, who oversaw the founding of prominent intercommunal organisation Marseille Espérance in the early 1990s (Lorcerie and Geisser 2011, 57). For writers such as Yvan Gastaut (2005), this oscillation or struggle between shifting forms of cosmopolitanism and nativism constitutes the “dorsal fin” of the city’s identity. At stake here was a struggle between contrasting visions of the city, variously informed by ideals of unitary French republicanism, the rejection of ethnic

⁷ Jean Marie Le Pen quoted in Temime et. al, 1991, 176

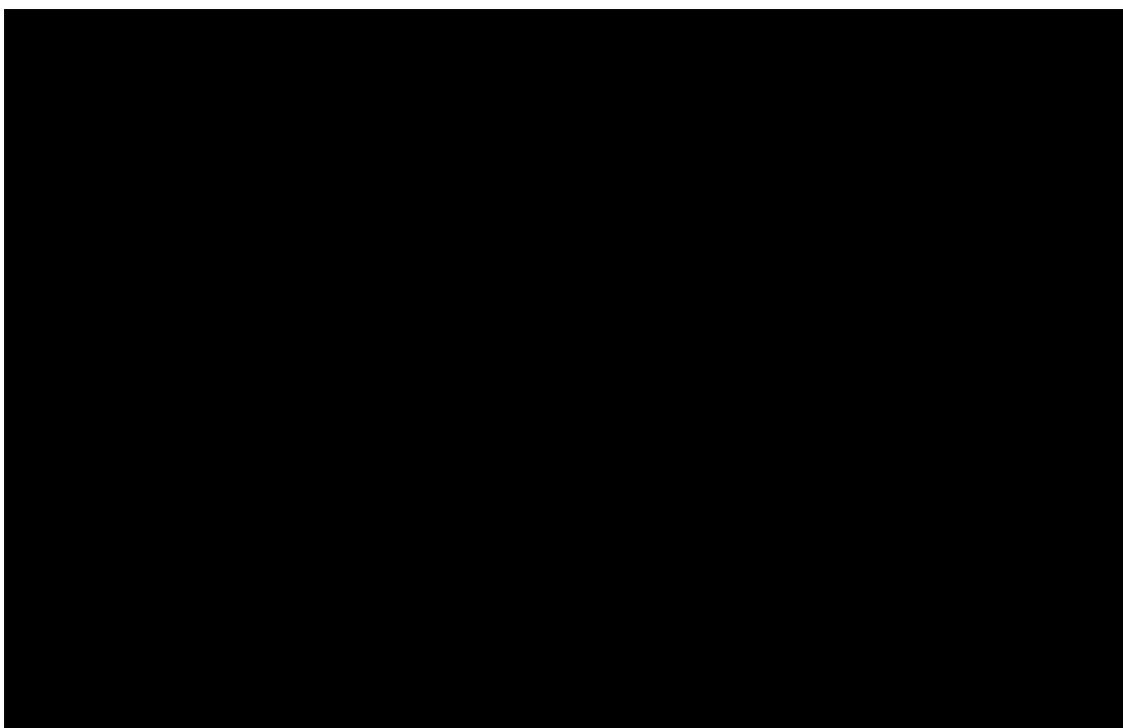
⁸ These developments can also be seen in relation to a French historiographical paradigm that excludes the voices of marginalized groups, Derderian (2002) observes that in dominant narratives of the Algerian War of Independence, ‘memory work’ is embedded in a power-knowledge arrangement that privileges French and pied-noir voices at the expense of Algerians.

minorities, or the foregrounding of rights based on cultural identity. In 2011, proposals for an International Festival of Arab Cinema in Marseille met with controversy at the local council. But for Patrick Mennucci, mayor of the 1st sector, it was time to acknowledge, or even reclaim, the specifically 'Arab' dimension of the city:

Marseille is an Arab city, just as it is a Mediterranean city. If we're not capable of seeing ourselves as we are we will regress, and all the pretty speeches on integration will be for nothing. Marseille must wholeheartedly accept its Arab side.⁹

Migrancy, circulation and settlement: the case of Belsunce

The settlement of North Africans began to coalesce in particular neighbourhoods from the earliest phase of Kabyle migration in the 1920s (Temime 1995). Like the newly arrived political exiles and refugees from Armenia and Greece, Kabyle migrants often settled in Belsunce, an area delineated by the Gare St. Charles and the Porte d'Aix to the north, and the Canebière to the south.



⁹ Patrick Mennucci cited in Barbier 2011. At the time of this statement Mennucci was the chief government representative for cultural affairs at the regional level, and also the leader of the Socialist Party in Marseille with ambitions for mayoralty in 2014. While his embrace of the notion of an 'Arab city' arguably countered a succession of anti-communitarian discursive strategies, it also enacted a familiar reduction of France's North African Muslim population by obscuring that population's ethnic, cultural and linguistic plurality. Specifically, activists such as Belkacem Lounès (e.g. 2003) have campaigned for greater recognition of Berber identity as distinct from Arab identity, claiming that Berbers number two million in France.

Detail of Marseille city centre, showing Belsunce to the north.

Within Belsunce, the Rue des Chapeliers was a focal point of migrant sociability, and its restaurants, boarding houses and pavements became emblematic of Marseille's North African presence. In the late 1920s, Albert Londres was foremost among the writers whose evocations of this milieu helped establish a highly exoticised, often pejorative vision of Belsunce's cosmopolitanism in the national imaginary:

Do you want to see Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia? Give me your hand. I'll take you to the Rue des Chapeliers: here are the shacks, the *bicots*, the *mouquères*.¹⁰ There is the perfume of the Orient, that's to say the smell of an old candle frying in a pan. Here, hung across the door, an old leathery sheep. There are the *sidis* returning to the casbah after working at the port. Give way and don't speak to women, that would cause a fight, you are in Arab territory. You are in Sfax, Rabat, the ghetto of Oran. Nothing is missing: the reheated Turkish coffee, the lanterns and the unhealthy and tempting twilight of Mediterranean towns.¹¹

Another journalist, Ludovic Naudeau, was no less exaggerated in his rhetoric, claiming that in Belsunce "there are no white people...and no blacks. There are only North Africans in fez hats. The Rue des Chapeliers has become the central encampment of the Kabyles" (Naudeau quoted in Temime 1995, 60). Addressing this discursive production of the neighbourhood, Temime (1995, 60) notes that the comparison of Belsunce to a souk or medina became key to descriptions of the neighbourhood in the 1920s. While 1931 census figures revealed that North Africans represented just 15% of the residents of the Rue des Chapeliers, it would be simplistic to dismiss Naudeau's remarks as hysterical propaganda. Temime rightly points out that the institutionalised practice of using certain street corners and cafés as recruitment spots for manual labourers may have given an impression, however conveniently, of the North African dominance of local public space. For ignorant or unaware outsiders, Temime suggests, the unfamiliar sounds of the Armenian and Greek languages may have led these populations to be conflated with their Arabic- or Berber-speaking neighbours. Instead, accounts such as these point to the fluidity and fundamental subjectivity of the urban experience, to its multiple and conflicting impressions of dominance and marginality (e.g. Tonkiss 2005, 113).

¹⁰ *Bicot* is a pejorative word designating a person of North African origin. *Mouquère* is an archaic Algerian term that designated "woman", following the Spanish "mujer".

¹¹ Albert Londres cited in Temime and Attard-Maranchini 1990, 87.

A more recent study suggested that the city's North African population often swells by 40,000 at weekends, thanks to the so-called 'grey market' in everything from car parts unavailable in Algeria to North African goods unavailable in France (Manry and Peraldi 2004). A neighbourhood interviewee for Temime's research remarked that "there's always someone preparing to leave for Algeria or someone coming back" (1995, 41). Indeed, for some, Marseille remains more significantly a site of passage than of settlement, capturing something of what Stokes, following Iain Chambers (2008), refers to as a "rhizomic Mediterranean" (2011, 30).

The case of Belsunce also points to an important distinction between the social geography of Marseille and of other French cities. Elsewhere, since the 1970s North African populations have been strongly associated with the *banlieue*, the rapidly built suburban housing estates that are often poorly connected to, and thus isolated from, the city centres. The consequences of this spatial fragmentation have been aggressively illuminated by the riots erupting periodically across the French *banlieues* (Donzelot 2008; Bronner 2010; Rosenczweig and Bodard 2007).¹² While Marseille's *quartiers nord*s are often considered to constitute a version of this crisis, Belsunce (and, more recently, Noailles) represent the unprecedented inverse in accommodating a North African population in the core of the city. Indeed, the merits of this centrality have been at the heart of local debates: the current mayor, Jean-Claude Gaudin, described himself horrified by the North African markets of Noailles, while others celebrate the area's ability to tolerate a diverse and openly communitarian population (Dell'Umbia 2006, 578). For the far right, areas such as Belsunce are seen to validate claims of an Arab 'takeover' in Marseille, while for others Belsunce foregrounds the pre-war, pre-"cité HLM"¹³ origins of local immigration and thus the deep-rootedness of the North African presence.

Les Sillons de Belsunce: musical heritage and the production of the multicultural city

Marseille's association with North Africa is therefore highly complex, laced with the paradoxes and contested discourses of postcolonial modernity and embodied in the emblematic neighbourhood of Belsunce. Algerian popular musics have long registered these tensions, and the political resonances of *rai* have formed a subject of particularly rich discussion (e.g. Marranci 2005; Daoudi 2000; Langlois 1996). The historical period

¹² More recently, socio-spatial fragmentation in French cities has been linked to a perceived growth in religious extremism (e.g. Kepel 2015).

¹³ A "cité HLM" is comparable to an American housing project or a British council estate. HLM refers to "Habitation à Loyer Modéré".

framed by the work of Phocéephone, stretching roughly from the end of World War Two to the emergence of the cassette market in the early 1980s, is closely associated with the flourishing of Algerian popular idioms such as *rai* and *chaabi* as well as the commercial development of the more traditional *chanson kabyle* style. Much of the music uncovered by Phocéephone belonged to these genres, and an outline of their intertwined histories can help prepare the ground for understanding the resonances of Phocéephone's work.

Both *rai* and *chaabi* are generally considered to have originated in interwar Algeria, at a time when the cities of Oran and Algiers were witnessing increasingly syncretic cultural developments (Langlois 2015; Marranci 2005; Daoudi 2000). The circumstances of French colonial rule contributed greatly to these conditions: on one hand, technological developments including the growing presence of radio and phonographs and the mass production of western instruments facilitated the dissemination of new and distant musics such as bebop and boogie-woogie (Daoudi & Miliani 1996, 61). Urban musical idioms thus became inflected by the timbres and rhythms of Western and Latin American genres, especially following new and intensely dispersed patterns of human circulation during and after World War Two (Langlois 2015, 150).¹⁴

On the other hand, the French expropriation of swathes of Algerian land starting in the late nineteenth century had imposed a longer-term rerouting of human settlement, forcing rural populations increasingly into the country's urban centres (Langlois 2015, 143). As in a range of other well-known historical instances, this rural-urban migration initiated deep and protracted collisions between situated notions of tradition and modernity, nostalgia and opportunity, that were often musically generative.¹⁵ *Rai* was closely associated with Oran, having first appeared as a popular form of wedding music among poorer families of rural origin in the city (Marranci 2005). Crucially, where the traditional *maddahat* wedding singers insisted on performing religious music, the *cheikhs* and *cheikhats* performing early *rai* instead tapped into the moral digressions of contemporary urban life. Themes of alcohol, desire and promiscuity, hitherto confined to private, single-sex contexts and bordellos, moved to the foreground of public performance (Marranci 2005).

If musical hybridisation was itself controversial given the often illicit connotations of Western dance genres, the articulation of these topics caused outrage, as Langlois suggests, among "a local Arab community striving to present a morally superior identity in

¹⁴ Langlois (2015, 151) describes how the Oranais pianist Maurice El Médioni encountered rumba, tango and boogie-woogie when he came to perform for American soldiers stationed in the city in 1944.

¹⁵ Other historical examples include the role of music in the inter-animation of cosmopolitanism and nationalism in 1980 Zimbabwe (Turino 2008).

opposition to that of European colonialists” (Langlois 2017).¹⁶ Moreover, *rai* borrowed freely from French and Spanish while allowing rural and urban dialects to inflect what Virolle (1995, 11) calls a “language freed from the constraints of classicism”. The growing movement for Algerian independence threw open the question of national identity, but *rai* had neither the moral purity required by Islamists nor the sense of geographical rootedness sought by secular nationalists.¹⁷

Like *rai*, *chaabi* emerged from these human and technological flows. It took shape in the working-class *casbah* of Algiers through major performers such as El-Anka, and drew stylistically from jazz and Egyptian popular forms. But where *rai*’s stylistic complexion was continually shifting, *chaabi* remained decisively shaped by *arabo-andalus* art music, with which it also shared the mutual participation of Jews and Muslims – as both participants and publics.¹⁸ The typical, expansive instrumental combination of “*mandole chaabi*”, banjo, violin, *ney*, *darbouka* and *tar* was established early on, and - unlike in *rai* - electronic instruments were never broadly accepted. Crucially, though *chaabi* texts dealt with questions of love and loss, these themes were treated more conservatively than in *rai* and thus more tolerably. *Chaabi* therefore emerged as a more socially acceptable form of Algerian popular music during the 1950s and 1960s.

As with other genres marked by closely interlaced Jewish and Muslim participation, *chaabi* became destabilised and contested during the years leading up to independence.¹⁹ Nevertheless it retained its treasured status among France’s growing North African diaspora, and stars such as Dahmane El Harrachi and Luc Cherki used their songs to narrate experiences of exile. The exhibition presented at l’Alcazar profiled a number of record labels active during this period: Tam-Tam, founded by the Armenian Jacques Derderian, published recordings in the 1950s of Jewish musicians such as Jo Amar El Maghribi, Zohra El Fassia and Luc Cherki.²⁰ The label Sonia Disques released a full LP by Dahmane El Harrachi, who had also lived briefly as a musician in Marseille upon his arrival in France in 1949.

¹⁶ Virolle (1995) discusses a number of early examples of *rai*’s controversial reception. Most famously, in 1954 the popular singer Cheikha Remitti was condemned for her song “Charrak Gattà”, in which young women were encouraged to be promiscuous.

¹⁷ Major restrictions on the performance and dissemination of *rai* in Algeria persisted until the 1980s, including a virtual ban by the state-run Radio Television Algérienne (Virolle 1995, 51).

¹⁸ Though *chaabi* remained associated with the mutual participation of Jews and Muslims, Langlois (2015, 149) argues that *arabo-andalus* art music, in moving to the foreground of the Algerian nationalist discourse on music from the late 1950s, was “dislocated from its historical links with the Jewish community”.

¹⁹ See Langlois 2015 for a discussion of the contestations around identification and ownership in these musics.

²⁰ Documentation for “Les Sillons de Belsunce”, available at <http://www.bmvr.marseille.fr/in/sites/marseille/patrimoine/exposition?expold=a2a787f2-eaf8-4647-9f6d-de88e8808550>

Both *chaabi* and the more traditional *chanson kabyle* style are understood to have animated a resilient sense of “Algerianness” for the first generation of migrants in France - one often underpinned by a belief in the possibility of a return to the homeland (Marranci 2005, 202). *Chanson kabyle* texts, Marranci argues, “expressed immigrant workers’ everyday difficulties and loneliness, but they also dealt with the political problems of their homeland”. Again, “Les Sillons de Belsunce” traced the presence of traditional Kabyle music through the commercial networks of Belsunce: the record company Sudiphone had released a number of records under license from the Algiers-based label Zed El Youm, including a 7” release by the Kabyle singer Cherifa. Born Guardia Bouchemlal in 1926, Cherifa grew up in poverty in Ait Halla, a small, mountainous village in Kabylie, singing initially for local wedding ceremonies and circumcisions (Ali 2014). At the age of 18 she left for Algiers, where she soon began recording for radio and commercial release. In her career she reportedly recorded over 800 songs, often based on the traditional, call-and-response mode of women’s chant called *achewiq* (Mihoubi 2016; Bouchène 2014). In the 1940s she became famous with the song “Abkay ala Khir Ay Akbou (Au Revoir Akbou)”, though despite great commercial success a number of reports suggest she saw little money (e.g. Ali 2014). In “Ezyne Ifazene”, a song uploaded to the Phcoéephone blog, Cherifa’s interplay with a women’s chorus is set to an insistent duple meter and backed by an elaborate instrumental ensemble.

It took until the 1980s for *raï* to achieve its own peak in popularity, with artists such as Cheb Khaled and Cheb Mami emerging as emblematic of a youthful and globally oriented *pop-raï* (Daoudi & Miliani 1996, 211).²¹ The music’s urge to hybridity now absorbed the rhythms of funk and reggae and the timbres of the latest synthesisers and drum machines (Langlois 1996). If the new sound galvanised a younger generation of Algerians both “at home” and in diaspora, it also represented an early manifestation of the World Music phenomenon (Virolle 1995, 8). *Pop-raï* was closely associated with the rise of the cassette, and its global success altered the established circuits of distribution on which the various enterprises of Belsunce had thrived (Suzanne 2007b). It was this moment, then, that marked the end point of the period surveyed in the exhibition. Nevertheless, perspectives on the politics of North African popular music are inevitably shaped by the intense contestations surrounding *raï* in the 1990s.

²¹ Virolle (1995, 11) notes, for example, the increasing density of references to signifiers of “modernity” (jeans, swimsuits), mobility (the car, the plane, the passport, the telephone) and liberty (especially in terms of alcohol) in *raï* texts.

Despite its stylistic mutations, *rai* is often thought to have retained historical coherence through a continuous and flexible orientation to profanity and the experience of youth and marginality.²² The term itself - often translated as “opinion” or “advice” – also registers something of the music’s recurrent focus on a break from moral doctrine. With the remarkable advent of *pop-raï*, these tensions resurfaced dramatically. The music had finally been co-opted by the Algerian state following *pop-raï*’s meteoric rise,²³ but among religious fringes its scandalous character became intolerable: during the Algerian Civil War the murders of famous figures, including the singer Cheb Hasni (in 1994) and producer Rachid Baba (in 1995), were both attributed to armed religious groups (Schade-Poulsen 1999; Langlois 1996).²⁴

The historical trajectories of *rai*, *chaabi* and *kabyle* musics can be understood, then, to inhabit and express certain overarching tensions of the Algerian diasporic experience. “Les Sillons de Belsunce” captured a period in which North African genres became powerful affective agents in the narration of exile, longing, nationhood and marginality. Through its incorporation into museological display practices, this history and its sonic-material artefacts acquired particular kinds of value and a particular set of orientations to the postcolonial condition in France. In the following section I attempt to conceptualise these values and orientations by drawing on theoretical approaches to what Kalay et al (2007) refer to as the New Heritage.

“Les Sillons de Belsunce” was put together by Damien with support from the Alcazar library, which is funded by the local government. I contacted Damien via email in 2014, and arranged to meet him to find out more about the initiative. We met a few days later, for an early evening beer on the Cours Belsunce. There, Damien explained how things had started. In 2007, while shopping at a local street market, he was surprised to find two crates full of old North African 7” records at a fabric merchant’s stall. Damien had previously worked at a Marseille record shop, and as a long-time record enthusiast he was curious as to their origin. Taking the records home, on close inspection he discovered that many had local addresses printed on their sleeves and labels.

He soon began digitising the recordings, and in 2010 initiated Phocéephone as a blog in order to upload selected tracks. As well as recordings produced in, or distributed from,

²² In this sense it is useful, following Marranci (2005, 197) to conceptualise *rai* as a “metagenre” that recurs and mutates in different historical contexts.

²³ Virolle 1995, 7

²⁴ Responsibility and motives for these and other attacks remain subject to debate and speculation, but within the literature there is a broad consensus that *rai* musicians were increasingly subjected to acts of intimidation during the Algerian Civil War.

Marseille, Phocéephone also featured a broader selection of “musiques orientales”, which entailed a geographically broad remit from Morocco to Iran. The blog described Phocéephone’s mission in terms of “the preservation and dissemination of recorded music heritage”,²⁵ and most uploads were of recordings dating from the vinyl-dominated era of the 1930s to the 1970s.

At the same time, Damien’s new interest in the historical networks of Belsunce led him to gradually uncover a number of record labels, studios and shops that flourished during the 1950s and 1960s, and that specialised in genres such as *chaabi*, *chanson kabyle* and *rai*. While most of the artists featured on these recordings were based either in Paris or in major Algerian cities such as Algiers or Oran, Damien discovered that many of the most famous had performed in Belsunce, at small venues such as the *Sultan* or the *Mille et un nuits*. Alongside the blog, he was also DJing regularly at small venues and cultural centres, and in 2012 began discussions with the team at l’Alcazar about hosting an exhibition based on his research. The project was eventually agreed and the exhibition ran from 7th January to 13th February 2014. I asked Damien why he had devoted so much energy to the project:

The experience of Maghrebis in France is quite poorly documented and understood I feel, compared to other groups. There isn’t a huge literary culture so the experience has to be transmitted in other ways, and music has been the richest form for that. At the same time, it hasn’t been discussed at all – Belsunce is known as a migrant neighbourhood, but more often in terms of crime and poverty than cultural production.²⁶

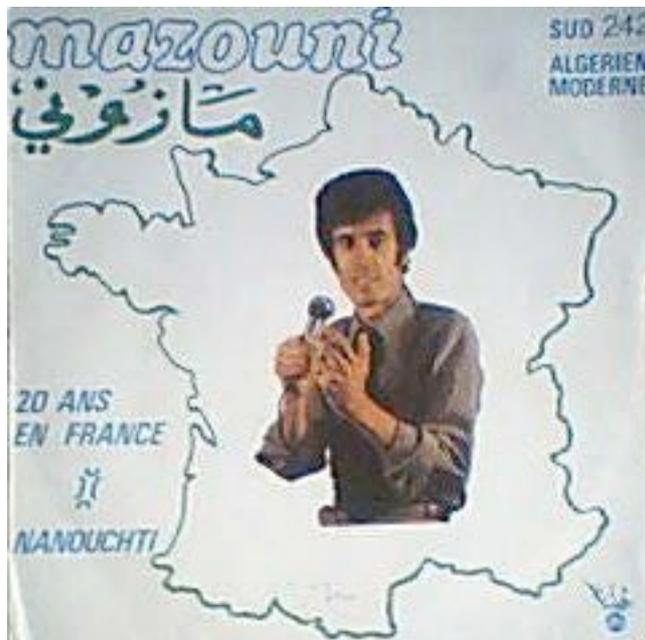
For Damien, exhibiting music presented itself as a possible means of enriching the simplistic and often derogatory perceptions of migrant neighbourhoods in France. Certainly, the notion of a Maghrebi oral tradition linking singing, song-writing and poetry is far better established in scholarly literature than in French public discourse (e.g. Virolle 1995, 5). Equally though, the story was one that afforded a certain recasting of North African popular music’s historical geography. Damien might not have been attempting to equate Marseille’s importance with that of Oran, Algiers or Paris, but he did emphasise networked flows over self-contained hubs of production and dissemination:

²⁵ <http://phoceephone.blogspot.co.uk/>

²⁶ Interview, Dock’s Café, 24/6/14.

Actually the productivity of these labels was never anything like what was happening in Barbès,²⁷ you know, it was small enterprises and the main thing is that they were connected to these wider networks, they were definitely part of those networks.²⁸

Damien saw the nodal importance of Belsunce as crucial and overlooked. In this way, Phocéephone draws attention to multiple iterations of musical mobility, from the recordings that circulate in and through diasporic flows to the musical rendering of cultural difference, memory and other dimensions of migrant experience. At the same time, it enriches the countermythology of Belsunce's cosmopolitan past, one in which the neighbourhood is understood in contrast to the assimilationist imperatives of French republicanism.



Cover design for “20 Ans en France / Nanouchti” (1970) by Mazouni

“Les Sillons de Belsunce” can be understood, then, as a window onto untold stories, one whose transparency is defined by music's particular energies. At the same time, and like all acts of heritage, Phocéephone does not simply reveal or uncover the past but also produces and manages it. In this sense it poses questions that are not often asked of North African music: what meanings - symbolic or embodied, local or networked - might be conferred on mid-century *rai* and *chaabi* by contemporary French institutions, and what is gained and lost as the music is subject to new forms of mediation? Where

²⁷ Barbès is a neighbourhood of Paris with strong historic North African associations

²⁸ Dock's Café, 24/6/14

existing studies have addressed the migration of *rai* and *chaabi* to France, they have tended to focus on the changing relationships between musical production and reception on the one hand, and diaspora identity on the other (e.g. Marranci 2005; Daoudi 2000; Virolle 1995; Gross et al 1994). These accounts thus stress the changing role of Algerian music within diasporic social life. In Marranci's case this is seen in relation to the absorption of *pop-raï* into the world music industry as it emerged and developed through the 1980s and 1990s, while Gross et al focus on what they call "the defensive deployment of *rai* on the immigrant margins" (1994, 29). While these accounts provide valuable insights into the changing meanings of Algerian music in diaspora, they have shed relatively little light on perceptions and representations of the music beyond these populations. In particular, greater attention could be paid to the role of heritage practices in what Rodney Harrison (2012) calls the "careful management of the past".

Harrison's critical approach to heritage is particularly useful in helping to illuminate dynamic relationships between materiality, ideology and history. Harrison emphasises the conceptual prism of late modernity to help account for what he sees as the ubiquity of heritage in post-industrial societies. For Harrison, late modernity is conceived – following the work of Kevin Walsh (1992) - as a period in which societies increasingly conceptualise themselves in relation to the past: the past is the "constitutive outside" that must be managed carefully to give meaning to the present (2012, 25). This imperative to define the present through contrasts with a maximally discernible past is, for Harrison, one reason for the growing pervasiveness of heritage. A further reason is that notions of obsolescence are immanent to notions of progress: if modernity, in Latour's words, understands time as an "irreversible arrow" (ibid. 25), this sense of the inevitability of progress logically requires the recognition of obsolescence, too, as inevitable. For Harrison these are among the factors that produce, following Terdiman (1993), the "memory crisis" of late modernity, in which we stockpile "the redundant, the disused, the outmoded as potential raw materials for the production of memories that we feel we are unable to risk losing" (Harrison 2012, 3).

If the circumstances of late modernity reveal much about why projects such as PhocéePhone emerge, it is also necessary to attend to the rise of the politics of representation as a major theme in contemporary cultural life. Following the work of writers such as Foucault (e.g. 1975) on the relationships between the construction of knowledge and the exercise of power, heritage has increasingly been understood as a discursive practice acting within a knowledge/power nexus (Harrison 2012). Rather than consisting in the impartial documentation and dissemination of historical data, heritage is

grasped as highly selective and ideologically situated. Here Harrison draws on the work of Stuart Hall, for whom these practices are comparable to the 'storying' carried out by individuals or families as a core element of identity formation. Here, identity is made sense of by "selectively binding" past events into a "single, coherent narrative" (Hall cited in Harrison 2012, 142). In the context of institutionally embedded discourses of nationhood, these acts of storying constitute powerful strategies of representation.

Informed by these theoretical developments, major critiques of what Tony Bennett (1995) called "the exhibitory complex" have helped apply pressure on cultural institutions to reflect on the absences and assumptions that shape the heritage they produce (Harrison 2012, 109). In response, Harrison characterises heritage practices since the 1990s in terms of a turn away from "canonical" models towards "relative" and "representative" models (ibid, 165). These frameworks emphasise a plurality of value systems and claim to adequately reflect their balance within society, often emerging in the context of multiculturalist state policies. Hall (1999, 27) observed what he saw as the beginnings of this shift in late 1990s Britain: first, notions of "history from below" were proliferating, and the idea of a "democratised" conception of "what is or is not worth preserving" was increasingly in evidence. Second, a growing cultural relativism and other challenges to Enlightenment concepts of universal knowledge were beginning to impact on the curation of high-profile exhibitions.

In France as in the UK, these shifts were closely associated with struggles to come to terms with histories of imperialism and slavery (Thomas 2013). In 2006 the opening of the Musée du Quai Branly in Paris was considered a watershed moment in French museological approaches to cultural diversity, yet it took place against the backdrop of a high-profile debate surrounding new dictionary definitions of 'colonialism'.²⁹ In the same year, a landmark edited volume, *La fracture coloniale*, was among the first major publications to insist that the French state "take responsibility" for these histories (Bancel et al 2006). For many, though, the "demands and exigencies of...postcolonial society" are yet to be reconciled with the brutalities of the past (Thomas 2013, 21).

"Les Sillons de Belsunce" can be understood in the context of such a multicultural turn, in the sense that it helped offset the paucity of attention given to Franco-Maghrebi cultural history in general and as it has existed in Marseille in particular. Placing the exhibition in

²⁹ The 2007 edition of the widely used Le Petit Robert dictionary was accused of attempting to "glorify" and "rehabilitate" colonialism by defining the word not simply in terms of exploitation but also of "mise en valeur", translatable as "valuing" or "enhancing" (Thomas 2013, 25; Le Monde 2006)

this context also involves considering well-established critiques of multiculturalism, particularly those that question where power resides in multiculturalist projects. Damien had worked closely with members of various North African community groups on each element of the exhibition, and had met with older residents to gain insights into local life during the period. At the same time, he was very clearly the face and voice of the project. In this sense both Said's (1979) *Orientalism* and Foucault's (1975) broader emphasis on the construction of knowledge as a pervasive basis for the exercise of power, appear relevant. As Hall observed in 1999, the questions of "Who should control the power to represent' and 'Who has the authority to re-present the culture of authors?' have resounded through the museum corridors of the world, provoking a crisis of authority" (1999, 28). If "Les Sillons de Belsunce" can be read as evidence of music's power to represent and animate marginal histories, it also points to the ways in which this same power can be mobilised to exhibit and potentially fix contested histories.

The exhibition, though, was only one outcome of Damien's ongoing archival work, and a finer-grained discussion demonstrates the inadequacy of reducing Phocéephone to the dimensions of an Orientalist project. Specifically, it is important to consider the implications of the particular methods of preservation and dissemination that Phocéephone has made use of, both in relation to "Les Sillons de Belsunce" and as part of the organisation's wider project. One key methodological feature was the use of digital technology, which Damien employed to capture, "clean" and store the audio from vinyl records, and then to upload this audio to his blog and Soundcloud account. From here it could be digitally streamed and shared from any internet-ready device around the world. For example, a number of websites publishing features on "Les Sillons de Belsunce" embedded tracks uploaded to the blog into their own posts, significantly increasing the music's exposure (e.g. Saisset 2014). In June 2014, Damien was invited by Marseille radio station Radio Grenouille to record a DJ set from his record collection live on air: though he did this using the original vinyl records, the mix was also broadcast digitally and then made available for streaming and downloading.³⁰ Music that had once circulated intensively was now circulating again, through a proliferation of new and improbable trajectories.

In this sense, just as Phocéephone participates in the turn to relativist models of heritage, it also inhabits what Kalay (2007) calls the "new heritage" – a paradigm defined first by the rapid rise of digital technology as a means of preservation and dissemination, and

³⁰ <http://www.radiogrenouille.com/audiotheque/sillons-de-belsunce/>

second by the challenges and opportunities this entails (see also Cameron et al. 2007). For Kalay, this ambivalence is captured in the deterritorialising impact of digital heritage, wherein “the instant access provided by digital media strips away [the] “conditioning” and “contextualizing” preconditions of the artefact” (2007, 8).

In the music industry, a significant iteration of the “new heritage” has been the growth of relatively small European and North American record labels that “crate-dig” for old records from distant parts of the world, before digitising and releasing them (Gardner 2017). For Gardner, labels such as Luaka Bop, Strut and Analog Africa stray close to a neo-colonial “race to the past”, seeking to fix and exoticise chapters of African musical history. While Phocéephone shares this interest in history and cultural difference, two important features distinguish it from Gardner’s characterisations. First, it does not release music commercially and therefore generate profit; and second, it emphasises local music history and seeks to share this knowledge locally. In addition to the exhibition, Damien had also given several workshops at local schools. A further method of dissemination was Damien’s use of live DJ sets, which served as an embodied and dynamic counterpart to the exhibition. Below I consider two of these events, both from July 2014, in which music served as an important site of affect and signification as framed by specific spatial environments.

Performing the Archive

As we neared the end of our interview, Damien passed me the details of two upcoming events at which he had been booked to DJ, and suggested I come along. The first event took place within a two-day conference at Marseille’s Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM), a major institution that opened as part of the 2013 European Capital of Culture programme.³¹ MuCEM is France’s first ‘national museum’ outside of Paris, a status that accords it significant and long-term public funding. The conference, titled “Avec ma gueule de métèque: chanson et immigration en Méditerranée”,³² consisted of a series of roundtable discussions on the twentieth century history of music and migration in France. Most events in the conference took place on the museum rooftop, an expansive space with trees and shrubs chosen for their pan-Mediterranean origins, and a series of steep, paved terraces that serve as tiered seating.

³¹ <http://www.mucem.org/en>

³² Roughly, “with my mongrel voice”. The title is a reference to the song “Le métèque” by Georges Moustaki, an Egyptian-French singer of Jewish, Italian and Greek origins.



MuCEM / Fort St Jean, rooftop space (unknown photographer).

The event in question was the closing section of the conference, and was titled “Conference chantée”. I arrived early with a friend visiting from Paris, and we took our seats on one of the terraced stone ledges facing the stage. The previous event was still underway, with Damien on stage discussing his work as part of a panel on North African music in France. Behind the stage the museum box office and bookshop formed an immediate background, but the building was framed by the wider backdrop of the Mediterranean, the sun already low enough to cut a shimmering reflection onto the blue of the ocean. Families, young couples and tourists circulated freely, reading the information panels and surveying the views west out to sea, north to the adjacent museum structure and the distant Côte Bleue, east to the Panier neighbourhood or onto the Vieux Port. Some had their attention caught by the conference and sat watching for a while, but the core of the audience was around fifty people. Among them were some familiar faces from ‘Pensons le Matin’, a discussion group I had been attending.³³ The symposium was free to attend and was integrated within the museum’s well-publicised events programme, though I was later told most of the attendees were academics or cultural sector professionals.

With the previous event finished, the presenter of the conference was quick to announce the details for the final session, due to start in thirty minutes. Volunteers approached the public and passed round printouts with a list of songs, explaining that we should mark one we would like to perform and pass our sheets back to the compere. The songs were all hits in France, written by artists such as Dalida, Idir and Cheb Khaled – singers of

³³ “Pensons le Matin” was a public discussion group in Marseille that met once per month and covered a range of issues relating to urban change in the city. It tended to centre on a critical position towards corporate-sponsored development and gentrification,.

heterogeneous origins who had all migrated to the country from across the Mediterranean. Reactions to the activity ranged from committed enthusiasm to self-conscious reticence, and a good deal of encouragement was needed before enough sheets were returned. I spoke to a couple in their late 50s who had been approached without knowing anything about the event. As *pieds-noirs*, they suggested, they felt a special connection with the music:

We were both born in Algiers, we came to France in '62 but have never lived in Marseille so we're here as tourists really. We just came to explore the famous MuCEM but of course, how can we resist this? Luc Cherki, musicians like that – it's really our music, you know?³⁴

A giant screen had been erected behind the stage, on to which were projected the words of each song as it was performed. Between songs, Damien played an 'exclusively Marseillais' North African DJ set, drawing on the 7" vinyl collection he had amassed through searches at flea markets and online. Music ranged from *chanson kabyle* to *sahraoui*, and included songs such as Mazouni's "L'Immigré", with its triple-time melody doubled and embellished on *oud* and violin.

By selecting only tracks that had some connection to Marseille, Damien was able to enact his recasting of the city as an important node in North African musical history, decentring the dominant narrative from its focus on Paris in general, and neighbourhoods such as Barbès in particular. Spun out over a full evening, the playlist came to constitute an impressive reimaging of the physical space we were in, a rich depiction of an unfamiliar soundscape. Many participants nodded along politely while others demonstrated varying degrees of competence in Algerian dance traditions. Meanwhile the compere told entertaining stories over the PA about the songs and their composers, tapping into the music's nostalgic affordances.

I was later given an official estimate of ninety attendees, though as a free event it naturally attracted a fluctuating audience. Spread between the wide terraces and a cluster of cabaret-style tables in front of the stage, an audience of this size might have felt somewhat lonely. Here though, any threat of flatness was counteracted by a defiantly positive, singalong atmosphere. As in conventional karaoke sessions, the fact that each

³⁴ Conversation with audience members, MuCEM, 27/6/2014

song had a clear performer did not prevent others from joining in boisterously. Conversations with participants suggested that the intended combination of entertainment, education and reflection worked well:

It's been fun, the woman hosting it was a great laugh and it was definitely informative. If you're French you know most of those songs, they're classics, but it's true that you don't always think of them in terms of migration and stuff.³⁵

I spoke to one member of MuCEM's events team later that year, who emphasised that the point was to show that many songs considered to be part of the French pop repertoire are in fact stories of migration or foreignness, sung or written by migrants.³⁶ With the audience singing along spontaneously with each number, her point seemed well-made. I also asked her about the museum's approach to events programming:

The tendency for the museum is towards highbrow events, and there's a real resistance to things that are *populaire*. As an example, we named this event a 'conference chantée' partly in order not to call it karaoke, as there was resistance to this.³⁷

The second event, held a few days later, had been organised by the local underground promoters Data³⁸, who staged regular gigs focusing on non-western traditional musics as well as various forms of experimental music. The series was itinerant, often taking place in squats or art studios, though most events were held at its 'datatheque', a small venue in the neighbourhood of La Plaine where it runs a weekly lending library for experimental music.

On this occasion, the performance took place in the back garden of an old apartment block on Rue Bénédict. For the outsider the area had a distinctly liminal feel, lying just beyond what is usually understood as the city centre. Like other streets and junctions immediately north and east of the Palais Longchamp, Rue Bénédict is strikingly quiet. Its residential emphasis contrasts with the animated atmosphere around the Eglise des Réformés, just a five-minute walk away. This sense of a transitional space is reflected in the positioning of administrative boundaries, with the trajectory of Rue Bénédict marking the eastern fringe of the 1st arrondissement and the tunnels of its northern end marking

³⁵ Conversation with audience member, MuCEM, 27/6/2014

³⁶ Interview, MuCEM, 14/10/2014

³⁷ Interview, MuCEM, 14/10/2014

³⁸ <http://datamedia.tumblr.com>

the beginning of Belle de Mai and the 3rd arrondissement. Whether crossed here or via the more westerly Boulevard National, this transition is understood by some as pivotal in Marseille's social geography, passing from a world of relative safety and familiarity to one associated with street crime and poverty. The southern end of Rue Bénédict bears only a small hint of this liminality, but afforded, from my perspective, a particular sense of discovery.

Despite the lack of markings, it was not difficult to see where the event was being held. On the step leading up to the apartment block two men sat smoking roll-ups, nonchalantly greeting those coming in. Like many underground gigs in Marseille, this one was 'prix libre'³⁹, as the men at the door explained before returning to their conversation. Inside, a corridor led to a narrow kitchen, where two more people were preparing food for the concert. The kitchen then gave onto the back garden, around six metres wide and ten long, and in which around forty people had so far gathered to attend the concert. Most were in their 20s and 30s, and conversations suggested a strong correspondence with the underground musical culture supported by Data: one suggested that "Data is basically the most interesting promoter in Marseille, because it's quite uncompromising and they dig up really obscure stuff".⁴⁰

The performer was Lahcen Akil, a *lotar* player who performed traditional songs from the High Atlas region accompanied by a percussionist on *darbuka*. Akil was born in the Berber village of Tamlalte, and his songs - often written in the Berber dialect of *tamazirte* - describe the landscape in which he grew up and still lives. The presentation was simple, with no stage, no audience seating, and brief introductions from the singer. Again, Damien's role was to DJ in between live sets. On this occasion he selected more freely from his substantial collection of old North African records, including many produced not in Marseille but in Paris, Oran, Algiers or elsewhere. Positioned prominently towards the back of the garden, his set-up was informal and clearly visible. Audience members chatted to him enthusiastically about where he had found certain records, the histories and characteristics of the labels that released them, and other common themes of record collecting. During the live performances, while most sat on the grass and watched quietly, some remained at the back discussing Damien's latest finds.

Surface noise, affect and materiality

³⁹ 'Prix libre' means that entry is on a donations basis

⁴⁰ Conversation with audience member, Rue Bénédict, 25/6/2014

In both events, significance was attributed by audience members and organisers to Damien's use of original vinyl records for his DJ sets. Regarding the MuCEM event, my interviewee in the events team said she had been delighted because Damien was "forging a really tangible connection to the past, and reanimating it."⁴¹ Damien himself referred to the visual and material dimension of playing with vinyl:

Of course, it's nice to work with originals, it makes it all the more direct. And people can come and read the sleeves and find out more. It's more tactile too.⁴²

Damien's remarks resonated with wider debates concerning authenticity and materiality in musical media, specifically over the use of vinyl (e.g. Bartmanski & Woodward 2015). In an era in which DJing is increasingly characterized by digital technologies, the use of vinyl is regularly invoked as a distinctive alternative. In the context of Damien's DJ sets, this can be examined more broadly in terms of the materiality of heritage, another key element of Harrison's (2012) approach. Harrison argues that late modern fixations with the past must be seen in terms of material culture, and especially in terms of "the way human and non-human agents are seen to work together to recreate the past in the present through everyday acts of association" (ibid. 37). If the "discursive turn" helps make sense of Phocéphone's approach to the politics of representation, the "material turn" provides a framework for understanding its approach to musical media.

Certainly, the cultural capital associated with vinyl-only DJ sets was active at the Data event, where Damien's records were the subject of enthusiastic conversation. It would be a mistake, though, to characterise Damien's DJ sets in terms of the dangers of what Svetlana Boym (2007) calls "unreflective nostalgia". Emerging from the necessarily material accumulation of his work, Damien's approach instead registered this archival emphasis and served to collapse conventional distinctions between preservation and dissemination. The act of playing original records is one that revives their everyday functionality, generating a fluid, living counterpart to more conventional display practices.

If the visible, ritualized dimension of record playing was important here, so was the audible dimension: at both events audience members commented on the sound quality of the old records:

"With that hiss and crackle you really feel the age of the recordings, it's very

⁴¹ Interview, MuCEM, 14/10/2014

⁴² Interview, Dock's Café, 24/6/14

evocative.”

“The way the singer sounds all distorted feels so typical of those tracks, so atmospheric”.⁴³

Responses such as these point to the distinctive affect of surface noise and production values. On one hand, surface noise distinguishes Damien’s selections from more conventional DJ sets, foregrounding the physical fragility of the records and the precarious heritage they constitute. On the other hand, production issues such as vocal distortion encourage listeners to reflect on the music’s poor production values and, by implication, the marginal conditions of its production. While recordings of more prominent pop artists are often remastered and restored at great expense, these DJ sets emphasised that recordings of *chaabi* and early *raï* remain less highly valued by the music industry.

Spaces and publics

The contents and format of Damien’s DJ sets and his use of vinyl together constitute a significant basis for comparing the two performance events. To begin with, it is useful to consider how the contrasting physical and institutional spaces entailed different mediations of North African musical heritage. MuCEM’s significance as a setting is inextricable from its central role in the culture-led regeneration of Marseille. The museum was initially proposed in the context of Euroméditerranée in the late 1990s, and its importance in the city’s regeneration was thus foregrounded from the outset. Conceived as an inheritor to the Paris-based Musée des Arts et Traditions Populaires, it was very quickly re-oriented to focus on the Mediterranean region while retaining, in theory at least, the older museum’s focus on the *populaire*. In 2006 it was agreed that the museum would be the first outside Paris to receive ‘musée nationale’ status, affording it both guaranteed state-level funding and a degree of prestige unprecedented among Marseille’s cultural institutions. This prestige was underlined as President Hollande led the museum’s inauguration himself in June 2013.

On one hand, MuCEM is considered to have secured the success both of the ECOC bid and of the festival itself. The museum featured prominently in the ECOC application, and is widely seen to have been central to the bid’s success (Ecorys 2015, 71). Equally, it is

⁴³ Conversation with audience member, MuCEM, 27/6/14

MuCEM's visitor figures for 2013 that are most often hailed as the key evidence of the success of MP2013, with 1.8 million visits and a reported 52% of residents having attended (Freschel 2014a). On the other hand, the museum is itself felt to have been secured by the MP2013 bid. Andres suggests that prior to the bid's success the museum was "in standby mode due to a lack of funding" (2011b, 68).

As a physical space, the design of MuCEM can be seen as a manifestation of the prestige afforded to it. Its fittings, signage and decoration bring to mind what Harvey (1991) describes as the "serial reproduction" of universal cultural space, in which museums, libraries and major galleries acquire international legitimacy by adopting particular signifiers of neutrality (see also Rojek 1995, 146). Like its status, the scale and architectural audacity of MuCEM are unprecedented in Marseille, with a huge mesh of steel forming the surface of its cubic centrepiece. The rooftop site can also be seen from this perspective, fixing and claiming a new panorama of Marseille and its coastline. Like many infrastructural projects associated with regeneration, MuCEM gained prestige from its attachment to an internationally renowned architect, in this case Rudy Ricciotti.

In this sense, MuCEM brings to mind Henri Lefebvre's notion of 'monumental space', more often applied to cathedrals and palaces. For Lefebvre, such spaces "effect a consensus" by creating the "conditions of a generally accepted power and a generally accepted wisdom" (1991, 220). While Lefebvre characterises monumental space in terms of its internal properties, sites such as MuCEM also acquire authority through the significance of their positioning in time and urban space. For example, while MuCEM lays claim to the future through its modernist self-presentation, it also lays claim to the past through its integration with the renovated 17th century Fort St. Jean (Jordi 2013, 16). The fort, originally built under Louis XIV, served as a prison during the Revolution and as a German ammunition depot during World War Two. It occupies a symbolic point at the entry to the port and, therefore, to new experiences of migration and exile. Jordi (ibid.) emphasises that the spatial location of the museum is "not neutral", that it is precisely at the old docks that "Marseille's great waves of Mediterranean migration crashed upon each other", "a space where different peoples first encountered each other" before settling in the city.

If Lefebvre's monumental spaces represent authority through their physical presence, a site such as MuCEM uses its monumentality to lend authority to the specific intellectual discourses of its exhibitions and events. In this way, a "sung conference" on Mediterranean migration acquires the potential for particular forms of legitimacy as

staged on the rooftop of MuCEM. Furthermore, the use of a large stage, substantial PA system and giant screen displaying close-ups of the performers, emphasised the event as a spectacle and drew attention to the wider spectacle of the Mediterranean.

Discussing Liverpool's 2008 Capital of Culture programme, Cohen (2013, 31) refers to one series of events in terms of the enacting or "strategic performance of cosmopolitanism". Such a characterization goes some way to capturing the dynamic of the MuCEM event in Marseille. In curating the playlist around the theme of migration, the museum set the stage for a performance of migrant experience, for cosmopolitanism as spectacle.

MuCEM's geographical location and spatial dimensions thus enhance its hegemonic position in the construction of (local) knowledge, drawing the work of singers such as Mazouni and Cherifa into a state-sponsored narrative of multicultural local heritage. If MuCEM can be seen in terms of monumental space, the Data event is more usefully approached by another Lefebvrian concept, that of the 'counterspace' in which established or normative spatial practices are disrupted. One audience member referred specifically to the setting:

"It's pretty cool having a gig just in a back garden like this, it almost feels a bit secret because of course the venue has no sign, plus you feel a bit more like you can do what you what want there, be more at ease." ⁴⁴

The clandestine tendencies of underground music venues and cultures are well-established and have been addressed to some extent in scholarly research. The rave scenes of the late 1980s and early 1990s have attracted particularly close attention, with Connell and Gibson (2003, 204) discussing "the collective – almost conspiratorial use of space" and Thornton (1995) emphasising the importance of being "in the know" when a scene is dominated by unmarked, temporary and geographically peripheral venues. In this context Damien's old North African records seemed to animate a different kind of sonic environment, one of subversion and radical independence. The soundtrack was no longer an object of cultural policy but one of subcultural capital.

To suggest that Damien's DJ set at the Data event presented *chaabi* and *chanson Kabyle* as somehow subversive is not to ascribe any straightforward notion of resistance to it. Following Thornton (1995), I see subcultural capital operating here as a resource for

⁴⁴ Conversation with audience member, Rue Bénédit, 25/6/2014

social distinction within the field of alternative music fandom. Here, the practice corresponds to what Novak (2011) describes as “World Music 2.0”, a growing tendency among independent record labels to foreground a sense of unmediated musical otherness. Novak suggests that labels such as Sublime Frequencies reject what they perceive as the “mission of cultural exegesis” undertaken by ethnomusicology on the one hand, and the commercialism and “celebratory multiculturalism” of earlier ‘world music’ on the other (2011, 608). At the same time, a new audience orientation emerges, one that values the music less as an informative window onto another culture and more as a “lost-in-translation’ encounter with the extremes of cultural difference” (ibid, 615). Novak’s account of “World Music 2.0” resonates with my experience of the Data event, where audience members seemed to relish and embrace a sense of musical foreignness.

At MuCEM, the public and participatory dimensions of the event were foregrounded. In this sense it differed not only from the Data event but also from the Liverpool 2008 event described by Cohen. While the performers in Cohen’s Liverpool were well-known local musical figures, here the emphasis on public participation sought to bring an everyday authenticity to this performance of cosmopolitanism. The organisers had hoped to attract the city’s Algerian diaspora, given the theme of the event and the prospect of a North African DJ set. In addition, it was explained to me that the museum was attempting more generally to increase its engagement with Marseille’s North African population.

Some of those I spoke to did describe personal attachments to the music, and valued Damien’s soundtrack in terms of the stimulation of musical and personal memory. Here music’s temporal dimension was key, as in Nora’s (2000, 67) formulation, as means of “[replaying] the temporal structure of a moment, its dynamism as emerging experience”. However, the audience demographic was neither a perfect reflection of the origins of the music featured, nor a particularly representative cross-section of the city’s population. A critic who was present at the event made the following comment on her blog:

It’s regrettable that MuCEM isn’t better at mixing up its audience: while the speakers who had come from all over the Mediterranean were heard by an audience that was attentive, approving and already convinced, once again the only blacks or Arabs [sic] were the security guards, an ironic reflection of an ‘entre-soi’ that wasn’t necessarily intended... [For the conference chantée] the

audience was hardly more diverse nor younger... The only ones who knew how to sing in Arabic were some passing Lebanese..."⁴⁵

Due to a series of complications, the museum had been forced to schedule the event for the first day of Ramadan, making attendance highly unlikely for most of the city's Muslims. While the rescheduling had become unavoidable, it nevertheless unsettles the discourse of cultural exchange foregrounded by MuCEM in general. In one sense, the production and staging of a cosmopolitan musical past points implicitly to what is seen as a challenging present.

Conclusions

Through its various activities, Phocéeophone placed the plural affective qualities of mid-century *rai*, *chaabi* and *chanson kabyle* at the centre of a new and experimental approach to Marseille's North African heritage. Emerging in the context of an increasing attention to cultural diversity in French heritage practices, Phocéeophone helped animate (post)colonial histories of exile and cosmopolitanism that have long been obscured or abstracted. At the same time, it channelled the music into new situations and trajectories of reception where its affective qualities were reconfigured. In distributing the music online Damien expanded its audience while potentially reconfiguring its meanings. By contrast, in disseminating the music through DJ sets Damien recast it as a living repertoire with material presence.

The ways in which the DJ sets inhabited and shaped their performance environments pointed to two contrasting forms of multicultural representation: on the one hand, the absorption of multiculturalist principles into state-sponsored heritage production; on the other, the absorption of non-western musics into the habitus of underground scenes that valorise notions of obscurity and alterity. The music was clearly valued diversely, but in all cases functioned as a 'manageable' form of difference. At the same time, Phocéeophone's turn to DJ sets and the 'new old media' of vinyl holds out the promise of a new approach to the politics of the musical past, one that generates new spatial trajectories for the music beyond marginalised sites of North African sociability. In this way, Phocéeophone's challenge to dominant modes of heritage production is not just a question of mutability but also of mobility. Drawing on Certeau (1984) we can understand Phocéeophone's mobile interaction with urban space as a kind of "tactics", an everyday

⁴⁵ Freschel 2014a

contestation of dominant ideas about where in the city this music belongs and how it circulates, both as sound and as physical media.

Chapter Three: Music, Occitanism and the contemporary city

I am at the Docks des Suds, the former site of a vast set of nineteenth century warehouses in Marseille's industrial port zone. Converted into an events complex in 1998, it became home to the Fiesta des Suds - a major World Music festival – and though the warehouses themselves were destroyed by fire in 2005, the venue was rebuilt and the festival remains, with an audience of around ten thousand turning up each evening. Tonight I am witnessing its 24th edition, the main draw being a rare performance by the Marseille group Massilia Sound System, among the most renowned spokespeople for the regional language of Occitan.¹ 'Massilia' is headlining the first night of this year's Fiesta with a performance celebrating their thirtieth anniversary, and long before they are scheduled to play their fans are already gathering. For a band of such longevity it is perhaps no surprise to see sixty-year-olds alongside teenagers, but in other respects they comprise a striking mosaic: hippies, punks and altermondialists nestle amongst those with less visible subcultural leanings, all of them raising their hands in the air as the group finally takes the stage.

Emanating from a Jamaican-style sound system are swallowing bass tones and percussive cracks, the upbeat throb of ragga music encountering ska and – most distinctively – the zany chatter - "tchatche" - of three men in their 50s navigating French, Occitan and a comic-book universe of obscure, half-invented reference points. Obscure, yet perfectly recognizable to most of those assembled, who repeat fanatically the trio's recurrent proclamations of "aioli!" and "oai!". There is even a name for Massilia's fans: the *chourmo*, or galley slaves. The performance is long, and though their music has an indefatigable energy, the group takes its time between songs. Reproducing the mood of an informal party, the stage welcomes a sequence of guest performers, old friends and family members. Improvised routines intersect with crowd interaction, and impassioned speeches call for "tolérance" among the city's communities.

700 years ago, at the turn of the fourteenth century, the celebrated poet Dante Aligheri proclaimed Occitan to be the perfect language for poetry (Burgwinkle 2011, 21). This was

¹ Esteve (2010) notes that Massilia remain the only Occitan-language group to have been nominated for the Victoires de la Musiques awards (for their 2002 album, *Occitanista*).

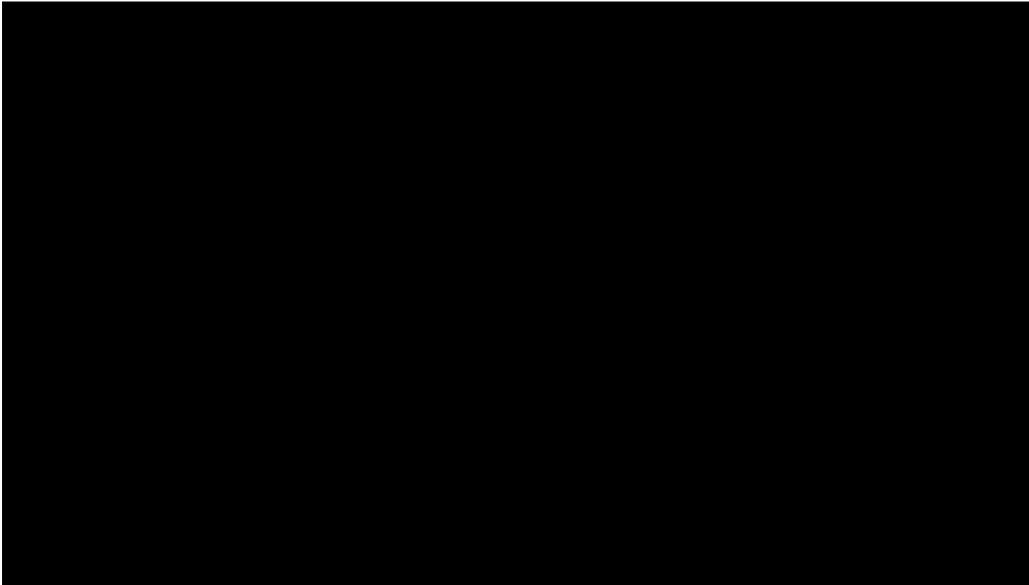
the language of the troubadours,² the medieval poet-composers who created what is commonly regarded as Europe's earliest vernacular verse. Distant as Massilia Sound System might seem from the tradition venerated by Dante and by Western literary scholarship, the group's members have often cast themselves as 21st century troubadours. Like other contemporary exponents of Occitan culture, Massilia thrives on a negotiation between tradition and modernity, regionalism and cosmopolitanism.

In Marseille in 2014, these imperatives intersected in particular ways with the changing city. After the concert, I was talking to a couple of fans when I noticed the CMA CGM tower, Marseille's tallest skyscraper, whose 147-metre façade looms over the Docks des Suds. I asked them what they thought of it, and though they found it grotesque, they suggested they were more concerned about threats to the Carnaval de la Plaine, which was nearer to their own neighbourhood.³ Like Massilia Sound System, the *carnaval* is an institution linked closely to the city's Occitan milieu. Set up in 2000, it is based both on traditional carnivals such as that held in Murs, and more politically engaged events such as the Carnaval de Saint-Roch in Nice (Kerste 2016). During Marseille-Provence 2013, when local residents were said to "have got together to offer you... the best of their creativity, their know-how and their dreams",⁴ the carnival found itself accompanied by unprecedented police presence. In 2014, the festivities were cut short following violent confrontations between police officers and carnival-goers. The Carnaval de la Plaine now constituted a flashpoint for the interface of Occitan culture and the contemporary city.

² I follow scholarly convention in this chapter in referring to 'troubadours' and not generally to the female 'trobairitz'. Whilst the trobairitz, as I explain in the chapter, were highly active, and whilst the use of the male signifier risks a phallogocentric distortion of this important history, I refer to 'troubadours' for two reasons. First, it corresponds to the discourse of the contemporary Occitanists I spoke to; second, it corresponds to the conventions I have encountered in academic research on the topic, the rigorous critique of which lies outside the scope of this thesis.

³ Conversation with audience members, Fiesta Des Suds, 20/10/2014.

⁴ 'Programme Officiel' 2012, 10.



Massilia Sound System at Fiesta des Suds 2014 (unknown photographer)

At the heart of this chapter is the question of how music animates and enables the negotiation of urban modernity within contemporary Occitan culture, and why this matters so intensely in the political and cultural climate of Marseille today. I begin by defining contemporary Occitan culture in Marseille as a set of practices and tropes incorporating the Occitan language while also cohering around a number of political tendencies. In particular, I describe the scene in Marseille as one underpinned by a movement for cultural decentralization, with anti-capitalist, localist and humanitarian tendencies as well as a significant historical consciousness.

Having established these characteristics I look in detail at musical manifestations of Occitan culture. First, I argue that historical reference points are brought to bear through music on contemporary urban realities. The troubadour and the work of nineteenth century poets are deployed in terms of their associations with literary innovation, social progressiveness and political commentary. Second, new social intimacies and outlets for cultural expression are produced through a culture of vocal polyphony that adapts and transmutes similar practices in other Mediterranean contexts. And third, the aesthetic and discursive projects of different groups refuse both the exoticism of dominant representations of Occitan culture and the ideal of a single, authentic alternative.

Background

Occitan culture today is understood, practised and lived in diverse ways that benefit from some initial explanation. The word “Occitan” and its derivatives, whose usage dates at

least as far back as the thirteenth century, refer primarily to two things: a geographical region covering much of southern France and small pockets in Spain and Italy, incorporating cities such as Bordeaux, Toulouse, Montpellier, Marseille and Nice; and a set of cultural practices and repertoires associated with this region. Central to these practices is the Occitan language, which is thought to have been widely spoken in Marseille and other cities until the late nineteenth century, and in some rural areas until much more recently (Dell'Umbria 2006, 329). Recent studies have given an inconsistent picture of contemporary Occitan usage, partly because of differing assumptions concerning what constitutes, among other themes, fluency, regular usage and oral and aural competence (Bernissan 2012). Martel (2007, 3) cites a number of studies giving figures of between 526,000 and 789,000, while Bernissan (2012, 492) estimates a total figure of 110,000 regular speakers. A further factor in this uncertainty is the unregulated character of much everyday Occitan usage: older speakers often describe their vocabulary in terms of a kind of patois rather than a conventional language, while others prefer to attach themselves to internal regional variants such as Provençal or Limousin rather than an all-encompassing Occitan. Less contested is the significance of a series of overarching demographic mutations, notably the rapid decline of family transmission and the (slower) expansion of a younger cadre of *néo-locuteurs*, those who have actively acquired linguistic competence (Bernissan 2012).

This co-existence of unitary imperatives and plural identifications, everyday customs and conscious cultural claims, the habitual and the performative, is part of the contemporary reality of Occitan culture. Within this heterogeneous field, however, the use of the Occitan language has the capacity to legitimise particular practices or texts as part of Occitan culture. This assumption draws a certain strength from the notion of language as a bearer of history and culture: Occitan is often said to have multiple equivalents of single French words, particularly those concerning the natural world. In a similar vein, the Marseille-based composer and singer Manu Théron has argued that “this land is impregnated by this language, and to know the land you have to know the language” (Saisset 2015).

In this sense, the Occitan context has much in common with other regional identities in France: in Corsica, for example, Bithell (2007, 195) notes that “notions of identity and authenticity remain inextricably connected to the question of language”. As a result, novels, poetry, non-fiction writing and theatre are prominent in institutional records of Occitan cultural production: according to the Centre Inter-Regional de Documentation Occitane (CIRDOC), the principal centre for the documentation of Occitan cultural

production, 166 books (of which around half are fiction) in Occitan are published on average each year (CIRDOC 2016).

Music is of special importance within Occitan culture. Its presence extends back to the time of the troubadours (Martel and Saïssset 2015; Tenaille 2008), while today musicians arguably provide a larger audience for the Occitan language than any other form of expression. At the same time, perspectives on music are diverse. As Haines (2004b, 286) suggests, musicians “frequently differ on the question of just what constitutes Occitan music”. While these differences rarely cause hostility, they nevertheless inform and shape artistic approaches. The question of tradition is one contested area: some emphasise particular dance rhythms thought to be rooted in the Occitan region, such as the *sautière limousine* or the *farandole languedocienne*, or instruments such as the *graïle* (a form of oboe). The content of these traditions and the legitimacy of their historical rootedness in the Occitan region are subject to debate. At the same time, the valorization of tradition itself exists in a complex relationship with notions of *création*.⁵ Massilia Sound System have insisted on the importance of a ‘living meaning’ for Occitan culture (Haines 2004a, 147), and most of the people I encountered in Marseille highlighted similar ideals.

To make sense of this balance or co-presence of tradition and creation in local Occitan culture, it is helpful to establish the political orientations that inform the movement and, first, some of the ways in which participation takes place. The Ostau dau País Marselhés is a cultural centre located on the Rue de l’Olivier, that serves as Marseille’s most prominent site for Occitan cultural activity.⁶ Run by two salaried members and dozens of volunteers, the Ostau offers Occitan language classes and music workshops while also presenting concerts, film screenings, debates, book launches and food events. Attendance at these events varied hugely, but at the launch evening for its new centre in October 2014 I found myself in a capacity crowd of around 200.⁷ Having previously been based at the heart of the neighbourhood at a site on the Rue des Trois Mages, the association had now moved to a slightly quieter patch, but with the advantage of a larger surface area.⁸ The association has existed since 2000, and most of those I spoke to agreed that it was essential to the life of the scene in Marseille. Indeed, the range of

⁵ The notion of *création* as used in contemporary French bears strong similarities to the English ‘composition’ or ‘artistic production’.

⁶ Ostau dau País Marselhés 2014

⁷ In October 2014 the association had around 250 members, but more recently I was told that this had gone up considerably. The usefulness of membership numbers in assessing the scale of local engagement is limited. As with many smaller arts venues in France, membership was a legal requirement for entry and members therefore include those who may have only visited once or twice in a year as well as those who participate regularly.

⁸ Interview with Christophe Rédon, Ostau dau País Marselhes, 23/10/2014

activities it hosts incorporates the vast majority of cultural actors who associate themselves with Occitan culture, from writers and language teachers to musicians, historians and campaigners.

As with other regional or territorially situated cultures, Occitan cultural practices are informed by particular understandings of regional history and the historical relationship between the Occitan region and the French nation-state. This historical consciousness undoubtedly dates back centuries, but was transformed decisively during the political upheavals of the 1960s (Tenaille 2008). Two interlinked strands, captured in the work of writers such as Robert Lafont and Félix Marcel Castan, were of particular importance: on the one hand, anticolonial struggles around the world inspired a sense of what Lafont (e.g. 1971) called “inner colonisation”, through which the Occitan region - like Algeria or what was then called Indochine - was understood to have been oppressed and exploited for centuries by the French nation-state. While Lafont’s writing was energizing, it was the emphasis on French centralism that remained particularly tenacious, distilled in Castan’s pioneering call for “cultural decentralisation” (e.g. Castan 1973).⁹ While the radical formulation of inner colonisation was not often made explicit, the French state’s familiar reputation for centralism and unitary models of nationhood were common targets:

You have to understand that the state has no interest whatsoever in the different cultures of the country. They’ve tried to erase our past, they tried to erase our language, and all in the service of those in power.¹⁰

If anti-colonial struggles were one important legacy of the 1960s, a number of other major currents of political activism had also informed Occitan cultural consciousness. Most significantly, anti-capitalist movements in France and elsewhere inspired some to understand the historical domination of Occitan culture in terms of capitalism as well as French nationalism. The repression of the Occitan language and the destruction of pre-industrial traditions and ways of life were seen as a function of capitalism’s urge to standardization and urban development (Dell’Umbria 2006). Occitan culture was thus the victim both of an aggressively centralising, unitary model of French citizenship and of the rationalising, commercialising imperatives of global capitalism.

In another putative parallel with well-known European colonial projects, the Occitan

⁹ Research by Weber (1976) addressed historical parallels between the construction of a unitary French nationhood and the French colonial project. Wright (2007, 93) argues that Occitan and other regional languages have suffered from an exceptionally “muscular centralism” in comparison to other Western European countries.

¹⁰ Conversation with audience member, Ostau dau Pais Marselhes, 24/10/2014

region and its people were understood to have been subjected to external regimes of representation that deliberately undermined and controlled the production of knowledge surrounding them (Lafont 1971). For writers such as Lafont, wider perceptions of the Occitan movement are subject to a kind of domestic orientalism in France that has produced the southern part of the country – the “midi” – in terms of an internal ‘other’ (Borutta 2013). In the nineteenth century this regime of representation found its voice among such prominent figures of French literature as Victor Hugo, Jules Michelet and Alexandre Dumas, whose texts, in Borutta’s (2013, 3) words, were “teeming with loudmouthed and hotheaded southerners: indolent and naïve, reckless and violent, lazy and cowardly”.

These stereotypes continued to have an imprint through the twentieth century, and today’s Occitanists often link them to casual prejudices among the general public. Some feel there to be an assumption that those involved with Occitan culture are pastoralists with a backward-looking, esoteric or obsessively conservationist cause. One regular participant remarked that “they just think it’s about fairies and tunics”.¹¹ Certainly, I did sometimes encounter assumptions that Occitan culture was focused on folklore and preservation. Meanwhile, others simply were not familiar with the scene.

Occitan cultural practices are therefore shaped, in various ways and to varying degrees, by a need to redress what are felt to be longstanding strategies of marginalization and misrepresentation. It is in this context that themes of preservation and creation, tradition and modernity are worked through. In Marseille, musical iterations of Occitan culture engage and negotiate these themes in particular ways. Groups such as Massilia Sound System have sometimes used their music to channel Occitanist concerns transparently: “anti-centralism is the philosophy”, they chant on “Disèm-facèm” (1993): “Parisian centralism has pissed us off for long enough / To get the country moving first we get the district moving”.¹²

At the same time, music emerges as a means of shaping the relationship between Occitan culture and the contemporary city. While some of those I spoke to at events readily situated themselves in the Occitan milieu, others were only vaguely aware of its existence. If many were informed by the historical and political issues discussed above, others were engaged only to the extent that it intersected with prior interests such as the

¹¹ Interview with Christophe Rédon, Ostau dau Pais Marselhes, 23/10/2014

¹² “*Anti-centralista es la filosofia / lo centralisme parisenc nos fa cagar ara n’i a pron / per bolegar lo país d’en promièr bolega lo canton.*”

social life of the neighbourhood or the discovery of unfamiliar cultures. In my experience Occitanism “as lived” is, like other cultural identities in late modernity, a mutable, contingent and often diffuse element of complex social lives.

In this context, musicians are often concerned with the challenge of communicating Occitan culture to an urban population marked by a multiplicity of experiences, circumstances, opportunities and globally dispersed affinities. This chapter considers three significant areas of musical affordance, beginning with the evocation and performative reframing of historical reference points. The aim here is to establish the ways in which music enacts and energises Occitan themes that might otherwise be thought bounded by, and to, history.

Music, history and urban modernity

Sirventes per cridar o canso per calinhar
Que lei pensaments totei son dins lo trobar,
Sirventes o canso sai pas çò qu'auquò serà
Mai, quora ven lo riddim, me fau totjorn charrar !

Sirventes for crying out, or *canso* for courting,
For all kinds of thought are contained in [the art of] *trobar*.
Sirventes or *canso*, I don't know which it will be,
But when the riddim comes I always have to chat!

Massilia Sound System, “Lo Trobar Reven” (1993)

For some musicians affiliated with the Occitan movement in Marseille, the troubadours constitute a prominent and multivalent reference point. The members of Massilia Sound System and artists such as Manu Théron often discuss the troubadours in interviews, as did those I spoke to during my research. In their music, artists regularly refer to the troubadours through lyrics and song titles, and even experiment with the use of troubadour texts or forms in their own work. The troubadours, as Gaunt and Kay (1999, 2) suggest, are at once “part of the furniture of our cultural knowledge” and “shrouded in the mystery befitting a medieval cultural tradition”.¹³ During the nineteenth century they

¹³ Troubadour historiography constitutes a copious body of literature with its own movements, trends, debates and revisions. I do not attempt to contribute to those debates here by assessing the legitimacy of claims to the inheritance of troubadour status by artists such as Massilia Sound System. What is of interest here is not whether

were idealized as the free spirits of a pre-industrial era, ancestors of the bohemian subject. The motif resurfaced during the 1960s folk revival, and the idea of the troubadour came eventually to evoke global icons such as Bob Dylan or Donovan more readily than the Occitan lyric poets of the thirteenth century (Haines 2004b, 284). Yet the reasons for contemporary Occitan references to the troubadours extend far beyond the desire to re-affirm a sense of regional ownership over a global cultural trope. In order to grasp the multiple affordances of the troubadours and their work for musicians in the contemporary city, it is helpful first to outline the circumstances of their historical flourishing in a time of cultural confluence and political-religious tension.

In dominant historical narratives the troubadours were active roughly from 1100-1300, emerging first in the southwest of what is now France – regions such as Poitou, Gascony and Limoges - and gradually spreading eastwards as far as Catalonia and northern Italy (Burgwinkle 2011; Gaunt and Kay 1999). While historical representations have often linked them to romanticized notions of itinerancy, the troubadours tended in fact to earn their living through forms of long-term patronage: employed by courtesans, they composed and performed lyric poetry in what Gaunt and Kay (1999, 2) describe as a “remarkably standardised” version of Old Occitan. Their texts were documented in compendiums known as the *chansonnières*, from which scholars have identified 460 troubadours and *trobairitz*, and around three thousand distinct works (Haines 2004b, Gaunt and Kay 1999).

their performances of medieval fragments are faithful nor whether claims to an inheritance of forms such as the *tenso* or traditions of satire and irony are credible, but rather what it means to be making such claims in a given time and place. In any case, in laying bare the difficulties of identifying stable notions of text, music and performance, scholarship has aptly demonstrated the drastic limitations of any attempt to impose frameworks of authenticity on the performance of troubadour texts.



The troubadour Perdigon (Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

While musicologists have discussed the work of the troubadours in the context of modal theory, today's musicians have been at least as interested in the discursive characteristics of troubadour verse as in attempts at historical performance. Occitan lyric poetry was composed according to intricate and highly codified rules, each set of which pertained to a specific genre. The most famous are those revolving around the theme of *fin'amor* (courtly love) – the *canço* form particularly – but genres such as *tenso* and *sirventes* were often used to attack political enemies or oppose powerful interests (Burgwinkle 2011). The political orientations of the troubadours were far from consistent, corresponding instead to the considerable range of socio-professional backgrounds from which they emerged. While some belonged to the nobility, others were raised in the clergy or the mercantile classes. Nevertheless, the idea of the troubadour as an outspoken social commentator is a common source of inspiration to Marseille's contemporary Occitanists.

For Massilia Sound System this image of the troubadour is particularly useful, framing and inspiring a broader orientation against corruption and right-wing politics: the troubadours are their “cultural weapon” (Tatou, quoted in Haines 2004a, 148) in efforts

both to “démasquer les conos” (“unmask the con-men”)¹⁴ and to critique the political landscape of the city. In “Ma ville est malade” (1997), Tatou confronts the growing influence of the Front National:

[Marseille] has lived for so long in peace, with respect for all communities.
But for the last ten years, inside people’s heads,
Funny ideas have started to take root.¹⁵

Recalling the troubadour *tenso* form, Tatou continues by explicitly presenting his lyrics as a line of argument:

You are not obliged to believe all that I tell you,
But I’ll go back to my argument, I’ll develop it and I’ll pursue it.
Because,¹⁶
[Chorus]
My city’s trembling, my city’s sick...

“If we love our city”, the group chant together repeatedly at the close of the song, “together let’s say no to the Front [National]”. In this sense, the troubadour ‘as commentator’ provides a meaningful guise for Massilia’s own inter-animating of Occitan culture and the contemporary city. A more direct engagement with the political dimension of the troubadour legacy is offered by Manu Théron, one of whose groups is itself named *Sirventès*. In a 2015 interview, he argues that the *sirventes* are at the root of a long tradition of Occitan non-conformism:

From the beginning, these texts were opposed to all forms of hierarchy imposed by the state and by religion... Troubadours like Peire Cardenal were shouting at the Creator, arguing with God, short-circuiting the religious authorities (Lemancel 2015).

This sense of a special license to deviate and to breach discursive norms links contemporary understandings of the troubadour to well-established cross-cultural work on

¹⁴ Citation from “Se Lèva Mai La Cançon” (2014). Other examples of lyrics dealing with corruption include references to “politiciens [qui] sont à l’aise pour magouiller à tour de bras” (“politicians [who] are happy to wheel-and-deal with all their strength”) in “Pauvre de Nous” (2000).

¹⁵ “Depuis bien longtemps, elle vit en paix / dans le respect de toutes les communautés / Mais depuis 10 ans, dans la tête des gens, de droles d’idées commencent à germer.”

¹⁶ “Vous n’êtes pas obligés de croire tous ce que je dit / mais je reprend mon argument, je developpe et je poursuit / Car, / Ma ville tremble, ma ville est malade...”

the status of musicians, notably by Alan Merriam (1964). For Merriam, musicians in a broad range of cultural contexts are characterized by a combination of “low status and high importance, deviant behaviour and the capitalisation of it” (ibid, 141). Certainly, permission to mock, criticise or undermine the authority of those in power is one attribute, however idealised, of the troubadour’s status that contemporary musicians seek to reactivate.

If dissent is a highly-valued aspect of the troubadour repertoire, contemporary musicians also recognise this as connected to the troubadours’ inventive approach to language and form. In the field of literary scholarship, the troubadours are considered to have pioneered new modes of irony, satire and intertextuality that had a decisive influence on later European literature (Burgwinkle 2011, Gaunt and Kay 1999). It was a sense of this formal sophistication that attracted the fascination of twentieth century modernists such as Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot (Gaunt and Kay 1999, 4). In their own way, groups such as Massilia seek to situate themselves in this lineage. For example, Massilia explicitly draw on the *tenso*¹⁷ form in songs such as “Tenson de Bambou” (2000), recovering its function as a verbal “jousting match”. They often evoke the idea of “trobar” itself, which combines notions of composing, inventing, finding and working. As Haines (2004b, 287) contends, the “art de “trobar” is central to Massilia’s work: traditions of linguistic invention and play provide a bridge between Occitan history and musics of today such as rap and ragga.

A third sense in which the troubadours are valued has to do with the rich intercultural confluences through which their literature emerged. The density of intellectual exchange in medieval Europe has long been familiar to historians, but has emerged more recently as a source of possible inspiration in the face of contemporary crises (Ganim and Legassie 2013). In particular, major postcolonial and poststructuralist critiques of linkages between Enlightenment philosophy, cosmopolitanism and colonial exploitation have encouraged a more far-reaching search for historical moments of cultural openness.¹⁸ As with Abu-Lughod’s (1991) influential revisionist history of medieval economic relations, the troubadours constitute a powerful example of cosmopolitanism “before European hegemony”. Specifically, troubadour verse is well-known for its absorption of Muslim and Jewish influences via the cultural centres of Al-Andalus (Burgwinkle 2011, 22; Pacholczyk 1983). The Occitan nobility, including early troubadours such as William of Aquitaine, had had contact with Moorish and other Arabic literary traditions during their involvement in

¹⁷ The *tenso* form in Occitan lyric poetry is similar to that of a debate, with two voices defending contrasting positions on a topic related to love or ethics.

¹⁸ Abu-Lughod’s (1991) interpretation of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as an extraordinary period of cultural and economic exchange “before European hegemony” captures much of this conceptual turn.

the Reconquista in Spain, and via the prolific work of translation centres in Toledo and elsewhere (Boase 1977). *The Ring of a Dove*, an early eleventh century treatise by the Andalusian scholar Ibn Hazm, is often singled out as a precedent for troubadour treatments of courtly love, and even the word “trobar” is thought by some etymologists to be of Arabic origin (Menocal 1985).

For today’s musicians such as Manu Théron, this coalescence of Arab, Jewish and Christian origins is to be foregrounded with particular urgency in the context of contemporary intolerance:

The rich connections that the troubadours maintained with the Muslim world, which are present in their work, render obsolete those narratives about the supposed “Judeo-Christian” nature of Europe which the French right are trying to define – or the supposedly uniquely Muslim nature of the Arab people. Far from an “obscurantist” period, the Middle Ages can be illuminated by these artists: their work makes us think about the historical upheavals we are living through today, and can serve as a protection against our foolishness and ignorance (Lemancel 2015).

These interpretations of the troubadour legacy acquire a distinctive importance in relation to the repression and misrepresentation of Occitan culture. The decline of the troubadours is closely associated with the Albigensian Crusades, during which the French monarchy and Pope Innocent III waged war on Catharism in southern France (Martel 2008, 187; McCaffrey 2002). In later centuries the architects of French nationhood often elevated the identifiably Francophone *trouvère* poets over the troubadours, who were increasingly infantilized and exoticised in scholarly literature (Haines 2004b, 277; Martel 2008, 275). Following the 1789 revolution, the urge to impose a unitary, republican form of citizenship only accelerated this diminishing of the troubadour legacy (Burgwinkle 2011, 20). In a 2015 interview, Manu Théron suggested that “if [the troubadours] are too rarely discussed in French history books, that’s simply due to the paranoia this country continues to have towards the languages and cultures that compose it, that’s all” (Saïssset 2015).

One means of countering this regime of representation is by emphasising the idea of the troubadours as socially progressive. If the multicultural origins of troubadour verse constitute one resource for this project, two further characteristics are also particularly notable. First, the secularity of troubadour verse challenges assumptions about *laïcité* as

an achievement of French republicanism (see Dell'Umbria 2006, 23). Second, Occitanists often observe the prominence of the *trobairitz* – female lyric poets – within Occitan society. Works have been attributed to at least twenty *trobairitz*, and it is generally thought that they held a comparable status to their male counterparts (Bruckner et al. 2004).

In summary, the troubadours constitute an important resource in music-based attempts to forge a contemporary Occitan identity: music serves as a means to transmute the troubadour's political acuties, formal innovations and symbolic associations such that they can link Occitan culture to the crises and possibilities of contemporary society. In this sense the troubadours are understood not so much as an isolated historical phenomenon and more as the centre of a distinctively Occitan imaginary. For Tatou of Massilia Sound System, the troubadour form of the *vida*, in which a poet imagines and narrates the life of another poet, provides a powerful precedent for this transhistorical logic:

We fantasize about the troubadours ... And what is great about them is that there were these guys who had already fantasized about them who wrote their *vidas*, so you are just adding to this (Tatou quoted in Haines 2004b).

For Tatou the *vida* form emerges as a license to fantasize about the possibility of a twenty-first century troubadour, about the ways in which a troubadour might reflect on and satirize the contradictions of today's Marseille.

If the troubadours of the twelfth century constitute an important creative resource for today's Occitan musicians, the protest poetry of the mid-nineteenth century represents a second set of historical reference points: one more closely linked to struggles over urban change. It is important to consider this era in terms of the huge urban transformations it witnessed: the opening of a vast new port detached from the old centre in 1856, the eviction of thousands of the poorest families to make way for speculative economic development, the advent of new forms of socio-economic segregation, a surge in demand for casual labour, inadequate housing and exploitation, and rationalist modes of urban planning that prioritized the individual and eroded the spatialities of traditional, collective ways of life (Dell'Umbria 2006).

For writers such as Dell'Umbria, it was these circumstances that allowed an Occitan cultural consciousness to materialize: if the Occitan language was repressed by the exigencies of industrial capitalism, for some it also came to firmly represent an entire way

of life under threat. By 1840, the Marseille poet and composer Victor Gelu was already lamenting the “shame [and] horror...this generation displays for the idiom of its fathers” (Gelu 1840, 6). These comments were made in the first edition of his *Chansons Provençales*, and in an updated edition from 1856 he observed that the “discrediting of the Provençal idiom has made giant leaps” (Gelu 1856, 17).

Gelu, born in Marseille in 1806, is one of the most frequently evoked figures of this era. Raised by a baker and a tailor, he witnessed violent street massacres following the Bourbon Restoration in 1815, and gradually developed a hostile and critical attitude towards political and religious elites (Delmas & Dionis 2007). In the 1830s he began writing poems and songs in Occitan, focusing not on idealized, pastoral scenes but on the everyday urban lives of those he called his “heroes”: “the lock-picker, the lazzarone [Neapolitan beggars] on the Rive Neuve, the labourer, the pot-washer, the cobbler” (Gelu 1840, 8). For Delmas & Dionis (2007, 9), Gelu “expresses in his chansons, virtually day by day, the mood of the Marseille working-class”. Underpinning Gelu’s observational narratives was a conviction that the city was being erased by capital:

“Destroy and build”, say these zealous speculators from the North who, knowing nothing of our pleasures, our needs, our climate, want to impose their ideas on us in order to amass millions! They destroy, but what do they build? (Gelu quoted in Dell’Umbria 2006, 319)

Gelu’s politically engaged songwriting has in turn inspired today’s musicians. In their 2007 song “Lo Gran Trablament”, Massilia Sound System adapt the words of a text by Gelu imploring a young North African migrant not to submit to repressive treatment by his new employers:

Moro, ti donon trenta sòus,
Quand vas debarcar de matiera,
Lei mestres de ta saboniera
Que t’an de lois lei plens pairòus.
Encar ti duves creire uròs
Se ti ronhon pas la jornada !
Lei traitres, emé son tetar-doç,
Ti l’empunhon sensa pomada,
Sensa pomada !

Moor, they give you thirty pennies
When you unload the chemicals,
The bosses of your soap factory
Whose cauldrons are full of coins.
Once again you count yourself lucky
If they don't cut short your working day!
The traitors, in their honeyed tones,
Knock you down without mercy,
Without mercy!

Gelu's text emerges as a powerful antecedent to Massilia's own calls for urban solidarity, expressed in songs such as "Massilia Fai Avans":

We do what we can, wherever we are,
But as marseillais we don't have the right
To let our smiles drop nor to lose faith.
If we lose our identity, we will regret it.
We have to mix it up, yes we must show the way.
The people of Marseille, united, will always win,
What we have to invent, together we'll invent it.
Whatever is to be harvested, together we will share it.¹⁹

In 2003, the Ostau dau País Marselhés published an edition of Gelu's poems themed around Marseille, together with a CD of performances of Gelu's texts by Lo Còr de la Plana, Massilia Sound System, and other local groups including Dupain and D'Aqui Dub.²⁰ In the same year, Manu Théron started a new group with tuba player Daniel Malavergne and mandolinist Patrick Vaillant, naming it Chin Na Na Poun after the title of a Gelu poem. In a 2012 live recording the group perform an abridged version of Gelu's text "Leis Aubres dau Cours" ("The Trees on the Promenade"), in which the author relates and rails against the removal of elm trees on a central Marseille avenue to make way for the "grand houses" of the industrial bourgeoisie:

- Pèra Laurenç, vos parlatz coma un libre

¹⁹ "On fait ce que l'on peut, où que l'on soit / Mais en tant que Marseillais nous n'avons pas le droit / De perdre le sourire ni de perdre la foi. Si on perd notre identité, on le regrettera. Il faut se mélanger, oui nous devons montrer la voie. Le peuple marseillais, uni, toujours vaincra / Ce qu'il faut inventer, ensemble on l'inventera / Ce qu'il y a à récolter, ensemble on le partagera." ("Massilia fai avans", 2014)

²⁰ Massilia Sound System et al 2003

leu, pòdi pas m'explicar dins lo fin;
Mai, fotut-Dieu ! Es que Siam donc pas libre
De si lanhar, s'avèm lo gròs pegin
Sensa cercar leis uelhs darnier l'aurilha,
Vos respondrai: qu'es aquò tant corós?
N'aviam pas pron de carrieras, a Marsilha ?
N'aviam pas pron dei grands Gamins possós?
Laissi pimar davant d'una muralha
Cademician, pintre vò frejolier :
Lei beis ostaus, que son per la gusalha?
Qu'es de pilastres, au garçon bolangier!
Aimariá mièlhs lo fulhagi d'un aubre,
Quand la calor li ven levar l'alèn
Que vint palais de frejaus e de maubre
Totei raiats coma un culhier d'argent.

Father Laurent, you speak like a book -
I cannot explain myself so finely;
But bloody hell, are we not free
To lament, if we feel great sorrow?

Without looking between midday and two o'clock
I reply to you: what is so agreeable about that?
Didn't we have enough streets in Marseille?
Didn't we have enough dusty roads?

I'll leave the scholars, the painters and the sculptors
To faint against a big wall:
These grand houses, what good are they for the paupers?
What good are pilasters for a baker boy?

He'd prefer the foliage of a tree
When the heat comes and leaves him short of air
Than twenty palaces cut from stone and marble
All polished like a silver spoon!

...

Ara lo Cors sembla una licha-fròia

Qu'an alestit per nos faire tourrar
De nòstre mau jugon lei bònei vòlhas ;
An sei bastidas, elei, per si chalar !

And now the avenue is like a roasting pan
That they've prepared to have us grilled.
They laugh at our misfortune, these brave people:
They have their walled houses to luxuriate in!

In performing “Leis Aubres dau Cours” in 2012, Chin Na Na Poun help foreground and stage a rich history of urban social critique in Occitan literature. In the same year, Lo Còr de la Plana’s album *Marcha!* went further in excavating the roots of local radicalism. Here, texts by Michel Capaduro, Josèp Sarraire and other late-nineteenth century poets are curated so as to reveal a densely active culture of urban contestation. In Théron’s words, these were writers who “were expressing themselves in Occitan to defend workers, the poor, the oppressed or rebellious, at a time when French was becoming more and more the language of politics” (Saisset 2012).

The troubadours and the poets of the nineteenth century, then, represent two potent resources through which musicians forge dynamic relationships between the Occitan scene and the contemporary city. In populating their lyrics, song titles and interviews with references to the work of the troubadours, musicians help shape a transhistorical imaginary that provides the basis for an interface with the polarised city. And in reviving the texts of Victor Gelu and other nineteenth century poets, they emphasise the need to engage with and dissect the contradictions of urban modernity. As Massilia sing in “Parla Patois” (1993):

*Garibaldi, Castan, Jaurès,
parlan patois,
lei trobadors, Gelu, Chadeuil
parlan patois,
Martí, Carlotti, Massilia
parlan patois.*

Vocal polyphony and intimate collectivities

In September 2015 I made contact with Misé Babilha, an Occitan-language women's choir based in Marseille. I had just seen them perform as part of a larger, combined choir at the Festival des Vives Voix, a series dedicated to *a cappella* traditions whose focus that year was on Occitan and Corsican groups. The combined ensemble, numbering some thirty female singers, had been drawn together to sing a new, long-form piece composed by Manu Théron, who conducted the performance at the Eglise de Saint Paul et Saint Pierre. As I had approached the church, sandwiched tightly between two apartment blocks, I had seen a small group gathered outside one of the side doors. I soon realized that this formed the back of a long, animated queue snaking its way through the door and downstairs into the main area of the church. The audience was younger than I had witnessed at other church concerts, and more effusive: alternative types in their late twenties laughed loudly with elderly couples, and some were familiar faces from events at the Ostau and elsewhere. Word travelled back through the queue that the venue was nearly full, and people wondered aloud whether we would get in. Not everyone did, but I was lucky enough to have arrived just in time. Inside, the mood was equally animated, and the smartly dressed singers mingled with friends and family members who had come to watch.

I wanted to find out how this culture of vocal polyphony intersected with the wider Occitan milieu, and what roles it played in everyday urban life. A few days later I arranged to meet Magali Bizot, one of Misé Babilha's founding members. Over a coffee on the Place Félix Baret, she related the story of the group and of her involvement in the Occitan scene. Magali was a writer and retired primary school teacher with cropped white hair, a diminutive figure and expansive in her enthusiasm for singing and creative education. She was first exposed to Occitan while very young: it was with some pride that she described her upbringing as bilingual. However, far from using this as a special claim to cultural ownership, she decided at an early age to devote as much of her energy as possible to teaching others. Since the 1970s she has been giving language classes in various locations in the city, alongside her main primary school job. She has also authored four novels in Occitan, all of which are published by the Institut des Etudis Occitans (Institute of Occitan Studies).

Misé Babilha had its origins in the Chorales du Lamparo, an Occitan language choir established by Manu Théron in the 1990s. The project was more open and accessible than some other musical ventures, welcoming untrained singers as well as those with formal experience. It was through this group that Magali had become involved with vocal polyphony, and when it closed after Théron no longer had time to continue directing it, a

number of smaller choirs were formed. Misé Babilha was one of these: the group was set up in 2006, gave its first concerts in 2008, and had been performing regularly since 2011.

The choir rehearses in Marseille, and its members all live in or close to the city. Yet they perform as often in towns and villages across the region, in part because of what Magali describes as a challenging political environment: “it’s very difficult to get support for things here”, she admitted. “We have this right-wing council that has no time for *culture populaire*.”²¹ Even during the European Capital of Culture year, she suggested, most performance opportunities were ‘pushed’ to the smaller towns and villages. Like most collectives involved with the Occitan cultural movement, Misé Babilha had forged close connections with activist and solidarity networks. For example, they had given several benefit concerts for campaigns supporting asylum seekers.

Misé Babilha currently had six members, ranging from those of Magali’s generation to younger enthusiasts. “Some of us are very involved with the Occitan world”, she told me, “but others just enjoy singing in unfamiliar languages and discovering a culture through that process.” Unlike the Chorales du Lamparo, Misé Babilha did not have a single director. Instead, Magali suggested that the different members contributed their own skills and specialisms:

I’m the oldest member by some way, and the most familiar with the language. The others include some very strong singers, so in a way we all have our own things to contribute. I feel I’m imparting my knowledge of the language, and also learning about singing.

Beyond that, it’s just a very special thing to have - we rehearse together in our own homes, and we’ll often eat together. We even rehearse in the kitchen! It becomes something very natural, very communal, which is sometimes missing from modern life.²²

Magali also explained to me that her daughters had sung in the church concert. They had been among her best pupils, she said wryly: both had opted to attend university in Montpellier, where courses in Occitan language and culture are relatively well-supported. Magali was naturally proud of her daughters, but also expressed disappointment that she

²¹ Interview with Magali, 30/9/2015

²² Interview with Magali, 30/9/2015

could not see them more often. When they did see each other, she told me, they always sing together in Occitan: “it brings us back together in a way”.

In this context, Occitan vocal polyphony helped engender intimate ties in contrast to the alienation of contemporary urban life. These ties could be produced among strangers, but pre-existing ties – in this case among family members - could also be revitalized. This emphasis on social ties and notions of community, links contemporary Occitan vocal practices to the ethical and methodological orientations of movements such as the Natural Voice network. The latter, initiated in the 1970s and active throughout the UK, sees amateur group singing as a channel for the sustenance of community, the democratization of the voice and the enhancement of intercultural understanding (Bithell 2014). This perspective in turn draws its assumptions from well-established associations between group singing and psychosocial relations, themselves discussed in Bithell’s (2007, 69) earlier work on Corsican vocal polyphony. If singing involves the articulation of intimate, corporeal sounds, collective practices emplace these sounding bodies in close proximity. In this way, perceptions of the relationship between self and other are potentially animated in new ways. Importantly, whereas Occitan cultural participation was sometimes linked to deep historical knowledge and linguistic fluency, singing groups helped embed Occitan culture in everyday life.

At the same time, choirs also served as a means to exceed the everyday. Magali stressed that singing in Occitan captured something deep, that went beyond what could be expressed through speech. Like many people around the world, she valued singing partly for the discursive possibilities it created in contrast to everyday conversation.²³ In Marseille, given that speaking Occitan in public often met with expressions of bemusement or ridicule, singing generated an exceptional space and time for the performative enunciation of Occitan-ness. The distinctive vowel sounds and rhythms of Occitan vocality could be fully celebrated in the dramatic framework of song.

In summary, group singing was an important element of Occitan sociability: it helped embed Occitan culture in everyday urban life, strengthening interpersonal and intergenerational ties. Meanwhile, it also represented a privileged, participatory site for exploring and performing Occitan-ness in the city. During the annual Carnaval de la Plaine, I was told, this performative dimension of singing took on a particular sense of

²³ See Potter and Sorrell (2012, 19) for a recent contribution to discussions about the relationship between singing and self-expression.

urgency. As discussed at the start of this chapter, the 2013 and 2014 editions of the carnival had been marred by confrontations with police officers.

At the same time, the participants often used the occasion to raise longer-term concerns surrounding the redevelopment of the neighbourhood, condemning the installation of security cameras or the construction of luxury hotels.

Songs, either written especially or selected from traditional repertoires, were often rehearsed in advance at workshops held at the Ostau or elsewhere, and then performed en masse during the carnival parade. Some texts were in French, others in Occitan: a particularly common song was “Adieu Paure Carnavas”, which exists in multiple variations across the different carnivals of the region. The version chanted in Marseille is best-known through a recording by Gacha Empega on their 1998 album *Polyphonies Marseillaises*. The text addresses a fallen ruler, celebrating his demise and the victory of the people.²⁴ In this context, singing together in Occitan could acquire a more explicitly political resonance.

Musical geographies and urban convivialities

In October 2014 I made contact with Christophe Rédon, one of the senior organisers of the Ostau. The team was preparing to open its new premises on the Rue de l’Olivier, close to la Plaine, and Christophe invited me to come and meet him there on the day before the opening. The main space had been recently sanded and was rich with the smell of floor polish. In a side room, I spoke with Christophe and a little with another, older member of the team, but soon afterwards the discussion was interrupted by the arrival of Jagdish Kinnoo, a Mauritian man who has been active in the local scene since the 1980s. Jagdish arrived in Marseille as a student in 1984, and quickly found himself socializing with those involved in pirate radio, reggae and street art. He was an early member of Massilia Sound System, and has continued to play on and off with the group ever since, while also launching his own musical projects. Jagdish often helps out at the Ostau, and the others were unsurprised to see him turn up spontaneously. “What I like most of all in music”, he told me, “is to make sounds from elsewhere, but with people from here”.²⁵

When I returned the following evening, the opening party was in full swing. Some were smoking outside, and inside it was nearly impossible to squeeze into the main space. Some

²⁴ <http://www.praulas.net/musica/cancon.php?cl=561&PHPSESSID=f02c34f7c07f0228f4d2c7e85386678c>

²⁵ Conversation with Jagdish Kinnoo, Ostau dau Pais Marselhes, 23/10/14.

of those present wore CNT²⁶ badges or signifiers of other union or activist groups, and there was a mixture of young students, artists, and academics - as well as others whose interest was primarily in the musical programme. On stage was Gacha Empega, the oldest of Manu Théron's many projects, in which he and Sam Karpienia sing stripped down duets with simple percussive accompaniments. Tight-knit as the scene may be, Gacha Empega is, musically, worlds away from Massilia Sound System. Songs were often based on triple-time dance forms, sometimes preceded by extended, melismatic vocal solos. The two vocal lines alternated between brief monophonic sections and more elaborate heterophony.

As we have seen, the redeployment of historical reference points and the nourishing of intimate socialities were two means by which music embeds Occitan-ness in contemporary Marseille – rendering it politically salient and socially generative while weaving it into the fabric of everyday life. In the final part of this chapter I turn to the question of musical style, conceptualizing this as a third interface through which Occitan culture addresses the contemporary city. It is useful here to recall the prominent notion of a “living meaning” for Occitan culture. In emphasizing this, musicians counter the paradigm of historical performance, but the question of how to formulate a musical alternative remains open. What does it entail, musically, for Occitan culture to have a “living meaning”? For some of those I spoke to, the response was inseparable from their understanding of the Marseille they inhabited. Music needed to be stylistically diverse, it was suggested, because the city was also. Stylistic hybridity in music is found throughout the Occitan scene: in Toulouse, Fabulous Troubadours and Bombe 2 Bal combine myriad genres, as do bands such as Maurésca Fracas Dub in Montpellier. When I met with Christophe before the opening of the Ostau, he emphasised this in the context of the broader need to reclaim the image of Occitan culture from accusations of irrelevance.

In a city in which ethnic diversity is so apparent in everyday life while facing such hostility from the political right, stylistic plurality could help affirm a sense of engagement. Musical approaches to the challenge of an urban Occitanism can be loosely categorized into two stylistic groups, each of which links Occitan culture to a broad but distinctive geography of affinities. The first of these approaches can be conceptualized as an orientation to the Caribbean, and is best introduced through reference to the work of Massilia Sound System. An ethnographic example is useful here as a means of articulating Massilia's sonic vocabulary. In 2014, when Massilia gave their headline performance at the Fiesta des Suds, it was the final event in a full week of anniversary celebrations, incorporating a

²⁶ The Confédération National du Travail (CNT) is an anarcho-sindicalist union active throughout France since 1946.

radio takeover, a book launch and even a free outdoor performance. At the latter of these events, held on the cours Julien on a weekday afternoon, I had been struck by the syncretism of their sound. Here, up close to a bass-heavy sound system, I felt the weighty thud of a kick pattern marking every downbeat as it flapped lightly against my jeans; a bright snap of a snare drum, bouncing irrepressibly off the tall facades of the square, provided its loping counterpoint.

This was a classic *dembow* rhythm, the central element of reggaeton, whose origins are usually traced to a series of migratory encounters (Rivera et al 2010): first, the descendants of Caribbean migrants in Panama adapted Jamaican reggae in the 1980s, re-shaping its rhythmic inflections and performing in Spanish. Then, prompted by political instability in Panama, some of these musicians fled to New York where they worked directly with Jamaican producers for the first time. The recordings that resulted found their way to Puerto Rico in the 1990s, where the instrumental tracks then formed the basis for San Juan's growing hip-hop scene. While accounts such as this one inevitably obscure the full complexity of what Rivera calls reggaeton's "socio-sonic circuitry", they nevertheless demonstrate the music's emergence in complex intersections of Afrodiasporic and Latino cultural production.

Stood among the crowd gathered on the cours Julien, I experienced the dembow rhythm as one element colliding with others: rave synth textures, tightly syncopated funk, the insistent two-chord 'skank' of 1990s digital dancehall productions and hints of Brazilian capoeira music and Mauritian *sega*. As the band members took a break between songs to hand out pastis in plastic cups, it dawned on me that the crowd registered the diversity of the neighbourhood in a way that I had seen few other events manage. The syncretism of Massilia's sound is likewise evident in their recorded output, which has been among the best-selling music using the Occitan language (Martel 2014). Examples include calypso and griot music in "Dins Ma Canton" (2002); capoeira rhythms in "Passa Mon Blocó" (2002); merengue in "Curtaglia" (1993); Hindi film songs on the album *Aïoiliywood* (1997) and Northeast Brazilian musics such as *coco* and *mangue* on the album *3698CR13* (2000).

This geography of affinities, centred on Jamaica and tracing links throughout the Caribbean and Latin America, forms the basis of Massilia's stylistic identity. In turn it has influenced a whole generation of Occitan artists including Doctors de Trobar, Maurèsca Fracàs Dub and Nux Vomica. At one concert at Molotov, Mauresca Fracas Dub were paired with a new Marseille band called Dancehall Balèti. Though the latter group sang in

French, the Occitan word 'Balèti' foregrounded their affinity to the scene. Featuring Jagdish as their frontman, the group blended reggae with occasional excursions into drum 'n' bass, ska and electro.²⁷

For these groups, the question of a "living meaning" is resolved or approached via the Global South. If, as discussed earlier, the troubadours as "cultural weapon" could be invoked in efforts to illuminate and critique the contemporary city, one purpose of musical syncretism is to embed the Occitan subject within that city: amid the flows, junctures and fissures of a cosmopolitan Marseille.

While it is useful to locate this orientation to the Global South in terms of the urban soundscape, it is also important to consider its relationship to Occitanist political affinities. As discussed earlier, the Occitan scene since the 1970s has been informed by strong anti-colonial and anti-capitalist inflections. As Esteve (2010) suggests, its concerns have evolved considerably during this period. In the 1970s, Occitanists were at the heart of struggles over the planned development of the Larzac plateau in the south of France's Massif Central. At that time the plateau was the object of fierce contestation between local farmers and the French government, which planned to expropriate their land for the extension of a military base. The defence of Larzac against the government's proposals became a broad movement of civil disobedience over the course of the decade, incorporating strong Occitanist tendencies: "Gardaram Lo Larzac" became a prominent slogan. But while the Larzac movement had been centred on a local concern, subsequent decades saw the emergence of a more globally oriented activism.

By 2003, when a major demonstration again convened at Larzac with the involvement of Occitan activists, it was under the banner of *altermondialisme* or 'alter-globalisation': an internationally networked movement of resistance against global capitalism. Occitan campaigners increasingly found inspiration in – and generated links with – activist movements in other parts of the world. In 1995, a year after the Zapatista movement in Mexico was launched in response to the North American Free Trade Agreement, the sleeve for Massilia's new album *Commando Fada* centred on a ghoulish face crowned with Emiliano Zapata's trademark hat. The portrait itself is framed by a design recalling the distinctive labels for the Savon de Marseille. In 2002 the group made the link more explicitly, titling their new album *Occitanista*.

²⁷ Raspiagaous was another prominent local group who did not sing in Occitan but who were closely affiliated with the scene. Their name derives from the Occitan "éspiagous" meaning "spikelet".



Cover design for Massilia Sound System's *Commando Fada* (1995, Ròker Promocion)

If musical syncretism itself links Occitan culture both to the heterogeneity of contemporary Marseille and to the globally-networked ambitions of the altermondialist movement, Jamaican sound system culture has a particular significance that must be considered in relation to Henriques' (2011, 3) notion of sound systems as "a social and cultural institution". When Massilia formed in 1984, reggae, dub and Rastafarianism constituted a dominant source of inspiration among a younger generation of left-wing groupings in France. In the neighbourhood of la Plaine, which was already a magnet for artists and activists of African or Caribbean origin, reggae was felt to be a powerful bridge. This historical moment is discussed in detail by Martel (2014): Jagdish discovered reggae working at a creole restaurant near the Cours Julien; as early as 1980, Tatou had a reggae show on the local station Radio Galère. By 1984 the nascent collective had established its own association, Massilia Dub, which became an unprecedented hub for parties, campaigns and underground publishing linked together by Jamaican and Rastafarian reference points (Martel 2014, 20).

At the heart of this engagement was a fascination with the distinctive linguistic inflections of Jamaican patois, as heard through Bob Marley and other reggae performers. Martel (2014) describes how Massilia's catchword "aioli" acts as a substitute for the Jamaican patois "irie" (meaning "alright", "great" or "powerful") while also referring to the

eponymous Provençal dish. Early on they began to develop alternative and esoteric reference points for Marseille, renaming its neighbourhoods as tribes inspired by Rastafarian zodiacal themes. Over email, longstanding group member Gari Greu described to me how this logic had unfolded:

From the beginning of Massilia, it was in wanting to transpose Jamaican symbols in order to re-create a folklore of our own that we became conscious that Bob Marley wasn't singing in English but in Jamaican patois, we said to ourselves: "let's be like him" and we appropriated Occitan.²⁸

Making a similar point in a 2014 radio interview, Gari emphasizes that "if we "tchatche" in Provençal²⁹ it's not because our grandparents have these roots, it's because at a certain point we wanted to be like Bob Marley, and we noticed 'oh, he's not singing in English, he's singing in Jamaican patois. Do we have a kind of patois here too?; That's how we found Provençal" (France Info 2014).

In this sense, Occitan is not so much an equivalent of Jamaican patois as an ingredient for a new kind of patois unique to Marseille: one that, as in Jamaica, consists in a playful *détournement* of a centralized language imposed from outside.

For Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 7), patois evidences the need for a rhizome model in understanding language and semiotic chains: language emerges as "collective assemblages of enunciation" marked not by dichotomies or fixed relations between sign and object, but by what Uriel Weinrich describes as "an essentially heterogeneous reality" that is "never closed upon itself" (1968 cited in Deleuze 1987, 7). This understanding of patois helps to illuminate Massilia's sprawling webs of signification. Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari's insistence that "there is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity" parallels the decentred basis of Massilia's linguistic project: as early as 1989, Tatou had concluded that in Marseille, Occitan was "the only language that doesn't belong to anyone in particular" (Martel 2014, 94). Likewise, Gari Greu explained to me that "we have a relationship to the language which is completely freed from any idea of roots or heritage etc".³⁰

Seen in terms of Deleuze's rhizome model, Massilia's use of Occitan emerges as one means of dramatizing the *exception marseillaise*: a carnivalesque staging of the city's

²⁸ Personal correspondence, April 2017.

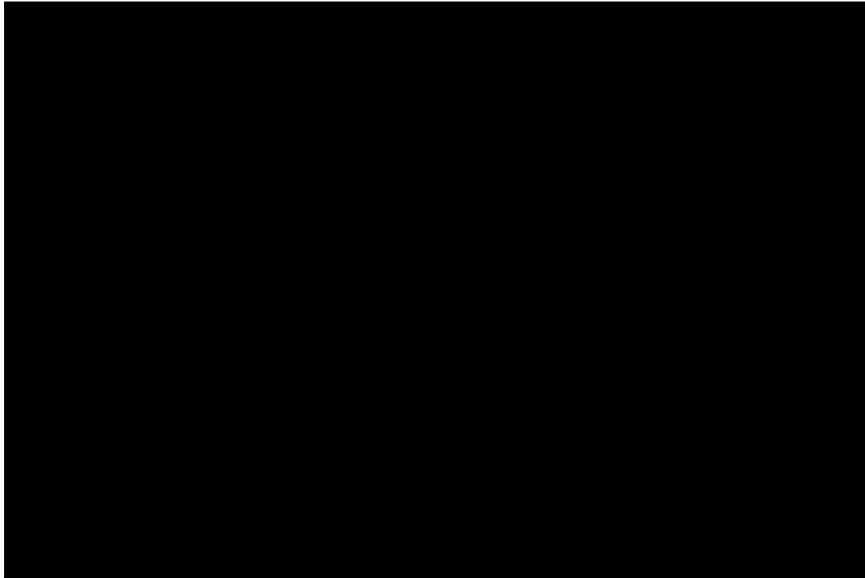
²⁹ "Provençal" is generally conceptualised as one geographical variant of Occitan, though the language and its variants are categorised in different ways by different people.

³⁰ Personal correspondence, April 2017.

heteroglossia. A useful example is provided by the group's frequent use of the local word *fada*, meaning "crazy" or "(s)he who has lost it". Among the few Occitan words remaining in wide circulation in Marseille, *fada* also signifies a certain stereotype of the *marseillais*, as reckless and uninhibited. On 2014's "Trois MCs sur la Version", Massilia declare themselves "the fadas in action, refusing the pressure" ("les fadas en action, refusant la pression"); on 2000's "La Fille du Selecta" they are "fada du reggae"; and on 1992's "Reggae Fadoli" they are "fada dans la danse". Through these lyrics, and song titles such as "Fada Dub" (1992) and "Commando Fada" (1995), Massilia reformulates the caricatured sense of the word, mobilizing it as a symbol of a proudly heterogeneous and anti-establishment city.³¹

If the Caribbean constituted one locus of stylistic inspiration for contemporary Occitan musicians, a second major focal point has been that of the Mediterranean. The groups formed by Manu Théron, in particular, have foregrounded this alignment. Théron's own vocal style, with its heavy use of melisma and ornamentation, is deeply inspired by vocal traditions from Italy, Corsica, Sardinia and elsewhere. In *Lo Còr de la Plana*, the format of close part-singing links closely to idioms such as Corsican *paghjella*, with frequent use of open fifths, unisons and pedal points serving as drones. At the Festival des Vives Voix, the massed-choir performance of Théron's "La Madalena" revealed a similar stylistic identity. In some sections the choir came together to deliver clear open fifths; in others it refracted into call-and-response patterns with distinct vocal lines ornamenting each other.

³¹ While Jamaican sound system culture was clearly a dominant source of inspiration for Massilia, conceptual links were also made with Brazilian *emoboladore* tradition. The writer Claude Sicre, for example, has described the *emoboladore* 'desafio' and the troubadour 'tenso' as parallel forms of social critique.



Lo Còr de la Plana (unknown photographer)

Whether in *Lo Còr de la Plana*, *Chin Na Na Poun* or *Gacha Empega*, Théron's compositions often draw their rhythmic and structural character from triple-time Mediterranean dance forms such as the Neapolitan *tarantella* or from Moroccan *gnawa* music. Instrumentation, too, is decisively Mediterranean: in both *Lo Còr de la Plana* and *Gacha Empega*, male singing is joined by sparse patterns on *bendir* and Italian *tamburello*; in *Chin Na Na Poun*, this is joined by a mandolin; and in *Sirventes*, Théron's voice meets the *oud* of Grégory Dargent and the percussion of Palestinian musician Youssef Hbeisch. In 2000, *Gacha Empega* released an album with Algerian group *El Hillal* following several years of collaborative sessions, while *Lo Còr de la Plana* have built a long-term musical partnership with another Algerian group, *El Maya El Assila* (*Compagnie Lamparo* 2017). Like *Massilia Sound System*, these groups conjoin their Mediterranean imaginary with an emphasis on the local: *Lo Còr de la Plana* foregrounds its affiliation with the neighbourhood of *la Plaine* through its name, while the widespread interest in the work of Victor Gelu likewise points to a sense of embeddedness in Marseille.

Beyond Théron's own groups, the culture of Occitan vocal polyphony that he helped establish also involves a distinctively Mediterranean orientation. In June 2014 I attended a performance by *La Roquette*, an *a cappella* group that had emerged recently from this network. Based in Arles, they came to Marseille to sing as part of a programme of Arles-based musicians, held at *Molotov*. I was captivated by what I experienced as a highly focused timbre, a sound whose detailed, human resonance occupied and altered the space. Given that the venue was more associated with punk, reggae, hip-hop and

electronic music, the presence of unadorned vocal polyphony seemed to transform the complexion of the whole venue. They were the only Occitan-language group on the programme, and one man near me in the audience cheered approvingly before muttering happily that he “understood nothing”. Like Manu Théron’s groups, La Roquette performed with an intense sense of commitment that seemed to acknowledge and valorize difference rather than dilute or apologise for it.

The proliferation of groups spanning a broad continuum of professionalization can be understood in relation to two intersecting developments. First, Théron’s encounters with Bulgarian and Italian singing and his formulation of an Occitan style coincided with the induction of various Mediterranean vocal traditions into the orbit of the World Music industry. In the mid-1980s, an album of traditional Bulgarian songs arranged for choir, *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*, was discovered and reissued on prominent labels such as 4AD, Nonesuch and Philips. A sequel was released in 1989, winning a Grammy award. Soon afterwards, Corsican groups such as A Fileta and Nouvelles Polyphonies Corses began to achieve international fame (Bithell 2007).

Second, the Corsican groups in particular began to establish intercultural networks with polyphonic groups from other places. A Fileta were instrumental in the establishment of the Rencontres Polyphoniques festival, which saw performances from groups from Sardinia, Albania, Georgia and elsewhere (Bithell 2007, 180). In this way, by the early 1990s polyphonic styles from various Mediterranean locations were both circulating with increasing prominence on the one hand, and being discussed in terms of a transregional phenomenon on the other.

Meanwhile, another local group that situated itself in terms of the Mediterranean was D’Aqui Dub, founded in 2001. In its own words, the group

...dips into the melting-pot of Mediterranean culture in order to experiment with a new type of music: one that is haunted by Occitan songs, touched by the breeze of Balkan music and led onwards by hectic post-punk rhythms. Bouzouki, bombarde, machines and bass rock cross paths with hypnotic electro, mysterious dub, spellbinding traditional trance and improvised music.³²

³² <http://www.daquidub.com/en/>

In their song “Lo Camin de Morgiu” (2014) the group performs a text written by Alessi Dell’Umbria. Bosnian bouzouki player Asmir Sabic punctuates the song throughout with a six-note hook, while singer Arnaud Fromont evokes the fate of a prisoner locked away on the Chemin de Morgiou, a path that climbs south from Marseille into the open scrubland of the *calanque de Morgiou* overlooking the sea. The track is taken from the album *Impermanencia*, whose accompanying booklet text is given in Occitan, French, English and Bosnian.

If the emergence of Mediterranean vocal polyphony as a recognised discursive category has been of practical value for Occitan musicians, it also encourages the affirmation of the Mediterranean as ethical alignment. As with those shaping the Corsican music revival, Occitanists find in the Mediterranean symbolic opportunities to exceed the framework of a centralizing nation-state: the Mediterranean offers to link Occitan culture to a more open and flexible space of belonging. Crucially, the Mediterranean promises to obviate and exceed deep-rooted binary distinctions between Europe and Africa, Christianity and Islam, East and West.

Ethnomusicology has long been drawn to the theme of Mediterranean music, as accounts by Stokes (2011), Cooper and Dawe (2005) and Plastino (2003) make clear. As Stokes suggests, early studies by Alan Lomax and others often sought to narrate the endurance of a Mediterranean musical identity despite the gradual weakening of economic and intellectual linkages across the region. More recent post-structuralist approaches have drawn on Herzfeld’s (1987) critique of Mediterranean unity to cognize instead a porous, fragmented region of musical circulation. In this context Plastino (2003, 185) calls for a de-essentialised Mediterranean, “no longer an object of study, but rather a field of study”, a “process-oriented understanding of the politics of cultural identity, in a region where indeed some people, some of the time, find it useful to emphasise their identity as Mediterranean”. The prism of a de-essentialised Mediterranean permits a more nuanced understanding of these Occitan musical projects, situating them as dynamic processes based on affinities and opportunities rather than inherent or bounded attributes.

Conclusions

This chapter has sought to demonstrate three broad domains in and through which music reimagines the intersections of Occitan culture and contemporary Marseille. Informed by a deep-rooted commitment to decentralization and pluralism in cultural life, Occitanists value music partly as a means of bringing these concerns into generative contact with the

conceptual tensions and physical spaces of the city. One means by which musicians effect this, I have argued, is by reactivating historically rooted cornerstones of Occitan culture. The troubadours of the thirteenth century are evoked as an overlooked model for cosmopolitanism and dissent, and musicians link the troubadours to their own practices through formal techniques and their own artistic discourse. Meanwhile the work of nineteenth century Marseille poets is adapted, performed and highlighted as a direct precedent for the contestation of capitalist urban development. In thematising these historical bodies of work, musicians recast them as resources through which to challenge local threats to cultural tolerance and public space.

A second domain consists in the practice of vocal polyphony, which incorporates non-professional singers to help embed the Occitan language in the spatial and temporal locations of everyday urban life. Rehearsing in homes and neighbourhood cultural centres, and attracting a range of culturally curious singers, groups such as Misé Babilha provide opportunities for social intimacy and collective expression. At the same time, singing could also be grasped as an exceptional mode for the performance of Occitan-ness.

Finally, with syncretic projects oriented often to the musical circulations of the Caribbean or the Mediterranean, musicians stage the dynamic pluralism of the city. In this context, Occitan-language singing decouples itself from any sense of traditionalism, ultimately envisaging Occitan culture as an open-ended locus of urban solidarities. This linkage between Marseille, Occitan-ness and a politics of global openness, is captured effectively in Massilia's 2002 song, "Occitanista", in which couplets in French and Occitan are interwoven:

Oh cousin je te le demande
Qu'est-ce que c'est d'être marseillais?
Comprendre que les différences
Sont le ciment de la cité.

Ò mon cosin te va demandi
La diferencia qu'es aquò ?
D'istòrias dins totei lei lengas,
Mila receptas per tenir còp.

Oh cousin je te le demande

Et ta recette qu'est-ce que c'est ?
Avoir la fierté de sa ville
Parler avec le monde entire.

Oh cousin I ask you
What is it to be Marseillais?
Understanding that differences
Are the glue of the city.

Oh my cousin I ask you,
What is the difference?
Stories in every language,
A thousand recipes to pick up.

Oh cousin I ask you,
What's your recipe then?
Taking pride in your city,
Talking to the whole world.

Music's active role, then, traversed the social, historical and aesthetic dimensions of the contemporary Occitan project. As I have suggested, practitioners often seek to redress deep-rooted assumptions about both Occitan culture and the ways in which it is practised. Music emerges as a means of countering both reductive assumptions of pastoralism and backwardness on the one hand, and the search for supposedly authentic alternatives on the other. Instead, an insistence on creation permits playful, powerful responses to the question of what the Occitan language might communicate at a precarious juncture of urban change.

Chapter Four: Live music and gentrification in la Plaine

14 October 2014:

On a mild midweek afternoon in October 2014, I am on the Cours Julien, where a free, open-air performance is taking place. Heavy bass spills out from a sizeable sound system, myriad afrodiasporic sounds colliding infectiously. Amid a fog of smoke, a sizeable crowd as visible, a snapshot of the neighbourhood's inhabitants: artists, punks, students; French, Spanish, Cap Verdean, Colombian and Malagasy. Many are committed fans, singing along enthusiastically; others dance casually and chat to friends. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, though undeniably an interruption for a square that normally feels calm during the daytime. At the square's more upmarket outdoor restaurants, some customers look on bewilderedly. At the edge of the crowd, I ask one slightly reticent woman what she thinks:

Well it's not my thing to be honest. I moved here two years ago. I really like the neighbourhood, it's buzzing, it's vibrant. I don't go to much live music but I like being in the middle of that diversity and that creative atmosphere. The problem is that often it goes a bit far, the noise is just too much and you get people drinking and fighting, taking drugs.

15 May 2015

It's a Friday evening, and I've just left a gig at Data, one of the city's tiny, essential venues for underground music. The performer, an acquaintance from the UK, delivered a dense cascade of electronic sound from his modular synthesiser set-up, to a small but attentive audience. As usual, the long racks which on Wednesdays were opened to reveal the venue's 'datatheque' of loanable records, now served as seating for those in attendance. Some were smoking roll-ups, others sipping beers bought from the makeshift bar in the corner of the room. At the back, the door to the garden was open and a couple of people could be heard talking and laughing amid the bleeps and fuzz of the performance. It was an early show, timed to allow the venue's usual crowd to then make it along to Vidéodrome 2, a small new arthouse cinema on the Cours Julien that sometimes hosts live performances. Tonight a live "ciné-concert" was scheduled, featuring a one-man no-wave band called The John Merricks, based in Strasbourg. As I

trace my way back home, up the Rue de la Loubière and on to the Place Notre Dame du Mont, students and young locals are accumulating at the outdoor terraces of the square's popular bars. Ahead of me to the right, the cours Julien is likewise filling up.

To my left, the Rue d'Aubagne gradually becomes clear, descending past the busy Place Cézanne, leapfrogging the traffic-choked Cours Lieutaud and through the heart of Noailles, where West African men gather on street corners and myriad African pop musics emanate from hair salons, wholesalers and cafés. At the Place Cézanne, these populations slide past each other in a shifting flow of differences: some pause outside Asile 404 to get a taste of the Noise band soundchecking frenetically inside, groups waiting outside Molotov for a gig to start greet passing friends. I overhear a conversation about how bobos are invading the area. Molotov is one of the most popular spots in the dense musical life of the area around Cours Julien, but eighteen months later it will become the latest in a string of venues threatened with closure following a breach of noise regulations.

In these two ethnographic moments, musical culture emerges as a set of practices and lifestyles suspended in the ambivalent web of gentrification. In the first, a recent incomer valued a musical performance as a crucial affirmation of neighbourhood conviviality, but also experienced it as a source of anxiety. In the second, a walk through the neighbourhood pointed to a musical grassroots that was thriving yet precarious, as it sought to navigate municipal regulation and cultural change.

In recent years gentrification has moved gradually to the centre of discussions about neighbourhood life in la Plaine, where new commercial openings, the regulation of nightlife and urban development policies are among the contentious examples of urban change. In this context, the stories presented above pose a number of questions: is musical culture threatened by gentrification or complicit in it? Does public music-making in la Plaine nourish illusions of social mix that merely entrench what Butler and Robson (2003) call the "tectonic" social relations of the gentrifying neighbourhood, or does it conversely produce spaces in which convivialities can be meaningfully realised? More broadly, what do these tensions reveal about the particularities of music's interactions with the gentrifying neighbourhood?

In this chapter I draw on approaches to gentrification from urban sociology and human geography to help address these questions. I begin by describing the material and social dimensions of la Plaine, establishing orientations to intercultural and underground music-

making as important features of local nightlife. I then describe different aspects of neighbourhood transformation and identify gentrification in la Plaine in terms of an emergent transition from small-scale, artist-led change towards government-led interventions. In this context, notions of music as outside, resistant to, or under threat from, gentrification, co-exist, informed by a sense of Neil Smith's (1996) "revanchist city". I trace local contestations around music, noise and the regulation of nightlife in terms of their relationship to revanchist urbanism and the right to the city. At the same time, my research also points to more ambiguous perspectives and relationships, in which musical culture is entwined with the transformation of the area. This ambiguity is conceptualised with reference both to Rose's (1984) seminal concept of the marginal gentrifier, and to Ley's (2003)'s framework of a "dialectics of gentrification". However, I argue that the persistence of a diverse, grassroots and often oppositional music scene through the last thirty years points to a diffuse, rather than direct, involvement with this dialectical process.

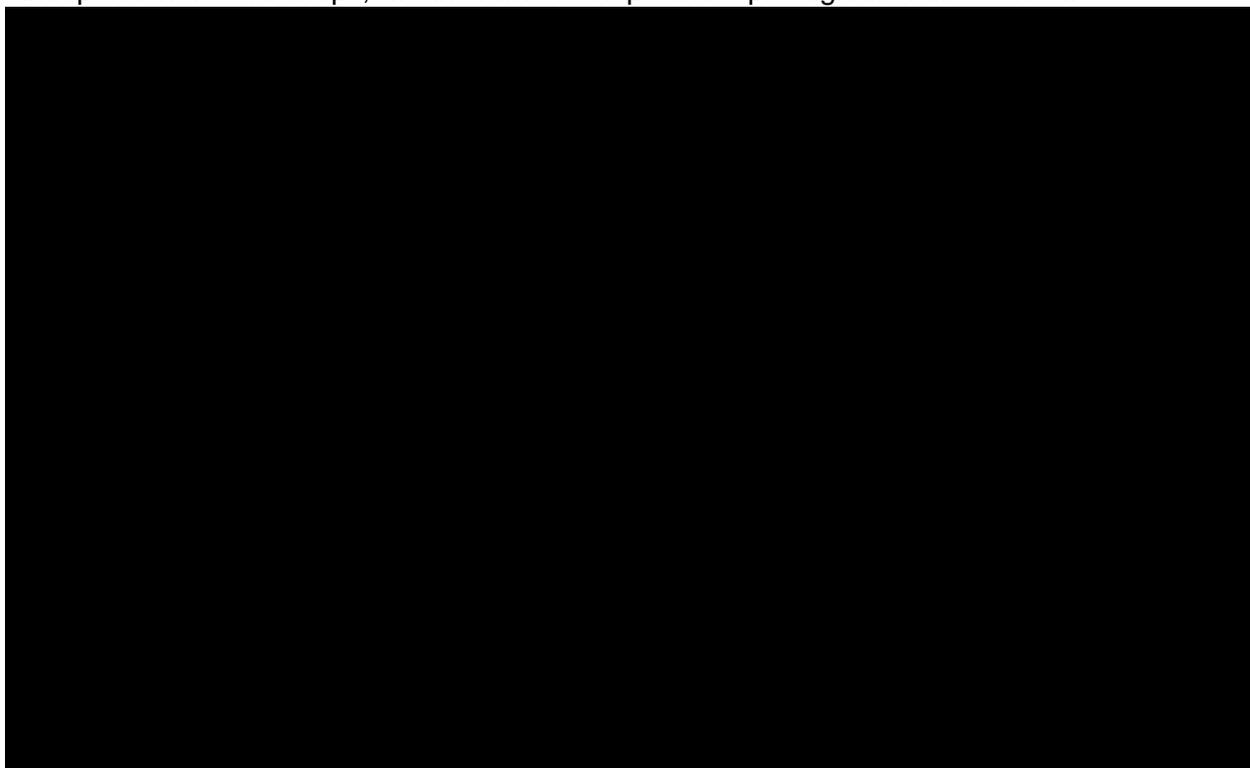
Music and cultural life in la Plaine

La Plaine is the local vernacular name for the Place Jean Jaurès, Marseille's largest public square and the site for one of the city's biggest street markets, held three times weekly. More generally, 'la Plaine' also refers to the wider zone stretching north and west from the Place Jean Jaurès, roughly comprising the Cours Julien, the Place Notre Dame du Mont and the interconnecting narrow streets between these squares. It is in this second sense that I refer to la Plaine for the purposes of this chapter.

The neighbourhood is situated at the junction of the 1st, 5th and 6th arrondissements, and is sometimes described as part of the fringe of the city centre: easily accessible on foot from central anchoring points such as the Canebière, yet possessing its own distinctive character. For the visitor this character might be apparent in material terms: the relative absence of chain stores and modern buildings, a density of narrow pedestrianized streets and open squares, three- or four-storey *anciens immeubles* adorned with event posters, graffiti and street art, and small, ethnically diverse restaurants, bookshops, theatres, music venues, organic food shops and bars. These small businesses have coalesced particularly on the squares and on pedestrianized streets such as the Rue des Trois Rois, Rue Crudère, Rue Vian and Rue Pastoret and other streets such as the Rue des Trois Mages and Rue des Trois Frères Barthélemy. In addition, those who live or spend time locally often describe a distinct "tissu associatif", a term that captures the clustering of those small cultural venues but emphasises civic or community-based initiatives. This cluster of independent cultural amenities and small commercial outlets contributes to the

widely-held idea that la Plaine is Marseille's pre-eminent 'alternative' neighbourhood, even if this label and its variants are used and interpreted in different ways.

Music is at the heart of this alternative scene. The neighbourhood features a remarkable aggregation of music-related sites, including at least thirteen performance venues, four independent record shops, two instrument shops and a prestigious music school.¹



Large dots: music venues; Dashes: other music-focused sites; Small dots: bookshops and theatres.

Facades, lampposts, doors and bar windows are populated by gig posters and band stickers indexing genres from far-flung corners of the world. Updated, scrubbed off, plastered over: the built environment manifests the rapid unfolding of the musical present and the sediments of the recent musical past. Marseille residents very often referred to la Plaine as the most musical area of the city, and though many described the city's cultural life as somewhat dispersed, la Plaine was commonly seen as a privileged locus of activity. One amateur musician told me he had gravitated to the neighbourhood quickly on arriving in the city as a student, because of its busy musical life. These affirmations were sometimes amplified by a sense of rarity or precarity, the idea that la Plaine is all the more precious because overall Marseille is somehow culturally impoverished. One audience member told me:

¹ Le Conservatoire National à Rayonnement Régional de Marseille has around 1800 students and was established at its present site in 2001.

Musically not a lot of things happen in Marseille that interest me to be honest, but when they do it's always around here, at l'Asile or sometimes at squats. It's like a little island of creativity in a city that's mostly quite dead.²

A further example is useful in demonstrating the sense of belonging that some local musicians articulated. On one occasion, I bumped into some acquaintances from la Plaine after a performance held as part of the twelfth edition of the annual RIAM festival, which focuses on digital and electronic arts and is held in various venues throughout the city. This event was at the new FRAC building, a major contemporary art space in La Joliette that had been funded in connection with Euroméditerranée and Marseille-Provence 2013. Though people seemed to have enjoyed the performances, some found themselves reflecting on the unfamiliarity of the space and the neighbourhood. "You know, it's very weird for us coming here", one of them said to me. "Where's all the graffiti?", he asked jokingly, in reference to the contrast between the new and carefully regulated built environment of the gallery and its surroundings on the one hand, and the more familiar world of the cours Julien on the other. Even those who tended not to spend time in the area were adamant of its significance. At a house party one woman told me that, though she didn't go to many gigs herself, la Plaine was known as "the place" for music in the city.³ In this sense, musical culture in la Plaine contributes to the neighbourhood's distinctive position in Marseille's reputational geography.

One way to understand the formative role of music in the area's broader cultural life is via a pair of distinctive points of orientation. The first of these involved an emphasis on the juxtaposition or encounter of geographically disparate genres. Styles such as cumbia, ragga, coladeira, funaná, salsa, flamenco and Balkan folk – as well as overtly hybrid projects - were nurtured in venues such as Molotov,⁴ Equitable Café,⁵ Le Jam, Le Bal Perdu, Espace Julien, Cubaila Café, La Passerelle, Kawawatei, Dar Lamifa and the Ostau dau Pais Marselhes. A singer who had been active in reggae and jazz groups suggested to me that "la Plaine and the cours Julien has always been a hub for world music, ever since I arrived in Marseille in the 1990s".⁶

² Conversation with audience member at Asile 404, 25/3/16.

³ Conversation at house party, 26/9/15.

⁴ <http://www.lemolotov.com/programmation>. Accessed September 13, 2017.

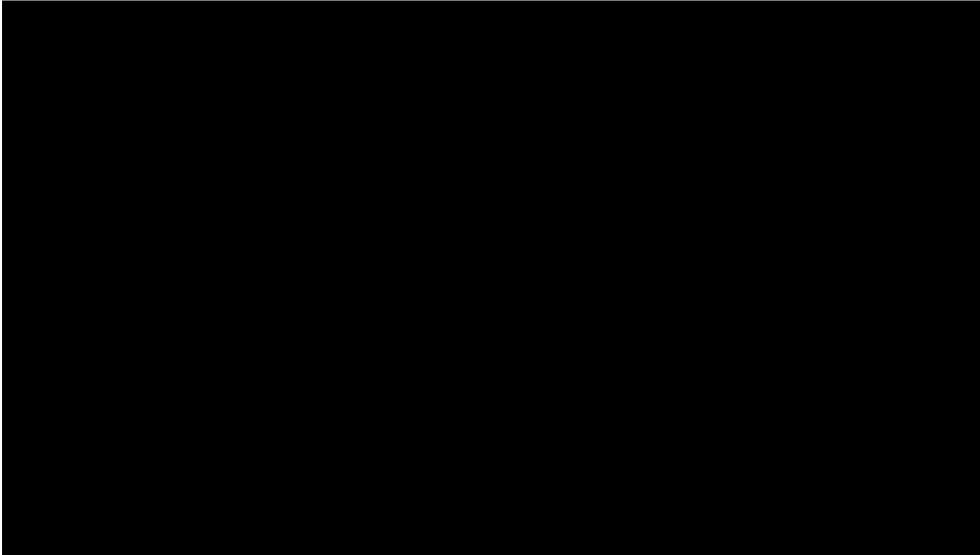
⁵ <https://equitablecafe.org/>. Accessed September 13, 2017.

⁶ Interview, Les Danaïdes, 6/4/2016

A simple cross-sectional analysis of some events taking place at these venues over a single weekend can give a sense, however limited, of the richness of the scene. On Friday 12 February 2016, it was possible to see Senegalese singer Pap N'Diaye at Kawawatei, flamenco performer Antonio Negro at Machine à Coudre, and a DJ night called Tupinamabas, featuring capoeira, samba and reggae, at Le Bal Perdu. The following evening, Marseille-based Guinean musician Kourou Fia was launching his new album at Le Jam, Greek trio Rebétologie were performing at Kawawatei, and Espace Julien was hosting a one-off festival featuring local artists such as reggae group Raspigaous, Latin ensemble Cumbia Chicharra, Ivorian rap-reggae artist Toko Blaze, and afro-soul DJ Selecter The Punisher.

This emphasis on geographically dispersed genres within la Plaine's music scene can be traced to the mid-1980s, when the area first began to attract groups exploring reggae and other Afro-Caribbean diasporic musics. A 2003 research project, featuring interviews with key figures of this historical moment, gives a detailed insight into the musical culture of that time (Bourdreuil et al. 2003, 80). The venue La Maison Hantée and bars such as Champs de Mars, Dégust and Bar de la Plaine had acted as important sites of sociability for young artists, activists and musicians. It was in this environment that Massilia Sound System emerged, along with pirate stations such as Radio Galère.

During the period of my research Molotov was one of the most active venues, hosting around five concerts every week. It was also relatively large, with space for around 150 people. Following gigs and between sets, it was common to see the venue's audience spilled out onto the Place Cézanne, a small square bordering the Rue d'Aubagne. Equitable Café, situated at the northern end of the cours Julien's pedestrianised area, was another active venue. It had existed at its present site since 2009, though the association dated back to 2003. As well as programming two or three music events per week, the venue also hosted workshops, conferences, film screenings and debates, and served as a popular neighbourhood bar. On one occasion, a friend and I saw a concert there by a Cuban group led by Ruben Paz, a saxophonist and flautist living in Marseille. The audience ranged from Latin American students to local seniors, the room forming a heaving mass of mostly untutored dancing.



Le Molotov (photographer unknown).

A second point of orientation was to what were often described as “underground” musics. Punk, metal, noise, industrial, free improvisation and innumerable variations on these genres featured heavily in venues such as Asile 404,⁷ Data, Salle Gueule and Machine à Coudre. References to an underground scene were not uncommon, and though the most emblematic venue in this regard, L’Embobineuse, was located on the other side of the city centre, la Plaine was a distinct hub for these musics.

Of the neighbourhood’s venues, Asile 404 and Data corresponded most straightforwardly to dominant notions of underground practice. Asile 404 was set up in early 2012 by two Parisians, and is run as an art studio and a space for workshops and exhibitions as well as performances. It was staffed partly by volunteers, a model which helped it to survive without large audiences or significant subsidies, while maintaining low ticket prices.⁸ With no official stage or separate bar area, the space was informal and intimate. On one occasion, I was among a small handful of people that turned up to see a solo guitarist improvise live with a trio of other musicians located in different cities: using an online collaborative streaming service, the performers sought to conjoin the sounds in real-time. They also relayed intermittent video streams to each other, and the performance became a fascinating exploration of networked creativity. On another occasion, on a warm autumn night, I ended up there with friends following a separate gig nearby. A group of ten musicians was sprawled throughout the venue channelling cosmic jazz excursions, with

⁷ <https://asile404.org>

⁸ Most events were priced flexibly, to allow audience members to pay based on their circumstances and convictions. The range tended to be set at €2-5.

esoteric percussion and elaborate costumes. Their set saturated the space, and when after an hour the audience retreated outside, the energy remained palpable.

Both Asile 404 and Data flouted the national smoking ban, and were small enough to feel full with around thirty to forty audience members. While Asile 404 hosted live performances roughly three times per week alongside daytime art classes and workshops, Data would programme once or twice per week and also hosted its 'datatheque', a weekly lending library for a broad range of experimental music. Programming at both spaces gravitated towards what genre categorists might describe as noise, free improv, free jazz, drone and post-rock, often involving experimental electronics and the use of unconventional instruments. Overall the practices of these venues corresponded closely to dominant notions of underground musical culture as outlined by writers such as Stephen Graham (2016), for whom underground music scenes involve conscious and emphatic departures from a cultural mainstream as well as efforts to dissociate from capital and the state.

Meanwhile, venues such as Salle Gueule and Machine à Coudre tended towards styles such as punk, metal and hardcore. These were slightly more formalised venues, with separate bar areas, professional staging and lighting, and no smoking inside. But they remained vital to local underground music, forming part of a close grassroots network. Often small venues such as these held fundraising events for other spaces in need of money, and helped promote each others' events. In 2014 a fortnightly guide - 'Vortex' - was established by local promoter and musician Samy Delabre, listing upcoming events in Marseille's underground scene.⁹ It quickly became a popular resource, and a simple analysis across four editions from between September 2015 and June 2016 gives a certain idea of the scene at this moment.

Edition	Number of events	Number in la Plaine / Cours Julien
14/9/15 – 27/9/15	23	20 (87%)
9/5/16 – 22/5/16	33	27 (82%)
23/5/16 – 5/6/16	47	34 (72%)
6/6/16 – 19/6/16	41	32 (78%)
Average per week	18	14 (78%)

Fig. 1. Events listed in the Vortex guide

⁹ Le Vortex 2016

The data suggest that it was common for the local underground scene to feature around fourteen concerts per week, making up around 75-85% of the city's total.

Certain limitations to this analysis should be observed: first, the dataset does not feature all events that took place, since Vortex was, as its founder acknowledged in an interview, a “non-exhaustive” guide (Chossis 2015). Events might not be submitted (or even organised) in time for print deadlines, or might take place in squats, homes or private studios and therefore seek to limit publicity. Second, the data only represent underground music events as defined through the curatorial frame of one guide, and some events are very possibly excluded here that would have been considered legitimate by other stakeholders. However, Vortex was a popular source of information, as attested by its wide availability in local venues, bars, cafés and shops and its prominence on social media. As such, the dataset it provides should be seen as a useful, emic resource, despite its contingencies.

In identifying these two points of orientation, I do not intend to posit a binary opposition of two musical worlds. Local music fans were often highly eclectic in their tastes, and the programming at local venues was not perfectly confined to the genre categories cited above. For instance, Asile 404 sometimes hosted DJ nights involving cumbia and afrobeat, and Molotov often programmed punk gigs. Indeed, the programming at Molotov illustrates an important domain of convergence between the underground and intercultural orientations of the scene. One recurring theme was an anti-fascist tendency, though the owners of Molotov have been careful to point out in interviews that they “do not belong to any political party” (Bachtarzi 2015).¹⁰ Rather than two segregated musical worlds, then, the intercultural and underground dimensions of the scene shared much even as they marked distinctive clusters of activity.

In addition to these features, the scene was also characterised by important connections beyond its physical location. The capacity to draw in musical audiences and performers from other parts of the city, and indeed from other locations around the world, helped constitute the neighbourhood as a site of mobility and an object of renown. Venues often staged performances by artists that were touring regionally, nationally or internationally. In an interview with the newspaper *La Provence*, the co-manager of Molotov, Hazem, described the venue's approach as being “to invite as many small groups recognised internationally as artists emerging from the Marseille scene” (Bachtarzi 2015). And it was

¹⁰ Events at Molotov in support of antifascist networks included a “Festiva vegan antifa” in May 2016, featuring Gaea, Griott, Sang Mêlé & Djambhellvice, and an annual “Massilia Antifa Fest”.

not uncommon to meet audience members who had come from suburbs of Marseille or other towns in Provence to attend particular performances or festivals.

Moreover, while venues were physically located in the neighbourhood, social media increasingly extended the life of the scene into the online world. The vast majority of venues, promoters and festivals had active profiles on Facebook or (less commonly) Twitter, as did many musicians and fans. More than simply a domain for the representation of news and events, the use of social media here can be understood, following Berry (2014, 1), as “part of the material and experiential formation of what now constitutes life in public spaces.” Photos and videos from recent gigs were frequently shared to public or semi-public feeds. Discussions, jokes, artistic feedback and other basic elements of social discourse seeped into the digital realm even as they continued to characterise the scene’s face-to-face sociality. In this sense, musical life in la Plaine demonstrates the increasing limitations of attempts to classify scenes, following Bennett and Peterson (2004), as local, translocal or virtual. Here, as in so many urban locales, the interpenetration of these spatialities has become part of everyday musical life.

Perspectives on Gentrification

la Plaine, then, was generally described as Marseille’s pre-eminent alternative neighbourhood, with a distinctive musical culture at its heart. At the same time it was also experienced by many as a neighbourhood in transformation. Accounts of these changes varied considerably among musicians and others I spoke to, indexing a range of “spatial stories” (Certeau 1984) that attest to the subjectivity of urban experience. However, some themes recurred: impressions of the increasing local settlement of *bobos*; the opening of new shops described as *branché* or *hipster*, and anxieties about local renovation plans. It is useful here to identify one development in particular that established a heightened sensitivity among some local residents. In October 2015, a local residents’ group, the Assemblée de la Plaine, acquired a copy of internal documents from Soleam, a publicly-owned city-wide development company, referring to plans to redevelop the Place Jean Jaurès (Coquille 2015). Four years earlier, Soleam had been appointed by the city council to carry out a large-scale urban development programme called “Opération Grand Centre-Ville”, encompassing thirty-five projects within the central arrondissements (Soleam 2016). Among these was a contentious plan to convert a vast historic building at the edge of the working-class district of Noailles into a 4-star hotel. On its website, Soleam described the programme’s aim as “improving the residential conditions and attractiveness of Marseille’s city centre”, and its budget was listed as €235m.

Not only did residents feel they had not been consulted on the plans for la Plaine, but the leaked documents already promised controversy: while green space and cycle lanes were to be enlarged, the market itself was to be shrunk and its emphasis shifted from affordable, everyday stock to “upmarket” and tourist-focused traders (Penverne 2016). A widely-shared February 2016 article in the national daily newspaper *Libération* lamented what it saw as a threat to a “highly symbolic site” of “human mixture”, the latest move in a city where “the crisis of confidence is severe” and whose “residents no longer believe the council is on their side” (Rouchier 2016). The following month, police officers forcibly removed a series of communal picnic benches that had been set up in an otherwise unused area of the square, sparking widespread condemnation when their use of tear gas against those who peacefully protested was filmed and posted on social media (Massenot 2016). Most of those I spoke to agreed that the square needed renovation, and some even approved of the plans wholeheartedly. Yet for many, confrontations such as these were significant in crystallising the impression that a co-ordinated and aggressive strategy was under way.

Gentrification was not always an explicit frame of reference for these observations, but as a conceptual tool it does offer possible ways of understanding debates about urban change in la Plaine. As such, it is useful to outline some key debates surrounding gentrification in order to begin theorising its relationship with local musical culture. We can introduce these longstanding and multi-faceted debates via the term’s origins in the work of sociologist Ruth Glass, who in early 1960s London observed that “many of the working-class quarters... have been invaded by the middle classes” (1964, xviii).¹¹ What for Glass seemed an isolated quirk of urban change soon turned out to be part of what Neil Smith (1996, 30) called “a much larger urban restructuring” across North America, Western Europe and increasingly elsewhere. Where orthodox theories of socio-spatial change had centred on the ever-degrading city centre and the ever-expanding wealthy suburb,¹² city centres were now instead being repopulated by the relatively wealthy while poorer residents found themselves displaced.

Initially, scholarly debate centred on two sets of explanations: the first, typified in Smith’s broadly Marxian work, held that gentrification was produced through market forces as

¹¹ Although gentrification is generally understood as a post-World War Two phenomenon, nineteenth century precedents identified by Smith (1996, 35) include the sporadic *embourgeoisement* of cities such as Paris and Manchester.

¹² I refer here to the theoretical orthodoxy inherited from Chicago sociologists such as Ernest Burgess, and Robert E. Park in the 1920s (e.g. Park and Burgess 1925). In particular, its paradigmatic “concentric model” had guided the expectations of urbanists and scholars for several decades.

channelled by state intervention, a key aim being to atomise working class communities. The process was therefore characterised by the return of capital to districts where the “rent gap” - the gap between the actual value of land or property and its potential value - had expanded so far as to make reinvestment sufficiently profitable. The second approach, typified in the early work of Ley (e.g 1983), held instead that the process manifested new and increasingly flexible forms of middle-class social identity in post-Fordist societies.

While this second set of accounts has often illuminated ways in which gentrifiers challenge patriarchal and monocultural social orders, Lees et al (2008, 161) emphasise that this focus risks distracting from - even normalising - the destructive impact of displacement. Nevertheless, sociological approaches have been crucial in identifying and interrogating the play of power among different urban actors and the symbolic economies they shape. It soon emerged, for example, that displacement needed to be understood not merely in terms of residential evictions and outpricing, but also in terms of social and cultural displacement: the marginalisation of residents whose needs and ways of life are devalued by the changing composition of local amenities (Marcuse 1985). More broadly, if these two sets of explanations for gentrification once constituted a somewhat polarised argument, they now inform an expanded set of debates about why and where gentrification occurs, how it develops within places and through its “historical geography” (Ley 2003), and what its social and material outcomes might be (Brown-Saracino 2010).

In France, while alertness to issues of class displacement dates back at least as far as the protests of 1968, the vocabulary and theoretical work surrounding gentrification only entered academic research and social activism in the 2000s (Préteicelle 2007). For Préteicelle, this late adoption reflects three important features of the French context: first, the relative persistence of state regulation and union power had delayed the advent of the post-Fordist paradigm associated with gentrification in its archetypal locations such as New York and London; second, the concept of *embourgeoisement* had been developed concurrently to that of gentrification and was felt to encompass the latter’s analytical purposes; and third, the mass construction of social housing in French urban peripheries after World War Two had already entailed the movement out of historic city centres by many poorer residents.

Gradually however, as Préteicelle demonstrates, gentrification has become more widely

observed in France.¹³ In this context, and given that the population of Marseille's centre is arguably more vulnerable than in other major French cities, it is perhaps unsurprising that displacement is an ever-increasing concern for local activists.¹⁴ During the period of my research, residents' associations and discussion groups such as Un Centre Ville Pour Tous, Assemblée de la Plaine and Pensons le Matin often highlighted the spread and risks of gentrification.¹⁵ The process is often thought to have gathered pace in the 1990s, when the success of the city's football team and of bands such as IAM, television shows such as *Plus Belle la Vie* and social initiatives such as "Marseille Esperance" were the basis for a short-lived national media trope known as the "Marseille movida".¹⁶ Not long afterwards, the first high-speed rail link between Marseille and Paris was established, and sociologists such as Jean Viard have suggested that this combination of semi-organised place branding and transport improvements made the city more accessible to "pioneer" cultural tourists (Vignoli 2014).

In the late 1990s the historic neighbourhood of le Panier became the first to witness the kinds of transformations that are often understood as symptomatic of gentrification, as the refurbishment of apartment buildings gave rise to higher rental costs and an explosion of small art galleries and cafés catering to middle-class tastes (Dell'Umbria 2012, 84). In the late 2000s, attention turned to the Rue de la République, a major central artery undergoing wholesale renovation. Its grand, Haussmannian blocks had been erected in a mid-nineteenth century attempt at *embourgeoisement*, but had instead ended up housing hundreds of working class and immigrant families (Borja et al 2010). The street was incorporated into the Euromediterrannée scheme in the late 1990s, along with promises that the dilapidated buildings would be renovated. But in 2004, a large section was bought by an international investment fund that swiftly demanded the eviction of 554 tenants, setting the stage for a protracted struggle. Groups such as Un Centre Ville Pour Tous campaigned against the exclusion of local residents and small business owners. When the street began to re-emerge, chain stores were interspersed with empty shopfronts. The sense of a coalition of interest in gentrification between the municipal council and corporate investors was now established (Grésillon 2011; Bertrand 2011; Borja et al 2010).

¹³ Certain districts in the northeast of Paris have witnessed a process of gentrification that is remarkably comparable to cities such as London or New York (Clerval 2010).

¹⁴ In the 1st arrondissement, 41% of the population lives below the poverty line, compared to 25% in the city overall. Unemployment was at 26.7%, compared to 18.5% overall (INSEE 2017a).

¹⁵ As early as 2010, Un Centre Ville Pour Tous published a text warning of the risks of gentrification in the context of Marseille-Provence 2013 (Un Centre Ville Pour Tous 2010)

¹⁶ E.g. Bressan and Dupont 1994. For a more recent discussion, see Samson and Péraldi 2013.

Artistic production and neighbourhood change

In this sense, prior histories of displacement in Marseille index a range of gentrification's forms, from state-led development programmes with corporate backing to artist-led processes on a smaller scale. Within the sociological research, the role of art and artists forms the focus of an extensive thread of literature that it is useful to outline. Following Zukin's (1982) pioneering account of "loft living" in the Manhattan district of Soho, a dominant narrative of gentrification has framed artists as the spark or catalyst for more comprehensive waves of reinvestment (e.g. Lloyd 2010). In this logic of succession, an initial phase involves artists settling in neighbourhoods where "improvisational spaces" (Bain 2003) to live and to practice their art are sufficiently affordable and unregulated. Such conditions are often met in areas characterised by industrial decline, where derelict or disinvested properties are accompanied by high concentrations of poverty. Through a combination of cultural capital and sweat equity, artists generate clusters of activity that begin to alter the dynamics of the neighbourhood: properties are renovated, new amenities appear and, in response, a broadening demographic of visitors begins to frequent the area. These changes may already generate significant pressures on long-term residents and the local networks they have built up, and once a subsequent upsurge in property development begins to take hold, the most vulnerable residents begin to be displaced. Eventually, the very artists whose settlement previously sparked the process, too, may be forced out.

Useful as this narrative has been in establishing a 'stage-setting' role for artists and artistic production in gentrification, Grodach et al (2016) rightly argue that this conceptualisation has become overly generalised. Two limitations are especially relevant to the present chapter. Firstly, in assuming that the settlement of artists will lead smoothly to a broader middle class takeover and the wholesale transformation of the neighbourhood, it fails to account for cases where this process is much slower and less certain. In la Plaine, the notion of art as a magnet for demographic change dates back at least as far as the mid-1990s: one musician interviewed in Bordreuil's (2003) study observed at that time that "la Plaine had changed. Now there's a whole bunch of artists in the broader sense of the term, and not just raggas or rockers. Part of the nightlife is quite *dandy*, quite Parisian in its attitude" (cited in Bordreuil et al. 2003, 61). The settlement of (often Parisian) *bobos* remains a common observation among local musicians twenty years later, and neither my discussions nor local media reports suggested that this had yet led to large-scale displacement.

Secondly, sociological narratives about art's role in gentrification very often derive from work on visual artists rather than those involved in music or the performing arts more broadly. Specifically, in referring repeatedly to "art" and "artists", these narratives fail to recognise important distinctions between the practices of different categories of artist, in terms of factors such as the usage of space, the division of labour, relationships to flows of capital and interactions with public audiences. Within the considerable literature on gentrification, music-making has too often been subsumed into undifferentiated categories of "cultural production" or "artistic lifestyle" that fail to account for the specific temporalities, spatialities and affective capacities of musical experience (Holt and Wergin 2013).¹⁷ Discussing New York in 2009, Sharon Zukin often lists elements of musical culture as signifiers of gentrification, but merely yokes them to vaguely defined assemblages of neo-bohemian taste without deeper interrogation. Thus we learn that "Williamsburg's new entrepreneurs reinvented the community as a new *terroir* for indie music, alternative art, and trendy restaurant cuisine" (2009, 38). Likewise, "the new consumption spaces that [incomers] patronize – music bars, cafés, boutiques, vintage clothing stores – reinvent the urban community" (2009, 20).

In order to conceptualise specific ways in which musical culture articulates to gentrification in la Plaine, this chapter therefore looks not only at the narratives outlined above but also at a range of work that focuses more specifically on music-making. Nevertheless, it remains useful at this point to situate la Plaine at a juncture of the various conventional forms of gentrification outlined so far. On one hand, small-scale and artist-led change had been proceeding gradually for many years, without a dramatic area-wide rise in property prices.¹⁸ At the same time, this was now accompanied by a degree of "commercial gentrification" (Lees et al 2008, 131). References were often made to shops such as Joli Rouge, which opened in 2014 and sells 'vintage' furniture and other premium second-hand items. The shop acquired a particular symbolic significance because of its location on the Rue d'Aubagne, a street more readily associated with small businesses serving everyday services and products for North and West African customers. Other examples included l'Entrepôt on the rue Pastoret, which sells retro furniture and art pieces, and l'Idéal, a new delicatessen further down the hill in Noailles and managed by a

¹⁷ There are important exceptions, some of which are referred to later in the chapter. Other explicit discussions of music and gentrification form part of a more general expansion of the term's conceptual uses beyond questions of urban space: Dyndahl et al (2014), for example, refer to the gentrification of musical practice itself through the incorporation of "lower status musics" into higher education music programmes or prominent state-sponsored festivals in Norway.

¹⁸ Data from the MeilleursAgents website suggests that property values in all three arrondissements incorporating the neighborhood fell slightly between 2011 and 2016. By comparison, the same website shows a sharp increase in property values in the tenth arrondissement of Paris, an area regularly linked to gentrification (MeilleursAgents 2017).

renowned food critic, which opened in April 2016 to excited national media coverage (Bizalion 2016). One audience member summed up their impressions in this way:

Even in the last four or five years - since the Capital of Culture and a bit before – a lot has changed around here, new shops that I can't afford, a lot of well-dressed people. I guess some have really gone for it and moved in but others are tourists for sure.¹⁹

Thanks in part to this co-presence of artist-led change, a degree of commercial gentrification and, perhaps most urgently, the prospect of more aggressive state-led initiatives, la Plaine emerged as a theatre of contestation. One prominent musician, who had lived in the city his whole life, explained it to me in this way:

Gentrification is overwhelming the working class areas of the city centre, which represent the uniqueness of Marseille. Certain areas are resisting, la Plaine in particular, where the planned redevelopment of the square has given rise to a wave of contestation which is organising itself bit by bit.²⁰

Noise, nightlife and the revanchist city

Perhaps the most direct encounters between musical culture, governance and urban change in la Plaine were those related to the regulation of nightlife. In July 2015, citing reports of street harassment, the municipal council imposed a ban on the sale of alcohol in the district's shops after 8pm (Smadja 2015). It was not the first ban of its kind in Marseille, but it was the first to impact on a neighbourhood with a high concentration of students and a strong tradition of public sociality. Local shopkeepers protested that the ban would endanger their livelihoods (Gefart 2015). For participants in local musical culture that I spoke to, the concerns were less pressing but the policy was still felt to be practically and symbolically significant. One local gig-goer pointed out that "it's an important part of going to gigs in la Plaine to be able to hang around afterwards, have a beer on the square or take it to a party".²¹ Others were less emphatic about the negative impact of the ban itself, but felt it was symptomatic of a wider attempt by the council to sanitise the area. A local artist told me:

¹⁹ Conversation with audience member, 21/6/14, Equitable Café

²⁰ Personal correspondence, April 2017.

²¹ Conversation with audience member, 24/2/16, Data.

It's not so much that my rent has gone up, it has a bit but it's more the character of the neighbourhood that has changed. It feels more controlled, more 'civilised' I suppose, not that I romanticise how it was before but it did feel freer.²²

In an interview with the newspaper La Provence, deputy mayor for local policing Caroline Pozmentier attempted to justify the policy:

We are not being heavy-handed. This is simply about responding to the demands of residents, the CIQ which has been complaining about fights, delinquency, disturbances... Out-of-control behaviour resulting from alcohol consumption in public places, which has been reported repeatedly by the police.²⁴

The CIQ - Comité d'Intérêt de Quartier – are official neighbourhood groups, intended to act as mediators between local residents and their elected officials, but in la Plaine the legitimacy of the CIQ was contested by some inhabitants. In 2011 the Assemblée de la Plaine was founded with the intention of campaigning for “un quartier vivant et populaire”, and its manifesto explicitly questioned the legitimacy and objectives of the CIQ:

We note that every time we're hit by a dirty trick – installation of CCTV on street corners; closure of music venues, bars and other social hubs; persecution of our market by the police and in the media etc. the CIQ of la Plaine defends and justifies these attacks in the name of all of us.

What really is this CIQ? A tiny, closed and obsolete group, a conveyor belt for local corruption acting without us and against us. We must no longer let it speak in our name.

Our group declares itself open and independent of all parties and institutions. An anti-CIQ of sorts: the collective voice of those who live in, spend time in and defend *la Plaine vivant et populaire*.²⁵

While this set of particularly defiant positions was certainly not shared by all, it does serve to illuminate an important issue of local contestation. Questions surrounding music venues were a high priority for the CIQ: in an interview from August 2015 with the

²² Conversation with audience member, 21/6/14, Equitable Café.

²⁴ Pozmentier quoted in Matias 2015.

²⁵ Assemblée de la Plaine, “Manifeste de la Plaine.”

Destimed website, the committee's president cited "noise from certain nighttime establishments and partygoers" as the biggest issue the CIQ was currently facing (Destimed 2015). In June 2012 a local venue, El Ache de Cuba, had been forced by the council to stop organising live concerts following a dispute with its new neighbours. For ten years, the venue had been a key site for Latin American music in the city. Earlier that month, Pozmentier had revealed that the city council was working on a charter for "la tranquillité de la vie nocturne", which would seek to "emphasise the rights and responsibilities of each party" after several years of tensions (Médiaterrannée 2012). Mundo Kfé, a venue on the Cours Julien which often programmed jazz, reggae and African music, also closed following disputes with the council in 2012. In 2013, as Marseille celebrated the Capital of Culture award, a journalist described a "Marseille capital et désert musical" (Vaysse 2013).

In Marseille as across France, venues must obtain a municipal license from the administrative police, a branch of the city's police services, before hosting events with amplified music.²⁶ They are also required to carry out a noise impact study that meets the standards of the council's public health department. Even if these conditions have been met, however, the police can issue penalties and enforce temporary "administrative closures" on the basis of a range of offences. One venue that suffered from this was WAAW, a bistro and café on the Rue Pastoret that served as a popular meeting point in the area. Occasionally the venue presented performances or film screenings, and in 2013 one performance ended up finishing on the street outside (Chiale 2016). Though this conclusion lasted only ten minutes, the fact that it involved an amplified guitar was reportedly enough to warrant a temporary closure (ibid.).

²⁶ See Ville de Marseille, "Les Nuisances Sonores".



Cours Julien (© Jeanne Menjoulet)

In December 2016, Molotov was threatened with an administrative closure following a routine police inspection during a concert. A petition set up by the venue pointed out that substantial acoustic insulation work had been carried out before they opened in 2012, and that both the inspection and the event had proceeded normally (Le Molotov 2016). Yet the police had cited both the “noisy attitude of around fifty customers stood outside”, and a period of noise problems from the musicians when the doors were opened, as offences (Fontana 2016). In its petition, the venue questioned the legitimacy of these claims:

Molotov is located on a public square with other shops and businesses surrounding it, it is difficult to define the origin of the people outside, the Place Paul Cézanne being a site of passage, a zone of free and lively circulation thanks to these diverse businesses. The notion of “noise” and of “disrupting tranquillity” due to the presence of passers-by was very subjective during this inspection (Le Molotov 2016).

Earlier that year, the Bar de la Plaine had also been threatened with an administrative closure. Located directly on the Place Jean-Jaurès, the bar had become legendary in the 1990s thanks to its close association with Massilia Sound System and the local music scene. In a petition against the threat, the representatives of the bar warned that “if the

public authorities make these kinds of inspections a widespread policy, soon there will no longer be a single place of life and conviviality in our city, which is already so lacking in liveliness” (Bar de la Plaine 2016). And in February 2017, Equitable Café was ordered to stop hosting amplified music until its licenses were in order. Though the venue had not carried out a noise impact study, one of its members noted in an interview that they had never received any complaints from neighbours (Castelly 2017).

Clearly these cases are marked by important variations in terms of the role of music in the venue and the apparent reasons for penalisation. One recurring point, though, was that small, grassroots venues were disproportionately affected because of their relatively precarious economic circumstances. Even carrying out a noise impact study can cost between €900 and €1600 according to some estimates, in addition to the cost of any pre-emptive soundproofing (SACEM 2016, 11). The impact of an administrative closure, meanwhile, can be decisive. At a gig in June 2014 I discussed this with one woman who had worked in the local music scene for several years:

The problem for these places is that if you have to close even for a couple of weeks, that can be the end. They don't really make much money as it is, so that can very easily tip them over the edge, particularly if it's a busy time of year.²⁷

The conceptual association between gentrification and threats to nightlife is well-established in scholarship and journalism alike (Lobato 2006; Gibson and Homan 2004). Hae's (2012) research on dance clubs in 1990s New York is a particularly useful example, identifying a coalition between local policymakers, relatively profitable businesses and relatively affluent residents. These temporary coalitions are considered to have systematically engineered a “transformation of the normative ideals of urban life” (2012, 2), repressing play and experiment in favour of regulation and discipline. Readings such as Hae's in turn link to Smith's earlier (1996) theory of the “revanchist city”, which cognised a new kind of alliance between gentrification and the intensive policing of public space and public behaviour. For Smith, gentrification is revanchist when it begins to involve notions of a moral majority in whose name the city is re-shaped and disciplined thanks to its economic power. Some in Marseille did describe fears approaching Smith's formulation, often by making associations between threats to nightlife and a range of other incidents and tendencies. The aggressive policing of street parties and protests and

²⁷ Conversation with audience member, 29/6/14, Embobineuse.

the conservatism of the local government could be understood as evidence of a revanchist imperative accompanying social change.

At the same time, others cautioned against the straightforward equation of gentrification with threats to nightlife. Firstly, while some did link local government policy with the state of the city's music scene, gentrification was not necessarily thought to be a strategic objective. Often, policies were seen simply as reflections of a deep-rooted social conservatism on the part of the local government, or were associated with the ongoing impact of corruption and organised crime in a city notorious for its "milieu".²⁸ One commonly cited area of government failure was that of night buses, which remain largely non-existent in Marseille whereas Paris, Lyon and Bordeaux benefit from well-established networks (Latil 2017). Given the exceptionally large spread of Marseille's metropolitan area, this places certain limitations on the ability of local promoters to attract audiences from across the city. These ideas often fed into the broader theme of Marseille as a city "mort la nuit" ("dead at night"), a prominent image with a long history. A local aphorism attributed to the rap artist Akhenaton is that "Marseille is Barcelona until 9pm, and Barcelonnette thereafter".²⁹ Though challenged as often as repeated, discussions about the precarity of local nightlife were more likely to be framed by this wider narrative than by the specific theme of gentrification.

Secondly, it was acknowledged that fines and temporary closures suffered by venues might sometimes have a basis in justifiable noise complaints rather than, or as well as, revanchist urbanism. Implicit here was the notion of the city as a shared space, and in this sense, discussions about nightlife resonated with a recent surge of comparable conversations in cities around the world, as venues struggle to meet manifold social, economic and political challenges. In London, a report by the Music Venues Taskforce estimates that the city lost 35% of its grassroots venues between 2007 and 2015 (Music Venues Taskforce 2015, 8). In Toronto, zoning laws and rent increases have threatened the music scene (Boles 2016). In many contexts, while campaigners continue to defend nightlife on the basis of its social and cultural importance, discussions are now marked increasingly by economic instrumentalism (e.g. Talbot 2006):³⁰ in February 2017, the Agence d'Urbanisme de l'Agglomération Marseillaise (AgAM) published the first major

²⁸ Though I did not hear detailed hypotheses, the notion that such networks generally remained influential in the city's commercial and economic development was hardly controversial, and is supported in prominent research on local governance, e.g. Samson and Péraldi 2005; Monnier 2016.

²⁹ Barcelonnette is a small town in France.

³⁰ See for example the rise of the Music Cities movement (<http://www.musiccitiesconvention.com/about/>)

study of Marseille's night-time economy, stating that "the night is a major issue of economic and urban development" (AgAM 2017, 2).

As in many urban locations, the question of how to reconcile such different enactments of the right to the city remains challenging: the right to domestic peace, to a private space over which we feel we have control; and also the right to musical community, to build and develop musical life and to live the city through it.³¹ In la Plaine, contestations around sound and noise point to distinctive qualities of musical presence in urban space. In questioning the stability of terms such as "noise" and "tranquillity" in the context of a fluid urban environment, the Molotov petition points to an important distinction between the ways in which music and other art forms articulate to gentrification. Key to this distinction is the question of music as sound. For Born (2013, 24), "music and sound – in their capacity to catalyze and augment the relational propensities of lived space, in this way generating complex and motile topological forms – elicit especially subtle reflections on spatial processes." Meanwhile, discussing activist musicianship in Mexico City, Green (2016, 348) highlights how "claiming the rights to urban space through sound can become a contentious enterprise". Musical sound, here, was an unpredictable quantity, perched restlessly at the boundaries of the spaces designated for it. Beyond those boundaries, the unknowably plural lives of the city hide unknowable thresholds of tolerance.

Marginal gentrifiers and symbolic economies

Perhaps most importantly, the idea of musical culture under threat from gentrification assumes a degree of independence and opposition between the former and the latter. Musicians I met certainly tended to distance themselves from these processes, and the solidary, grassroots spirit discussed earlier in the chapter helped distinguish many venues from dominant understandings of the gentrified urban environment. Furthermore, music-making was closely linked to the cultural diversity of the area. Relations among different social and ethnic groups in contexts of gentrification are often described as cautious or "tectonic": Butler and Robson (2001, 77) characterise this in terms of a tendency towards "parallel rather than integrative" social relations. Music-making around la Plaine often seemed precisely to counter this tendency, especially where it involved

³¹ One approach, first introduced in Melbourne and since trialled elsewhere, has been that of the "agent of change" principle, in which "responsibility for local amenity falls upon the change agent, whether it be the venue or resident" (Homan 2014, 152). As Homan suggests, it is designed to prevent both "resident complaints against established music venues" and "sudden and harmful music activity against established residents" (ibid).

public space. It was common to see West African musicians performing at the terraces of the *cours Julien's* restaurants, while in the central open space groups of men would often gather to listen to Cap Verdean *coladeira* or reggaeton on portable sound systems. During the 2014 Fête de la Musique, the square witnessed a swirling, chaotic convergence of performances, jam sessions and sound systems: visitors and participants threaded their way fluently among these musical centres of gravity. And in the first example from the start of the chapter, a public performance had drawn together a crowd whose conviviality, however ephemerally, clearly permeated certain boundaries of language, ethnicity and culture.

At the same time, while the woman I spoke to appreciated the social plurality of the event, she was also open about the limits to her own engagement. In this sense, while the encounter demonstrated something of music's power to generate meaningful convivialities against the grain of gentrification, it also suggested limitations to the overlap between multiculturalist ideals and lived experience. As Lees (2008) argues, notions of cultural diversity can constitute prominent discursive "hiding places" for gentrification. Music, here, could stand for a certain idea of local diversity, and was therefore drawn into the neighbourhood "of the mind" that often accompanies gentrification (Butler and Robson 2003).

Equally, it is useful to situate this conceptual decoupling of music and gentrification in the context of the professional and personal affinities that may inform it. For those deeply involved in the scene, it was understandably preferable to sustain a sense of its distance from negative or controversial forms of social change. A relevant comparison can be made with Holt's (2014) study of "mid-sized" venues for rock music in New York's Lower East Side in the 2000s. Discussing perspectives within the scene, Holt suggests that "urban cultural circles tend to see [gentrification] as an external evil, inventing a discursive location outside of the process" (2014, 27). The emergent circumstances described in Holt's Manhattan are dominated by commerce, consumption and the "commodity market of concerts". While this kind of saturation does not characterise la Plaine, narratives of opposition and resistance nevertheless deserve to be understood partly in terms of narratives of local belonging.

One useful way of cognising the uncertainties and nuances of the scene's relationship to urban change is to focus on the trajectories and perspectives of specific musicians.

John,³² a musician I met in 2014 and became close friends with, represents a useful example. A guitarist in his mid-twenties, John had been based in the neighborhood for three years when I first met him at an Occitan music performance. Following the gig, we went for a customary pizza with a mutual friend, and then to another gig at Asile 404. I learned that John was a guitarist and composer, and that he was actively involved in the underground scene: at gigs he usually seemed to know everyone there, whether musicians, audience members or venue staff.

John arrived in Marseille as a recent university graduate in 2011, though he already knew the city well. He had grown up in the UK, in a fairly musical family, and had studied music at university. Towards the end of his degree, having passed through baroque and classical repertoires, he had developed a fascination with composition and free improvisation. As a guitarist, musicians like Fred Frith, Jim O'Rourke and Marc Ribot had been important inspirations for him. He had never seen Marseille as the ideal location in which to pursue these interests, but found himself drawn in by the city: the weather, the cost of living, the sense of something new and different. In particular, la Plaine offered a dense and informal cultural life where it was possible to meet and make connections with like-minded people. Soon he was performing at venues such as Asile 404 and Data, often collaborating with other improvisers and a range of artists. "It's a very comfortable scene, as in everyone knows everyone", he told me.³³ "I mean it took some time, maybe because people are in their very specific circles, and that is one of the things about Marseille. But yes I guess I'm part of that world now".

He took up various courses in composition and electroacoustic music, at the Conservatoire and at the Cité de la Musique. Like a number of other musicians I spoke to, he followed this relatively informal educational path in parallel with an engagement in the local DIY scene. Meanwhile, he funded himself largely through teaching English part-time. John was broadly happy with this situation, which gave him the convenience of flexible working hours, plenty of free time to practice and compose, and enough money to pursue a life he was largely comfortable with. This did not involve going to expensive restaurants or accumulating much in the way of material possessions. Instead it meant going to small gigs, socialising with other students and musicians and travelling every few months to see friends and collaborate with other improvisers elsewhere in France and across Europe.

³² Name has been altered

³³ Interview, 30/72016

This emphasis on travel was important for John. Though he had put down roots in the city to some extent, he had never felt he would settle there permanently: as he gradually finished his courses, he used much of his new free time to research and apply for international residencies and festivals. “Whenever I go on tours”, he told me, “I find myself in Germany or Scandinavia and things really are so much better organised there”. This theme, of contrasting Marseille with northern European cities, was one that John approached often and with humour. Far from romanticising Marseille, he often voiced frustrations with what he saw as a chaotic mentality. At the same time, he noted that to a large extent this perspective reflected his own status as an outsider, even if he participated enthusiastically in some aspects of what the city had to offer.

John lived in a shared flat near the top of the Rue Curiol, a street that branches off from the Canebière and climbs directly to the Place Jean Jaurès, where it intersects with one of the square’s long edges. The street is well-known as the site of the Bar des Maraîchers, a typical, popular drinking spot that, as John says, “is the kind of place all sorts of people go, all bunched up together”.³⁴ Nearly opposite the bar is the entrance to John’s building, one of the many nineteenth century tenements that line the street and other roads nearby. His flat on the third floor, which he rents with two students and a secondary school teacher, looks out over the street below and on towards the square.

John’s own flat registers something of the variety of trajectories embodied by local residents: one flatmate was an undergraduate student from near Perpignan; another was a schoolteacher in her late twenties, originally from Germany but who has lived in Marseille for several years; the third, also from Germany, was a younger exchange student living in the city for one year. Many of Marseille’s exchange students gravitate towards la Plaine, forming an additional and significant layer of transience in the area’s migratory flux.

For John and his flatmates the apartment was affordable, spacious and light, and for John it had the added benefit of serving as an effective workspace for composing and practicing. From inside the flat, the sounds of the daytime – market traders, some car traffic – gave way markedly to those of the night – young professionals drinking at Le Petit Nice, another bar, larger than the Maraichers, whose outdoor terrace fills up reliably most evenings. John did not often frequent the Petit Nice but he did spend much of his free time in the area, going to gigs and socialising with friends. Reflecting on the mixture

³⁴ Interview, 30/7/2016. The bar is the subject of numerous homages in the work of writer Jean-Claude Izzo (e.g. Izzo 1998)

of places he tended to gravitate towards, John noted that this range traversed some of the socio-cultural boundaries that are often assumed to exist in the area:

Yeah I do go to some of the grimmer venues and I love that, that's where the music I like tends to be found. But then I also quite like going for a nice beer at Vidéodrome, which although not really smart, definitely has a certain kind of *bobo* vibe, I mean that is the clientele.³⁵

At the same time, he was happy to point to other popular sites and aspects of local public life that he didn't participate in. He acknowledged, for example, that he almost never shopped at the Marché de la Plaine despite living a stone's throw from it, and that he participated far more enthusiastically in the area's underground musical life than in its community and activist networks.³⁶ Equally, there were newer, more fashionable bars and restaurants that he had not spent much time in. Like many musicians and others in his social circles, it was the convenience of a dense visual and performing arts scene that drew John to la Plaine more than the presence of a strong and anti-establishment community life.

The ways in which John navigated the neighbourhood place certain demands on the conceptual logic of gentrification, complicating the bounded categories that obscure what is ultimately a "chaotic conception" (Rose 1984). He was both insider and outsider, participant and consumer, student and teacher, young professional and artist. On one hand, John's sociological profile and life as a musician shared certain features with those often associated with gentrification. He was young, mobile and highly educated, and enjoyed the benefits of a flexible freelance job. Like some others, he did not often circulate among local sites of everyday cosmopolitanism. Though he did affirm a certain sense of local belonging, his international mobility meant his perspective was underpinned by very different experiences to those of many long-term residents.

On the other hand, he was neither a high earner nor an energetic consumer: if gentrification advances in part through the deployment of economic capital, residents such as John were not among the most obviously complicit. And if the idealism of the

³⁵ Interview, 30/7/2016.

³⁶ Though he did not become involved in local activist groups, John did engage with the *Nuit Debout* movement. *Nuit Debout*, translatable as "up all night", refers to a series of mass protest events held in French cities in the spring of 2016. The events were linked to major strikes and demonstrations held in opposition to the government's proposed employment reforms (the *Loi travail*). In media coverage *Nuit Debout* was often compared to other post-2008 movements such as Occupy Wall Street and Spain's 15-M.

neighbourhood “of the mind” is prominent for some gentrifiers, John was far likelier to frame the appeal of the area in terms of its practical convenience. Having few definite long-term plans, his relationship with the neighbourhood and the city more generally was highly contingent, based on a constellation of socio-musical possibilities that were now aligned, but always shifting.

John’s own perspective on gentrification was equivocal, too, especially during longer conversations where we were able to discuss different sides of the argument. He agreed that the neighbourhood had changed over the last five years, but would not condemn the outcomes outright:

It’s definitely changed, and is changing. You know, new shops, new restaurants, new kinds of people of course. It’s pretty striking how different things feel after 2013 especially. And the truth is it’s quite dynamic, you know, people have legitimate concerns but also, places do change and new things will happen elsewhere. There’s a lot of stuff happening in Belle de Mai now.³⁷

John’s circumstances and engagement with the city can be understood partly in terms of Rose’s (1984) conception of the “marginal gentrifier”. For Rose, this category incorporates a range of urban actors whose practices, while often seen in terms of “alternative lifestyles”, are substantially shaped by precarious social and economic circumstances. Rather than simply displacing long-term residents through unconventional life choices taken from a position of privilege, marginal gentrifiers may be guided into these choices by low pay, rising house prices and other large-scale systemic conditions. As a conceptual term, the marginal gentrifier therefore looks beyond the opposition of critical and celebratory perspectives to reconceive lifestyles as structurally inflected.

A second means of testing assumptions about music’s status outside or in opposition to gentrification is to consider its possible roles in the symbolic economy, defined by Zukin (1995, 3) in terms of the “intertwining of cultural symbols and entrepreneurial capital” in post-industrial cities. While this symbiosis clearly predates the decline of heavy industry in North America and Western Europe, Zukin sees its rising significance as a corollary of the turn towards design-intensive production and cultural consumption: in her analysis, “the symbolic economy unifies material practices of finance, labor, art, performance, and design.” (1995, 9).

³⁷ Interview, 30/72016

Importantly, the symbolic economy entails the production of both symbols and space (ibid, 22). Adopting this prism in his discussion of the Chicago blues scene, Grazian (2004) describes a “symbolic economy of authenticity”: audiences are demonstrated to hold differentiated conceptions of musical authenticity that shape (and are shaped by) the socio-spatial distribution of live venues. Grazian describes how venues in peripheral neighbourhoods have either emerged or adapted themselves to cater for audiences seeking alternatives to the city centre’s tourist-oriented clubs. For these consumer-participants, authenticity is linked not only to musical performance but also to questions surrounding the décor, clientele and location of venues.

Though gentrification is not an explicit lens of analysis for Grazian, the process he describes could justifiably be labelled in these terms. Clearly there are important distinctions between the context of Grazian’s research and that of cities such as Marseille, where the musical cultures in question are both less stylistically coherent and less deeply mythologised: for Grazian’s audience members, the notion of Chicago as a site of blues authenticity shapes expectations directly and elaborately. As in a range of recent case studies from New Orleans (Sakakeeny 2010, Gotham 2005) and Istanbul (Potuoglu-Cook 2006), tourism establishes a tightly regulated version of the cultural form in relation to which participants variably position their practices.³⁸

By contrast, musical culture in la Plaine does not involve such mythic affordances. Yet the more general reputation of the neighbourhood is well established nationally and increasingly in international media. As early as 2003 a *Guardian* journalist reporting from Marseille suggested that “you will find a colony of artistic types around the Rue des Trois Mages and its offshoots. Cafés and restaurants specialising in ambiances from the grungy to the edgily hip have sprung up here and you get the feeling that more will proliferate” (Busch 2003). In 2008 the *New York Times* described la Plaine as “one of the most dynamic neighbourhoods in France, safe, prolifically diverse and a lot of fun.” For that journalist, it was “perhaps Cours Julien’s newest immigrants who have sealed its status as the alternative heart of the city: the so-called bobos, or France’s bohemian bourgeoisie” (Lanyado 2008). Five years later the same newspaper was more colourful in its description of the area’s *bobo* habits:

³⁸ Research by Potuoglu-Cook (2006) on belly-dancing in Istanbul uncovers a comparable symbolic economy, in which tourism combines with shifting domestic attitudes towards Ottoman cultural signifiers to enfold performances within the city’s gentrification.

From there it's a short hike to the Cours Julien, where the bobos dress toddlers in hand-sewn sailor caps, roll cigarettes and drink organic cola with their kale gnocchi at outdoor cafes. This is the Williamsburg of Marseille, but it's still got a healthy mix of tumbledown comic-book stores and tattoo parlors to balance the tourist traps.³⁹

In its casual analogy with the New York neighbourhood of Williamsburg, the article locates the Cours Julien, firmly if prematurely, within a global index of gentrification. Yet the comparisons are not entirely unjustified: in the same year, two entrepreneurs chose la Plaine as the site to launch Marseille's first artisanal microbrewery, reproducing an originally American trend that has become a global hallmark of gentrification (Matthews & Picton 2014). By then, the symbolic production of the neighbourhood was sufficiently advanced that the company could be named simply "Bière de la Plaine", and by 2016 the brewery had tripled its output and was being served in Michelin-starred restaurants (Tanguy 2016). la Plaine itself has gradually acquired symbolic capital, then, and even if musical culture is not so explicitly valorised within this process in la Plaine as in Grazian's Chicago, it undoubtedly contributes to the more generalised image of the alternative neighbourhood.

Music, aesthetic disposition and the field of gentrification

One framework through which this relatively diffuse influence can be conceptualised is that of the "field of gentrification" as formulated by David Ley (2003). Seeking to help reconcile positions about the relative importance of structure and agency in neighbourhood change, Ley describes a dialectical interplay of economic and cultural capital. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of the cultural field provides the basis for this analysis: specifically, the field of cultural production is understood as a set of relationships between production and consumption, through which cultural value is shaped. Rather than simply reflecting the tastes of consumers, cultural production both structures and is structured by those tastes.

Importantly, these interactions are embodied by actors according to their positions in social space: in Bourdieu's (1984, 122 [Fig. 5]) social space diagrams, artists are characterised by relatively high volumes of cultural capital and relatively low volumes of economic capital. A series of overlapping socio-professional subcategories then follows,

³⁹ Kimmelman 2013

with cultural capital gradually diminishing and economic capital rising: teachers, professionals, engineers, industrial employers. At one extreme, artists are marked by an aesthetic disposition which confers value according to autonomous artistic criteria. At the other, value is measured in economic terms. Yet artistic production depends on networks of relationships between and across these extremes, even as they give form to struggles over cultural legitimacy.

Applying this dialectical relationship to the “field of gentrification”, Ley transposes its logic to changing patterns of use and occupancy in urban space. Here, “the population that follows artists does not enter the field haphazardly, but in a succession that is shaped by their proximity to the aesthetic disposition and cultural competency of the artist” (2003, 2540). In this way, “the dialectical ties between artistic imagination and middle-class convention” (ibid. 2533) underpin gentrification’s advance through the post-industrial city – what Ley call its “colonising arm”.

Ley’s argument suffers from certain flaws: though he challenges Bourdieu’s “over-socialisation” of the artistic project, an insistence on somewhat inflexible categories is retained. “Artists”, for example, are considered to have relatively consistent backgrounds, practices and volumes of cultural and economic capital. Ley’s emphasis on assemblage artists and “the art world” links his conception firmly to visual art culture and thus to certain practices and spaces that are not necessarily shared by music scenes. As a physical space, the archetypal gallery lubricates the shock of the artistic new through its putatively neutral setting of white walls and bright light, and by normalizing the free circulation of the visitor. By contrast, grassroots music venues are heterogeneous environments and involve an engagement that is often tightly framed in time and space. In this sense, dominant modes of reception for visual art and visual culture arguably render them amenable to the field of gentrification in ways that are not shared with musical culture.

Furthermore, the “aesthetic disposition”, for Ley, consists in the somewhat narrow framework of “affirming and transforming the everyday”. While this understanding may help account for the success of assemblage artists and, in places such as la Plaine, the emergence of boutique second-hand shops, the prism of the everyday tells us little about the ways in which the neighbourhood music scene might stretch the boundaries of “middle-class convention”.

Nevertheless, the broader notion of an aestheticizing or commodifying imperative,

proceeding dialectically through tensions between cultural and economic capital, may have some currency in understanding music and gentrification in la Plaine. Specifically, if the aesthetic disposition is understood to valorise not only the everyday but also, for example, the intercultural, then it does have the potential to draw local musical life into the dialectics of gentrification. Music was an important means through which local diversity was experienced and expressed. In turn, themes relating to diversity were prominent in the mediatisation of the neighbourhood and in its reputation, forming part of its appeal. However, in the case of la Plaine, material changes in the neighbourhood did not yet suggest the commoditisation of local diversity, but rather the beginnings of a more general upscaling of local consumption. In this sense, while Ley's theoretical framework is potentially very useful, the linkages it accounts for were more diffuse here than in Ley's account.

Conclusions

This chapter has demonstrated a number of ways in which links between musical culture and gentrification complicate and exceed reductive assumptions about music's resistance or vulnerability to, or autonomy from, processes of displacement. First, contestations around noise and the regulation of nightlife, while sometimes understood in terms of a threat from revanchist gentrification, were also entangled with wider issues of urban governance. Additionally, these contestations pointed to the propensity of musical sound to transgress boundaries of publicness and privacy in the uncertain context of the nocturnal city: in this way, the notion of a "threat" to the right to the city is potentially relocated from gentrification to music itself.

Second, while music often constituted a site for the realisation of intercultural conviviality against the grain of gentrification, it also symbolised this conviviality in ways that could nourish a more ambiguous neighbourhood "of the mind". Third, looking more closely at the circumstances and practices of individual musicians often reveals sociological profiles that complicate certain distinctions - between victim and perpetrator, insider and outsider, participant and consumer - on which structuralist accounts of gentrification often depend. Instead, the notion of the "marginal gentrifier" captures what is often a complex mixture of needs, choices, complicity and precarity. And fourth, though music was not as directly involved in the symbolic economy of the neighbourhood as in certain other cities, it can be conceptualised to a limited extent within Ley's (2003) "field of gentrification".

Such ambivalences reflect the layered realities of the post-industrial city in a context of globalisation and digital mediation, but to insist on this multiplicity is not to obscure music's role in organising and imagining alternatives to gentrification. This chapter has noted, for example, the persistence of important threads of underground aesthetics, intercultural programming and grassroots solidarity in the local scene.

One set of concerns, then, has been centred on the need to grasp the contingencies of music's relationship with gentrification. A second aim has been to cognise specific aspects of musical culture that distinguish this relationship with gentrification from that of visual culture and art as articulated in much sociological literature. Most obviously, live music is often something to be contained and regulated, a sonic quantity that risks exceeding the spaces accorded to it, in ways not generally shared by visual art. Equally, and especially in its public forms, live music can animate and reconfigure local sociability according to new patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Such configurations may be linked to the temporary timescales of performance, but can also leave more enduring, intersubjective residues. Here, music potentially straddles contested fault lines of the gentrifying district: order and disorder, community and privacy. In la Plaine, music's demonstrable capacity to animate these contrasting realisations of the city was at the heart of its complex relationship with neighbourhood change.

Conclusions

The thesis has sought to investigate the ways in which musical culture shapes, and is shaped by, contested redevelopment practices in contemporary Marseille. The introduction established a number of themes characterising the contemporary city, including culture-led regeneration, socio-spatial fragmentation, and debates around cultural diversity. It also outlined some of the major institutions and issues in local musical life, while emphasising its unevenness and the presence of a wide variety of perspectives and experiences. Chapter One addressed two controversies surrounding the musical programming of MP2013, identifying these, and other music-related responses to the festival, in terms of contestations around the city's future. Chapter Two focused on a new initiative aiming to raise awareness about Marseille's North African musical history, and interpreted its projects in terms of issues of minority heritage and materiality. Chapter Three examined the musical dimensions of local Occitan culture, conceptualising these partly as modes of negotiating the city and defending its plurality. And Chapter Four explored the grassroots music scene in la Plaine and its interface with the local advance of gentrification.

Three overarching research questions were posed at the outset. To what extent has musical culture been restricted or marginalised in the context of urban redevelopment? How have musicians and audiences used music to narrate and negotiate the city in new ways? And how are technological changes inflecting the ways in which musical culture inhabits the city?

To begin with the first of these questions, the contexts of the European Capital of Culture programme and of gentrification in la Plaine both involved the marginalising of certain musical cultures. The scale of MP2013 and its presentation as a kind of collective vision, through which local inhabitants were declared to be offering "the best of their creativity, their know-how and their dreams",¹ meant that decisions about what was to be represented, and how, acquired deep symbolic importance. Thus the paucity of hip-hop was often seen as consistent with a longstanding tendency by local policymakers to overlook rap music as a source of local pride. Meanwhile, the scale of the David Guetta campaign highlighted the sense of exclusion felt by many local musicians.

¹ 'Programme Officiel' 2012, 10.

The context of gentrification in la Plaine also involved challenges for local musical culture, though the balance between governance, cultural change and musical life was ambiguous and complex. Venues were being targeted in new ways by local authorities, and there was clearly a degree of disconnect between local musical culture and some newer residents. The evidence for gentrification, in terms of commercial change and redevelopment plans, made it clear that the texture of neighbourhood transformation was diverging gradually from that represented by many small venues. At the same time, the precarity of nightlife had to be seen in a multi-faceted context of urban policymaking rather than through the single lens of gentrification.

The thesis also asked how musicians and audiences used music to narrate and negotiate the city. In some cases, composition and performance served to mediate explicit conceptualisations of the city. The video for Keny Arkana's "Capitale de la Rupture" articulated a forceful refusal of the dominant discourse surrounding MP2013, condemning corruption and inequality while emphasising hip-hop's local significance. Meanwhile, Massilia Sound System used their 2014 return to insist on a renewal of local conviviality, giving a free open-air performance at the site of their first-ever concert and calling, in their new album, for their city to "wake up!".² The broader aesthetic dimensions of Occitan musical culture also permitted distinctive ways of foregrounding and dramatising the city's plurality. In other cases it was through curatorial practices that music helped animate hidden aspects of the city's past and present. Phocéephone used DJ sets and a blog to disseminate Marseille's North African musical heritage, highlighting an under-represented chapter of a fractious history. Meanwhile, if local rock music was nearly absent in MP2013, Phocéa Rocks drew on the strength of local grassroots networks to illuminate the richness of the DIY scene, offering an alternative vision of the musical city.

The third question concerned the impact of technological changes on the ways in which musical culture inhabits the city. One significant development in this sense was the growing use of online petitioning websites such as Change.org, through which campaigns in defence of local musical culture could be amplified among extended social networks. In the campaign against the David Guetta subsidy, the online petition became an important focal point for sustaining media coverage and generating pressure on the municipal council. Similarly, an online petition to protect the Molotov venue helped both to raise awareness about the threats the venue was facing, and to enable the demonstration of public support for it. More broadly, the use of social media to publicise and discover

² "Ma ville reveilles-toi" (Massilia Sound System 2014).

upcoming events and new music was widespread, and was commonly described as an instinctive part of local musical life. While social media is often understood in relation to the disembedding functions of networked individualism (Wellman 2001), this did not appear to have eroded the embodied sociability of the local music scene. Instead, as in Kruse's analysis (2010), internet and social media were often a means of extending and enhancing the life of the scene.

Beyond the use of social platforms, another significant mobilising of technology was Phocéephone's inter-animation of digital and material media. On one hand, North African musical heritage was introduced to new circuits of reception via the blogosphere. On the other hand, the social lives of the records that formed that heritage were themselves extended through DJ sets around the city.

One possible means of drawing together these various strands is by returning to the theme of the "right to the city". It was proposed in the introduction that the concept, viewed in terms of "a transformed and renewed right to urban life" (Lefebvre 1996, 158), can be seen to underpin a range of practices as studied by ethnomusicologists (e.g. Sakakeeny 2010; Baker 2006; Bennett 2000). In Chapter Four, I used the right to the city as one reference point in conceptualising contestations around live music in la Plaine. Here, however, it was noted that these contestations pointed to the potential contingencies of such rights when claimed by, on behalf of, multiple actors.

In this sense, it is useful to address the terminological ambiguities of the right to the city if its usage is to be meaningful. A number of recent accounts (e.g. Purcell 2014; Kuymulu 2013) have stressed that the expanding presence of the term in public discourse requires it to be formulated more specifically. Kuymulu describes "the vortex of the right to the city", in which its usage by United Nations agencies since 2002 involves an aim "to absorb the notion of the right to the city into their own political agendas" (2013, 932). Attoh (2011), in observing that the "right" invoked often goes undefined and untheorized, seeks to outline the term's legal and juridical affordances. For Kuymulu, a particular risk is that individualistic, rather than collective, conceptions of rights, come to dominate discussions about the right to the city.

While Kuymulu's response is to insist on treating the right to the city through Marxian theories of value, Purcell warns that the term's "conceptual bloating... should not push us too far in the other direction, toward a single orthodox interpretation" (2014, 141). Instead, he suggests, we need "multiple formulations of the right to the city", with the qualifier that

“each should be specific in its conception and transparent in its political content.” (ibid, 142).

Masuda and Bookman (2016) create a space for one such formulation in calling for greater attention to place branding and the discursive dimensions of urbanisation in discussions around the right to the city. Indeed, if it is acknowledged that the right to the city is not simply the right to use public space but, following Harvey, to “change and reinvent the city more after our hearts’ desire” (2012, 4), then it may be useful to cognise the ways in which such transformations combine discursive and material processes. In this way, the paucity of hip-hop in MP2013 matters precisely because, in helping to constitute the festival’s explicit discursive formulation of Marseille, it de-emphasises hip-hop’s right to the city. Meanwhile the work of local Occitan-language musicians discussed in Chapter Three might be interpreted in terms of a staging of the language’s right to the city. And Phocéphone points towards the possibility of music as a means of helping to animate the right to the city for marginalised minorities.

Key Contributions

The thesis forms part of a growing strand of ethnomusicology that attempts to cognise the dynamic relationships between music and urban change, and contributes specifically to efforts to investigate these relationships in the ambivalent context of culture-led regeneration (e.g. Holt and Wergin 2013; Cohen 2012). At a time when strategies and policies associated with the “creative city” are both widespread and increasingly questioned (e.g. Scott 2014), the thesis demonstrates that ethnomusicology can offer new perspectives and enrich existing ones. In broad terms, my research supports a core argument made by these authors, most explicitly by Cohen, that music has plural articulations to the city that exceed binary distinctions of structure and agency. It also supports Cohen’s (2012) argument that researching music in urban environments benefits from a broad musical ontology, accommodating multiple mediations (Born 2005).

The thesis also contributes to the well-established literature on European Capitals of Culture. Considerable research has been conducted on ECOC in terms of questions of governance (O’Brien 2011) and economic, social and cultural legacies (Garcia 2013; Evans 2005). However, notwithstanding Cohen’s (e.g. 2013) work in Liverpool, relatively little work has focused on how the specific qualities of musical culture are brought to bear on the ECOC context. The thesis suggests that music’s complex affordances can have a significant bearing on the ways in which ECOC is framed, understood and contested.

The thesis points to a number of significant opportunities for future research. Most obviously, there are many more scenes and networks in Marseille that could be engaged with, and conducting research beyond the city centre would illuminate a variety of other perspectives. Further research could do more to attend to experiences of urban marginality, whether linked to issues of gender, sexuality, ethnicity or other themes. In addition, my study has pointed to the growing need for research into the multiple affordances and contradictions of online and digital technologies in relation to urban musical culture. Core socio-spatial themes of place and space, presence and absence, publicness and privacy, community and intimacy are now continually challenged and experimented with through developments such as live streaming. Future research in urban contexts might attend more closely and specifically to the ways in which these challenges impact on musical publics and practices.

A further particularly generative direction may be towards comparative research between cities. Having documented and reflected on a range of music-related practices in Marseille, future projects could involve collaboration with researchers working on similar themes in other cities marked by the experience of the Capital of Culture or by culture-led regeneration in general.

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