

'Rock 'n' stroll': promoting the consumption of musical places

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Abstract

Cities are increasingly being marketed as sites of consumption in order to attract tourists. In this paper we examine the extent to which cities are aiming to capture the 'tourist gaze' through the cultural promotion of their musical heritage. We illustrate our arguments using promotional literature from, and a questionnaire survey of, a number of cities in the United Kingdom. The case study of Manchester is then considered in greater detail.

Keywords

Manchester, place-promotion, music.

Introduction

Until recently, popular music was neglected in human geography (Kong 1995a; Smith 1994). In recent years, this has been redressed with work which has focused on geographical representations, the cultural politics of place and the consumption practices implicated in the lyrics and music of artists such as U2 (McLeay 1995), Bruce Springsteen (Moss 1992) and kd lang (Valentine 1995); the relationship between regions and identity as expressed in sounds (Aldskogius 1993; Gill 1993; Kong 1995b); and the geographical dynamics of the global music industry, the role of place and the nexus of the local-global relations within music production and consumption (Halfacree and Kitchin 1996; Leyson *et al.* 1995). However, in general the role of music in the cultural commodification of the city and, in particular, its role in attracting the 'tourist gaze', have been overlooked. In this paper we begin to address this by considering the use of music and musical heritage to attract visitors to cities in the United Kingdom. Building upon our previous work exploring Manchester's geographical situatedness within

the global music economy (Halfacree and Kitchin 1996), we go on to explore the specific case of Manchester and argue that this city has much still to gain from capitalising on its diverse musical traditions.

The cultural production of place

Cities are increasingly seen as sites of service industry and consumption, marketed as cultural commodities to be consumed by both residents and visitors. For instance, Urry (1990, 1995) has provided extensive material on the consumption of places, particularly by tourists seeking cultural satisfaction and an 'authentic' heritage experience through the 'tourist gaze'. He suggests that there is an active restructuring of places into centres for such consumption. There is a conscious attempt to rework the 'old' into 'heritage' and to re-code sites to convey marketable meanings. For example, disused warehouses are restored and converted into museums concerned with the industry that they formerly housed (the Maritime Museum in Liverpool or Quarry Bank Mill near Manchester), or sites of production are replaced by museums populated

by 'real' (former) workers (Big Pit in south-east Wales, see Hewison 1987). In short, cultural resources are increasingly being extracted from redundant sites of fixed productive capital and then packaged and marketed in their own right (Philo and Kearns 1993). As a result of such processes, Zukin (1992) contends that how we see and organise the city is changing, as the consumption of space is abstracted from its former logic within industrial production. This, she suggests, is part of a broad change into a postmodern society, where the city becomes a spectacle for consumption and, ultimately, developers seek to construct explicitly simulated landscapes for the public to consume. Examples of such construction include Liverpool's Albert Dock, London's Covent Garden and, in a more rural setting, the Beamish Open Air Museum near Newcastle upon Tyne. Whilst such a changing role for the city must be treated with care given 'the (ab)use of culture by capital in the phenomenon of selling places' (Philo and Kearns 1993, 20), there has been a realisation of the benefits of owning, controlling and promoting culture and heritage in the urban arena, since this can attract many visitors and generate substantial profits (Goodwin 1993). Consequently, tourism and recreation authorities, the local state and other official bodies have been quick to (re)market existing attractions and have actively constructed new ones by drawing upon supposed historical legacies (Ashworth and Voogd 1990; Fretter 1993). Private enterprise has, not surprisingly, also recognised the potential rewards from the increasing commodification of the cultural city; for example, 56 percent of recently opened museums and heritage centres are privately owned (Urry 1990). As such, there has been a significant growth in the cultural production of urban visitor attractions over the past twenty years.

This trend towards repositioning the city as a heritage consumption space is part of a broader attempt to create what may be termed a 'new urban localism' stemming from a more 'general agreement that broad-brush packages and policy measures are inappropriate for dealing with contemporary regional problems'

(Lowe 1993, 213). Returning to the heritage marketing of our cities, the net result of this place-focused emphasis on the city is an increasingly diverse set of attractions within the urban space. Whilst some of these attractions could be sited almost anywhere (theme parks, marina developments, cobbled streets and simulated gas street lighting), others draw upon more locally-specific aspects of a city's heritage. This distinction between what may be labelled generic and contextual strategies, respectively, also applies to the marketing of a city's musical landscape.

At first, popular music appears to have little to offer in the creation of any contextually sensitive new cultural localism for a city. As Adorno (1992) argued so effectively, the reduction of music to a commodity under capitalism, with the latter's relentless search for profit through the marketplace, has stripped the musical product of its aesthetic and emotional power, replacing it with a bland, homogenised and thoroughly internationalised product. Popular music, with its implied mass audience, represents the epitome of this process. Consequently, it follows that the only way in which popular music is likely to form part of a city's new localism is through a more generic strategy of 'grounding' some element(s) of the global musical commodity.

In contrast to this analysis, we suggested in a previous paper (Halfacree and Kitchin 1996) that an Adornoesque interpretation of music within a mature capitalist society is rather one-dimensional (see also Said 1991, Smith 1994). In short, all music still appears to have a degree of grounding, e.g. the artists themselves live somewhere, live performances and recordings take place somewhere, and the promotion of artists and their music can incorporate explicit place aspects. Such placing of music not only merits continued critical scrutiny but also suggests that there is scope for popular music to be incorporated into the production of new urban cultural localisms. Whether this is achieved through taking the generic route and capturing some of the global musical currents or through more locally-embedded strategies

will vary according to both the opportunities which present themselves and the actors involved.

Selling the musical landscape of cities to tourists in the United Kingdom

A short questionnaire and a request for promotional literature was sent to the Tourism Officer (or equivalent) of a random sample of twenty cities and major towns in the United Kingdom¹. The questionnaire focused on strategy and initiatives, i.e. information that would not be easily determined from the promotional material. We received information from eleven cities². Whilst this is not a large sample, and does not merit being seen as statistically representative of cities in the United Kingdom, the diversity of cities covered in terms of size, infrastructure and location, enables us to gain initial understanding of the current role played by music in urban promotion. From the questionnaires and promotional material, it was immediately clear that marketing the city's attractions for both day visitors and longer-stay tourists and visitors has become a key issue for the city authorities. Three main emphases were apparent.

First, the need to raise the profile of, and develop a distinctive identity for, the city was acknowledged widely. This was achieved through general publicity, the contestation of negative stereotypes, and the development and promotion of distinctive events within the city. Examples of the latter include Summer festivals in Cardiff (*Cardiff Summer Festival*), Reading (*Summer on the Street*), Southampton (*Symphony in the Park, Power in the Park*) and Leeds (*Summer Heritage Festival*). More general campaigns included *Destination Sheffield*, *Destination Cardiff* or *Nottingham City of Legends*. Plymouth recognised the city's image problem, being both confused with Portsmouth and 'perceived as a rather earthy and unglamorous city' (Plymouth City Council n.d., 10). In contrast, Glasgow extolled the success brought in terms of an image change after being made European City of Culture in 1990.

Second, culture and the arts were seen as being essential to place promotion. Whilst shopping facilities, local 'character' and sporting events were noted in many cases (for example, Sheffield) the 'heritage' of the cities invariably included a strong arts component. For example, Reading – *The Guide* is very arts orientated, Southampton promotes itself as the *Entertainment Capital of the South* and Plymouth is preparing an explicit *Strategy for the Arts*. For Cardiff, "the two leading names in the city are Panasonic and Tadaaki Otaka (conductor of the National Orchestra of Wales)", according to the leaflet extolling the appeal to the business community of the city's general cultural milieu (Cardiff Marketing Limited, n.d.).

Third, active redevelopment, especially through the efforts of the city authorities and other quasi-public bodies (for example, Sheffield Development Corporation), has been central to this re-positioning of the cities examined. Typically, such development has been achieved through (supposed) partnership schemes between the city, local businesses and the community, summarised on the Leeds questionnaire as follows: "Undoubtedly a mixture of Leeds Development Corporation (especially the waterfront), Leeds City Council, Leeds Waterfront T.D.A.P. 1989-92, entrepreneurial spirit, and partnerships involving various combinations of the above".

These three emphases can be "subsumed under the heading of selling places ... a conscious and deliberate manipulation of *culture* in an effort to enhance the appeal and interest of places" (Philo and Kearns 1993, 3). Boyle and Hughes (1991) demonstrate the apparent success of such a strategy in Glasgow, the 1990 European City of Culture – also suggested in our response from the city – whereby 'mean streets and mean people' became 'Miles Better' in the words of the key promotional slogan. The cultural emphasis is becoming more central to urban localism instead of being mediated via residential quality (for example, London Docklands, Salford Quays) or the quality of the retail environment (for example, Sheffield and the Meadowhall Retail Centre) (Goodwin 1993; Short 1989).

Music and urban redevelopment

It would appear that music does not form an important component of cities' promotional strategies. Indeed, whilst Sheffield, Southampton and Newcastle draw attention to their 'night life', only Reading stresses the central role played by its music festivals (notably the WOMAD Festival of World Music and the *Reading Festival* Rock event) in attracting visitors. However, this is not to imply that cities' musical tradition(s) pass unrecognised and are not marketed: only Southampton and Plymouth did not claim a musical tradition. Newcastle, noted that its tradition had been neglected in recent years but in all of the other cities a strong musical heritage was emphasised. Cardiff, Glasgow, Sheffield and Leeds drew attention to a strong rock/pop, traditional and classical presence, with Leeds claiming that the city's 'commitment to music making of all kinds extends back to the 17th and 18th Centuries'. However, the most complete picture again came from Reading, suggesting a clear awareness of the potential of a diverse range of music to boost the city's image and economic and cultural prosperity:

'Very strong [musical tradition]. The Hexagon is one of the key performance venues in the South. We have many old established, and famous, choirs and performance groups. On a contemporary 'note' live music is very popular in pubs and clubs around the town, we host the Reading Festival (going for 25 years) as well as the largest WOMAD event in the country, and encourage live music of all sorts on the streets of the town. Live Sunday afternoon band concerts have continued for over a hundred years'.

There were three principal ways through which these varied musical traditions have been incorporated into marketing strategies. First, there were a number of cities which did not appear to promote their musical landscapes, least of all those associated with popular music. The clearest example of this was Belfast, which acknowledged a musical heritage to the city but was concerned about the sectarianism associated with this 'live' heritage. The questionnaire noted that it was "difficult in the present political climate to use 'traditional music' to attract tourists". It should be noted, however, that events such as the marching Orange bands do attract significant tourist visits, particularly from

the west of Scotland, even if they are not actively marketed. No serious attention was given to the city's other music-related strengths, such as its lively club scene. Some English cities, too, saw little major scope for their musical heritage in creating their new localism. Thus, whilst Southampton as the 'Entertainment Capital of the South' wished to portray itself as "a lively, culturally rich, historic, cosmopolitan, waterfront City", musical promotion was confined largely to a listing of venues in the visitors' guide. Nevertheless, it did see a future in classical concert promotion and does host events such as *Symphony in the Park* and *Power in the Park* ('top-of-the-bill' pop bands for 'youngsters'). Plymouth claimed that its main cultural promotional foci were in theatre/performance and outdoor events/festivals, rather than in more general musical activities, although its *Building on Quality and Success* strategy was positive about 'street entertainments', the Pavilions 'entertainment complex' and its nightclubs, and saw potential in 'high profile special events' (Plymouth City Council n.d., 20). Finally, Newcastle did not use its musical heritage in its promotion to any serious extent but noted that, for the future, its "Rock and pop history needs exploiting in a project as yet undefined".

Second, some cities use an events-based strategy. The substantial income generated from these visitors is recognised by the council. Events characterise Cardiff's perceived appeal, both at Christmas and in the summer (with more all-year sites such as the International Arena not featuring so strongly), and Glasgow concentrated on events such as the *10 Day Weekend*, the *T in the Park* festival, *Mayfest*, *Jazzfest*, and *Folkfest*, all of which contain a very strong musical dimension. The *T in the Park* festival reveals the tenuousness of the 'urban' character of many of these events since it is held outside of Glasgow itself, moving from Hamilton in Lanarkshire to Kinross in Fife in 1997. Broad-ening the field, an events-based strategy is clearly of immense significance to other places within the United Kingdom, not least with the other festivals of popular music (for example, *Glastonbury Festival*, the *Phoenix Festival*, WOMAD events), folk (for

example, *Cambridge Folk Festival*, *Sidmouth Festival*), jazz (for example, *Brecon Jazz Festival*) and classical/opera (for example, *Glyndebourne, Pavarotti in the Park*). Other annual carnivals and cultural events (for example the *Notting Hill Carnival*, the Welsh *Eistedfodd*) also feature music heavily.

Third, some cities are actively seeking to market themselves as an all-year site of musical activity. Thus, consolidating the success of its festivals, Reading is now keen to promote its music venues and general live music scene, its local bands, choirs and musical societies, and to promote street entertainment. Expressing the need to develop 'sustainable tourism', Nottingham stresses how the city's musical events encompass 'popular music and classics at the Royal Concert Hall, and street entertainment' (Nottingham City Council 1995, 36). Indeed, the council has sought to broaden the city's appeal through their support of the *Dirty Stop Out's Guide to Nottingham 1996/97*, a lurid coloured booklet proclaiming the city to be:

More than bows and arrows [the Robin Hood legacy]. Too long has this regional capital of cultural and leisure excellence kept its mouth shut while hyped-up neighbours blow their respective clubland trumpets. ... After a recent late night on the razzle Jane Ellis, Nottingham's City Centre manager, said: 'Thousands more young people are now flooding into the city to study, work and to have a good time, the main attraction being our ever-expanding range of clubs, restaurants, pubs and café bars. We're out to make Nottingham a living, breathing 20-hour city and the cutting edge of 1990's nightlife. We'd have gone for 24-hours but we do think people deserve to sleep occasionally' (Anderson 1996, 3).

Of course, many cities produce 'what's on guides' but Nottingham goes further with its detailing of the club, pub and 'youth' scene, and with the up-front official support for this campaign. Indeed, musical events are apparent in the city's general promotional material, such as the *Robin Hood Country* booklet, and in specific guides, such as *Nottingham Classics*. Leeds, which positions itself as a pioneering '24-hour city', also features a wide range of musical material in its promotion. Whilst it regards its *International Concert Season* (supported by numerous leaflets) as its 'musical flagship', its broader musical landscape is also apparent.

Finally, Sheffield represents itself strongly as a year round site of musical production and consumption. Besides noting the significance of a range of classical events, the *Destination Sheffield* campaign's 'right on' message (a term used in the promotional material) paints a picture of the 'vibrancy of the city' through its clubs, record shops and music venues. Thus, *Sheffield. All You Need to Know 1996* has a distinct 'music and clubs' section. The huge range of musical experiences to hand is emphasised, with a degree of analysis capable of recognising a weakness in jazz coverage and how, for rock bands, the 'lack of small venues is the only problem' (Waple 1996, 24). Recognition of the city's popular music legacy has led to it becoming the venue for a *National Centre for Popular Music*, which opened in 1998. Described as a 'major permanent visitor attraction for the city', this £15 million complex will incorporate an interactive museum and a three-dimensional 'sound auditorium' in bold, modernist design: "Four stainless steel drums, linked by fluorescent orange girders and glazed atrium" (*The Guardian* 1996). Thus, Sheffield is striving to build and consolidate its year-round popular music appeal.

Overall, whilst music did feature in the promotional efforts being undertaken in many United Kingdom cities, this recognition was largely in terms of the supply of musical amenities and was associated with what we have termed a generic strategy. Music-related services were both recognised and marketed with varying degrees of enthusiasm related to the perceptions of individual cities' abilities to capture a part of a largely external and global musical entertainment phenomenon. Generally, musical amenities were just seen as part of a bigger cultural picture:

Whilst each attraction is important in its own right, it is important to note that it is often the City itself that people come to visit. (Nottingham City Council 1995 24).

Such a realisation, apparent in virtually all of the strategies under review, acknowledges both the diversity of the tourist market and the very definition of 'tourism':

... tourism is often perceived as a single industry when it is really a diverse collection of small,

medium and large businesses, each with its own markets, aspirations and difficulties. (Plymouth City Council n.d., 6)³.

From such a perspective, there is scope for a classical concert series to sit with popular music events, and with folk, jazz, country and other musical forms in the promotional landscape of the 1990's city.

In contrast with attempts to ground the diversity of musical genres and events, the emergence and embeddedness of music within individual cities was weakly developed or appreciated. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that music's incorporation into a city's localism strategy was more of a top-down than a bottom-up approach. This is especially the case as regards popular music and was reflected in Sheffield's plan for its *National Centre for Popular Music*, where Sheffield's attempt to market itself through music rests on bringing a development to the city which has little direct rootedness within the city itself. Such a strategy contrasts with Liverpool's attempt to build an image around the Beatles (Cavern Club, the 'Magical History Tour', Strawberry Fields: Urry 1990, 119). Similarly, in the USA, Cleveland's establishment of the grandly-titled *Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame*, a key element in reconstructing the image of this former industrial city (Holcomb 1993), contrasts with the more place-rooted strategies devised in Nashville around country music's *Grand Ole Opry* or Memphis's market-ing of Elvis Presley's *Graceland* mansion.

Nevertheless, in spite of the lack of spatial embeddedness of popular music in the surveyed cities' promotional strategies, there was evidence that efforts were beginning to be made to construct such distinctions. This would, of course, be consistent with the more general resurgence of local distinctiveness in a globalising world (Urry 1995). Thus, we had Nottingham as clubland, Reading integrating spectacular festivals with more mundane street-based events and, most clearly, Sheffield constructing itself as a 'capital' of pop. The ground is being laid for producing contextual strategies: the next step from producing difference is to recognise the differences that already exist.

Selling the musical landscape of Manchester

How, then, does Manchester, with its strong musical heritage, fit with the outline regarding the place of music within the new urban localism? Probably moreso than with any of the other cities reviewed above, Manchester is now attempting to promote itself as a city of culture (Urry 1995). This strategy appears to draw primarily upon its past. In particular, the famous industrial legacy of the city has been (re-)commodified into 'heritage'. For example, the booklet *Experience Greater Manchester* focuses upon 'over 200 industrial heritage themed attractions and events', from the Alexandra Craft Centre in Oldham to 'Britain's first urban heritage park' at Castlefield in central Manchester. However, Manchester's cultural revival has not been based upon industrial heritage alone. The Council's *City Pride* initiative (Manchester City Council 1994) expressed the need for a strong and varied cultural dimension to enhance its position as a European regional capital:

While still inevitably concerned with the legacy of its glorious industrial past, there is, however, evidence of a new assertiveness and a proactive vision concerning the strategic development of the city, and a new mutuality of interest among the main 'shareholders' involved in recreating the prosperity of the city and conurbation. (Williams 1996, 211).

From within this new assertiveness has come the recognition of the city's musical landscape. Thus, whilst the Unitary Development Plan (Manchester City Council 1995) made little direct reference to the role of culture in revitalising the local economy, it did acknowledge the importance of fostering the development of the city's vibrant youth culture (Williams 1996), which clearly includes (popular) music. The musical landscape features prominently in *Manchester - The City Guide 1996*. Besides brief promotion of the city's music shops, the *City Guide* has an extensive 'night life' section which draws attention to a 'legendary' club scene (e.g. the Hacienda, the Manchester Boardwalk, or gay clubs such as the Paradise Factory), diverse entertainment venues, many of which have been opened within the last few years (e.g.

Bridgewater Hall, the new home of the celebrated Hallé Orchestra, GMEX, and the purpose-built NYNEX Arena), and the huge range of music available and where to find it ('chamber', 'church music', 'classical', 'dance/ballet', 'jazz and blues', 'opera', 'pop' (illustrated by a picture of the Manchester band Oasis) and 'world folk').

The frequency of musical entertainment on the streets and in other venues, such as the Universities is also recognised. The 'key events 1996' section has some musical content (for example, the Hallé Proms season, Manchester Irish Festival – see Busted, this volume), although this is not as strong as in many other cities. The 'attractions and museums' section of the *City Guide* identifies a distinct area of the city strongly associated with music, the so-called 'Northern Quarter' (see Milestone, this volume). Finally, the 'Gay Village' off Princess Street is also presented as having a strong club and festival ('It's Queer Up North') flavour. This is described in ways which express well the direction taken by Manchester's urban revival, with its suggestion of the postmodern 'playfulness' of culture commonplace within localism strategies (Philo and Kearns 1993):

The Northern Quarter is the name given to the city centre area which is bounded by Great Ancoats Street to the north, Piccadilly to the south, Ducie Street and Shudehill Street to the east and west. ... The city's cultural vitality in recent years has prompted a resurgence in new entrepreneurial businesses and provided the potential for regeneration. As a result it is now an area which has a *strange collection of incongruous activity* which seems to happily co-exist. Nightclubs, music venues such as Republic(a) ... and Band on the Wall, bars such as Isobar and Dry 201, cafés such as Café Pop, record shops such as Vinyl Exchange and Eastern Bloc, hair and beauty salons such as Pierre Alexander and Dome Plaza, craft workshops including the Manchester Craft Centre, offices, fruit and vegetable barrows ... all complement the wholesale textile business, the major sector in the area. (Manchester City Council 1996, 15, our emphases).

Indeed, this account chimes well with Holcomb's (1993, 142) observation on the promotion of Pittsburgh and Cleveland in the USA, where:

The packaged image reflects the aesthetic tastes of postmodern society, with its eclectic conformity, its fragmented palimpsest of past times

and distant spaces, its commodified ethnic culture and sanitised classlessness.

It therefore appears that Manchester aims to position itself alongside Sheffield, Leeds, Nottingham and Reading as a year-round music city. The promotional materials display a clear awareness of the city's rich musical legacy and, whilst key events are not shunned, there is also an impression that large-scale events do not need to be the main effort – the overall, differentiated musical landscape of the city is stressed over any more selective musical events and festivals. There appears to be a clear attempt to overcome any elitism as to what comprises musical 'culture' and express Manchester's appeal to wide range of musical consumers beyond those just attracted to established classical events such as Hallé Orchestra performances. Furthermore, the embeddedness of musical activities within the landscape seemed more complete within Manchester's promotional material than was the case in the other cities. Thus, within Manchester, less effort was placed into the generic strategy of capturing a piece of the global musical industry. Instead, the already established musical landscape was the resource for (re)development and (re)evaluation. This takes the city's strategy closer to the more 'original' heritage developments (for example, Wigan Pier Heritage Centre) than to more recent and 'self-conscious' simulations (for example, Beamish). In this sense, therefore, Manchester resembles Liverpool (Beatles tourism) more than Sheffield (national popular music).

Nevertheless, there does seem to us to remain clear gaps in this official promotional material and a failure to embrace fully Manchester's position as the key city outside London with respect to popular musical output and innovation over the past two decades. Returning to the *City Guide*, it is perhaps telling that the diversity of contemporary popular music is reduced to the category 'pop' in the 'music' section. Moreover, this sub-section is reduced solely to a place to purchase concert tickets (Piccadilly Box Office) and is introduced with reference to a fairly limited group of Manchester bands, namely Take That, M People, Oasis and

the 'longer established' Simply Red, all of whom have entered the same popular music mainstream that so many other cities are trying to capture.

What then, is missing from the Manchester musical landscape presented to the visitor, especially those relatively unfamiliar with the city? Considering popular music alone, the voice of the city's substantial black population immediately appears to be largely absent, with the partial exception of M People. There is also little direct reference to the 'Indie' music scene of the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's. Bands such as Joy Division, New Order, the Fall, the Smiths, the Happy Mondays and the Stone Roses put Manchester/Madchester 'on the map' for what is now generations of young (and not so young!) people (Halfacree and Kitchin 1996) but it seems that the promotion of the city's new localism shies away from this aspect of musical heritage⁴. At present, the casual visitor has little opportunity to take an informed *Rock 'n' Stroll* tour through the streets of Manchester; to visit the venues played by these bands in their formative years, to explore the landscapes of the Smiths' Stretford or Whalley Range, to trek to the site of the various recording studios, and so on. Whilst we are not suggesting that the popularity of such music is that extensive – indeed, the selective appeal of Indie music is one of its strengths – if Manchester is going to promote its distinctiveness in part through selling its musical landscape, the legacy of this musical genre must surely merit some consideration. This route is also to be recommended if Manchester is to escape the tendency towards 'sameness' which characterises many cultural localism strategies, especially those taking on a generic character (Urry's heritage style). Regarding this sameness, Philo and Kearns (1993, 20) express it thus:

For places, the idea is not so much that they be genuinely different from one another but that they harness their surface differences in order to make themselves in a very real sense nothing but 'the same': to give themselves basically the same sort of attractive image ... with basically the same ambitions of sucking in capital so as to make the place in question 'richer' than the rest.

Such a tendency goes against two of the key requirements for a more robust place marketing,

namely 'to know exactly what you have to offer' (Fretter 1993, 167) and, most importantly, to 'find or create a real point of difference' (p.171).

Conclusion

Music is becoming an important component of the promotional marketing of many cities within the United Kingdom. Some cities clearly have greater scope to capitalise upon this than others. Most effort has been paid to capturing and grounding aspects of the global music industry rather than starting from a particular city's musical legacy: the generic strategy has been favoured over the contextual. A musical dimension to the new urban localism is also apparent in Manchester, although here it does appear that greater attention has been paid to the city's own musical landscape. However, there is still some way to go before the full range of Manchester's musical heritage is incorporated into any new localism grounded firmly in an 'authentic' context. In making this observation, we are not suggesting that Manchester is especially negligent in this regard; indeed of all cities in the UK, it perhaps promotes the widest range of musical experiences. However, questions as to what constitutes Manchester's musical 'heritage' remain to be explained (see also Hewison 1987; Urry 1990; Wright 1985, on the broader debate as to what heritage means).

If Manchester is to successfully develop its musical appeal beyond current provision then those responsible for marketing could more fully recognise and express explicitly the music produced within the city. In this respect, Manchester has greater potential than all of the other cities surveyed. The Indie scene within Manchester spawned a host of successful bands whose appeal is still acknowledged. Given the wide selection and appeal of these bands the potential is great. At present, whilst brochures such as the *City Guide* are to be commended for making some allusion to this heritage, it is unlikely to be understood or appreciated by an audience outside the cognoscenti. The place-rich character of the music of Manchester also needs to be stressed. We have argued more fully elsewhere that popular music in many respects

retains a context-specific character (Halfacree and Kitchin 1996) and drawing upon this presents a clear way in which a city can enhance its distinctive new localism and avoid the tendency towards sameness which characterises much heritage development. Such a point seems to be appreciated in Reading, a city much less renowned for its music, and in some of the other cities surveyed (Sheffield, Nottingham). Building on this point, many popular musical styles, although embedded within the mainstream (for example, Indie, Folk, Reggae), are less well suited to large-scale spectacular exhibitions and displays than more global kinds of popular music. Thus, whilst the latter may be captured

in Sheffield's *National Centre for Popular Music*, the creative director of the centre, Tim Strickland, is only telling part of the story when he observes:

Almost any northern city can lay claim to a great heritage of popular music-making, and Sheffield is no exception. But we have persisted while elsewhere it's been mostly talk. (quoted in *The Guardian* 1996).

A national centre may bring visitors to Sheffield but all of the experiences of popular music, woven into the landscape, cannot be captured in such a way; the enduring place-ness of this music still leaves much scope for future enhanced presentations of 'The Sounds of Manchester'.

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Notes

- 1 A 'community based' study, paralleling in some respects this paper, has been undertaken by Hudson (1995), in his exploration of the potential of musical production to regenerate the former coal and steel economy of Derwentside.
- 2 Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester, Nottingham, Plymouth, Reading, Sheffield and Southampton.
- 3 In this respect tourism mirrors music, since: 'what is impressive about musical practice in all its variety is that it takes place in many different places, for different purposes, for different constituencies and practitioners, and of course at many different times' (Said 1991: xviii-xix).
- 4 This situation is changing rapidly as this paper is being completed, with October 1997 witnessing the establishment of a promotional internet website for the city - with the youth culture heavy address www.madforit.com - where the 'guides' will be a cartoon dog, the television presenter Jenny Ross and the former Happy Mondays and Black Grape dancer Bez!

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