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**VALUES OF HIGHER  
POPULAR MUSIC EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES  
FROM THE UK**

Tom Parkinson

The University of Reading

## **Acknowledgements**

Working on this research project has been a challenging, but ultimately fascinating and precious experience. I am grateful to the University of Reading's Institute of Education for awarding me funding, without which I would not have been able to undertake doctoral study. I am grateful also to my doctoral colleagues at the University's Institute of Education and Graduate School, with whom I have shared many illuminating discussions, and from whom I have gained so much in the way of advice, insight, friendship and support. I have no doubt that I have made friends for life.

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I hope this thesis does justice to the help and support I have received.

## Abstract

In the 23 years since the first undergraduate popular music degree programme opened in the United Kingdom, the academic discipline of popular music has burgeoned to encompass over 160 programmes delivered across the higher education sector, by private institutions, Royal-chartered conservatoires, post-92 universities and Russell Group universities. This doctoral research project seeks to understand the values underpinning and informing educational practice in this growing academic discipline.

It proceeds from an understanding of higher education and popular music as two highly complex domains in their own right, and from the proposition that values inhering at their nexus- Higher Popular Music Education- derive from and are borne by multiple human, institutional and disciplinary sources, and bear the trace of socio-cultural, economic and historical contexts related to each domain. It takes an inductive approach to a multiple-case study of four popular music degree programmes at different higher education institutions across the United Kingdom. Acknowledging from the outset the impossibility of identifying a conclusive ‘roster’ of itemisable values, this study draws on a combination of institutional literature, semi-structured interview and field observation data to explore the interplay of musical, educational and other values within the educational message systems of *pedagogy, curriculum, institution, assessment, lifestyle* and *market*.

Analysis of the data suggested that seemingly unrelated values such as, for example, those relating to musical aesthetics and social justice, could in fact be oppositional in practice, resulting in surprising tensions and impacting on such areas as curricula and student lifestyles. Moreover, values enshrined in policy, or perceived by interviewees to be dominant within the higher education sector, appeared often to be at odds with individuals’ personal opinions regarding the value of knowledge and education, or with what they saw to be the core values of popular music as an art form.

This interdisciplinary study sits across the research fields of music education, the sociology of higher education and popular music studies, and makes original contributions to knowledge in each of these fields.

*Keywords:* Higher Education, Popular Music, Popular Music Studies, Pedagogy, Curriculum, Institutional Culture, Value, Values

## Table of Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>Acknowledgements .....</b>  | <b>i</b>  |
| <b>Abstract .....</b>  | <b>ii</b> |
| <b>Chapter 1 Introduction .....</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| 1.1 Contexts of the Study .....  | 2         |
| 1.2 Why this research?.....  | 3         |
| 1.3 An Insider-Outsider Perspective.....   | 8         |
| 1.4 An Inductive-Hermeneutic Approach Within a Hybrid Social<br>Constructivist/Structural Functionalist Paradigm ..... | 9         |
| 1.5 Terminology and Subject.....   | 11        |
| 1.6 The Research Focus.....  | 11        |
| 1.7 A Caveat .....   | 12        |
| 1.8 Thesis Outline.....  | 12        |
| <b>Chapter 2 Literature Review.....</b>  | <b>14</b> |
| 2.1 A Hermeneutic Approach to Literature Review .....  | 14        |
| 2.2 Value.....   | 15        |
| 2.2.1 Value and values in higher education .....   | 16        |
| 2.3 Macro Values in Higher Education: Some Policy Documentation .....  | 22        |
| 2.4 Employability .....  | 28        |
| 2.5 Student-Centredness .....  | 30        |
| 2.6 Ideology and Higher Education.....   | 32        |
| 2.6.1 Postmodernism .....  | 33        |
| 2.6.2 Neoliberalism .....  | 34        |
| 2.6.3 Third-wayism .....   | 36        |
| 2.7 Institutional Culture.....   | 37        |
| 2.8 Disciplinary Values .....  | 41        |
| 2.9 Popular Music.....   | 45        |
| 2.9.1 ‘Popular’ and other musics.....  | 47        |
| 2.9.2 Popular music and the value of authenticity .....  | 49        |

|                  |  |           |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| 2.9.3            | Canon in popular music.....  | 51        |
| 2.9.4            | Postmodernism and popular music .....  | 53        |
| 2.10             | Summary .....  | 55        |
| <b>Chapter 3</b> | <b>Popular Music in Higher Education: An Enigmatic Discipline.....</b>             | <b>57</b> |
| 3.1              | An Historical Overview of Tertiary Music Education in the United Kingdom.....      | 57        |
| 3.2              | Popular Music Education in Theory and Practice .....                               | 61        |
| 3.2.1            | ‘What is Popular Music Studies?’ .....   | 62        |
| 3.3              | Scholarship vs musicianship.....   | 62        |
| 3.3.1            | Popular Music Pedagogy.....  | 64        |
| 3.3.2            | <i>How Popular Musicians Learn</i> , and how they are taught.....                  | 64        |
| 3.4              | The Current Provision of Higher Popular Music Education in the United Kingdom..... | 65        |
| 3.4.1            | A doubly new discipline.....   | 66        |
| 3.4.2            | Nomenclature .....   | 67        |
| 3.5              | Programme Content and Emphasis.....  | 69        |
| 3.6              | Summary.....   | 71        |
| <b>Chapter 4</b> | <b>Methodology .....</b>   | <b>73</b> |
| 4.1              | A Multiple-Case Study Approach .....   | 73        |
| 4.2              | Theoretical Issues .....   | 74        |
| 4.2.1            | The message systems of education.....  | 75        |
| 4.2.2            | Authenticity and commercialism .....   | 75        |
| 4.2.3            | Art school/conservatoire/business school trialectic .....                          | 75        |
| 4.2.4            | Locale .....   | 75        |
| 4.2.5            | Canon .....  | 75        |
| 4.2.6            | Transactional and principle values.....  | 75        |
| 4.2.7            | Macro, Meso, Micro.....  | 76        |
| 4.3              | Data Collection .....  | 77        |
| 4.3.1            | Institutional literature .....   | 77        |
| 4.3.2            | Observation .....  | 78        |
| 4.3.3            | Staff interviews .....   | 79        |
| 4.3.4            | Semi-structured interview .....  | 79        |
| 4.3.5            | Student interviews and focus groups.....   | 81        |

|                  |  |           |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| 4.4              | Recording and Transcription .....  | 87        |
| 4.5              | Practical Constraints .....  | 88        |
| 4.6              | Analysis .....   | 89        |
| 4.6.1            | Observation data.....  | 90        |
| 4.6.2            | Interview data.....  | 91        |
| 4.6.3            | Document analysis .....  | 91        |
| 4.6.4            | Triangulation and cross-case comparison .....  | 91        |
| 4.7              | Validation .....   | 93        |
| 4.8              | Ethics .....   | 94        |
| 4.8.1            | Anonymity.....   | 95        |
| 4.8.2            | Ethical approval.....  | 97        |
| 4.9              | Summary.....   | 98        |
| <b>Chapter 5</b> | <b>The Cases .....</b>   | <b>99</b> |
| 5.1              | Case 1: BA Popular Music and Recording/BA Popular Musicology,<br>Department of Music, Institution A .....            | 99        |
| 5.1.1            | The institution .....  | 100       |
| 5.1.2            | The programme leader .....   | 101       |
| 5.1.3            | The students.....  | 101       |
| 5.2              | Case 2: BA Commercial Music at the Institution D .....   | 101       |
| 5.2.1            | The institution .....  | 103       |
| 5.2.2            | The location.....  | 103       |
| 5.2.3            | The deputy programme leader.....   | 104       |
| 5.2.4            | The students.....  | 104       |
| 5.3              | Case 3: BMus Popular and Contemporary Music, Institution C (as of<br>2012/13 BA Contemporary and Popular Music)..... | 104       |
| 5.3.1            | The institution .....  | 105       |
| 5.3.2            | The location.....  | 106       |
| 5.3.3            | The programme leader .....   | 106       |
| 5.3.4            | The students.....  | 106       |
| 5.4              | Case 4: BA Professional Musicianship at Institution B .....  | 107       |
| 5.4.1            | The institution .....  | 107       |
| 5.4.2            | The location.....  | 108       |
| 5.4.3            | The programme leader .....   | 108       |
| 5.4.4            | The lecturers.....   | 108       |

|                  |   |            |
|------------------|---|------------|
| 5.4.5            | The students.....   | 108        |
| 5.5              | Summary.....  | 109        |
| <b>Chapter 6</b> | <b>Findings.....</b>  | <b>110</b> |
| 6.1              | Documentary Sources.....  | 110        |
| 6.2              | Staff Interviewees.....   | 111        |
| 6.3              | Student Interviewees.....   | 111        |
| 6.4              | Different Conceptions of Employability, Core Knowledge and Core Skills.....   | 111        |
| 6.5              | The Impact of Meso and Macro Values on Programme Values.....  | 116        |
| 6.6              | Transactional Conceptions of Educational Value, and Expectations of Higher Education.....                             | 121        |
| 6.7              | The Presentation of Faculty Credentials and Expertise.....  | 129        |
| 6.8              | Positions and Attitudes Regarding Commercialism and its Relationship to Authenticity.....                             | 131        |
| 6.9              | Academic Enculturation.....   | 136        |
| 6.10             | The Academic Value of Popular Music Education.....  | 140        |
| 6.11             | ‘Classical’, ‘Popular’ and ‘Just’ Music.....  | 143        |
| 6.12             | The Impact of Staff Interviewee’s Background on their Values.....   | 146        |
| 6.13             | Creativity and Individuality.....   | 149        |
| 6.14             | Collaboration, Lifestyle and Informal Learning.....   | 151        |
| 6.15             | Musical Values, Tastes and Genres.....  | 156        |
| 6.16             | Canon.....  | 160        |
| 6.17             | Locale.....   | 164        |
| 6.18             | Summary.....  | 167        |
| <b>Chapter 7</b> | <b>Discussion.....</b>  | <b>169</b> |
| 7.1              | Principle and Transactional Values.....   | 169        |
| 7.2              | Conceptions of Knowledge and Employability.....   | 178        |
| 7.3              | The Question of Authenticity.....   | 187        |
| 7.4              | Authenticity and Academia.....  | 190        |
| 7.5              | The Post(-)modern Condition: Relativist and Foundational Values.....  | 196        |
| 7.6              | The Inevitability of Canon?.....  | 198        |
| 7.7              | Taking the Cardigan and The University of Life: Academic Enculturation, Disciplinary Socialisation and Lifestyle..... | 202        |
| 7.8              | The Message Systems of Higher Popular Music Education.....  | 204        |

|                  |   |            |
|------------------|---|------------|
| 7.8.1            | Curriculum .....  | 205        |
| 7.8.2            | Pedagogy .....  | 206        |
| 7.8.3            | Assessment.....   | 208        |
| 7.8.4            | Institution .....   | 208        |
| 7.8.5            | Lifestyle.....  | 210        |
| 7.8.6            | Market .....  | 211        |
| 7.8.7            | Intersection .....  | 212        |
| 7.9              | Summary.....  | 213        |
| <b>Chapter 8</b> | <b>Conclusion.....</b>  | <b>215</b> |
| 8.1              | Recapitulative Summary.....   | 215        |
| 8.2              | Limitations.....  | 219        |
| 8.2.1            | Focus .....   | 220        |
| 8.2.2            | Methodology .....   | 220        |
| 8.2.3            | Timescale .....   | 221        |
| 8.2.4            | Data collection.....  | 222        |
| 8.3              | Original Contribution to Knowledge.....                                     | 222        |
| 8.4              | Concluding Remarks .....  | 225        |
|                  | <b>Reference List.....</b>  | <b>226</b> |
|                  | <b>Appendix I</b> Code of ethical practice .....                            | 235        |
|                  | <b>Appendix II</b> Ethics forms, informations sheets and consent forms..... | 237        |
|                  | <b>Appendix III</b> Observation record .....                                | 258        |
|                  | <b>Appendix IV</b> Interview protocols .....                                | 263        |
|                  | <b>Appendix V</b> Within-case coding document .....                         | 267        |
|                  | <b>Appendix VI</b> Pilot study .....  | 271        |
|                  | <b>Appendix VII</b> Published book chapter .....                            | 285        |

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction**

This doctoral research project seeks to understand the underlying values at play within the higher education field of popular music. It proceeds from an understanding of higher education and popular music as two multifaceted and highly complex domains, and from the proposition that values inhering at their nexus- higher popular music education- derive from and are borne by different human, institutional and disciplinary actors, bear the trace of socio-cultural, economic and historical contexts related to each domain, and become enmeshed. It takes an inductive-hermeneutic approach to a multiple-case study of four popular music degree programmes at different Higher Education institutions across the United Kingdom. Acknowledging from the outset the inherent messiness of soft systems such as education, and the ultimate impossibility of identifying a conclusive “roster” of itemisable values, this study draws on a combination of literature review, documentary analysis, semi-structured interview and field observation to explore the interplay of different values within higher popular music education settings. While case study research such as this does not generate findings that can be statistically generalised to wider contexts, the cross-case findings in this study are abstracted out to theoretical issues that enhance and advance understanding of the values underpinning popular music higher education, making an original contribution to the research fields of popular music studies, music education, higher education studies and the sociology of education.

This short introductory chapter describes the background, genesis and theoretical framework of my research project. It begins with an overview of the contexts within which the research focus is situated. It then accounts for how the study was conceived and came to be realised, and why it represents a valuable contribution to existing bodies of research. It goes on to give some biographical information about me, the researcher, which is pertinent to why and how I conducted the study, and is a necessary component of constructivist research. It then presents the paradigm and epistemology underpinning the study. Finally, it outlines the structure of this thesis.

## 1.1 Contexts of the Study

The units of analysis in this study- its cases- are undergraduate popular music degree programmes, and as such are situated within the context of higher popular music education, often referred to as ‘popular music studies’, ‘popular music pedagogy’ and other names. While a thorough account of this field is given in Chapter 3, some preliminary background is warranted here.

Higher popular music education is a young, but no longer nascent academic field. Its beginnings have been variously identified in the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies, and in particular from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at the University of Birmingham (Cloonan, 2005; Huq, 2006), on the music education programme at Göteborg, Sweden (Tagg, 1998), in research surrounding popular music within school-level curricula (such as Swanwick, 1968; Vulliamy & Lee, 1982) and in academic studies of popular artists such as the Beatles (for example, Mellers, 1973). It came into being as a taught academic discipline proper however between 1988 and 1990 with the first ‘Popular Music’ postgraduate and undergraduate degree programmes respectively.<sup>1</sup> All but one of the undergraduate programmes existing today however were first delivered after 1992, a watershed year in UK higher education which saw the conferring of university status onto former polytechnics and colleges of Higher Education under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. It was predominantly within these ‘new’ universities that popular music studies burgeoned as a taught discipline.

The Further and Higher Education Act 1992 represents one of several developments which have altered the climate of UK higher education, and which have determined the conditions under which popular music studies has developed. Within higher education generally, the Act precipitated the emergence of many new disciplines, provoking tense debate surrounding the function of higher education, the nature of academic practice, the relative value of different types of knowledge and the relative emphases placed on vocational and ‘pure’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001) academic content. These academic value-related tensions have accompanied the growth of popular music studies, and continue to be felt within the field. Other developments in higher education, while far less abrupt, have also imparted values and ideological positions that bring new complexities to the higher education context in which popular music studies is situated, and participate in its tensions.

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<sup>1</sup> Details are given in Chapter 3.

As a young field unfolding largely within ‘new’ universities (Cloonan, 2005), it can be argued that higher popular music education experiences the shifting values of higher education particularly acutely. In addition however, just as any ‘academic tribe’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.1) must engage with the values and ideologies surrounding its object of study, the phenomenon of popular music is replete with its own tensions, ideologies and conflicting values, which when brought into the academic setting must be seen to interact with those surrounding higher education. This study seeks to understand this interaction.

## **1.2 Why this research?**

My interest in this area preceded my formal research, and indeed prompted me to seek to undertake doctoral study in the first place. Prior to beginning this project I was working as an administrator in a classical music conservatoire, performing regularly as a musician, and studying part-time towards an undergraduate qualification in music. This particular confluence of activities led me to reflect on the underlying values of education and popular music, and to consider them against each other. Having learnt to play music largely by teaching myself and through playing in bands and other ensembles, and learnt about popular music through obsessively listening, reading, watching, playing and talking about it for most of my life, I was struck by the differences between these “informal” learning experiences and those of conservatoire students, and indeed my own new experiences of studying classical music at university. In particular, I was intrigued about the values underpinning classical music education; where they came from, and why some practices, sounds, pieces, composers and performers were valued over others. Curricula and assessment criteria at the conservatoire seemed to reify these musical values, endorsing and enforcing the canon of Western art music. Indeed, a symbiotic, mutually perpetuating relationship appeared to exist between the Western art canon and classical music education.

It seemed to me that no equivalent authoritative “canon” existed for popular music. Notwithstanding the obvious variety across genres, periods, and performance practice within Western art music, there was nothing comparable to the bewildering spread of musical forms all bracketed within “popular music”, and each associated with particular values- aesthetic, political, social or other. Moreover, perhaps naively, I understood popular music practice to be, in its ideal, autonomous in the sense of being free from

governing “rules”, and mediated only by the expectations of audiences and related market dynamics, and the intentions of performers. It was also greatly enmeshed with social life, accompanying and in many cases defining the lifestyle practices of individuals and communities.

What then, of popular music education? Friends of mine had studied on popular music programmes, but I had taken very little interest in their experiences until this point. I now wondered how such aesthetic and ideological variety could be accommodated within education, what values would be inculcated, and where they would derive from. I began to read across the issues of canon and genre in music, and in music education. These initial investigations confirmed for me that the concept of canon was problematic in the context of popular music education, a young field without a “great tradition” of the kind identified by Bloom (1995), Leavis (2006) and others in disciplines such as English literature and Western art music, or a central repertoire as exists in classical music (as discussed by Bohlman & Bergeron, 1996; Citron, 1993; and others). How and from where, then, did values pertaining to quality and authenticity emerge within popular music in an educational context, and within music education communities? Furthermore, how do they inform approaches to curriculum, pedagogy and assessment?

Alongside these considerations of popular music in education, I began to reflect on the value and purpose of higher education itself. As a programme administrator I was a participant in the culture and practice of higher education, and I was aware of policy and the role of regulatory bodies in assuring quality. I was intrigued by this notion of “quality”, which seemed to be laden with values that were specific to a particular, dominant conception of higher educational purpose. Higher education, it seemed, was charged with many responsibilities, including providing skilled labour to support industry and the economy, generating and conferring knowledge, participating in cultural life and responding to the demands of paying students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge they desired.

I was making these considerations against a tense backdrop. Around this time, two universities announced the proposed closure of long-standing departments deemed to be unviable from an economic perspective<sup>2</sup>, and student protests against proposed increases in tuition fees were gaining high profile media coverage. I became aware that the purposes

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<sup>2</sup> Middlesex University’s Philosophy department and King’s College London’s Palaeography department (which was ultimately saved).

commonly attributed to higher education were potentially at odds with each other, and that negotiation across these responsibilities demanded that they be evaluated in terms of relative value.

Meanwhile, I witnessed academic staff at the conservatoire constructing and deliberating over programme and module specifications and assessment criteria. This reminded me that at a local level, institutions, programme teams and individuals within education must also engage in processes of negotiation and compromise across objectives, assessing value, including and excluding content from curricula and, in teaching, actively inculcating certain values over others. I also served committees and working parties in which student representatives voiced their concerns about issues such as programme content, teaching and assessment. I came to the informal hypothesis that in the practice of higher education, discipline-specific values, values concerning the purpose of education, and the personal values of individuals are brought together and, to cast them metaphorically as active entities, must vie for authority. I reasoned that in popular music education, the ideologies and values associated with different popular musics and their attendant practices must surely be brought into dialogue with those associated with higher education, and also with the values of institutions and individuals.

From these considerations a working hypothesis began to emerge; that within higher popular music education, values relating to higher education, issuing from state policy, institutions and individuals and formed both within and outside of the academy, interact with the values associated with the discipline's object of study, popular music, and impact upon the educational experience. The crucial question was how, and thus a tentative research question was formed: 'How does value formation impact upon popular music pedagogy at undergraduate level?'

I conducted a pilot study in early 2011, with a view to gaining an insight into the values operating within higher popular music education, in addition to testing my proposed research instruments. I interviewed two programme leaders and two alumni of popular music programmes. The findings appeared to confirm that complex matrices of different values, sometimes oppositional, sometimes seemingly unrelated, and held by/issuing from different subjects, existed within higher popular music education settings (a summary report of the pilot study can be found as Appendix VI).

The research focus was refined further through literature review. Within educational theory, I found that the educational reform theories of Ball (1994) and Usher (2009) offered possible frameworks within which to proceed with my investigation.

Consideration of Ball's (1994) suggestion of four 'message systems' of education-*curriculum/ assessment/ pedagogy/ organisation* (p1)- led me to adopt a more systematic approach to examining educational settings. However, bringing Usher's theories into the frame led me to consider the possibility of other, less tangible message systems unaccounted for in Ball's list, operating within educational systems "by stealth". Usher (2009) asserts:

Learners are positioned by lifestyle practices as active subjects...but they are also passive subjects, since lifestyle is socially defined, culturally legitimised, economically influenced and prey to consumerism and media-generated images. (p.173)

This suggests that cultural, social and economic values enter the educational setting not only via Ball's message systems (Ball, 1994), but also through active and passive learning associated with learners' lifestyle experiences. These values might be seen to operate within a fifth, hidden message system, *lifestyle*. Considering Usher's assertions alongside Bannister (2006) and Wyn Jones' (2008) theories of value formation in popular music, it is easy to conceive of socially and culturally determined values infiltrating popular music educational systems on a normative or tacit level via the *lifestyle* message system.

A further message system relates to market forces. Usher (2009) suggests that:

Changes in industry and changes in education go hand in hand, with educational institutions being expected to produce enterprising, consumption-oriented individuals with the attitudes, competences and predisposition to change appropriate to the Post-Fordist economy (Usher, 2009, p174)

In my experiences of working within the sector for five years, higher education was increasingly being rationalised in these terms; learning outcomes and programme aims were often geared towards equipping learners with skills sets that corresponded to industrial and market demands. Moreover, institutions appeared to compete to attract learners, as educational "consumers", and according to Usher (2009) learners in turn position themselves as skilled "products" to be chosen by the professional marketplace. I surmised therefore that market values circulate within an educational system through all of Ball's (1994) message systems but, as with cultural and social values, also on a hidden level, firstly because they are embedded within students' and providers' anxieties and aspirations and secondly because students and staff interact with the market (as consumers and as functionaries) outside of the educational setting. Thus another message system,

*market*, might exist. I chose therefore to adapt and extend Ball's (1994) message systems model, proposing six message systems of education: *curriculum*, *pedagogy*, *assessment*, *institution*, *lifestyle* and *market*. The decision to change *Organisation* to *Institution* was based on the currency of the term institution within higher education.

After further refinement, I decided upon the following two subsidiary research questions:

- 1 *What values are held on undergraduate popular music degree programmes?*
- 2 *How are these manifested in the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy, institution, assessment, lifestyle, and market?*

As intimated in the introduction to this chapter, these are not research questions for which the study provides, or seeks to provide, conclusive answers. Rather, they served to provide a focal point for inquiry, and to support a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. The first question is subjectless, and deliberately so; an initial subject- 'key players' (an earlier research question read: what are the values held by key players [...]?) was found to be too constricting insofar as it implicitly drew focus towards human individuals and away from less tangible sources of values. Far from negating or glossing over the subjectivity of values, the conspicuous absence of a subject prompted a greater awareness of (inter)subjectivity accompanied by an understanding that, while values are formulated by human subjects, these original subjectivities can recede from view when values are enshrined in text, which, while it can hold authority, is neither itself a subject, nor a straightforward proxy. As such, this subjectless research question was appropriate for an investigation within a hybrid social constructionist/structural functionalist paradigm (see below).

Existing research into the practice of higher popular music education has tended either to present summative, albeit critical and thematically-driven overviews of the discipline as a whole (Cloonan, 2005; Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012) or to explore themes that are common in wider music education research, such as formal and informal learning, peer learning and assessment in the context of popular music education. The majority of the latter instances have been conducted by insiders such as programme leaders (for example, Lebler, 2007; 2008; Pulman, 2009; Smith & Shafighian, 2013). A small number of studies have investigated institutional culture and its relationship to (among other things) musical genre (Hewitt, 2009; Karlsen, 2010; Papageorgi, Haddon, Creech, Morton, de Bezenac, Himonides, Potter, Duffy, Whyton & Welch, 2010a; 2010b). As Jørgensen (2009) asserts

however, the research base in this area is conspicuously sparse and in much need of development. Moreover, no such studies are primarily concerned with the issue of values, despite value being a prominent theoretical issue in both education and music research. Karlsen's (2010) study is notable for considering authenticity (another prominent theoretical issue in popular music studies) within the context of a Swedish popular music programme, and exploring the collocation of educational and musical values (Karlsen, 2010). Her short study is important for highlighting some of the complexities inherent in such a collocation; however, to my knowledge it represents the only empirical investigation of institutional values on a higher popular music education programme conducted solely by an institutional outsider, despite much educational research and theory (for example, Becher & Trowler, 2001; Clark, 1983) focussing on the interplay of institutional, disciplinary and other values within other higher education settings. Given the existence of such research, together with much high profile writing exploring the disciplinary scope of popular music studies (for example, Middleton, 1990; Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002; Brabazon, 2012) and in the context of rapid growth in popular music studies within UK higher education, it is surprising that this area remains under-researched. This study makes a significant contribution to knowledge by drawing theoretical issues relating to popular music into dialogue with those related to higher education, through empirical investigation of real-life instances in which higher education and popular music co-exist. In so doing it enriches understanding of a burgeoning higher educational field.

### **1.3 An Insider-Outsider Perspective**

It is necessary to clarify my own position in relation to this research, and to acknowledge its potential bearing on my outlook and approach. Given the multilayered context of this study, I can be seen to have neither a wholly etic perspective, nor a wholly emic one. I am, at the time of writing, a postgraduate research student, and have in the past studied at three universities. In my current role as Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Reading I am also a higher education teaching professional, and I have in the past worked as a university administrator. As such, many of the experiences related by my interviewees, both students and staff, inevitably chime with my own. Moreover, the structures and culture of higher education are familiar to me, and educational policy,

whose impact is investigated in the study, has impacted on my own past and current experiences as a higher education insider.

I have also played popular music in bands and other ensembles for almost twenty years, and self-identify strongly as a musician. I have worked, and continue to work, professionally and semi-professionally as a musician and music educator and hope to be an active musician, in one form or another, for the rest of my life. In terms of popular music practice therefore, I must also be regarded as an insider. In the context of popular music in higher education, however, I am not. My only experience of studying music formally was of undertaking a two-year undergraduate diploma (Dip.Mus) with the Open University, which while encompassing a range of musical styles had a dominant Western classical emphasis. I have neither studied nor worked on a popular music degree course, and to this extent I am an outsider to higher popular music education. More specifically, I am not associated with any of the institutions that feature in this study, and am thus a clear outsider to each case.

As discussed above, my decision to undertake this particular research project was far from capricious and derived from my professional, intellectual and emotional investments in higher education and popular music. My approaches and interpretations are thus inevitably coloured by assumptions issuing from my personal experiences. The attendant potential for bias must be acknowledged here, and is reflected upon in greater detail in the final chapter. The potential of my outsider status to affect interviewees' engagement with the project is discussed in Chapter 4.

#### **1.4 An Inductive-Hermeneutic Approach Within a Hybrid Social Constructivist/Structural Functionalist Paradigm**

This study recognises that participants, including myself the researcher, interpret and construct the world uniquely, and holds to the view that the notion of 'disinterested' research is ultimately fallacious. This is not to say that the study is unabashedly biased; rather it proceeds with a critical awareness of my own position in relation to the project-my motives, my approach, my prior assumptions, and so on- and a similarly critical approach to participants' responses. In short, subjectivity is mitigated through critical awareness thereof.

Notwithstanding this awareness of individual subjectivity, the study's primary focus is social, and its paradigmatic frame is best understood as being rooted in social

constructivism. Drawing on Kim (2001), Galloway (2001), Vygotsky (1978) and Rogoff (1990) among others, this study makes the following assumptions:

- That no reality precedes that which is constructed through social activity;
- That, accordingly, knowledge is socially constructed;
- That learning is therefore a social process;
- That understandings of individuals are affected by the intersubjectivity of the groups of which they are members.

At the same time, it seeks to understand how this intersubjectivity impacts upon the way social systems function, and furthermore focuses on some of the structural, albeit often abstract components of these systems (and wider systems within which they sit), exploring how they relate to their values and norms, and how they function. As such, the study might also be aligned with functionalist paradigms, and for its focus on values, with the approach of Parsons (1951; 1967) in particular. However, I do not commit to an understanding of structural components as being objectively functional and fixed (a common criticism of structural functionalism). Rather, I approach the education programmes in this study as soft systems (Checkland, 1990) that have social, cultural and political dimensions and are therefore inherently messy; I employ tentative structural frameworks (such as the six message systems, discussed above) as means through which to focus and order my analyses of these soft systems. To this extent, my approach differs markedly from structural functionalist approaches, in that I do not seek to test the objective validity of structural frameworks, only to employ them as tools and reflect upon their utility.

Finally, and to a lesser extent, my approach is informed by poststructuralist understandings of struggle for power and knowledge being enacted in discourse, and of language being central to the construction of social realities. This allows for consideration of how language texts (encompassing literature but also, in the form of interviews and documents, my primary data) embody values and present realities, how different subjective constructions relate to one another, and why some come to dominate. To oversimplify, it draws the dynamics of intersubjectivity to critical light.

My methodology follows a multiple-case study design informed by approaches developed by Yin (2003), Stake (1995) and others, and draws from semi-structured interview data, field observation notes and institutional documents as primary data sources, all appropriate for generating rich understanding of complex phenomena. As explained in

detail in Chapter 4, I took an inductive approach (Thomas, 2006) to analysis, scrutinising raw data until themes emerged, refining these into thematic categories and establishing their interconnectedness, first within and then across cases.

My literature review was informed by hermeneutic approaches. In particular I held to Gadamer's (1982) positive appropriation of the term 'prejudice' as denoting a researcher's judgement and understanding prior to beginning formal research, which must be recognised as susceptible to change but also central to determining the path of inquiry. Related to this is Smythe and Spence's (2012) Heideggerian notion of 'incline', which suggests that we incline towards a text only if it "inclines towards" us; that is, engages our working assumptions. This reflexive incline enacts a dialogic experience through which the researcher refines their theoretical framework. While much of this dialogue between my developing theoretical understanding and literature has been largely written out, the literature review represents a discursive re-view of a unique assemblage of literature resulting from this reflexive process.

## **1.5 Terminology and Subject**

Many of the central and peripheral terms in this study cannot be rigidly defined, but nonetheless have a high degree of currency in discourse and practice; the resulting variety of uses and understandings poses significant challenges. While this variety is explored across the thesis, the study does not seek to identify "true" or "accurate" definitions for its terminology, nor does it work under strict definitions of its own. After initial efforts to do both, it became clear that semantic instability lies close to the crux of the value problem; that subject, context and usage imbue terms with meaning, which in turn can be traced to underlying values.

## **1.6 The Research Focus**

The study is focussed broadly upon the academic field of higher popular music education, and specifically on the interplay of values therein. As already discussed, popular music in higher education constitutes a union of two vast and complex phenomena. It was thus decided that a narrowing of the research focus to specific examples, or cases, was necessary in order to facilitate depth of inquiry. On the other hand, the findings of my pilot study suggested that the values operating within cases were to some extent context-

dependent.<sup>3</sup> In order to investigate the impact of contextual variation it was therefore necessary to maintain some variety across cases. I identified a selection of undergraduate degree programmes which together reflected the variety of provision within popular music in UK Higher Education. From an initial list of ten possible programmes, I secured participation from four, all of which consented to being named in this thesis (see Chapter 4, Ethics). They are introduced in Chapter 5.

## **1.7 A Caveat**

It must be stated here at the outset that while this is a ‘critical’ study in the academic sense of taking a critical-theoretical approach, and is also comparative in that it examines variation across cases, it does not seek to criticise the cases, or compare them with a view to asserting their relative quality or failings. Rather it seeks to draw to light their inherent complexities, in order to enrich understanding of the domain in which they operate. The integrity and credentials of participants and their colleagues is beyond question, and the programmes speak for themselves in terms of success and quality. All findings and observations should be read as being implicitly preceded by this caveat.

## **1.8 Thesis Outline**

This first chapter has given a preliminary overview of my research project. Chapter 2 is a literature review. It proceeds inductively by unpicking and discussing the study’s central concepts of ‘value’, ‘higher education’ and ‘popular music’, and reviews theory, empirical research and policy documentation pertinent to their usage in this study. Chapter 3 presents a more detailed overview of popular music in higher education, and, where relevant, extends the literature review to cover existing research (and other writings) in the field. Chapter 4 gives a thorough account of my research design, including choice of methods, data collection instruments, analytical strategies and ethical considerations. Chapter 5 presents summary descriptions of each of the four cases, based on the initial within-case analysis process. Chapter 6 presents the findings of cross-case analysis, supported by verbatim examples and arranged under thematic categories that emerged during the coding of data. Chapter 7 brings the literature-driven inquiry initiated in Chapter 2 to bear on the primary research findings presented in Chapter 6. The final chapter

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<sup>3</sup> For example, socio-economic, geographical. The pilot study can be found in Appendix VI

considers the conclusions drawn in the preceding discussion in terms of their implications for the field of popular music studies, and for future research. It reflects on the strengths and limitations of the study, and asserts its original contribution to knowledge. Ethical approval forms, a specimen interview transcript, a write-up of my pilot study, a published book chapter and other supporting documents are provided as appendices.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature relating to my research questions and to the concepts encompassed therein. It begins with an explanation of my approach to literature review. This is followed by an examination of my terminology, unpacking and contextualising the concepts of value, higher education and popular music. It reviews how these concepts have been addressed in theory, empirical research and practice, considers how their inherent multifariousness has both problematised and facilitated discussion, and considers them in relation to the context, aims and research questions of this study.

#### **2.1 A Hermeneutic Approach to Literature Review**

The interdisciplinary nature of this research project was such that an exhaustive literature review was unfeasible. Instead, I read widely across research within the fields of music, popular music studies, philosophy of education, higher education and music education, establishing a deep theoretical and contextual understanding of the study's interdisciplinary terrain, before undertaking an inductive, hermeneutic phase of literature review through which my theoretical framework was established and refined. It is worth giving a brief account of my approach here.

Smythe and Spence (2012) take issue with common understandings of literature review as something distinct from the act of research proper, as if it were an ancillary rather than integral aspect of the research process. To the contrary they argue that literature review is a phase of active research, and part of the methodology of any research process. As touched upon briefly in the last chapter, they suggest that literature review is inevitably an interested, 'prejudiced' (Gadamer, 1982) process, in which the researcher 'inclines towards' (Smythe & Spence, 2012, p.17) texts with which their developing assumptions are drawn into dialogue, and which come to serve as cornerstones in a theory-building discussion, through which the researcher is prompted to question their own preconceptions

alongside the assumptions they perceive to be implicit in texts. The theoretical framework is therefore established through the researcher's interpretive, or hermeneutic, engagement with literature. Recognising such an engagement in my own approach to literature review, I decided to do so deliberately; once I had established a breadth of disciplinary and contextual understanding, I began a second, more focused phase, identifying theoretical issues through critical re-readings (or 're-views' (Smythe & Spence, 2012, p.14)) of texts that provoked and participated in my deliberations, synthesising their themes and issues towards an integrated theoretical framework. This chapter offers an account of this phase.

## 2.2 Value

Value is a semantically unstable term (Woodall, Hiller & Resnick, 2012) that is used and understood to mean different things. In seeking to unpick the term, one encounters meanings ranging from the moral (for example, 'John has good values') to the monetary ('that restaurant is good value!'). These uses are not as disparate as they might first appear; both demonstrate the engagement of subjective judgement, and of subjectively held principles in the assessment of phenomena, objects and others. Indeed, in the first example above, John's values are considered good because they concur with the principles held by the subject (and the statement therefore tells us as much about the values of the subject as it does about John's). The second example also represents an act of comparative judgement, as the subject compares the price of the restaurant's menu against his/her intuitively-held principles of fair pricing. Even though monetary considerations by their nature relate to quantity, such judgements are still fundamentally qualitative appraisals.

*Value* relates then to what we consider good, bad, important, right, wrong, and so on. We refer to the act of applying these considerations to phenomena as *valuing* (inf. *to value*) or *evaluating*, and to the principles underpinning these considerations as our *values*, although as is often pointed out, these are implicit and we rarely articulate them explicitly in everyday life (Harland and Pickering, 2011; Skelton, 2012; Smith, 2012). Rather, they are discernible through the judgements, choices and actions they give rise to, and permeate the practice of our lives. Unlike laws, these values are understood tacitly, but like laws and rules they affect how we negotiate our approach to life. Indeed, values arguably precede laws (in the jurisdictional sense) and rules, since to obey and uphold laws is to value the rule of law (or at least to value conditions that might be jeopardised by disobedience), and to construct them is to enshrine values. Nothing we ever do is entirely value-free because

decision precedes our conscious actions, and our decisions, from the fraught to the mundane, are always grounded in values.

### **2.2.1 Value and values in higher education**

Despite the term *value*'s conceptual breadth however, it is most often used in education research to refer to one or other limited aspect of value, with the term's other meanings being overlooked, taken-for-granted or glossed over. While this is perhaps necessary given that value's 'semantic diversity [and] multiplicity of meaning' can lead to 'differently operationalised measures, and [...] conceptual conflict' (Woodall et al., 2012, p.3) that can undermine research and practice, Harland and Pickering (2011) argue that conceptually narrow understandings of the term (specifically those limited to its moral dimension) risk it appearing too abstract to be useful in discussions of educational practice. Harland and Pickering (2011) assert that although moral values inevitably underpin our actions, they inhabit our subconscious such that we rarely consciously apprehend their impact upon our practices; consequently explicit discussion of values can seem irrelevant from a practical perspective, or to be related to some other, more abstract domain.

The majority of education research employing value as a central term can be collated according to two aspects: a) what I refer to in this study as *principle* value, encompassing discussion of the intrinsic value of knowledge, moral values, values relating to social justice, the personal and professional values of educators and students, and ideological values; and b) *transactional* value, encompassing discussion of benefit-sacrifice exchange, value-for-money and student-as-consumer value. While critiques of an alleged marketisation of higher education are common within the literature surrounding *principle* values, and arguments that espouse the intrinsic value of education are usually given passing acknowledgement in studies of *transactional* values, focused comparative analyses of these two value aspects, or even acknowledgement of their possible interconnectedness, are rare.

Among empirical studies, Woodall et al. (2012) acknowledge that the student-as-customer metaphor is contested within higher education (especially among academics), but argue that since universities treat students as a source of revenue, and students display 'customer-like behaviour' (Woodall et al., 2012, p.4) 'customer value' is a legitimate analytical framework. They explore this framework, but do not consider the implications of analysing education according to *transactional* value alone, as opposed to in conjunction with the moral, personal or ideological aspects of value.

Woodall et al. (2012) identify a disparity existing across conceptions of customer value, with some accounting only for monetary, and others incorporating non-monetary factors. They draw from previous research by Bolton and Drew (1991), Gronroos (1997), Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) and Holbrook (1996), and offer their own understanding of the term as representing a ‘complex web of intrinsic prompts that cause consumers to reflect critically on their service encounters’, and which encompasses factors such as ‘price’, ‘indirect costs’, ‘time and effort’, and ‘brand’ (Woodall et al., 2012, p.4). The authors address this range of factors in an analysis of survey data relating to student sentiment at a London business school, and the study concludes that different concepts of customer value render different readings of student data, but that variations of ‘net value’ (Woodall et al., 2012, p.16), conceived as benefit (that which students receive) over sacrifice (that which students forfeit) offer the most potential for market benchmarking. Significantly, the *principle* values of students (such as for example their moral beliefs) are not investigated, suggesting that the authors do not consider them to be relevant to (student-as-) customer value equations.

Like Woodall et al. (2012), Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) acknowledge the arguments of some scholars (Bay & Daniel, 2001; Gibbs, 2001; Molesworth, Nixon & Scullion, 2009) that the ‘student-as-consumer’ metaphor subjugates the ‘core ideology of education’ (Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, p.2), but like Woodall et al. (2012) they nonetheless consider consumer value to be a legitimate and important analytical framework, broadly concurring with Ng and Forbes (2009) that increasing student numbers, and the ensuing marketisation of higher education ‘lend currency to the student-as-consumer concept’ (Ng & Forbes, 2009, p.44). Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) choose, for the purposes of their study, to essentialise student value according to benefit and sacrifice across a range of monetary and non-monetary ‘value dimensions’ (Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, p.7), although in place of ‘benefit’ and ‘sacrifice’ the authors adopt Zeithaml’s (1988) terminology of get and give, and a typology of get/give dimensions set out by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991): for get, ‘functional’, ‘emotional’, ‘epistemic’ and ‘social’- and for give, ‘time’, ‘money’ and ‘effort’ (Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, p.7). At a glance this typology might imply the incorporation of *principle* values; however, all dimensions are conceived and explained by Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) as deriving from engagement with the ‘product’, as opposed to preceding, accompanying or underpinning it; for example, ‘social’ value is explained as ‘the benefits acquired from a product’s association with a particular demographic, cultural or social group’ (Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, p.7), rather than as

relating to students' pre-existing *principle* values of, for example, social justice or equality. Emotional value is also characterised as deriving from the educational transaction, as a get value associated with the educational product:

Emotional value associates with extrinsic aspects of consumption in terms of a product's ability to arouse feelings or affective states [...] In the educational context emotional value is realised through the affective states that are aroused in the student while studying their degree, for example feelings of pride and self-achievement (Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, p.7, citing LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1999)

Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) add a further value of 'Image' to Sheth et al.'s (1991) typology to account for 'the benefits of consumption that derive from studying at a well thought-of institution: i.e., the status and reputation of the business school influences perceptions of the value of the qualification gained therein' (Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, p.7, citing LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1999; Ledden & Kalafatis, 2010; Ledden, Kalafatis & Samouel, 2007; Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001). The dimension of 'Image' thus broadly conforms to 'brand' as identified by Woodall et al. (2012).

Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) can therefore be seen, like Woodall et al. (2012), largely to exclude *principle* values from their analyses of student value. They use the above 'dimensions' (Ledden & Kalafatis, 2012, p.7) as the thematic framework for a longitudinal survey study of postgraduates enrolled on an MA in Marketing at a London business school (as in Woodall et al.'s study), which investigates how student (-as-customer) value changes over time. The study concludes that students' responses to the various value dimensions changes over the course of their programme, and also that functional and emotional value are 'co-created' (Ledden & Kalafatis, 2012, p.15) by the course structure and students' interaction with the course team.

To summarise here, it can be seen that the authors of these studies delimit student value to its *transactional* aspect, and while this is broadened beyond monetary transaction to encompass non-monetary elements such as emotions and time, it is nonetheless striking that value in its *principle* aspect is out of focus in their investigations, as if unrelated to the student value concept or tantamount to a category mistake. However, if we hold to Harland and Pickering's (2011) assertions that our values- meaning our *principle* values- inform everything we do, then to ignore them is arguably to ignore the root impetuses of students' decisions.

Other literature concerning value in education has focused on *principle* values, and although, as has already been noted, the marketisation of higher education is often

critiqued in such research (for example Ball, 2007; Barnett, 2003; Harland & Pickering, 2011; Skelton, 2012), the insights and implications of student-as-customer value research, exemplified by the studies reviewed above, are rarely considered in detail, or, by implication of the strong criticism levelled at the ideologies that student-as-customer conceptions are perceived to reflect, are given little credence. Indeed, the literature reviews and bibliographies of studies oriented towards either the *principle* or *transactional* aspects of value suggest little engagement with the literature of the other.

Winter (2009), investigating academic staff's negotiation of academic and managerial identities, identifies 'values incongruence' (p.122) where 'academics and managers' ideological beliefs and values may not overlap in respect to the roles and obligations of academics and the primary purpose of the institution' (p.122). As a solution, Winter (2009) proposes deliberative discussion among academics and academic managers.

Skelton's (2012) study, based on semi-structured interviews with academic staff from across a UK university, examines academics' experiences of their *principle* values conflicting with those operating at 'micro', 'meso', and 'macro' levels of the higher education system (Skelton, 2012, p.258). Skelton posits that academic staff arrive at the educational setting with 'a highly distinctive set of personal values about teaching and learning' (Skelton, 2012, p.258) based on prior experiences and informed by parental and other relationships. Citing Festinger (1957) and Ball (2003), he asserts that when these values are denied in practice, conflict is experienced and 'values schizophrenia' (Skelton, 2012, p.257, citing Ball, 2003) is induced. Conflicts identified by the interviewees in Skelton's study related to notions of authenticity, accommodating cultural difference, independent learning, and interaction with students (Skelton, 2012). Like Winter (2009), Skelton concludes by advocating a 'deliberative approach' (2012, p.267) based on Young's (1996) notion of deliberative democracy, to analysing value conflict, in which people are encouraged to examine the 'personal, cultural and historical contexts that shape their values and perspectives' (Skelton, 2012, p. 267).

An obvious difference between Skelton's (2012) and Winter's (2009) research and that of Woodall et al. (2012) and Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) is its focus on teachers' as opposed to students' experiences. Nonetheless it is striking that Skelton's use of the term values is entirely removed from *transactional* analyses of the educational experience.

Brooks (2012) investigates how young people across all strata of education are constructed within the educational policy of the current (at the time of her writing) UK coalition government, and identifies a shift in emphasis towards *transactional* values and

away from *principle* values. She conducts discourse analysis of, among other documents, the *Students at the Heart of the System* White Paper (DBIS, 2011), and compares its construction of young people against that of the previous Labour government. She identifies a continuity across governments in constructing students as consumers (Brooks, 2012), and suggests that the coalition government is ‘endorsing and expanding’ (Brooks, 2012, p.7) the consumerist model by (among other measures) demanding that higher education institutions provide a ‘Key Information Set’ (KIS) to prospective applicants, detailing: student satisfaction ratings; time spent in different teaching and learning activities; methods of assessment; accreditation by professional bodies; costs; student support; graduate employment figures and student union information (Brooks, 2012). All of these elements, and the reasoning behind the use of Key Information Sets, fit with *transactional* understandings of value, but far less so with value in its *principle* aspect.

In addition to the student as an ‘active consumer’ (Brooks, 2012, pp.5-7) of education, Brooks identifies ‘dutiful citizens’ (pp.7-8), ‘good characters in-the-making’ (pp.10-11) and ‘friends and students of business’ (pp.4-5) as other constructions of young people by the coalition government. However, even in constructions of citizenship, she identifies a gradual move, across both the New Labour and coalition governments, towards values of ‘economic respectability’ (Brooks, 2012, p.8). Furthermore, the coalition’s ideal of ‘good character’ is according to Brooks dominated by a masculine sense of competition that is ‘attuned to the market’ (Brooks, 2012, p.11). Young people’s construction as ‘friends and students of business’ (Brooks, 2012, pp.4-5) is for Brooks in accord with increasing private-sector involvement in education, predicated on the assumption that ‘the interests of students are broadly in line with those of business and, secondly, that young people can only benefit from adopting business values, such as enterprise, entrepreneurship and competitive individualism’ (Brooks, 2012, p.4). Citing Ball (2007), Brooks points to a ‘shift in values’ (Brooks, 2012, p.4) towards economic competitiveness, which has usurped traditional emphases on the ‘moral obligations of teaching and learning’ (Brooks, 2012, p.4).

Brooks’ analysis of her source documents demonstrates clearly that *transactional* values and *principle* values are neither categorically discrete nor functionally autonomous, and that the relationship between these value aspects is reflexive, multilayered, and implicit. Conceptions of value predicated on *transactional* models inform but also derive from social constructions of students such as those identified by Brooks (2012), which also reflect ‘ideological underpinnings’ (Brooks, 2012, p.12) that issue from wider political ideologies. The prevalent student-as-consumer construct, together with the marketisation

of education identified by Brooks (2012), Harland and Pickering (2011), Skelton (2012), Ball (2007) and others (Barnett, 2003; Delanty, 2003; Henry, Lingard, Rizvi, & Taylor, 2001, Wynyard, 2002) has given rise to *transactional* conceptions of value, but these have also informed standards against which the success of policy, and by extension its ideological foundations, are measured. It might therefore be seen as an oversight that studies such as those of Woodall et al. (2012), Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) and others do not consider the impact of *principle* values in their analyses of *transactional* values. On the other hand, studies that focus on the *principle* aspect alone fail to acknowledge the extent to which *transactional* understandings of value, whether enshrined at a macro level in policy (such as DBIS, 2011) or enacted at a meso/micro level, both reflect and inform the ideologies of higher education. Delimiting the meaning-in-use of value to one or other aspect may facilitate tidier analyses, and render more accessible and manageable results, but it arguably inhibits understanding by overlooking the extent to which the different aspects of value are interconnected and co-dependent. A synthesis of these aspects is, I believe, crucial to enriching understanding of value in education; accordingly, this study presupposes that, far from being categorically discrete, *principle* values are in constant interplay with *transactional* values, and both are potentially manifested in each of the message systems of education: *curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, institution, lifestyle and market*.

The terms ‘macro’, ‘meso’, and ‘micro’ (Skelton, 2012, p.258), are used by Skelton to demarcate different levels at which academic staff experience value conflict. They can however be adapted to provide a more general framework for approaching the various levels at which values operate in higher education. This study focuses on the micro level, which I take to refer to the community (students and staff), physical environment and resources specific to my case studies (the degree programmes). However, the interplay of values extends beyond the immediate boundaries of the case study, as values operating at the meso (the wider institution, or, where applicable, the school or faculty within which a case sits) and the macro (higher education in the national context, encompassing policy and cultural trends) are manifested in the micro level setting. Awareness of macro and meso level values is therefore essential.

### 2.3 Macro Values in Higher Education: Some Policy Documentation

Atkinson and Coffey (2011) assert that documents have typically been neglected in social research, but that they can reveal much about the values operating within societies. Documentary analysis forms part of my methodology, and documents such as prospectuses, employability statements, websites and module specifications are treated as data in my case studies alongside interview transcripts and observation notes. Here, I review some macro level documentation that illustrates the impact of political values on higher education, and how higher education has been conceived in terms of function and purpose.

Brooks (2012) notes that policy is rarely implemented straightforwardly but is instead “enacted”: translated, interpreted, challenged and sometimes resisted in different ways by different policy actors’ (Brooks, 2012, p12). As such, any values enshrined in policy documentation will arrive at the micro setting having passed through a competitive matrix of other values. To focus purely on current policy would be to ignore the complexity of these processes; on the other hand, an exhaustive historical review of policy documentation is unfeasible. My aim here is to present a selection that highlights this complexity and give a “flavour” of the shifting values of higher education as enshrined in macro level documentation. I have focused on four documents: The *Higher Education Academy Professional Standards Framework For Teaching and Supporting Learning* (HEA, 2011, hereafter *Professional Standards Framework*); the *Future of Higher Education* White Paper (Department of Education, 2003); the Department for Business Innovation and Skills’ *Higher Ambitions* report (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2009) and the 1963 *Robbins Report* into higher education (Robbins, 1963). Comparison is also drawn with the *Students at the Heart of the System* White Paper (DBIS, 2011) as reviewed by Brooks (2012). These have not been chosen on the basis of their direct pertinence to the focus of this study, but because together they offer an illuminating glimpse of the interplay of values occurring at the heart of higher education policymaking in the United Kingdom. An additional document, the revised Higher Education Academy *Pedagogy For Employability* report (HEA, 2012), has a more specific thematic focus and is reviewed separately below, and the impact of the *Further and Higher Education Act 1992* on the UK higher education sector, and its implications for higher popular music education, are discussed in Chapter 3.

While the Higher Education Academy claims on their website to be ‘a national [...] independent institution’ (HEA, 2014), it is interest-bound, being both in the service of and financially reliant upon the state; its products can therefore be treated as policy. *The Professional Standards Framework* was drawn up in response to a need identified by the *Future of Higher Education* White Paper of 2003 (DES, 2003), at the request and under the funding of the four UK higher education funding bodies. An earlier version was published in 2006, the updated version (reviewed here) in 2011. As its full title suggests it is specifically focussed towards teaching practice; however, it reveals some basic assumptions regarding the purpose of higher education. For example:

At the heart of this framework is acknowledgement of the distinctive nature of teaching in higher education, respect for the autonomy of higher education institutions, and recognition of the sector’s understanding of quality enhancement for improving student learning. The framework recognises that the scholarly nature of subject inquiry and knowledge creation, and a scholarly approach to pedagogy, combine to represent a unique feature of support for student learning in higher education institutions (HEA, 2011, p.1)

The report presupposes institutional autonomy to be a good thing (although it might be argued that this is at odds with the nature of a state-commissioned and funded framework for standardising teaching practice across the sector; Watson (2012) writes of frequent contradictions between the values espoused by government and the pressures they exert), and ‘quality enhancement’, ‘inquiry’, ‘knowledge creation’ and ‘a scholarly approach to pedagogy’ are also mentioned/espoused. None of these concepts is neutral or stable, but they are nominally consistent with the lexicon of academic values commonly found across policy documents of the last two decades. The document ends with a list of five ‘professional values’ for higher education teaching:

- 1 Respect for individual learners;
- 2 Commitment to incorporating the process and outcomes of relevant research, scholarship and/or professional practice;
- 3 Commitment to development of learning communities;
- 4 Commitment to encouraging participation in higher education, acknowledging diversity and promoting equality of opportunity;
- 5 Commitment to continuing professional development and evaluation of practice (HEA, 2011, p.3).

A lack of specificity, common in documents of this kind, renders these statements somewhat insipid and open to interpretation, but again they employ some common value terminology: ‘quality’; ‘equality’; ‘diversity’; ‘communit[y]’. It is however the first and fifth values that stand out for hinting at accountability; the former through its explicit call for the individual learner, referred to elsewhere in the document as a ‘stakeholder’ (HEA, 2011, p.1), to be afforded respect (an ambiguous term), and the latter through its insistence on ‘evaluation’ and professional development, which the Professional Standards Framework itself seeks to standardise through descriptor-based benchmarks, and which the Higher Education Academy formally accredits by way of professional development programmes.

The *Future of Higher Education* White Paper (Department for Education, 2003) to which the *Professional Standards Framework* responds was a strategic review of UK higher education and a mission statement for its future, announcing the then New Labour government’s strategy. In his foreword to the paper, the then Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, sets out three challenges facing the sector. The first is to widen the reach of higher education to disadvantaged sectors of society; the third, to make the systems of funding support (mainly fee repayment mechanisms) fairer. This can be appended to the first. The second however is an economic imperative:

We have to make better progress in harnessing knowledge to wealth creation. And that depends on giving universities the freedoms and resources to compete on the world stage. To back our world-class researchers with financial stability. To help turn ideas into successful businesses. To undo the years of under-investment that will result in our universities slipping back (DES, 2003).

A heavy emphasis on economics is somewhat inevitable in a paper concerned with funding distribution. It is however the emphasis on global competition that is remarkable for denoting a shift in values from those enshrined in documents such as the Robbins Report of 1963 (see below). The urgent need to safeguard the ‘world-classness’ of UK higher education is a leitmotif written into every chapter of the paper, evidencing a state level preoccupation with global competition.

The findings and proposals of the *Future of Education* White Paper can be collated into four overarching value themes: the market (maintaining world-classness and global competition); the social (social justice and widening access); the professional (rewarding ‘excellence’ in teaching and research) and the vocational (promoting links with business

for the exchange of skills). Ideologically, the paper could be said to bear the hallmarks of what Delanty identifies as a ‘third way’ (Delanty, 2003) that seeks to reconcile a commitment to competitive market principles with a social justice agenda (see below, 2.6 Ideology and Higher Education). Watson (2012) offers a critique of the preoccupation within higher education with international competitiveness, suggesting that it can potentially work against the values governments claim to want higher education to embody. In particular, he suggests that focussing on the matrices used in international league tables risks subjugating some core values of higher education:

What doesn’t count in international league tables is:

- Teaching quality
- Social mobility
- Services to business and the community
- Rural interests
- Other public services
- Collaboration
- The public interest

What does count is -

- Research
- Media interest
- Graduate destinations
- Infrastructure
- International “executive” recruitment (Watson, 2012, pp.5-6).

The Department for Business Innovation and Skills’ *Higher Ambitions* paper (DBIS, 2009) opens with a raft of statistics attesting to the world-classness of UK higher education, followed by a stark warning against complacency, and of the threat of decline. Again, the importance placed on global competitiveness is pronounced, as is the emphasis on economic aspects, though much of this discussion in this 2009 document is framed in the context of recovery from the financial crisis. Most of the findings and recommendations of the report can be collated into the same four themes of the market, the social, the professional and the vocational. However, despite the dominance of instrumentalist rationalisations, a greater focus is given to the cultural functions of universities than in the *Future of Higher Education* report. The following passage is a striking example:

Universities have a vital role in our collective life, both shaping our communities and how we engage with the rest of Europe and the wider world. They play a huge role in our communities through the provision of cultural and sporting amenities and in passing on and preserving a set of shared societal values, including tolerance, freedom of expression and civic engagement. They have the capacity to provide intellectual leadership in our society, in areas such as the transition to a low carbon economy (DBIS, 2009, p.13).

The idea of universities' role in 'passing on and preserving' a set of 'shared societal values' might read as anachronistic or anti-postmodernist, consistent with the sense of higher education's moral obligation that Ball (2007) and others argue has been usurped by economic values. It is also uncharacteristic of neoliberal rhetoric; while policymakers are unlikely to deny education's socio-moral role, this has arguably tended to be left on the periphery where economics and widening participation have taken centre stage. While still on the margins of the paper's discussion, the focus seen in the above passage is more redolent of statements of purpose from earlier decades than of the twenty-first century (see Robbins, 1963), and might be seen to hint at a rise in attention to non-economic academic values in the policy domain, which were less apparent in the *Future of Higher Education* report (DfE, 2003). However, in his address to the 2011 National Association for Music in Higher Education (NAMHE) conference, Professor Julian Johnson argued that the *Higher Ambitions* report includes 'several conflicts' (NAMHE, 2011, p.1), such as those between acknowledgement of intrinsic cultural value on one hand, and assertions that vocational arts programmes needed to change on the other, and between seeking economic return from the arts and maintaining a depth of intellectual and cultural life. In any case, as Brooks' (2012) review (see above) of the *Students at the Heart of the System* (DBIS, 2011) white paper reveals, economic values were back at the core of the coalition government's 2011 higher education policy literature.

The Robbins Report (Robbins, 1963) is a document from a very different period in higher education, and led directly to the establishment of many new universities during and after the 1960s, and consequently to dramatic increases in higher education intake. It warns against reductive analyses of the aims of higher education:

No answer in terms of any single end will suffice. Eclecticism in this sphere is not something to be despised: it is imposed by the circumstances of the case. To do justice to the complexity of things, it is necessary to acknowledge a plurality of aims (Robbins, 1963, p.6).

With this proviso, Robbins identifies four objectives essential to a balanced system of higher education, which are as follows: 'instruction in skills suitable to play a part in the division of labour'; 'to promote the general powers of the mind'; 'the advancement of learning' and 'the transmission of a common culture and common standards of citizenship' (Robbins, 1963, pp. 6-7). Set against more recent neoliberal and postmodern discourses (see below, 2.6 Ideology and Higher Education), the fourth objective sounds somewhat

outmoded, though as already suggested it chimes brightly with the above passage of the *Higher Ambitions* (2009) paper. The other three objectives are mainstays of the stated mission of higher education in the United Kingdom. However, it is significant that not one refers explicitly to economic growth or competitiveness; the first objective, the only strictly utilitarian one, foregrounds contribution to the labour system rather than the economy, as is the case with the later documents discussed above.

That the Robbins Report, drawn up under a Conservative government, is markedly less economic growth-driven than the later documents, all but one (*Students at the Heart of The System*) of which were drawn up under a Labour government, may jar with normative understandings of “right” and “left”. A more important and useful *temporal* distinction can be made between a post-war, Welfare State-based approach to governance, and a later cross-party neoliberal approach rooted in a belief that market forces can be used to regulate the country and thus relieve the state of many of its responsibilities. Although the later neoliberal model is associated with its origins in the New Right of the 1970s, and with the Thatcher-led Conservative government, these two approaches cannot easily be ascribed to “right” and “left”, since governments across this notional divide have adopted and built upon each other’s strategies; Shore and Wright (1999) suggest that the Blair-led New Labour government extended the neoliberal project of previous Conservative governments, while Peden (2010) argues that prior to Thatcher, neoliberalism was slow to take hold because of the New Right’s commitment to the idea of a Welfare State. It is arguably more helpful therefore to approach the value climate of higher education in terms of ideological phases stretching across incumbent governments, rather than “right” and “left”, but also to understand that the present climate is characterised by tensions between competing understandings of educational purpose.

To summarise, the selection of policy documents analysed here reveals some differences in understanding of the values and purposes of higher education. Ranging from the pragmatically utilitarian to the culturally-edifying, these values must be understood as being at tension with each other in practice, where it is not a case of either/or but a question of degrees of emphasis between objectives: as Robbins notes, ‘there is no single aim which, if pursued to the exclusion of all others, would not leave out essential elements (1963, p.6). The narrative of higher education in the United Kingdom has been shaped in large part by competition between emphases of instrumentalism versus intellectualism, of knowing what versus knowing how (Becher & Trowler, 2001) and, more recently, of marketisation and academisation and moral versus economic function. As a result, an array

of competing values, espoused, enshrined and implied, can be seen to populate official and academic discourse. These include: competitiveness; social justice; mobility; widening participation; access; world-class(ness); community; diversity; equality; employability; culture; prosperity; progression; excellence; quality; student-focus; autonomy; civic; accountability; efficiency and many others. Not one has autonomous meaning and all are contextually dependent on their usage and semantic clusters (Shore & Wright, 1999). Nonetheless, they comprise an analytically useful lexicon for unpacking and unpicking the value systems of higher educational settings.

## **2.4 Employability**

The Pedagogy for Employability paper was first published in 2006 by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the Enhancing Student Employability Co-ordination Team (ESECT). A revised edition was published in 2012 which takes into account some policy and literature that has emerged in the interim, and the changes experienced in higher education following the 2008 financial crisis. As the paper's title implies, it is concerned with higher education's relationship to the labour force, although the authors warn throughout against narrow interpretations of employability in terms of skills and attributes. A significant revision of the 2012 edition is the use of two definitions of employability in the interests of a 'holistic' approach to the issue (the original edition only used the first of these). They are as follows:

- 1 A set of achievements- skills, understandings and attributes- that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy;
- 2 Employability is more than about developing attributes, techniques or experience just to enable a student to get a job, or to progress within a current career. It is about learning and the emphasis is less on 'employ' and more on 'ability'. In essence, the emphasis is on developing critical, reflective abilities, with a view to empowering and enhancing the learner (HEA, 2012, p.1).

While employability might be argued to be a value unto itself, these definitions encompass many value-laden terms: 'success', 'community', 'progress', 'ability', 'critical[ity]', 'reflexiv[ity]', 'empower[ment]' and 'enhanc[ement]'. Employability can be regarded therefore as an ambiguous concept that means different things, to different people, in different contexts.

The authors identify as a common policy theme the urgency of ensuring that graduates can contribute to economic growth in new business environments and in a locally, nationally and globally competitive labour market (HEA, 2012), and also note that conceptions of employability are usually placed within a ‘rather uncritical understanding of the knowledge economy and potential future graduate opportunities’ (HEA, 2012, p.6). They argue that the desire for quantifiable results has led to employability—a multifaceted concept— being confused with ‘employment’, which is more easily measured with statistical data such as those generated by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)’s leaver destination survey (DLHE). Also linked in the report to the current focus on employability are skills ‘auditing’ systems (such as professional development planning (PDP)), student attainment records that record ‘added value’ achievement (such as the higher education attainment record (HEAR)) and standardising frameworks such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)’s subject benchmarks. As is discussed below, all of these are arguably instruments for accountability, the growing trend for which has been linked by some to neoliberal meta-policy (Brooks, 2012; Shore & Wright, 1999; see below, 2.6 Ideology and Higher Education).

The report suggests that increases in tuition fees, a reliance on loans and competition for employment have made employability a dominant concern among students. This implies a *transactional*, benefit/sacrifice conception of student value (see Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012; Woodall et al, 2012). Watson (2012) however cautions against taking this for granted:

The public discourse is heavily dominated at present by a perception [that] what counts is “employability” (even more than “employment”) and whether or not students are prepared for it. Meanwhile students themselves confound expectation further: not just in choice of subject of study, but by delaying their entry into the job market [...] by being much less spooked about debt than their parents (Surowieki, 2011), by returning to volunteering [...] and by reviving student-led political activism. ( p.7).

Employability has now become an ‘official’ criterion; following a letter from Sir Alan Langland, Chief Executive of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in June 2010 (Langland, 2010), all funded HEIs in England have been required to compose an ‘employability statement’, published on their website and linked to the Unistats and UCAS websites (the employability statements for the Institution A, Institution C and Institution D are all covered within my case studies and treated as documentary data (Institution B, a private institution, was not bound by this requirement)). Given that the

term ‘employability’ has been appropriated in such a way, its use in such contexts must be approached as enshrining the values and agenda of government (although as already discussed, the ambiguity of the term is such that it might be understood in different ways by different people). In academic research literature usage of the term is less common, except where used in critiques of policy that employs the term (for example, Beatty, 2006; Henry et al., 2001, Smith, 2013). Discussion of issues associated with ‘employability’ is not uncommon however. For example, Harland and Pickering (2011) discuss a trend towards narrow vocationalism and professional values in higher education, Becher and Trowler (2001) discuss the shift in emphasis within disciplines towards applied, vocational knowledge (discussed later in this chapter), and issues relating to students’ preparation for professional life are discussed widely within discipline-specific literature (for example, in music, Cloonan & Hulstedt 2012; Gaunt & Papageorgi 2010, Smith, 2013).

Given that much discussion of ‘employability’ is framed within the context of student choice (HEA, 2012; HEFCE, 2010), ‘employability’ can be seen as pertinent to *transactional*, benefit/sacrifice conceptions of student (as-customer) value (such as those of Kalafatis & Ledden, 2012, and Woodall et al., 2012; and in particular to the ‘functional’ and ‘epistemic’ value dimensions used by Kalafatis and Ledden (p.7)), as well as to *principle* values concerning the intrinsic value and purpose of education, which are often apportioned to ideological positions (Ball, 2007; Barnett, 2003; Beatty, 2006; Harland & Pickering, 2011; Henry et al., 2001).

## **2.5 Student-Centredness**

Calls for the student, or learner, to be given a more prominent role in the educational setting are a common feature of educational discourse, and terms such as ‘student-centred’ (Buswell & Becket, 2009; Jones, 2007) and ‘student voice’ (Czerniawski & Kidd, 2011) are frequently used. In relation to student voice, Czerniawski and Kidd (2011) identify two parallel discourses; one which champions it as a driver of democratic pedagogy, and another which casts it as an insidious term used to justify a neoliberal agenda of customer-focused performativity. Meanwhile, the obsession with learner-centredness has been critiqued by Boud (2006), among others. That higher education should be focused on the learner has, according to Boud, ‘become an unquestioned mantra’ (Boud, 2006, p.20), despite the fact that ‘learner-centred’ is understood in myriad different ways. Collapsing these different understandings together is, Boud suggests, a mistake, and

has resulted in the term losing much of its value (Boud, 2006). Boud also argues that ‘learner-centred’ is largely a reactionary term, conceived as an overthrow of the previously too-focused-upon teacher, and that the notion of a ‘vying of position between teachers and learners’ (Boud, 2006, p.29) is both inappropriate and a distraction away from other concerns such as the overall learning environment. Writing in epistemological terms, Delanty (2003) alludes to student-centredness having caused a fall in the quality of curricula, contending that in the ‘age of student choice’ low culture has been allowed to ‘invade’ the academic space and knowledge has become unreliable as a result (Delanty, 2003, p.80). Watson (2012) however is more sanguine about the growing student role, arguing that students have always exercised control of higher education through demand:

Look at the ways in which student demand led the systems of the “developed” world towards meeting the needs of the cultural, creative and service economies. Their ICT requirements (where they are normally ahead of their teachers) compound this. The UK system provides ample evidence of how (despite political voices to the contrary) a market does exist. Indeed student choices – of subjects, of institutions, and of mode of study – could be said very substantially to have moulded the system as we have it today. (Watson, 2012, p.6)

and that responding to this demand with more flexibility and faith will help ‘mend the system’ (p.6). More formally, involvement of students in processes such as QAA institutional audits indicates that at policy level a greater value is being placed on students’ expectations of higher education.

Within literature, student-centredness has ironically but inevitably been explored and advocated in the main by academics and policymakers rather than students themselves. However, in 2009 the QAA published a series of “think pieces” themed around the student role in higher education which unpick the various descriptions of students as ‘consumers’, ‘active participants’, ‘co-producers’, ‘partners’, a ‘community of learning’ and ‘apprentices’ (Streeting & Wise, 2009, p.2). One of these pieces is written by representatives of the National Union of Students (NUS), who assert that the ‘student as consumer model’ (Streeting & Wise, 2009, p.2), a symptom of market approaches to higher education, is becoming most prevalent. The aim of this model, the authors argue, is to apply the principles of choice and customer satisfaction to higher education (see earlier discussion of Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) and Woodall et al. (2012)). It invites value-for-money judgements from students, and calls for HEIs ‘to respond to both students’ demands, as individual learners, and indeed student **demand**, in aggregate, in a constantly

evolving market' (Streeting & Wise, 2009, p.2, their emphasis). Streeting and Wise (2009) believe that this model destabilises the system of higher education, and lean towards McCulloch's (2009) suggestion that students be seen instead as 'co-producers, essential partners in the production of the knowledge and skills that form the intended learning outcomes of their programmes' (Streeting & Wise, 2009, p.2). They suggest that while this happens inevitably at the level of the individual learner, an understanding of 'student as co-producer' should be broadened to encompass student involvement in collective decision-making regarding curriculum design and the learning environment, and an increased role for students' unions and course representatives in institutional policymaking (Streeting & Wise, 2009).

The discourse of student-centredness is pertinent to this study, since it permeates the field of higher education and contributes to the values climate within which institutions must operate. As demonstrated by the literature reviewed above, different constructions of the student have been attributed to different visions of (and approaches to) the function and purpose of higher education, and as suggested by Brooks (2012), Boud (2008), Streeting and Wise (2009) and others, impact upon the practice of higher education. Moreover, increasing focus on student perspectives, as illustrated across much of the literature reviewed so far, suggests that student influence over the values and culture of higher education is in the ascendancy.

## **2.6 Ideology and Higher Education**

Values in higher education are often apportioned to ideologies. In some cases (Barnett, 2003; Delanty, 2003; Harland & Pickering, 2011; Henry et al., 2001; Shore & Wright, 1999) specific ideologies, such as neoliberalism, are identified, whereas elsewhere (such as by Skelton, 2012) the term 'ideology' is used in a less harnessed way to refer to an unnamed system of values. Common to both however is an understanding of the term 'ideology' as connoting a source of foundational values underpinning higher education.

Higher education is never ideologically neutral (Harland & Pickering, 2011), and the ideological assumptions of institutions, disciplines and departments inform the values that are enacted therein. Delanty (2003) identifies three dominant ideologies that exert their influence on twenty-first century higher education practice: postmodernism, neoliberalism and third-wayism. I have used Delanty's (2003) paper as a framework for reviewing some literature relating to these.

Delanty (2003) asserts that the ideal of the Western university, as it emerged from the eighteenth century enlightenment, was buoyed by a vision of a society led by knowledge producers, secular ‘men of learning’ (Delanty, 2003, p.72) who had wrested authority over knowledge from the church. In the industrial period from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century this ideal was undermined by the emergence of professional society, and an instrumentalist conception of knowledge bound to the training and accreditation of professions came to predominate (Collins, 1979, cited in Delanty, 2003). In the latter half of the twentieth century, sociologists heralded a new post-industrial epoch of services over industry in which professional society gave way to information society, broadly summarised by Delanty (2003) as being driven by communication and information technology, and less defined by national parameters. Therefore while knowledge has fed the systems of society for centuries, the values of those societal systems have in turn affected society’s conception of knowledge. Delanty identifies contemporary reality as a ‘knowledge society...[where] knowledge is taking more and more public forms’ (Delanty, 2003, p.72) but warns that in contemporary discourses the term ‘knowledge society’ implies a raft of ideological assumptions ultimately traceable to the ideologies of postmodernism and neoliberalism, and which are at their most apparent in contemporary higher education.

### **2.6.1 Postmodernism**

Barnett (1999) stresses the difference between post-modernity- a neutral, non-ideological term that refers to the condition of a new world order- and the unhyphenated terms ‘postmodern’ and ‘postmodernism’, which he suggests are value terms used to positively endorse ‘fragmentation [and a] lack of foundations and openness’ (Barnett, 1999, pp.4-5). In Barnett’s usage then, postmodernism is an ideological strategy for survival in the post-modern world. Delanty (2003) concedes that postmodernism is not an ideology in the normal sense, and indeed might even be considered antithetical to ideology since it negates the validity of foundational principles. However, he argues for it to be treated as such since it ‘has exerted some of the main features of ideology in offering a comprehensive interpretation of modern society in its current formation’ (Delanty, 2003, pp.73-74). In the case of higher education, Delanty (2003) suggests that the postmodern view of culture as essentially meaningless and all-encompassing has been adapted by new academic discourses that give ‘intellectual legitimation to relativism’ (p.74). Moreover postmodernism has for Delanty (2003) blurred the modernist distinction between

knowledge and opinion, a distinction which has justified the existence of an intellectual class and supported the very notion of academic expertise. Henry et al. (2001) also suggest that the epistemological relativism of postmodernism has ‘legitimate(d ) a cynicism vis a vis claims to universalist truth in favour of a smorgasbord of values’ (p.160) which, amidst a growing neoliberal trend for performance accountability, risks ‘confusing means with ends [and] style with substance’ (p.159). Usher (2009) too identifies a breaking down of parameters for what is considered educationally appropriate knowledge, which in the postmodern moment is ‘based on multiple realities and the multiplicity of experience [and is] neither canonical nor hierarchical’ (p.173).

In terms of curricula, the postmodernist blowing open of the study-worthy domain has, Delanty (2003) argues, ushered in an ideology of multiplicity which is exemplified by modular curricula, the module being a unit of education ‘designed, packaged and consumed by student demand’ (p.74), while in terms of pedagogy, Usher (2009) suggests that the ‘postmodern sensibility’ (p.171) is manifest in the notion of experiential learning:

Pedagogically, experiential learning, sitting comfortably within the postmodern, gains an increasingly privileged place as the means by which desire is cultivated and identity formed. (Usher, 2009, p.171)

In summary, postmodernism has according to the above writers problematised the notions of a value hierarchy and expertise, lateralised the epistemic terrain, and led to pedagogy and curricula that privilege student demand (or for Usher (2009) ‘desire’ (p.171)) and experience over foundational values.

## **2.6.2 Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism is a more straightforwardly ideological phenomenon that entrusts societal progression to market forces. The foundational principles of neoliberalism correspond to market principles, and include efficiency, structural centralisation (Delanty, 2003), consumer choice and economies of scale. Delanty (2003) identifies a Fordist massification of higher education as the principal effect of neoliberalism.

Harland and Pickering (2011) argue that the increased dominance of neoliberal thinking in higher education has eroded the autonomy previously afforded to academics, who are ‘no longer the trusted professionals of old and are now managed more closely using the neoliberal technology of accountability’ (p.7), but that the force of neoliberalism has met such little resistance within the academic community that ‘it may seem that

academics uncritically surrendered their academic freedom as they continued to be driven down a path towards economic activity, market-driven ideology and more state control' (p.7). According to Shore and Wright (1999), this state control is made less visible in the United Kingdom by the existence of seemingly disassociated intermediary bodies, which are usually acronymous (such as QAA, HEA, HEFCE, etc), and which monitor and regulate the sector on the state's behalf via subtly coercive audit systems. These audit systems, couched in the language of 'empowerment' and 'quality', are to Shore and Wright types of what Foucault terms political technologies (Foucault, 1991, cited in Shore & Wright, 1999) that discipline professional domains, and the individuals within them, according to government priorities. Pointing out auditing's origins in financial accounting, they assert that under the ideology of neoliberalism the audit has been 'released from its traditional moorings' and applied to 'virtually every field of modern life' (Shore & Wright, 1999, p.558). Its financial associations remain however, such that, according to Shore and Wright (1999), audits measuring such things as 'quality' and 'effectiveness' in areas of higher education are ultimately designed to support the government's ideology of governance by market principles. Furthermore, they argue that the coercive power of audits lies in the threat and consequences of failure, which are such that individuals reconfigure their own priorities towards the objective of survival, enacting 'technologies of the self' (Shore & Wright, 1999, p.560) that support the status quo from within. Like Harland and Pickering (2011), Jackson (2006) writes of the detrimental effects of economic priorities, accountability systems and the resulting conservatism on academic life. While he makes no explicit reference to neoliberalism, when considered in terms of Shore and Wright's theory of political technologies the phenomena he identifies might all appear symptomatic of the same 'coercive neoliberal governmentality' (Shore & Wright, 1999, citing Foucault, 1991):

The constant pressure for greater efficiency and cost effectiveness, increasing levels of personal accountability, quality assurance and peer review systems that favour conservatism, and resistance in colleagues to anything that involves doing things differently, are just a few of the things that can inhibit our individual and collective creativity (Jackson, 2006, p.7)

Likewise Becher and Trowler (2001), without specific reference to neoliberalism, acknowledge 'a fundamental conflict between quality audits and entrepreneurial pressures on the one hand and academic norms and values on the other.' (p.160). Winter (2009) identifies 'identity schisms' (p.127) among academic staff resulting from the 'clash of

values between traditional academic cultures and the modernising corporate cultures of higher education' (p.127), and argues that 'the ideology of market-based rationality is so strong that for many academics any deviation from such a norm of work is considered fanciful, steeped in a bygone age, or insular and ignorant of the competitive and financial realities facing universities today' (p.123).

Henry et al. (2001) suggest that the renewed concern with employability is itself symptomatic of attempts to address social and economic disparity in a local (as opposed to global) context without diverting from the fundamental tenets of neoliberalism— an attempt at compromise that Delanty (2003) identifies as 'third-wayism' (p.79, discussed below). Elsewhere they argue that a dominant neoliberal ideology, in combination with globalisation, has led governments to adopt a 'meta-policy' (Henry et al., 2001, p.30) of prioritising economic competitiveness, which should be seen as framing all discussion relating to educational policy.

### **2.6.3 Third-wayism**

Delanty (2003) uses the term 'third wayism' to denote a via media between neoliberal ideology on the one hand and the idea of state responsibility and a basic commitment to welfare on the other. The term 'third way' was coined by Mannheim but the concept was chiefly developed by Giddens (1998). According to Delanty (2003), two central beliefs of this new 'third way' are that developments in the knowledge economy are generally positive and that access to this knowledge is 'empowering'. Delanty (2003) regards third-wayism as being caught in a basic contradiction, which it seeks (but ultimately fails) to overcome with postmodern value terms such as 'inclusion', which are devoid of autonomous meaning and make sense 'only in relation to something else and, above all, in the elision of a clear reference. [...] The third way can be defined only by reference to that which it is not.' (Delanty, 2003, p.79) Others have written, within different specific foci, of this basic contradiction of values in higher education (Barnett, 2005; Barnett & Coate, 2005; Becher & Trowler, 2001; Mann, 2008). Mann (2008), though she does not refer explicitly to third-wayism, identifies the emerging language of contradiction borne in the space between economic and social justice agendas:

Competing discourses, and purposes, between those of 'access', 'widening participation', 'inclusion', 'diversity', 'collegiality', 'inquiry', 'enhancement' and those of 'market', 'efficiency', 'performance', 'enterprise', 'employability' express the tensions between a social justice agenda and economic and managerial imperatives (Mann, 2008, p.1)

To summarise, third-wayism seeks to accommodate both neoliberal market principles and moral imperatives associated with social justice. Delanty (2003), Mann (2008) and others have argued however that these values are not easily reconciled, and can lead to tensions regarding the purpose of higher education.

## **2.7 Institutional Culture**

Institutional culture is an ambiguous concept, owing to the ambiguity of the words ‘institution’ and ‘culture’. ‘Institution’ is problematic in higher education because of the multilayered nature of the sector, where departments operate within faculties, within schools and sometimes within institutes and so on, and where partnerships with external entities such as validating partners, professional accreditation bodies and private enterprise are common. Within this study, the categories of micro, meso and macro (derived from Skelton (2012)) offer a useful framework for ordering these structures into broad domains, though it must be remembered that this framework is deliberately reductive; that the reality is more complex and that the domains are porous. Meso is taken within this study to denote the domain beyond the immediate bounds of the programme (that is, its students, curriculum, staff, resources and pedagogy) but within the perimeter of the self-governing institution (the university, or in Institution B’s case, the Institute). However, relationships such as that between Institution B and its validating partner university, or between the Institution D and its accrediting partner Creative Skillset, are treated as lateral in this study on the bases that they are negotiated by choice and actively sought, and are thus also accounted for in the meso category. Thus while the term ‘meso’ to a large extent conforms to normative understandings of the term ‘institution’, it is chosen here for its being more flexible and accommodating than the latter term. Nonetheless, it is important here to consider concepts of ‘institutional culture’ since research in this area is pertinent to the study of values in higher education.

Jørgensen notes that terms such as ‘climate’, ‘ethos’, ‘atmosphere’, ‘character’ and ‘tone’ (Jørgensen, 2009, p.32) are often used interchangeably, with the consequence that ‘culture’ is construed as meaning different things. He presents two definitions of institutional culture in higher education, those of Kuh and Hall (1993) and Schein (1985) that he considers useful for their accounting for the term’s inherent multifariousness. Kuh and Hall (1993)’s definition is as follows:

[Higher education institutional] culture is viewed as the collective, mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical setting, norms, traditions, **values**, practices, beliefs and assumptions which guide the behaviour of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education and which provide frames of reference for interpreting the meanings of events and actions on and off campus (Kuh & Hall, 1993<sup>4</sup>, quoted in Jørgensen, 2009, p32, my emphasis)

This study treats value(s) as preceding many of the features of institutional culture identified here by Kuh and Hall (as do others, notably Harland & Pickering (2011) and Smith, (2012)), but this definition is helpful as it presents the values of an educational setting as being an integral aspect of its ‘frames of reference’ (Kuh & Hall, 1993, quoted in Jørgensen, 2009, p32) against which actions can be understood. Schein’s definition is also relevant:

[Institutional culture comprises, in order of tangibility]:

- 1 Artefacts, i.e. visible organisational structures and processes;
- 2 Espoused values, i.e. strategies, goals, philosophies;
- 3 Basic assumptions, i.e. unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, perceptions, thoughts and feelings. (Jørgensen, 2009, p32, summarizing Schein, 1985, pp.1-14).

These levels conform to my understanding of how and from where values in higher education settings derive, and to my methodological approaches; semi-structured interviews are particularly suited to drawing out the kinds of tacit information described in Schein’s (1985) third level. Given that institutions construct themselves in part through the documentation they produce (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011) documentary analysis is an essential instrument for addressing the first and second.

Jørgensen’s (2009) own focus is higher music education, and he gives an overview of some studies that, while not employing the precise term ‘institutional culture’, have approached music conservatoires as holistic entities with dominant ‘views, values and practices’ (Jørgensen, 2009, p.33) functioning together as cultural systems. Two, by Kingsbury (1988) and Nettl (1995) are ethnographic in design. Focusing on one music conservatory, Kingsbury examines the dominant views regarding the concepts of talent, authenticity, musicality and music (Kingsbury, 1988). Significantly, he abstracts his study of the institution outwards to a broader consideration of Western art music functioning as a

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<sup>4</sup> Frustratingly Jørgensen (2009) does not provide page references for quotations. While I was able to access all the other source texts he reviews in the British Library, I was unable to locate Kuh and Hall (1993), and am thus unable to provide a page number for this quotation.

cultural system with value hierarchies, roles, and integrated ethical and aesthetic codes. Nettl's (1995) study is longitudinal and multiple-case, and takes as its unit of analysis university schools of music across the mid-Western United States, condensed into one fictional institution, Heartland University. Nettl (1995) asserts that an ethnographic /ethnomusicological approach allows him to 'comprehend the musical culture through a microcosm [and] look [...] at the familiar as if one were an outsider' (p.2). He argues that ethnomusicologists have, at his time of writing, only recently approached Western classical music, the 'last bastion of unstudied musical culture' (p.2). His research questions are targeted towards understanding the relationship between 'the Music Building', its 'repertory as centred on a canon' and the 'great composers who rule the society of the Music Building' (p.12). He writes of his colleagues' unease with his project, despite its being entirely within the methodological conventions of ethnomusicology.

Of particular interest to this study is Nettl's (1995) observation that both 'living and deceased participate' (p.2) in classical conservatory culture, his apportioning of the status of gods to Mozart and Beethoven and his analogy of conservatoires as 'religious systems' (p.40) replete with sacred texts and rituals, the latter being redolent of Tagg's (2000) likening of classical repertoire to liturgical practice. Nettl (1995) concludes that the centrality of this repertoire/canon in conservatory culture, and the authority it holds over the values of mid-Western US university music departments, is such that other musics are deemed to be less valuable. Nettl's (1995) research therefore suggests that canon can be crucial to the construction of music institutions' values.

Also of relevance is Nettl's (1995) claim that the artefacts, structures and tensions of education become enmeshed with those of the discipline (art music) within the conservatoire, as actors position themselves according to oppositional binary identities that derive from education (teachers/students, teachers/administrators), from music (strings/brass, singers/instrumentalists) and from the nexus of the two (academics/performers) (Nettl, 1995). It therefore supports my proposition that values relating to the discipline and those relating to education are interactive. Furthermore, Nettl (1995) claims that the tensions existing in the conservatoire setting correspond to American societal characteristics, which might support a hypothesis of a downward, macro-meso (-micro) bleed of social norms and values.

A final study reviewed by Jørgensen is by Turner (2004), who uses semiotic analysis to identify the dominant values implicit in music department websites across the United States, coding photographic images according to content and then quantifying

features with a percentage share. The findings indicate that while around 40% of music students in his sample of departments were music education majors, photographs involving music education accounted for less than one percent of the photographs displayed, revealing disparity between the reality of practice within institutions and their outwardly-projected image. This suggests that the internal reality of institutional culture can be markedly different from its outwardly-projected values. Such a quantitative approach is inappropriate in a small, multiple-case study such as this, but qualitative semiotic analysis approaches are employed, and images and other visual elements (such as institutional appearance, recorded in field notes) are approached as potentially indicative of institutional values.

Papageorgi et al.'s (2010a) mixed-method (questionnaire, focus group, case-study interview), multiple-case study seeks to understand the relationship between institutional culture (the term is used explicitly) and students' approaches to learning and performance. Every institution, they assert, has a 'prevailing ethos' (Papageorgi et al., 2010a, p.153) and 'predominant culture representing the quality and way of life within the institution and the conduct of the institution itself' (Papageorgi et al., 2010a, p.151). They review a number of studies that investigate this prevailing culture. Among these, Bliss and Sandiford (2004) draw a distinction between student culture, which encompasses characteristics of students' communities— socioeconomic, ethnic, and so on— and the beliefs and values of those communities, and institutional culture, which comprises the values and beliefs manifested in institutional priorities, curricula and policies. Their observation that students are affected by cultural factors both within and external to the institution is useful, although it perhaps underplays the role of students as *active* agents of institutional culture.

Papageorgi et al.'s (2010a; 2010b) research focuses on three purposively chosen institutions: a classical and Scottish-traditional conservatoire, a popular/jazz music college and a university music department (it is significant that the university *department* is conceived of as the institution, and not the university, and thus the possibility of wider institutional culture is not investigated) and proceeds from the hypothesis that differences across types of institution, genre affiliations and curriculum foci result in differences in institutional culture, and consequently in learning contexts and experiences. Among their findings are that locale was a factor of institutional culture, and for Scottish traditional students in particular it related to national identity (Scottishness); that some students within the university department had a holistic understanding of their identity as musicians which

incorporated educational work, whereas a stronger performing identity was identified at the conservatory, and that teaching activity was a source of anxiety for popular and jazz musicians.

Jørgensen (2009) notes that investigations into institutional culture can point to ‘what really matters’ and ‘the dominant values of the institutions studied’ (p.33), but asserts that the research output focusing on institutional culture is startlingly small and can therefore ‘hardly be expected to make a significant impact on institutional policy and efforts towards development and change’ (Jørgensen, 2009, p.34). More research is clearly needed, and although the present study is explicitly concerned with values as opposed to culture, it nonetheless contributes substantially to this research base.

## **2.8 Disciplinary Values**

Just as institutions have their cultures, values and practices, there are as Skelton (2012) suggests values associated with ‘disciplinary tribes’ (p.259). Defining precisely what is meant by ‘academic discipline’ is difficult however, given both the internal breadth of some disciplines and the increasing *interdisciplinarity* of higher education generally. However, Becher and Trowler (2001) note that despite this difficulty, disciplinarity is understood tacitly within academic communities, and that academics hold clear opinions regarding their disciplinary situation and the relative academic validity of other disciplines.

Becher and Trowler’s (2001) book offers an in-depth discussion of academic disciplines and their attendant values, and through literature review the authors chart how understandings of disciplinary culture have developed over time (specifically between 1989, when Becher’s first edition was published, and 2001). They suggest that while older literature tends to maintain a view that ‘particular kinds of people choose certain disciplines’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.131), later literature sees individuals *becoming* particular kinds of people as a result of inhabiting a disciplinary culture— what they term the disciplinary socialization argument (Becher & Trowler, 2001). They identify in later literature a dominant ‘situationally contingent’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.42) understanding of academic disciplines as being responsive to (among other variables) ‘the changing nature of knowledge domains over time’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.43). Furthermore, drawing on Rothblatt (1985, cited in Becher & Trowler, 2001) and Gibbons (1985, cited in Becher & Trowler, 2001)) they point to a tension between intrinsic considerations, which relate to how the discipline has been internally constructed by its

participants, and extrinsic considerations relating to society's demand for and expectations of the discipline. They identify as an extrinsic pressure what Elzinga (1985) terms epistemic drift in UK and US policy towards 'a utilitarian [...] 'knowing how' rather than 'knowing what'' (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.166). Related to this, the authors identify three 'modes of genesis' (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.171) in academic disciplines: internal genesis, where a discipline develops from a specialism within another discipline that becomes increasingly independent; external genesis, where the academy responds to demand from outside; and, developed from Blume (1985), external stimulation, which involves the reorganisation of existing disciplines, and the establishment of new 'problem hierarchies' (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.171) in response to a newly perceived social utility for certain knowledge. Each of these modes affects the values of the resulting discipline, although there is also significant variation within modes (Becher & Trowler, 2001). For example, in disciplines with an external genesis, Becher and Kogan (1992) identify a high level of market responsiveness in vocational courses such as accounting, while Blume (1985) identifies in engineering a gradual intellectualising shift away from its original practical emphases towards more theoretical curricula and higher academic entry requirements for programmes.

Becher and Trowler consider the epistemic characteristics of disciplinary subject matter, and adapting Kolb (1981) suggest four quadrants into which academic disciplines might be collated: Hard-Pure; Hard-Applied; Soft-Pure; Soft-Applied. 'Hard' is broadly synonymous with science, 'soft' with humanities and social sciences. It is interesting to consider a field such as popular music studies, which as Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2002) and others suggest is highly interdisciplinary, in light of these quadrants. Of the four, arguably only 'Hard-Pure' (pure, non-applied science) can be eliminated from consideration; each of the others might accommodate at least an aspect of popular music studies.

Becher and Trowler (2001) offer summaries of the characteristics for each quadrant, and it is useful to reproduce them here:

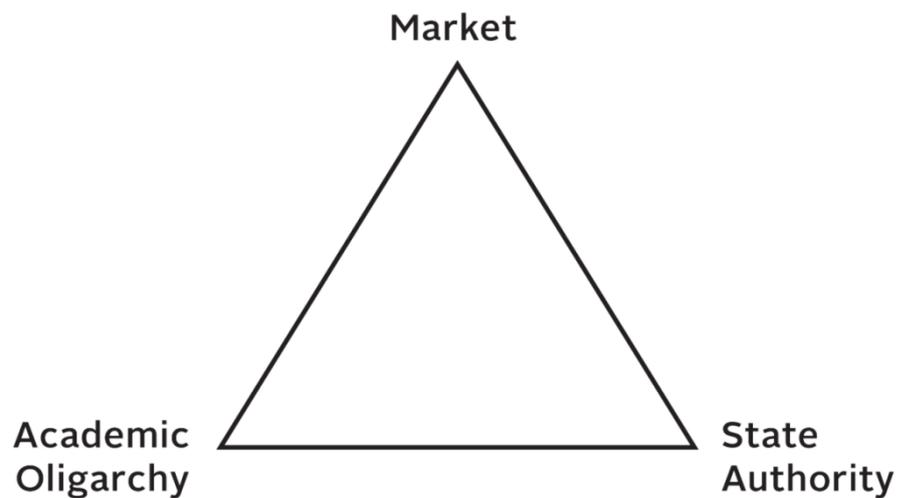
**Table 1.** Becher and Trowler’s ‘Knowledge and Disciplinary Grouping (Source: Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.36, adapted from Becher, 1994)

| Disciplinary grouping   | Nature of knowledge  |
|---|--|
| Pure sciences (e.g. Physics): ‘Hard-Pure’   | Cumulative; atomistic (crystalline/tree-like); concerned with universals; quantities, simplification; impersonal; value-free; clear criteria for knowledge verification and obsolescence; consensus over significant questions to address [...]; results in discovery/explanation. |
| Humanities (e.g. History) and pure social sciences (e.g. anthropology): ‘Soft-Pure’ | Reiterative; holistic [...]; concerned with particulars, qualities, complication; personal, value-laden; dispute over criteria for knowledge verification and obsolescence; lack of consensus over significant questions to address; results in understanding/interpretation.      |
| Technologies (e.g. mechanical engineering, clinical medicine): ‘Hard-Applied’       | Purposive; pragmatic (know-how via hard knowledge); concerned with mastery of physical environment; applies heuristic approaches; uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches; criteria for judgement are purposive; functional; results in products/techniques.             |
| Applied social science (e.g. education, law, social administration): ‘Soft-Applied’ | Functional; Utilitarian (know-how via soft knowledge); concerned with enhancement of [semi-] professional practice; uses case studies and case law to a large extent; results in protocols/procedures.   |

While many of these characteristics might not appear, *prima facie*, particularly relevant to undergraduate taught provision (as opposed to “higher” academic practice such as research) the table nonetheless illustrates some oppositional epistemic positions across quadrants, suggesting potential epistemic tension in disciplines such as popular music studies which cannot straightforwardly be apportioned to one quadrant alone. It is important to note also the omission of the arts as a distinct disciplinary grouping from this categorisation (they are presumably conflated into the humanities).

The majority of literature reviewed by Becher and Trowler (2001), and indeed their own study, is academician-centric, in that it focusses overwhelmingly on the experiences and impact of academics within disciplines. Discussing higher education culture as a whole (as opposed to that of disciplines within), Becher and Trowler reproduce Clark’s (1983) ‘continua of influence’ (figure 1), noting that in the intervening years UK higher education has moved towards the ‘market’ point of the triangle. It is significant to note that ‘market’ is understood by Becher and Trowler (2001) in terms of “‘customers’: students, employers and the government acting as a core buyer” (p.8, citing Dill & Sporn, 1995). Students are

thus reduced here to a contributing element of market demand, as opposed to a more multifaceted force of influence on higher education.



**Figure 1.** Clark's continua of influence over higher education (Clarke, 1983, p.143; Cited in Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.9)

Elsewhere however, Becher and Trowler acknowledge students' involvement in knowledge creation, albeit of a different kind of knowledge to that held by department 'elites', citing Geholm's (1985) two types of tacit knowledge within academic disciplines:

- 1 [that which has] 'grown out of long experience in the discipline [and is] a practical, almost subconscious knowledge or competence that the department elite fully masters'.
- 2 [that which is] 'generated by the students themselves as they try to make sense of what they are experiencing'. (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.47, summarising Geholm, 1985)

Mantie (2013), taking a content analysis approach to analysing a representative selection of research articles relating to popular music education, identifies significant differences in the thematic preoccupations of the discipline across international contexts. He argues that while in many cases this can be attributed to situational contingencies such as bureaucracy and policy, in others it appears to reflect differences in normative understandings of musical and educational purpose and value. This might suggest that disciplinary values are contingent upon local structural and sociocultural specificities.

So far then, it has been demonstrated that there are myriad factors influencing the values at play within higher education. However, as suggested in this last section, disciplines within higher education bear their own value frameworks, and any investigation

into the values of particular programmes must take into account the values of the ‘disciplinary tribe’ (Skelton, 2012, p.259). My case studies represent a joining of higher education with popular music, itself a highly complex phenomenon that defies easy definition. It is hypothesised that the values held within the educational settings in this study are informed in part by values and ideologies associated with popular music. The following section examines popular music as a phenomenon and reviews some attempts to conceptualise it. It then looks at some of the ideologies and values that have figured in popular music. The subsequent chapter considers popular music in the more specific context of higher education.

## **2.9 Popular Music**

Despite being notoriously difficult to define concisely, the term ‘popular music’ is used confidently and frequently in public life, and even, as can be seen from this study, in academic typology. While this suggests it is understood on a tacit level and is not widely considered to be a problematic term, examination of its usages reveals it to be interpreted differently by different people in different contexts. Middleton (1992) and Shuker (1994) each offer several illuminating examples of the term in academic and non-academic use, and of various attempts to define it. Middleton reproduces Birrer’s (1984) four categories of definition, and it is useful to do the same here:

- 1 Normative: popular music as an inferior type
- 2 Negative: popular music is music that is not something else
- 3 Sociological: popular music is associated with or produced by a particular social group
- 4 Techno-economic: popular music is disseminated by mass media and/or in a mass market (Middleton, 1992, p.5, summarised from Birrer, 1984, p.104)

As Middleton notes, all of these are ‘interest-bound’ (1992, p.4) and unsatisfactory. Drawn together however they are useful in charting the elusive space in which the term and much of its associated typology (e.g. pop, rock, mainstream, commercial, alternative) acquire their meanings. In the context of this study none can be wholly dismissed. The first two relate to, among other things, a high/low culture dichotomisation that has historically been and continues to be perceived (positively and negatively) by musicians, educators and students. The third, not unrelated, encompasses the musical identities, forms and lifestyle practices associated with social groups, whether class-, locale- subculture- or otherwise-based. The fourth category of definition, while no less problematic, is particularly crucial

to this study for its bringing into focus the oft-alleged inextricableness of popular music from its mass product-oriented, economic aspect. As is discussed in more detail below, drawing this feature into synthesis with debates that cast the academic integrity of higher arts education in opposition to economics-driven agendas (see NAMHE, 2011) highlights some of the discipline-specific complexities that popular music brings to this prevailing tension.

Collating the many definitions of popular music still more reductively, Middleton (1992) identifies two definitional syntheses: positivist, in which ‘popular’ is understood quantitatively in terms of commerce; and social essentialism, where ‘popular’ is a qualitative adjective denoting a relationship to the people (variously conceived as active or passive). Positivist understandings of popular music correspond to Birrer’s fourth category discussed above, and bound as they are to market mechanisms are according to Middleton no less ideological than social essentialism (Middleton, 1992). Referring to musical forms such as rock, folk, jazz and country that are often gathered under the typological umbrella of “popular music”, Shuker (1994) refers to a fundamental tension between the creativity inherent in the music-making act and the commercial context, brought to the fore in positivist definitions, to which it is bound. Within popular music therefore, a tension can be perceived between notions of commerce and artistic integrity (or authenticity) which is somewhat analogous to that which has been identified earlier in this chapter between market values and academic integrity.

A paradoxical dimension to these tensions might be seen to derive from the techno-aspect of Birrer’s fourth definition, in that the means of dissemination and production—those by which audiences are reached and music is heard—are embedded in the mechanics of the commercial market, and are thus an inescapable defining condition of popular music; technologically-produced and disseminated music can therefore never be autonomous from the market. Shuker (1994) explores this paradox in the cases of pop and rock, two popular music genres (or metagenres) which have tended to be understood and differentiated according to, among other things, their perceived complicity in (pop) or rejection of (rock) the commercial agenda of prioritising sales figures over authentic creativity. Shuker (1994) problematises this ‘central yardstick’ (p.7), giving examples of rock and pop functioning in the same way, and of marketing’s co-opting of rock tropes in attempts to project an inauthentic impression of authenticity, in order to access and profit from the ‘commodity of authenticity’ (Shuker, 1994, p.7). Furthermore, citing Jones (1992) Shuker suggests that increasingly affordable technology might potentially erode

market-dependency and thus diminish the hegemony of commercial values (Jones, 1992; Shuker, 1994). Writing in 1992, Jones refers to multitrack recorders and cassettes (now largely obsolete technology) as facilitating a form of ‘folk’ music which is neither rock nor pop, and which thwarts attempts to define popular music still further. While the specifics of Shuker’s (1994) examples are somewhat rooted in their time of writing, two broader subtexts, a) that subgenres have emerged and derived their sense from how they have approached the paradoxical commercial and creative conditions upon which their existence is dependent, and b) that these subgenres, though often stridently ideological, themselves confound definition according to strict criteria and do not easily withstand systematic, logical scrutiny, are pertinent to this study. Popular music, however defined, is a musical field that encompasses many genres that position themselves differently towards the idea of profit-making, conceive of different proportional relationships between commercial and artistic value, and engage differently with the commercial market. This has obvious implications for higher education programmes that seek to prepare musically diverse student cohorts for professional life within the field of popular music, meeting the competing requirements of contributing to economic growth and maintaining cultural value, and must inevitably engage with this matrix of values.

### **2.9.1 ‘Popular’ and other musics**

Social essentialist (Middleton, 1992) understandings of ‘popular music’ conform to Birrer’s second and third categories (Birrer, 1984, see above). They derive their interpretation of ‘popular’ from *populus*, ‘the people’, who, as Middleton suggests, are sometimes imagined as an ‘active progressive historical subject’ and sometimes as a ‘manipulated dupe’ (1992, p.5). In the former case, popular music is imagined as a conduit of popular sentiment and a medium of proletarian empowerment. At the extreme of the latter it is conceived of as lowest common denominator fodder, pedalled to the masses by a malign and invidious commercial machine. Both cases are according to Middleton framed in the context of power struggle, and ‘established through comparison with [...] an absent Other’ (1992, p.6); potential others include folk music, art music and classical music. Walser (2003) asserts that ‘‘popular music’ and ‘classical music’ cannot be compared in terms of value because these categories are interdependent and actively reproduced’ (p.25), and that like all cultural genres, these categories are not natural but polemical and have less to do with internal homogeneity than with social negotiation. Just as low culture cannot exist without its higher counterpart, so, according to Walser, popular music is reliant on its

classical counterpoint for its identity. Consideration of the interdependence of musical categories is pertinent to this study; popular music has only recently established itself as an academic discipline and now shares departments, policy (for example, the generic QAA subject benchmarks for music (QAA, 2008)) and in some cases curricula with ‘other’ musics against which it has historically been imagined and defined. In the vast majority of cases however its separateness is preserved in nomenclature. Therefore, if we hold to Walser’s (2003) suggestion that these typological distinctions are indicative of social negotiation, then it might be argued that using them in academe is to import the social information encoded therein.

Shuker (1994) suggests that the cultural critiques of the left-leaning Frankfurt School have much in common with the conservative high-culture critiques of Abbs (1975) and others in that both approach popular culture as a synthetic cultural commodity and therefore of no intrinsic value, and adopt a behaviourist view of the impact of media on human nature (Shuker, 1994). Drawing age into the frame alongside social class, Abbs uses the term ‘false culture’ (1975, p.53, quoted in Shuker, 1994, p.21) to refer to the forms, popular music among them, that are targeted at youth to ‘fabricate a secular mythology for the production and consumption of goods’ (1975, p.65; quoted in Shuker, 1994, p.21). According to Abbs’ critique, high culture- ‘true culture’ (Abbs, 1975, p.53, quoted in Shuker, 1994, p.21)- is under threat. The arguments of other cultural conservatives, notably Scruton (1997; 1998), are cadenced with similar anxieties about popular culture, and popular music in particular.

Adorno first critiqued popular music in 1941, and referred specifically to the Tin Pan Alley song industry and the formulaic approach to composition it adopted. Adorno saw this as an instance of ‘standardization’ (Adorno, 2002, p.438), a symptom of capitalist mass production. Popular music and popular musicology have much developed since Adorno’s first critique, and his subsequent writings have been criticised for glossing over these developments (Middleton, 1992). However, despite frequent assertions that Adorno’s theories have outlived their relevance, and the very fact that popular music departments exist, implicitly suggests that popular music is valued within academia (Parkinson, 2013), Adorno is a ubiquitous feature of popular music syllabi. Thus while this is resented by some (Tagg, 1998; Waksman, 2010; Walser, 2003), engaging with Adorno is broadly seen as something of a rite of passage for popular music students.

### **2.9.2 Popular music and the value of authenticity**

Middleton suggests that ‘authenticity’ is a key concept in social-essentialist readings (see above) of popular music and signifies a conception of value and meaning as deriving from the subject (Middleton, 1992). He adds that searches for authenticity occur through channels of rebellion at the crux of an ever-present ‘symbiotic struggle’ (1992, p.14) between industry and art, and against backgrounds of ‘situationist change’ (1992, p.14), of which the most relevant in the context of popular music is the post-Second World War period when electronic technologies, a global economy and tolerant liberal ideology were all in their ascendancies (Middleton, 1992). Middleton writes also of a ‘tendency to reduce the music/culture relationship to a deterministic, functional or structural homology’ (Middleton, 1992, p.127) which leads to authenticity, signifying honesty, becoming the principal measure of musical value. Crucially, Middleton problematises this notion of authenticity, suggesting that it bears the divisive assumption that there is ‘‘our’ music and ‘their’ music [...] one is corrupt, manipulated, [...] commodified or whatever; the other is natural, spontaneous [...] and perhaps a radical alternative’ (Middleton, 1992, p.168) and as such represents a romantic and retrograde ‘ideological couplet’ (Middleton, 1992, p.168).

Building on Lilliestam (1995), Green (2002) identifies an ‘ideology of authenticity’ (p.99) among musicians based on a similar romantic idea that ‘their music is a natural outpouring of the soul involving no commercial interest, no artifice [...] and no work on the part of the musician’ (Green, 2002, p.103). This understanding of authenticity, like that of which Middleton writes, assumes a dichotomy of nature (‘the soul’) on the one hand, and structures (commerce, education) on the other; Green (2002) suggests that this ideology of authenticity arises in part from a celebrated autonomy from formal education. Such an ideology thus privileges the value of nature over nurture, and indeed positions itself in direct opposition to nurture.

Adorno is critical of what he identifies as Heideggerian notions of authenticity in which the subject has ultimate sovereignty ‘as if he were his own property’ (Adorno, 1973, p.127), and argues that authenticity is mediated across subject and object, and individual and society. In Adorno’s view therefore, subject-centric understandings of authenticity of the kind discussed by Middleton (1992) are invalid. In earlier writings on popular music (Adorno, 2002), Adorno asserts that the commercial processes of standardisation and mass reproduction are antithetical to authenticity. Huq (2006) writes of the problem of popular music’s inherent inauthenticity issuing from the mass reproduction of its product, and

refers also to a post-modern ‘post-authentic era’ (p.50) of pastiche, appropriation and ‘retro’ which appears to actively subvert the notion of authenticity.

Conceptions of authenticity in popular music can differ across subgenres. Citing Thornton (1995), Sandberg and Petersen (2007) and Bourgois (2003), Soderman (2013) argues that authenticity in hip hop can be equated with a combination of two forms of Bourdieusian capital- sub-cultural capital, which he summarises somewhat superficially as ‘quite simply [...] what is described in the media as ‘hip’ and being ‘right’ (p.4), and street capital, ‘a know-how that deals with how different situations on the street can be interpreted [and is] a complex web of the world, symbols, attitudes and life strategies that arise in opposition to the society in which the average people live’ (p.4), while O’Hara (1999) explains that authenticity in punk relates to an active rejection of consensus perceived to be reinforced through education systems and by the media, and a search for truth. Thus, in contrast to the ideology of authenticity identified by Green (2002) in rock music, which cast nature against nurture, punk authenticity according to O’Hara (1999) casts institutional knowledge against nonconformist autodidacticism. This is no less problematic in relation to higher music education.

Soderman (2013) and O’Hara (1999) also emphasise that hip hop and punk are not simply musical genres but cultures comprising various synergistic practices such as, in hip hop, rapping, djing, breakdancing and graffiti (Soderman, 2013), and in punk, writing and publishing fanzines (do-it-yourself magazines), event organising, music and activism. These practices express and reinforce the ideological principles of the subcultures, which in turn imbue the practices with a sense of authenticity. O’Hara (1999) quotes Zbach (n.d) to exemplify the extent to which departure from punk ideology can be seen by punks to undermine the authenticity of the genre:

The critical message of Punk has a number of targets including classism, sexism, racism, and authoritarianism. [...] When ‘punks’ adopt the form or style without attention to the critical message of the punk movement, [...] the seeds of Punk’s destruction are sown (Zbach, n.d., quoted in O’Hara, 1999, p.46).

The concept of authenticity is important to studies such as this which focus on an academic field whose object of study— popular music— so often takes authenticity as its central gauge of value, and which is oriented, to varying internal degrees, towards both art and industry and must participate in their ‘symbiotic struggle’ (Middleton, 1990, p.15). As

demonstrated above however, authenticity is neither a neutral value nor a straightforward concept; rather, it is ideologically charged, heavily contested and complex.

### **2.9.3 Canon in popular music**

The notion of canon is highly contested in popular music. This can be attributed in part to the fact that historically popular music has not been academically or institutionally mediated, in contrast to the Western classical tradition (discussed in Chapter 3), and to the destabilisation of foundational values brought about by postmodernism (discussed earlier in this chapter, and below, 2.9.4, Postmodernism and popular music). Nonetheless, forms of canon do appear to exist within popular music. Wyn Jones (2008) notes that canon formation in popular music takes place largely outside of the academy, and mainly within music journalism. Magazines such as *Rolling Stone*, *New Musical Express (NME)* and *Mojo* regularly conduct polls, sometimes involving their readerships, sometimes limited to panels of experts, to assemble hierarchical lists of ‘great’ or ‘important’ songs, albums, guitarists and so on. These lists vary across publications and, as might be expected, reflect and dictate particular publications’ genre or era foci. Readerships contribute to the list-making not only by direct participation in polls but also through market forces (by continuing to purchase a particular magazine and thus validating its authority). Wyn Jones (2008) argues that this canonical practice of list-making points to a desire among lay populations to discipline and arrange a vast and chaotic field into hierarchies by consensus. This consensus is sought and found, however, within narrow aesthetic parameters demarked by particular publications. Therefore while these hierarchical lists, as canons, relate to the values of particular social and commercial groups they do not necessarily hold any broader authority. However, Wyn Jones’s (2008) analysis of a selection of polls and lists reveals that, despite these variations, certain artists such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Marvin Gaye are recurring features, suggesting that a degree of consensus, obscured amidst surrounding discrepancy, does exist.

At a less formal level, fans and practitioners of popular music maintain clear values of what is good and bad. Bannister (2006) notes that canon formation takes place within popular music on a sub-cultural level at the hands of tastemakers such as record collectors and DJs. These canons at once inform and enshrine the aesthetic values of subcultures, but, as with the lists discussed above, hold no authority beyond them.

Within academic literature, few researchers have acknowledged, less still shown a desire for, canonical authority in popular music studies; most express a desire for

something broader and more inclusive (see Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002, p.2; Kassabian, 2010, p.77; Moore, 2001, p.7; Taylor, 2010, pp.85-89; Waksman, 2010, p.69). However, Kassabian's suggestion for how this might be achieved suggests that thwarting the processes of canon formation is frustratingly difficult:

[instead of constructing a canon] it might indeed be quite useful for IASPM International to put on its website lists of works that people believe to be important in a particular area. What I mean is something along the lines of a Wiki, where we would all agree not to remove things, but to add important works to lists in a subfield, or to add new lists altogether, and to comment in limited and collegial fashion on the works where appropriate. (2010, p.78).

This would doubtless result in a useful resource for academics and students, but as an alternative to canon it is problematic. Firstly, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) is suggested as custodian of the imagined Wiki, and although membership of that society is open (for a fee), in practice this arrangement would exclude lay populations from the listmaking process by dint of its being visible only to the limited demographic reach of the IASPM's website. It might be argued that those for whom the list is intended (academics, researchers, students) would be involved in the process; however, this runs contrary to visions of popular music studies ('PMS') as an 'inherently democratic' discipline that 'builds on a body of knowledge that most people have' (Cloonan, 2005, p.89). As Wyn Jones (2008) notes in respect of rock albums, 'a canon is not an impersonal issue that concerns only a small number of experts with suitable credentials...such a canon in popular culture would appear to, and arguably does, potentially involve everyone' (p.107). If it is accepted that, in line with Cloonan's (2005) assertions of democracy, authority over canons in popular music education should extend beyond the academy, then relying on such a limited system would be not only undemocratic but potentially unempirical. Secondly, incorporating the ideal of collegiality (which is not a universal one) arguably further establishes the control of academic practice by excluding different modes of mediation and debate. In both these respects, authority would be effectively ring-fenced for a small pool of academically enculturated, institutionally-affiliated experts. Such a system would therefore not represent an alternative to canon formation, but a framework for greater academic control under a different, less regressive-sounding banner.

To summarise, canon formation in popular music is an issue which, at an academic level, provokes anxiety among researchers and educators, yet there is much evidence to

suggest that, within non-academic popular music practice (including listening), loose canons, while far less distinct than those within high art disciplines, serve to enshrine values and discipline the field.

#### **2.9.4 Postmodernism and popular music**

Just as postmodernism and neoliberalism, as era-defining conditions (or in Delanty's view 'ideologies' (Delanty, 2003)), might be considered backdrops to the practice of education, so too might they be seen to frame the practice of popular music. Huq (2006) asserts that 'even if postmodernism's definition is imprecise, without doubt one of the most fertile test grounds for its application has been music' (p.27). Indeed, 'postmodernism' has been appropriated as a descriptive term within music, denoting either music created according to a set of practices and ideological assumptions, or simply referring to music associated with the postmodern era. Writing in the context of popular music, Nehring (1997) identifies conflicting orientations towards mass culture ('either sweeping criticism or uncritical celebration' (p.5)) as a central feature of postmodernism, while Huq (2006) identifies 'culturally plural fragmentation' as opposed to a pervading 'parent culture' (p.27). These observations are in accord with the tensions identified earlier relating to relativism and increasing epistemic multiplicity in education. As a further characteristic, Nehring identifies 'the attribution of an enormous passivity', which might be interpreted positively and negatively, 'to non-intellectuals' (Nehring, 1997, p.5). Adorno's understandings of mass culture (Adorno, 2002) also cast non-intellectuals (negatively) in such a way, and while his is not a postmodern perspective in itself, it nonetheless illustrates this same tension regarding intellectual value. For Adorno (2002), avant-garde music is valuable and authentic for its being autonomous from mass culture and its attendant commercial and industrial processes. However, much avant-garde art music self-consciously incorporates aspects of popular culture (for example, Boulez, who collaborated with popular musicians and composers (notably Frank Zappa)), and is often considered to be "postmodern" music. At the same time, much popular music (notably rock) seeks to set itself apart from mass culture and commercial values, arguably betraying a quasi-Adornian view of authenticity. Writing of performance (in general terms, not just musical), Frith (1996) argues that theorists of the post(-)modern such as Kaye (1994) have given 'relentless attention to the institutionally defined avant-garde' (Frith, 1996, p.204), despite the fact that popular performance, oft-overlooked in academic circles, is inherently unstable and thus characteristically post-modern. For the purposes of this study, what is

most relevant from these observations is that the postmodern condition has given rise to positive and negative responses within and outside the academy towards mass (which is also to say non-academic) culture, ranging from taking refuge in an anti-mainstream avant-garde to embracing popular culture's plurality and instability.

Huq (2006) identifies the ascent of consumer capitalism as a prominent feature of postmodernism. As such, neoliberalism might be viewed as both symptomatic of and participating in the postmodern condition. Unlike 'postmodernism', 'neoliberalism' has not found use as a musically descriptive term, and little published research exists which considers popular music within the explicit frame of neoliberalism. Nonetheless, neoliberalism might be seen to constitute an ideological and economic backdrop against which Western popular music, from at least the 1970s onwards, has been produced and practised. While the music industry (in its anglo-american aspect at the very least) has participated in neoliberal economic systems and thus inevitably displayed many neoliberal features, some musics and musicians have positioned themselves in opposition to neoliberal tenets or features, such as structurally-centralised large corporations, the primacy of economic incentives, and others. The resulting tensions are familiar, and again ultimately reducible to a commercial/artistic value dialectic. To offer a lyrical example, The Sex Pistols' *EMI* (1976) articulates a tension between major-label distribution and profit-making on the one hand, and artistic authenticity on the other:

There's unlimited supply  
And there is no reason why  
[...]  
An unlimited amount  
Too many outlets in and out  
[...]  
And you thought that we were faking  
That we were all just money making  
You do not believe we're for real  
Or you would lose your cheap appeal? (The Sex Pistols, 1976)

'Indie' (derived from 'independent') music provides another example of a musical subgenre that has traditionally adopted a negative, reactionary orientation towards commercialism and big business. However, while Huq (2006) suggests that the denial of material wealth is a foundational conceit of indie music, Jones (2013) argues that during the tenure of Blair's New Labour government it acquired a distinctly neoliberal aspect as 'a

hegemonic form of popular music [...] accommodating rather than challenging the Thatcher-Blair consensus and becoming a travesty of itself' (p.6).

It is clear that the symbiotic yet oppositional relationship between industry and art, illustrated in these examples and explored across this section, is a central, defining feature of popular music. Popular music as an academic discipline must therefore be seen to be encumbered by this relationship and its baggage of associated values. Moreover, I believe there is a clear comparability between the value struggles discernible in popular music and the prevailing tensions of value and purpose in higher education, discussed earlier, in which the same issues of massification and marketisation are pitted against notions of authentic academic value and purpose, against the same ideological backdrops. Higher popular music education must be seen to be contingent upon value struggles related to both popular music and higher education, but not, I propose, discretely; rather, the values and tensions of the one have implications for the other, such that they contribute to a complex and fascinating interplay of values unique to the discipline. It is this interplay that this study seeks to understand.

## 2.10 Summary

This chapter has interrogated the central concepts and terminology of the study, and reviewed literature encompassing theory, empirical research and official documentation that is relevant to my research questions. It began by interrogating the term value, revealing its ambiguity and unpacking its various meanings. It then examined how the concept of value has been understood and employed within higher education research, and identified a disparity between studies that focus on its *transactional* aspect and those that focus on its *principle* aspect. It continued with analysis of an indicative selection of policy documentation, illustrating how higher education has been susceptible to developments in political and ideological climate, leading to tensions issuing from competing values. Two concepts currently prominent in higher education— employability and student-centredness— were discussed in terms of such tensions, followed by a consideration of the ideological implications of postmodernism, neoliberalism, and third-wayism. Discussion then moved towards a consideration of the culture and values particular to specific higher education institutions, and those specific to disciplines within higher education. It finished with a consideration of popular music, first reviewing attempts to define it, then considering its identity in relation to other musics. It explored

the enduring tension in popular music between authenticity, arguably its central value concept, and commercialism. This was also considered against its postmodern and neoliberal backdrops.

## CHAPTER 3

### **Popular Music in Higher Education: An Enigmatic Discipline**

This chapter presents an overview of popular music in higher education. It begins with a summative chronology charting the development of popular music in higher education in the UK; focus is given to significant developments in cultural climate, higher educational policy and programme design. Where relevant, examples from international contexts, and from other academic disciplines, are given as points of comparison. It then reviews some of the literature surrounding popular music in higher education and maps the current reality of popular music degree provision in UK higher education, addressing the themes which have emerged from research and practice.

#### **3.1 An Historical Overview of Tertiary Music Education in the United Kingdom**

While popular music has figured as an object of study across a range of academic disciplines for decades, its existence as a free-standing, degree-worthy discipline in higher education began in 1990, with the creation of a BA in Popular Music and Recording at the University of Salford (Salford and a small number of other institutions, such as the privately owned Tech Schools in West London, had offered non-degree-bearing programmes since a few years earlier). Prior to this, music, as it featured in academe, was overwhelmingly in the Western classical tradition. This was the case both at the more vocationally-focused conservatoires, and at universities whose curricula tended towards a liberal scholarly model (QAA, 2008), albeit usually with some elective opportunities for performance.

The relationship between Western art music and its educational institutions has historically been, and continues to be, mutually supportive (Dibben, 2004; Ford, 2010; Nettl, 1995. See Ford (2010) for a detailed account of the genesis of the conservatoire tradition in the United Kingdom and Nettl (1995) for an account of this relationship in the US context). In the United Kingdom, conservatoires have been crucial loci for the

composition, collection and performance of repertoire since the inception of the Royal Academy of Music in 1823 (QAA, 2008), and were initially founded specifically for educating performers and composers. Based on earlier Italian and French models (Ford, 2010), they were paradoxically borne of a nationalist drive for cultural institutions but initially maintained an almost exclusively Austro-German repertoire (Ford, 2010). A Gulbenkian foundation-funded report in 1965 noted that conservatoire practice in the UK had seen very little change since these beginnings in the Twentieth Century (Gulbenkian Foundation, 1977). University music departments, first occurring in 1890, followed a scholarly model of textual appreciation and analysis (QAA, 2008), at once refining and applying the aesthetic criteria by which art music was identified and judged. Prior to that, the church had provided an infrastructure for musical apprenticeship, composition and dissemination of sacred music since its beginnings in the British Isles. The historical narratives of Western art music and institutional music education are therefore, in the British context, thoroughly entwined. The nomenclature of the diplomas which were until recently conferred to conservatoire graduates (and are still used for honorific purposes, and awarded by external exam boards)—licentiateships, associateships and fellowships—suggests continued institutional affiliation, and stakes an implicit claim of institutional authority over standards in the Western musical tradition. The ‘Royal’ prefixes held by five British conservatoires arguably embed Western art music still further in structures of institution and establishment. In short, it can persuasively be argued that the Western art music ‘profession’ has historically been, and still is, mediated by a high degree of institutional credentialism, even if, as Ford (2010) notes, it is not subject to official or legally-bound industry accreditation in the manner of professions such as nursing or medicine.

The canon and practice of classical music education have a rich history, and one should be wary of reductive analyses that gloss over internal heterogeneity. What is important however is the sense of institutional belonging, and the integrated systems of production, dissemination, apprenticeship and assessment that have characterised and set the parameters for tertiary music education and art music since at least the mid-nineteenth century. By contrast, “vernacular” musics have rarely featured prominently in the UK academic domain. Popular music has developed outside of, and has often positioned itself in direct opposition to, institutional authority (see earlier discussion of Green’s (2002) ideology of authenticity). This perceived freedom from control is fundamental to ‘outsider’, anti-establishment identities often associated with popular music (see Middleton

(1992) for a discussion of authenticity pursued through channels of rebellion), and to its conceptions of authenticity, both of which are potentially destabilised by the co-opting of popular music into the academy.

Social, geographical and political complexities are inevitably woven into educational histories, and it is outside the scope of this thesis to unpick the United Kingdom context exhaustively. However, it is important to highlight the high culture/low culture divide as a defining condition of British cultural life since at least the Victorian era, and by extension therefore, given the institutionalisation of British cultural life, of arts education in the United Kingdom. The subtly pejorative adjectives traditionally used in association with popular culture ('vernacular', 'light', 'low', 'popular', 'mass') set it apart from that which has been prized, guarded and mediated by its own institutions (see Chapter 2 for discussion of Birrer's (1984) second definitional category (negative) of popular music as music that is not something else).

Tagg (1998) has written of the Swedish social, economic and cultural conditions out of which popular music education emerged in that country, almost three decades earlier than it did in the United Kingdom; it is worth reproducing a portion of his text as it provides an interesting counterpoint to the UK context<sup>5</sup>:

(Sweden lacks the) high cultural historical ballast in relation to other nations. Put simply, Swedes did not have to contend with legacies of the likes of Bach, Bacon, Beethoven, Descartes, Debussy, Dante, Gallilei, Goethe, Haydn, Hegel, Mozart, Pascal, Purcell, Sartre, Schiller or Shakespeare...there were no big historical names of high culture on which to focus bourgeois national identity and that the institutionalisation of high culture was therefore less substantial and less powerful than elsewhere. [...] Sweden's history of class conflict also differs radically from the UK or Central Europe and the nation experienced a much later and faster process of industrialisation...all these factors and others...contributed to the establishment of a political climate in which the official public debate of popular music and the subsequent institutionalisation of musicological studies in that field was able to materialise and flourish earlier. (Tagg, 1998, pp.220-221).

These factors together were such that popular music was more easily and readily accommodated by higher education in Sweden than elsewhere (which is not to say that it

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<sup>5</sup> Providing another useful international comparison, Hebert (2011) gives an analysis of resistance to popular music education in the USA. Interestingly, in that context it is attributed not only to the dominance of European "art" aesthetics, but to a Jazz aesthetic (Jazz education in the USA preceded popular music education by a longer interval than in the UK). Hebert also makes the observation that time is a factor in the acceptance of popular music; that it is still too young to be appraised from the vantage of hindsight.

met no resistance; Tagg (1998) goes on to discuss the ensuing problems in detail). The United Kingdom's context is markedly different; high cultural achievement and national identity are accompanied by a famously stratified class system, which has been mapped convincingly on to both distinctions of high and low culture (Savage, Devine, Cunningham, Taylor, Li, Hjellbrekke, Le Roux, Friedman & Miles, 2013) and also to engagement in higher education (such as Dibben's (2004) analysis of National Statistics Social Class (NSSC, 1998-99 to 2001-02) and National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC, 2002-03) data). Dibben (2004) notes, with reference to national and institutional statistics, that engagement in higher music education in the United Kingdom is predominantly among higher socio-economic groups, where consumers of classical music are also typically to be found, helping to preserve a Western art-oriented status quo. Given this context, and more significantly the long-established institutionalisation of the high arts discussed above, it is perhaps inevitable that popular music's entrance into higher education has been slower and more tentative in the United Kingdom than in Sweden. A significant development in the United Kingdom context was the awarding of university status to former polytechnics and colleges of higher education under the Further and Higher Education Act in 1992. This weakened, in theory at least, the distinction between business and trade facing institutions (most of which were previously polytechnics and specialist training colleges) offering 'applied' programmes and more traditionally 'academic' universities, and marked the beginning of a period of diversification and increased competition in which 'post-92' universities explored new academic terrain. Thus a climate of experimentation, coupled with the dynamics of competition, led to favourable conditions for new academic disciplines to emerge; just as the University of Gothenberg, at that time an unremarkable university without a famous intellectual heritage (Tagg, 1998), provided a context for popular music education to grow in Sweden, it was in these newly established universities that the discipline of popular music was to thrive. All but one (Salford) of the popular music programmes currently available came into being after 1992, and all but seven of the universities offering popular music degrees at the time of data collection for this study are 'new' universities (see 3.4, ). Dibben (2004) writes of the 'failure of pre-1992 institutions to engage with popular music [which] maintains social distinctions because it values the culture of the Western European middle-classes more highly than that of other social groups' (p.3).

In practice, the vocational ethos of many post-92 universities has endured, as has a high degree of 'applied' delivery, albeit amidst pressure to prove themselves as genuine

scholarly institutions deserving of university status and research funding. Popular music as a degree subject in the United Kingdom has emerged from this context and exemplifies the tensions between ‘applied’ and ‘business facing’ delivery and traditionally ‘academic’ scholarship (Cloonan, 2005). Viewed from a different perspective, the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 can be seen to have precipitated the essential conditions out of which higher popular music education has burgeoned; even after two decades of expansion and diversification, the post-92 institution is the typical home of higher popular music education, a situation which according to Dibben (2004) ‘perpetuates music as a basis for class divide’ (p.3).

### **3.2 Popular Music Education in Theory and Practice**

Concurrent with the proliferation of taught programmes from the early 1990s onwards, literature began to emerge that not only focussed on popular music itself but was expressly concerned with the study of popular music. During the 1990s Middleton’s *Studying Popular Music* (Middleton, 1990; 1992), Moore’s *Rock: The Primary Text, Developing a Musicology of Rock* (Moore, 1993) Shuker’s *Understanding Popular Music* (1994) and *Key Concepts in Popular Music* (Shuker, 1998) all helped to formalise popular music’s place in academia by synthesising the interdisciplinary strands of scholarship into an encompassing discipline, and collating some prominent themes. In particular, Moore’s book sought to liberate popular music (specifically rock) from traditional musicology by emphasising its differences from classical music and the need for new musicological approaches. In 2002 Negus and Hesmondhalgh in their edited volume *Popular Music Studies* (2002) declared popular music studies to be ‘at its best, a uniquely interdisciplinary area of research drawing significant contributions from [...] a number of academic fields’ (p.2). However, while each of these books advocates the place of popular music in higher education, not one brings its central themes and issues to bear on the teaching of popular music practice, despite the latter being a substantial and often majority element of most popular music programmes (this is based on my own informal review of programme websites, and is supported also by the findings of Cloonan and Hulstedt’s (2012) mapping exercise). This accompanies a discrepancy, examined more closely below, between conceptions of popular music studies (PMS) as an academic research discipline, and practical, music-making popular music education as it is delivered in practice in the majority of cases. The issue of teaching popular music-making has rarely been discussed within the

channels of PMS research, and to date there has been little crossover between research taking place within the field of PMS, and research that focuses on popular music education but is more aligned with the data-driven empirical methodologies of social science and disseminated via the infrastructure of music education research.

### **3.2.1 ‘What is Popular Music Studies?’**

This was the title of an article by Cloonan (2005) seeking to offer insights into the nature of popular music in higher education. As is discussed below, the term ‘popular music’ is itself rarely defined precisely in academe, and can and has been interpreted in different ways. In comparison with traditional academic disciplines such as English literature and music (that is, not specifically ‘popular’ music), popular music studies is extremely difficult to position; its sheer scope is such that categorisation according to distinctions of practical/theoretical or arts/sciences/humanities/social sciences is contentious (see Chapter 2, p.43). As Cloonan (2005) suggests, the term ‘popular music studies’, along with its acronym, is an unwieldy term that might refer to a number of related but distinct things; an interdisciplinary research field; a journal; an educational discipline or a branch of musicology. Cloonan and Hulsedt’s (2012) HEA-commissioned mapping exercise, for which questionnaires were sent to UK popular music degree programme leaders and four follow-up interviews conducted, indicates that some educators find the term ‘popular music studies’ to be unrepresentative of the reality of what they do, with one questionnaire respondent declaring ‘we don’t teach popular music studies, we teach popular music’ (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012, p.20). Though somewhat oblique, this response can perhaps be read as meaning they teach students to “do” popular music— that is, make it or work with it— as opposed to study it in the manner of a humanities subject.

### **3.3 Scholarship vs musicianship**

In the rare instances of PMS research focussing on education, the musicological and sociological aspects of curricula are often foregrounded to such an extent that the music-making aspect of popular music in higher education is rendered virtually invisible (for example, Waksman, 2010; Kassabian, 2010). Waksman’s perception of the PMS landscape is illuminating in this regard:

[...] the number of graduate programmes within which popular music is a primary field of study can be counted on one hand. Apart from those who graduate from the Institute for

Popular Music at the University of Liverpool, there are very few of us who can say that we are trained in popular music studies, and fewer who work or can expect to work in departments or programmes where popular music is the focus. (2010, p.68)

Leaving aside that undergraduate provision receives no mention here, in the British context alone (for the statement is international in scope) there are far more graduate opportunities than Waksman acknowledges, if we count masters degrees and postgraduate diplomas in popular music production, composition and performance in addition to programmes with a more traditionally academic, essay-based approach. Waksman's analysis therefore betrays an intuitive delimiting of popular music studies to analytical modes of scholarship, and by implication a view of educational programmes involving popular music-making as something other. Thus despite the fact that most undergraduate popular music programmes involve some degree of music-making, music production or other form of creative popular music practice (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012), scholarship and musicianship are effectively drawn apart here.

Writing in the Danish context, Björnberg (1993) identifies the problem of balancing a 'musician attitude' with a 'scholar attitude', and suggests that reconciling the two 'requires a continuous and critical discussion of the aims and methods of music education' (p.75). An examination of how 'practical' and, linked to this, 'vocational' are understood is arguably needed, since graduates from music degrees are increasingly having to explore a range of avenues and income streams in their professional lives (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012; Gaunt & Papageorgi, 2010; QAA, 2008; Smith, 2013), and too great a focus on practical music making at the expense of theoretical and contextual scholarship might potentially hinder a student's prospects for future work as a music educator or musicologist (Björnberg, 1993). On the other hand, as Björnberg suggests, analysis of musical phenomena 'should ideally be based on a practical as well as theoretical comprehension of the intra-musical relationships of the music concerned' (Björnberg, 1993, p.75), and too far a swing towards traditional scholarship risks divorcing theory from practice. It is a reasonable generalisation that while programme curricula in the United Kingdom tend towards practical emphases (musical and otherwise), research and scholarship focusing on popular music in higher education, usually referred to as popular music studies, has until the last few years focused more on typically "scholarly" sociological and musicological aspects. As such there has, across the short history of the discipline, been a disparity between popular music education in practice and popular music education as researched.

### 3.3.1 Popular Music Pedagogy

Perhaps in response to this climate, the term ‘popular music pedagogy’ has been used by Hebert (2011), Lebler (2007; 2008), Oehler and Hanley (2009) and others (Mantie, 2013; Smith, 2013), and provides a helpful research distinction between studies of popular music scholarship and studies of popular music teaching practice. Hebert (2011) goes a step further, using the acronym ‘PMP’ as a counterpoint to PMS. The International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) now hosts a ‘popular music pedagogy interest committee’<sup>6</sup>, the Society of Music Theory (SMT)’s popular music interest group has convened a roundtable discussion on ‘popular music pedagogy’<sup>7</sup>, and the Higher Education Academy held a Popular Music Pedagogy workshop event in January 2014, following the recommendations of Cloonan and Hulstedt’s (2012) mapping report.<sup>8</sup> Efforts are evidently being made to promote PMP as a distinct research area.

### 3.3.2 *How Popular Musicians Learn, and how they are taught*

Discussion relating to the place of popular music in education has taken place in music education research since the 1970s, including some significant book-length studies (notably Vuillamy & Lee, 1983). However, as Green notes in her book *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002), detailed investigations into popular musicians’ learning practices have been minimal, and sometimes taken place outside of music education research in fields such as anthropology and sociology.

The impact of *How Popular Musicians Learn* has been profound and far-reaching. This is both a testament to the value of the study, and a reminder of the Western classical-oriented hegemony that had previously dominated music education, in both research and practice. It would seem that from the vantage points of mainstream music education research, the practices identified in *How Popular Musicians Learn* had hitherto been hidden in plain sight amidst the terrain of potential research; to ask why these commonplace practices had rarely been brought to scholarly light is not to diminish Green’s achievement, but rather to acknowledge that prior to her study a widespread lack of interest within music education research had led to the learning practices of a vast

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6 [www.iaspm-us.net/aboutiaspm/committees/pedagogy](http://www.iaspm-us.net/aboutiaspm/committees/pedagogy), accessed 16/04/12

7 [www.societymusictheory.org/societies/interest/popularmusic/past](http://www.societymusictheory.org/societies/interest/popularmusic/past), accessed 16/04/12

8 [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2014/Seminars/AH/GEN919\\_University\\_of\\_Edinburgh](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/2014/Seminars/AH/GEN919_University_of_Edinburgh), accessed 06/01/14

proportion, perhaps a majority, of the UK's musically active population being ignored.<sup>9</sup> It also highlights the absence of popular musicians' voices within education research, and suggests that few popular musicians have felt inspired, qualified or welcome (or all three) to bring their experiences into the realm of pedagogical research. Notwithstanding the inescapable irony that it was only after established, classically-trained researchers such as Green had focussed on popular music learning practices that the latter achieved exposure to anything like a representative degree, popular musicians are increasingly finding voice in music education research, and this fact owes much to Green's pioneering work.

Although her main focus has been at school level, Green's influence on music pedagogy in higher education has been marked. Emulating as far as possible the learning environments that occur outside of formal education settings has come to be seen as an imperative in popular music pedagogy, as if to safeguard popular music's authenticity from adulteration by 'top-down', transmissive pedagogy. Green's observations in *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2002) have achieved almost axiomatic pre-eminence, and investigations into how popular musicians should or might learn in higher education frequently presuppose the need to maintain the learning practices that occur outside of institutional frameworks (Hewitt, 2009; Lebler, 2007; 2008).

### **3.4 The Current Provision of Higher Popular Music Education in the United Kingdom**

A search of home student Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) degree courses starting in Autumn 2013 (excluding foundation degrees), using the search term 'Popular Music', yielded one hundred and eighteen results. This high number is perhaps misleading, in that many are joint honours programmes, listed separately for each combination (for example, the University of Northampton offers 25 Popular Music degree options, in combination with subjects ranging from Events Management to Human Biology). Some institutions however offer multiple popular music programmes which, while they may share some content, have different emphases and core curricula; the University of Westminster's BA in Commercial Music and BMus in Commercial Music Performance are good examples of this (see nomenclature, below). The majority of programmes are completed in three years of full-time study, although some have a four year 'sandwich' option, some are offered as a two year 'accelerated' degree and some can

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<sup>9</sup> Green's notes (Green, 2002, pp. 217-218) provide a thorough account of exceptions

be studied for part-time. Four courses in the search results were one year ‘top-up’ courses, designed to build upon level 5 qualifications such as 2 year foundation degrees (FdA) and higher national diplomas (HND); although not indicated in the search list generated, many of the institutions offering full degrees in popular music also admit students who have completed a level 5 course of study at another institution (typically a local college of further education) onto the final year of their programme.

Two of the eight UK conservatoires- Leeds College of Music and the Royal College of Music- offer popular music programmes, and Birmingham Conservatoire offers a degree with a large popular music component. The BA Music (Popular) offered by Leeds College of Music featured in the UCAS search results, but the programmes offered by the Royal Northern College of Music (BA Popular Music Performance, in partnership with Access to Music and replacing an earlier FdA degree) and Birmingham Conservatoire (BSc Music Technology) did not, as their applications and admissions are handled through the Conservatoires UK Admissions Service (CUKAS). In addition, there are a number of programmes offered by private institutions such as the Academy of Contemporary Music (ACM, in Guildford), the Brighton Institute of Modern Music (BIMM, with campuses in Brighton, Bristol, Manchester and Dublin) and the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP) in London who maintain validation partnerships for degree awarding purposes. A Higher Education Academy report by Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) offers a more thorough mapping of popular music (or ‘PMS’) programmes available in the UK, although their research drills down from a UCAS search and so does not account for programmes offered by conservatoires or private institutions (see above) other than the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance.

### **3.4.1 A doubly new discipline**

The first programme began in 1990 at the University of Salford. The first incarnation of the BA Commercial Music offered by the University of Westminster- the first explicitly commercial programme (Cloonan, 2005) - followed in 1993. Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) suggest that popular music studies is ‘doubly new’ (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012, p.4), in that not only is it a new academic discipline, but it is offered overwhelmingly by ‘new’ institutions, such as post-92 universities and university colleges. Of the 47 popular music programme providers rendered through Cloonan and Hulstedt’s UCAS search, 27 are new universities and 13 are university colleges or further education colleges (Cloonan and Hulstedt, 2012). Only seven are ‘old’ universities, of which three are members of the Russell Group (Liverpool, Newcastle and Southampton). The growth trajectory for the discipline has

been exponential; of 29 institutions surveyed by Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012), one first delivered its popular music programme 1990, two in 1997 and one in 1999. Seven had introduced their degrees between 2001 and 2006, and eighteen since 2006.

A large number of postgraduate opportunities in fields related to popular music have also emerged over the last two decades, the first being the MA in Popular Music Studies offered since 1993 at the University of Liverpool. The current provision ranges from the broad in scope (such as the aforementioned) across the more narrowly-titled (the MA Beatles, Popular Music and Society offered by Liverpool Hope University) and the creative practice-based (the MMus Songwriting offered by Bath Spa University) to the vocationally focused and industry-oriented (such as the MA Music Industry Management at the University of West London and the MA Audio Production at the University of Westminster). Postgraduate diplomas (PGDip, which are widespread), an MLitt degree (in Popular Music Studies at the University of Glasgow) and most recently an MBA (in Music Industry Management at the University of Reading's Henley Business School, currently the only MBA available) are also offered at level 7. Many universities offer research opportunities at level 8 (MPhil, PhD). While this thesis is concerned primarily with undergraduate degree programmes, this postgraduate presence is important to note, as it further indicates popular music's gains towards academic establishment and recognition, and that an educational path from BTec to post-doctoral research is now possible within the parameters of a dedicated discipline; the interdisciplinarity that has defined popular music education, while still very much in evidence, is now increasingly being accommodated by explicitly 'popular music' focused programmes.

### **3.4.2 Nomenclature**

There are some subtle but illuminating nomenclatural variations among the degrees that have emerged since 1990 (Cloonan, 2012; Parkinson, 2013). Outside of a majority of programmes in just 'popular music' there are, or have been, programmes in 'popular and contemporary music', 'popular and world musics' (University of Leeds, no longer being offered as of 2012), 'popular music performance', 'popular musicology' 'popular music studies', 'popular music production' and 'music (popular)'. Some programmes do not feature the word 'popular' in their title at all; however these programmes' inclusion in the UCAS search suggests that 'popular music' was submitted by the institutions as a search term, and a cursory review of the programmes' webpages reveals them to be essentially 'popular' in emphasis. Among the full degree programmes available (outside of level 5

qualifications), a majority award a BA, a sizeable minority award a BMus and a smaller minority offer BSc degrees.

In many cases these differences in degree type and title do not seem particularly significant (based on programme content indicators, programme aims and outcomes and other information available on programme webpages). In others however, they offer an indication of the content of programmes' curricula, or, less straightforwardly, their underpinning values. The suffix 'performance' is an obvious example, usually indicating that a programme has a high music-making content, oriented towards live performance. Elsewhere however, nomenclature is more subtly emphatic and seemingly chosen on the basis of instinctive understanding or "feel", rather than semantic precision. Indeed, the term 'popular music' is itself rarely defined or delimited in programme literature, or differentiated from other music, but the distinction is understood tacitly. A handful of programmes in 'Commercial Music' and 'Songwriting' were not rendered by the UCAS programme search, which suggests that either a) the provider deliberately sought to differentiate their programme from 'popular music' programmes, or b) they unwittingly limited their UCAS presence by not including 'popular music' as a search term when submitting programme details for inclusion in the UCAS registry of programmes.

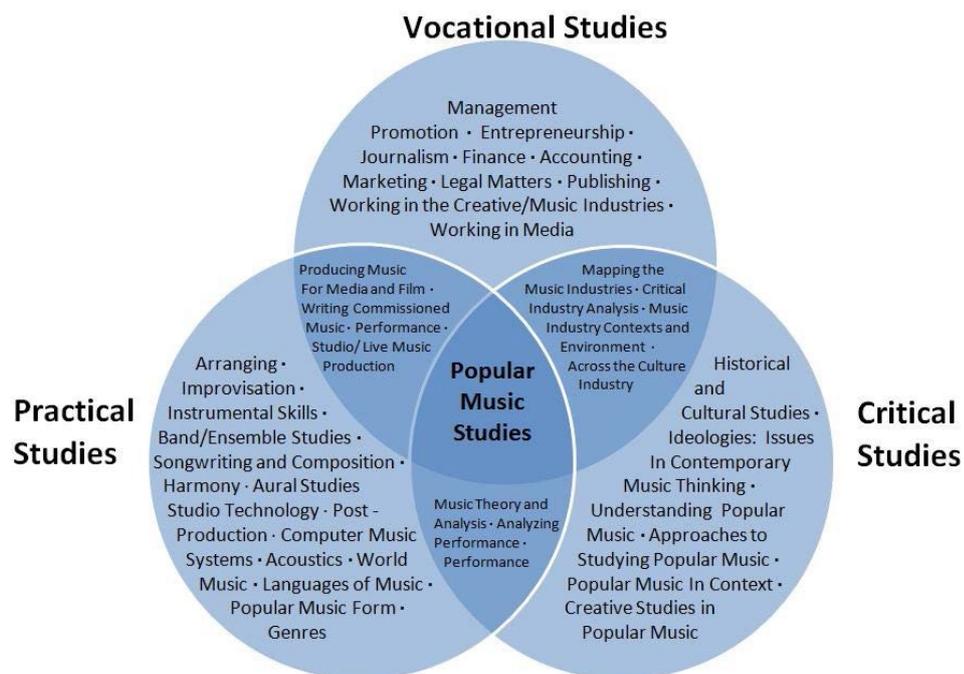
Björnberg (1993) has highlighted the issue of value-laden nomenclature in the Danish context, where the term 'rhythmic music' is widely used. He suggests that while this term is problematic as an analytical concept as it 'focus(es) attention on one single parameter of expression and impl[ies] the classification of other musical styles as 'unrhythmic', 'arhythmic' or 'less rhythmic', it has been pragmatically useful and 'by way of de-emphasising and concealing ideological and social differences between the genres included [...] has been an aid in the process of bringing a vast body of musics from the popular field into the curricula of music education' (Björnberg, 1993, p.71). Considering the UK context, while terms such as 'Commercial Music' are arguably less constraining than 'rhythmic music' from a musical-stylistical point of view, they could also be seen to foreground particular, ideological aspects of popular music. Programme nomenclature is explored within my data analyses, and its significance considered in each case; while I cannot generalise from these cases, I can hypothesise, from this inductive phase of research, that the nomenclature of popular music programmes is a potentially significant, if somewhat enigmatic, indicator of their values.

In addition, Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) note that the nomenclature used in module titles is often ambiguous to the extent that it is hard to discern from programme

literature what constitutes the ‘core’ curriculum of a programme. This is potentially problematic from a marketing perspective because in many cases module overviews are not available to applicants— part of a wider problem of limited programme information available on webpages and prospectuses (Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) note in particular the often glaring omission of programme leader contact details). More ominously, Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) suggest that the opaqueness of curriculum terminology is symptomatic of a much deeper problem, ‘the tip of the iceberg [...], the reality is there appears to be no ‘core’ to popular music studies.’ (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012, p.31)

### 3.5 Programme Content and Emphasis

Cloonan and Hulstedt note (Cloonan, 2005; Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012) that the core content of popular music studies can vary wildly across programmes. In his earlier paper, Cloonan (2005) writes of three main themes within which curricula function- ‘musical’, ‘critical’, ‘vocational’- while acknowledging a high degree of bleed across these distinctions. In his later paper with Hulstedt, (Cloonan and Hulstedt, 2012) Cloonan revises ‘musical’ to ‘practical’ in recognition of the fact that much popular music practice, for example journalism, tour management or audio production, is not strictly musical. The authors provide a useful Venn diagram (figure 2) in which they position a sample of module titles according to emphasis (but see 3.4.2 above for issues relating to the opacity of titles!).



**Figure 2.** Cloonan and Hulstedt’s (2012) sampling of PMS modules

This issue of balancing the practical, critical and vocational aspects of programmes is consistent with current trends within higher education at large. In many cases, Popular Music Studies exemplifies the trends and strategies associated with shifts in higher education practice, such as work-based learning ('WBL'), industry links, and professional practitioners as faculty (Becher & Trowler, 2001). Subject benchmarks specifically for popular music do not as yet exist (and would represent a significant challenge to create given the disparity of the field as identified by Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012)), but popular music programmes are accounted for in the somewhat one-size-fits-all QAA subject benchmarks for music (QAA, 2008). The emphasis on employability, in comparison to broader policy documentation, is surprisingly sparse in the QAA subject benchmark document, suggesting that less pressure is being exerted on music programmes, through policy channels at least, to rationalise their provision in such terms than on other subjects. Thus while popular music curricula typically feature a strong applied emphasis, this cannot easily be attributed to pressures exerted via the mechanisms of government accountability. More obvious factors impacting on the level of applied content are resources (including staff availability and expertise), student expectations and the demands of the music industry (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012).

Within Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) broad categories of practical, critical and vocational, there are significant variations in how those areas are constituted. As already discussed, 'practical' can relate to a wide range of popular music practices, encompassing the musical and extra-musical. 'Vocational' can denote a variety of specific skills and focus on different professional areas. Programme approaches to the 'critical' are equally variable. While 'criticality' is a broad concept, it must at least be seen to demand a theoretical understanding of a subject area; thus the critical aspect of a programme must account for the theoretical framework of its discipline (this is how Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) appear to understand and employ the term). The theoretical aspects of programmes are contingent upon how popular music is conceptualised therein. Fleet's (2008) mapping exercise of the provision of 'musical skills' in popular music programmes in the north east of England includes discussion of how musical knowledge relating to the intrinsic features of music- the relationship between notes, and so on- is incorporated into programmes. However, Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) note that traditional, notational approaches to music theory are rare on popular music programmes. An interview respondent in their study was quick to emphasise that 'popular music is fundamentally from an oral and aural tradition, and that [...] needs to be reflected in the pedagogy— how it is delivered, and the

kinds of understanding that arises from theory and analysis' (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012, p.24). It is frequently argued moreover that focus on extrinsic musical aspects is essential to a theoretical understanding of popular music (for example Middleton, 1990; Moore, 2003; Tagg; 1998), and explicitly or implicitly sociological content in programmes is common.<sup>10</sup> Theorising the nature, status and value of popular music is a key feature of programmes, which Tagg (1998) and Waksman (2010) claim is characterised by an inappropriate obsession with Adorno and the Frankfurt school—a feature which Alan Dumbreck, a grandee of higher popular music education, also refers to and bemoans in his interview with Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012).

Owing in part to its origins, the academic discipline of popular music studies can be seen to exemplify many of the features associated with the changing culture of higher education, and which have precipitated forthright debate thereof. Binaries of theory and practice, of the musical and extra-musical, of informal and formal learning and of scholarship and musicianship, together with different understandings of the parameters of the discipline and indeed its object of study, all contribute to a complex terrain of competing values.

### **3.6 Summary**

This chapter has given an overview of higher popular music education in the UK context, the domain within which this study's investigation takes place. It began by summarising the origins of Western art music and institutional music education, which represent a contextual counterpoint to the origins of popular music and popular music education in the UK; examples were also given of popular music education in an international context, offering a further point of comparison. It went on to discuss higher popular music education in detail, identifying disparities between research and practice and an inherent tension between scholarship and musicianship. It then discussed an emerging body of research concerned with the formal education of popular musicians, and considered the impact of such research on practice. The current reality of UK higher popular music education was then summarised, including provision, access and curriculum content. Issues relating to pedagogical innovation, programme content and nomenclature

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<sup>10</sup> Based on a reading across of programme content as presented on programme websites. Also noted by Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012)

and the discipline's establishment within higher education, all pertinent to this study, were drawn out and discussed.

## CHAPTER 4

### Methodology

This chapter provides a detailed account of my research design and methodology. It begins with a discussion of case study methods, and reviews some literature that has informed my multiple-case study design. It then accounts for data collection, outlining the composition of my data set, justifying my choice of data collection tools and considering some associated theoretical and practical issues. Each instrument is discussed in detail, including a review of relevant methodological literature. My approaches to transcription, coding and analysis are then summarised. Finally, the ethical considerations of the study are discussed.

#### 4.1 A Multiple-Case Study Approach

As discussed in Chapter 1, this study seeks to gain insight into the values at play within the academic field of Higher Popular Music Education in the UK. As such, it takes the academic field at large as its object of inquiry, and offers theoretical propositions that enrich understanding thereof. However, research through literature review and pilot study highlighted a high degree of heterogeneity within Higher Popular Music Education in the UK, and suggested that contextual differences relating to (for example) institutional type and geographical location impacted upon the values held on, inculcated through, and informing music programmes. As such, the study's research design needed to facilitate inductive exploration of these contextual differences, and also allow for the gathering of rich-thick data appropriate to inquiry into a complex phenomenon with human actors. Accordingly, I opted to follow a multiple-case study approach that took four instances of the object of inquiry— that is, four popular music degree programmes purposively selected to account for the dimensions of heterogeneity identified through pilot study and literature review— as its cases and units of analysis (Yin, 2003). This facilitated a comparative framework through which the uniqueness of each case could be considered against the

others. Across the range of case study literature I identified two key methodological theorists whose approaches chimed with my study's requirements. Outlined here are the methodological features of case study as proposed by Yin (2003) and Stake (2003), and my application of them.

Although not exclusively qualitative, case-study research as proposed by Yin (2003) typically involves the gathering of rich-thick data for the purpose of finding out how and why (Yin 2003) phenomena occur. It therefore has an obvious affinity with qualitative methods like interviewing, and with paradigms seeking to enrich understanding of phenomena rather than those pursuing positivist agendas. It was therefore an ideal approach for this study, which sought to gain a deep understanding of music degree programmes by investigating them in-depth. Yin's (2003) summary definition of a case study is as follows:

- 1 A case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when -
- 2 the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident
- 3 The case study inquiry copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis (Yin, 2003, p.13)

Relating this definition to the requirements of this study, it clearly accounted for the apparent reflexivity between context and phenomenon that emerged from the pilot study, and for the many variables potentially impacting upon the interplay of values within the field. Yin's (2003) model thus allowed me to investigate the contemporary phenomenon of popular music in higher education through engaging empirically with the real-life contexts of popular music degree programmes and drawing on multiple data sources. However, I adapted Yin's approach to incorporate Stake's suggestion of using theoretical issues (Stake, 1995), as opposed to narrower propositions, to allow more space for inductive reasoning while still lending focus to data collection and analysis (Stake, 1995). These are outlined below.

## 4.2 Theoretical Issues

My theoretical issues were developed from the findings of the pilot study and from the literature review, and were constructed as follows:

#### **4.2.1 The message systems of education**

As discussed in Chapter 1, I adapted Ball's (1994) idea of 'message systems' through which educational values are transmitted, and identified six: *Curriculum*, *Assessment*, *Pedagogy*, *Institution*, *Lifestyle* and *Market*. This provided a framework against which interview schedules and observation protocols could be formulated.

#### **4.2.2 Authenticity and commercialism**

These categories emerged in the literature review and pilot study as key areas of value struggle in both popular music and higher education.

#### **4.2.3 Art school/conservatoire/business school trialectic**

Pilot study findings, together with informal review of programme webpages, hinted at a range of epistemic approaches within higher popular music education. I expanded upon one respondent's suggestion of an 'Art School'/ 'Conservatoire' dialectic by incorporating 'Business School' as a further approach within a trialectic. The literature reviewed (in particular Cloonan, 2005; Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012) also suggested differences in emphasis along these lines. This issue focused investigation on programmes' epistemic emphases and pedagogical approaches, and the value implications thereof.

#### **4.2.4 Locale**

This issue, also derived from the pilot study and literature review (in particular Papageorgi et. al, 2010a), focused attention on the impact of locale-specific factors (available resources, cultural heritage, socio-cultural norms and traditions, industry and economy, local educational policy) on value formation.

#### **4.2.5 Canon**

This issue arose from the literature review. It focused on evidence of canons, whether musical, cultural, educational or other, that might inform the emphases and practices of the cases.

#### **4.2.6 Transactional and principle values**

This issue arose from the literature review. It focused on the interplay of *transactional* values of benefit and sacrifice, and *principle* values relating to issues such as

educational purpose, cultural value and social justice, in how the value of higher popular music education was appraised and rationalised.

#### **4.2.7 Macro, Meso, Micro**

These distinctions derived from Skelton's (2012) notion of three domains in which values operate within education, which are adapted to serve as levels (see Chapter 2, p.19). This issue relates to the proposition that values deriving from macro (the state, wider society), meso (the institution) and the micro (the programme and its human subjects) interact.

These issues guided inquiry towards the theoretical foci of the study. They were addressed through data collection, and thus have an inevitable bearing on the themes that emerged through analysis (see Chapter 6).

Yin (2003) advises drawing up protocols before beginning fieldwork in order to keep the study targeted on the appropriate foci and enable the researcher to anticipate potential problems in advance. I drew up protocols based on Yin's (2003) model for each case prior to data collection. Each protocol functioned as a critical 'to-do' list, forcing me not only to plan and order tasks scrupulously but also to justify to myself the appropriateness of methods used. They also reminded me to consider mundane issues such as practical resources (having enough pens, batteries in the recorder, etc) and money (such as when to buy cheap train tickets). A particularly useful feature of Yin's (2003) approach is a system for ordering questions into levels according to their scope. Within this system, level one questions are 'unit of data collection' questions, such as a researcher might ask a participant during an interview. Level two questions on the other hand relate to the 'unit of analysis' (the case); they are questions asked by the researcher of him/herself during and after data collection. These distinctions remind researchers to consider whether questions asked during data collection (level one questions) are relevant to the research foci, and, in studies where the unit of analysis is institutional as it is here, they ensure that a researcher's focus does not shift too much towards individuals and away from the wider case. Levels three and four contain questions for consideration after data collection and analysis has ended, such as how the study complements or contradicts existing research. Although these remain unanswered during the case study process, Yin (2003) advises they should be included in protocols because they exert a quality control influence, helping again to emphasise the focal parameters and objectives of the study. These questions are however primarily addressed during theoretical triangulation (see Chapter 7)

Tensions might be seen to exist between Yin's (2003) guidelines for case study research and approaches to analysis that seek to understand that which is not always made explicit. For example, Yin (2003) warns that inference drawn from textual data can lead to 'false leads' (p103), which might be seen to contradict the pursuit of second-order meaning through techniques such as discourse and document analysis. While mindful of Yin's concerns however, I found that the case-study model itself did not hold any inherent restrictions regarding how analysis could be conducted, and could comfortably accommodate my analysis strategies (reported in 4.6, Analysis).

In the presentation of my case studies I have drawn on the recommendations of both Yin (2003) and Stake (1995). In particular, I have followed Yin's (2003) fourth suggested model for reporting multiple-case studies, in which the findings from all cases are presented together according to common themes, contexts or chronologies, followed by cross-case discussion. This takes place within Chapters Six and Seven.

However, I have also taken Stake's (1995) suggestion of offering descriptions for each case in order to allow the reader to engage vicariously with the 'feel' and identity of the cases as the researcher has experienced them, and also to 'remind the reader that the report is just one person's encounter with a complex case' (Stake, 1995, p.123). The summary profiles presented in Chapter 5 serve these same functions as well as giving descriptive, contextual information for each case in advance of the cross-case findings presented in Chapter 6.

### **4.3 Data Collection**

This section gives an account of my choice of data and collection instruments: institutional literature, observation, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. These are addressed in turn (Table 2, p.83, details the data collected for each case).

#### **4.3.1 Institutional literature**

Atkinson and Coffey's (2011) assertion that social settings can be self-documenting is particularly apposite in the context of education, where written texts accompany and shape all facets of educational practice. Atkinson and Coffey (2011) add that in spite of this, much contemporary social science research privileges orally-transmitted data to the extent that 'organisational and even educational settings are implicitly represented as devoid of written documents' (p.78). This downplays the ubiquity

of documents within social life, and the active roles they play in shaping values and practice. Within a study such as this that seeks to understand subjective realities, with the proviso that subjectivity can be obscured within institutions, institutional texts must be seen to represent ‘documentary realities’ (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p.77) that are as worthy of attention as those that are orally-transmitted. My inquiry into the values operating within popular music degree programmes therefore needed to give due attention to the documentary realities existing within the cases under focus, with ‘a clear understanding of how documents are produced, circulated, read, stored and used’ (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011, p.79). Documents like handbooks and websites needed to be treated as primary data rather than background literature, equal in value to interview- and observation-generated data and just as ripe for analysis.

A dataset was generated by collating important written texts associated with each case. While permission was granted by gatekeepers to access some internal literature such as programme and module handbooks, most texts were readily accessible in the public domain. Documents included: prospectuses; websites; other promotional literature or artifacts (e.g. promotional CDs, films); programme and module handbooks; assessment criteria. Texts were coded and analysed using a mixture of content, discourse and semiotic analysis techniques (discussed under 4.6, Analysis).

### **4.3.2 Observation**

During visits to each case site, I recorded observations concurrently with other data collection activities. Observations could refer to location, décor, the size of spaces, or to activities such as (as featured in one case) performances in communal areas or (as featured in another) an informal jam between students in an open classroom. I created an observation record sheet to structure my observations, divided into ‘banks’ according to different foci. This served as a sort of preliminary coding process, and provided a more approachable foundation for analysis later on. Where an observation related to more than one bank, it was recorded twice, with cross-references.

Stake (1995) notes that observational records of this kind have researcher-oriented and reader-oriented functions; they lead the researcher to develop a better understanding of a case (the primary purpose of data), but can also help to construct a descriptive impression to give readers vicarious experiences (Stake, 1995, see Chapter 5) of being present within the case. I kept these dual functions in mind when making observations, and highlighted notes that could be used descriptively to enrich readers’ mental impressions in addition to

being analysed as data. A third function of observation records was to provide me with interview stimuli; this is discussed below in relation to interview design.

As discussed above, these observations were made throughout site visits, and concurrently with other methods of data collection. As such, while they followed a protocol, they were not bound to a rigid, time-dependent structure. To ensure that my presence was unintrusive, I adopted inconspicuous vantage points where possible, and rather than walk around with my clipboard 'primed', I stopped periodically to record notes.

### **4.3.3 Staff interviews**

Interviews were conducted with teaching staff at each institution. Prospective participants were selected on the basis of their role within the programme, the amount of time they had been working on the programme (new members of staff were avoided), and their availability. In the first instance I contacted a gatekeeper from each case, identified through preliminary internet research. In three cases these were programme leaders but in one case was a non-teaching principal. Once permission to undertake research at each institution was granted I sent each gatekeeper an email for forwarding to teaching staff, explaining my research and inviting them to participate in an interview. Response to these emails was nil in all cases except one, where four members of staff volunteered their time. For the other three cases I sent a further round of emails, targeted to individual staff members, but this also generated a nil response. Despite this however, I was ultimately able to interview the programme leaders of three cases, and the deputy programme leader and admissions tutor for the fourth. I interviewed a further two members of staff at one institution. Interviews lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes. Three interviews were conducted by telephone and three were conducted face-to-face during site visits.

### **4.3.4 Semi-structured interview**

As noted by Rubin and Rubin (1995), there are differences in design and approach for interviews that seek answers to specific questions, and those with a non-positivist agenda that seek to draw out subjective meanings, behaviours and feelings. Since my needs fitted with the latter (although I occasionally checked facts and asked more specific questions relating to dates, resources etc) I chose a semi-structured interview design. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews are an ideal tool for generating detailed 'pictures', as they give the researcher (as interviewer) the flexibility to pursue emerging themes and issues as they arise, and engender an atmosphere conducive to interviewees presenting

their thoughts freely and reflectively, and in which they are more likely to 'make explicit what might hitherto have been implicit' (Arksey & Knight, 1999, p.32). Rather than following a rigid, itemised question format, I devised interview schedules that were non-sequential and made up of key words, concepts and phrases rather than fully formulated questions, to serve as aide-memoires (see Appendix IV). This helped to achieve the desired free-flowing conversational feel, diffusing potential issues of confidence and trust, and encouraged critical reflection in both interviewee and interviewer. For example, when discussing course design, teaching method and personal values, the open, semi-structured conversation gave space for participants to expand upon, qualify and justify their statements, where a rigid schedule of questioning might have felt leading or limiting.

A potential danger of semi-structured interviews is their occasional tendency to meander away from the research objectives, leading to a glut of surplus data of limited relevance. This can significantly inflate the task of sorting and coding responses, and can also corrode the analytical focus if categories are created that do not correspond to the research questions. To guard against this I made sure that interview schedules corresponded to the study's theoretical issues, and made a conscious attempt during interviews to be assertive in drawing conversation back to the research issues.

***First-phase interview questioning.*** Although semi-structured interviews do not follow a rigid, linear approach, allowing for flexibility in terms of when and how issues are discussed, I nonetheless collated the themes and issues into two 'phases'. The first phase of each interview focused on participants' musical, professional and educational perspectives, in order to generate an in-depth understanding of the formative experiences, beliefs and values underpinning their practice and understanding of popular music in (/and) higher education. I encouraged participants to discuss their own musical and educational backgrounds and the musical, educational and professional values they held. This phase also served to 'warm up' the participants, providing opportunities for them to talk at length about something they were familiar with (their own lives and beliefs).

***Second-phase interview questioning.*** The second phase of each interview was geared towards addressing my theoretical issues, and required participants to discuss more specific aspects of their programmes and relate this to their personal values. Where the themes of discussion aligned with insights gained through other data types, I sought participants' perspectives regarding my field notes and/or documentary data, and, in cases where I had observed the interviewee teaching, my observations thereof. This aspect of the interview was informed by stimulated recall methodology, though it did not itself qualify

as such; stimulated recall in education research typically involves making a video recording of a lesson or other educational event, which is then used to stimulate a participant's (usually the teacher's) memory (Calderhead, 1981). The participant is then asked to explain certain behaviours or actions highlighted by the researcher, in order for the researcher to identify the cognitive systems behind decision-making. It is favoured in education research as an alternative to 'think-aloud' approaches that may be considered too disruptive for classroom settings (Lyle, 2003). For the purposes of this study however I felt that video had the potential to be disruptive, particularly where creative practice might take place. Moreover it might arouse suspicion as to the purposes of my collecting video footage; institutional gatekeepers can be happy for a researcher to visit and observe but can often object to what they perceive as 'bulletproof evidence' (Eberle & Maeder, 2011, p.66) being taken. Since the focus of my interviews was not solely on pedagogic practice and I did not seek to stimulate participants' recall of specific instances in their own teaching practice but rather to respond to a broader range of informal observations (detailed above), field notes were a more suitable and practical means of stimulating participant reflection. I incorporated descriptive statements from my observation notes into interview schedules, relaying an observation statement to the participant and then asking them to expound upon it if they could and wished. For example:

Tom: it was interesting, [...] some of the groups were entirely different to one another in how they responded to the task at hand, and in their interactions with each other.

DPL: Yes

Tom: And the fact that it was a peer review exercise, but also a sort of peer assessment thing. Does peer assessment occur a lot on the course, across other modules in a similar way?

(Extract from an interview with a programme leader)

#### **4.3.5 Student interviews and focus groups**

As with staff interviews, once I had secured permission from institutional gatekeepers I asked them to circulate an email to all students within each case, in which I detailed my research project and invited them to participate in focus groups and interviews on the date of my forthcoming site visit. While response to these emails was in all cases nil, all of the students I eventually recruited for participation remembered having received an email and were thus already familiar with my project, reducing the need to explain on

the spot. I recruited students during my site visits by approaching them and asking them to participate. Institution D's deputy programme leader and Institution A's programme leader presented me to the students at the end of a lecture, explaining who I was and why I was visiting that day, and that I would be grateful of their participation in my research. At Institution C I was shown by the programme leader to the student common room and introduced to the students who were present, but unfortunately no popular music students were among them at that time.

I had hoped to conduct at least one individual student interview and one student focus group at each site, but due to poor email response, and to unforeseen circumstances during site visits, I was unable to meet this target (except at Institution A, where I exceeded it). However I was granted individual student interviews at all cases except Institution C, and focus groups everywhere except Institution D. Ultimately therefore, while my exact target was not met, I was still able to gather multiple student perspectives from each case (see Table 2 hereafter).

**Table 2.** Data make-up for each case.

|                            | <b>Institution A</b>  | <b>Institution B</b>   | <b>Institution C</b>   | <b>Institution D</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Staff interview</b>     | 1 (by telephone)  | 3 (2 face to face, 1 by telephone)   | 1 (face to face, during site visit)  | 1 (by telephone)   |
| <b>Student interview</b>   | 2 (face to face)  | 1 face to face, during site visit  | 0  | 2 (1 by telephone, 1 face to face)   |
| <b>Student focus group</b> | 3 (12 students)   | 1 (4 students)   | 1 (3 students)   | 0  |
| <b>Site visits</b>         | 1   | 2  | 1  | 2  |
| <b>Lesson observation</b>  | 1 (informal)  | 1  | 0  | 2  |
| <b>Documents</b>           | Programme specification, programme webpages, university website, employability statement, Key Information Set, prospectus | Institutional website, programme webpages, programme specification, QAA institutional audit report | Programme specification, programme webpages, university website, employability statement, Key Information Set, promotional CD, promotional video | Module and programme specifications, programme webpages, university website, employability statement, Key Information Set, prospectus, promotional video |

All individual student interviews were conducted face-to-face during site visits, except for one conducted via telephone and one conducted face-to-face at a later date (both Institution D students). These lasted between thirty minutes and seventy minutes. A two-phase approach, similar to that used for staff interviews, was used. Focus groups were recruited either by approaching individuals, requesting their participation and asking them to convey the request to their peers, or by approaching entire groups (outside of rehearsal rooms, for example). The focus group sessions lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes. As with the staff interviews, a first phase was conducted in which I asked about their musical backgrounds, followed by a second phase in which the discussion was open, and concerned their experiences of studying on (and reasons for choosing to study on) the programme, their musical values, their professional/vocational aspirations and so on.

The decision to use focus groups for gathering student data was practical as well as epistemological. In practical terms, focus groups enable researchers to gather data from a range of participants in the same sitting. Given the restraints of time, place and calendar, they were a valuable addition to one-to-one interviews as they gave me access to the

perspectives of far more students within the limited data-collecting opportunities I had available than if I had only conducted one-to-one interviews.

Although I did not formally test focus groups as a data collection tool in my pilot study I had used them professionally in the past while working as a programme administrator in a conservatoire (immediately prior to beginning my PhD study). The context in which I had conducted focus groups (as part of module and course evaluation for music degree courses) was comparable enough to the current context for me to feel confident of having tested focus group interview for its appropriateness, and for my ability to use it effectively.

An unfortunate result of the history of focus group research methods (they were first used in commercial market research and only later adopted by academic research communities) is that much of the methodological literature available on focus group research covers approaches that would be unsuitable in a social science context, or would at least need to be significantly adapted. Such texts can be useful in highlighting relevant operational issues, but the epistemological space separating market research approaches and social research approaches should be mindfully acknowledged when drawing up a focus group design. Market research focus groups tend to use groups formed purposively from strangers (thus avoiding any prior ‘group status’) for reasons of representativeness, because the information yielded by the focus group is intended to reflect the opinions of wider populations, or markets. In such contexts, any peculiarity in or of groups might negate this representative function. Within social research however, using pre-existing groups can have many advantages (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas & Robson, 2001). In practical terms, using pre-existing groups can dramatically reduce the time required to recruit participants, as arrangements can be made with representatives who can in turn communicate with the other members on the researcher’s behalf, and furthermore a pre-existing collective identity can promote a shared sense of responsibility for attendance and participation, helping to reduce the chance of no-shows. In addition, familiarity within a group can help to maintain productive levels of conversation because the prospect of interaction with strangers, which might daunt shy and reticent participants, is removed. Further still, participants are likely to be familiar with their fellow members’ conversational styles, and can feel more comfortable interrupting or interjecting, safe in the knowledge that they will not cause offence. Finally, pre-existing group members are often familiar with each other’s experiences and can remind each other of illuminating details, anecdotes, and so on. Where the level of familiarity is closer to that of friends than

acquaintances, this can extend further to group members challenging each other's opinions. From an epistemological perspective, the use of pre-existing groups can arguably generate more "natural" data, because the focus group event is more similar to a naturally-occurring one. Members may speak in the same argot used to communicate with each other outside of the focus group, allowing the researcher to access the terminology and phraseology in which participants naturally couch and construct their experiences and perspectives.

It should be emphasised that focus groups, and in particular those using pre-existing social groups, offer more than an opportunity to interview individuals simultaneously, and data should not solely be reduced to a collection of individuals' responses during analysis. They also yield data relating to collective judgements (Bloor et al., 2001), and to the normative assumptions that are drawn upon in making them. Indeed, they are uniquely powerful in this respect because these normative assumptions will usually go unexamined; within a focus group however, the researcher can draw them to light and lead the group to reflect upon them. Further still, as Kitzinger (1994) suggests, pre-existing focus groups 'provide one of the social contexts within which ideas are formed and decisions are made' (p.105)— the dynamics of the focus group setting not only reveal normative assumptions, but can potentially reveal the social processes that underlie, reinforce and generate them.

Pre-existing groups were used in all cases, although the nature and extent of their prior association varied; some were members of the same module groups, some were members of musical ensembles and some were from friendship groups. Incorporating different types of group into a study design is recommended by Bloor et al. (2001) as a more feasible alternative to reconvening focus groups as it allows for contextual variety to be brought to bear on data analysis. In all groups, participants appeared at ease with each other and comfortable expressing themselves within the group.

It is commonly advised that the ideal focus group should have between six and eight participants (Bloor et al., 2001). However, acknowledging that focus groups can mirror naturally occurring settings in which collective judgements are formulated, it seemed appropriate to study the interactions of groups of a naturally occurring size. Within popular music, ensembles typically comprise three to five members (this is the case not only within instrumental genres such as rock and funk, but also within vocal-oriented pop, rap and electronica, and even DJ cohorts). In my personal experience as a musician, groups of this size tend to be conducive to collaboration and openness; adding extra participants to such pre-existing groups would risk jeopardising these dynamics. Similarly, within a

higher education context, collaborative projects typically involve small groups, and such groups are again usually lateral rather than hierarchical. In general therefore it was reasonable to assume that groups of this size would feel familiar and natural to music students whose social lives functioned around (and perhaps even entirely within) their musical and educational lives. No focus group had fewer than three, and most had four or five participants.

Greenbaum (2006) warns that not everyone possesses the requisite skills or attributes to moderate focus groups. He lists seven ‘natural characteristics’ that a focus group moderator should possess: ‘Superior Listening Ability’; ‘Excellent Short-Term Auditory Memory’; ‘Well-Organized’; ‘A Quick Learner’; ‘High Energy Level’; ‘Personable [nature]’ and ‘Well-Above-Average Intelligence’ (Greenbaum, 2006, pp.77–78). This list served as a valuable reminder of my duties as a moderator, and of my potential strengths and weaknesses.

Perhaps the most significant characteristic listed above is short-term auditory memory. According to Greenbaum (2006) this is essential for two reasons; the first, that it enables the researcher to recall the salient points of the interview for the purpose of report writing, is less important in social research, where more rigorous data capture methods such as audio recording should ideally be used. The second reason— recall during the focus group— is however pertinent. The researcher must be able to remember what participants have said throughout in order to establish ‘working’ themes, prompt discussion and identify any inconsistencies or changes in participants’ views. To aid this element of moderation I found it useful to note down short, one- or two-word memoranda on my interview schedules.

Choosing venues for interviews and focus groups was a balancing act between privacy and informality. Educational spaces were often in high demand for teaching, music making and other activities. On the other hand, communal spaces were noisy, and held the risk of participants becoming distracted by their colleagues and friends, or of the sessions being interrupted unintentionally by outsiders. I decided that cafes or pubs would be good sites to conduct focus groups as they provided comfortable seating and refreshments and were typically only a short walk from the case sites. For one case I was able to conduct focus groups in the student union café, and for another two in local pubs of the students’ choosing. I incentivised all interviews to the best of my financial ability by providing coffee, or polite quantities of beer if preferred.

Some of the advantages, discussed above, associated with the dynamics of focus groups can have disadvantageous counterparts. For example, while familiarity among a pre-existing group can be productive because it mitigates against potential shyness, it may also have the opposite effect of suppressing the voices of members who, within a group of strangers, might feel liberated from peer pressure and social expectation and express themselves more freely. As a result, what might appear as points of consensus within a focus group may in fact reflect pressure felt by participants to align themselves with dominant perspectives. As discussed above, however, as well as seeking the opinions of the members of the focus groups, I was interested in the processes by which normative social values are formed. I therefore had to moderate the focus groups in such a way that engaged the quieter group members and encouraged a plurality of perspectives, and at the same time recognised the event as an instance of social dynamism and made room for this to be explored.

A number of other disadvantages associated with focus groups needed to be considered. Firstly, because of the free flow of discussion and the number of voices potentially speaking at the same time within a focus group, an overwhelming amount of irrelevant text can be generated. There was no easy solution to this problem other than to moderate closely; ultimately it was felt that the fundamental strengths of the focus group method should not be put at risk by time-saving adaptations, and that free, natural conversation, even where it meandered to a time-consuming degree, was preferable to concise but overly-guided conversation.

#### **4.4 Recording and Transcription**

Interviews were recorded using a small digital voice recorder. This was always clearly visible but unobtrusive, and successfully recorded the interviews clearly, with the exception of a few occasions where the level of background noise was high. In order to facilitate substantive and discourse analysis strategies, the interview recordings were transcribed verbatim. I tried to transcribe speech as faithfully as possible by including non-lexical utterances such as ‘umm’ and ‘er’, and where interviews were conducted face to face, noting contextually significant non-verbal elements, such as facial expressions, nodding, gesticulation and so on. In order to enhance readability however, interview data are presented in the thesis (Chapter 6) in smooth verbatim, with non-lexical utterances omitted and significant non-verbal elements (such as laughter) noted in brackets.

As with the one-on-one interviews, I recorded focus groups using a digital voice recorder and noted significant non-verbal features such as gesticulation and facial expressions, registering the time at which they occurred so as to be able to incorporate them into the transcriptions easily. In addition however I needed to be able to indicate where participants interjected or spoke at the same time. For this reason I used Celtx, an easy-to-use freeware scriptwriting programme which divides the transcript where necessary into two columns to accommodate passages of dual/multiple dialogue (two or more participants are speaking at once):

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>That's certainly what I felt at the time, yeah. I mean, I couldn't wait to just get on and start making music, I hadn't really given much thought to the other stuff</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>Definitely</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>Yeah</p>   |  |
| <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>That's...for me that's...</p>  |  |
| <p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>I wanted to start playing with all the amazing equipment that was here, yeah I mean I was really impressed with that, it was all really professional and...</p>          | <p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>Definitely</p> |

## 4.5 Practical Constraints

The educational focus of the study imposed some practical restraints on the research design. All data collection needed to take place during an academic year running approximately from early October until early April, when assessment began. In addition, winter and spring breaks of around three weeks each, and reading weeks, all reduced the time available for data collection. Still more complications arose from the part-time or visiting status of teaching staff whose timetables were contingent upon parallel professional commitments, and from student work experience placements conducted during term time. Because of these restrictions it was necessary to gather large amounts of data in short, concerted bursts during the second term of the academic year. A chronologically-phased approach was not therefore feasible. The iterative possibilities of data capture were therefore limited to an inevitable degree, as I was unable to pursue emerging issues through multiple interviews with the same participants. However,

processes of member validation (Kvale, 2007) allowed for limited revisiting of themes emerging from initial data.

## **4.6 Analysis**

I had employed grounded theory methods of analysis for the pilot study, in particular Charmaz's coding techniques of 'selective', 'open' and 'axial' coding (Charmaz, 2006). While I found coding to be effective for ordering interview data according to emerging themes, I did not feel it was necessary to separate the process into these three rigid phases. Not only can such a meticulously prescribed approach be restrictive, but the technical jargon it employs can convolute research reports for readers. Moreover, within the literature of grounded theory technical definitions and terminology can differ according to whose approach one follows, and I wanted to avoid any ambiguities or misunderstandings that might result from this. Instead I sought a method of analysis that facilitated thematic coding but dispensed with technical jargon in favour of plain, approachable language; the Inductive Approach as outlined by Thomas (2006) offered such a method. Like grounded theory, it allows findings to emerge according to themes through multiple re-readings of raw data, and works 'upwards' from the data to formulate theory. In this respect, the approach concurs with Yin's (2003) idea of 'analytical generalisation' (p.36) (in contrast to statistical generalisation) in which case study data can be 'generalised to theory' (p.37).

Research studies are arguably never entirely inductive, since the formulation of research questions inevitably involves a degree of deductive reasoning and is typically preceded and accompanied by reading across related literature. What is important however is that within the Inductive Approach (Thomas, 2006) the coding and analysis of primary data proceeds inductively, through identifying and refining thematic categories as they emerge from readings and re-readings of raw data. These categories are given plain-language names and short descriptions. Statements of text are then allocated to the most appropriate category, and if necessary to more than one category. If categories become bloated or amorphous, subordinate categories are created. Finally, links are identified between categories, and choice statements are identified that can be used to demonstrate the internal dynamics of each category (contradictions, tensions, and so on). The desired outcome from this process is a summative framework of categories that conveys the key themes inherent in the raw data.

Some epistemological issues needed to be considered in relation to coding. Firstly, analytical approaches of this kind typically build categories according to what participants actually say; indeed, software packages used for qualitative analysis use keyword recognition as part of the code building process. However, in discourse analysis, the researcher must also pay attention to what is *not* said- the non-explicit and non-literal- when drawing inferences. In response to these issues I strove to adopt two analytical modes that accounted for these different levels of meaning. Informed by Ford's (2010) adaptation of Anderson's (2003, cited in Ford, 2010) model of first- and second-order observations, I initially read across data in a first-order mode, focusing on their literal and explicit meanings and resisting the urge to draw inference. In doing so I identified themes that were straightforwardly present in the data. I then re-read the data adopting a second-order mode of analysis, which sought to understand why and how those categories existed- what implicit discourses, processes, struggles or norms gave rise to categories, and by what means- and adapted the thematic categories accordingly where necessary.

**Table 3.** First and second order analysis model adapted from Ford (2010).

| First phase analysis                                     | Second phase analysis  |
|--|--|
| What is being said?                                      | Why is it being said? What does it mean?                       |
| What categories are emerging?                            | Why are these categories emerging?                             |
| What are subjects' perspectives? What is being espoused? | What do themes reveal about tacit values, knowledge and norms? |

This dual approach forced me to maintain an awareness of the need on the one hand to look beyond the explicit, challenge the taken-for-granted and draw to light hidden values, and on the other that of faithfully representing participants, institutions and phenomena and producing findings that would withstand scrutiny in terms of validity. It also supported Yin's (2003) two-level inference model, according to which level one inferences are straightforward interpretations of specific pieces of empirical data, and level two inferences are more abstract and work towards theory building.

#### 4.6.1 Observation data

An inductive approach can be used to analyse multiple data sets (Thomas, 2006) and thus allows for documentary data and observation notes to be coded into categories together with interview and focus group data. As discussed above (p.78) observation notes

had already been allocated to thematic banks during data collection according to observation protocols. This aided the process of coding the notes into categories alongside interview and focus group data as part of first-order analysis.

#### **4.6.2 Interview data**

Although Bloor et al. (2001) suggest that coding should ideally be kept ‘indigenous’ (p.7) by constructing categories in the argots with which participants construct their experiences, to avoid misunderstanding and misrepresentation, this is problematic where it involves multiple data sets (such as, in this case, interviews with staff and student focus groups) reflecting multiple participants and multiple argots. I decided therefore to construct coding categories using the language in which the research report was to be written. By taking this approach, I was able to code jargon-heavy and slang-heavy interview and focus group statements into the same framework of categories, and the use of (smooth) verbatim quotations in the thesis preserves participants’ constructions for readers.

#### **4.6.3 Document analysis**

I analysed institutional literature using techniques of discourse analysis and semiotic analysis. As with interview data, a glossary of terms was maintained in order that synonyms and connected phrases could be recognised during coding. I read documents and coded whole sentences or statements into categories according to themes; as such, the process was conducted in much the same way as that of analysing and coding interview transcripts. Extra-textual elements of documents such as images, visual design and, in the case of some web pages, sound and video, were described in note form in much the same way as for field observations. This allowed for these elements to be categorised alongside textual data.

#### **4.6.4 Triangulation and cross-case comparison**

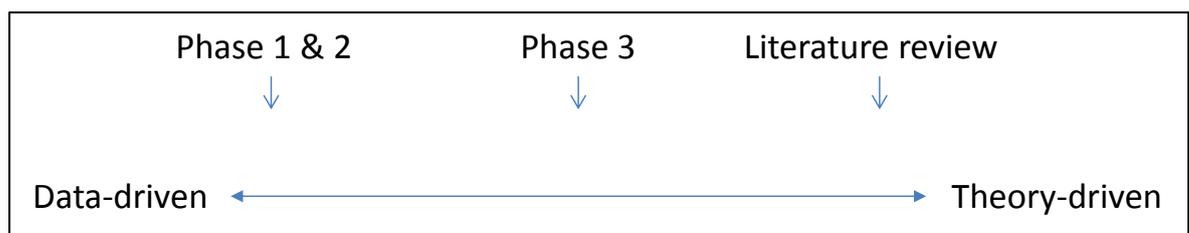
Once each of the data sets had been coded into categories and analysed, three phases of triangulation began. It must be stressed that triangulation in qualitative research is not validatory in a manner equivalent to replication in science (Bloor et al., 2001); different methods yield different kinds of data that are not directly equivalent, and dissonance between data sets in triangulation may well be as welcome and crucial to findings as agreement, and form the basis of conclusions. Data triangulation should

therefore be regarded as a process of critical comparison with the aim of deepening understanding, rather than as a means of assessing the validity of data.

The first phase of triangulation was within-case data triangulation; a comparative examination of all data collected for each institution, looking out for similarities and differences in findings between data sources. Thematic categories were synthesised across data sets to create new themes into which all forms of data could be allocated. This phase resulted in a coded data bank for each case containing data from all data sources: staff interviews; individual student interviews; student focus groups; observation (field) notes; documentation. It was also at this phase of analysis that the majority of surplus data were eliminated, although in order to allow for raw data to be revisited in light of themes that had emerged within other cases surplus data were not dispensed with entirely until the end of analysis. The coded data bank documents formed the basis for the next phase of cross-case triangulation. In the interests of readability they are omitted from the body of the thesis, but an example document can be found in Appendix V.

The second phase involved triangulation across cases, and was broadly equivalent to cross-case analysis as described by Yin (2003). The documents generated in the first phase were read and re-read in light of the themes that had emerged in each case, and where necessary raw data were revisited. New cross-case thematic categories were created, each structured internally according to comparisons across cases. The results of this process are presented as findings in Chapter 6.

The last phase was theoretical triangulation, and is represented in Chapter 7. This involved a critical drawing-together of the findings presented in Chapter 6 and the discussion of existing research, policy and theory undertaken in Chapters 2 and 3, and the initial research objectives as determined in Chapter 1, in order to orient the study's findings within wider contexts. As such, the theoretical triangulation phase marked a move away from a strictly data-driven approach towards a more theory-aware phase of inquiry in which theory was brought to bear on findings. The phasing is illustrated in Figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Phases of analysis

## 4.7 Validation

To ensure the validity of interview data, three phases of validation as recommended by Kvale (2007)— ‘member validation’, ‘peer validation’ and ‘audience validation’ (p.125)— were followed. Member validation involved sending interview transcripts and summary analyses to participants, along with an offer to see a completed findings chapter in which their verbatim interview data were presented ‘in the round’ (this offer was taken up by three interviewees). This was done with all staff interviewees, as per ethical guidelines (see 4.8), and also for one student interviewee, for indicative purposes. Comments, corrections and clarifications were invited, and in three instances were returned. This ensured that the data presented within the thesis were free of transcription errors, and also that participants remained happy for their statements to be included, having been given the opportunity to review them with hindsight. In addition to validating the original interview data, this phase of validation also yielded additional data in the form of clarifications and elaborations, which were incorporated into my analyses.

Peer validation involves having the interview data checked and reviewed by fellow researchers in the field. Due to the condition stipulated in my ethical approval documents that only myself and my supervisors should see the interview transcripts in their original form, I was unable to show them to any third parties. However, my supervisors were experienced researchers with expertise in related fields, and thus clearly met the criteria specified by Kvale (2007) for peer validators. In addition, my supervisors were shown the data at all stages of coding and analysis, and their reflections thereof helped me to consider alternative inferences, as recommended by Kvale (2007) and Yin (2003). In addition, following member validation a specimen within-case coding document was shown to a fellow doctoral researcher who was asked to provide comments concerning their impression of the appropriateness of my coding categories, and the placing of data therein. I was satisfied that this combination of peer reviewing was sufficient to fulfil the requirements of peer validation.

The third validation phase, audience validation, involved presenting the data to its intended audience and gathering feedback relating to their impressions of the validity of its presentation. While the majority of data, at the time of writing, has yet to be published in written form, I had various opportunities to present interim findings at conferences, research seminars, and other events. This allowed me to gather audience feedback on my

methodology, my theoretical framework, my data and analyses thereof, which informed my inquiry throughout, helping to assure the validity of all aspects of the research.

## **4.8 Ethics**

All participants in the study were over the age of eighteen and none could be considered vulnerable adults (in accordance with The Police Act 1997 (Enhanced Criminal Record Certificates) (Protection of Vulnerable Adults) Regulations 2000). The research was conducted in naturalistic settings, and the instruments used were chosen in part for their being comfortable for participants. There was therefore little risk of serious physical, mental or emotional harm to participants resulting from the research process. Nonetheless, some complex ethical issues needed to be considered. These related to: the risk of actual or perceived impact upon participants' professional image; possible disturbance to the learning environment and experiences of case populations and damage to institutional public image.

A first step to approaching the ethical dimensions of the study was to construct a 'Hippocratic oath' of general principles that the study would adhere to. This was informed by the reading of a range of ethics literature, and drawn up in reference to the British Educational Research Association (BERA)'s ethical guidelines (2011) and the British Sociological Association Statement of Practice (2004). It can be found in Appendix I.

Eberle and Maeder (2011) note that research participants in ethnographic studies within organisational contexts are simultaneously informants for the researcher, and members of the institution under scrutiny. While this was not an ethnographic study, their observation is nonetheless relevant; a recognition of participants' dual roles is necessary for most organisational studies conducted by 'outsiders'. In adopting this dual role, a participant takes a degree of risk because he or she must consider the possibility of ramifications upon their status within the organisation. The researcher, via processes of analysis, reconstructs behaviours, tacit knowledge and other manifestations of routine practice (Eberle & Maeder, 2011), in effect taking ownership of statements away from participants and assuming authority over their meaning. Wariness and mistrust on the part of participants are understandable, and the researcher has a responsibility to preserve participants' public image as a matter of respect and gratitude.

Teaching staff were encouraged to share their individual experiences and perspectives as actors within institutions, but were simultaneously functionaries and

professional representatives of those institutions. In some instances, a degree of unease emanated from this dual position; participants and gatekeepers sought reassurances that I did not intend to pit them ‘against’ other members of staff or other institutions, that I was not seeking to identify approaches as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ and that I was not questioning their professional integrity in general. Their anxieties understandably related to how they might be perceived by peers, superiors and outsiders, and more generally to the destabilising involvement of an outsider in their professional milieu. In order to overcome these issues, it was important that I established trusting field relations with participants (and with institutional communities generally). Maintaining transparency regarding the research aims, encouraging participants throughout to voice issues of concern and offering them the opportunity to check data were key in achieving this. It also allowed participants to feel invested in the project beyond their status as data sources.

Going beyond reassurance and openness, I needed to respond to participants’ concerns in my own conduct as a researcher, to ensure that there was no actual danger of their professional image being compromised. Confidentiality was guaranteed to interview participants insofar as recordings and transcripts were concerned, and as a matter of course names and other distinguishing features of third parties referred to in interviews, by participants were removed from transcripts, except in one instance where the third party was a famous, deceased figure, and the context in which they were referred to had no ethical implications. Transcripts were stored on my personal computer and in my hardcopy files and not shown to any third parties other than my supervisors. As part of a process of member validation (Kvale, 2007, see p.93), gatekeepers were sent reports that summarised tentative findings, and staff interviewees were sent their interview transcripts and offered the opportunity to see summary findings on request. Students were not automatically sent their interview transcripts, but were given the opportunity to see the research findings on request.

#### **4.8.1 Anonymity**

The issue of anonymity was particularly complex in this study. The structures of Higher Education departments, and the status of Popular Music as a field within Higher Education in the UK, are such that any one identity within the study, whether of an institution or an individual, could betray others if known. With the name of a particular institution being presented, for example, the identity of staff members could be easily worked out with minimal effort. Similarly, should a member of staff’s identity be revealed

through reference to their background (highly possible in a field where members of staff have often led, or continue to lead, high-profile performance careers), or through a combination of distinguishing features, then their institution and by association all staff therein would be easily identifiable.

On the other hand, the issue of anonymity presents significant substantive difficulties, as the uniqueness of contexts— institutional, geographical and social— and the personal experiences of respondents are crucial foci of the study. Attempting to safeguard anonymity by ‘cleansing’ data might have led to the removal of essential features and resulted in data that were vague and unengaging, and in the worst cases too obscure to be of any substantive value. Furthermore, I was wary of the presumption, too often taken for granted in social research, that anonymity is the best way to honour the researcher’s duty of care to participants. Scheper-Hughes suggests that ‘anonymity makes us forget that we owe our [...] subjects the same degree of courtesy in writing that we extend to them face to face in the field’ (Sheper Hughes, n.d., quoted in Crow & Wiles, 2006, p.5). While this is clearly not true in all cases, it is nonetheless important to bear in mind the possible effects of anonymity on the researcher’s treatment of participants. Furthermore, it might be considered reasonable for participants who have given of their time and resources, and granted access to their lives and personal histories, to want explicit recognition for their involvement, particularly where no monetary incentive has been offered. I was concerned that the research project should not be perceived as ‘parasitic’ or exploitative by participants, particularly as I did not share their profession and was not therefore prone to any potentially negative ramifications of publication. Encouraging and welcoming participants’ investiture was important in establishing trusting field relations, and their support and knowledge needed to be explicitly acknowledged where desired.

In reconciling these ethical, substantive and operational issues, compromise was unavoidable. I decided that as the institutions’ distinguishing characteristics were central to the study, attempts to disguise them would inhibit and undermine the value of findings; cases had, after all, been chosen purposively on the basis of these distinguishing characteristics. I decided ultimately to anonymise the institutions (although each institution granted permission to be identified in the study) but maintain the significant distinguishing characteristics in their descriptions.

I decided that in the interests of consistency all staff members should remain anonymous within the study. Those participants who wished to have their contribution explicitly acknowledged were named in the acknowledgements at the beginning of the

thesis alongside other people (not research participants) whose help I wished to acknowledge, while those who did not were thanked anonymously. Student participants were all anonymised.

A possible danger of anonymity was that while the identity of a real interlocutor might be successfully disguised, a reader might ascribe interview data to the wrong person within an institution, thus impacting on the public image of a non-participant. There was no obvious systematic solution to this issue, other than to bear it in mind during the write up of findings.

The question of how the research might impact upon teaching and learning needed to be broken down into two areas: data collection and dissemination. In the case of data collection, I was a non-participant observer and not actively involved in any institutional practice. It was therefore important to minimise my presence in natural settings such as the classroom and practice space. Interviews and focus groups were conducted around or outside of institutional timetables so as not to disturb teaching and learning. Arranging site visits as far in advance as possible and in accordance with institutional timetables, and consulting with course teams regarding suitable times to conduct interviews, ensured that disturbance was kept to a minimum.

Regarding the dissemination of findings, the possible impact on teaching, learning and assessment needed to be carefully considered. Many student participants would still be enrolled on their programmes of study after the research had been completed and published; there was therefore a potential risk that their responses would be read by faculty, possibly impacting on student/faculty relations. However, I was satisfied that the anonymity of student respondents was a sufficient safeguard against this. As an added caution, student interview data presented within the thesis were scoured for any particular features that might expose the identity of participants. Where it was considered necessary, these details were amended to obscure the identity of participants while preserving the overall message. For example, a student's reference to their hometown (such as 'Market Harborough') would be substituted for another of similar size (such as 'Faversham').

#### **4.8.2 Ethical approval**

Ethical approval for the study was granted by the University of Reading Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee in November 2011, by whom the pilot study had also been approved in November 2010. All gatekeepers and participants were presented with an information sheet detailing the purposes of the study, what was required of them

and how data were to be used, and a consent form. The consent form made clear that they had the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Ethical documents for the pilot and main studies are presented in the Appendices.

## **4.9 Summary**

This chapter accounted for my research methodology. It began by justifying the use of a multiple-case study design, detailing how I have incorporated and adapted the approaches of Yin (2003), Stake (1995) and others. It then explained my choice of data collection instruments, and my approaches to data analysis and literature review. Finally, it discussed the ethical implications of the study, how these were addressed, and the means by which they were formally approved.

## CHAPTER 5

### The Cases

In the presentation of my case studies I have drawn on the recommendations of Yin (2003) and Stake (1995). In particular, I have followed Yin's (2003) fourth suggested model for reporting multiple-case studies, in which the findings from all cases are presented together according to common themes, contexts or chronologies, followed by cross-case discussion. This takes place within Chapters Six and Seven.

However, I have also taken Stake's (1995) suggestion of offering descriptions for each case in order to allow the reader to engage vicariously with the 'feel' and identity of the cases as the researcher has experienced them, and also to 'remind the reader that the report is just one person's encounter with a complex case' (Stake, 1995, p.123). The summary profiles presented in this chapter serve these same functions as well as giving descriptive, contextual information for each case in advance of the cross-case findings presented in Chapter 6.

#### **5.1 Case 1: BA Popular Music and Recording/BA Popular Musicology, Institution A**

Institution A's BA Popular Music and Recording was the first, and is the longest-running and perhaps best-known Popular Music programme (now a pathway as opposed to a discrete programme, see below) in the UK, and has been at the forefront of developments in Popular Music Studies in the United Kingdom. Two former faculty members held early professorial Chairs of Popular Music Studies, and the majority of current faculty members are active researchers in the field.

The School of Music is based in a former Victorian soap works a ten minute walk from the main university campus. It is a worn-looking but vibrant place, whose corridors reverberate with the sounds of trombones, choral singing and rock guitar. The building houses three high-specification recording studios, extensive rehearsal space, and a theatre.

Until 2011, a BA Popular Musicology that shared some content but had different emphases, specialisations and elective options, and programmes in non-popular music were also offered by the music department. From the academic year 2012/2013 onwards however, these formerly discrete programmes are being offered as pathways within a single BA Music. The programme leader explained that this has allowed for the Popular Music and Recording course title, a well-known ‘brand’, to be retained, but also for a more holistic nomenclature, reflecting current curricula that are not bound to rigid distinctions of ‘popular’ or ‘classical’, and promoting an inclusive understanding of music, to be introduced.

Teaching is delivered via a combination of lectures, seminars and tutorials, and one-to-one instrumental tuition in students’ chosen instrument. Many Manchester musicians and industry professionals deliver masterclasses. Many of the programme’s full-time faculty members are active musicians and perform regularly in and around Manchester, often at jam nights in a local pub frequented by the music department’s community.

The programme benefits from extensive links with the local and national music industry (or, to use the programme leader’s preferred terminology, ‘cultural economies’) but does not, like some programmes, incorporate work placements as part of the curriculum. Although business-oriented modules have featured on the curriculum for a long while, the programme has not historically had a strong vocational focus. However, from the 2011/2012 academic year onwards the vocational, business-focused aspect of the programme had been increased, and had been incorporated into the curriculum at an earlier stage (it had previously only featured on the final year).

### **5.1.1 The institution**

The University was established by Royal Charter in the late 1960s out of the an earlier technical college, following the Robbins Report into Higher Education (1967) which recommended the granting of university status to former colleges of advanced technology<sup>11</sup>. It is often considered a ‘plate-glass’ university, although its architecture ranges from redbrick Victorian to twenty-first century chrome. Mature students make up over half of the University’s population, and over half of students are from the local area.

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<sup>11</sup> The Robbins Report was not directly responsible for the conferring of University Status onto Institution A, but is nonetheless a salient indicator of the cultural and political climates out of which Institution A, and others, emerged.

The University is situated in Greater Manchester, a city with a strong and internationally renowned popular music heritage. The city has produced many successful acts across a range of genres, but is perhaps most commonly associated with guitar music (and to a lesser extent dance music), and with groups such as New Order, The Smiths, Oasis, the Stone Roses and those associated with the ‘Madchester’ scene of the 1980s and 1990s.

### **5.1.2 The programme leader**

The programme leader has twenty years’ experience as a student and teacher in the department. She has taught on the programme for most of her professional life, having been offered a teaching post after graduating among the programme’s second cohort in 1992. She later completed a master’s degree and PhD within the department.

### **5.1.3 The students**

The majority of the 14 students (of 200 enrolled on the programme) I interviewed were originally from the north of England, while others came from Scotland, Kent and Somerset. Most had come to university directly after school or college, but a few had spent some years working in between. Some had not formerly studied music formally and had undertaken an initial foundation year as a route of access onto the BA programme. I interviewed students from the first, second and third years of the programme. The oldest interviewee was twenty-four, and in his second year of the degree (having also completed a year on the foundation programme). The youngest were eighteen.

## **5.2 Case 2: BA Commercial Music at Institution D**

The BA Commercial Music at Institution D started in 1993, and was the first music degree with an industry focus to be offered in the UK. The first incarnation of the programme was written and pitched to the University by a small team of young musicians, music industry professionals and academics, some of whom were also responsible for setting up Rockscool, the leading accredited provider of graded rock examinations worldwide. It is currently one of four programmes offered within the University’s Music Department, all of which ‘are designed not only to educate you and extend your natural talent, but also to prepare you for your potential career in the music industry’ (Department website). The programme is currently accredited by Creative Skillset, an industry body that

‘supports skills and training for people and businesses to ensure that the UK creative industries maintain their world class position’ (Creative Skillset, 2012).

The programme’s curriculum is heavily oriented towards the commercial music industry. In addition to work placements, modules are targeted at specific areas of the music business, from performing in club and tour environments, to tour management, audio production and contract law. The majority of modules are experiential in design and intended to constitute authentic instances of commercial music practice.

After an initial year in which students undertake modules in performance, business and sociology, and a ‘learning burst’ module designed to give all students a foundation in all areas of the programme, a range of elective modules allows students to specialise in one or more areas. From the second year onwards, music-making is not a compulsory aspect of the programme; both student interviewees had chosen not to take any performance elements.

Most of the teaching staff on the programme are active music industry professionals and maintain parallel careers as musicians, producers and lawyers, among other roles. In addition, the maintaining of an extensive network of industry contacts, many of whom were alumni of the programme, allowed enabled the programme team to secure high-level work placements and other industry opportunities for students.

The majority of the programme is delivered at a large, 60s-built residential campus in the outer north-west suburbs of London, and home to the School of Media, Arts and Design. Students have access to extensive facilities including industry-standard recording studios, sixteen rehearsal rooms, music labs and audio production galleries, as well as a music venue and nightclub. The Music Department has its own record label and music media company, and a number of industry-linked research hubs and other knowledge transfer projects. All of the programme’s teaching staff are industry practising professionals, and the programme relies on its links to hundreds of alumni now working in the creative industries to generate work placements, which form part of the curriculum. The programme team are ‘looking for [students] who are out there, doing things in the industry, before they arrive at our door step’ and its website asserts that graduates ‘don’t succeed in the music industry, they shape it’ (programme website).

Admission onto the programme formally requires attainment of a UCAS point-score of 160, although the programme is heavily oversubscribed and the average point-score for applicants is 300. However, non-traditional qualifications are also considered and all applicants are required to undertake an interview/audition. There is also an alternative

access route for students studying towards a foundation degree at a local FE college. Although the majority of students are musicians in one form or another, musical ability is not a prerequisite for studying on the programme and students can audition with a business presentation in lieu of a musical performance or recording.

### **5.2.1 The institution**

Institution D was formerly a polytechnic and was granted full university status in 1992 following the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, and therefore counts among those institutions referred to as post-92 universities.

Institution D has a student population of approximately 24,000 and, in common with most London institutions, a large proportion of international students. It offers a broad range of subject areas across the arts and humanities, social sciences and sciences, but is perhaps best known for its pioneering of new media-related subject areas such as media studies and commercial music, most of which are delivered at the University's North London campus.

Institution D has 'always believed that [a student's] University experience should be designed to enhance [their] professional life' and places 'as much emphasis on gaining skills relevant to the workplace as on learning the academic discipline that [students] are studying'. (University website) The majority of students at the University work part-time alongside their studies.

### **5.2.2 The location**

London is one of only two cities in the world awarded an Alpha++ rating according to the GaWC index, which ranks 'global cities' according to international economic, political, cultural and infrastructural significance (the other is New York). It is the epicentre of the UK's cultural life, and of its music, media and entertainment industries. Sony, Universal, EMI (Publishing) are just a few of the major music corporations that maintain their European bases in London. As might be expected of a city with London's rich cultural and demographic history, it has associations with a range of musical styles and artists, including punk, ska, British invasion rock 'n' roll, house, garage, drum 'n' bass, The Rolling Stones, Coldplay, The Sex Pistols and The Kinks.

### **5.2.3 The deputy programme leader**

The deputy programme leader was among those who designed the first incarnation of the programme in 1993 and is currently the convenor, admissions tutor and senior lecturer on the programme, and leads the Music Department's research group. His teaching is primarily within the music sociology elements of the programme.

### **5.2.4 The students**

The two students (of 83 in their cohort) I interviewed were on the second year of the programme. One had come onto the programme having completed a BTEC in Music in the north east of England, and had moved to London with the other members of her punk band who had enrolled to study popular music at another institution. The other student interviewee, now in his early thirties, had also completed a BTEC in Music, but had worked for several years as a nightclub manager before applying to join the programme. He had released electronica music on independent labels and worked as a remixer for a well-known dance act.

## **5.3 Case 3: BMus Popular and Contemporary Music, Institution C (as of 2012/13 BA Contemporary and Popular Music)**

The BMus Popular and Contemporary Music is one of four music programmes offered by Institution C within the School of Arts and Cultures. Traditional A' level qualifications are not accepted for entry onto the programme; the specified access routes are a BTEC in (specifically) popular music or music production, or a music foundation degree. Some applicants are considered on the basis of an interview, depending on evidence of performance ability and prior experience. From 2013 onwards, the programme has been renamed and reclassified as BA Contemporary and Popular Music. The entry requirements have been broadened to include A' levels (at grades ABB, with an A in music or music production).

The Popular and Contemporary curriculum is geared towards helping students achieve what the programme leader calls 'ownership' of the discipline, which he described as a thorough, critical understanding of the academic and musical terrain that will enable them to situate and adapt their own practice within a wider context. The programme is modular in structure, with much of the curriculum content shared across all four music programmes. Students are able to navigate a personal pathway outside of core module

requirements, and experience ‘studying, composing and performing alongside classical, experimental, jazz and folk musicians’ (programme specification), engendering what the programme website describes as ‘a truly stimulating environment for broad-minded, imaginative and creative musicians’ (programme website). Students on the programme are encouraged to ‘explore more contemporary ways of making music, including music from other cultures’, and there is a strong emphasis on ‘creativity, experimentation and artistic risk-taking’ (programme website).

The programme encompasses ‘performance, composition, improvisation, data analysis, research, and critical intellectual enquiry’ (programme website) and is presented to prospective students as being both intellectually and musically demanding, with both the academic and practical content conferring a range of skills to enhance graduate employability. It covers a range of styles and genres, but seeks to ‘look beyond formulaic commercial music forms’ (programme website). Students are encouraged, and at times required, to move beyond their primary genre affiliation and work or collaborate across programmes.

Within the core curriculum, a critical theory-based module considers music within contexts such as race, culture, gender and genre, and draws from the theories of Adorno, Benjamin, Derrida and others. In featuring a variety of world musics it also seeks to broaden students’ conceptions of popular music beyond European and American popular music.

The Music department is based on the University’s imposing main campus in the city, and lectures are delivered within the School of Arts and Cultures. In addition, a further building houses rehearsal rooms, and high specification recording studios and production suites. The musical life of the department extends beyond the curricula through concert programmes, and through musical collaborations between students, academics and administrative staff, some of which are featured on a CD given to prospective applicants.

### **5.3.1 The institution**

Institution C can be traced back to the a medical school, established in the mid-19th Century in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, through a series of associations, mergers and separations with another nearby university, to its establishment under its current name in the 1960s. Although this institutional narrative (similar to that of the Institution A), and in particular the date of its establishment as a university proper, bear the hallmarks of a ‘plate glass’ university, it is often considered a ‘redbrick’ university owing perhaps to its unambiguously red brick campus buildings. It is a member of the Russell Group, an

affiliation of research-intensive universities. It ranks consistently among the top 30 universities in the UK.

### **5.3.2 The location**

The University is located in Newcastle, a city of around 280,000 in the north-east of England. The wide variety of music venues is typical of a city of its size and profile. A large multi-venue cultural centre, with which the music department maintains links, has an international profile as a creative hub for a range of musical genres. It plays a significant role in the region's musical life through its music education and community projects across the north-east, and is the base of both a leading orchestra and a well-known non-profit organisation committed to preserving the folk music of the British Isles, and which co-created England's first traditional and folk music degree programme in collaboration with Institution C.

The city is associated with many popular music acts, but is not usually associated with a particular genre or subcultural scene. The county within which Institution C is situated sustains a strong folk music tradition featuring a bellow-blown bagpipe unique to the region, which many students on the department's Folk and Traditional degree programme play.

### **5.3.3 The programme leader**

The programme leader is himself an alumnus of the University's music department, and took up a lecturing position within the department after completing his undergraduate and doctoral study there. In addition to his role as programme director, he is also involved with the foundation degree in Music Production offered by a local college, and which serves as an access route onto the programme.

### **5.3.4 The students**

The three students (of thirteen in their cohort) I interviewed were in their final year of the programme. All identified themselves primarily as guitarists, but also played other instruments and wrote songs. One student had joined the programme after having completed an HND in Performance at a college in Scotland. The other two had joined the programme after completing a foundation degree in Music Production at a local college. One of the latter was originally from the local area, and the other had relocated to Newcastle from South Yorkshire specifically to enrol on the foundation degree.

## **5.4 Case 4: BA Professional Musicianship at the Institution B**

The BA Professional Musicianship, like all programmes offered by Institution B, is designed to act as ‘a springboard to employment’ and seeks to produce graduates that are ‘work ready’ (Institute website). Most modules are geared towards the development of specific applied skills, such as technical proficiency, project management, studio engineering, transcriptions and sight-reading, although the programme also features less applied content, such as a compulsory second year module offering a chronological overview of the cultural and social backdrops against which popular music has developed, and the study of significant artists and other figures related to popular music. Work-based learning (WBL) is a prominent aspect of all programmes at Institution D, and students undertake placements (level 5), and professional projects (level 6) within the commercial industry. In addition to the music-making and vocational content, all years of the programme feature more traditionally academic modules that focus on the historical and cultural impact of popular music.

Institution B ‘aim[s] to mentor students through experiential learning, developing self-employed and entrepreneurial projects’ (Institute website). In addition to formal mentoring support and network access, the students and staff I interviewed spoke of informal networking as being a major feature of life at Institution B.

The teaching staff on the programme are chosen on the basis of their extensive experience and continued professional engagement, and one-to-one career tutorials offer students the ‘unique opportunity [...] to be individually guided by the most experienced industry professionals in the country’ (Institute website). Almost all programme faculty are active musicians or music professionals currently based in Brighton, and ‘teach at [the Institution] because of their commitment to music education’ (Institute website). The programme is validated by a local university.

### **5.4.1 The institution**

Institution B celebrated its tenth year of existence in 2011. From its beginnings in a former warehouse building in Hove, it has grown to encompass four campuses in Brighton, Bristol, Dublin and, as of 2012/13, Manchester. The Brighton campus now occupies three sites across Brighton and Hove. The Institute offers programmes and qualifications ranging from level 3 to level 7, in areas including performance, music industry management and higher education teaching.

Inside, the walls are lined with gold discs and press cuttings documenting students' and staff's musical achievements, and the framed autographs of famous musicians who have visited the Institute to give masterclasses. The classrooms and practice rooms on the ground floor are equipped with Marshall and Orange amplifiers, and some have a raised stage platform at one end.

#### **5.4.2 The location**

Brighton and Hove is a city of around 270,000 people on the south-east coast of England. It is known for its classic British seaside feel and 'affable eccentricity' (Institute website), its large gay community and its vibrant nightlife. It is a mainstay of the UK touring circuit and has music venues of all kinds and sizes, from cafes to an arena and a stadium. A number of famous acts including Fat Boy Slim and Nick Cave are Brighton residents, but Brighton's musical heritage is arguably less associated with a particular genre or scene than that of other towns and cities. The Great Escape Festival is held in Brighton every year which sees hundreds of musical acts and thousands of fans descend on Brighton's many performance spaces.

#### **5.4.3 The programme leader**

The programme leader is an internationally-known guitarist. He has taught on the programme since 2007, and was previously senior lecturer at the University Of The Arts, Philadelphia, USA.

#### **5.4.4 The lecturers**

In addition to the programme leader, I interviewed two members of academic staff. One had been a touring member of a famous rock band in the 1990s, and had taught on the programme since its inception. He believed it was primarily his extensive experience in live performance that he brought to the programme, and his teaching areas included live performance and commercial band management. The other was an active session musician who had performed with many international artists. He too regarded his extensive performing experience as the main asset he brought to the programme.

#### **5.4.5 The students**

The five students (of 296 enrolled on the programme) I interviewed had come to Institution B from across England. Four were guitarists and one was a singer. Four, who

were interviewed as a focus group, were coming to the end of their final year, and one, interviewed individually, was in his second year of the programme. Four had come to Institution B directly from school or college, where they had studied music or, in one case, performing arts, and one had come to Institution B after completing a one year diploma course at the Academy of Contemporary Music in Guildford.

## **5.5 Summary**

This chapter has introduced the four undergraduate popular music degree programmes that serve as cases in this multiple-case study. It has given summary information relating to the institutions within which the programmes are delivered, including their historical and geographical contexts. It has also introduced the staff and student interview participants from each case. The following chapter presents the findings that arose following cross-case analysis of data.

## CHAPTER 6

### Findings

This chapter presents the findings that emerged from the cross-case coding and analysis process, in response to the research questions:

*What values are held on undergraduate popular music degree programmes?*

*How are these manifested in the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy, institution, assessment, lifestyle, and market?*

The act of writing served as a final coding phase, as new connections and insights emerged in light of presenting the data in prose. Interview data is presented in smooth verbatim (see Methodology), documentary data in verbatim and field notes in prose. The findings are presented within the final thematic categories that resulted from the cross-case coding process.

The following key has been used to identify data sources and interlocutors.

#### 6.1 Documentary Sources

|      |                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| APWS | Institution A programme website       |
| BPWS | Institution B programme website       |
| CPWS | Institution C programme website       |
| DPWS | Institution D programme website       |
| CVT  | Institution C video transcript        |
| DVT  | Institution D video transcript        |
| APS  | Institution A programme specification |
| BPS  | Institution B programme specification |
| CPS  | Institution C programme specification |

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| DPS   | Institution D programme specification |
| AES   | Institution A employability statement |
| CES   | Institution C employability statement |
| DES   | Institution D employability statement |
| [Institution B did not have an employability statement] |                                       |
| AKIS  | Institution A Key Information Set     |
| CKIS  | Institution C Key Information Set     |
| DKIS  | Institution D Key Information Set     |
| [Institution B did not have a Key Information Set]      |                                       |

## 6.2 Staff Interviewees

|      |                                       |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| BPL  | Institution B programme leader        |
| APL  | Institution A programme leader        |
| CPL  | Institution C programme leader        |
| DDPL | Institution D deputy programme leader |
| BL1  | Institution B lecturer 1              |
| BL2  | Institution B lecturer 2              |

## 6.3 Student Interviewees

|              |                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| SS1, SS2 etc | Institution A student 1, 2 etc (1-15) |
| BS1, BS2 etc | Institution B student 1, 2 etc (1-5)  |
| CS1, CS2 etc | Institution C student 1, 2 etc (1-4)  |
| DS1, DS2     | Institution D student 1, 2            |

## 6.4 Different Conceptions of Employability, Core Knowledge and Core Skills

Employability emerged as a prominent issue from the literature review, and to a lesser extent from the pilot study. As such, it was a pre-ordinate theme and was addressed directly through interview schedules. Staff interviewees were asked about their programmes' approaches to employability, and the values and beliefs that they saw as underpinning these approaches. The findings revealed that while all staff participants placed value on employability as an outcome of their programmes, conceptions of

employability differed across cases and interviewees, and corresponded to the value they placed on different types of skills and knowledge.

Participants' discussion of employability tended to be couched in terms of 'skills' and 'knowledge'. There was some variation within and across cases as to what were seen to constitute core skills, but in all cases this included musical and extra-musical skills. At Institution B, the programme leader's understanding of the 'basic skills set' (BPL) revealed a focus towards a range of potential professions within music, including teaching and researching:

The core skills are, for me, being able to play with an ensemble, in a number of different styles convincingly and proficiently. They need to have a basic theoretical knowledge of music, so that if they're going to teach they're able to go up to ninths and thirteenth chords and things like that, and to be able to write down basic examples. [...] They need to be able to do research, so when they come out of here they'll have a good academic background as well. They'll be able to write a good CV, write a good report, [...] do business plans, they have to know about contract law, publishing, all these sorts of things. So in a sense, if you looked at the curriculum, you'd say there's the basic skills set, or portfolio. (BPL)

While another Institution B lecturer's summary was arguably more directly focused towards being a performing musician, non-musical attributes such as business acumen and sociability were still considered to be core skills, alongside technical ability and musical literacy:

[...] we try to push all the arrows into the quiver, you know, you've got to have good chops, you've got to be a good player, it really helps if you can read, you know, you need a good business head on your shoulders, and you need to be able to network and [...] to be able to communicate with an audience, and get on with your band. (BL1)

In both cases, these summaries might be seen to bear the trace of the interviewees' own careers, experiences and values. In the programme leader's case, his view that theoretical knowledge should extend to include ninth and thirteenth chords (which although they feature across a range of genres, are perhaps most prominent in jazz) might be seen to derive from his own background in jazz theory. Moreover, his reason for incorporating this knowledge— to enable students to teach— may stem from his own career, in which teaching has played a prominent part alongside performance. In the lecturer's case, his emphasis on networking was by his own assertion rooted in his own experience:

Probably every opportunity I've ever had, with different degrees of separation, can be traced back to some covers gig I did with somebody. It's all very well saying 'I'm going to be a session player and be taken seriously', no you're not, you're going to network and hang out with people that's how it works. (BL1)

Elsewhere however, there were more significant intra-interviewee differences in what they understood to be, and valued as, core skills. For example, the Institution C programme leader's understanding of core skills differed markedly from those of the Institution B programme leader and lecturer presented above, and rather than focusing on a set of specific competencies, he associated the notion of core skills with heightened understanding and awareness in key areas:

There's four- that sense of performance, critical awareness, history and culture, and the very specific module [focusing on] the 1920s onwards, to me are core skills that will inform us as 21st century musicians. (CPL)

In addition however, he spoke of the transferable, non-music-specific skills that graduates of the programme acquired through their practice as popular musicians:

I firmly believe that a student leaving here with a music degree is one of the best-suited candidates for many jobs. Time management, leading teams, well, musicians do that as their bread and butter in their professional life. We can manage ourselves because we rehearse, we can lead teams because we organise groups, we can be independent because we spend hours just rehearsing ourselves. There are so many transferable skills that we have. (CPL)

This view accorded with the employability statement of Institution C's programme website. Alongside a long list of music-related professions, 'flexibility, self-discipline and good time management' (CES) were specified in terms of preparing students for careers or training pathways in management, accountancy, law, events management, journalism and information technology.

Whereas at Institution C the programme's employability statement made substantial reference to extra-musical (extra-music industry) careers, focus on skills in Institution B's literature, was overwhelmingly weighted towards the music industry. A detailed, nine-page programme specification outlined the skills attained on each year of the programme, and a set of eleven skills groupings was given for the programme as a whole. While these ranged from hard and vocational ('physical, creative, technical and performance skills relevant to employment in professional musicianship' (BPS)) to soft

and transferable ('research, analysis, problem solving and critical reflection' (BPS)), seven of the eleven made explicit reference to 'the music industry', and four of the remaining six referred to 'professional musicianship'. While this is consistent with the programme degree title (BA Professional Musicianship), it is notable that, in stark contrast to Institution C's employability statement, no other professional avenues are referred to, suggesting that music industry-specific skills were valued more highly than generic skills, and that music industry norms and values informed the learning outcomes of the programme more than the demands of generic industry.

Institution A's conceptions of employability and skills were more similar to Institution C's than to Institution B's. Its employability statement featured alumni case studies, beginning with famous musicians and also including a community arts entrepreneur and an academic. Among the possible careers it listed were 'arts administrators, [...] senior administrators and educational advisors' and 'teachers [and] lecturers', alongside 'freelance composers, performers and producers' (AES). It also noted that 'many students [...] go on to study at Masters and Doctoral level.' (AES). This suggests that value was placed on a broad range of transferable, non-music-industry-specific skills. The skills overview in the programme specification emphasised that in addition to practical skills, the programme 'plac[ed] considerable emphasis on the academic and theoretical aspects' (APS), and that students would 'develop a detailed understanding of key popular music concepts' (APS). This association of deep understanding with the notion of skills is redolent of the Institution C programme leader's statement above.

In stark contrast with Institution A and Institution C, the skills focus at Institution D was unambiguously targeted towards commercial success within the music industry, from songwriting in commercially-viable vernaculars and to the 'prevailing standards of the commercial music market' (DPWS) to entrepreneurship. The deputy programme leader related this to the context in which the programme was created, and to his own experiences of studying music at university:

the main thing that links everything that we do is that we want people to make money from it, and so that again goes right back to the start of the course, and the one thing that all music degrees weren't preparing their graduates for was a job doing music, and that's why so many of my colleagues from my first degree [didn't do] anything remotely connected with music from then on. (DDPL)

He suggested that at Institution D generally, and on its music programmes in particular, the emphasis was on equipping students with industry- or profession-specific skills rather than generic, transferable skills:

Most of the courses here are so good at the hard skills stuff that the idea is that students get the jobs in the hard skills area rather than the transferable things. And that's very unofficial; certainly if you look at mission statements and five year plans then transferable skills and such do get a look in, but even then I think the emphasis on them is perhaps less strong in day to day reality, certainly in our course area, than elsewhere. (DDPL)

This was seen as essential in maintaining the programme's employment success rate (75% employment in the music industry (DKIS)), and its links with the music industry:

[...] we don't value [transferable skills] as much as the hard skills in our particular course environment because that's how we can keep our rollover of brilliant graduates getting that job with Sony, or writing for that person, starting up that company, label or whatever it is. (DDPL)

In striking opposition to the view of Institution C's programme leader, and the employability statements of Institution C and Institution A, the deputy programme leader voiced his skepticism of some programmes that foregrounded transferable skills:

[...] sometimes in the course literature it seems to me that some other places put [transferable skills] so much at the heart of it that it's almost as if, putting my cynical hat back on, it's a smoke and mirrors thing to explore the fact that none of their kids get [music industry] jobs. (WDPS)

Expanding on the issue of employability, he spoke at length about tensions associated with the impact of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, and in particular of the derision that had been poured on new vocational disciplines that had developed within post-92 universities. Again, he expressed his view that higher education had a responsibility to prepare students for paid employment, and that despite media cynicism, vocational programmes at post-92 institutions often had excellent graduate employments rates. As a comparison to his own subject area, he gave the example of catering degrees:

It was very much in the newspaper culture of the time, the Mickey Mouse degrees. I remember TVU getting it in the neck for what the papers described as Curry Making. It was a catering degree, [...] a degree like any other degree, and of course all of those kids got off and got jobs, and that was perhaps the most offensive thing at the time (DPL).

To summarise, in relation to my first research question *what values are held on popular music degree programmes?*, these findings suggest that while employability was valued by all staff interviewees, and explicitly referred to on all programme websites, the concept of employability was not understood in the same way across cases or by different individuals, and that different understandings of and responses to employability corresponded to different positions regarding the relative value of transferable and music-specific knowledge. Regarding the second research question *how are these values manifested in the message systems of education?*, values relating to employability were enshrined at an institutional level in documentation and were thus discernible through the message system of *institution*. They appeared also to impact upon the message system of *curriculum*, since programme content corresponded to the programmes' understandings of employability (as presented in programme literature and understood by senior staff), and upon *pedagogy*, since staff focused their teaching towards enhancing particular skills, or inculcating particular types of knowledge.

## **6.5 The Impact of Meso and Macro Values on Programme Values**

Also established through literature was the theoretical issue of values deriving from macro, meso and micro levels, and the proposition that values deriving from wider macro (state/policy level) and meso (wider institutional) levels impacted upon programme values via the message systems of *curriculum*, *pedagogy*, *institution*, *assessment*, *lifestyle* and *market*. The relationship between macro, meso and micro levels was therefore focused upon in data collection.

Macro (state) level values relating to the purpose of higher education were present on the Institution D, Institution A and Institution C programmes, since compulsory employability statements and Key Information Sets (KIS) were embedded in the programmes' webpages (Institution B was not required to do so as a private institution). These macro values could be most obviously discerned within the message system of *institution*, since they were enshrined in official institutional literature (while the employability statements were unique to each institution, the imperative to make employability explicit ultimately issued from state policy). However, such values might also be seen to have operated via the message system of *market*; given that a primary function of the employability statements was to provide prospective students with information to assist them in their choice of degree programme, value placed at macro

level on enhancing employability had, via policy imperatives, placed employability at the centre of the higher education marketplace, as a key (and mandatory) element of programmes' stated missions.

In addition to values deriving from macro level, values deriving from the institutional, meso level, were also identified. All cases were located within wider institutional structures; the Institution D, Institution C and Institution A cases all sat within a music Department, which in turn sat within a School, within a University. The Institution B case sat within an Institute which offered other pre-undergraduate (level 3), undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and which had sites in other cities across the United Kingdom. Lateral relationships were also maintained at meso level; in Institution C's case, with the Russell Group, in Institution D's with Creative Skillset and in Institution B's with the University of Sussex. As is illustrated below, in some instances values promoted at meso level came into conflict with those held by case populations, while in others they were seen to chime with, and indeed support, those of the programmes.

The Institution B programme leader noted that while the University of Sussex, in its capacity as Institution B's validating partner, exerted a control over the procedural requirements of the programme, and had 'lots of requirements in terms of assessment and learning outcomes', it was not otherwise intrusive:

I mean there's nobody that comes over and goes, 'hey you need to cover more gospel', I mean in procedural terms, any validating partner would expect the usual, the stuff in print, but the musical stuff no, I mean they have a classical music programme, and they're very hands off in that sense, they just assume that we're getting on with what we should be getting on with, [...] they're not aesthetically intrusive in terms of music (BPL).

This focus on process, assessment and learning outcomes, and not on musical content, suggests that the academic value of the programme's content was not called into question by the validating partner; indeed, the University of Sussex's belief in the degree-worthiness of the programme, and by extension the value of popular music practice, are implicit in the validation partnership itself. There are limits, without access to further information on the validation process, as to what meso values can be inferred beyond this, but the University's concerns appeared to correspond chiefly to values of procedural integrity, rather than in relation to academic or musical values.

As such, values promoted at meso level did not appear to contradict those held at micro level at Institution B. In contrast, at Institution D (which as a university had degree-

awarding powers and therefore no validating partner) there was an indication that the academic value of the department's activity had been called into question at meso level. The deputy programme leader spoke of tensions in the past at School level surrounding the nature of the music department's research (encompassing creative practice and other knowledge exchange) output:

There were some extraordinary discussions leading up to the 2001 RAE [Research Assessment Exercise][...] nothing was revered in terms of what we were doing because it wasn't avant-garde, even though the whole point was that we were providing the music that fashion designers, tv producers etc etc wanted as the background for what they were doing. (DDPL)

This perceived (by the deputy programme leader) skepticism regarding the value of commercial music practice, coupled with a perceived preference at meso level for 'avant-garde' output, arguably highlights discrepancies in tacit criteria for what constituted authentic academic output, and therefore a dissonance between normative meso-level and micro-level understandings of academic value. Despite these tensions however, the deputy programme leader reported collegial relationships with the School and University in the main, and that the values and ethos of the University of Institution D were broadly consonant with those of the Commercial Music programme. Indeed, he remembered that the University had been purposively chosen by the original programme designers for that very reason:

[Institution D] was always a really synergistic location. [This was] the first industry-facing pop music course in the place that pioneered media studies, [...] it was an ideal place to have our kind of course, and [the founding programme leader] I think researched that very carefully to make sure that there was that sort of place. (DDPL)

He remembered that when learning outcomes, aims and objectives criteria began to appear in higher education, many academics at his previous institutions had been 'fundamentally and morally against the imposition that it implied', and that 'there was a real, real antipathy to the whole philosophy of having to justify what one did' (DDPL). Institution D, however, 'was very good at this [and] embraced it wholeheartedly [...] at the forefront of what they did' (DDPL). He noted that he and his present colleagues did not object to the accountability implied by these criteria, or perceive it as a threat to academic autonomy; on the contrary, they valued the opportunity that such frameworks facilitated to be systematic and explicit:

It's something everyone who works here has come to expect and to appreciate in a way, [...] there's something of the comfort in the joined-up thinking that's explicit in the course design, of 'what are we trying to get the students to do, what do we want them to do at the end of that module and how are we going to test it? How do we know that they're doing it well? And you've just described aims, objectives and learning outcomes. (DDPL)

At Institution D then, there had been both schism (in relation to research output) and synergy (in relation to ethos, procedural practice and curriculum design) between the values held at meso and micro levels. At Institution C, the programme leader felt that the programme's ethos and academic values were consistent with those of the University, and that the University's commitment to equipping students with transferable skills, which he himself espoused, was particularly strong. He pointed to their early adoption of the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR), instituted at university level as a requirement for all programmes, as being indicative of this. He suggested that while there was some resistance among staff to the time-consuming paperwork involved, as Institution D's deputy programme leader had reported with the introduction of criteria there, it was appreciated by staff in the main:

We are one of the first universities to have HEAR. [...] The four of us who run our degree programme had to write a brief page of what skills, as a basic set, a student would learn whilst undertaking this degree programme. Now that's incredibly valuable to the student. I'm sure some of my colleagues think what an absolute waste of time, but actually the majority of us see the benefit. That's something that the University has shuffled down to us, saying, 'get this part of their degree running out, so they know what it is useful for.' (CPL)

Institution A's programme leader noted that values promoted at University level impacted directly upon academic practice at micro level. In particular, she acknowledged a 'cultural shift' towards preparing students for work, which the University had embraced, and suggested that the pressure to be visibly preparing students for work was 'not just related to our course, but is University-wide, [...] there's a real effort to incorporate some of this' (APL). The HEAR system adopted by Institution C was not used at Institution A, but a similar form of professional development planning (PDP) had been introduced fairly recently. Like her counterparts at Institution C and Institution D she was not opposed to demands by the University for more systematic and explicit approaches, though she noted that some of her colleagues were.

The Institution C programme leader hinted at tensions at meso level between different rationalizations of higher education ‘higher up the chain’ (CPL) within the Russell Group consortium of universities:

I was at a meeting the other day with the provost, and you know he didn’t use this term condonably at all, but he said that one of the words that he had heard in a meeting from higher up the chain with other Russells is this sense of ‘marketisation’ of higher education. What? Ridiculous. (CPL)

This anecdote was recounted within a discussion of government policy and the wider cultural, political and economic contexts (macro level) within which higher education sits. He was opposed to the proposed fee rises (see p.123) and believed that macro-level policy developments regarding funding and fees had precipitated regressive change in institutional cultures across the sector, specifically regarding the vocational emphases of curricula:

I don’t understand it in terms of holistic benefit to the economy. And [the sector]’s splitting. You know, your post-92 institutions are becoming more vocational, and your old redbricks are more academic, so it’s reverting to pre-92. But it’s pre-92 with a hell of a price tag. (CPL)

The programme leader suggested that the University’s membership of the Russell Group had to some extent determined their response to the proposed changes in higher education funding and tuition fees. As such, the values enshrined in macro level policy, promoted at meso level among members of the Russell Group, and influencing the University’s funding strategy were at odds with the programme leader’s own values.

Institution D maintained a meso-level relationship with its accreditor, Creative Skillset, described on the programme’s website as an industry body that maintained networks of colleges and universities that offered skills and training ‘to ensure the UK creative industries maintain their world class position’ (DPWS). Global competitiveness was further emphasised, together with innovation, leadership and productivity:

The Creative Skillset Media and Film Academy Networks enable education and industry to work together to produce the innovators and leaders of the future - those who will ensure the UK’s creative industries remain globally competitive and at the forefront of productivity and business innovation. [...] the aim of the Creative Skillset Academy Network is to ensure the UK has the most talented workforce in the world for film, television and interactive media, both now and in the future. (DPWS)

Partnership with industry was thus an explicit and emphatic aspect of Institution D's programme, and industry values were maintained and mediated on the programme through formal industry accreditation.

In summary, it can be seen from the data presented in this category that values deriving from macro level (state policy) and meso level (wider institutional levels, and lateral relationships) were present across cases. These included: values of operational best practice in higher education; values of academic practice; values relating to educational purpose; industry values and values relating to professional practice. They were manifested in the message system of *institution* by way of programme literature and through operational systems, and by extension through the message system of *curriculum*, because of the impact of such operational systems on programme design and content (such as, for example, the module design criteria as referred to by the deputy programme leader at Institution D). At Institution D, meso values might also be apportioned to the *market* message system, since the terms of its accreditation by Creative Skillset required it to be responsive to the values of industry and business.

## **6.6 Transactional Conceptions of Educational Value, and Expectations of Higher Education**

Across cases, the transactional aspect of education, from how much students should or were willing to pay for their education to what they should or could expect to receive from it, was a prominent theme. Students and staff spoke of education being increasingly rationalised in terms of value-for-money. One student at Institution A suggested that in the current climate of cuts to resources and fee increases (in higher education generally as opposed to his programme specifically), cost/benefit value analyses were the norm among students:

I think in a wider sense everyone's paying more for less now. Because it's getting cut down to less and less contact time, it's become a question of how much it's actually worth it in that sense. (AS1)

He spoke of feeling at times as if 'you're paying to learn yourself' (AS1). Two other students at Institution A however had been pleasantly surprised by the level of resources available to them on the programme, and felt it represented good value for money:

In terms of everything, I divided up my fees by the amount of studio time I get a year and it works out about £20 an hour, which you'd pay way more for in a regular studio, and that's not including any of the band practice time I had, any of the teaching I had, the one to one tuition I get. [...] In terms of value for money this course is on it. (SS9)

People walk out in September saying 'I've got five contact hours on paper, £3500 for five hours'. But he's right, that's not what you're paying £3500 for, you've got so much more available to you. [...] Even if you don't want to spend a lot of time in the studio, access to this library is ridiculous, it's amazing the stuff that's there. (SS8)

Institution A's programme leader linked recent fee rises to shifts in student expectations, and suggested that the prominence of the overtly transactional aspect of higher education had begun to influence how educational value was rationalized. She associated this with cultural change in higher education:

People talk about a change in culture really, and I have to say I've noticed a difference. There is some pressure when they're paying, and will from next year be paying quite substantial amounts of money, there's the expectation that there will be something at the end of it that's worthy of that. And in our opinion university degrees have always been worth that, but the question of actually moving on to paid employment of some kind, related to the degree itself, I think that undeniably there is that. (APL)

In response to this pressure, the programme team had increased the level of business content at the last curriculum review:

I think this is actually the right thing to do, introducing it at an earlier point, but I feel it's the part of the curriculum review that is in part a response to this need now to feel that we are preparing students for careers once they graduate, and there wasn't that concession say eight, nine, ten years ago even, to do that. (APL)

As such, the curriculum was being developed in accordance with what the programme team perceived as a shift in students' values towards vocationalism and employability. This was echoed in student interviewees' expectations, and in particular in their imagined expectations of a degree programme costing £9000 a year, as would be the reality for future cohorts. While all students at Institution A felt on balance that the programme was worth the current fee of £3500, some felt that such a large increase would have affected their decision regarding university, ranging from not going at all to studying a different subject:

I knew I wanted to go to university a long time ago and I suppose I just accepted it was going to be £3000 a year. Obviously now it's gone up to £9000 I might have had second thoughts. (SS4)

[and]

I wouldn't have come down to England. I'd have stayed in Scotland. (SS5)

One student interviewee suggested that the increase in fees exerted pressure on students to prioritise the financial return they could expect from investing in their education over what they valued on a personal interest level:

I suppose I thought well music's what I'm interested in, I should follow the knowledge in that subject. But I think as it gets towards nine grand a year, and you're looking at 27000 for a three year degree, I think most people would start thinking more seriously about what they're going to get out of it financially at the other end. It becomes even more difficult to follow what you want because of its own intrinsic interest. (AS1)

Nonetheless, he felt that the transactional assessments of educational value were inappropriate, and that pursuing higher education for vocational/financial reasons went against his educational values:

I feel it is the wrong way to look at it...surely you should want knowledge for its own sake, to understand the world that you live in, and it feels a bit back to front to me now. (AS1)

He added that the proposed fee rises would 'doubtlessly close down some opportunities for people of lower incomes' (AS1). Other student interviewees however, while also strongly opposed to the fee rises, felt it would not have stopped them going to university, and felt that the value of education, even at £9000, was not in question:

It's just disgraceful the fact that it's going up to nine grand, but it shouldn't stop you. If you want to go to university and get a better education and follow what you think is the right way to go then it shouldn't stop you. (SS7)

I don't think it would have stopped me doing the course. Obviously £3500 is a lot of money anyway. £9000 is a lot more admittedly, but [...] I think that if I had decided that university was worthwhile and I wanted to do this course I don't think money would have changed that. (SS8)

At Institution C, the programme leader was opposed to the 'incredibly wrong' fee increase to £9000, and 'worr[ie]d deeply about the missed people because of this' (CPL).

Relating this to his own experience of studying, he suggested that he would not have had the career he had had if the current fees had been in place:

The majority of people here will say the same thing. We would not be in our current positions here because we wouldn't have been able to be educated to this point had it been the current 2012 fee strategy. My working class parents would not have been able to afford that, it was only that I came through a system where I actually got some money [...]. I wouldn't have been an educator at all. I'm not sure what I would have been, but I wouldn't have been educated up to university level and beyond. (CPL)

One Institution B lecturer, while concerned that the economic climate would limit the opportunities afforded to some young people, felt that Institution B's consistently high application rate was a reassuring indicator of the value of education, and the motivations of students:

I think there's a risk across the board in any subject. Parents have got to pay the fees and if the money isn't there, you know, that's economics. If it goes up it's bound to have an effect. [...] But having said that, they still keep coming [and] it's nice to know [the programme]'s a success and that the music industry is perceived as a risky business but they're motivated to take that risk. (BL2)

One student at Institution B spoke of how, when applying to programmes, he had been put off by Institution B initially because the fees were higher than at publicly funded institutions, but noted that against the proposed fee rises private provision would represent a cheaper alternative:

I wasn't going to come here originally because of how expensive it was at the time, obviously now it's probably going to be cheaper because of the tuition fees now, but a year or two ago it wasn't like that and I still had to find about two grand every year. (BS1)

To offer a summary at this point, there was evidence that students considered the value of their educational experiences in transactional terms, weighing the cost of study against both the future financial benefits and the delivery and content of their programmes. At Institution A, there was also evidence that the programme team recognized students' concerns in this regard, and had sought to adapt curricula to align with students' changing expectations. Moreover, while some student interviewees perceived the value of higher education to be beyond question or monetary quantification, others acknowledged that increases in fees had the potential to force them into prioritizing financial return over intellectual curiosity, or even to lead them to forgo higher education altogether. This ran

counter to one Institution A student's educational values, which corresponded to the pursuit of 'knowledge for its own sake, to understand the world you live in' (AS1). He, one Institution B lecturer and Institution C's programme leader also made reference to the negative impact of the government's fee strategy on access to higher education, which Institution C's programme leader felt was a morally regressive step. Across cases therefore, transactional considerations of educational value could be seen to interact with participants' values relating to the intrinsic and moral purposes of education, sometimes leading to shifts in how higher education was rationalised, and elsewhere leading to conflict between students' and staff's personal values and those they perceived within the changing culture of higher education. In relation to my second research question, this could be discerned in the message system of *curriculum*, since at Institution A the curriculum had been consciously redesigned in response to a perceived shift in student expectations, and in the message system of *market*, since the interviewees' considerations were contingent upon the market value of UK higher education.

Staff interviewees also considered the value of higher education specifically in relation to its relevance to popular music practice, and to what students expected to gain from a degree in popular music. Across cases, academic staff acknowledged that a degree in popular music was not a prerequisite for becoming a professional musician, yet they all asserted the unique value of the experience offered by higher education. The programme leader at Institution B was keen to stress the benefits of formal education of the kind offered at Institution B, chief among which were the opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge quickly, and avail oneself of expertise within the institutional community:

People have to think about what they want to get out of school. And I think if you want to become a musician, a teacher, a manager or whatever, then on a degree programme you'll have a bunch of people in one geographical area who can help you. Why do we go to college? We want the piece of paper obviously, but you want a short cut. I could figure all this stuff out in ten years, or I can figure it out in two while I go to school and get a degree.  
(BPL)

One lecturer at Institution B noted that there was a degree of suspicion regarding the feasibility of popular music education, not only from students or academic colleagues but also from music industry professionals:

I've had it from musicians that I work with. How, not why, but how do you teach that? They should just be going out doing it. But there's a lot more to it than teaching music and saying 'go along, run with this'. (BL2)

The Institution C programme leader's view was similar, and he spoke of the need to manage students' expectations, and to clarify that a music degree should not be conceived of purely as a route to employment, or a programme of training in practical skills, but as something with richer and less tangible benefits. He gave the example of an industry professional who was a visiting lecturer on the programme:

He says 'do I need a degree to do my job?' Or students ask him a question, 'I want to get into sound engineering', and he says, 'well, get into sound engineering.' You don't need a degree to do that job, you've got to get out there and get experience. I think there's a need for authentication of why people are spending so much money because we can get you a job. When actually that's a falsehood. We'd be lying to students (CPL).

[and]

If you want to know what it means to be a critical, thinking, adaptive musician [...] because you've had this higher educational experience, then we do that. If you want to be just a really good guitarist, then just be a really good guitarist. But actually if you want to be a bit more than that [...] then we could be for you. (CPL)

To summarise the data presented here, the value of higher education in the context of popular music was understood differently among staff interviewees. For some, notably the Institution C programme leader, it was understood to extend beyond preparation for professional musicianship, and to correspond to values of criticality, reflectivity and reflexivity, while for Institution B's programme leader his degree programme was most valuable for offering a resource of professional expertise, and allowing students to acquire knowledge more quickly than would otherwise be possible. His comments related therefore to a transaction of time invested over professional knowledge gained, implying an understanding of higher educational value that corresponded to the values of time and vocationalism.

Interviewees also spoke about students' expectations of higher education and ambitions for the future. Linked to the above discussion of her programme's increasingly vocational curriculum, Institution A's programme leader noted that there had been an increase in students' own requests for industry links and vocationally-focused teaching:

On a music course that's how [the changing educational culture] is going to manifest itself, with people being more preoccupied about the professional links the course has, or might not have, and who it's partnered with. (APL)

[...] they'll say what they would like to learn in the business classes, and how they would like some of the masterclasses to involve more people coming in from outside, [...] who will talk about their experience as a paid or working musician (APL)

However, she suggested that students' expectations of their programme varied widely, and in many cases changed significantly over the course of their studies. She spoke of having to manage students' expectations and awaken them to the competitiveness of the music industries, but at the same time not demoralise them or be overly prescriptive:

Not to knock them back, but to make them aware that after graduating, they're not all going to leave and become session musicians, because it's simply unrealistic. But we don't have a sit down talk with them and say 'OK everyone, this is the way the land lies', because that's not what we're here for. (APL)

She noted that many students broadened their horizons on the programme, and developed new ideas of what they wanted from the programme as they discovered new talents and interests:

I think a lot of them don't know what they want at all when they enroll on the course [...], for a lot of them it's only when they start doing something like a composition module that they start to think of the ways that they might carve out a niche in that area. [...] they just broaden their understanding of what's out there and what they have an ability in. (APL)

The situation at Institution B was similar. According to one lecturer:

There are students who come in with an idea [...] and they end up leaving wanting a different thing. 'What I wanted to do was be a musician and tour, but I've decided to go into the industry a completely different way'. And I think it's because of the course, and how it has steered them and made them make a decision. (BL1)

Student interviewees' experiences confirmed this. Across cases, many students spoke of changes in their ambitions, most commonly away from (or beyond only) careers in performance:

[I came here] with slightly naive expectations of trying to make it in a band, [...] and I suppose everyone progressing on becomes more realistic and realises what's obtainable. (AS1)

I chose to do a law module, which is something which I never thought I'd do but which sounded interesting, whereas originally I came here to do performance. (DS1)

I'm not sure whether I want to pursue a career in music now, based on everything I've learned about it. (CS2)

One student at Institution A suggested that there was a presumption among teaching staff that all students wanted to be famous. While he acknowledged that this was true of many students, it was not an ambition of his:

[a tutor] originally said, 'obviously your plan A is to be in a band, but I'm going to teach you about session musicianship, and this is your plan B'. [...] My plan A was teaching and youth work. [...] I just think the course [and] him in particular implied that you're here because you want to become rock stars. (SS8)

Another however felt frustrated by programme staff's repeated reminders to students that fame was unlikely:

There's loads of pessimism. Anyone you speak to on this course, nobody thinks they can make a career in music just off the back of getting signed or whatever, getting out gigging, selling albums. [...] and it's partly because apart from [lecturer's name], a lot of the lecturers don't encourage that enough [...], there's not really anyone who's going to get a hold of me and say 'if that's what you want to do, do it'. (AS10)

Similarly, at Institution B one student reported having felt demoralised by what she perceived as pessimism among staff, although she acknowledged that realism was necessary:

I remember in the second year, a female vocal tutor told me, listen love it might never happen, you know that kind of attitude and in retrospect it's like blimey, saying that to a young girl is quite shit! And it's fair enough, [...] you have to be realistic, but it's a shame I had to hear that less than eighteen months into my course here. (BS2)

There was suspicion among some students that pessimism among staff was in some cases underpinned by their own lack of success, or negative experiences of the industry. For example:

Every lecture you go to now, these are people who lecture now. Some of them have had good careers, but a lot of them haven't really had much, [and] you can tell how bitter it is. (SS5)

Don't forget that most of the tutors have actually been in the industry themselves [...] and if they were really that successful they wouldn't be teaching at [Institution B] would they? (BS3).

In summary, there was significant variation in what students sought to gain from their programmes and achieve after graduating, highlighting the heterogeneity of student populations, and the values thereof. Moreover, there was evidence that students' academic and professional values changed over the course of their studies. As might be anticipated therefore, a degree of reflexivity was discernible between students' academic experiences and their professional values. Finally, some students at Institution A and Institution B identified degrees of 'pessimism' and 'bitter[ness]' among academic staff regarding working the music industry, which was interpreted by some students as deriving from academics' prior professional experiences. However, Institution A's programme leader suggested that 'realism' was a value inculcated on Institution A's programme, to ward against students maintaining unrealistic professional expectations. This might be seen to highlight that the interpretation of others' values was contingent upon subjects' own perspectives.

## **6.7 The Presentation of Faculty Credentials and Expertise**

The presentation of faculty expertise in public-facing literature varied across cases, sometimes dramatically. In some cases, professional expertise appeared to be valued above academic expertise, while in others emphasis was placed on staff's academic credentials, such as qualifications and research output. This appeared to correspond loosely with the explicit values and emphases of programmes.

At Institution D, Institution B and Institution A, staff profiles for full-time lecturers featured on the website, and while some lecturers (and in Institution A's case most) had academic credentials that were typical of lecturers in higher education (higher degrees, academic research profiles), these were not made reference to elsewhere in the programme literature, where emphasis was placed instead on faculty's professional experience and expertise:

All our lecturers are still industry practising professionals (DVT)

You will be taught by practising professionals (APWS)

All tutors at [Institution B] are highly skilled in their specialist area and remain actively engaged with the contemporary music industry. (BPWS)

At Institution C however, while the website stated that ‘over 100 professional instrumental and vocal tutors [...] deliver free one-to-one tuition’ (CPWS), programme staff’s research expertise and output was foregrounded (although this included creative practice such as performance and composition):

[We have a] committed and dynamic team of staff, all of whom are active researchers of international standing and excellent teachers; our staff are world leaders in musicology, composition and performance. (CPWS)

Despite many of the department’s staff being active music industry professionals, with the exception of the third clause of the above quotation this was not advertised as prominently in Institution C’s promotional literature as it had been at the other three cases. The programme leader explained that staff recruitment policy sought to maintain a balance between theoretical and applied expertise, and that teaching staff were required to possess both:

The majority of staff here are professional musicians as well as academics. [...] You wouldn’t get in here if you weren’t research active, you wouldn’t get in here if you barely played an instrument, you know. The staff have to be employed on their merits as musicians and musicologists. (CPL)

This may reflect the distinction drawn on the programme website between the musicological and creative practice-based areas of the programme. At Institution D meanwhile, where teaching staff were recruited primarily on the basis of their active industry engagements, the deputy programme leader spoke of the difficulty in finding people to teach the programme’s theoretical content:

The people qualified to teach in those [theoretical] areas is still centred around me I suppose! Not literally just me, but we’re not overburdened with practitioners who are as skilled and as experienced in their theoretical knowledge as they are in their practical knowledge. (DDPL)

Although the programme had been redesigned to facilitate a more integrated curriculum in which the theoretical and applied aspects could be taught together, this staffing situation was such that in practice they were necessarily dealt with separately:

Therefore the teaching of those elements tends to be related to the more strand-based teaching that we used to have, and I think that's almost inevitable. (DDPL)

As at Institution C then, at Institution D value was placed on faculty members possessing a blend of professional expertise and theoretical knowledge, although this proved difficult to achieve in practice.

In summary, across cases there were not only marked differences in faculty expertise, but also in how this expertise was presented in public-facing programme literature. In relation to my first research question, this suggests there was significant variation in how different types of knowledge— specifically practical and theoretical— were valued across cases. This may also point to different assumptions regarding how prospective applicants might value these knowledge domains. We may reasonably assert that the nature of a programme team's expertise has clear implications for programme content and teaching; in terms of my second research question then, the programmes' knowledge bases might be seen to have informed the message systems of *curriculum* and *pedagogy*. The recruitment of faculty members on the basis of professional expertise represented a responsiveness to music industry values, and thus to the *market* message system. Furthermore, the foregrounding of faculty members' professional experience in promotional literature suggested that professional expertise was assumed to be valued by prospective students within the popular music education marketplace.

## **6.8 Positions and Attitudes Regarding Commercialism and its Relationship to Authenticity**

Across cases there were substantial differences in how and the extents to which programmes positioned themselves in relation to the commercial music industry and market values. There was also variation in the extents to which students' values relating to commercialism and authenticity aligned with the values that they perceived as being espoused on their programmes.

Institution D was the only explicitly commercial case, and was emphatically so. Aside from the precise nomenclature (BA Commercial Music), the Music department, which also delivered one other undergraduate and various postgraduate programmes, 'regard[ed] [itself] as the centre for commercial music' (DPWS) and maintained extensive industry links (including those maintained through Creative Skillset, see Macro and Meso Influence), and the BA programme's aims were oriented towards preparing students for

‘participation in the commercial music market’ (DPS) in all areas from business and entrepreneurship to compo[sition and audio production. In terms of musical output, the programme sought to ‘establish students’ ability to use production processes to create musical works to the *prevailing standards of the Commercial Music sector*’ (DPS, my emphasis); the latter standards are thus adopted as an abstract authority. Moreover, the programme team, who were described as ‘all still industry professionals’ (WPVT) were therefore authentic representatives of the commercial music sector. This implies an acknowledgement of the primacy of commercial market-governed musical values. Elsewhere a more reflexive relationship was suggested, the website claiming that graduates not only succeeded in but ‘shape[d]’ the music industry, and that students were:

[...] encourag[ed] to act as agents of change by using their understanding of the culture, business and production processes of commercial music and offering vision, innovation, judgement, wisdom, direction, leadership and implementation (DPWS).

Nonetheless, the emphasis on interaction with the commercial market was maintained. One student spoke of the programme team’s preference for what they perceived to be commercially viable musical compositions, and of distinctly chart-oriented curricula:

People that are playing music that’s going to make money now tend to shine massively [on the programme]. They try and push you in that direction. We had a module where it was ‘write a song in the style of...’ and then they gave us a choice of six artists in the Top 40, people like Ellie Golding and Tiny Tempah and stuff, so they try to push you in a commercial direction. (DS1)

She noted that although students were able to compose in whatever style of music they wanted, and would ‘still be appreciated, it [wouldn’t] necessarily get the highest mark’ (DS1). Another student thought that the dominance of urban music styles on the programme was inevitable given that ‘one fundamental aspect about urban is that [it] is now the definitive, modern commercialized type of popular music. [...] Pop is no longer Steps or S Club 7, it’s the Jay Z’s.’ (DS2). Even outside of urban styles, he felt there was still a prevailing orientation towards commercially successful styles, and that in the rare instances of niche subgenres featuring there was still an orientation towards the commercial market beneath their aesthetic veneers:

There’s one band on the course, and they do shoegaze, [...] very *en vogue*, but if you take away the amount of reverb they overdose it with it’s basically Coldplay (laughs). (DS2)

He had told the above mentioned band, with whom he was friends, that one of their songs sounded like Coldplay, and they had been offended. The interviewee attributed this to a concern for authenticity (his friends had perceived his comment as an accusation of ‘selling out’ (DS2)). When I asked him about his own feelings regarding commercial success and authenticity, he reported that he had become less resistant to commercially successful music since studying on the programme, and had even come to appreciate Coldplay:

I do listen to them now and go, ‘God, I think I like this! My coolness is going down the drain right now!’ But you know, bite that bullet I say. (DS2)

However, he was unable to get over his dislike of urban music, the dominant genre on the programme:

It’s horrible in a way because you end up having this intellectual superiority. Because urban music in essence feels dumb. It has this kind of dumbness about it, and that’s a very snobbish point of view to have. [...] It’s not like I think everyone who makes urban music is dumb, my housemates make amazing urban music and are definitely not dumb, but it’s got this innate thing. The backwards baseball cap, or the white guy with the gold chains, and it’s weird how [on] my course [...] that vibe gets amplified. (DS2)

The other Institution D student felt that the bias towards commercial-oriented tropes extended to live performance sessions, where students were assessed on stage presence, image and dress sense, and encouraged to ‘play like you’re Bono’ (DS1). She had found this uncomfortable, and inauthentic for the style of music she performed:

I’ve been touring and gigging in punk bands for about six or seven years [...] and I was like, well you don’t really do that, you fit the venue. [...] It was hard that they were trying to get us to play with this big attitude and ego, and really you try and rein it in and you stick yourself into the venue. (DS1)

She had been asked to join a band on the programme that was ‘really industry-focused’ (DS1), and the experience had temporarily put her off pursuing a musical career:

[It was] really industry focused, and they just [focused on] everything like my stage presence, the way I looked, and that kind of made me see the industry for the monster that it is, and made me a bit sour for a while. (DS1)

At Institution A, one student had been frustrated that ‘in the commercial realm [...] you have to adhere to these song forms’ (AS1), while another had come to hate chart music

since joining the programme because ‘I’ve realised it’s just a formula for the Top 40’ (SS7). However, both felt that the programme had helped them to escape these (perceived) compositional restraints. One asserted:

It’s changed the way I write. [...] Before I came here if I wanted to write, I would literally go, well this needs to go like this and this needs to go like this, and think too much of it, and it would put me off (SS7)

The other, who identified his compositional style as ‘contemporary’ as opposed to ‘popular’ or ‘commercial’, was appreciative of the compositional freedom afforded to students, and felt they were:

[...] encouraged to pursue whatever it is you’re doing. I mean the music that I’ve written is not commercial by any means, but I don’t think I’ve been steered away from anything. The teachers in composition have encouraged me to pursue that kind of thing. (AS1)

However, he had perceived a greater attention to the standards of the commercial market in performance modules than in composition modules:

It is interesting that when we do more of the performance modules there is more of an influence that’s suggesting that perhaps you should do this, you should do that [...], not that they’re saying ‘don’t do this’, just that they’re more aligned to the commercial market and how a band needs to present themselves if they want to be successful. Which I suppose you would expect in that module. (AS1)

At Institution B, one student identified a tension between the value of experimentation espoused in composition classes and the conservative, formula-driven appraisals given in feedback:

Sometimes they’re saying you’ve got to be really creative and search for new things, but then they go ‘well, you haven’t gone verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus, you haven’t adhered to the standard way that a pop song is written’. (BS3)

However, he credited the programme’s contextual modules, which focused on the history and theory of popular music, with helping him to isolate what he regarded as the secret to songwriting success, which he felt had less to do with structural formula than with a conceptual framework. He made opaque use of the terms ‘selling’ and ‘successful’, such that it was unclear whether or not he was thinking in primarily commercial terms:

It just makes you think, I mean if you're writing a song and you want someone to listen to it, you're essentially selling a message, whether that's 'I don't love you anymore', or whatever, [...] you're essentially selling someone your art, [and] it'll have more effect if it's got some sort of conceptual basis in the world that everyone's living in, [...] people are going to be able to relate more easily and that's why all those bands were so successful. (BS3)

According to Institution C's programme specification, 'students are encouraged to look beyond formulaic commercial music forms, and to engage with more exploratory contemporary ways of making music' (CPS). This statement stands in stark contrast to Institution D's explicit orientation towards 'the prevailing standards of the commercial market' (DPS); while Institution D would perhaps be resistant to the adjective 'formulaic', their application and understanding of the term 'commercial' was in no way pejorative, as was arguably the case at Institution C where commercial formula was cast in opposition to contemporary 'exploration' (DPS). Furthermore, rather than preparing students to apprehend and respond to commercially-mediated values, Institution C claimed to offer its students:

the opportunity to work on contemporary music outside of the mainstream, and to develop original and imaginative approaches to your work on a course that recognises the diverse and often unorthodox nature of contemporary musical practice. (CPS)

'Mainstream' is not, in and of itself, synonymous with 'commercial', but it denotes majority validation and ubiquity, both of which are, in the case of popular music, gauged in terms of, and in achieved through, commercial success. Like 'commercial', 'mainstream' can accrue pejorative connotations in discussions relating to authenticity.

Among the Institution C student interviewees, there was a feeling that Institution C resisted 'commercialisation' (CS1). One student felt that in comparison with other institutions, such as one where his friend was studying whose emphasis was 'completely commercial' (CS3), Institution C offered a 'richer' educational experience. Another however was frustrated by the prevalence of 'weird, soundscapey music that you don't necessarily want to listen to but you feel like you should', and felt that there was 'no emphasis on how to make a career out of it, and I think that's a very important thing' (CS1).

In my field notes I had recorded that gold discs awarded to staff and alumni lined the walls of Institution B's building. As such, visual signifiers of commercial success were

embedded in the physical landscape of the learning environment (I did not record anything similar at the other sites; however, Institution D and Institution A (like Institution B) list their commercially successful alumni and staff on their webpages). However, Institution B's programme leader suggested that famous icons of success could be misleading. He pointed to the majority reality of the music industry, beyond famous outliers, as justifying the need for formal education that would equip students with a broader range of skills to enable them to earn money from music:

For every one the Edge, there's two million not-the-Edges who'll not make any money in music. It's that simple. (BPL)

To summarise, within this section, data relating to the impact of and responses to commercial values, and understandings of authenticity in popular music, have been presented. Programmes were shown to maintain different orientations towards the commercial music market, with the starkest contrast existing between Institution D and Institution C, the former being explicitly committed to commercial values and the latter explicitly encouraging musical exploration beyond the commercial mainstream. Students' responses to their programmes' positions also varied, with some students disliking their programme's commercial emphases, and others what they perceived to be their programme's avant-garde preoccupations and apparent disregard for professional viability. Some felt that their own musical values were at odds with their programme's, while others attested that studying on the programme had led them to fundamentally rethink their musical assumptions, and caused a shift in their musical values. In terms of my first research question, these findings highlight complex tensions existing on some programmes between commercial values and notions of authenticity and artistic value in music. They suggest also that understandings of the relationship between commercialism and authenticity differ between musical genres. Competing values relating to commercialism and authenticity could be identified within the message systems of *curriculum*, *pedagogy* and *assessment*, but also within *institution*, both in programme literature (Institution C and Institution D) and the physical environment (Institution B).

## **6.9 Academic Enculturation**

Institution D, Institution A and Institution C all made reference on their websites to preparing students for future academic practice:

This course aims to: Prepare students for further study (DPWS)

We have many students that go on to study at Masters and Doctoral level (APWS)

Graduates who want to use their music degree in their work often progress to become [...] academics (CPWS)

Institution B did not, although they listed their own Postgraduate Certificate in Further and Higher Music Education (PGCHE) under the Career Progression section of their programme webpage (BPWS). Institution A's programme leader suggested that some students became academically enculturated after joining the Institution A programme:

There are some that are more academically-minded that go on to do dissertations, and who at the beginning don't think about postgraduate study, but then of course just from being in that university environment some people find that it really suits them. [...] they might go on to do an MA in performance, or composition, or technology, but they become more aware of the potential for an academic route for them. So that's quite common. (APL)

One of the Institution A students interviewed, who was in his final year and intended to apply to Masters programmes, had experienced this academic enculturation, and had become less motivated by notions of performing musicianship, which he now distinguished from academic practice:

I've got more interested in other, wider things like music philosophy [...] and I think it's a general intellectual climate I suppose that I've become more interested in that's quite different from the 'I want to be a really good musician' mentality. (AS1)

In particular, he appeared to see his new-found academic interest as being at odds with popular music practice:

Now I'm more into composition I obviously use more of the full notational side, but somehow I feel quite detached from the performance-based side that others are really into, and more into the technical, musicological side. (AS1)

[and]

I think the academic environment suits me. In a lot of ways I feel a lot more like a classical musician than a popular musician. (AS1)

Institution D's deputy programme leader noted that, in contrast with past cohorts, a small number of students on the current programme had come to consider engaging in further academic study:

At least two who are in their second year are talking about postgraduate degrees, and certainly that would have been unthinkable, barring a heavy object falling on them, even a couple of years ago really. (WDPS)

As with the Institution A student above, one of the Institution D students I interviewed had developed a liking for academic life and was considering applying for Masters programmes. This had taken her and her family by surprise as it was seemingly out of character:

My mum keeps making jokes, I was the idiot child who got arrested, was a late bloomer, that kind of thing. Now she's like, 'I've bred an academic!' [...] I've found a kind of inner academic (laughs) [and] I don't know what I want to do next year, and I don't have a job or career in mind so I may as well learn a bit more for a year. (DS1)

She put this down to a second-year module, for which students researched, wrote and presented a themed conference paper, that stood out on the programme for being 'really academic':

It wasn't until the conference paper module. [...] Before on the other modules you could [...] write a 1500 word essay, add a little quote in and you could blag it, but doing that module where you researched anything you wanted really interested me, and when I did well I thought 'I could really get into this', because I hadn't realized how powerful that could be. It's the only module where we've been able to do something that's really academic, whereas other more traditional courses that's the kind of thing they do all the time. So I've missed that. (DS1)

She noted however that many people on the course had 'despised it and hated it and not really connected with it' (DS1) and had little interest in theoretical or research content, preferring the more practical, applied content that was geared towards professional life in the music industry.

While none of the students interviewed at Institution C or Institution B expressed an intention to continue studying at postgraduate level, all student interviewees across all cases found the more traditionally academic aspects of their programme to be intellectually stimulating, and placed high value on the theoretical content. For example:

I came to uni with an obsession for all sorts of different musics, [...] but I've become more aware of it, I've got a more in-depth knowledge of the stuff rather than 'oh yeah I've heard of this guy before.' I think the cultural theory, understanding how it's applied to the real world, that's been the most important thing for me. [...] We really get inside what music has done culturally. (CS1)

[and]

I think at [Institution C] we've had a richer experience [than students elsewhere] learning about culture, social and cultural theory as well, and it really challenges you intellectually. (CS3)

[and]

I just found it so enjoyable. It feels like second nature now [...], I missed the first Historical Perspectives session I have to admit, but the second [...] I was just blown away by the sheer scope of what we were learning. [...] when you first come down you don't expect yourself to be thinking about those kind of things, and if you just want to shred your guitar it can be a bit 'Whoa! I've just aged!' (laughs). But there's just nothing wrong with learning, with having knowledge. You can apply it to anything really. (BS2)

In some instances students felt that the theoretical content had been pivotal in shaping their musical values and their approach to their musical career. For example:

To be honest it takes everything that you know and makes you think, ah shit! In some ways maybe that's depressing as well [but] it's saved me from going on the X Factor! (laughs) It makes you think well what is that exactly? What is that all about? I mean people masquerading as musicians! (BS2)

To summarise, the data presented in this section illustrate that many student interviewees across cases spoke of having valued opportunities to engage in traditional modes of academic practice such as theoretical scholarship and essay writing, and having come to enjoy the academic environment. Furthermore, some interviewees spoke of having not appreciated these activities prior to engaging in them on their programme, suggesting that they had undergone a process of enculturation into the culture and practice of academia. This process was acknowledged by the programme leader at Institution A and the deputy programme leader at Institution D. For some interviewees, this had led to them wanting to undertake postgraduate study, and the aim of preparing students for further study was stated in the promotional literature for Institution D, Institution A and Institution C. As such, students developed values relating to academic practice as a result of their

engagement with the curriculum and ‘general intellectual climate’; as such, the development of these values might be attributed to the message systems of *curriculum* and *institution*. References made by Institution A’s programme leader and one Institution A student to developing an affinity with the academic ‘environment’ suggest also that such values might also be attributed to the message system of *lifestyle*.

## 6.10 The Academic Value of Popular Music Education

This category accommodates data that relate to the academic value of popular music education, and the values that were implicit and explicit, in discussions thereof. Understandings of academic value, and the value of academic study, varied among staff and students across cases. While all interviewees believed that popular music was a valid academic discipline, many felt that it was not considered as such by outsiders. For example:

I think there’s a stigma attached to doing a pop degree, it’s not seen as a proper thing, [...] and they’ve still got a while to go before the stigma drops off and people accept it. (CS3)

[and]

Questions of careers have always come up at admissions days, and not just candidates but parents. But you know I think it’s natural that people wanted to put their mind at rest, particularly in the early days of popular music [studies], that it wasn’t this Mickey Mouse degree [and] that it’s valued. (APL)

As discussed below in section 6.11, Institution D’s deputy programme leader linked this to binary distinctions of ‘popular’ and other (usually ‘classical’) music which he saw as being ‘social capital-led’ (DDPL), and which apportioned greater value to Western art music than to popular music. He suggested that in the early days of the programme (and of the discipline), elements of the curriculum were incorporated primarily to meet wider academic expectations rather than to meet a genuine desire or need for that content:

In the early days there was no question in my mind that the sociology strand was taken somewhat as an essential thing to make it into a degree rather than something anyone would have wanted by choice. (DDPL)

He felt that the proliferation of popular music degrees often pointed less to a shift in values within academe than to the pressures placed on academic departments to meet recruitment

targets; popular music studies' popularity among applicants was, he argued, attractive to universities seeking to meet student intake targets:

[There are] places that were formerly very good at classical music but have seen their places dwindle from seventy to twenty. [It's] the realpolitik of trying to keep your job as a 14<sup>th</sup> century paleographer, that you're going to have to accommodate [popular music] people and that kind of music (DDPL)

Despite his perception that distinctions between 'music' and 'popular music' persisted within academe, and in particular in programme nomenclature, the deputy programme leader was hopeful that the situation would improve in the future:

I think there's more likelihood of change when there's a new generation of lecturers who, when we've all retired, have been through this process from day one, and can say you know, what's the problem? I did a perfectly respectable degree, I have an interest, I want to bring it back and share it with other people of the future. (DDPL)

One student at Institution D spoke of being put off initially by the low entry requirements for the programme; as such, her prior assumptions regarding the programme's validity corresponded to traditional measures of academic standards rather than disciplinary content:

I think initially I was quite snobby, [...] I mean you didn't have to have your three As, and I'd done eleven GCSEs and was a bit snooty about it. (DS1)

At Institution C however, one student suggested that the University itself was wary of being seen to be dumbing down by offering a popular music degree:

They always seem to say popular and contemporary music, with an emphasis on the contemporary. Which suits me in one respect, but there's a big taboo with popular music, they don't like the commercialization of it [...] [Institution C], a very well respected university doesn't want to be seen to be putting out a degree for pop musicians.

*So the contemporary sounds more intellectually defensible?*

It does yeah. (CS1)

As noted in the previous section (p.135), Institution C explicitly encouraged students to engage with 'exploratory' modes of contemporary music practice beyond the commercial mainstream. For the 2013/2014 academic year, the programme title was changed from 'Popular and Contemporary Music' to 'Contemporary and Popular Music',

perhaps suggesting an attempt to convey the emphases and content of the programme more accurately. I asked Institution C's programme leader about this by email during member validation (Kvale, 2007). He confirmed that it was an attempt to reflect more accurately the nature and range of music covered on the programme, and to differentiate the programme from others:

Spinning the contemporary before the popular was a deliberate choice to signal the nature of our degree's creative practice and to sound different from the popular music degrees that are also in HE. It therefore attracts students who are interested in a wide range of modern musics. (CPL)

He also noted that this nomenclatural variation had communicated this message successfully to applicants:

It is interesting to note that this outward signal has been picked up by those students who have applied to us and has been mentioned, unprompted, as a reason why they chose the course: because it is more than the popular. (CPL)

In contrast to the staff interviewees at the other institutions, staff at Institution B spoke of the skepticism surrounding the discipline within the music industry as oppose to within academia. One Institution B lecturer spoke of a perceived 'juxtaposition between rock and roll, and doing a degree in rock and roll' (BL1), while Institution B's programme leader highlighted what he saw as a common belief within the industry regarding the authenticity of popular music education:

That's a common thing, you can't teach rock and roll, you know, it's always there. It seems a cliché to me, but I mean you hear those things all the time you know. 'Hendrix never went to university', this kind of thing.

To summarise, the data presented in this section illustrate that a degree of sensitivity was evident surrounding the issue of popular music's academic legitimacy. Both student and staff interviewees held the view that popular music was a legitimate academic subject, but perceived scepticism from outside the discipline. In relation to my second research question, these concerns could arguably be seen to have impacted upon the message system of *curriculum* at Institution D (in an earlier incarnation of the programme), where normatively academic (theoretical) content had been included in the curriculum in order to satisfy concerns of degree-worthiness, and at Institution C, where the curriculum content was explicitly 'more than popular' (CPL). Furthermore, it could be

seen to have impacted upon the message system of *institution* at Institution C, where it had prompted a change in programme nomenclature.

### 6.11 ‘Classical’, ‘Popular’ and ‘Just’ Music

Across cases, the issue of the perceived relative value of popular music and other types of music emerged as a prominent theme. The programme leaders at Institution A and Institution C and deputy programme leader at Institution D all voiced concerns regarding the bifurcation of music into ‘classical’, ‘popular’ and/or other types, either resisting such categorisation itself, or the hierarchical value judgments they saw as deriving from it. At Institution C, where classical, popular and contemporary, and folk and traditional students all studied within the music department and shared some programme content, the programme leader sought to promote a common identity of ‘musician’ beyond genre-bound distinctions. He gave examples from curriculum and pedagogy:

To say [the music programmes] run in parallel does not quite reflect the pollination between them. Folk and Traditional, Classical [and] Popular and Contemporary [students] have dedicated, non-elective modules that are compulsory [...] where we mix them up. They are organized deliberately across the different programmes to get them to mix and meet up. There is that sense of identity, but the identity is not to the point of exclusivity. (CPL)

[and]

When they turn up to their first oral session, I deliberately say ‘right. Put your hand up if you’re a folk and traditional student, and they put their hands up, in the corner, you know that sort of ghettoization [of] all the different programmes, and I say ‘you’re all liars!’ and they look at you stunned, and you say ‘think about your MP3 player, hit shuffle, ok what’s the next track, what’s the next track, what’s the next track?’ And I say, ‘You’re all musicians. Musicians. You might have a specialized interest, but you are not specifically that. (CPL)

[and]

I have students in each cohort who say ‘can I turn up to [the others] as well?’ [...] I’m more than cool with that, because they meet other people and they form bands, and talk across ideas and find how common they are. (CPL)

Similarly, Institution A offered a range of programmes delivered within the same music department. As noted above, the forthcoming change to an encompassing ‘music’ degree title was seen by the programme leader as an attempt to broaden the scope of the programme. She noted that some staff had seen this as a symptom of a breaking-down of musical distinctions, and a threat to popular music studies as a stand-alone discipline:

I have heard one or two colleagues saying ‘well, this is an example of where you’ll hear the term popular music less and less’. (APL)

She spoke of her frustration in the past at reductive understandings of popular music, often equated with ‘pop’:

In the past whenever popular music was spoken about there were some people that consistently referred to it as pop music, as if that was what all it was, and that was one of the little things that irked me I suppose. And still is if I hear people trying to sum up an entire degree course in popular music as pop music, because what I understand is that pop music is certainly a large part of it but it’s not the entirety of what we do on a popular music course. (APL)

She suggested that ‘snobberies’ could be found on either side of the popular-classical distinction, but was optimistic that less rigid curricula that accommodated a broader range of musics could help to break them down:

Provided that students still come on the course, and recognize that popular music is part of this overall music, let’s just say, then that is fine by me. I don’t have a problem with it at all, I think it’s good that we don’t have these barriers. It has to work both ways doesn’t it? You can’t have these snobberies on the one hand and an openness on the other (laughs). It seems to be working. (APL)

Institution D’s deputy programme leader was also frustrated by the typological distinctions maintained within higher music education:

[At] Goldsmiths for example, the difference between music and popular music, separate courses. And it’s extraordinary how common that is. [...] There are still music degrees available, music of course meaning not pop music of any kind. (DDPL)

He believed that such musical distinctions were traceable to distinctions of social class; that there was ‘so much social capital attached to [classical] music, and so little to the kind of music that goes on here’ (DDPL). These distinctions were, he felt, discernible even in cultural initiatives that sought to increase musical engagement across social strata:

In some of the literature promoting wider access to music it seems to be worded as if it were very much part of the problem rather than the solution, because music again was very much about instrumental lessons, go to the estates and allow that kid to play the clarinet or whatever. (DDPL)

For Institution D's deputy programme leader therefore, popular music education was inextricably bound to a social justice agenda within education of breaking down 'bifurcated social capital-led distinction[s]'. He asserted that such an agenda had informed Institution D's programme since its radical conception as an antidote to the status quo of higher music education:

The philosophy [the founding programme leader] had in mind for the course [...] was explicitly something which was trying to be the opposite of everything else that was available. (DDPL)

[and]

[The founding programme leader]'s ideal would have been to have had such a revolution in pop music education that no music department existed anymore at all, other than those studying commercial music. I never shared that view, [...] but however it's something we've always felt we're here to do, I can't remember how Ranciere puts it but it's from Aesthetics and their Discontents. [the interviewee later provided me with a full quotation: '[we're trying to] reconfigure the common of a community, to introduce into it new subjects and objects, to render visible what had not been, and to make heard as speakers those who had been perceived as mere noisy animals' (Ranciere, 2009; p25) ] (DDPL)

In summary, the data presented in this section reveal complex tensions related to how popular music is perceived and valued. On the one hand, there was resistance among interviewees to musical distinctions such as 'popular' and 'classical', which were seen by some staff to promote hierarchical valuing of different musical traditions and were related by the Institution D's deputy programme leader issues of social capital, and a preference for breaking down such distinctions and approaching all music as 'music'. On the other hand, there was concern that popular music was not respected in its own right. As touched upon in the previous section, the issue of nomenclature appeared to be central to this tension. In terms of my first research question then, while the value of popular music specifically in relation to other musics was asserted, so was the value of a pluralist, holistic approach to music. The Institution D programme leader linked the issue of musical value to values of social justice. In terms of my second research question, these values were

shown to circulate within the message systems of *institution* (through nomenclature), *curriculum* and *pedagogy*. They might also be seen to have circulated through the message system of *lifestyle*, given the Institution C programme leader's reference to encouraging students to form bands with students from other programmes in the interests of widening their musical palates, and through the Institution A programme leader's reference to public perceptions of popular music.

## **6.12 The Impact of Staff Interviewee's Background on their Values**

Through literature review it was established that academic's personal experiences inform their musical and educational values. As explained in Chapter 4 (4.3.3, Staff interviews), I sought to capture data relating to interviewees' personal backgrounds in music and education, and their reflections concerning its impact upon their values and practice.

All programme leaders, and Institution D's deputy programme leader, had studied music formally from childhood up to postgraduate level. Thus, while they had also all worked as performing musicians or industry professionals, their musical and educational lives had always been interconnected. Institution B's programme leader spoke at length about his music education, and in particular of studying under inspirational teachers who awakened him to the vocation of teaching as well as to high levels of musicianship:

[After university] I went on to study with Dennis Sandole, who was John Coltrane's teacher, and \_\_\_\_\_. I studied with them for about three years. [...] It was very important for me because guys like them weren't just great musicians and theoreticians, but they were great teachers. (BPL)

These teachers' pedagogical styles, and in particular their systematic, informed and flexible approaches to music, had informed his own approach to teaching:

It does influence the way I teach quite a bit, [...] and obviously I adapt that for popular music, but I learned the value of having an organized literature, and being flexible too. [...] I thought well if I can get every pedagogical technique together, and pretty much mastery over my instrument, I can improvise, you know, and switch gears. (BPL)

Institution D's deputy programme leader also acknowledged the influence of inspirational teachers as being pivotal in his choice to follow an academic career:

[In my] first year at Southampton, there were two lecturers operating at a very high level [...] that got me into the music analysis side of things, and as soon as I started really taking that seriously I suddenly found myself [...] ogling cardigans in shops! And it was really half way through the first year [...] that I thought yeah, I definitely want to do a Masters and then do a PhD. (DDPL)

He recalled that this experience had also influenced his decision to pursue a music-related career and that previously:

I had [had] no intention particularly at the time of pursuing anything remotely related to music afterwards, as indeed was the tendency in those days. (DDPL)

Institution C's programme leader also reported the positive inspiration of educators, and acknowledged their influence on his approach to teaching:

I had two teachers [at college] who were fantastic. And to this day I'm extremely grateful to them. (CPL)

I got in on the HND course for another two years, where, I would say, I became a musician. [...] The course leader at the time was absolutely stunning. The breadth of things from you know, understanding how Bach chorales really work, or playing the American songbook at the same time and mapping the two together. (CPL)

but also noted the importance of his negative experiences of learning music at school:

Actually I think that, and I would never tell this [school] teacher if I ever saw him again, but he did me a profound favour in terms of showing me exactly what not to do and in terms of how not to behave as an educational person. Because that taught me exactly how to leave people out in the cold. (CPL)

Although classically trained as a pianist, he spoke of having had a deficit of theoretical and contextual knowledge that his schoolteachers, concerned primarily with 'crowd control' (CPL), had neglected to address. He had begun to perform with a metal band, but saw it as something separate from the music he was studying in school; it was while studying for an HND at College that he began to develop an understanding of the commonalities between popular music and the music taught in formal education, and of his own musicianship as deriving from both areas. Awakened to the idea that his professional and educational activities could be integrated, he began to identify with academic study:

That course, which was utterly adapted to me, and my understandings of musicology, was not just traditional but popular as well. [...] Those two years were utterly superb and I

totally immersed myself in the learning experience that I wanted. I [...] started to use libraries, and that was the academic training that started it off. (CPL)

[At school] what I did as a musician was separate from education [...] you rehearsed after school, it was not integrated in the classroom at all. [...] But the synthesis was [...] during the HND when my professional life and my educational life were married, and I understood how the two could work together. (CPL)

Institution A's programme leader had played classical brass instruments growing up. However, she identified singing in a vocal duo as a teenager with an older friend and mentor, as being the main formative experience that led her to develop a passion for music. Initially deciding not to go to university because the music programmes on offer at the time were classical in focus, she later heard about the Popular Music and Recording degree offered at Institution A, then the first of its kind in the UK. Like Institution C's programme leader, she went on to study for a Masters and a PhD in the same department and became a member of teaching staff.

Both lecturers at Institution B had worked as professional musicians before working in education, and had not received any formal music education. Both felt that their expertise was experience-based, and had been recruited on the basis of their experience. Both however expressed a wish that they had received some formal education in music, believing that it would have enabled them to learn faster, and make fewer mistakes in their careers.

In summary, data in this category illustrates that staff interviewees' musical, educational and professional values derived in part from their own formative experiences, also musical, educational and professional. While interviewees recounted experiences that were for the most part positive, some also made references to negative experiences, or to learning from mistakes. Prominent among interviewees' recollections were inspirational figures such as educators and mentors. In relation to my research questions, the data presented here demonstrate that interviewees (variously) placed value on formal music education, systematic pedagogy, learning through professional activity, and on a holistic, pluralist approach to music. These values were primarily transmitted through *pedagogy*, and derived from *lifestyle*, *pedagogy*, *curriculum* and, by dint of professional engagement in the commercial music sector, arguably from *market* also.

### 6.13 Creativity and Individuality

Creativity and individuality were espoused by staff across cases as core values which they sought to foster in students. These values were borne out in their approaches to pedagogy and in curriculum design. At Institution B, one lecturer spoke of the challenge of allowing students to develop their individuality and creativity while still providing them with useful instruction, and of new initiatives being piloted to address the challenge:

We're really looking hard at how we can allow more creativity and nurture what they do rather than imposing what we think they ought to do, not least because one of the guys got on [a reality TV music show]. Solo acoustic [...], pin-drop silence. And I've known him for two years, and thought, [...] he's done alright in his exams, merits, distinctions, but if someone had come to me and said do you know a male vocalist who would be good for a project I would never have said \_\_\_\_, [...] all I saw was him being shy trying to sing metal songs badly, but that wasn't him you know. I'm hoping that's going to be a big change for next year actually, [...] nurturing creativity and individuality in a classroom context. (BL1)

The other lecturer's comments echoed this. He spoke of striving to preserve and make a feature of students' individual characteristics rather than impose a generic model of musicianship upon them:

At Institution B it's individuality as well. We've never wanted to groom musicians to be a certain kind of musician [...], we're helping them into the industry with what they're coming with. We want them, even in the live performance, to bring out their individuality. (BL2)

At Institution D, the deputy programme leader spoke of his efforts to nurture students' faith in their own convictions, and their individual thinking, as opposed to 'tell[ing] them what to think':

I'm very fond of the *avocatis diavoli* kind of approach, particularly with the kind of people who are [...] 'if it's on the 'net it's right, what the teacher says is right'. So what happens when you get two teachers disagreeing? [...] I often start whole modules by saying, 'quite often in the taught content I will say things that you'll be thinking to yourself, hand on that's bollocks! And that's what I want you to think. From time to time I will say things that are morally reprehensible or whatever, and I want you to debate with me.' (DDPL)

He saw an inherent affinity between this ideal of criticality and independent thinking and the underlying non-conformist ethos of punk music, which he had listened to and performed growing up:

I'm not telling them what to think, you know, I'm sure like all of us we're all slightly guilty of that, but I think it comes back to where we started really, the punk ethos. The wonderful thing that I remember about punk, the most liberating thing that anyone said was 'don't listen to what anyone else is saying, it's rubbish.' And that was a tremendously useful starting point, particularly in our subject areas it seems to me (DDPL)

Similarly at Institution C, the programme leader sought to nurture independent thought in students. While students were taught music theory through the study of rules and frameworks, the programme leader was 'at pains [...] throughout [...] to get them to think how it will work for them' (DDPL). Like Institution D's deputy programme leader, he saw punk as a potentially liberating case study, for its rejection of restraint and convention:

That's a great starting point to get them ripping apart. Students that come here don't know anything about hacking, and DIY scenes, and the projects that come from that, but if you asked them to define punk, they'd talk about Carnaby Street, and McLaren and the Pistols, but [not] the sense of what that legacy is within a DIY scene...so is Punk canonical? Only in the sense that it had so much shared ground afterwards. (CPL)

Furthermore, 'creativity, experimentation and artistic risk-taking' (CPWS) were explicitly espoused in Institution C's promotional literature, where they were set in opposition to 'formulaic' and 'mainstream' (CPWS) approaches to creative practice (see earlier findings relating to commercial values, p.135).

At Institution A, the programme leader spoke of nurturing students' individuality and creativity in composition, but acknowledged that this presented difficulties in terms of establishing criteria for assessment:

The assessors have to be open-minded themselves, [...] and you have to have an understanding of what [the students'] compositional intentions are I suppose, and assess it against the set criteria and try and be open-minded. It is [...] a challenge for the assessors in that way. (APL)

To summarise, values such as creativity, individuality, individuality, artistic risk-taking and experimentation were variously valued by staff, and in official documentation, across cases. Staff interviewees spoke of seeking to promote such values in their teaching, and of adapting curriculum and assessment design to better accommodate them. They were thus reflected through the message systems of *institution, curriculum, pedagogy* and *assessment*.

## 6.14 Collaboration, Lifestyle and Informal Learning

There was evidence across cases that students' developed their musical and vocational values through extra-curricular activities and lifestyle practices, and through the influence of their peers on their programme. Staff across cases asserted the value of peer learning, and of students' musical engagements outside of the formal curriculum and institutional purview.

Institution D's deputy programme leader spoke of how he and his colleagues sought to promote frequent collaboration and encouraged students to utilize each other's skills and expertise in realizing their own projects. He termed this shared practice 'jigsaw collegiality', and suggested that the structure of the curriculum around unsupervised group work and integrated projects was naturally conducive to a collegial atmosphere:

Because it's more centred around being in the studio jamming or being in the studio rehearsing or being in the studio producing, or being in the business lab researching the legal aspects of playing that live gig or whatever, then almost invariably there's more likely to be a more collegial vibe among students, naturally. (DDPL)

One student had found herself contributing to a number of projects on the programme because of her range of musical skills:

Sometimes they have this shortage of drummers, so I would step up and say, well, I can drum a bit, and I'd get pushed in at the deep end and would have to drum, [...] I was asked to join this dubstep, trip hop band and sing in that, and that was not like anything I'd done before. (DS1)

While these collaborations had led her to 'subconsciously pick up loads of things' (DS1), she felt that some students, specifically vocalists who did not play instruments or produce music, benefitted more than others. Another student reported that his friend had become disillusioned with collaborating with others on the programme as he felt he was not benefitting much himself:

He said to me, 'I think I'm one of the most talented people on the course and I was really hoping that wasn't going to happen', [...] he wanted to be challenged but instead he gets loads of MCs phoning him up wanting a beat. [...] And he's done it loads of times but now he's like 'I'm not getting anything out of that, what's the point?' (DS2)

While he was broadly positive about the collaborative aspects of the programme, he suggested that dividing students up into groups with different responsibilities could sometimes lead to tensions:

Essentially what they're trying to do is give students that angle on the industry, which I understand, and they had this beautiful idea of [getting] students to create their own show, [but] you have the creative strand who'll create the show, and the sharing strand who'll share the bands, and the thing is by creating that divide, you're creating a divide. (DS2)

At Institution B, one lecturer believed that the ability to build collaborative networks- in a discerning, informed way- was an essential skill for professional musicians:

I try and push hard for them to get used to the idea that they've got to know a good bass player even if they're a good singer, and a drummer's got to know a good guitarist, that you've got to know what this stuff means, or you'll end up banging your head against the wall carrying dead weight. (BL1)

Some students noted that the opportunity to access musical networks was a key factor in choosing to study at Institution B:

It's a huge part of it, [...] for many people the only thing was meeting other musicians, because in some areas of the country that people come from you're just not exposed to this world where everyone's creative, everyone's writing music and everyone's got something to add to you, and you yourself can contribute to them. (BS2)

[and]

If I'd stayed in Exeter for three years I'd still have the same friends, the same amount of musicians, which is about five, [but] now that I've been here for a few years I've got about a hundred new friends who all play different instruments and have different talents. (BS3)

On all programmes, collaboration and networking were not limited to the classroom or the formal curriculum, but were part of students' (and staff's) social life, both within and beyond the institution. Institution B's programme leader identified hallways and other communal spaces as sites in which collaborative practice took place:

I think a lot of them exchange ideas, and a lot of them are practising in the hallways, that sort of thing. (BPL)

He saw the active institutional social life at Institution B as engendering 'a driven sort of artistic environment in which people thrive' (BPL). Furthermore, it allowed

students to avail themselves of professional expertise that they would be unable to access anywhere else:

I mean not shooting my own horn, but I play with some of the best musicians in the world. Unless you find me somewhere, you're not going to work with me. [...] A guy like \_\_\_\_\_. When [else] are you going to get a chance to talk to someone like him over coffee about contract law? (BPL)

According to one student at Institution D, informal hallway interactions between students and staff had contributed to the dominance of an urban vernacular on the programme:

You've got the student walking down the corridor and saying 'yo' to the lecturer, [...] and you can see that the relationships are very, for want of a better word, street, and there's a street vernacular, and there's a deeper understanding, irrespective of race and ethnicity.

*So just more of a cultural register?*

Yeah, guided by that understanding of urban music, and what that entails. (DS2)

All staff interviewees identified peer learning as occurring through students' extra-curricular musical engagements. One lecturer at Institution B spoke of a difference in the social practices of different instrumentalists, in particular between drummers and guitarists:

I honestly believe that drummers are really social animals (laughs), and as musicians they will teach each other and learn from each other quite happily, [...] they'll talk and discuss and help each other out. Whereas guitarists seem to be a bit more insular, they sit here like this (huddles into himself) and they work something out. I know it's a generalization, but I see it a lot. There's a lot of peer learning, [and] I've found in ten years drummers have always been very quick to get on with each other. (BL2)

The programme leader at Institution C noted that students' musical development also occurred outside of the programme, through their concurrent social and professional engagements:

Students just forming bands, getting together and performing within the town too, they often make their own routes. (CPL)

He placed high value on students' engagement in extra-curricular activities alongside their work on the programme. Relating this to his own experiences of playing in bands as a

student, he acknowledged that involvement in wider musical activities was essential, even though it could impact upon students' engagement with the formal curriculum:

So you'd finish your rehearsal and then at two in the morning after you'd done the gig you'd get up early for a lecture [...] at seven, and you'd get on the metro for a nine o'clock start, and you're still quite tired. So my engagement wasn't as good as it could have been. But that's remarkably important. [...] And when students come to talk to me about their professional life alongside studying, I understand it. (CPL)

One student at Institution C had had opportunities to work with students on the other music programmes through his professional engagements, and had been able to draw from the University's musical network:

I've had experience with some of the other folk students and classical students through my external work. I worked to get some cash as a freelance producer, and one of the artists I was working with wanted strings for their record, and flute, things that would require a folk player, and I did find that working with them was an incredibly beneficial thing, because you realise what their skills are and aren't. (CS1)

Within the music department, but outside of the classroom and curriculum, students from across the four music programmes at Institution C were encouraged to interact and collaborate. All three students interviewed had valued the extracurricular musical life of the department. One felt he had significantly broadened his musical knowledge by watching his fellow students perform:

We have lunchtime concerts which showcase a range of really different musicians, and it really does...I mean there's music out there that I didn't know existed before university, and I think that's really important. (CS3)

He felt that students only had themselves to blame for not taking advantage of opportunities to interact with other musicians:

I think the course really is what you make of it. I mean you can shut yourself away and not interact with any other students, but it's like any situation. You can interact with them if you like, the opportunities are there, it's whether you take them or not. (CS3)

Another Institution C student asserted that he had 'learned as much from students as I have from lecturers' (CS2), while the third suggested that performing with other musicians had led him to be more reflective regarding his own musical practice:

I think you learn from each other obviously in a positive way, but you learn from experiences that aren't so positive, and they're often the most important learning curves. You don't just think, 'ah that was shit, so therefore that person's rubbish and I don't ever want to work with them again', you question, 'oh, was that me?' How you practise music, [...] you really open your mind. (CS1)

At Institution A one student interviewee, who played in two bands in his home town in addition to his projects on the programme, explained that every aspect of his social life involved music in one way or another:

*To what extent is music involved in your social life, either in or outside the course?*

Oh music's everything to be honest. Everything I do revolves around music. During the week I'll either be home writing music or playing my guitar or composing, and at the weekends I'm gigging, and practising between that as well. (SS2)

He felt that mixing with other musicians on the programme had helped to broaden his musical tastes and playing style, leading him to see value in different genres of music:

I'd say before I came to uni I was more into standard rock, but now since I've met people who are really into the progressive side, that's what's really made me feel that more. Just playing with other people, you get jazz people in here, and you'd never really play with them [otherwise]. (SS2)

Another student also saw music as a major aspect of his life and identity, but was not an active performing musician and as such did not shape his social life around musical engagements:

I'd say that music is a massive part of my life and who I am really. It's always an influence. I don't know socially whether I'd say really it influences too much of what I do, I'm not sure. I think I don't get out as much as some of the others, I spend a lot of time studying (laughs). (AS1)

Another student spoke of how her listening tastes had changed dramatically since joining the programme. This was mainly as a result of a culture of music sharing among her friendship group:

We all live closely and there'll be moments when (SS8) will come in and go 'check this out', or 'listen to this band', and I'll say 'I don't know them', and he'll say 'oh you've got to listen to them'. (SS7)

Music sharing was apparently common on the programme, not just among localized friendship groups but across the whole programme population via a facebook group:

So is there a lot of music sharing on the course then?

Yeah. We also set up a facebook group, and everyone here on the course is a member, and everyone is always posting videos, and within two minutes there are these arguments (laughs)'. (SS7)

In summary, the data presented in this category illustrate that students' musical, professional and other values were formed, transmitted and changed through their extra-curricular lifestyle practices, and that some students saw the *lifestyle* message system as being as crucial to their development as *curriculum*, *pedagogy* and the *institution*.

### 6.15 Musical Values, Tastes and Genres

Across cases, student and staff interviewees reported dominant genres and styles of music on their programmes, suggesting the predominance of certain aesthetic values over others. At Institution B and Institution A staff and students identified the dominance of rock, or indie:

[It's] rock and stuff, but that's always going to be that way. (BS1)

I'd say the high percentage are the rock players; there are pockets of other stuff but there is a dominant vibe of rock (BL1)

Half to three quarters of the course are indie bands, or indie influenced. But you get that wherever you are don't you? There's always got to be the main genre of music that people listen to. (SS5)

Going back to a review that one of my colleagues did over this last academic year [regarding] the interests of the ensemble bands that were put together, he just noted that in terms of genre it's primarily rock based. Now I know that's a huge genre in itself, but it's not as if the students are coming in saying 'we want to do more sanku and latin'. (APL)

At Institution B however, both the programme leader and another lecturer had discerned a shift in recent years towards a broader spectrum of styles represented in students' playing interests:

I mean when I got here it was hard rock, blues, and maybe kind of indie bands, but it seems to have spread out a bit. (BPL)

It's changed. When we started it was very much metal. And then it started to be more rock, but it started off with a load of metal heads. But during the years I've noticed less and less of that. It's much more eclectic. (BL1)

while at Institution A, the programme leader suggested that the bias towards rock styles in ensemble performances, which had been identified in a report by her colleague, did not extend to composition:

Compositionally I'd say it's less so in terms of there being an overall genre that's seen to dominate, [...] students seem to be a bit more willing to push themselves in different directions. (APL)

At Institution D however, both students identified urban music styles as being dominant among students on the programme. In one student's view this had defined the overall 'culture' of the department, as staff sought to meet the interests of the student majority:

Urban. Urban is the word, sky high, not just among students but teachers generally. [...] and when you're in a lecture urban culture is always used as an example because the majority of the people in the class are interested in it and can relate to it. (DS2)

*So that emphasis is student-driven or faculty-driven?*

I think initially it's student driven, because it's just a numbers game in that respect, but then as soon as staff latch onto that it's amplified massively. (DS2)

There was variation across cases in the extent to which students felt the programme had influenced their tastes and musical values. However, almost all students appreciated having been exposed to a broader range of musics, and had come to see the value in music beyond their own tastes. Indeed, one student at Institution B drew a distinction between liking and valuing music:

I was into Rock, but now [...] I'm into RnB and hip hop.

*So you feel that your outlook has changed since you've been on the course?*

Yeah, tastes definitely. Not value, because I still appreciate it as much as the next hip hop record, you know. (BS1)

while a student at Institution A spoke of not valuing any style of music over others, despite his own tastes lying predominantly in rock music:

I can [listen to] that and listen to a record that Phil Spector's mixed and mastered and written you know, like a Charelles hit from the 60s that's two and a half minute long and think that's perfect you know. I don't place any value on one more than the other. (AS11)

Some students did not believe in an absolute distinction between good and bad music, only differences in taste:

*(Do you think there's good and bad music?)*

I would have just said it was music that I don't get. (SS3)

It's all about your taste. (SS4)

I'm not a massive fan of dubstep, but I appreciate what they're doing and the skill it takes to create those sounds. [...]It's not for me, but I wouldn't call it bad music. (SS2)

Without giving a specific definition of music I don't think you can say there is good or bad music. (SS8)

Another student however was frustrated by what they perceived to be a relativist understanding of musical value:

[But] you can apply [relativism] to everything. Hitler wasn't bad, he was just misunderstood. That's rubbish. There's everyone's opinions but some people's opinions are wrong. [...] There is good and bad. There is right and wrong. (AS10)

While another attributed relativism to the 'introduction' of postmodernism:

I think [the distinction between good and bad] is something that is disappearing since postmodernism's been introduced. (SS6)

Despite these differences of opinion, all students supported a distinction between good and bad musicianship. The qualities associated by student interviewees with good musicianship were broadly the same across cases, and included the ability to listen, lack of ego, knowledge of different styles, punctuality and restraint. For example:

I think you've got to be able to listen to the other members of the band, and not be egotistical about what you're playing. (BS3)

Just listening when you're in bands, and knowing where you sit with other musicians, [...] knowing your styles. (AS1)

At Institution A, some students spoke of their musical values being at odds with their instrumental teachers', and that they had felt frustrated by the content their teachers had prescribed:

I've had [...] problems, like my first teacher was a classical teacher so I wanted to do something and she wanted to do something else (SS3)

[and]

[I]t got frustrating because I knew what I wanted to be working on but he had his ideas of what I should work on, it's difficult to find a balance, and I think maybe if they had a wider range of teachers they could maybe you know tailor it to the students' needs. (SS4)

Some students related this to their instrumental teachers' age, suggesting that their musical values related to a different era and that they did not understand the needs of modern musicians:

They're a bit older [...], they are great musicians and have a lot of experience, but the more modern music that we're playing they don't perhaps understand (SS4)

If we play what they're playing when we go up, everyone's going to start looking at us. [...] If we're wanting to get paid as musicians we can't be doing that stuff from back then, it's a lot more modern. (SS5)

At Institution B, the programme leader and one lecturer noted that solo virtuosity was not a priority at Institution B. He suggested that the emphasis was more on the ability to work well within ensembles ('band-oriented') while the lecturer suggested that there was an emphasis on 'simple things done well' (BL1). Another lecturer at Institution B spoke of the difficulties he had encountered with trying to get students to listen outside of their narrow tastes. He related this to what he saw as the 'tribal' nature of youth culture:

I think [it's] really hard when they're young, and I mean I was the same listening to Genesis, [...] I wouldn't have listened to Depeche Mode. Funnily enough now I think Depeche Mode are amazing, [...] I think, the tribal thing, it's like I've got this T shirt, I can't play Stevie Wonder, it's not me. (BL2)

To summarise, these data suggest that while a range of musical values existed on all programmes, there were dominant genres and styles. This was mainly due to students' music tastes, but in some cases, genre biases were perceived to be embedded in institutional culture, and in curriculum content and assessment criteria. There were

significant differences in understandings of musical value, with some students maintaining relativist understandings and others foundational ones, and in understandings of the relationship between value and taste. All students acknowledged the value of engaging with a broad range of musics, although some students felt that the music they were required to study were irrelevant to their needs.

Relating these data to my second research question, musical values were seen to be borne in the *lifestyle* message system, since they derived in large part from students' prior musical tastes, and in some cases from changes in students' tastes precipitated by extra-curricular social interaction, but also through *curriculum* and *pedagogy*.

## 6.16 Canon

The theoretical issue of canon had emerged through literature review as an important area of value formation in music education, and an early proposition was formulated that the values of popular music programmes derived in part from canons of works, artists and practices. The issue of canon was therefore targeted explicitly in data collection.

There was varying resistance within and across all cases to the concept of canon in popular music, but acknowledgements that it would be remiss to exclude certain high profile musics or artists. For example, Institution A's programme leader was:

[...] not really aware that in Institution A we have defined things as a canon, but I think it's true to say that the bigger names will always feature in one way or another, and when I say big names, that does have to come down to popularity, and [...] culturally who is seen to have greater value I suppose in their contribution to popular music, and a course in popular music has to take account of that but not be tied down by it, or be limited by that. (APL)

One Institution B lecturer suggested that knowledge of some repertoire was a pre-requisite for playing certain styles of music, and that he always sought to impress upon students lines of heritage behind performance traditions:

They don't understand that to play what they play you kind of have to hear the Beatles, and you have to hear that, and you have to hear that. It's you know, you have to keep knocking on the door, and they get there. (BL2)

Likewise, the Institution A programme leader felt that 'you should include some things, I mean we would always include something on Hendrix, something on the Beatles' (APL).

Paradoxically, the practicalities of pedagogy both denied and necessitated the inclusion of artists in the curriculum; owing to time constraints some artists that lecturers felt to be important were inevitably overlooked, but at the same time, and as one Institution D student's observation regarding tutor's employment of urban music examples might suggest is also the case there, the choice of examples was limited by what lecturers thought students would be familiar with:

We always say to students that it's impossible to cover everything, it's impossible to cover every artist (APL)

[and, when teaching composition]

[...] thinking about examples I want to select [...] it was selected at times certainly on whether I thought the students would know the artist, [...] if we've only got one playing of this then it's better that we play something that they've heard but haven't thought about in that way before. (APL)

She explained that she always sought to pair well-known artists with lesser-known examples, so as to introduce students to new music. These would not necessarily be drawn from popular repertoire however, and might include examples of contemporary classical music:

On the popular music courses I've taught on we've always incorporated and referenced a huge range of music, [...] if we were looking at some more current compositions that are quite challenging in their use of manipulation of sound sources then we would talk about people like Varèse, [...] Stockhausen, [and] if we were looking at atonal works, some of Zappa's work, or things like Morbid Angel, then we'd go back and look at the very early days of atonal, [such as] Schoenberg (APL)

While this breadth of styles had always been a feature of the programme, Institution A's programme leader spoke of a recent increase in musical scope, which she linked to the proposed change in degree title to a BA Music (previously BA Popular Music and Recording):

[...] we've never really shied away from looking at classical music, or contemporary classical works, but now I think there's probably [...] even more of an attempt to make them realise, you know, we shouldn't have these barriers, and I think that's a good thing. (APL)

Institution C's programme leader was similarly opposed to stylistic barriers, and asserted that the curriculum at Institution C was designed to broaden students' understanding of popular and contemporary music to encompass a range of styles including 'world musics, [because] it's not just European pop we're talking about here'(CPL). Like Institution A's programme leader, he strove to highlight commonalities that existed across musical styles. He also gave the example of Frank Zappa:

Modernism, postmodernism, how does that inform the popular music canon? Why would Boulez work with Frank Zappa? Those sort of ideas. Again, breaking out of those areas that they might have preformed. (CPL)

He gave a further example of using popular and classical music side by side, in this case to illustrate harmonic structure:

[...] there's a wonderful slide I put up, 'Who's the best exponent of the three chord trick, is it Status Quo, or is it Monteverdi?' And they go 'Oh it's got to be Status Quo', and I put on some Monteverdi and say 'It's one-four-five guys!' That's it. (CPL)

While he used the term popular music canon on occasion, he explained that he found the notion of canon to be 'incredibly dangerous', and suggested 'shared practice' as a more appropriate term/concept for its emphasis on commonality and not categorisation:

There's something horrible about the desire to canonize and to label, it reminds me of the early ethnomusicologists that would go out into the field and take their recordings and then bastardise them into tonal structures, [...] so if you talk about the canon, I think that's a little too slippery for me. I like shared practice as a more interesting idea, drawing ideas together. (CPL)

The notion of 'interconnectedness' (CPL) in music was, according to Institution C's programme leader, woven into every aspect of the curriculum at Institution C, from critical-theory based modules to historical studies and performance. As such, open-mindedness was a core value that Institution C sought to inculcate in its popular and contemporary music students, who the programme leader felt were in any case more disposed to take an open-minded approach than classical students because of the nature of their prior musical development:

In think that popular and contemporary students that come through these doors have a more open awareness of what they are as a musician. Within the people they listen to and the bands that they go to there's an immediacy to it. I think your more traditional classical

musician has more awareness of history as canon, because of the music they've had to do for ABRSM, or [which has been] taught in the syllabus. (CPL)

Notwithstanding his wariness of canon formation, which he saw as having given rise to divisive musical 'pillars', he recognised the pedagogical usefulness of the common practice canon in teaching certain aspects of theory:

Teaching Schenkerian theory, which I do on a Thursday morning, it's very easy to do that within the common practice canon. (CPL)

While he saw traditional modes of analysis (such as Schenkerian theory) as valuable knowledge for all musicians (popular or otherwise) however, he was again emphatic in his belief that they were inappropriate as means of codifying popular music:

What I'm at pains to do throughout is get [popular and contemporary music students] to think about what they're currently playing and how it may well work for them. I don't like articles that are 'Schenker for the Stones' and things like that...it's missing the point. That canonization of popular musicology is incredibly dangerous. (CPL)

[and]

It's Mouer, who classified all of the popular musicology in his appendix, [...] following from Adorno's theory of how limited popular music harmony is. I struggle to see the value. (CPL)

At Institution A, students noted that jazz was commonly used in teaching harmony. One suggested that this was appropriate because:

[...] there aren't many other styles of music that lend themselves so easily to doing advanced theory. The jazz lends itself to that well if you're not doing classical.

*The harmonic side of things, and rhythm?*

Yeah [...] I mean apart from progressive metal and all those sort of things, but they're very niche and specialised compared to something general like jazz, and there's an established teaching framework for it. (AS1)

The data presented here illustrate a high degree of ambivalence to the notion of canon formation and canonical values, but also that teaching staff drew upon established traditions and repertoire. Canons were employed in teaching and syllabus design, and as such canonical values might be seen to have operated via the message systems of

*curriculum* and *pedagogy*; however, staff interviewees sought to promote values of scepticism and open-mindedness to mitigate against what they saw as pitfalls of canon formation.

## 6.17 Locale

The findings of the pilot study (Appendix VI), together with the findings of Papageorgi et al. (2010a) informed the theoretical issue of locale, and the proposition that programme values may derive in part from socio-geographical context. The findings appeared to support this proposition, to varying extents across cases. Students reported that local cultural norms and cultural infrastructure impacted upon their extra-curricular, and in some cases curricular musical experiences. In some cases, the programmes' promotional literature explicitly asserted a direct link between programme values and the cultural heritage of their geographical location. For example, Manchester's musical heritage featured on Institution A's programme website:

[Institution A]'s proximity to Manchester city centre means you will be able to take full advantage of the region's world-renowned music scene as both an active participant and an enquiring spectator. Professional guest speakers and visiting artists from the industry ensure you will gain an appreciation of Manchester's historical importance within both traditional and contemporary/popular music idioms. (APWS)

Some students suggested that the city's musical heritage had impacted on the culture of the course by way of some of the teaching staff's experience:

*So does that whole heritage influence the culture of the course?*

It's lecturer to lecturer, some of them pick up on that, some don't, it's person to person. (SS3)

*It depends on the staff member?*

A lot of the staff are from round here, and the ones that are from round here [Manchester's heritage] is a big influence. (SS4)

Institution B's programme website featured a page devoted to Brighton's cultural life, although there was no explicit suggestion, as there had been at Institution A, that locale-specific musical heritage was incorporated into the programme curriculum. It asserts however that 'music is in Brighton's bones', describes the city as 'bohemian' and

‘eccentric’ and highlights its musical eclecticism by way of referencing many popular music subgenres including ska, reggae, soul, rockabilly, punk, funk, jazz, goth, metal and industrial (BPWS). One student spoke of having been attracted to this cultural diversity. He had found what he perceived to be Brighton’s liberal values to be liberating in terms of his personal identity, allowing him to lead a more ‘authentic’ lifestyle. This had been instrumental in the development of his musical ambitions:

I mean Brighton’s really diverse, really liberal, and I’ve noticed that a lot of people here want to be different, and I find that a lot of people being different, you don’t stick out, so I’ve definitely tried to be more of an [...] average guy, trying to live his life rather than try and live something else I guess.

*Have you changed your outlook in terms of what you want from music from being here?*

Yeah definitely. (BS1)

For most students across cases, the location of the institution had been a significant factor in their choice of degree programme. For some, being able to live at home was an important factor in their choice of programme, whether for financial reasons or because they had musical (or other) commitments that they wanted to maintain while studying. Others however had actively sought the specific cultural life and opportunities that the programme locations offered:

I’d always wanted to give Brighton a try (BS2)

[and]

I thought well I don’t want to spend another year [in my home town], I’ll do a year’s course in Brighton. I wanted to live here anyway. [...] I’m in somewhere that’s a hub of creative activity, Brighton. It’s next to London, I mean it’s a suburb of London basically. (BS3)

[and]

[It was] partly circumstantial, but partly I was like, I’m going to get myself down there, play in bands and stuff. There’s more going on in Manchester than in Newcastle. (AS11)

[and]

I knew that Manchester was good for music but I didn't think about it too much, I knew that Manchester was a big enough size for me, I think London would have been too big for me. And it was in the north. (AS10)

At Institution A, one student had been attracted to Manchester because 'it's got that heritage'(AS10). Institution A's programme leader suggested that Manchester's musical reputation was important for the many students who were 'from the area anyway, and a lot of those that [had] come from outside [were] coming to Manchester because it's got this great reputation for music and that's what they in part want[ed] to try to get involved with' (APL). Most students acknowledged that Manchester had much to offer in terms of opportunities to perform and listen to music, although some claimed they didn't 'go out' (AS1; AS12) or regretted 'not gigging as much' as they felt they should have (AS12). Others however had found Manchester's musical climate to be dominated by indie rock and thus at odds with their own musical tastes. This had led them to look elsewhere:

I've spent most of my time in Leeds [...] you can go and see your jazz or your indie, whereas here there's your Manchester indie stuff that seems to cover a lot of bases.

*It's narrower?*

Narrower in that it's just one genre of music but a lot more clubs play it, whereas if you want to see your jazz there's not that many clubs that play it. (SS4)

[and]

A lot of it is not my kind of rock. There's a really big kind of indie thing going on at the moment [and] every time we get a gig in Manchester it's like us playing prog rock music, on with a bunch of indie bands, so it's really hard work.

*The audiences are hard work?*

Yeah you feel alienated from the audience. But [...] a place where we gig a lot now is Liverpool, [and] Preston, Blackpool as well, we go down well in Blackpool. (SS2)

Other students suggested that in addition to indie rock dominating the live music scene, the club scene was dominated by 'lowest common denominator' (SS9) chart pop. However, one student asserted that there were opportunities to experience music outside of the mainstream for those willing to seek them out:

Even the club scene isn't that bad if you go to the right places. If you go to the big, cheap, aimed at everyone everywhere, for students, 'you'll all like it' kind of club then yeah it's

going to be rubbish, but if you go to something a little more niche then it's going to be good. (SS9)

All of the student interviewees at Institution C were active musicians who performed regularly around Newcastle. All appreciated Newcastle's cultural life, but did not give specific details. The programme leader summarised the city's musical life as being 'remarkably plural' (CPL), and characterized by collaboration across different genres:

From the Sage in Gateshead, which is a fantastic, fantastic venue, the home of Sinfonia, through to halls one and two in the same venue which have folk, and you go across to [what's] now called the O2 academy, which is within Newcastle itself for the rock shows, across to the arena, which is more like stadium-type concerts, through to the City Hall which is a bit more provincial, down to Lit and Phil which does the sort of chamber ensembles, through to Northern Stage, through to all the stuff we do here, back to the pubs and the DIY scene, through to the clubs, [it's] massively plural, and there's an awful lot of fusion. An awful lot of combined sites where [...] different genres are brought together deliberately because of the bands that do that. (CPL)

To summarise, data presented within the category of Locale illustrate that values associated with cultural-geographical contexts were evident, to varying extents, across programmes. These values impacted in various ways upon students' lifestyle practices, and as such might be seen to have operated via the *lifestyle* message system. Local music culture was noted explicitly in Institution A's programme literature as informing programme content, and thus locale-specific values might be seen, in Institution A's case, to have operated within the message systems of *institution* and *curriculum* and *pedagogy*. Elsewhere, locale-specific resources determined the musical activities, both curricular and extra-curricular, available to students.

## 6.18 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings of the primary research phase of the study, arranged according to themes identified through coding and analysis. The findings reveal that the nature of the interplay of values within the cases could be highly complex. Aesthetic and musical values were brought into dialogue with values relating to equality and social justice, and with commercial and academic values; the dominant values encoded in local cultural life were in some instances seen to impact upon students' engagement

with music in ways that were perceived to be positive and negative; students found their musical values changed as a result of their programme of study, and also from coming into contact with their peers' musical tastes and practices; *transactional* analyses of the value of higher education were pitted against conceptions of higher education as being of higher, intrinsic value; advocacy of the value of popular music as a cultural form, and for its academic manifestation, ran alongside calls for genre distinctions, which were perceived to implicitly present some forms of music as being of greater value than others, to be broken down; values seen to underpin macro level policy such as in the proposed fee rises, or enshrined in meso level literature or strategy, informed the values within the micro (case) setting but could also be oppositional to those of individuals, and the relative value ascribed to different skills and knowledge appeared to reflect other value positions, such as programmes' responsiveness to commercial values, or even the aesthetic characteristics of certain types of music. Different values could be seen to inhere, and be transmitted through, different message systems.

The following chapter considers these findings in concert with the theoretical and contextual frameworks established across the first three chapters, with the aim of generating wider insights towards a sophisticated apprehension of the values of higher popular music education, and how they intersect.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Discussion**

This chapter considers the findings presented in Chapter 6 in the context of the issues discussed in the literature review. It discusses the values that can be identified within the data, and considers how these relate to and interact with each other. It proposes that complex value relationships gave rise to tensions which were evident within and across the cases, which may be crucial to understanding the dynamics of higher popular music education in the UK.

The primary data in this study were mainly sourced from the micro level- from the students, staff and literature of the cases- as opposed to the meso and macro levels within which the cases sat. However, analysis of the data revealed that values deriving from the wider meso and macro contexts were evident within the micro level setting, for example when embedded within and transmitted through state policy or institutional governance. Moreover, within each case, values relating to seemingly separate domains did not always manifest discretely but were often enmeshed, establishing value relationships that could be oppositional or complimentary. Therefore, this section seeks not only to identify values that were held by students, staff, or enshrined in programme literature at the micro level, but to discuss them in terms of their interplay.

#### **7.1 Principle and Transactional Values**

As discussed in Chapter 2, Skelton suggests that academics' values develop in part through their formative life experiences, and under the influence of their parents and other central figures in their lives (Skelton, 2012). This appeared to be true of all staff interviewees. The programme leaders at Institution A and Institution C and two lecturers at Institution B all made reference to their own experiences as professional musicians, and a clear link was evident in the relationship between these experiences and the musical and professional values they maintained. In the Institution A programme leader's case, working

as a singer as a teenager had enhanced her valuing of popular music, and brought her to the realization that she wanted to focus on popular rather than classical music. Both lecturers at Institution B explicitly stated that their professional and musical experiences lay at the root of what they chose to teach, while the Institution C programme leader's experiences of juggling professional and academic life informed his vision of the programme as being 'rooted in a professional landscape' (CPL), and in his belief in the necessity of students acquiring 'real' experience. He also related his beliefs concerning access to (and the cost of) education to his own experiences of growing up in a working class family and of receiving a grant to study at university. Institution B and Institution C's programme leaders and Institution D's deputy programme leader all acknowledged the impact of influential educators on both their musical and educational values, and for the Institution B and Institution C programme leaders in particular, the interconnectedness of these different value domains.

These uniquely personal values underpinned the staff interviewees' understandings of the purpose of popular music education, of education generally, and of popular music itself. This supports a proposition that individual academics' personal *principle* values are active within the educational setting. While in all cases the staff interviewees claimed to broadly agree with the values of their institution, the Institution C programme leader's opposition to the marketisation of higher education might be considered an instance of 'values schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003, cited in Skelton, 2012, p.257), defined as when an individual's personal values are in contradiction with those of the system— in his case UK higher education— they are professionally obliged to participate in (see Chapter 2, p.19). Institution A's programme leader's and Institution D's deputy programme leader's reports of colleagues' discomfort at the changing educational culture, and in particular to what they perceived as increases in accountability and a drift towards vocational curricula, might also be seen as evidence of values schizophrenia.

Institution D's deputy programme leader reflected that his valuing of open-mindedness and resistance to canonical values derived from his listening religiously to John Peel's eclectic radio show as a teenager, and more generally from the 'punk ethos' (DDPL). His account of his formative experiences was unique among the staff interviewees for this reference to subcultural values. Although Institution C's programme leader spoke of metal as having been his genre affiliation during college and university, his reminiscences did not touch upon values specific to metal culture, or even to metal performance norms; Institution D's deputy programme leader, by contrast, referred to the reactionary values inherent in the

punk ethos, which had influenced his *principle* values and which he saw as hugely important to higher popular music education, in particular for its rejection of epistemic authority ('don't listen to what anyone else is saying, it's rubbish' (DDPL)).

Concerning Skelton's (2012) discussion of the interplay between individual academics' values and those of their disciplinary tribes, we must once again acknowledge the uniqueness of popular music studies as an academic discipline, and of popular music as a social phenomenon. The importance of popular music within youth culture has been widely discussed (for example, by Huq, 2006; Scruton, 1998) yet seldom has focused consideration been given to the fact that all academics working in the UK today have lived (and continue to live) their lives in the era of popular culture and are thus inescapably under its influence, albeit to varying degrees. Given the pervasiveness of popular culture in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, its potential to impact upon the experiences from which academics' values derive is surely self-evident. As the deputy programme leader at Institution D's comments suggest however, the inherent heterogeneity (aesthetic, ideological or other) of popular culture is such that individuals, academics among them, may develop values according to their engagement with particular strains of it (in his case punk). While this is relevant to academics of all disciplines, it is arguably of particular pertinence to popular music studies where the object of study (popular music) is itself a vast phenomenon of popular culture, and where academics are charged with teaching and designing curricula for heterogeneous student cohorts with potentially different popular cultural experiences and aesthetic, subcultural and other allegiances.

If we accept, as Skelton (2012) suggests, that academics' personal values interact with those inherent in the wider systems in which they work, then we should also consider the interplay of students' personal values with those they perceive to be espoused on their programmes; students, like academics, must surely be seen to arrive at the academic setting in possession of a set of values issuing from their prior experiences, and informed by influential figures in their lives. In the case of popular music education, these sets of values include their musical values, and many of the formative experiences and influential figures from which students' musical values derive relate to popular culture. Several examples might be offered from the present study, one being an Institution A student's acquisition of a secondhand CD collection as a teenager, which he saw as setting in motion the development of his musical tastes (AS10). Moreover, given that students engage with popular culture outside of the academic setting, the development of values from personal experiences must be seen to take place not only prior to but concurrently with their studies,

as an aspect of lifestyle (see 7.8.5, Lifestyle). One Institution A student's musical tastes changing dramatically, which she attributed not only to her programme of study but to record-sharing with her housemates, might be taken as an example to support this proposition.

Furthermore, students are arguably as susceptible as academics to 'values schizophrenia' (Ball, 2003; quoted in Skelton, 2012, p.257) when their existing values are at odds with other values inhering explicitly or implicitly within the academic setting. A subculture-related values schizophrenia is arguably evident in one Institution D student's experience of being asked to perform according to commercial performance values at odds with her own, which were rooted in her experiences as a punk musician. Values schizophrenia was arguably also evident in one Institution B's student's reappraisal of her earlier fondness of the X Factor, and an Institution A student's similar shift in musical values away from her earlier commercial tastes.

The studies by Woodall et al. (2012) and Kalafatis and Ledden (2012) of student value, discussed in detail in Chapter 2, employ analytical frameworks that are based in a conception of educational value as essentially transactional. Evidence across cases of cost-benefit considerations informing decision-making at student, staff and institutional level might be seen to support the validity of such analyses. Some students considered the value of education in terms of (among other things) the benefits they would acquire (such as skills and access to networks) and the sacrifices they would make (money and effort), which conforms to understandings of net student-as-customer value as = get/give, and to some of Kalafatis and Ledden's (2012) get/give values (Get: 'functional' (skills), 'social' (networks) / Give: 'money', 'effort' (p.7). In addition, the programme leader at Institution B's understanding of students' reasons for undertaking study was formulated according to notions of benefit and sacrifice, and in particular the value of 'time' ('you want the piece of paper obviously, but you want a short cut' (BPL)), another of Ledden and Kalafatis' (2012) 'give' values (p.7). Elsewhere, Institution C's programme leader spoke of the 'marketisation' of higher education, a process which Ng and Forbes (2009) see as 'lend[ing] currency to the student-as-customer concept' (p.44), although as discussed above his strident resistance to it suggests that the student-as-customer concept conflicted with his *principle* values.

Woodall et al. (2012) identify 'price', 'indirect costs', 'time and effort, and 'brand' (p.4) as key aspects of student value. Institution A's maintaining of 'Popular Music and Recording' as a pathway title (having previously been a degree title) was explicitly

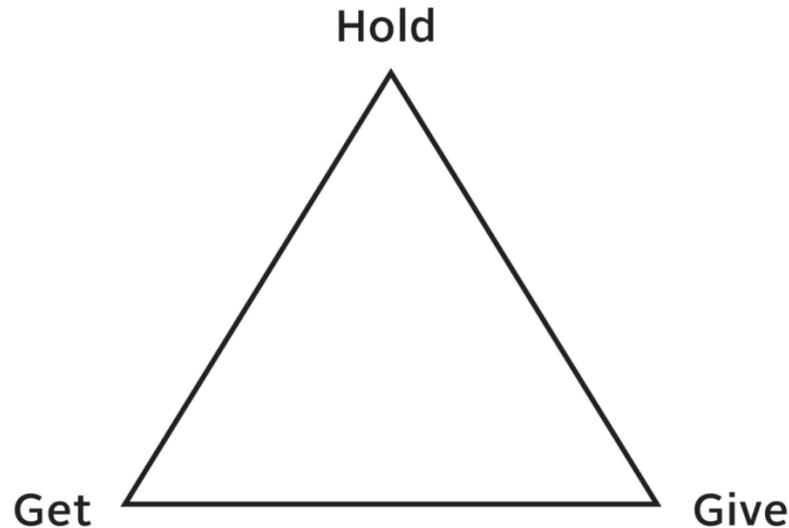
attributed by the programme leader to brand-consciousness, suggesting an awareness on the part of the programme team of students' customer dimension, and of branding as an influential factor. Among student interviewees, although branding was only referred to specifically by one student whose decision to study at Institution B had been based on an advert in a guitar magazine that made heavy use of rock iconography, others spoke of institutional reputation, often transmitted by word-of-mouth. These examples not only indicate that students did indeed 'display customer-like behaviour' (Woodall et al., 2012, p.4), but also suggest that a conception of the student-as-customer underpinned Institution A's and Institution B's approaches to student recruitment. This might also be considered in relation to the notion of neoliberal political technologies (Shore & Wright, 1999, Discussed in Chapter 2, p.35), since it was the extrinsic pressures associated with funding that had provoked a more market-aware approach to student recruitment.

The *transactional* aspect of higher education was foregrounded in students' and staff's comments concerning proposed fee increases. Many students' acknowledged that the fee increases would have impacted on their decision-making regarding higher education opportunities, and on their expectations thereof. This might again be seen to support the validity of benefit/sacrifice analyses of student value. However, it also brings into focus the perceived value of education itself, which some students felt was unquantifiable in monetary terms but intrinsically valuable in another, less tangible sense. Indeed, some students asserted that there would never have been any question of their not pursuing higher education, regardless of the cost. This was not on the quantitative basis that any price would be transactionally justifiable, but rather that education was something they valued on a deeper, *principle* level. Similarly, resistance to fee rises from some student and staff interviewees did not relate to the monetary value of the educational product (whether or not the higher cost represented value-for-money in terms of benefit) but was rooted in *principle* values such as equality of opportunity, free education, and the intrinsic value of education itself (as discussed above (p.170), the Institution C programme leader linked these values to his own experiences). These analyses draw to light some ideological tensions underlying the student-as-customer concept, whose framing of education in consumerist terms is for Brooks (2012) consistent with what she perceives to be an emerging educational paradigm that privileges economic competitiveness over moral purpose.

Mann's (2008) observation that competing values such as 'competition', 'employability' and 'market' on the one hand, and 'access' and 'inclusion' on the other illustrate tensions between economic imperatives and a social justice agenda (p.1) is

persuasive. However, it arguably overlooks the possibility that the values underpinning these discourses, as can be seen from the findings of this study, are not always understood to be oppositional or counter-productive and can even be seen as mutually-fulfilling. For example, the emphasis on vocational knowledge and ‘employability’ was for Institution D’s deputy programme leader both market-focussed *and* a means to pursue social justice, since it facilitated equality of access to the music business; this is consistent with Henry et al.’s (2001) suggestion that the employability agenda is indicative of an ideological stance that seeks to maintain market principles while at the same time promoting social justice through equality of economic opportunity; it might be argued that such approaches to the employability agenda display a form of ‘third way’ thinking.

These findings suggest that, as Harland and Pickering (2011) argue, *principle* values underpin all that we do. While students in this study certainly considered their educational choices and expectations in terms of benefit and sacrifice, some also related their educational experiences to their *principle* values. Moreover, while institutions and academics were seen to consider student recruitment in terms of *transactional* values, there was evidence also of individuals’ *principle* values informing their approaches to and understandings of education. This might suggest that analyses that reduce academic value to its *transactional* aspect alone are incomplete, and that new models of analysis that consider the values and beliefs that students and staff hold in relation to what they give or get through the education experience, may lead to richer insights, at once acknowledging the currency of the student-as-customer concept but also its limitations. The trialectical relationship between give (sacrifice), get (benefit) and hold (*principle*) values suggested by these findings can be expressed as a model of three value continua (see Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Continua of *transactional* and *principle* value in higher education

*Principle* values of social justice were both implicit and explicit in interview data, and in macro, meso and micro documentation. Most significantly for this study, they featured in discussion of musical, educational and vocational values, and as such represented a nexus of these different value domains. According to Institution D's deputy programme leader, popular music suffered under a 'social-capital-led distinction' (DDPL) that placed it below Western art music in terms of value. He suggested that this bifurcation of 'art' and 'popular' music corresponded, perhaps more than ever, to distinctions of social class, and as such both embodied and exacerbated social inequality. To him therefore, popular music itself was a socially disenfranchised musical form, and his understanding of it might be seen to conform in this respect to Birrer's fourth definitional category of popular music (Sociological: popular music is associated with or produced by a particular social group (Middleton, 1992, p.5, summarised from Birrer, 1984, p.104)). He therefore saw popular music education as a means to achieve social justice, since it allowed students without a knowledge of a particular cultural form (classical music) associated with higher socio-economic strata to access higher music education on their own cultural terms.

The Institution D deputy programme leader's reference to rap music as a form associated with less affluent socio-economic groups is especially noteworthy in this regard. Firstly, and foremost, it suggests that popular music itself can be perceived as internally socially stratified, and subject to its own 'social-capital-led distinctions' (DDPL). As such it might be seen to problematise dichotomous perceptions of socio-musical categorisation according to the distinctions of 'classical' and 'popular' alone. If frequently asserted links

between genre and social class are valid, then some genres within popular music might be seen to be more socially disenfranchised than others, and thus arguably more deserving of focus within a social justice agenda. Secondly, it presents an indicative example of subcultural nuance in the commercialism/authenticity problem. It brings us to consider what might appear, *prima facie*, to be a contradiction between the often perceived socio-economic disenfranchisement embodied by rap music, and rap music's vast market share, and an alternative urban music aesthetic (encompassing rap) which totemises the pursuit of wealth and might therefore be seen to embody the market values of neoliberalism, examined more closely below. There is not space here to sufficiently unpick the juxtaposition of social disenfranchisement and conspicuous commercialism in some rap music (which is arguably as much causal as it is contradictory). It might however be considered here in light of what the Institution D students perceived to be the prevalence of commercial-oriented urban music on Institution D's programme, and of the collocation of social justice and economic values in higher education which Delanty attributes to 'third way thinking' (Delanty, 2003). Just as an industry/market-focused approach to 'employability' was seen by the deputy programme leader to be consistent with the social justice agenda (see above), Institution D's explicit emphasis towards the commercial aspect of popular music, coupled with what the deputy programme leader described as its strong commitment to social justice, might again suggest that the two were not considered to be oppositional, and that commercial success was seen to have an equality-achieving potential. If this analysis is valid, then market values such as commercialism and competition were not understood by the deputy programme leader to be oppositional to social justice, or even in tension with it as Mann (2008) suggests, but rather facilitative of it. Such an understanding is again consistent with third-way thinking.

Despite also being critical of the musical binaries of classical and popular, Institution C's programme leader did not link them to social inequality as Institution D's deputy programme leader had, but only to musical closed-mindedness. The theme of social justice featured elsewhere in his interview however, and most prominently in discussion of fee increases in higher education and the culture of marketisation, which Institution D's deputy programme leader, in contrast, did not refer to. Institution C's programme leader believed strongly that dramatic increases in the cost of higher education were prohibitive, and would limit university access for people of low income backgrounds, a principle which he saw as having been crucial in enabling him to pursue his own academic career (see above). One Institution B lecturer expressed similar concerns to the Institution C

programme leader's but was less explicitly opposed to fee increases, which in any case have different implications for private institutions such as Institution B, and spoke more generally of a regrettable economic climate. His understanding of the impact of fee rises was arguably consistent with *transactional* conceptions of student value; students' willingness to pay was seen as an endorsement of the quality of the product.

Among students, the theme of social justice was rarely in evidence explicitly, although the student interview question schedules promoted discussion of their own experiences rather than reflection upon wider, abstract principles such as social justice. As the only exception, one Institution A student voiced concerns similar to those of the Institution C programme leader, and like him lamented that fee increases would close down opportunities for lower-income applicants. This ran counter to his understanding of the value and purpose of education. As discussed above (p.173) however, there was much evidence to suggest that the issue of money was prominent in some students' decision-making, and that fee increases might therefore impact upon the latter. Thus while (with the exception of the Institution A student above) students did not explicitly invoke the issue of social justice implications arising from fee increases, their reflections on their own situation might be seen to lend currency to concerns such as those voiced by Institution C's programme leader.

As demonstrated by the selection of educational policy documents reviewed in Chapter 2, values such as 'access', 'equality', 'diversity' and 'widening opportunity' are commonly espoused in policy documents, and thus purportedly enacted in legislation. All cases in this study are subject to this macro-level discourse, situated as they are within a regulated sector legally bound to comply with macro decision-making. What is clearly demonstrated empirically through these findings is that such values, while widely espoused across macro, meso and micro levels, may be variously associated by individuals with different contextual domains such as (in this study) academic content, cultural form and the price of education. Therefore, while it is not within the remit of this study to highlight contradictions between the values espoused by the state and the pressures it exerts, the use of such concepts in policy and official discourse can be problematised by the suggestion that such values are not neutrally understood. It can however be reasonably asserted that, in the Institution C programme leader's case, the pressures deriving from the government's fee strategy, and in the Institution D deputy programme leader's case socio-cultural norms and some cultural policy, went against their ideals of social justice.

To summarise, across this section it can be seen that *transactional* and *principle* values impacted on student and staff experiences, and complex relationships could be seen to exist between participants' *principle* values, such as their beliefs in the intrinsic value of education and popular music, or in principles of social equality, and the *transactional*, commercial value of both education and popular music.

## **7.2 Conceptions of Knowledge and Employability**

As discussed in Chapter 2 (p.28), employability has become a prominent theme in higher education in recent decades, and is now an 'official' term used in higher education documentation and policy. While 'employability' might, *prima facie*, be considered a value unto itself in the same way that we might consider 'equality' or 'diversity' to be values, different understandings of this term correspond to a host of value-laden concepts and ideological positions. The employability agenda has clear epistemic implications; it impacts upon the nature and scope of knowledge taught, or generated, since it configures the aims and purpose of higher education in accordance with wider state strategy. The values driving this agenda, and underpinning notions of employability, can thus be seen to be present within each case by dint of the legal imperative for higher education institutions to conform to macro level state policy.

Each programme published, as a legal requirement (see Chapter 2, p.29), an employability statement aimed at prospective applicants; as such each case was, as is any undergraduate programme in the UK, 'committed' to the employability agenda in the sense of legal obligation as discussed above. The required placement of this information, and 'key' statistics relating to graduate employment, at the centre of applicant-facing literature in the interests of enhancing student choice (HEFCE, 2010) indicates the presence of macro level market values of competition. Beyond this legal obligation however, staff interviewees all expressed a positive commitment to enhancing students' employment prospects, such that employability might be argued to have been valued by the staff interviewees in all cases. However, approaches to and understandings of employability were seen to vary markedly, pointing to different underlying values among staff and across institutions. For example, Institution D's deputy programme leader spoke of Institution D's focus on the 'hard skill areas' (DDPL) that would lead to employment within the music industry, and explicitly acknowledged that Institution D valued hard skills over transferable skills. Institution C's programme leader on the other hand emphasized

graduates' versatility owing to the transferable skills they had accrued at Institution C, and identified non-discipline-specific skills such as critical awareness as being among the core skills. These differing perspectives can be considered in light of the two employability definitions offered in the 2012 revised edition of the *Pedagogy for Employability* paper (HEA, 2012, quoted in full in Chapter 2, p.28). The Institution C programme leader's position was more obviously aligned with the second of these, which asserts that 'employability is more than about developing attributes, techniques and experience just to get a job' and places emphasis on 'developing critical, reflective abilities' (HEA, 2012; p.1). The values of transferability and criticality clearly underpinned the Institution C programme leader's approach to the employability agenda, and were also embedded in the programme's employability statement that made reference to a range of musical and non-musical professions for which graduates are suited. The Institution D deputy programme leader's position on the other hand was distinctly more instrumentalist. He was openly sceptical of programmes that emphasized general skills such as critical thinking, and, in line with the first definition, his approach was more straightforwardly focused towards 'a set of achievements [...] that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations.' (HEA, 2012 p.1). Meanwhile, one Institution B lecturer's understanding of core skills, with the exception of 'a good business head', was more narrowly focused towards musical skills. Thus while his understanding was arguably as utilitarian and pragmatic as the Institution D deputy programme leader's, it was rooted firmly in the specifics of performing musicianship.

We can refer here once more to the histories of higher popular music education and its non-popular counterpart, and consider them against Delanty's history of societal knowledge (Delanty, 2003). As discussed in Chapter 2, Delanty asserts that the 'knowledge society' (Delanty, 2003 p.72) that emerged from the eighteenth century enlightenment and was dominant until the late nineteenth century placed 'men of learning' (Delanty, 2003, p.72)- the academy- as the new guardians of knowledge. It was within this epistemic climate that the British conservatoire and university music department came into being; early academic (i.e. institutional) music can be seen as a product of post-enlightenment ideals and epistemology, and in particular of understandings of art for art's sake (Ford, 2010). This elite-mediated 'knowledge society' was followed by a period of professional training and accreditation, arising from the demands of the industrial epoch. Popular music studies emerged however, like its object of study, within a later post-industrial and post-modern 'information society' (Delanty, 2003, p.72). As such, the

discipline has come into being within an epistemic climate that is responsive neither solely to traditional academic nor professional expertise but is vast and pluralistic, and in which, as Delanty suggests, knowledge is ‘taking more and more public forms’ (Delanty, 2003, p.72). These epistemic conditions may partly explain what Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) observe to be the absence of a “core” curriculum in the discipline. No straightforward epistemic foundation can be seen to exist in popular music studies, and programme teams face the significant challenge of creating curricula that, at once: prepare students for professional life in an unpredictable industry<sup>12</sup> contingent upon frequent developments in information technology and thus subject to continuous structural and operational change; accommodate the study (and practice) of popular music, a cultural phenomenon which unlike its classical counterpart has no institutionally-mediated core canon embodying aesthetic ideals, and over which the academy has traditionally not held any authority in terms of value; and satisfy the norms and expectations of ‘higher’ education, whether as enshrined in policy (such as QAA subject benchmarks) or understood tacitly by the wider academic community.

Responses to, and the balancing of, these imperatives differed across the four cases in this study, lending support to Cloonan and Hulstedt’s (2012) observation of internal disparity in the discipline. The programmes’ differences in response to these competing imperatives might be considered in terms of Becher and Trowler’s (2001) distinction of extrinsic pressures, such as epistemic drift (Elzinga, 1985), and intrinsic pressures which relate to a discipline’s construction by its internal participants. However, this distinction is complicated if we accept Shore and Wright’s (1999) argument that extrinsic pressures are applied through insidiously coercive political technologies (Foucault, 1991, cited in Shore & Wright, 1999), and can effect new internal subjectivities, when people under pressure are forced to re-orient themselves towards the values and priorities of policy. The requirement for programmes to publish Key Information Set statistics is an obvious mechanism of accountability functioning through the transactional aspect of higher education; prospective students are presented with quantitative indicators of programmes’ achievements according to areas identified as important (or ‘key’) by policymakers, on the basis that this will inform their decision about where to invest their time and money. In this situation therefore, policy promotes a competitive market in which programmes’ survival

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<sup>12</sup> if it can even be considered such- Institution A’s programme leader discouraged use of the term ‘music industry’ at Institution A, preferring ‘cultural economies’

(in terms of student intake, and therefore funding) depends upon their relative performance in statistical categories extrinsically deemed to be ‘key’. It might persuasively be argued therefore that the Key Information Set functions in the manner of a neoliberal political technology as identified by Shore and Wright (1999), disciplining not only the whole (higher education), but also the composite (the individual/micro population), by way of reconfiguring subjective priorities towards survival under new, externally enforced conditions. The Institution A programme leader’s comments regarding a ‘wider cultural shift’ in emphasis towards graduate employability, to which the programme team had had to make a ‘concession’ (although she was admittedly uncomfortable with that word’s negative connotations) and to which some colleagues were opposed, might be seen to exemplify the extrinsic pressure of wider epistemic drift (Elzinga, 1985, cited in Becher & Trowler, 2001) towards vocational emphasis, and its impact on internal priorities. On the other hand, the inclusion of theoretical content on Institution D’s earlier programme, which was according to the deputy programme leader was a reluctant concession to dominant, traditional academic standards, suggests a shift in the other direction towards intellectualisation (Becher & Trowler, 2001) under the external pressure of academic benchmark standards and tacit academic expectations. Furthermore, Institution D’s deputy programme leader’s anecdote regarding the ‘realpolitik’ of ensuring the commercial viability of university music departments, in which creating a popular music programme was a means to meet and profit from applicant demand in order to underwrite the more arcane elements of music departments, also depicts a situation in which extrinsic pressure in the form of a tuition-fee-dependent funding strategy affects how a department is internally constructed and leads to a shift in its epistemic identity and curricula.

The issue of programmes’ orientation towards applied and theoretical knowledge is further complicated by the difficulty of categorising musical knowledge according to this binary. As was noted in Chapter 2, Becher and Trowler’s (2001) quadrants of hard-pure, soft-pure, hard-applied and soft-applied conspicuously omit arts disciplines, as a discrete category, from consideration. While humanities, into which the arts are often (and presumably by Becher and Trowler) conflated, are identified by Becher and Trowler (2001) as soft-pure disciplines, this is problematic in relation to subjects such as music that commonly involve applied, product-oriented elements such as composition, songwriting and performance. Considering first the pure-applied axis, music might be identified by some to be an essentially “applied” discipline in the sense that music-making arguably requires ‘knowing how’ over ‘knowing what’. Taking again the example of the

conservatoire, its educational model has historically been rooted in the practical application of musical knowledge (Ford, 2010; Gaunt & Papageorgi, 2010; QAA, 2008). At the same time however, the conservatoire was conceived as a guardian of “pure” aesthetic knowledge, and its criteria for judgement were not primarily purposive or pragmatic, but supposed to be foundational; as Ford (2010) notes, while conservatoires came to be seen as training grounds for professional musicians, their epistemic character was not defined by the practical demands of industry (which has always been predominantly “light” music-focussed (Ford, 2010)) but was rooted in a commitment to “high” aesthetic values. University (as opposed to conservatoire) music education on the other hand has traditionally been scholastic rather than performance-based, and thus less “applied” in emphasis, yet applied content is increasingly a feature of such programmes (Gaunt & Papageorgi, 2010). In terms of the second, soft-hard axis, traditional forms of music theory that codify canonically entrenched principles and rules, and theory which incorporates the science of sound (such as acoustics or electroacoustics) arguably display some of the characteristics of “hard” disciplines, such as being ‘concerned with universals’ and having ‘clear criteria for knowledge verification and obsolescence’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.36). On the other hand, musicology that incorporates the methodologies and paradigms of the humanities and social sciences is more consistent with “soft” disciplines, with its ‘dispute over criteria for knowledge verification and obsolescence’ and ‘lack of consensus over significant questions to address’ (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.36). Music, which can be seen as a field within which popular music education sits (and is treated as such by the QAA subject benchmarks for music which encompass popular music (QAA, 2008)), is thus resistant to rigid epistemic categorisation according to these quadrants. The interdisciplinarity and internal disparity of higher popular music education are such that its various elements, and different programmes, might be apportioned to different epistemic quadrants; as such it defies disciplinary grouping to an even greater degree.

We might draw two conclusions from this: firstly, that Becher and Trowler’s (2001) model, as is, cannot straightforwardly accommodate arts disciplines or highly interdisciplinary fields, of which popular music studies is both. Secondly, and more importantly, that higher popular music education should not be treated as a single unit of analysis, since the epistemic characteristics of programmes differ markedly. In short, analyses based on categorical conceptions of disciplinary identity are, in higher popular music education’s case at least, too crude; studies that focus upon its internal disparity, such as Cloonan and Hulstedt’s (2012), are more pertinent.

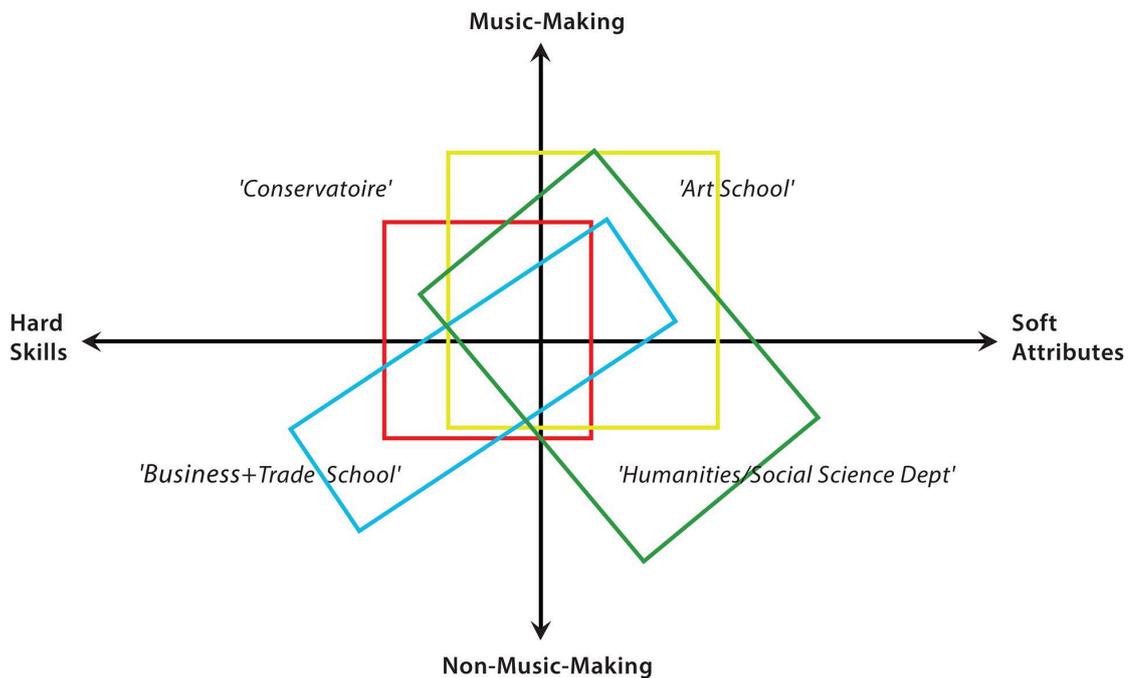
As discussed in Chapter 3, Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) study focuses on curriculum content across popular music studies (they use this term), and collates modules according to distinctions of 'practical', 'theoretical' and 'vocational'. However, these are, as the authors suggest, highly porous. Based on a pilot study participant's observation of a binary of 'conservatoire' and 'art-school' approaches in popular music studies (see Appendix VI), together with my observation (based on a review of programme webpages) that many programmes include sizeable business studies elements, a theoretical issue was identified relating to how programmes might be positioned, in terms of their emphasis, according to an 'art-school'/'conservatoire'/'business school' trialectic (see 4.2.3). These three categories were not intended to represent accurate, absolute descriptions of existing models (for each of these models has experienced its own epistemic developments- see Ford (2010) for a discussion of the contemporary conservatoire) but rather to represent reductive types loosely demarcating different approaches. Within this trialectic, 'conservatoire' can be seen to represent an emphasis on music-making, a focus towards professional musicianship, and pedagogy and assessment according to criteria based on established, dominant norms (some institutions, notably the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, explicitly position themselves as popular music equivalents of classical conservatoires (ICMP, 2013), while two predominantly classical conservatoires offer popular music programmes). 'Art-school' on the other hand represents emphasis on creating music as "art", and of fostering students' creative subjectivity. 'Business school' represents an emphasis on extra-musical elements, and a focus towards the commercial/industrial aspect of popular music. Considering this proposed trialectic against Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) model for curriculum content discussed above, the absence of a type for theoretical emphasis is conspicuous. According to Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) model however, the distinctions of 'practical' and 'vocational' force a conflation of 'applied' content into porous categories which do not allow for a distinction to be drawn between musical and extra-musical knowledge. Figure 5 (accompanied by table 4) seeks to synthesise Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) and Becher and Trowler's (2001) models with my earlier proposed trialectic, towards a more appropriate model for gauging the epistemic values of popular music programmes. Addressing the problems discussed above, it employs a y axis of music-making/non-music-making in place of pure/applied, and an x axis of hard skills/soft attributes in place of hard knowledge/soft knowledge. It should be stressed that these axes are not intended to be equivalent to Becher and Trowler's (2001); rather they seek to gauge the epistemic content of programmes according to dialectics

specific to the discipline of popular music studies. It must also be noted that although the x axis employs the same adjectives as Becher and Trowler’s (2001), their meaning here is somewhat different; distinct from ‘hard’/ ‘soft’ knowledge, ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills is a frequently-used binary to distinguish between utilitarian, ‘hard’ skills which relate to specific tasks and functions, and less tangible, less straightforwardly measurable ‘soft’ skills such as problem-solving, communication and creativity. Wary of the utilitarian connotations of the word “skills” and its habitual grouping in discourses of ‘knowing how’, I have chosen to replace ‘soft skills’ with ‘soft attributes’.

Where Cloonan and Hulstedt’s (2012) Venn diagram was designed to collate modules, and Becher and Trowler’s quadrants (2001) for collating disciplines, this figure should be viewed as a landscape of four domains, or quadrants, of epistemic emphasis that popular music programmes sit across, as opposed to within. I have called these quadrants “Conservatoire”, “Trade and Business School”, “Art School” and “Humanities and Social Sciences Department”. Table 4 shows the epistemic values that characterise each quadrant.

**Table 4.** Epistemic values that characterise each quadrant

| <b>Quadrant of emphasis</b>      | <b>Nature of knowledge</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| “Conservatoire”                  | <i>Hard skills, music-making</i><br>Purposive criteria for judgement; responsiveness to normative performance values  |
| “Trade and Business School”      | <i>Hard skills, non-music-making</i><br>Purposive criteria for judgement; Responsive to market and industry values; espouses entrepreneurialism and competitiveness |
| “Art School”                     | <i>Soft attributes, music-making</i><br>Subjective criteria for judgement; focused towards artistic products (“works”)  |
| “Humanities/Social Science Dept” | <i>Soft attributes, non-music-making</i><br>Interpretative; reiterative; dispute over criteria for judgement; theory-focused; espouses criticality and collegiality |



**Figure 5.** Model for gauging the epistemic emphases of popular music programmes.

Figure 5 shows how the model might be used to represent the epistemic emphases of popular music programmes. The cases in this study are all plotted onto the model, according to my impression and understanding of their epistemic values gained through conducting this study (Institution B is red; Institution A is yellow; Institution D is blue; Institution C is Green). I have used rectangles for clarity; a less regular shape would allow for greater precision.

Institution B has been positioned to reflect a dominant emphasis on musical performance, as might be expected on a BA Practical Musicianship. Accordingly, it sits mostly within the conservatoire quadrant. It also sits, to a lesser but still substantial extent, across the trade school quadrant, reflecting significant industry engagement through placements and projects. It sits less substantially within the art school quadrant, reflecting the smaller emphasis placed on the creation of original “works”. One lecturer’s (BL1) discussion of proposed curriculum changes to better accommodate and foster creativity should be noted here; it might be expected that following such changes the programme would sit across the art school quadrant to a greater degree. It is also worth noting that the BA Songwriting degree offered at Institution B which shares some content with the BA Professional Musicianship would be positioned more across the art school quadrant. Least

substantial was the emphasis on contextual study, and accordingly the programme sits least across the humanities/social sciences department quadrant.

Institution A's programme featured a high proportion creative, works-oriented content such as composition modules, and the majority of the students I spoke to seemed to be interested in these aspects of the programme above performance and other areas. Accordingly, I have positioned it most substantially across the art school quadrant. Teaching on the programme included conservatoire-style one-to-one instrumental tuition, and also humanities-style contextual content; I have sat the programme across the conservatoire and humanities/social science to an equal degree. Business emphases were far less apparent at Institution A than at Institution B or Institution D, and the curriculum did not incorporate industry work placements; accordingly, the business and trade school quadrant is occupied the least in Institution A's representation. As with Institution B however, there were suggestions that curriculum changes may result in the business aspect of the programme being increased in the future, in which case the representation might be expected to sit more across the business and trade school quadrant more substantially.

Wesminster was clearly and explicitly industry focused. It incorporated work placements into its curriculum, sourced its faculty from industry and maintained a network of alumni working within the music industry. I have thus positioned it most substantially across the business and trade school quadrant. It included some optional performance tuition, creative project work, and humanities style content, but as stated in the programme specification, these were all oriented towards industry standards and norms. To reflect this I have positioned it to a lesser degree across the other three quadrants.

With its emphases both on musicology and on creative practice, Institution C was most obviously aligned with the university humanities department and art school models. It involved a high level of 'artistic risk-taking' and experimentation, and creative works-oriented content such as composition featured prominently on the programme, and was foregrounded in promotional material such as the CD given to prospective applicants. There was also of high level of theoretical and contextual content, delivered through lecture and seminar and assessed through written work.

Both the programme leader and programme literature emphasized general academic skills and knowledge such as critical thinking more so than business-focused hard skills. Some emphasis towards the latter were nonetheless in evidence, so this quadrant is occupied to a lesser degree. One to one instrumental lessons were incorporated,

although this was less central to the prevailing nature of the degree than at Institution B. This quadrant is thus also occupied to a less substantial degree.

To re-emphasise, these graphical representations are subjective and impressionistic, and are not an attempt to offer objective or quantitatively verifiable representations. Representations such as these come into their own when they are supported by verbal explanations, and subjected to collective appraisal and discussion. The model presented in Table 4 and Figure 5 may help educators and policy makers to engage critically and discursively with issues of programme emphasis and content. Most obviously, it might be used as a workshop aid onto which programme teams (and indeed students) could plot their impressions of their own programmes, or indeed of their desired programmes. For researchers, it might also be used as a data collection tool to collect impressions of programme emphases from programme teams, staff and students.

### **7.3 The Question of Authenticity**

The findings revealed significant interplay between the values of, or associated with, authenticity and commercialism. In some cases, conceptions of authenticity and commercialism were related to the values and ideological underpinnings of musical subgenres. At Institution D for example, the commercial emphases of the programme were seen by one student as being antithetical to punk performance values, while another observed that urban music, which he identified as the pre-eminent commercial music form, had inevitably achieved pre-eminence on the programme because its values were in accord with those of the commercial music programme. At Institution B and Institution A some students spoke of having, since joining the programmes, come to view mainstream pop music of the kind typified by the X Factor as inherently inauthentic because of its adherence to commercial formulae (also discussed earlier in the context of *principle* and *transactional* values, p.172).

These findings chime with existing scholarship regarding authenticity in popular culture. Negus (1999) warns against a common understanding of rap music as being oppositional to the commercial 'mainstream', since in many cases rap music unrepentantly pursues commercial success, while Huq (2006) writes of rap music's performative conspicuous consumption. Huq and Negus's observations might easily be applied to the umbrella genre of 'urban' music into which rap, in its commercialized form, has been subsumed, and which also frequently draws from an iconography of designer brands,

luxury apparel and elite lifestyle practices. By dint of urban music's association with a commercial aesthetic employing signifiers of wealth and commercial success, and its current status, as the above mentioned Institution D student observed, as the pre-eminent commercial music form, urban music might be seen to implicitly espouse commercial values. Such an analysis is incomplete, yet it suggests a reflexive affinity between the values of Institution D's commercial music programme and the music it supports.

Elsewhere, tensions and contradictions between the values of subgenres and commercialism were apparent. For example, the gold discs (an iconic trophy in the music industry signifying 250,000 unit sales) of indie artists that hung on the walls at Institution B presented indie music in its commercial aspect, and therefore might be seen to contradict the genre's core values, which Huq describes as being 'about denying the importance of material wealth' (Huq, 2007, p.115).

As discussed in the literature review, rock, the dominant genre at Institution B and Institution A, has commonly been differentiated from pop on the basis of its perceived autonomy from commercial values (Frith, 2007; Middleton, 1990; Moore, 1993). As in the case of rap discussed above, such understandings are undermined by rock's multi-billion dollar market share, but authenticity in rock is nevertheless frequently understood in opposition to commercialism (Frith, 2007; Moore, 1993). One Institution A student's claim that, provided he could maintain creative autonomy and make music in the way he wanted, he desired only to make a modest living in music, typifies this understanding of authenticity, yet it also highlights its inherent contradiction. Although vast sums of money were not considered to be essential by the student, a financial income was; a degree of commercialism, however modest, was thus inescapable. Frith's (2007) observation that according to an authenticity/commercialism dichotomy any engagement with the machinery of production and dissemination erodes authenticity is pertinent here, yet the aforementioned student's statement suggests that, at an individual level, understandings of authentic musical practice are not easily reducible to mutually exclusive absolutes but are formulated tacitly in terms of a balance between creativity with commercial success; commercial values were not understood by the student to undermine musical authenticity *per se*, rather, the relationship between authenticity and commercialism was negotiated intuitively.

Each of the above examples touches upon the relationship between music subgenres and the commercial mainstream. Punk, rap and indie music have all been romanticised as iconoclastic responses to commercial and other hegemonies, yet all have since achieved

vast commercial success and in some circumstances have become hegemonic themselves (see Jones (2013) for a discussion of indie music's cultural dominance in Britain during the tenure of the Blair-led Labour government). Huq (2006) discusses these relationships and asserts that music subcultures' subsumption into the mainstream is an inevitable consequence of commercial engagement (Middleton also writes of subcultural 'decay' for the same reason (Middleton, 1990, p.146)) which, significantly, would imply that many subcultural ideologies and commercial values are indeed mutually exclusive. We might posit therefore that the values of authenticity and commercialism are more easily reconcilable within some subgenres than others. Furthermore we might propose accordingly, and with reference to the findings of this study discussed above, that popular music programmes' levels of commercial emphasis may engender value climates that are more conducive to certain types of popular music than to others.

Though not directly related to commercialism, one Institution B lecturer's comments regarding students' 'tribal' resistance to music outside of their preferred genre are nonetheless illuminating in the context of authenticity for two reasons. Firstly, they highlight the often hermetic nature of musical genres, and their recalcitrant relationship with other musics. Secondly, the lecturer perceived this tribalism to be typical of young people. Taken together with an Institution A student's observation that some instrumental teachers were unfamiliar with their musical preferences because of their advanced age, this points to a potential temporality in how authenticity is understood, and might be seen to enrich Huq's observation that 'authenticity has always been a desirable quality in youth culture' (Huq, 2006, p.113).

Institution C's explicit privileging of the experimental over the commercial mainstream must be considered in terms of both musical and academic authenticity (the latter is discussed below). In musical terms, Institution C's explicit resistance to 'formulaic' commercial music hints at an Adornian conception of standardization as antithetical to authenticity (Adorno, 2002). As a popular and contemporary music degree programme, it explicitly supports some forms of popular music, and to such an extent differs from Adorno's critique (although Adorno wrote prior to the advent of many popular music styles), but is resistant to others; thus a similar understanding of musical authenticity as being oppositional to mass (re)production is arguably implied in Institution C's approach.

## 7.4 Authenticity and Academia

Each case represented an instance of popular music existing and functioning as an academic discipline; that is, as an operationally distinct subject area within an academic institution with dedicated expert faculty, students and curricula. At this straightforward level therefore, their academic status is indisputable. At a second-order level however, faculty and students across cases reported skepticism from third parties such as parents, colleagues within other departments, the wider academic community, professional musicians and, at Institution C, even within the programme itself, regarding whether popular music was a valid academic focus; from the participants' emic perspectives therefore there were perceptions that their discipline was not always valued from the outside; that it was not considered to be academically authentic. A self-conscious awareness of how popular music education was perceived was arguably discernible in the staff interviewees' staunch espousals of the value of their programmes, which stressed compatibility with *principle* academic values such as collegiality, criticality, employability, equitability and interdisciplinarity.

The tension surrounding the issue of the academic value of higher popular music education has been a condition of its emergence (Cloonan, 2005). In addition to providing the subtext for many journalistic articles about popular music degrees, and thus participating in the discipline's public profile (Beaumont, 2010; Michaels, 2011; Muga, 2002; Tysome, 2004; Williams, 2003), the Institution D deputy programme leader's noting that in Institution D's case this tension had led to the inclusion of demonstratively "academic" content, appended to programmes for the purpose of answering outside concerns regarding academic standards (see 7.2 for an earlier discussion of intellectualization), suggests that this tension may be borne in curriculum design. In the view of one student, it also lay behind Institution C's 'popular and contemporary music' degree title, the 'contemporary' element sounding more academically defensible than the 'popular', and behind what he perceived to be the programme's emphasis on 'contemporary' music over popular music. The subtle change, made the following academic year, in Institution C's programme nomenclature from 'popular and contemporary' to 'contemporary and popular' is perhaps significant in this regard; the programme leader explained that this was a deliberate attempt to better reflect the nature of creative practice on the programme. Although there was no direct indication in his explanation that he believed popular music to be of lesser academic value, he noted that

students had spoken of choosing the Institution C programme over other popular music degrees because of the additional contemporary focus; as such, being more than just a popular music degree was seen as a unique selling point of Institution C's programme.

The perceived academic value of higher popular music education and the perceived cultural and artistic value of its object of study- popular music itself- are arguably bound together. This relationship between academic value and artistic value was exemplified in the paradox of the Institution D deputy programme leader's and Institution A's programme leader's advocacy for the discipline of higher popular music education on the one hand, and their opposition to reductive categorisation that set popular music apart from (and implicitly beneath) 'music', on the other. In other words, the value of popular music was seen to justify the existence of popular music education as an academic discipline, but at the same time the existence of popular music education- that is, a standalone discipline distinct from 'music'- was seen as a symptom of popular music's lack of esteem within traditional academia. Nomenclatural variations in the study can perhaps be seen to bear the trace of this paradox, and of the interplay of musical and academic values generally. At Institution A for example, the recent adoption of an encompassing 'music' degree to replace dedicated genre- and activity-specific degrees (which continued to exist as pathways within the programme) was explained by the programme leader as an effort to recognise their egalitarian approach to music, and the equal value of the department's music degree programmes.

We might consider here Walser's (2003) suggestion that popular and classical music cannot be compared in terms of value since they are interdependent, mutually reinforcing categories and, like all cultural genres, are 'always polemical rather than natural' (p25). Given this reflexivity, it might also be argued that consideration of the perceived value of one cannot ignore its relationship to the other. We must therefore re-examine the historical bases for differentiation between popular and other musics. As discussed in Chapter 3, the 'academy', understood broadly to refer to cultural-intellectual institutions, can be regarded as a powerful historical agent in establishing the high/low culture divide, with conservatoires mediating "art" music and distinguishing it from other musics (Ford, 2010). Art music is fundamentally academic in the sense of being 'of the academy', since the conditions of its production, dissemination and analysis have historically been determined by its institutions. At the same time, the academic discipline of music, in both its practice-oriented and musicological modes, has developed its values in accordance with the canon it has itself constructed through mediation of the music. Art

music and the academic study of music must therefore be seen to have a symbiotic, mutually-mediating relationship, such that art music practice has historically been considered authentic academic practice where popular music has not. Popular music on the other hand has developed (largely) outside of the academy, and thus has historically been apportioned to the domain of low culture. Consequently, while popular music has since found purchase in the academy, unlike art music it is not mediated by it and is therefore not fundamentally academic; indeed, according to the theses of those who argue a case for the qualitative legitimacy of high culture (for example, Bloom, 1995; Leavis, 2006) low cultural artefacts are positively antithetical to academe, having been excluded by, to quote Leavis' (1930) description of the arbiters of culture, the 'very small minority [on whom] the discerning appreciation of art [...] depends' (Leavis, 1930, pp.3-4). Returning to Birrer's definitional categories of popular music, we might assert that through its exclusion of popular music, the academy has historically enacted the second-

negative: popular music as music that is not something else (Birrer, 1984, quoted in Middleton, 1992, p.5)

-in this instance, 'something else' being what the academy has deemed to be "art". It has also arguably enacted the first:

normative: popular music as an inferior type (Birrer, 1984, quoted in Middleton, 1992; p.5)

In this case, it is 'inferior' in the sense of falling short of criteria which other academy-legitimated music has met, and thus of lesser musical and academic value. Although popular music's comparatively recent status as a musical form taught and studied within the academy destabilises such conceptions, a folk memory relating to historically bifurcated cultural-academic conditions arguably endures in sensitivities, such as those expressed by the Institution D deputy programme leader and Institution A programme leader, regarding perceptions of popular music's academic validity.

It should also be noted here, and with reference to both the earlier discussion of mass market orientation and the following discussion of canon formation, that popular music's gaining entry into the academy potentially also has implications for sociological definitions of popular music (music associated with a particular group (Birrer, 1984)). The act of selecting music for academic study might in some cases be seen as a repositioning of that music as an intellectual, scholarly artefact; where the mainstream is consciously avoided, as was the case at Institution C, a possible corollary is that music selected for

study is tacitly distinguished from the implicitly less important music favoured by mass audiences. Where commercialism is explicitly favoured, as was the case at Institution D, similar hierarchical processes might be seen to occur, although underpinned by markedly different values issuing from the commercial marketplace.

The Institution D deputy programme leader's perception of a lack of academic esteem given to the music department's commercial and popular-oriented output, both by colleagues within the school and implicit in the criteria of the 2003 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), and the championing of 'avant garde' output over populist output within music academe generally, is notable here. Firstly, it represents an instance of interplay between musical and academic values, and secondly, it reveals again the historically-engendered tension between popular music and the values of academia. If the Institution D programme leader's perception was valid, then Birrer's (1984) first and second definition categories (normative and negative) were arguably inherent in a conception, on the part of faculty and embedded in the RAE criteria, of popular music as intrinsically un-academic and therefore inescapably inferior within an academic context. Even if his perception was wrong, and the high/low culture dichotomy-in-use that he alluded to did not exist, it endured in his perception of the situation, representing a perceived set of values in opposition to which his own values were set.

Institution C's programme leader's and Institution D's deputy programme leader's reference to assumptions and expectations associated with different kinds of institutions within UK higher education were illuminating with regard to dualities of academic identity. Institution D's deputy programme leader recounted the public debate surrounding Thames Valley University (now the University of West London)'s catering programme, referred to in the press as a 'curry-making' degree. This was to him indicative of snobberies regarding new subject areas offered by post-92 institutions, and analogous to the reception of popular music studies years earlier, and he pointed to high employment rates as justification of the aforementioned programme's value. Institution C's programme leader on the other hand identified what he saw as a regrettable shift towards a 'pre-92' higher education of dual vocational and academic strands, with institutions reverting to type as a result of the 'marketisation' of higher education. These comments are notable for two reasons. Firstly, they arguably reveal both interviewees' egalitarian values; the Institution D deputy programme leader's opposition to academic snobbery points to a desire for devalued forms of knowledge to be given academic recognition, while implicit in the Institution C programme leader's resistance to a bifurcated higher education system is a valuing of

academic parity across the field. Secondly, they highlight some complexities regarding how the relationship between academic and vocational knowledge was understood by these two participants. In Institution D's deputy programme leader's case, the vocationalist nature of the programme, and its measurable successes in terms of graduate employment, were evidence of its appropriateness for higher education- its academic value. This accords with his comments about the value of his own programme deriving from its commitment to graduate employment, which he saw as a neglected duty of higher music education. On the other hand, the Institution C programme leader's use of a distinction between 'academic' and 'vocational' clearly demonstrates that the adjective 'academic' is normatively nuanced, and while we cannot infer his understanding of the word from this usage alone, we may go as far as to say that, in this instance, 'academic' referred to scholarly activity that is not principally focused towards vocational skills training.

It must be stressed that Institution C's programme leader only noted a trend towards bifurcation and was not disparaging of either academic or vocational emphases, or explicitly in favour of one over the other. Indeed, elsewhere he was emphatic that the academic study of music should be situated within a professional landscape, but also that his programme was broad in academic scope and was thus unsuitable for applicants seeking targeted training in a specific profession. This would suggest that regardless of whether he conceived of academic and vocational study as separate or not, he saw the importance of incorporating both into higher popular music education.

While the deputy programme leader at Institution D's own affinity with academic study had led him to 'take up the cardigan', he noted that the founding programme leader had disliked 'academe' and had sought to create a music programme that was uniquely (at the time) focused towards vocational skills/knowledge for employment in the music industry. Thus again an intuitive distinction was made by the former programme leader between the 'academic' and the vocational, but with a clear valuing of the latter over the former. Here, as in Institution C's programme leader's usage, the term 'academe' (a noun form of 'academic') means more than simply 'of the academy'; for the founding programme leader (via the deputy programme leader's recollection and interpretation) it held pejorative connotations and referred to an academic culture that neglected its role in preparing students for employment. Indeed, the very fact that he sought to utilise academic infrastructure (by establishing a programme) indicates that he was not opposed to academe per se, only to what he perceived to be its contemporary form.

Elsewhere student and staff interviewees used the adjective ‘academic’, most often when referring to programme content which was theoretical and not straightforwardly instrumentalist. The Institution B programme leader’s usage also implied its difference from vocational and practical content, but referred to a set of skills such as referencing and essay writing which students would need should they pursue an academic career, and as such was a more vocationally-oriented usage of the term than those discussed above.

Taken together, the analyses presented in this section point to a complex matrix of values through which the academic value of popular music education is appraised. Not only was the academic value of popular music perceived by participants to be contested within the academic community, but there was evidence of the value of different manifestations of academia itself being contested- a vocational one in the Institution D deputy programme leader’s Thames Valley example, and the allegedly distinctly non-vocational model in direct response to which Institution D’s programme was apparently created. Moreover, different, nuanced usages of the term ‘academic’ suggest different understandings of what it means to be authentically academic. This can be seen as analogous to differences in understanding of the term ‘music’ within academia, since both involve a conceptual term that acquires different meanings by way of tacit or overt processes of valuing and discrimination according to pre-ordinate, but often intuitive and implicit, criteria. These findings suggest that within higher popular music education, the perceived value of popular music and academia are reflexive, and the perceived value of popular music education is therefore contingent upon this dialogue. We cannot of course attribute specific understandings to human or institutional third parties referenced by participants, but the very fact of these references being made by participants demonstrates that, according to the interviewees’ perceptions at the very least, complex tensions exist around the issue of academic authenticity in higher popular music education.

In addition to the above tensions relating to the relationship between popular music and academic authenticity, the findings also highlighted tensions relating to the impact of academia on musical authenticity. The Institution B programme leader’s and one Institution B lecturer’s reports of skepticism from self-taught musician colleagues regarding popular music education arguably betrayed what Green identifies as an ‘ideology of authenticity’ (Green, 2002) among the third parties. However, neither interviewee themselves saw disciplined, formal study as a threat to authenticity in popular music (perhaps unsurprisingly given their work as educators). Moreover, the Institution B programme leader’s reports of students craving more, rather than less formal direction,

together with the Institution B student interviewees' unanimous appreciation of the programme, suggest that no such ideology of authenticity prevailed at Institution B, and that formal education- nurture- was valued. Similarly, students at Institution A were appreciative of formal instrumental tuition, with one student seeking extra tuition to supplement that which was provided on the programme. Indeed, it might be argued that musicians partaking in formal study by choice either do not maintain an ideology of authenticity as identified by Green (2002), or do not value authenticity. This is significant since it suggests a potential disparity between the understandings of musicians outside of formal music education and those within it by choice regarding the nature and value of authenticity. Thus, and furthermore, it might suggest that many issues relating to the recognition and incorporation of informal learning processes, such as Green (2002) discusses in *How Popular Musicians Learn* in the context of school level education, are less relevant to post-compulsory music education where the valuing of formal and systematic music education is implicit in learners' decision to embark on post-compulsory study.

## **7.5 The Post(-)modern Condition: Relativist and Foundational Values**

The hyphen in the above subheading is bracketed in reference to Barnett (2000)'s distinction between the post-modern and the postmodern, the former being a neutral term describing a contemporary state of affairs characterised by bewildering cultural, social and epistemic breadth, the latter an ideology which values and celebrates in the former (see 2.6.1, Postmodernism). The hyphen can therefore be taken to express the tension between positive and negative perceptions of the postmodern era.

Popular music's entrance into higher education can be seen as an example of the opening-up of the academy to greater cultural and epistemic breadth, as identified by Usher (2009), Skelton (2012), Henry et al. (2001) and others, and also as an affirmation of the relative value ascribed to new cultural knowledge. As such it is not only characteristic of the post-modern moment but, in its positive response to the latter, also bears the hallmarks of Delanty's (2003) and Barnett's (1999) reading of postmodernism as an ideological approach. Both Institution C's programme leader and Institution D's deputy programme leader spoke of antagonising consensus and the status quo, both citing punk as an important cultural phenomenon for its embodying a reactionary ethos, and espousing a pluralist approach to music that recognised the potential for value across all genres. The

programme leaders at Institution B and Institution A, and one lecturer at Institution B, also espoused a broadening of the musical field. As such, an appreciation of openness, and a breaking down of established value hierarchies, was evident. Among students, where a majority denied the possibility of objectively ‘good’ or ‘bad’ music, many suggested that they could see the value in all music.

Despite this widespread appreciation of openness in the musical-academic field however, there was also some palpable discomfort regarding cultural relativism. This was vividly exemplified by the frustration of one Institution A student at his peers’ reluctance to concede to the possibility of ‘good’ or ‘bad’ music, and his insistence on the existence of objective, foundational values, the rejection of which he saw as having serious moral implications. A further complexity is highlighted by one Institution D student’s discomfort not only with a musical form he thought was ‘inherent[ly] dumb’ (DS2), but with his own resulting feelings of intellectual superiority; he was both unable to adopt a relativist view of musical value, and at the same time troubled by this inability. Furthermore, Institution C’s programme represented an opening-up of a pre-existing music department’s cultural field to historically devalued forms, and espoused pluralism in its literature (and in the programme leader’s comments), but also explicitly favoured music at a conscious remove from the ‘mainstream’, and thus appeared to maintain a guarded approach to openness. All of these examples are arguably characterised by an anxiety concerning how to approach the issue of value in the post-modern era in terms of intellectual, cultural, and in some cases even moral, legitimacy.

It should be borne in mind that the term ‘postmodern’ is highly contested in music, as it is in education, but is nonetheless often used frequently. Just as Barnett (2000) distinguished between condition (hyphenated) and approach, a distinction must be drawn between music made in the post-modern moment and music that deliberately seeks to articulate the postmodern experience. For the sake of continuity I will adapt Barnett’s distinction and use ‘post-modern’ and ‘postmodern’ to distinguish between state and approach.

Frith’s description of popular music as being ‘as much to do with the social basis of the event as with the intentions or principles of the performers’ (Frith, 1996, p.204) has implications for education. For example, it problematises assessment because the event of assessment represents one such social basis in which the performer’s intentions and *principle* values are denied absolute authority. Moreover, assessment is rationalised according to criteria that enshrine a schematised set of values, and thus represents a giving

over of authority to the institution. As illustrated in the case of one Institution D student (p.133), the assessment context can be resented by performers because it may enshrine values they consider to be invalid, yet to which they are obligated to subjugate their own. Moreover, students may perform differently in assessment situations because of an awareness of meeting criteria. Both situations arguably reveal the problem of academic authority in a post-modern medium such as popular music. The Institution A programme leader's identification of the challenge of establishing assessment criteria that accommodated difference and students' artistic intentions demonstrated that this issue was being engaged with. However, it might be argued that in seeking to address the problem of academic authority, such an approach privileges artistic intentionality over other determining aspects. Moreover, it paradoxically entrusts appraisal of the fulfilment of the artist's intentions to others- while the value of the performance is determined according to the student's intentions, yet it is up to a panel to decide whether or not the student has achieved what she or he intended.

It must be stressed here that I am not in any way seeking to undermine these assessment strategies, which in any case are not unusual in arts disciplines in higher education. Rather, I hope to illustrate, as through all the examples in this section, that the inherent instability of values in the post-modern moment poses significant challenges to the academy, with the question of authority perhaps the most difficult among them. Delanty (2003) and others (Barnett, 2000; Henry et al., 2001; Usher, 2009) suggest that the post-modern condition has given rise to a skepticism of universalist truth. While this can be seen to have egalitarian, emancipatory potential, as this study demonstrates, the inclination away from universalist truth and foundational values towards multiplicity can also generate discomfort (as in the case of the student discussed above) or be tacitly resisted, as the stylistic preferences of programmes might suggest. Moreover, it might be argued that regardless of epistemological or ontological validity, an ideology of multiplicity is practically impossible to maintain in education, at least in the case of taught programmes leading to assessment-dependent awards.

## **7.6 The Inevitability of Canon?**

The notion of canon sits uneasily within the frame of postmodernism, because by definition it goes against multiplicity and relativism. The Institution C and Institution A programme leaders' and Institution D deputy programme leader's resistance to canon was

in each case accompanied by a valuing of openness and plurality (already discussed in relation to other issues); indeed, critical open-mindedness was a core value espoused across cases, by students and staff, and was seen as a means to overcome canonical strictures. This brings to mind Kassabian's (2010) assertion that it was the critique of canon formation, which in her view had engendered the aesthetic hierarchies and dualisms that have historically subordinated popular music, that 'made popular music studies possible in the first place' (p. 74). In particular, the Institution D deputy programme leader's recounting of the conditions and motivations behind the creation of the first incarnation of Institution D's Commercial Music degree conforms to this analysis.

While the notion of canon was resisted however, there was evidence across cases of canon formation occurring at a subvert level, often as a direct consequence of efforts to resist it. For example, while punk was incorporated into curricula for its iconoclastic potential, that incorporation arguably rendered it a canonical icon. Indeed, as Moore suggests there is an 'accepted canon of popular music [...] which already accepts the Beatles, 'punk' and Bob Dylan at the very least' (Moore, 2001, p.7). This might suggest that curriculum design and pedagogy are inevitably canonical practices because they necessitate processes of inclusion and exclusion. Practical considerations such as resources, time, and students' base knowledge (all identified by Institution A's programme leader) were shown in the study to impact upon these practices, and thus upon the delimiting of curriculum content. In the case of historical modules, such as those included in curricula at Institution B and Institution C, curriculum design is arguably tantamount to historiography, a mechanism of canon formation, since a linear narrative (however broad) is constructed through the selection of content.

Thus despite widespread resistance to traditional canons and even the very notion of canon, canon formation arguably occurred in all cases. Moore (2001) writes of his own 'attempts to subvert the growth' (p.7) of a popular music canon. However, The Beatles, 'punk' and Bob Dylan are among the most frequently and comprehensively discussed in his book, arguably displaying the very same "catch-22" discussed above; in spite of efforts to thwart canon formation, the processes of exclusion and inclusion necessary in writing a book inevitably engenders new canonical edifices.

Aside from canons of musical artists or works constructed in curricula, traces of canonical values appeared also to inhere in pedagogical approaches, which were not consistent across cases. At Institution A, Institution C and Institution B, a prerequisite level of music theory knowledge was required of applicants, demonstrating a clear valuing of

textual modes of representation and analysis. The Institution B programme leader's ideal of the basic level of music theory knowledge required by musicians was arguably more oriented towards harmonically complex musics such as jazz than (for example) to punk or indie, and would therefore appear to promote, however inadvertently, certain forms of music over others. Interestingly, while the inclusion of music theory in Institution C's curriculum indicates a belief in its value to popular musicians, Institution C's programme leader was resistant to studies that placed popular music under traditional musicological analysis, and chose instead to draw from the 'common practice canon' when teaching; while music theory knowledge was seen as valuable, the process of bringing music theory to bear upon popular music was left to the students in order that they might discover its potential for themselves. Thus efforts were made to enrich the student-musicians' understanding without promoting adherence to canonical principles, or allowing a canon to emerge according to those rules. In stark contrast, Institution D's programme did not feature any compulsory notational analysis at all and its core musicological content focused exclusively on the extra-musical dimension. Despite these differences of approach however, both demonstrate a conscious resistance to canonizing popular music in line with the methodologies of classical music scholarship.

This exemplifies the unease that surrounds the notion of canon within popular music research. Few researchers have acknowledged, less still shown a desire for, canonical authority; most find the notion of canon problematic and express a desire for something broader and more inclusive (see Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002, p. 2; Kassabian, 2010, p. 77; Moore, 2001, p. 7; Taylor, 2010, pp. 85-89; Waksman, 2010, p. 69). However, as the examples from practice in this study reveal, avoiding the processes of canon formation is frustratingly difficult (Parkinson, 2013).

Institution D's deputy programme leader aligned his own attitudes, and the underlying social justice agenda of Institution D's programme, with the theories of Bourdieu and Rancière. As such, it might be argued that a sociological theoretical canon informed some core values of Institution D's programme. The traces of similar canons can be found elsewhere in the discourses of higher education and popular music (for example, Moore, 2012; Soderman, 2013; Taylor, 2010). In his discussion of canon formation in popular music studies, Taylor writes of 'return(ing) again and again to the classics of theory: Marx, Weber, Bourdieu... I think I would (currently) align myself with a kind of updated Bourdieusian field of cultural production approach' (Taylor, 2010, p.86). Institution C's programme leader meanwhile made references to Adorno, who was also

mentioned by students at Institution B as featuring in their academic modules. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Frankfurt School, and in particular Adorno, commonly feature on popular music syllabi, despite Adorno's highly pejorative analysis of popular music and his 'lack of historicization, and, more generally, a lack of engagement with the empirical, whether historical or ethnographic' (Taylor, 2010, p. 87). Adorno's ubiquity in popular music syllabi is particularly significant for the departure from traditional canonical authority it represents. While the classical music canon is representative of what the academy consider good or right, aesthetically or otherwise, Adorno's place in the canon of popular music education is not only in spite of, but arguably because of his opposition to popular music; he is there to prompt student-musicians to appraise their own experiences and engage with some of the criticisms historically levelled at their chosen art form and profession (and whatever else it represents for them). A theoretical canon is more readily challengeable than an aesthetic canon of works, crucially because it is necessarily discursive and as such is denied axiomatic authority and can be readily engaged with through critical discourse; arguably therefore the emerging theoretical canon of popular music studies is more in-tune with the liberal educational ideal of critical thinking than an aesthetic canon as found in Western classical music. Along the same lines, concerns that:

a theoretical canon must not be rockist, it must not prefer or overvalue one methodology over another, it must not be weighted toward one discipline over another, it must not be Eurocentric, and even further must not be Anglo-American centered. (Kassabian, 2010, p.75)

might be partly addressed by inculcating a greater sense of critical scepticism in student-musicians, that they might feel emboldened to challenge biases. Another emphatic caveat is required here. Just as pedagogical approaches vary in popular music education, so do the contexts, resources and aims of programmes, and it is not my intention here to advocate certain approaches over others. Rather, I have sought to illustrate the complex nature of canon formation in popular music education, and the implications this carries for pedagogy. Canon formation occurs as a consequence of institutionalisation, and canons have inevitably begun to emerge since the institutionalisation of popular music in academe. While the notion of canon is considered regressive and undesirable by popular music educators, in this study and in the wider research community, attempts to arrest canon formation are arguably unsuccessful, as it may be seen to continue to occur as if by stealth. An acknowledgement of canon formation as an ever-present, inescapable reality may

encourage educators and learners alike to draw these covert processes to overt inspection, enhancing critical reflection on our assumptions and expectations of popular music programmes. Moreover, a reappraisal of canons as useful indicators of values, to be approached with scholarly scepticism, rather than (either) self-evidently authoritative sources of criteria or outmoded, oppressive edifices, will allow popular music educators to employ them as pedagogical tools that are both harmonious with the implications of a higher education, and of value in helping develop the skills and knowledge needed by twenty-first century popular musicians.

### **7.7 Taking the Cardigan and The University of Life: Academic Enculturation, Disciplinary Socialisation and Lifestyle**

Institution D's deputy programme leader used the 'cardigan' as a metaphor for academia, evoking the stereotypical university lecturer who has eschewed fashion in favour of books, cloisters and knowledge. It was a metaphor he employed in describing his own experiences of pursuing an academic career, his 'ogling of cardigans' as a student symbolising his growing intellectual curiosity and affinity with the academic environment. However, it was a symbol he also playfully reified on the research module he delivered; in the seminars I observed, a lemon-yellow cardigan was shown to the class and promised as a trophy for the best presentation at the coming student conference. A sense of genuine competition was palpable among many of the students, and attractive though the cardigan was, it is fair to assume that its perceived value lay in its metaphorical aspect. This is not to say that the students coveted an academic career, but suggests that many saw the value in engagement with traditional modes of scholarship; indeed both of the students I interviewed regretted that opportunities to engage in research, or even written work, were few on the programme. For one this had been a source of frustration throughout his studies, while the other had been surprised by her enjoyment of the module and had regretted not having discovered this interest sooner. Having both enrolled on the programme with the intention of pursuing careers as musicians, this ambition had waned and a desire for further academic study had developed. One Institution A student's experience had been similar, and at Institution C many postgraduate students had joined their programmes from the undergraduate programme.

It is important here to reiterate the epistemological characteristics of social constructivist case study research: case studies present a researcher's impression of a

bounded system (Stake 1995), gained at a particular time and through interaction with particular individuals, and data only reflect realities constructed by participants and the researcher. The experiences referred to above were not majority experiences in any of the cases, either in terms of students interviewed (with the exception of Institution D), or the wider case populations. However, they do represent minority experiences of aspirations, interests, values and identities developing as a result of their experiences of the academic environment and academic practice.

We might reasonably refer to these processes collectively as academic enculturation, since they relate more to a general academic culture than to anything particular to popular music. However, the issue of disciplinary enculturation, or to use Becher and Trowler's (2001) term disciplinary socialisation, is complicated by the internal disparity of the discipline, and indeed that of its object of study; there were significant differences in disciplinary identity across the cases in this study, despite all being instances of higher popular music education. Moreover, as discussed across this chapter, there was evidence of oppositional values- aesthetic, educational, ideological- within cases, resulting in tensions surrounding students' and staff members' identities. Thus markedly different experiences can be considered in terms of disciplinary socialisation, despite their supporting the formation of different identities and involving different values. This enriches Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) observation that popular music studies lacks a disciplinary core, in that beyond the fact that 'what students on [PMS] degrees actually study [...] [varies] greatly between institutions' (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012, p.32), it highlights that this can have implications in terms of the development of students' identities and values.

The Institution B, Institution A and Institution C programme leaders and the Institution D deputy programme leader had all developed their educational values through continued engagement in higher education as undergraduates, postgraduates and academic staff, and all spoke of being influenced by inspirational educators. However, while the Institution D deputy programme leader's cardigan anecdotes suggest that he understood these experiences primarily in terms of developing an academic identity, the Institution C programme leader spoke of his academic career as leading to his becoming a 'musician', suggesting that his musical and academic identities were woven together. Similarly, the Institution B programme leader had come to appreciate the interconnectedness of these two areas of his life.

These experiences can be understood in terms of academic enculturation, but again, the issue of disciplinary socialisation is more complex since the identity and values of the discipline itself are not straightforwardly clear. There is insufficient information in these interviews to ascertain conclusively the extents to which the staff interviewees' pre-existing characteristics and traits had led them to enter the discipline- in line with what Becher and Trowler (2001) identify as being the more traditional understanding of disciplinary culture- or whether they had developed traits as a result of their working and studying within it (the disciplinary socialisation argument), but there was some evidence of both being true. On one hand, the two staff interviewees at Institution B who had entered teaching after high profile performance careers had clearly chosen the discipline of popular music (and indeed had been employed by their institution) on the basis of these backgrounds. This might be seen to confirm that 'particular kinds of people choose certain disciplines' (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p.131), although this is perhaps an obvious characteristic of applied, vocation-focused disciplines where faculty are typically drawn from the professions. On the other hand however, the vocational emphases of popular music in higher education are such that the division between academic discipline and object of study (popular music) is somewhat elusive, such that it is also possible to speak of their prior experiences within the profession as a form of disciplinary socialisation in itself. As discussed above, the programme leaders with more traditional academic backgrounds spoke of developing their academic values as a result of these backgrounds, but all had worked as popular musicians, to varying degrees, previously, and spoke of the influence these experiences had had on their values, and on the values they sought to inculcate in students. They all appeared therefore to have chosen the discipline because of their pre-existing traits and values, but also to have further developed their identities working within the discipline. These analyses suggest that disciplinary socialization in the case of higher popular music education, a discipline which is historically non-academic, may occur outside of the academy within non-academic popular music practice.

## **7.8 The Message Systems of Higher Popular Music Education**

I have demonstrated so far that a range of musical, educational, vocational and other values, deriving from different sources and related to each other in complex ways, impacted upon the practice of higher popular music education in each of the cases within this study. It is important here consider this impact in terms of the message systems of

education identified in Chapter 1- *Curriculum; Pedagogy; Institution; Assessment; Lifestyle; and Market*. I shall discuss each in turn.

### **7.8.1 Curriculum**

Institution D's deputy programme leader spoke of how some curriculum content had been created to respond to traditional values and expectations of academic authenticity, but also that the design of the original programme corresponded to the programme team's (and in particular the founding programme leader's) beliefs that music education was placing too little value on employment outcomes, and that popular music as a cultural form was devalued. As such, the history of curriculum design at Institution D was marked by competing academic, vocational and cultural values regarding educational purpose, and curriculum content was created in the sway of this competition. Commercial and industry values can also be seen to be present in the *curriculum* message system at Institution D, since the curriculum was designed to prepare students for the 'prevailing standards' (DPWS) of the commercial music sector.

At Institution A, the curriculum's musical breadth was attributed by the programme leader to values of openness and pluralism. At the same time, an increase in vocational curriculum content was acknowledged as a concession to a cultural shift in higher education, and within Institution A, towards an emphasis on employability. The programme leader also spoke of an increase in student desire for more vocational content (a desire which some student participants in this study also expressed themselves). *Curriculum* at Institution A thus transmitted musical values of openness and plurality, but wider cultural and institutional concerns for employability were also present.

The same values of openness and plurality appeared to inhere in the *curriculum* message system at Institution C, where some content was shared across the music department's popular and contemporary, classical and folk and traditional programmes. Staff-and-crochet-based music theory was incorporated into the core curricula at both Institution A and Institution C (in contrast to Institution D), and as such a valuing of traditional analysis paradigms was arguably evident, although Institution C's programme leader was emphatic (see *Pedagogy* below) that students were given this knowledge to do with as they wished, and that they were encouraged not to interpret such knowledge as rules to be obeyed.

Of all the cases, Institution B's curriculum was the most heavily populated with performance-oriented content (as might be expected, given the programme's title of

‘Professional Musicianship’). At the same time, the incorporation of work-based learning (WBL) was such that students, as a formal part of their curriculum (work placements were treated as formal projects, assessed according to learning outcomes as with all other modules), spent time within industry. This aspect of *curriculum* was unpredictable, in that students were exposed to different cultures and environments, and therefore to different values (see *market*, below).

One staff interviewee at Institution B spoke of his efforts to develop new curriculum content which fostered students’ creativity and individuality, in response to a need identified in curriculum review. This new content was due to be piloted in the 2012/2013 academic year, marking a conscious shift in values within Institution B’s *curriculum* message system.

### **7.8.2 Pedagogy**

The *pedagogy* message system in all cases featured values deriving from the educators’ formative experiences, and while the data relate only to the interviewees’ own experiences, it can reasonably be assumed that the pedagogies of other staff would also be influenced by formative experiences (research by Skelton (2012), Becher and Trowler (2001) and others relating to educator values supports this assumption).

Interestingly, these not only included musical and vocational values but in some cases ideological values. For example, Institution D’s deputy programme leader spoke explicitly of the influence of punk, his preferred musical genre growing up, on his personal values. He asserted that his skepticism of orthodox knowledge, that he saw as an indispensable attribute for popular music students, went back to the ‘punk ethos’, and through pedagogy he sought to promote confident, independent thinking in students by adopting a provocative ‘*avocatis diavoli*’ stance against which they could argue. Thus the *pedagogy* message system at Institution D, at least insofar as the deputy programme leader’s own teaching went, transmitted heterodox epistemic values which derived in part from the educator’s affinity with a subculture.

The same radical values could arguably be discerned in Institution C’s *pedagogy* message system, although the DIY principles of punk and hardcore were conveyed by the programme leader through his choice of curriculum content and might thus be more accurately attributed to *curriculum*; indeed, this highlights that the message systems are porous rather than entirely discrete. Similarly, at Institution A the bleed between the message systems of *curriculum* and *pedagogy* was illustrated by the programme leader’s

choosing of musical examples in accordance with the values she sought to inculcate, but also with what students would be familiar with, suggesting that the choice of curriculum content was informed by practicalities associated with pedagogy.

The Institution C and Institution A programme leaders' choosing to incorporate a wide range of musics was attributed by them to values of pluralism and openness, and a desire for students to 'understand that it's all part of this overall music' (APL), and that regardless of their genre affiliations they were 'all musicians' (CPL). Institution C's programme leader employed pedagogical devices to promote these values, from putting musicians from different backgrounds (and programmes) together in ensembles, to workshops drawing attention to the plurality of students' MP3 collections. Thus the values of pluralism and openness, already inherent in curriculum content, were also transmitted via the message system of *pedagogy*. Elsewhere however, students spoke of teachers' pedagogies being rooted in, and promoting values associated with, specific genres (such as jazz). This was most apparent in relation to one-to-one instrumental teaching at Institution A, where some students reported tension between their own musical tastes and values and those of their instrumental teachers, and where one student had chosen to change his teacher. This highlights the potential heterogeneity of pedagogy within programmes that offer one-to-one provision, where different students might be exposed to different pedagogies promoting different sets of values, and also that pedagogy is less easily standardised than curriculum as it derives from human subjects.

There was evidence across cases of participatory pedagogies (HEA, 2013), where students participated actively, within formal settings, in knowledge generation. At Institution C and Institution A this was evident in project work, and at Institution B, in the genre-focused performance workshop I observed, students helped each other to ensure the success of their element of the performance (band, vocal section etc). However, student participation in pedagogy was most apparent at Institution D where I observed four 'peer review' sessions and a student conference that were part of a 'conference paper' module for which students researched, wrote and presented a paper. As such, much of the classroom delivery of the module centred around knowledge which the students had generated; in this instance therefore, the message system of *pedagogy* was, albeit to a controlled extent, given over to student subjects, and potentially therefore transmitted their values.

### 7.8.3 Assessment

Owing to the lack of assessment documentation available and limited opportunities for assessment observation, the *assessment* message system was the least investigated, and therefore least illuminated, within this study. It is self-evident however that assessment constitutes a process of evaluating artefacts- be they essays, examinations, performances- according to criteria. As such, each instance of assessment involves a set of values, enshrined in assessment criteria, against which the value of artefacts are gauged. However, some students at Institution A and Institution B suggested that judgments made in assessments were at times inconsistent with the values espoused in classes. At Institution D, one student suggested that students who produced music that was deemed to be commercially viable would get better marks in assessments, which is consistent with the explicit claim of the programme to respond to prevailing market norms.

The Institution A programme leader spoke of employing strategies that allowed for assessment according to students' vision and intentions. In such instances therefore, students' musical values were accommodated within the *assessment* message system, contrasting starkly with traditional modes of musical assessment in which assessment corresponds to canonically embodied values, or normative aesthetic values.

The Institution D programme leader incorporated peer assessment into his 'Conference Paper' module, in which students blind peer-reviewed each other's abstracts. While he asserted that this element was primarily pedagogical, and only accounted for a negligible percentage of the module grade, it was a key element of *formative* assessment, and as such student judgments can be seen to have been accommodated within the *assessment* message system as well as *pedagogy* (see above).

### 7.8.4 Institution

As explained in Chapter 1, the message system of *institution* was adapted from Ball's (1994) message system of organisation, largely because the term institution has currency both in policy and official documentation (such as the Higher Education Academy and Quality Assurance Agency's usages) and in educational research. Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 2 (2.7, Institutional Culture), the term 'institution', especially insofar as it relates to culture and values, presents difficulties in higher education where institutional structures can vary greatly, and where departments often sit within schools or institutes within the wider institution (the university or college) which might itself be affiliated with wider bodies. To accommodate this structural complexity,

the term meso was used within the study to denote the terrain beyond the limits of the case (the programme) but part of, or directly affiliated with, the education provider. Consideration of the message system *institution* must take these multi-layered contexts into account.

Within the study, arguably the most explicit acknowledgement of institutional values was the Institution D deputy programme leader's account (p.118) of the original programme team having purposively sought an institution whose values chimed with those of their proposed programme. Institution D had been chosen for its being a 'pioneer[ing]' and 'really synergistic' institution, with an emphasis on applied knowledge and employability. The deputy programme leader also asserted that his programme's emphasis on hard skills over transferrable skills was consistent with the general institutional approach

The Institution D deputy programme leader's reference to programmes at another post-92 institution (Thames Valley University, now the University of West London) in the context of public debates surrounding academic value and employability highlights that types of institutions are perceived as having certain identifiable characteristics- in this case of post-92 institutions being associated with heavy emphasis on applied knowledge and, by detractors, with questionable academic integrity. Institution C's programme leader maintained a distinction between post-92 institutions and Russell Group institutions, associating the former with applied, vocational programmes and the latter, among whom Institution C is counted, with more traditionally academic programmes. The comments of both interviewees suggest that institutional identity corresponds to expectations and assumptions regarding curriculum content and the relative value placed on applied and 'pure' knowledge. Both Institution C and Institution D appeared to project these identity types outwardly in the form of branding; Institution C's brand identity as an elite institution was heavily reliant on its Russell Group affiliation, while Institution D's was reliant on its industry connections and vocational focus. Interestingly, at Institution C two students felt that the university's brand consciousness had impacted on the nature of programme content, and attributed their programme's emphasis on avant-garde music, as opposed to 'pop', to a desire to safeguard its elite status from accusations of dumbing down, while at Institution A, the programme leader spoke of having to respond to a shift in institutional culture towards applied knowledge. Both instances would appear to support the proposition that an *institution* message system exists through which macro level values

are transmitted, and also indicate a responsiveness to institution within the *curriculum* message system.

At Institution B, a specialist private institution that only offered degrees in popular music, the values of the programme and those of the wider institution were less easily separated. The programme leader and both staff interviewees spoke of Institution B being ‘band-oriented’ as opposed to being concerned with solo virtuosity, while one staff interviewee described the institutional ethos as being ‘simple things done well’ (although he conceded that others may dispute this). However, this ethos was not enshrined in any of the promotional or programme literature to which I had access, suggesting that normative values might be transmitted via the *institution* message system on a tacit, cultural level, without being stated explicitly.

### **7.8.5 Lifestyle**

It was clear across cases that students’ extra-curricular interactions with their peers, and with the wider community, were a source of learning. Students across cases spoke of their musical tastes and values developing as a result of their friends’ influence, and there was evidence at Institution A in particular of students actively promoting musical values to their peers by giving them CDs to listen to.

There were indications in all cases of local cultural life impacting on students’ extra-curricular experiences. In some instances this effected shifts in students’ musical values; in others the values associated with local cultures (whether musical, as for one Institution A student, or social/moral (‘liberal’) as for one Institution B student) had been key drivers in students’ choices of where to study, while in other instances students felt that their musical values were at odds with those encoded in the cultural experiences available to them locally, where perceived genre biases were seen to marginalise their own tastes and practices.

This range of experiences suggests that the *lifestyle* message system was to some extent contingent upon cultural geography. They also highlight however that students possessed sets of values *prior to* beginning their programme of study, and that unlike *pedagogy* and *curriculum*, the *lifestyle* message system was not limited by the parameters of entry onto and exit from the programme of study. Rather, it runs the length of a persons’ life, interacting reflexively with situational contingencies such as locale and time, and with the other message systems.

In this regard, the experiences of staff, as well as students can be considered in terms of the *lifestyle* message system. As discussed earlier in this chapter, all programme leaders spoke of the impact of formative experiences outside of formal education settings upon their values, ranging from the aesthetic and ideological (for example the Institution D deputy programme leader's professed affinity with punk ethics) to the vocational (notably the Institution C programme leader's experiences of performing in metal bands while at university). This indicates that the message system of *lifestyle* had impacted upon academic staff's values, which were then transmitted via other message systems (see *curriculum* and *pedagogy* above). *Lifestyle* might therefore be understood as a constant and uniquely personal message system through which all people within educational settings- student and staff- developed their values.

### **7.8.6 Market**

Market values were evident across cases in relation to both higher education and popular music. In the case of the former, notwithstanding some resentment among interviewees, all programmes were responsive to the educational 'marketplace', the space in which higher education programmes compete to secure student applications, and therefore funds. As discussed under *institution*, there was a clear brand awareness in all cases, and promotional materials such as (at Institution D and Institution C) videos and (at Institution C) cd compilations were used to support programmes' 'brands'- a term used explicitly by staff interviewees at Institution A and Institution B- within the education marketplace. Some students, notably at Institution B, spoke of having been made aware of the institution through promotional literature. At Institution A, the programme leader spoke of the impact that tuition fee increases had had on students' expectations regarding programme content, and that in particular more business content had been included as a result. As discussed under Transactional and Principle Values, some students' claims that under the proposed fee increases they would choose a more vocational programme suggest that students behave as customers within a marketplace, their educational choices being informed by notions of investment and transaction. Taken together, students' customer-like behaviour and institutions' response to it in terms of programme design might be seen to indicate that responsiveness to student demand had increased in line with competition within higher education. As such, a *market* message system transmitting values deriving from the educational marketplace can be identified.

The incorporation of work placements and work-based learning, more prominent at Institution B and Institution D than at Institution A and Institution C, was such that authentic commercial environments were utilised as educational spaces, and that students' experiences of working within the commercial music sector- the marketplace- were formalised as learning experiences. Throughout such experiences students learnt outside of schematised curricula and pedagogy, and were inevitably prone to the *market* message system.

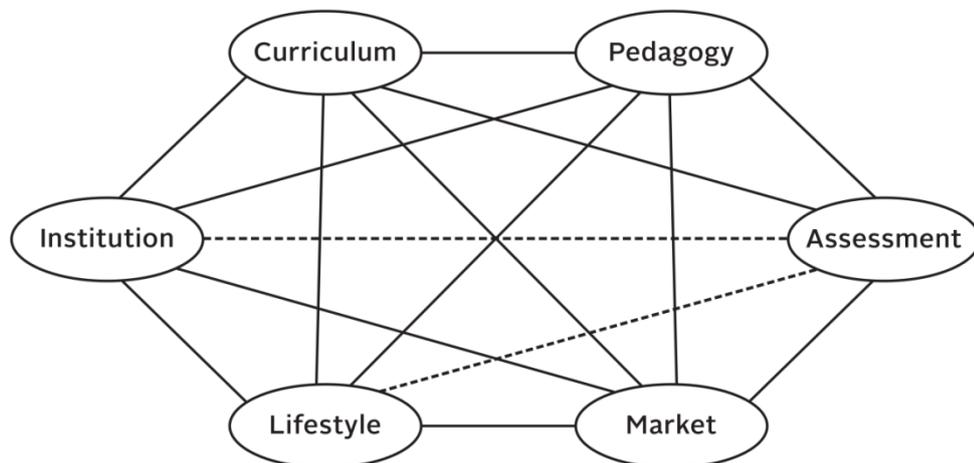
### 7.8.7 Intersection

In summary, the six message systems discussed in this section provided a useful framework through which to explore the issue of programme values, and helped me to consider the formal and overt elements of education alongside its more abstract and covert aspects. As the discussion above demonstrates, the proposition of *lifestyle* and *market* message systems is persuasive, and they accounted for hidden processes of value formation occurring beyond the more visible message systems of education.

Moreover, my research highlighted many intersections between these message systems. *Curriculum* and *pedagogy* were unsurprisingly frequently interwoven, to the extent that they often appeared co-joined. *Institution* intersected with *curriculum* and *pedagogy* both overtly, due to institutional strategies (such as meso level strategic emphasis on vocational or academic content) that curricula and teaching were required to support, and tacitly, where unarticulated institutional culture and normative values informed curriculum design or approaches to teaching. *Assessment*, the least illuminated within this study, could nonetheless be seen unsurprisingly to maintain values transmitted via *curriculum* and *pedagogy*, occasionally to the frustration of students who did not. The *lifestyle* message system could be seen to intersect with *institution*, informing institutional cultures and norms, and operating among the social networks within institutions. *Lifestyle* also impacted upon *curriculum* and *pedagogy*, informing staff interviewees' values which they in turn sought to inculcate in students. The *market* message system clearly interacted with the *institution* message system, transmitting market values to which institutions were responsive within a competitive higher education market place, impacting upon their branding strategies and choices of institutional partnerships. The *market* message system could be seen to intersect with *curriculum*, promoting transactional understandings of higher education according to which curricula were tailored to meet students' expectations and demands. At Institution D, where the emphasis was explicitly

commercial, the *curriculum*, *pedagogy* and *assessment* message systems were tethered to *market* to ensure that the standards of the commercial music industry were met. At Institution B and Institution D, where work-based learning featured, *market* became the primary message system during commercial work placements and functioned as a proxy of *pedagogy* and *curriculum*.

Figure 6 provides a graphic representation of the interplay identified within this study between the message systems across cases (the dotted lines represent interactions that were not strongly identified); there is not space to give a visual representation for each case. However, the model might provide a stimulus framework for academic staff, perhaps in partnership with students, to unpick the ways in which values are transmitted on their programmes.



**Figure 6.** The message systems of higher popular music education.

## 7.9 Summary

This penultimate chapter has considered the findings displayed in the previous chapter in relation to the insights and issues that arose across the first three chapters. This discussion has bolstered the proposition set out at the beginning of Chapter 1 that higher popular music education, a nexus of the vast and multifaceted domains of education and popular music, is subject to a fascinating intersection of aesthetic, commercial, epistemic and many other types of value, and has established a thematic and structural framework through which this intersection might be explored. The themes and theoretical propositions arising from this synthesis represent my understanding of this intersection developed through in-depth primary engagement and critical analysis thereof. As the only study to my

knowledge which has sought to gain such an understanding, it will provide a vital resource for others- including educators, researchers or policy makers- seeking to enrich their own understandings of the phenomenon of higher popular music education.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Conclusion**

This final chapter recapitulates the aims, processes and outcomes of my doctoral research project. It begins with an overview of the arc of this thesis, from the formulation of theoretical underpinnings to empirical findings and discursive insights. It then considers the focal, methodological and theoretical limitations of the study, and identifies potential avenues for further research that might address these limitations or build upon the study's findings. Finally it asserts the study's contribution to knowledge in the fields of popular music studies, music education and higher education.

#### **8.1 Recapitulative Summary**

This study sought to generate insight into the values underpinning, and active within, popular music in higher education in the United Kingdom. Chapter 1 detailed my personal musical, professional and educational background, and the preliminary, informal inquiry from which the theoretical framework for the study began to germinate. It explained that an interest in how canons of great works and artists have historically informed the values and practices of classical music education, and have served to arbitrate aesthetic value in music, led me to consider how and from where popular music education derived its value frameworks. It explained how initial literature review, together with reflection on my own experiences, led to a proposition that canon, while a significant participant in value formation in popular music education, was only one element of many, and that accordingly the theoretical framework was broadened beyond canon to accommodate a more open understanding of values relating not only to popular music but to the domain of higher education. The findings of a pilot study in which I interviewed staff and alumni from three degree programmes appeared to confirm this proposition. It then detailed how I adapted Ball's model of educational 'message systems' (Ball, 1994) to provide a framework for my investigations.

Chapter 2 engaged discursively with the concept of value, and demonstrated through literature review some disparity in how it has been understood and employed in higher education research. It identified two prevalent value discourses, one maintaining a transactional conception of value in higher education, and another maintaining a moral conception of value, rooted in discussions of higher education's moral purpose and responsibility, and of the intrinsic value of knowledge. It argued that the conspicuous absence of any committed synthesis of these discourses had resulted in a literature at cross purposes. It went on to consider the value climate of higher education, reviewing theoretical and empirical research alongside official policy documentation. It identified a lexicon of value terms within interested higher education literature. It unpicked some key terms, revealing them to be inherently unstable, deriving their meanings and implicit value assumptions from the contexts in which they were used.

Discernible across a selection of higher education policy were underlying tensions between imperatives of economic competitiveness and social and cultural responsibility, and between epistemologies of foundational, instrumentalist and relativist knowledge, traceable to wider ideological positions. Accordingly it then examined higher education in the context of some dominant contemporary Western ideologies- postmodernism, neoliberalism, and an emerging 'third way'. This was followed by a consideration of institutional and disciplinary culture, and the implications of each for the interplay of higher educational values. In particular it examined the role of the individual in academic settings (institutional and disciplinary), considering the reflexive interplay of personal values with those of the setting.

The chapter continued with an examination of the values associated with higher music education's object of study: popular music. It considered the ways in which it has been defined and differentiated from other music(s), and the implications in terms of value of various definitions and understandings of popular music. It identified as an ever-present tension the relationship between understandings of authenticity- a central value concept in popular music- and the market-bound mechanisms of production and dissemination upon which popular music is dependent. It argued that within higher popular music education, the complex value frameworks associated with popular music and higher education become enmeshed, resulting in value matrices of even greater complexity.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of research and practice in popular music education, charting the emergence of the discipline from its emergence within an established Western art music-dominated higher music education landscape, through

developments in UK higher education policy that facilitated its emergence within post-92 institutions, to the current expanse of popular music programmes across the higher education sector, and considered how the discipline has accrued some of its underlying values from this narrative context.

Reviewing literature relating to the discipline, it asserted that while the majority of teaching provision focuses on music making or other practical applications, studies concerned with the content and identity of the discipline and disseminated through popular music studies research channels have typically displayed a bias towards its theoretical (both sociological and musicological) aspects. It was argued that this has resulted in a discrepancy in theory and practice, and a drawing-apart of the scholarly and music-making aspects of higher popular music education, and that greater synthesis of these research domains is long overdue.

Across these initial three chapters then, the predominantly literature-driven research phase was documented, the theoretical and contextual frameworks for the study were established, and a proposition that higher popular music education was underpinned by supercomplex matrices of educational, musical and ideological values was explored discursively through literature review.

Chapters 4 to 6 accounted for the primary-empirical phase of research. Chapter 4 detailed my research design and methodology, justifying my choice of a multiple-case study approach and my research instruments, and discussing the ethical implications of the study. Chapter 5 presented summary case reports intended to give the reader background information and a vicarious impression of each case. Chapter 6 presented the thematic categories that emerged from the cross-case phase of analysis, corroborated by extensive verbatim examples. These categories illustrated the confluence of different values within each case. Chapter 7 triangulated the literature- and data-driven research phases, bringing the earlier-established issues and theoretical issues to bear on the data-derived findings. Within a thematic framework, it discussed how different values, and ensuing tensions, were manifested within and across case settings, and their implications for wider higher popular music education. It considered how the interplay of *transactional* and *principle* values had informed and participated in the experiences of staff and students across cases, and related this to notions of values schizophrenia (Ball, 2003; Skelton, 2012), the student-as-customer concept, and the conflict between market- and social justice-focused agendas. It presented a graphic model which promoted critical awareness of the interplay between benefit and sacrifice values rooted in the transactional aspect of education, and the values

underpinning subjects' belief, principles and moral positions. It then considered the theme of education's moral purpose, and of interviewees' beliefs that this was being impeded, in one's view by aesthetic (musical) distinctions that subtly enforced class divide, and in another's by economic policy which did the same. As such, economic, aesthetic social and cultural values were shown to interact.

Discussion then moved to the nature of knowledge and responses to the concept of employability. It was argued that the legal requirement for employability statements, and 'key' information related to graduate employment, to be placed within programmes' applicant-facing promotional literature, embedded macro level market values within each case. Programme leaders' conceptions of employability were considered against the different definitions of employability set out in the revised *Pedagogy for Employability* paper (HEA, 2012), and it was shown that differences in emphasis placed on hard and soft skills, and on different types of knowledge, across cases reflected different understandings of employability. It was argued that these findings lent support to observations that higher popular music education appeared to lack consensus as to what constituted its epistemic core (Cloonan & Hulstedt, 2012), and could be related to the unique historical conditions out of which higher popular music education has emerged. Drawing on models by Becher and Trowler (2001), Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) a theoretical model was offered as a means to gauge the epistemic characteristics of programmes within higher popular music education.

The tense relationship between authenticity and commercialism was then discussed. It was shown that this tension, a key theoretical issue in popular music, was evident within each case, and that the issue of authenticity was further complicated by understandings of academic value. Indeed, perceptions of the value of popular music, and the value of the academic discipline of higher popular music education, were shown to be reflexive. The nature of the discipline was then discussed in relation to post-modernism, and in particular with the destabilization of foundational values and relativist approaches to epistemic value, which are both lauded and criticized. It was shown that tensions relating to relative value were evident across cases, in particular in relation to curriculum and assessment.

The notion of canon, central to the values of many established arts disciplines, was shown to be destabilized within the post-modern context, and was seen by interviewees to be an outmoded and potentially harmful concept. However, it was shown that processes of canonization were identifiable across cases, in spite of efforts to resist them, suggesting

that canon is an inevitable by-product of the practical necessity to include and exclude content from curricula and pedagogy. Some staff interviewees made attempts to avoid inculcating canonical values by promoting scepticism of consensus.

The processes of academic enculturation and disciplinary socialization were then discussed. The findings suggested that staff and students began to value academic study through engaging in it, but that for some staff their academic identity developed as an aspect of their holistic musical identities. However, the notion of disciplinary socialization, whereby people's values become attuned to the norms of the disciplinary culture, was shown to be complex within higher popular music education, as it was a new discipline whose populations have participated with its object of study (popular music) outside of the academic setting.

Finally, the theoretical framework of educational message systems, which I had devised and employed throughout data collection and coding, was appraised in terms of its conceptual utility. It was shown to be useful in focusing inquiry towards both the overt and covert aspects of higher education settings, and a graphic model was offered.

## **8.2 Limitations**

Writing a doctoral thesis entails the presentation of years of intensive, unpredictable learning in the form of a structured and lucid document. As such it is an act of ordering, and for the most part concealing, the messiness of research; false starts, dead ends, practical frustrations and technical problems are written out of the thesis to give an impression of a confident, linear pursuit of new knowledge within a clearly understood framework. This is not an act of cheating the reader, but an acknowledgement of the outward primacy of the research product over the research journey; a doctoral project should ultimately amount to a written contribution to others. Nonetheless, the practical realities of the research journey must be taken into account as part of an assessment of the study's limitations.

Limitations can be collated into three categories: those resulting from my purposive limiting of research parameters and objectives, or acknowledged prior to beginning active research; those resulting from unforeseen impediments to the research process; and those emerging from a critical re-view of the theoretical and methodological frameworks of the study after active research has ended. I shall approach these in turn.

### **8.2.1 Focus**

For practical reasons, and to reflect my research interests, the study's focus was limited to the United Kingdom (or more specifically, England). This limitation roots the study within historical narratives (of education and of music) which, as is explored in Chapters Two, Three and Seven, impose unique contextual conditions upon which the formulation of values is contingent. While it might be argued that this limits the transferability of insights to the UK, it provides valuable comparative insights for international contexts. As is covered in Chapter 3, Tagg (1998) considers the political and cultural backdrop out of which the discipline emerged in Sweden, while Björnberg's (1993) study focuses on some specifics of the Danish context and Hebert (2011) offers a discussion of the US context; further comparative studies across international contexts would be illuminating.

In addition to undergraduate degree programmes, higher popular music education in the UK encompasses two year foundation degrees (FdA), certificates and diplomas of higher education (CertHE, DipHE), Higher National Diplomas (HND) and postgraduate qualifications, as well as popular music modules and content within other programmes of study. Each of these examples has characteristics, remits and objectives that differ from those of undergraduate degrees (this understanding stems from on an informal review I have conducted of programme descriptions, and on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) benchmark standards for level 5 qualifications). It was decided to exclude these other types of programmes in favour of a more clearly defined focus, and one which might reasonably be seen to correspond to the majority of higher popular music education in the UK. Nonetheless it must be acknowledged that significant areas of higher popular music education have been excluded from this study; these areas clearly offer potential foci for further research, which might in turn be compared with the findings of the present study and other existing research to generate a broader and richer picture.

### **8.2.2 Methodology**

A further limitation was the decision to focus on four cases. These were purposively selected, as far as possible within practical constraints, to account for geographical and other contextual variations which the literature review and pilot study revealed to be potentially significant, but not on the basis that they constituted a representative, statistically generalisable (Yin, 2003) sample of a wider reality. Nor was each case internally 'generalisable' in terms of proportional representativeness; the

students and staff interviewed did not, and were not intended to, amount to a representative ‘sample’ of the case populations, and thus interview data can be taken to represent only the perspectives of the participants themselves at the point in time at which they were interviewed. These limitations were accepted from the outset, and understood to be accepted features of qualitative case study inquiry. As Stake (1995) explains, statistical generalisability beyond the bounded system under investigation is impossible within case study research, and the case study must be understood as a time-, participant-, and researcher-specific impression of a social reality. Instead, emphasis is placed on the transferability of insight which may provoke critical comparison with other cases. Putting it another way, Yin emphasises the role of case study research in abstracting outward (Yin, 2003) from in-depth data towards theory which might be tested through further research- a process he refers to as analytical generalisation. As such the study provides no statistically generalisable findings, in the sense of their being quantifiably relatable to wider phenomena, but instead offers transferable, localised insight and theoretical propositions which may be explored through further research.

In line with this objective, a decision was made not to employ instruments such as questionnaires designed to gather information from whole populations or large samples, and instead to use instruments suited to gathering detailed information from a limited number of sources- namely field observations, documents and semi-structured interviews. This accords with the privileging of depth over breadth in case study research, and was appropriate to the objective of generating rich understanding of soft (Checkland, 1990), complex systems. Nonetheless it must be acknowledged that such understanding comes at the expense of statistical generalisability.

### **8.2.3 Timescale**

Given the anticipated three-year time-span of this project, the potential for a longitudinal aspect was always understood to be limited. It was however soon understood to be entirely unfeasible owing to the time constraints of participants within the study, which were such that data collection could only be undertaken on limited occasions across an eight month academic year cycle. This is a regrettable limitation; there was evidence in students’ reports of their values changing over the course of their studies, which was attributed to a range of factors including inspirational teaching, friendships and lifestyle, and the development of new skills. Woodall et al.’s (2012) and Kalafatis and Ledden’s (2012) studies both identify temporality as a contingency of student-as-customer value, but

neither team adopts a framework in which students' *principle* values or the values specific to the academic discipline involved, as opposed to those deriving from the experience of transaction, can be considered. Further research is needed which explores the temporality of student (and indeed staff) values, and would contribute to a revitalised consideration of student value within conceptual frames such as academic enculturation and *principle* values.

#### **8.2.4 Data collection**

As touched upon above, an already limited and rigid timeframe for data collection, and cases distributed across the length of England, what might otherwise be minor problems could result in significant setbacks. Interviewees' illness, problems with institutions' computer systems and transport problems (for interviewer and interviewee) all resulted in site visits and other data collection events being cancelled, which in some cases could not be rescheduled. As a result, together with poor take-up to participant recruitment communications, I was unable to meet my initial target of two staff interviews, one individual student interview and one student focus group for each case. Where possible however I sought to mitigate against this deficit by conducting longer interviews, and still managed to gather 120,000 words of data from a total of 32 individuals across the four cases. Together with detailed field notes and documentary data, this constituted a sufficiently large data set, and a decision was made in January 2013 to end data collection.

### **8.3 Original Contribution to Knowledge**

While this study is relevant to several research fields, I locate it primarily within the areas of music education, the sociology of higher education, and popular music studies. It makes a significant and original contribution to knowledge in each of these areas.

As noted by Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012), Parkinson (2013), Smith (2013) and others, popular music education is a burgeoning yet under-researched discipline within higher education. This study therefore makes a much-needed contribution to an underdeveloped disciplinary research base, providing a valuable resource for those researching the discipline in the future. Moreover, it provides a resource to practitioners working within the discipline who may consider their own experiences and situations against the insights offered in the study.

This study constitutes at the time of writing what is to my knowledge the only in-depth, multiple-case study of undergraduate popular music degree programmes to have been undertaken in the United Kingdom. As such it makes an original contribution to knowledge, and complements recent published research, such as Cloonan and Hulstedt's (2012) mapping exercise commissioned by the Higher Education Academy which is necessarily focused towards achieving a broad (as opposed to deep) understanding, and Smith's (2013) which is autoethnographic and reflective, by offering deep and empirically-supported insight. Moreover, it is to my knowledge the only study to investigate staff and student perspectives together (Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012) only involve staff perspectives), and one of few studies focussing on the discipline to have been conducted by an 'outsider' (i.e. not a popular music academic or student).

In addition it draws together, to a greater and more explicit extent than existing studies (such as Cloonan and Hulstedt (2012); Cloonan (2005)), discussion of higher educational values with that of the value(s) associated with popular music. In addition to contributing to discussion of disciplinary values within higher education generally (see below), this helps to shed light on the uniquely complex nature of popular music studies, and the associated challenges it faces. In particular, the notion of musical authenticity- a core value concept in popular music (Adorno, 2002; Frith, 2007; Green, 2002; Middleton, 1992) and which Green (2002) has considered in relation to formal and informal music education- is explored in the context of higher education and in relation to issues such as commercialism, employability and academic expectations.

Beyond specifically popular music education, the study makes an original and valuable contribution to knowledge in music education research generally. In his overview of higher music education research, Jørgensen observes that:

There is a lot of personal commentary on the question of purpose and mission [...], but very little theoretical research of an analytical and critical nature on the written and unwritten goals of institutions, on the historical and cultural dimensions of goals [or] on the relationship between institutional goals and society's expectations (2009, p.22).

While several studies over the intervening four years have gone some way to addressing this deficit (Ford, 2010; Moore, 2012; Smith, 2013), Jørgensen's assertion remains true. This study can be seen to address each of the areas identified in the above quotation as needing attention: while this study focuses on values as opposed to aims or purpose, these distinctions are porous, and discussions of value and purpose are self-evidently

interconnected. Significantly, it engages both with written values (those found in institutional literature and in state education policy) and unwritten values (those held by individuals or encoded in less obvious ways), and examines their interplay. It engages critically both with the questions of how and by whom values come to be held within institutions of higher music education, and how they impact upon higher music education in practice. It presents and engages new or revised conceptual models- the message systems (Figure 6, p.213), the macro, meso, micro domains; the give/get/hold value continua (Figure 4, p.175) and the epistemic quadrants (Figure 5, p.185) which provide theoretical frameworks for exploring issues of value, purpose, aim and culture. It examines the cultural and historical dimensions of popular music education and relates these dimensions to the value terrain within the field, and examines societal expectations and assumptions regarding the role of education and the value of knowledge.

Jørgensen suggests that research of this kind ‘will [not] give us ready to use recipes for future conduct. [Rather] it will most probably enlighten us about the fundamental forces that shape our daily work.’ (Jørgensen, 2009, p.22) As such, while studies like this can make enlightening contributions to knowledge, their impact cannot always be readily asserted in instrumentalist terms. Nonetheless, I believe that by bringing original and fresh insight to issues which lie at the core of higher education practice, this study enriches the knowledge bases that inform decision-making, best practice and reform. Following dissemination therefore it will have great potential to impact upon such areas as curriculum design, pedagogy, and both institutional and state policy.

Beyond higher music education, the study makes an original contribution to knowledge in higher education research for its critical consideration of the nature of disciplinary knowledge and values, and examination of the interface between disciplinary values, the values of higher education generally, and the values of institutions and individuals. It problematises Becher and Trowler’s (2001) earlier model of disciplinary categorisation according to knowledge characteristics, and identifies in particular the inappropriateness of the model for the categorisation of arts disciplines in what might be termed a postmodern knowledge society (Delanty, 2003). It offers suggestions as to how this model might be developed further to accommodate heterogeneous arts disciplines.

Furthermore, it synthesises disparate value discourses- those in which higher educational value is conceived in terms of transaction, and those which centre upon notions of intrinsic and moral value. It draws to light tensions that have emerged between these discourses both within wider literature and within the cases in this study, and

uncovers instances in which these discourses have impacted upon students' and staff's experiences of higher education, and of higher education practice from curriculum design and classroom pedagogy to research output. At the current time of rapid change within global and national higher education, critical syntheses of this kind play an essential role in illuminating the landscape and drawing disparate positions into dialogue. By identifying, and responding to, a need to reconsider the way in which value(s) in higher education is/are measured, and specifically by looking beyond reductionist analyses that limit value either to its transactional or intrinsic aspect, this study will potentially stimulate consideration and discussion of value which draws these aspects together. The give/get/hold value continua model (Figure 4, p.175) might serve as a stimulus or aid for such discussion and a theoretical framework for future research, and indeed might be adapted for use as a data collection instrument through which, for example, students and/or institutional representatives might plot their values, both *transactional* and *principle*, and the relationships between them.

#### **8.4 Concluding Remarks**

A statement of Stake's (1995) has resonated with me since I first began to plot my research design:

The function of research is not necessarily to map and conquer the world, but to sophisticate the beholding of it. (p.43).

Undertaking this study has led me to a more sophisticated understanding of the phenomenon that engaged my interest four years ago, and of the value of research and education. Having the opportunity to return to higher education and study its processes and cultures has, on reflection, been one of the most valuable of my life, and I sincerely hope to be able to 'give something back'. I hope that this thesis is of some value, whether pedagogical, intellectual or methodological, to anyone who reads it. I wish here to reiterate my deep gratitude to the four institutions that agreed to be the focus of my investigations, and in particular to the staff and student interviewees whose experiences and perspectives are so crucial to the study's findings and insights.

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## **Code of Ethical Practice**

*This has been drawn up in reference to the Statement of Ethical Practice for the British Sociological Association (2004) and the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011). It is intended as a summative ethical framework focused towards the specifics of my research project.*

### **In undertaking this research, I will:**

- Strive to maintain the integrity of sociological enquiry, and the reputation of the discipline.
- Safeguard the interest of participants and others involved in the study.
- Report my findings accurately and truthfully.
- Abide by national laws and regulations.
- Recognise the limits of my professional competence, and undertake training in the research methods used.
- Consider safety issues pertaining to my research project, to ensure my own and my participants' safety.
- Ensure that the social, psychological, professional and physical wellbeing of my participants is not adversely affected by the research.
- Secure participation only on the basis of informed and freely given consent, and participants' awareness of their right to withdraw their involvement at any time, without giving a reason.
- Give participants clear information regarding conditions of anonymity, and pertaining to how identities will be made visible within the research report.
- Maintain the anonymity of any third parties referred to in the research.
- Give participants clear information regarding how data is to be captured, and how the resulting data types are to be stored and disseminated
- Make participants aware of the extent to which they will be able to see data, interim research findings, and research reports, and to change or review their statements.
- Offer participants to opportunity to see and comment on data and findings.

- Be aware of the potential impact of my research upon the lives of participants, making them aware of any risks involved and striving to minimize risks and alleviate distress.
- Secure consent from institutional gatekeepers and from individual participants, understanding my responsibilities to both, and not compromising their relationship to each other.
- Maintain an awareness of my responsibilities towards my research participants insofar as dissemination of findings/sharing of data is concerned.

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**Appendix II: Ethical approval form, information sheets and consent forms (main study)**

University of Reading  
Institute of Education  
**Ethical Approval Form**



Tick one:

Postgraduate project: PhD

Name of applicant (s): Tom Parkinson

Has the data collector obtained satisfactory CRB clearance: N/A

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr Mary Stakelum/Prof. Suzanne Graham

**Please answer questions 1 to 6, then complete Sections A or B, and Section C overleaf.**

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <b>1. Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents, which:</b>  | X   |    |
| a) explains the purposes of the project   | X   |    |
| b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants   | X   |    |
| c) gives a full and clear account of what will be asked of them   | X   |    |
| d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary   | X   |    |
| e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they so wish   | X   |    |
| f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, and arrangements for its storage and eventual disposal   | X   |    |
| g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this  | X   |    |
| h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them   | X   |    |
| i) gives the name and designation of a member of staff with responsibility for the project together with a contact address or telephone number. If any of the project investigators are students, this information must be included and their name provided   | X   |    |
| k) explains, where applicable, arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants  | X   |    |
| j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows:<br>‘This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct’. | X   |    |
| <b>2. If your research is taking place in a school, have you obtained the permission of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?</b>  | X   |    |
| <b>3. If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you sought parental consent or given parents the opportunity to decline consent?</b>   | N/A |    |
| <b>4. Have you sought consent from all participants, if they are able to give it, in addition to (4)?</b>   | X   |    |
| <b>5. Will your research involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?</b>   |     | X  |
| <b>6. Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?</b>  |     | X  |

PLEASE COMPLETE EITHER SECTION A OR B AND PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION, THEN SIGN THE FORM (SECTION C)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>A:</b> My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has <b>no</b> significant ethical implications.</p>   | X |
| <p>Give a brief description of participants and procedures (methods, tests used, etc) in up to 150 words. Attach any consent form, information sheet and research instruments to be used in the project (e.g. questionnaires, interview schedules).</p> <p>The research project is a multiple case study of popular music degree programmes, involving one-to-one interviews with faculty and students, focus groups with students, observation and documentary analysis.</p> <p>There are two separate phases of staff interviews, the second of which will follow an observation of a teaching session, upon which the interview schedule will be based. For this reason each phase of interviews has a separate information sheet consent form, to allow for the possibility that participants may only be willing to take part in one phase of interviews.</p> <p>I have included information sheets and consent forms for each participant set (staff and students) and for each method of data collection, and also an information sheet and consent form for institutional gatekeepers (programme leaders, department heads etc), to gain initial access to the case sites, and to secure consent for the institution to be named within the thesis.</p> <p>Participants will be presented with the documents as much prior to data collection as possible.</p> <p>Please state how many participants will be involved in the project:<br/> <i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i></p> <p>It is expected that 40 students and ten members of staff will participate in the study.</p> |   |

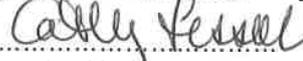
|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>B:</b> I consider that this project <b>may</b> have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.</p>  |  |
| <p><b>Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. title of project</li> <li>2. purpose of project and its academic rationale</li> <li>3. brief description of methods and measurements</li> <li>4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria</li> <li>5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)</li> <li>6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.</li> <li>7. estimated start date and duration of project</li> </ol> <p><i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i></p> |  |

**C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:**

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed:  ..... Print Name Tom Parkinson Date 11/11/11

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE  
 This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed:  ..... Print Name... C. TISSOT Date... 10/1/12  
 (IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)\*

\* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is granted on the basis of the information declared by the applicant.

**INFORMATION SHEET****Supervisors:**

**Dr Mary Stakelum**  
[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

**Professor Suzanne  
Graham**

[s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

Dear Participant Institution,

I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music pedagogy at Higher Education level, focussing on the formation of value systems that inform pedagogy and course design. I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent.

The research project is a multiple-case study of five Popular Music degree courses representing five different educational contexts. Your institution was chosen on the basis of its uniqueness in relation to the other cases, following research into all programmes currently on offer in the United Kingdom. Your participation in the project will be highly valued, and I hope that you will find it interesting to take part.

If you consent to my conducting research at your institution, I will conduct one to one interviews with staff members, and observe them during teaching (see Annexe 1 and 2). I will also conduct focus groups with groups of 4 to 6 students (see Annexe 3). In addition, I intend to record my visual and aural impressions and reflections in the form of handwritten notes. I will also conduct some analysis of programme literature such as websites and prospectuses.

All sight visits will be arranged and agreed with you beforehand. I will make every effort to ensure that my presence at your site is unobtrusive and impacts as little as possible on the day to day running of your programme. I will consult with you throughout on how best to achieve this.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The data gathered in this study will be used to gain an overview of popular music degree programme delivery in the United Kingdom, to gain an insight into the perspectives, experiences and teaching practices of staff, and to identify pertinent themes relating to Popular Music education at degree level. A detailed overview of the study, as well as a draft of my methodology chapter, are available on request to any of the individual participants and to the programme team.

## **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

All data collected will be held in strict confidence. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only my supervisors and myself will have access to the records. Records will be retained for five years after the project end and will then be destroyed securely.

Your institution will be named in the study. This decision was made on the basis that the distinguishing features of each institution involved would be sufficient for their identification anyway.

The personal anonymity of participants will be guaranteed; I have made clear in the information literature for staff participants (see Annexe 1 and 2) that if they wish for their contribution to be formally recognised, they can be named in the acknowledgements page of the thesis. They will not be named within the thesis. All student participants will remain anonymous. References to members of staff or students made during interviews or focus groups will be edited to ensure their anonymity.

If you have any objections to any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am committed to ensuring that the project is conducted ethically, openly and with the full confidence of all participants, and will attempt to accommodate your needs.

The decision to participate is entirely voluntary. As an institution you are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the research will be conducted at your premises.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact us on the details given at the top of this letter.

This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Signed:

Date:

**Please retain this sheet for your records**

*Consent Form*

I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me by Tom Parkinson the purposes of the project and what will be required of our institution, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to the institution's participation.

I understand that participation is entirely voluntary and that the institution has the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to Tom Parkinson conducting interviews with staff

I consent to Tom Parkinson observing lessons and taking handwritten notes

I consent to the institution being named in the thesis

Name:

Professional Capacity:

Signed:

Date:

**INFORMATION SHEET**

**Supervisors:**

**Dr Mary Stakelum**  
[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

**Professor Suzanne  
Graham**

[s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

Dear Participant,

I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music pedagogy at Higher Education level, focussing on the formation of value systems informing pedagogy and course design. You have been identified as a potential participant on the basis of your roles and responsibilities on the programme. I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent.

You have been chosen on the basis of your roles and responsibilities on the programme. Your participation in the project will be highly valued, and I hope that you will find it interesting to take part.

**Observation**

If you agree to participate in this study, I will observe you during a lesson (or other educational event) and record handwritten notes relating to your approach and methods. I will make every effort to impact as little as possible on the lesson, and will discuss with you beforehand how best to achieve this. My notes will be used as data, and will also inform interview questioning (see below).

**Post-Observation Interview**

You will then be asked to take part in an interview with me, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission and will focus on your approaches to teaching. Many of the questions asked during the interview will relate to my notes from the observed session.

The transcriptions will be shown to you in order for you to check their accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. I can send a summary of the results of this research to you if you wish.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The data gathered in this study will be used to gain an overview of popular music degree programme delivery in the United Kingdom, to gain an insight into the perspectives, experiences and teaching practices of staff, and to identify pertinent themes relating to Popular Music education at degree level. The information may be included in my PhD literature and in research publications.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only my supervisors and myself will have access to the records. Records will be retained for five years after the project end and will then be destroyed securely.

Your personal anonymity can be guaranteed. However, if you wish for your contribution to be formally recognised, I will include you by name in the acknowledgements page of the thesis, and in any subsequent research publications based upon the study. Your name will not be used within the thesis itself. Any references to other members of staff or students made by you during interview will be edited to ensure their anonymity. Your institution will be named in the study.

Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the interview will be conducted at your premises.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact us on the details given at the top of this letter.

This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Signed:

Date:

**Please retain this sheet for your records**

**Consent Form**

I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me by Tom Parkinson the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

**Please tick as appropriate:**

I agree to allowing Tom Parkinson to observe my lesson and to record handwritten notes

I consent to take part in a subsequent audio-recorded interview as outlined in the Information Sheet

**Please cross out as appropriate:**

I wish to remain anonymous /I wish to be named in the study

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## *Information Sheet*

### **Supervisors:**

**Dr Mary Stakelum**

[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

**Professor Suzanne Graham**

[s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

**Tom Parkinson (student researcher)**

*email* [t.j.n.parkinson@student.reading.ac.uk](mailto:t.j.n.parkinson@student.reading.ac.uk)

*phone* 07954 335292

**Dear**

I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music education at university level, focussing on the formation of values informing teaching and course design.

I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent. Your participation in the project will be highly valued, and I hope that you will find it interesting to take part. You have been selected for participation according to the following criteria:

- You are enrolled on the undergraduate popular music programme
- You have participated in the programme modules during the academic year 2011/2012

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a focus group with other volunteers (between four and six students), led by me and lasting approximately 45 minutes, at a time and place convenient for you. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission and will focus on your views of popular music as an industry and as a field, your personal backgrounds and reasons for joining the degree programme, your experiences of the programme and your opinions relating to the relevance of formal education in popular music. I can send a summary of the results of this research to you if you wish.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The data gathered in this study will be used to gain an overview of popular music degree programme delivery in the United Kingdom, to gain an insight into the perspectives, experiences and teaching practices of staff, and to identify pertinent themes relating to Popular Music education at degree level. The information may be included in my PhD literature and in research publications.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only my supervisors and myself will have access to the records. At no time will your tutors or fellow students be given access to the data, and your participation in the project will have no impact on your grades. Records will be retained for five years after the project end and will then be destroyed securely.

Your personal anonymity will be guaranteed. Any references to other students or members of staff made by you during the session will be edited to ensure their anonymity. Your institution will be named in the study.

Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the interview will be conducted at your premises.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact us on the details given at the top of this letter.

This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

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I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to take part in a focus group interview as outlined in the Information Sheet

I consent to this interview being audio recorded

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## *Information Sheet*

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[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

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*phone* 07954 335292

**Dear**

I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music education at university level, focussing on the formation of values informing teaching and course design.

I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent. Your participation in the project will be highly valued, and I hope that you will find it interesting to take part. You have been selected for participation according to the following criteria:

- You are enrolled on the undergraduate popular music programme
- You have participated in the programme modules during the academic year 2011/2012

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a focus group with other volunteers (between four and six students), led by me and lasting approximately 45 minutes, at a time and place convenient for you. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission and will focus on your views of popular music as an industry and as a field, your personal backgrounds and reasons for joining the degree programme, your experiences of the programme and your opinions relating to the relevance of formal education in popular music. I can send a summary of the results of this research to you if you wish.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The data gathered in this study will be used to gain an overview of popular music degree programme delivery in the United Kingdom, to gain an insight into the perspectives, experiences and teaching practices of staff, and to identify pertinent themes relating to Popular Music education at degree level. The information may be included in my PhD literature and in research publications.

### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only my supervisors and myself will have access to the records. At no time will your tutors or fellow students be given access to the data, and your participation in the project will have no impact on your grades. Records will be retained for five years after the project end and will then be destroyed securely.

Your personal anonymity will be guaranteed. Any references to other students or members of staff made by you during the session will be edited to ensure their anonymity. Your institution will be named in the study.

Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the interview will be conducted at your premises.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact us on the details given at the top of this letter.

This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Signed:

Date:

**Please retain this sheet for your records**

**Consent Form**

I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me by Tom Parkinson the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to take part in a focus group interview as outlined in the Information Sheet

I consent to this interview being audio recorded

Name:

Signed:

Date:

***INFORMATION SHEET*****Supervisors:**

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[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

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Dear Participant,

I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music pedagogy at Higher Education level, focussing on the formation of value systems informing pedagogy and course design. I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent.

**You have been chosen on the basis of your roles and responsibilities on the programme. Your participation in the project will be highly valued, and I hope that you will find it interesting to take part.**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with me, lasting approximately 30 minutes, at a time and place convenient for you. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission and will focus on the design, structure and delivery of the popular music degree programme you teach on, your experiences of working on the programme, your own musical background and the values you hold relating to music and education.

The transcriptions will be shown to you in order for you to check their accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. I can send a summary of the results of this research to you if you wish.

**Purpose of the Study**

The data gathered in this study will be used to gain an overview of popular music degree programme delivery in the United Kingdom, to gain an insight into the perspectives, experiences and teaching practices of staff, and to identify

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Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the interview will be conducted at your premises.

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**Signed:**

**Date:**

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I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

**Please tick as appropriate:**

I consent to take part in an interview as outlined in the Information Sheet

I consent to this interview being audio recorded

**Please cross out as appropriate:**

I wish to remain anonymous/I wish to be named in the acknowledgements

Name:

Signed:

Date:

## *Information Sheet*

### **Supervisors:**

**Dr Mary Stakelum**

[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

**Professor Suzanne Graham**

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*phone* 07954 335292

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I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music education at university level, focussing on the formation of values informing teaching and course design.

I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent. Your participation in the project will be highly valued, and I hope that you will find it interesting to take part. You have been selected for participation according to the following criteria:

- You are enrolled on the undergraduate popular music programme
- You have participated in the programme modules during the academic year 2011/2012

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview me and lasting approximately 45 minutes, at a time and place convenient for you. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission and will focus on your views of popular music as an industry and as a field, your personal background and reasons for joining the degree programme, your experiences of the programme and your opinions relating to the relevance of formal education in popular music. I can send a summary of the results of this research to you if you wish.

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### **Confidentiality and Anonymity**

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Your personal anonymity will be guaranteed. Any references to other students or members of staff made by you during the interview will be edited to ensure their anonymity. Your institution will be named in the study.

Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. You are free to withdraw your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the interview will be conducted at your premises.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact us on the details given at the top of this letter.

This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Signed:

Date:

**Please retain this sheet for your records**

***Consent Form***

I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me by Tom Parkinson the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to take part in an interview as outlined in the Information Sheet

I consent to this interview being audio recorded

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Observation Record

Case: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 24/02/12 \_\_\_\_\_

Visit: 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Location**

(London)

- Station - [redacted] media exhibition on - photos
- Lots of media activity going on! Students w/ tripods + cameras // boom mics.
- Large campus - green - halls of res.
- Lots of students walking from station with instruments

**Decor/Physical Environment**

- Green campus grounds
- 60s concrete - "The Street" main campus walkway.
- Not much evidence of popular music!
- New campus development underway - "some resentment"

Books in Go Music Dept Bookshelf: (Dr [redacted])  
Bourdieu / Rancière / Sontag (1977) | Tagg  
'Fakesong' (Harper) | 'The Rest Is Noise' (Ross) | 'Shadows, Fading Studios' (Muir)

## Behaviours

- Lots of student project work going on, esp. on "The Street". Mainly film students?
- Student-staff interaction positive - friendly, laughing.
- No music-making (but students with guitars)

## People

- 3 lecturers in office, inc. Dr [REDACTED]
- Lots of international students
- Mix of accents (a few native)
- 70/30 m/f(?)
- No obvious subcultures (rock, RuB etc); fairly 'neutral' dress
- "Heavy teaching load" - Dr [REDACTED]
- Staff-student ratio is low <

## Formal Observation(s)

Type: Seminar x 3 (3hr total)

Staff: Dr [REDACTED]

Seminars for 'conf. paper' module

① 3m / 3f } 5 in 20s  
3 UK / 3 Euro (?) } 1 late 30s

- Abstracts on pre-agreed papers had been distributed on Blackboard (anonymous)
- 'Pro-forma' for peer review is distributed
- 1 student referencing "Alla Nettle" - Dr [REDACTED]: "not quite an old book now" etc etc (guiding the session)
- Traditional seminar 'feel' - large table, open discussion. Students asked to appraise the abstracts critically
- Academic conventions stressed

② 7 students, 6 m / 1 f  
1 international

- Abstracts quite varied:
- 1 on Stiff Records!
- Philosophy / Sociology of PM
- Umberto Eco
- "Automation of musical taste"

③ 9 students, 2 international (1 American)  
5 m / 4 f 20s - some late 20s  
(30s?)

- Conference procedures explained
- full papers (best abstracts) + posters (the rest)

1 abstract on tattoos

1 abstract on reverberation

Dr  marking throughout

Conference is in May (attend?)

## Qs for Dr [REDACTED]

- Do students get a reading list for the module?
- How much 'free reign'?
- How were you marking during the session?
- Is Do you follow a model for your peer-review process?
- Any stylistic dominance?
- Mix of students? (w/f) (uk/int)
- Research mission of UoU?
- Research mission of dept.
- How was module created?

# **Staff Interview Protocol**

Date:

Interviewee:

## **Research questions (bear in mind)**

*What values are held on undergraduate popular music degree programmes?*

*How are these manifested in the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy, institution, assessment, lifestyle, and market?*

## **Question Themes (cross out as covered)**

Personal academic background  
background

Personal musical

Personal professional background

What is education for?  
education?

What is the value of higher

Programme history

Student body

Department/school/university relations?

Programme content

Programme aims

Is your programme typical?

Vocational?

Theoretical?

Core skills?

Transferable skills?

Staff profiles (colleagues)

External pressures?

Local area?

Local community?

What genres and artists do you cover?

Canon?

Art vs. Craft?

## **Extra Questions**

# **Student Interview/Focus Group Protocol**

Date:

Interviewee/focus group no:

## **Research questions (bear in mind)**

*What values are held on undergraduate popular music degree programmes?*

*How are these manifested in the message systems of curriculum, pedagogy, institution, assessment, lifestyle, and market?*

## **Question Themes (cross out as covered)**

Personal academic background

Personal musical background

What is education for?

What is the value of higher education?

What instrument do you play?

Programme experiences

Peer interaction

Genre emphases?

Vocational?

Theoretical?

Local area?      Local culture?      Local community?

Art vs. Craft?                      Good music, bad music?

Good musicianship, bad musicianship?

Institutional culture

Ambitions for the future?

Ambitions before you came?

## **Extra Questions**

## Coding

### Student Expectations/Motivations/Ambitions

I think a lot of them don't know what they want at all when they enroll on the course. (Programme leader) [student motivations] 1.

I know that on the open days when they come in the staff really try and spend part of the time explaining that it's not a fame academy, you know, that you're not coming here and playing all the time, that there's an emphasis on theory, on critical evaluation, and so on (Programme leader) [realism, criticality, academicisation, fame] 2.

...hopefully they've got a bit of an insight, but I still think some of them come onto the course and think well, I'm a performer, that's what I'm going to come out doing. (Programme leader) [student ambition, musician identity] 3.

I think they get a dose of realism in the business module. (Programme leader) 4.

the business module, which on the old course was only really taught in the third year but now is run in the second year, that really helps them to have a better understanding of, realistically, what possible routes there are. (Programme leader) [vocationalism] 5.

not to knock them back, but to make them aware that after graduating, their not all going to leave and become session musicians, because it's simply unrealistic. But you know, we don't have a sit down talk with them and say, ok everyone, this is the way the land lies, because that's not what we're there for. (Programme leader) [realism, broad skills set, purpose] 6.

Er, yeah, again I hadn't studied music at all, and with all the other courses you had to have that first to get on, but with this it was just do the interview and perform to the right standard. (A) [performing ability] 7.

Yeah there was that, but I came here because I liked the course, I liked the mix of studio production and performance, but also composition and theory aspect which you didn't seem to get on other courses either. It was either you're doing studio production or kind of quite heavy music on a classical background, whereas this seemed to have a great balance of it all, and also being based in the north of England too, for my gigging. (A) [scope, plurality] 8.

*So you guys both want to be composers...is that something you wanted to be before, or is that something that has emerged since?*

B: It's emerged. Maybe it was there, but before I came on the course I knew I wanted to be something in the industry, either studio work, or a professional drummer, but obviously now it's come to the time when I need to start thinking about what job I'm going to get, I can't just kind of be hoping, cross my fingers that the drumming's going to pay, um, and yeah, I've enjoyed composition even since school, but I've just taken it more seriously here because there're a lot more options. [course impact on student ambitions, realism, industry focus] 9.

D: But even before I was playing guitar, my favourite was a games composer called Jovya Matsui, and I've always thought I wanted to follow that composition, you know, and I think a bit more could have been done for that in a kind of business aspect...I think I've learned a lot about actually composing and stuff and it's

really kind of helped me, but in terms of a business sense you're not really given any guidance as to how to approach companies or publishers or... [vocationalism/professionalism, employability] 10.

C: When I started uni I always thought I'd be a session player. The tutors put me off that completely. I wasn't brought up with jazz or latin, the main things that are really taught here, and that was kind of shot down really quickly. It started to make me think a lot more about what I wanted to do and stuff. And you know everybody thinks, when they go to uni or something, that they'll somehow get a break, but it gets more unlikely every day. And every lecture you go to now, these are people who lecture now. Some of them have had good music careers, but a lot of them haven't really had much. You can tell how bitter it is. [genre, staff past experience] 11.

*Is that because they aren't doing it anymore?*

C: They've had it, and now it's gone. Or they've never had a real chance to pursue it. Now it's like, if I can teach and stuff, because I do quite enjoy teaching...you've got to basically live the way you want to live in music...you need a decent job on the side, you can't just be on the dole, I'm a musician, it's not going to pay any bills is it. You've got to be sensible about it. I mean one out of a thousand get a break and that's good, but until you get some sort of opportunity you cannot count on it. I mean I've been doing music for six or seven years now and every year more and more you get people drilling at you, you're never going to make it. It makes you work harder but at the same time it makes you think, when I leave uni I'm not just going to go and fall into a paying job. So you have to do something that's maybe not in music to start and keep your portfolio going. [realism, musician identity, pragmatism, portfolio career] 12.

*So in terms of what you want to do with music...has the course changed that? So your professional ambitions...you're a guitarist obviously but has it made you want to explore other areas?*

Well obviously my ultimate ambition or aim is to be in a band touring, playing wherever. But that's always been the case, but since coming to uni I've really enjoyed the tech side of it. So if for whatever reason I don't carry on playing guitar or the band doesn't work out I would be more than happy to go in...or open a recording studio. (152) [musical identity] 13.

now I'm more into composition I obviously use more of the full notational side, but somehow I feel quite detached from the performance-based side that other people are very into, and more into the technical, musicological side. (151) [academic knowledge] 14.

*...was it a big decision for you to come to university? Did you have to think hard about whether you wanted to or not?*

No, I always wanted to come to uni, just to learn more about the subject I love so much. [enjoyment, musician identity, educational value] 15.

*So you always wanted to do music?*

I always wanted to do music since like high school really. I've always wanted...I couldn't see myself doing anything but music. And I've always wanted to be at uni. [enjoyment, musician identity, vocational] 16.

*And is it worth the debt?*

Yeah...it's, I think it's worth the three grand a year or whatever it is we're paying. Obviously next year it's going to be more, nine grand, it's going to be a struggle for anyone, but...

*Would that make a difference? The nine grand?*

## Appendix V: Within-case coding document (indicative sample)

Possibly. It's a lot of money. Considering I'm in like ten grand debt for like the three years, and you'd get in that in like one year...it's insane. But like there's always ways...like to help you out, the ways to pay it back...so...cos the payback system's changed with the nine grand, like the way you pay it back...you have to be earning more to pay it back I think. So...I don't know. (152) **[Student-as-customer value] 16.**

E: In our third year we have to pick two majors, and I'm undecided at the moment about what I want to do, I mean I still want to perform, I want to...be a performing musician, but I also want to make some money (laughs), I still want to live and have an affordable living, so then I thought about teaching, and recently I wanted to do more tech stuff, and live sound, and stuff like that. **[money, pragmatism, employability] 17.**

H: We had a meeting the other day with a guy called \_\_\_\_\_, he does arranging. And he said something that we've all known for a while, is that you can't get by doing one thing any more. You have to do little bits of everything if you want to work and keep your head afloat in the business. **[portfolio career, employability] 18.**

F: One of the Pdp people on the course, a lovely man, he originally said, he sort of said to everyone, obviously your plan A is to be in a band, but I'm going to teach you about session musicianship, and this is your Plan B. And I was like, that was never my plan A! I don't want to be in a band...**[student ambition, realism, employability] 19.**

H: That was funny I thought everyone wanted to be in bands, like you want to be a recording artist or whatever and you think that's everyone's main kind of thing but no. **[fame, student ambition] 20.**

*What's your Plan A when you came here?*

H: Yeah it still is to a degree, you know it's hard and stuff and you need to have things to fall back on, but the more we've gone on in the course the more I've realised that that's more of a minority thing. There's less...

E: Deep down for me I would love to be a recording artist but I think I've realised that it's not getting that possible anymore, it's not easy to do that and I suppose that deep down there's that feeling for me, but then I'm thinking it may not happen. **[realism] 21.**

H: You've got to try though don't you. I think that's a pessimistic view.

G: It's a pessimistic view but also I think people...like when they think like recording artists and all that they're thinking about it in the wrong way. The industry's changed like, the whole point of life anyway is to get enough money to live and I suppose be relatively happy. Like you don't have...things like 'I wish I was famous and signed', that's all rubbish, if you're happy and recording artist and only earning 30 grand a year, I don't know before tax, but that's perfect to keep you alive, and that's what you should be aiming for, you shouldn't be sacking off that dream because you won't earn a million pounds. **[student ambition, musician identity, enjoyment] 23.**

F: My point is that that wasn't my dream. And I think at the time of hearing \_\_\_\_\_ say that, my Plan A was definitely teaching and youth work, because I'd just come out of youth work, spent two years, really enjoyed that, realised that music was what I wanted to do, and wanted to focus this idea of teaching and music and what I could do with it, and I've thought about it a lot less recently...

*What's your Plan A now?*

F: There isn't one, but certainly teaching's still up there, particularly like community projects, like doing music in the community rather than teaching A level or something. And...but yeah, and I'd say that's probably still some kind of Plan A, I don't know if it's up there at the top any more or what would be at the top. I just think the course, certainly from him in particular implied that you're here because you want to become rock stars, and that wasn't why I started. **[student motivation, fame, success] 24.**

H: If there's going to be a Plan B then that's what it should be, but there's loads of pessimism, like anyone you speak to on this course like, nobody thinks they can make a career in music just off the back of you know getting signed or whatever, getting out gigging, playing gigs selling albums. Nobody thinks you can make a living like that, and it's partly because apart from \_\_\_\_\_, a lot of the lecturers and stuff here don't encourage that enough. **[student motivation, realism, pragmatism] 25.**

G: I don't know I think that's a good thing.

H: Obviously I can understand why, do you know what I mean? But at the same time I still think that there's not really anyone who's going to get a hold of me and say well if that's what you really want to do you need to do this and this. If you want to do it do it. **26.**

"I chose Salford because of the great courses, excellent teachers and the masses of facilities, also because it's close to Manchester" (Student testimonial on website) **[located] 27.**

#### Vocationalism/Industry Focus

You will be taught by practicing professionals on a course well-known for producing graduates who excel in their chosen careers (programme website) **[employability] 28.**

I do know of courses where students go on and do vocational work. We don't offer that at Salford, our students don't go out and work for someone, but we do have an enterprise component of the business module, where students can create a company, and run that company for a year, and they're assessed on their business plan and they do a presentation where they basically give an account of the company's activities, and they submit a critical evaluation where they assess their role in the company, and assess how successfully the company operated and what have you... and even if the company loses money, it doesn't mean they're not able to get a first. So we're not assessing the financial success of the company, rather the quality of the learning experience, and how well they can critically evaluate what they've done over the course of the year. (Programme leader) **29.**

We don't use the term music industry, but rather industries, or cultural economies, if you like, because that starts making students aware of what's going on today. You know, rather than the traditional view of there being this one Music Industry. (Programme leader) **[industry focus, entrepreneurship] 30.**

... that was really the old system where we just tackled this primarily at third year level, final year, and now in the new curriculum, this will be the first year that our second years are doing it, and they're starting to look at these issues from the second year onwards, the second semester really. So we've introduced it slightly earlier in the course, and I think that's our one...I don't want to say concession, because I think this is actually the right thing to do, introducing it at an earlier point, but I feel it's the part of the curriculum review that is in part a response to this need now to feel that we are preparing students for careers once they graduate, and there wasn't that concession say eight, nine, ten years ago even, to do that. (Programme leader) **[macro influence, employability] 31.**

*I mean how music industry oriented is this course? [...]*

B: They're pretty good at that. I mean we had a business module in the third year about starting a business or promoting an artist, erm, but I think they're very good at giving us skills for the real world.

*Just in the musical arena, or broader?*

B: Broader I'd say.

D: For me, I think a bit more could have been done across the three years. Like he's saying they've only just introduced a business module now, in the third year, and in the business modules that we're doing is concentrated on starting a business, which you know for some people that might be a big responsibility for them, they might not be interested in, but for me personally I kind of want to score compositions, kind of write for films, you know, and I don't feel that I've been given any advice on how to approach that in a business sense, like how to set myself up as a composer who writes for that sort of thing. [instrumentalist knowledge, vocationalism] 32.

there's quite a lot of...well it's been cut recently because of the education cuts, but they used to do this thing called Pdp week which was professional development, and you'd get this whole week of professionals talking about, I don't know, Plan B, what you can do with this and that...yeah...and I suppose that technically we're all building up a portfolio in our own ways, but not in the same manner as building up a big folder that you hand round. (G) .

And that's something that I've learned a lot being here. About like what these guys think of the industry. And this idea of...one of the things \_\_\_\_\_ said the other day is if you want to be an arranger for example your job is always to be the smartest guy in the room, and in order to make a living in music you have to make sure that you're the smartest guy in the room. Every time. To get people to go his last album was really good. I think that's daunting, but it's good advice. (F) [professionalism, competition] 33.

#### Employability/Core Skills

For a lot of them it's only when they start doing something like a composition module that they realise that they have a talent in that area and they start to think of all the ways that they might carve out more of a niche in that area. (Programme leader) .

a lot of the performers, they go on to take performance and composition in their final thing, and the two are very much married together. They do their final performance and that's where they perform their composition, and the two go very much hand in hand, but for some they might realise that, well I'm not really cut out to be a performer. You know they come to the big sea and they come to university and realise that maybe they're not quite as talented in amongst everyone else. (Programme leader) [student ambitions]

34.

they just sort of broaden their understanding of what's out there as well as what they have an ability in. And so quite a few of them seem to steer off the performance route, and not stay so fixated on it and explore other options. (Programme leader) [breadth of focus] 35.

certainly there are some that are more academically-minded, you know, that go on to do dissertations, and who at the beginning don't think about postgraduate study, but then of course just from being in that university environment some people find that it really suits them. (Programme leader) [academic value, student ambitions, enculturation] 36.

they might go on to do an MA in performance, or composition, or technology, but they become more aware of the potential for an academic route for them. So that's quite common. (Programme leader)

I think one of the best things about this course is the heavy theory, which on a lot of other popular music courses is kind of missed out completely. Because it allows us the skills to do even the more classical stuff. I mean my composition I'm doing it for full orchestra, which, having the theory skills we've been taught here allows me to do that. And if I'd gone to another popular music course I wouldn't have the skills to be able to do that. (B) [genre, pluralism] 37.

Yeah. I want to be a composer. But also having the studio and the technical background that we also have on this course allows me to be more diverse with that and use the technology to help me. (B) [genre] 38.

Yeah. In tutorials we're forced to. Um, there was also an ensemble as well where we had to assess people's playing and that tests your technical knowledge as well because you have to be able to pick apart pieces and listen to what's going on. (B) [peer learning/assessment] 39.

I think the course actually helped me do what I want to do and gave me the skills that I need, because I didn't really have a clue...but now I have a million clues, there's a lot available to you. But I do agree that the business aspect is a bit late, and it might have been nice to have that throughout the course. (A) [vocationalism, employability] 40.

Our annual Masterclass series involves leading professionals and is designed to assist you in your professional development and career management. (programme website) [vocational, staff expertise, industry focus] 41.

that has been our experience of it, that whatever type of music a graduate has studied, that they recognise that there are a variety of skills that are covered on a course, and that there are outcomes like that. So we've not ever had any issues with it. (Programme leader) [generic skills, transferability] 42.

80% Students in work / study six months after finishing (KIS) [employability] 43.

40% in a professional/ managerial job at six months (KIS) [employability] 44.

#### Student-As-Customer value

*Do you think there's a relationship between that and the fee rise, and what I suppose the learner...what they feel they want to get from the learning experience?*

Do you mean that they're now paying fees?

Yeah

I think that a lot of people do feel this way and it's...people talk about the change of culture really, and I...I have to say that I've noticed that difference. And there is some pressure when they're paying, and will be paying, from next year, quite substantial amounts of money, there's the expectation that there will be something at the end of it that's worthy of that...and in our opinion university degrees have always been worth all of that, but that question now of actually moving on to paid employment of some kind, related to the degree itself, I think that undeniably there is that. (Programme leader) [macro control, transactional value] 45.

I wouldn't say that we've had a lot of pressure from students, just...they'll say what they would like to learn in the business classes, and how they would like some of the masterclasses to involve more people coming in from outside, so there's...who will talk about their experience as a paid or working musician (Programme leader) [student value, professionalisation] 46.

*Do you think the environment here has facilitated that...has it nurtured your interests?*

Yeah I think it has. And But I mean the economic restraints are huge on that as well, so...

*Do you think that's affected course design?*

Yeah. Which I think can be frustrating in terms of the value for money and things...because at times I feel you're paying to learn yourself. As much as anyone else...you're paying for a kind of bubble outside the economic world where you can spend three years learning about something you're interested in. (S1) [academic value, enjoyment, transactional value] 47.

.....

I've asked people actually the extent to which they think the industry, the market, and more generally the economy, has a bearing on what is taught on the course, or how it's taught...

Yeah this is something that's particularly frustrated me I feel... I'm not quite sure how I fall on this, but I suppose my philosophy on the education system is that things should be taught, I don't know, they should be taught for their own sake... I'm not keen on the idea of economic policy influencing too much what should be taught. I get... I think among students as well, there seem to be more wanting to come to uni because it will give them this or that that will get them a job, which I feel is the wrong way to look at it... surely you should want knowledge for its own sake, to understand the world that you live in, and it feels a bit back to front to me now. (S1) | **knowledge** | 48.

*Did you have to think carefully about what you were spending your money on? Has it influenced the way you're approaching the course?*

A: Well the state of the economy anyway just makes you more careful in everything

B: I knew I wanted to go to university a long time ago, and I suppose I just accepted that it was going to be 3000 a year. And obviously now it's gone up to 9000 I might have had second thoughts.

*You wouldn't have done music?*

C: I wouldn't have come down to England. I would have stayed in Scotland. | **transactional value, internationalisation, student choice** | 49.

*Do you think there's things... do you think a rise in fees in fees like that might have affected your views, and your ambitions and your need... what you would want from higher education?*

Do you mean if I were applying now?

*Yeah- what would you want back?*

I'm not sure. Because with the course that I have done, I wonder if I might have been better, with my academic background, doing something that leads you to a more obvious job prospect. I suppose. But I thought, well music's what I'm interested in, I should follow the knowledge, in that subject, but er, I think as it gets towards nine thousand a year, and you're looking at 27000 for a three year degree, I think most people would start thinking more seriously about what they're going to get out of it financially at the other end. It becomes even more difficult to follow what you want because of its own, intrinsic interest, I think. I think you have to become even more economically savvy and consider it even more. (S1) | **enjoyment, transactional value, knowledge** | 50.

**It will doubtlessly close down some opportunities for people of lower incomes (S1) | social justice, widening participation** | 51.

I think in a wider sense though everyone's paying a lot more for less now as well, because it's getting cut down to less and less contact time, it's becoming a question of how much it's actually worth it, in that sense. (S1) | **pedagogy, transactional value** | 52.

G: One thing I would say is from chatting to a lot of friends who are at the same uni but on different courses, this is the only course that I've heard of that you actually get some sort of value for money from.  
*In terms of teaching?*

G: In terms of everything, like I divided up my fees by the amount of studio time I get a year and it works out about £20 an hour, which you'd pay way more for in a regular studio, and that's not including any of the band practice time I had, not including any of the teaching I had, not including the one to one tuition I get, which works out, what you'd pay 35 quid for half an hour of that? Like in terms of value for money this course is on it.

F: Definitely if you decide to make it that way.

E: Yeah you get out what you put in.

F: People walk out of it the day we get our timetables in September, saying I've got 5 contact hours on paper, 3500 for 5 contact hours. But C's right, that's not what you're paying 3500 pounds for, you've got so much more available to you. And you know even if you don't want to spend a lot of time in the studio, access to this library, it's ridiculous, it's amazing the stuff that's here. | **transactional value** | 53.

E: Yeah. I think that... when I first went through the application process, one of the main things was the money, and I just can't afford it, things like that... and I think my parents were like don't let that stop you going to university. You get all the loans and stuff, and they'd help me and things like that. Because my brother is in his last year of A level now and he's due to go to university in September, and he's going through the whole application process and that hasn't phased him at all, and I think you know, yes it is just disgraceful the fact that they are going up to 9 grand, but it shouldn't stop you I don't think. If you want to go to university and get a better education and do what you think is the right way to go then it shouldn't stop you. | **transactional value, educational value** | 54.

F: I don't think it would have stopped me doing the course, because I think my... obviously 3500 grand is a lot of money, anyway, 9500 grand is a lot more admittedly, but I think the way I kind of see it is it's a worthwhile investment, and I'm getting a loan for it so I don't have to think about it now (laughs). I mean I couldn't possibly have done this without a loan, and I'm very aware that you know I'm going to pay that back over a long time, you know but I think that if I decided that university was worthwhile and I wanted to do this course then I don't think money would have changed that. | **transactional value, educational value** | 55.

H: I think the main thing, I would be pushing to kids who are going to go to uni and are doing A levels, is that if you are going to go to uni and it's going to cost you 9 grand a year now, you make... yeah ok you have to earn more to pay it back, but it is a massive amount of debt that you're going to carry for the rest of your life, and I think that there's not enough sort of like provisions for kids who are like 17-18, there aren't enough avenues for them to go down or advice given out, really terms of their future. And I think that 18 is in many ways the wrong time to give it anyway, but honestly the only thing I'd say to anyone going to uni, especially if they're going to be paying 9 grand a year for it, is take a couple of years out because trust me 18 to 20 even in those two years, even if you know what you want to do, you do a lot of growing up in that time, and I think that if you're going to make that big decision to go to uni, which has just been made even bigger, I would make sure that you do the right thing. Because I know loads of people who have gone to uni straight from school cos they wanted to go away and then they end up dropping out. | **lifestyle, age, transactional value** | 56.

#### Musical Value(s)

We have a large and vibrant student body and welcome musicians from all musical backgrounds. (website) | **pluralism** | 57.

in the past, whenever popular music was spoken about there were some people that consistently referred to it as pop music, as if that was what it was, and I... that was one of the little things that irked me I suppose. And still is, if I hear people trying to sum up an entire degree course in popular music as pop music, because what I understand is that pop music is certainly a large part of it, but it's not the entirety of what we do on a popular music course (Programme leader) | **musical value, pluralism, nomenclature** | 58.

I've also heard some people that, you know, with degrees having to be combined... for instance, with what's happened... these are combined and we are now a BA Music, and we have these pathways, and you couldn't be a BA Popular Music because that would then omit some of the more classically-based modules on the modular pathway, so you had to go for the more all-encompassing title of music, which is appropriate, but... and this isn't something I necessarily agree with, but I have heard one or two colleagues saying well

closely related to the music industry. A third interviewee lead degree and diploma courses at a further and higher education institution in Scotland that runs classical, Scottish traditional and popular music courses. A fourth was the co-creator and former programme leader of a BA Commercial Music programme. The interviews were between forty-five minutes and an hour long, and conducted in informal settings; one in a pub, one in a cafe, one in a restaurant and one over the telephone. Recordings were transcribed verbatim within twenty-four hours of the interviews' taking place. All participants were offered the opportunity to see the transcriptions and the results of the research.

### Coding

I took an iterative, grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006) to analysing the data. A quantitative selection of categories (assessing the significance of categories according to the frequency of their emergence across interviews) was inappropriate in a study of this scale; instead I used an open-coding procedure to sort interviewees' responses into conceptual sub-categories (see Table 1) but did not eliminate any categories that figured infrequently, or grade categories in terms of response strength. I then used a process similar to selective coding to explore relationships between categories and identify 'core' or 'overarching' categories. Coding was carried out manually without data analysis software packages; interview transcripts were printed and statements were colour coded according to emerging themes.

Twenty-three sub-categories emerged from the three interviews. These were grouped into four 'core' categories: Make-up of student body, assessment, delivery and content, motivation and expectations.

| Subcategory  | 'Core' category              |
|--|------------------------------|
| prior experience/learning (of students)                                | Make-up of student body      |
| positive aspects of atypical recruitment and access routes             | Make-up of student body      |
| negative aspects of atypical recruitment and access routes             | Make-up of student body      |
| difficulties of assessing song writing and performance                 | Assessment                   |
| positive aspects of assessment   | Assessment                   |
| success of delivery (teaching and learning)                            | Delivery and content         |
| problems of delivery   | Delivery and content         |
| positive feelings about emphasis and content                           | Delivery and content         |
| emphasis on professionalism and vocationalism                          | Delivery and content         |
| positive mix of the student body                                       | Make-up of student body      |
| impact of professional/musical background of staff                     | Delivery and content         |
| financial/operational constraints                                      | Delivery and content         |
| (students') motivation to achieve fame                                 | Motivations and Expectations |
| (students') motivation to acquire skills/prepare for professional life | Motivations and Expectations |
| (students') motivation to make music                                   | Motivations and Expectations |
| (students') expectations of the course                                 | Motivations and Expectations |
| (students') expectations of their future                               | Motivations and Expectations |

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Dominant genres and styles                                | Musical and Aesthetic Values |
| Student demographics                                      | Make-up of student body      |
| Local norms   | Make-up of student body      |
| Difficulties of measuring creativity in assessment        | Assessment                   |
| Local music industry                                      | Delivery                     |
| Differences between classical and popular music education | Assessment                   |

Table 1

### Data Key

AA Alumnus A

AB Alumnus B

PLA Programme Leader A

PLB Programme Leader B

### Make-up of student body

The make-up of student body was perceived by the interviewees to have positive and negative influences on the learning experience, and to have impacted upon the musical values of the programme. Both alumni interviewees commented on the recruitment of students from non-traditional academic backgrounds. Although they felt that many of their peers were not 'up to scratch academically' (SB), they both approved of the inclusion of skilled individuals within the student body who might otherwise be denied access to higher education:

[AB] I think it's a really good thing... that it allows people who are very talented in a certain field to get on to a university course... I'm pretty sure that actually in terms of grades and stuff, the number you had to get to get in as set by UCAS and stuff, they weren't [...] particularly high, I think it was very much based upon this audition kind of thing.

Both recalled that the mix of musical backgrounds on the course promoted a rich learning experience, in particular in the performance modules where students were allocated into diverse working groups.

[AA]...you look at the sort of spectrum of people that were on the course, hip-hop was well covered, drum and bass was covered, rock was covered, acoustic sort of, soul, r'n'b.

[AB] I liked the idea of meeting people from different kinds of backgrounds and influences and getting to know them.

One interviewee noted that self-identification among students was often genre-specific:

[AB] So then they split us up on the performance module, and some of those in the singer category were like, I'm not a singer, I'm a vocalist, or you know I'm a rapper.

The former programme leader of the London institution noted that students were often more interested in learning from their fellow students, and that 'your peers [were] always your first port of call'. Moreover, within each student cohort, there were respected 'leaders, the ones with the ideas', who acted as 'tastemakers' and 'set the pace'.

The course leader from the Scottish institution noted that unpredictability in terms of the student makeup had implications for the delivery of the course, often impeding planning and limiting performance opportunities:

[PLA] We're not in a position to say we need 12 guitarists, 4 drummers. We get what we get. You can't even plan what you going to do.

[and]

[PLA] You've just got to be imaginative. In the first year of the HND we've got 5 drummers, but I've got tons of guitarists. What we've done is make up six ensembles each week and [...] take them through it.

Similarly, the former programme leader of the London programme remembered that certain instruments were heavily over-represented among applicants, impacting on the practicalities of performance pedagogy:

[PLB] [...] guitarists come in packs of a hundred, and you've a case of special needs, which are your bass players, because you've got to make up a series of bands, which was always done entirely arbitrarily.

The Scottish programme leader identified a correlation between the current balance of instrumentalists and the dominant musical styles among students:

[PLA] guitar music is a big thing, there are very few keyboard players. [It's] rock music, and the big thing is progressive rock.

However, the former London programme leader related the balance of genres on his programme to the ethnic makeup of the student body:

[PLB] You could always tell what the musical movements were, I mean in my last year of Westminster [...] the two musical strands that were evident were divided on ethnic lines, and so we'd get all the sort of white dance music which just went through in various forms, and then there's the grime, the soul-boys, you know the speed garage as it was in those days, and [...] there was some intermingling but not necessarily very much.

## **Delivery and Content**

At the alumni interviewees' institution, the course was comprised of performance, theoretical (including music sociology) and business modules. Both alumni felt that there was an appropriate mix of content, and that it had allowed for a diverse cohort of students to pursue their interests and strengths. Both felt however that the first year modules had had the effect of 'putting people off' [AB] or 'weeding people out of' [AA] particular pathways (whether performance or business), and thus forcing their choices.

Both interviewees noted that most of the teaching staff at their institution had previously worked in the music industry as musicians, composers and managers. While this gave them unique expertise which the interviewees valued, both interviewees recalled a tendency among staff to focus too much on their personal experiences in their teaching:

[AA] ...with some of the lecturers [...] you felt like they were coming in and saying how great it was in their day and bigging up how they had it, and you question, well why are you here teaching then?

[AB] I distinctly remember that there were members of staff who had a chip on their shoulder, who felt they'd been done over by the music industry, and that wasn't always necessarily a positive influence.

The course leader at the Scottish institution acknowledged that the musical focus was inevitably dependent on the teaching staff available, and that this had an aesthetic and methodological influence over the music that was composed or performed on the course. The popularity of making extensive use of technology in composition, for example, was seen as being due in part to the influence of an inspirational composer on the teaching faculty. Furthermore, the involvement of famous rock musicians in a large-scale performance had led to an interest in progressive rock among students:

[PLA] Jon Lord from Deep Purple came in and did his Concerto for Rock Band and Orchestra, Chylde in Time. And it was our rock band that played [...] and Phil Cunningham, who's a famous folk guy up here, he played his stuff and the band played with him. [The students] are writing prog-rock music now.

The former London programme leader noted that the location of programmes had an inevitable bearing on the content and delivery of programmes:

[PLB] [Programmes] are to a certain extent defined by their location and do serve their locale, [and] the work experience is going to be the local venues, the odd local record label if there is such a thing.

As discussed below, he also saw this as impacting on students' professional ambitions.

Within the curriculum at the Scottish institution, sustained focus was given to specific genres, both in practical performance classes and in modules with a large written element. This was in order to generate deep understanding of different genres, but also to develop a broad repertoire that might serve the students professionally:

[PLA] we have a band who [play] Eurovision songs, and it really is some of the naffest stuff, [but] I say [...] you're going to have to play Congratulations at somebody's birthday party. You have to know these things.

Both alumni interviewees noted that musical emphases across their programme accounted for a broad range of genres, and that open-mindedness was encouraged. While no particular genre was privileged however, both felt that the values underpinning the course were commercially, rather than artistically-oriented, in contrast with other programmes they knew of:

[AB] ...on the song writing modules the idea of it being appropriate for commercial success, or approachable and listenable, was a lot more important in their teaching to us than... artistic integrity and originality

[AA] I mean my thought would be that if you want a more art rock experience then you'd go to Goldsmiths and you'd be with Bloc Party and that lot, where it's less about the business and more about taking a lot of drugs and coming up with a crazy philosophy for your music.

In contrast, the course leader from the Scottish institution identified originality, innovation and ingenuity as the values that were promoted most in performance and composition. Students were encouraged to 'take things and rearrange them, or reset them in interesting ways'.

Discussing the issue of fostering originality and creativity, the former London programme leader, who had served as an external examiner on a number of programmes across the UK, suggested that there were two dominant approaches to popular music education in the UK:

[PLB] I think you can categorise these institutions in one of two ways, and one is what you call the conservatoire model, or [...] the art school model, and there are some institutions that like to position themselves in between. [...] The conservatoire model is pretty much what it says on the tin. It's instrument focused, and it's about getting your chops to a good extent, and then everything else is just an add on. [...] The art school model [is] predicated on the idea that if you looked at where musicians had come from in the fifties, sixties and seventies, it was the sort of that whole idea of freedom to throw all sorts of things together under the benign tutelage of some sort of genius.

He noted that his own programme had been closer to the 'art school model'. This reflected a view that technical proficiency was not a prerequisite skill for working in popular music, in contrast to the classical music:

[PLB] there is a technical judgement, which in pop music of course are entirely contrary to the way a classical musician will approach it. It actually doesn't matter if you can play your instrument or not, in fact if you can play in a very unorthodox way it's very much in your favour.

### **Assessment**

All interviewees noted that there were tensions surrounding the issue of assessing creative output. Both alumni interviewees felt that the approach to songwriting and performance assessment had been problematic at their institution because of a lack of 'objective' (SB) criteria:

[AA] I just remember thinking how on earth can you mark this? How can you tell me whether my song is good or not?

[AB] There was a lot of questioning of the scoring and how the grades were given. Because [...] there was a panel of people and one person might think you've got the best song in the world, or the best voice in the world, and another person wouldn't be...you know it comes down to personal taste.

The former London programme leader suggested that establishing assessment criteria for popular music was significantly more difficult than for classical music because of the lack of an established set of normative values, which in classical music were canonical:

in classical music values are embedded, there is I still think a fundamental approach which is evidenced in the conservatoire, [...] and the academies in particular, the Royal ones, they see themselves as guardians on the canon, and in classical music there is only the canon, and ultimately it's what they rate.

He noted that the assessment of creative elements such as composition was a particular challenge

I always [thought] how can you measure creativity and what assessment criteria can you apply to it? [...] you know, is there serious intent to this, and if the answer is well no, someone is just whacking a few things together, then you have to think about what your framework is for judging that.

At the Scottish institution, students were assessed on performances within particular prescribed genres:

[PLA] There's an outcome which says that you have to perform in four different genres, so I absorb that into the performance [assessment].

Thus, for these assessment elements, the normative tropes of different genres provided frameworks against which performances could be judged.

### **Motivation and Expectations**

There were suggestions that the expectations and motivations of students differed across institutions. One alumnus interviewee (from a London programme) was initially motivated by the opportunity to meet musicians with whom he could form a band that he fully expected to achieve fame and success. The second had held similar hopes, though these were not held exclusively and were quickly abandoned:

[AB] I probably came from quite a small town where I was considered to be the best drummer for my age group, and I got on the course and was like, this isn't going to cut it any more. I've got to do something else, and I've got to find what I'm good at.

Nonetheless, he maintained an ambition to enter into the music industry and work for a record label; he saw it as essential to be studying in London where he could take advantage of prestigious work experience opportunities at record companies. Such opportunities were facilitated by the course and led to his immediate employment within the music industry upon finishing the course. At the Scottish institution however, it was noted that many students were not motivated by fame or achievement on a high level. This was attributed by the programme leader in part to sociocultural factors:

[PLA] a lot of them don't see being rich and famous as an option, [...] whereas you would think that that would be the predominant thing [...] there's a kind of Scottish mentality [...] if you don't aim too high you won't be disappointed.

The interviewee went on to emphasise the peculiarity of her institution's experience, in terms of locality and regional culture, and asserted that its model of delivery needed to address the local reality:

It is different up here- a lot of them do want to go down south [...] because they recognise that if you want to go down the traditional route then you need to be in bigger places, but [...] we try to make it clear at the college that they can make their own market, and that they can stay and do the same, or something similar, in Scotland [...] there's something to be said for being a big fish in a small pond.

The former programme leader of the London institution also hinted at sociocultural differences across geographical locales. Speaking of the advantages that studying in London offered to students who wanted to work in the music industry, he suggested that programmes in smaller conurbations could be 'limit[ing]' to students' ambitions:

Your locale does pretty much limit what your ambitions might be, unless you've got ambitions to be something a bit better and a bit wider. But you know, if that's the case why not apply to a London based college because that's where the action is.

## **Discussion**

The above findings illuminate several areas pertinent to my investigation. Firstly, they highlight the heterogeneity of popular music education. There were significant differences across programmes in terms of curriculum content, pedagogy, resources, student intake, and underlying values. Some, if not all, of these areas were contingent to some degree upon the geographical characteristics of the programmes, whether demographic, economic or socio-cultural. This suggests that any subsequent investigation should proceed in awareness of the geographic conditions of the degree programme (or, if comparative, programmes), and their impact thereupon.

Secondly, the findings suggest that students have a significant impact upon value formation on programmes. This was evident both in the alumni interviewees' appreciation of the diversity of students' musical backgrounds, we they saw as having enriched their learning experience, and the

former London programme leader's comments regarding influential students impacting upon the musical values of their cohorts. On a more operational level, the Scottish programme leader's and the former London programme leader's comments regarding the instrumental make-up of cohorts, and its implications in terms of the genres of music covered on the programme, also highlight student impact upon the aesthetic characteristics of programmes. This affirms the need to consider students as active agents of value formation.

Thirdly, and on the other hand, the Scottish programme leader's comments regarding the influence of high-profile, visiting faculty on students' tastes suggest that, as might be anticipated, curriculum and pedagogy impact upon students' values. Again, this reinforces the need to gather student and faculty perspectives in order to gain insight into the reflexivity of value formation on programmes.

Fourthly, all respondents perceived tensions and difficulties associated with assessing creative practice. This was related by the alumni interviewees to a lack of standardised criteria, and differences in tastes among assessors, and by the former London programme leader to a lack of established foundational values in popular music, in contrast to classical music. This suggests that within popular music education a lack of consensus exists regarding aesthetic value.

Fifthly, and in relation to the last issue, one alumna interviewee's comments relating to the 'commercial success' being prized more highly on his programme than notions of 'artistic integrity' highlight that popular music is both a commercial product and an artistic form, and that contradictions can be perceived between these two aspects.

Finally, the former London programme leader's comments regarding differences in approach across the discipline, which he had perceived over many years of external examining, suggest that the disparity across the field might be ordered into 'types'. His suggestion of an 'art school model' and a 'conservatoire model' may offer a useful framework. However, on the alumni interviewees' programme music performance or composition were not compulsory, and students were permitted to study music business modules instead of music making modules. It does not therefore fit comfortably into either of the models identified by the former London programme leader. This might suggest that a third 'type' might exist.

### **Semi-structured interviews as a research instrument**

The interviews afforded insight into both the practical aspects of delivery and course design, and the respondents' own experiences of the latter. Where a more strictly formulated set of questions might be useful at a more developed stage of a research project to achieve focus relating to a priori theories, the conversational dynamic of the semi-structured interviews encouraged critical reflection in both interviewee and interviewer and led to the emergence of important themes.

The semi-structured interview is a particularly appropriate instrument for my research project. Firstly, because of its disarming nature, it has the potential to overcome issues of confidence and trust in participants; for example, an academic whose course design or teaching method is under scrutiny might be more willing to answer questions on the latter in an open discourse that allows them to (for instance) expound, justify and disclaim as they wish, than in a rigid schedule of questioning that might appear leading or limiting. Secondly, its informal 'feel' renders it more attractive and less intimidating, and thus increases the chances of participation. Finally, it yields rich, nuanced data (provided that the data is captured as verbatim transcripts) that can be analysed and coded with a variety of approaches, such as a Grounded Theory approach, a discourse analysis approach, or an

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach (for students' learning experiences perhaps). Given the relatively small purposive sample of interviewees I am likely to use, a semi-structured interview is therefore an ideal data collection tool.

Through conducting semi-structured interviews in a pilot study I became aware of challenges associated with the instrument. Prominent among them were those associated with the need to maintain a discursive, conversational exchange while at the same time retaining control over direction and focus. As interviewer I had to strike a balance between allowing the interviewees a degree of conversational freedom to reflect upon their experiences (essential in a 'Grounded Theory' approach for the emergence of themes) and 'reigning in' tangential discussion if necessary. Related to this is the somewhat paradoxical requirement that the interviewer be the less dominant speaker, but maintain control and authority in the conversation. I encountered challenges on either side of this. One of my interviewees was initially reticent, and in trying to promote freer conversation I found myself compelled to talk more. Another interviewee however spoke freely from the start in an almost monologous way. This was complicated by the fact that the interview was conducted over the telephone, and therefore deprived of non-verbal communication. In cases such as these, I realise it is essential to develop strategies to account for differences in conversational style among interviewees.

Epistemologically, I felt that the disciplining aspect of the interviewer's role problematised the 'Grounded Theory' approach; by trying to regain control of conversation, I felt at times as though I was asking leading questions in spite of my intentions, pursuing pre-ordinate ideas and focusing on areas I had deemed to be significant. This highlighted for me the need to consider reliability throughout, acknowledging problems relating to epistemology and accounting for possible bias.

Other potential challenges included difficulties of background noise in recording (particularly true when the interviews are taking place in public spaces), repetition of questions (making sure that time wasn't wasted), neglect of questions/issues (making sure that everything was covered), the commitment of interviewees (some of my participants cancelled their original interview times and this delayed completion of the study), and interviewees' possible propensity to present espoused theory over theory-in-use (when answering questions regarding learning (students) or teaching (academics) for example, interviewees may present ideas of best practice rather than the 'reality' of their experience).

### **Reference List**

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.

University of Reading  
Institute of Education  
Ethical Approval Form



Tick one:

Staff project: \_\_\_\_  
Postgraduate project: PhD ✓  
Undergraduate project: \_\_\_\_

Name of applicant (s): Tom Parkinson

Has the data collector obtained satisfactory CRB clearance: NO (N/A?)

Name of supervisor (for student projects): Dr. Mary Stakelum/Professor Suzanne Graham

**Please answer questions 1 to 6, then complete Sections A or B, and Section C overleaf.**

|   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| <b>1. Have you prepared an Information Sheet for participants and/or their parents, which:</b>  | ✓   |    |
| a) explains the purposes of the project   | ✓   |    |
| b) explains how they have been selected as potential participants   | ✓   |    |
| c) gives a full and clear account of what will be asked of them   | ✓   |    |
| d) makes clear that participation in the project is voluntary   | ✓   |    |
| e) explains the arrangements to allow participants to withdraw at any stage if they so wish   | ✓   |    |
| f) explains the arrangements to ensure the confidentiality of any material collected during the project, and arrangements for its storage and eventual disposal   | ✓   |    |
| g) explains the arrangements for publishing the research results and, if confidentiality might be affected, for obtaining written consent for this  | ✓   |    |
| h) explains the arrangements for providing participants with the research results if they wish to have them   | ✓   |    |
| i) gives the name and designation of a member of staff with responsibility for the project together with a contact address or telephone number. If any of the project investigators are students, this information must be included and their name provided   | ✓   |    |
| k) explains, where applicable, arrangements for expenses and other payments to be made to the participants  | ✓   |    |
| j) includes a standard statement indicating the process of ethical review at the University undergone by the project, as follows:<br>‘This application has been reviewed following the procedures of the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct’. | ✓   |    |
| 2. If your research is taking place in a school, have you obtained the permission of the head teacher or other relevant supervisory professional?   | N/A |    |
| 3. If your research involves working with children under the age of 16 (or those whose special educational needs mean they are unable to give informed consent), have you sought parental consent or given parents the opportunity to decline consent?  | N/A |    |
| 4. Have you sought consent from all participants, if they are able to give it, in addition to (4)?  | ✓   |    |
| 5. Will your research involve deliberately misleading participants in any way?  |     | ✓  |
| 6. Is there any risk that participants may experience physical or psychological distress in taking part in your research?   |     | ✓  |
| <b>If you have answered YES to Questions 5 and/or 6, please complete Section B below</b>  |     |    |

PLEASE COMPLETE EITHER SECTION A OR B AND PROVIDE THE DETAILS REQUIRED IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION, THEN SIGN THE FORM (SECTION C)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A: My research goes beyond the 'accepted custom and practice of teaching' but I consider that this project has <b>no</b> significant ethical implications.</b>   |  |
| Give a brief description of participants and procedures (methods, tests used, etc) in up to 150 words. Attach any consent form, information sheet and research instruments to be used in the project (e.g. questionnaires, interview schedules).  |  |
| My doctoral research project will focus on the impact of canon formation on popular music pedagogy at undergraduate level.  |  |
| The project for which I am seeking ethical approval is a pre-pilot study to yield a greater understanding of the student's research field, for the purposes of refining their research question and identifying valuable areas for focussed, in-depth research.   |  |
| For the pre-pilot study, audio-recorded semi-structured interviews will be conducted with programme leaders, programme alumni and music industry professionals (all adults). Interviewees will be selected because of their professional roles, and via my established professional contacts and networks. The interviews will focus on the interviewees' experience of popular music education, and their opinions regarding the field of Popular Music Studies. |  |
| Attached are interview plan documents outlining the questions I intend to ask/areas I intend to discuss in the semi-structured interviews.  |  |
| Please state how many participants will be involved in the project:   |  |
| It is hoped that a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 participants will be involved in the pre-pilot research project.   |  |
| <i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i>  |  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>B: I consider that this project <b>may</b> have ethical implications that should be brought before the Institute's Ethics Committee.</b>   |  |
| <b>Please provide all the further information listed below in a separate attachment.</b>  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. title of project</li> <li>2. purpose of project and its academic rationale</li> <li>3. brief description of methods and measurements</li> <li>4. participants: recruitment methods, number, age, gender, exclusion/inclusion criteria</li> <li>5. consent and participant information arrangements, debriefing (attach forms where necessary)</li> <li>6. a clear and concise statement of the ethical considerations raised by the project and how you intend to deal with them.</li> <li>7. estimated start date and duration of project</li> </ol> |  |
| <i>This form and any attachments should now be submitted to the Institute's Ethics Committee for consideration. Any missing information will result in the form being returned to you.</i>  |  |

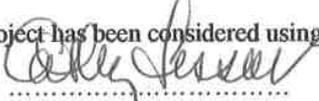
**C: SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT:**

I have declared all relevant information regarding my proposed project and confirm that ethical good practice will be followed within the project.

Signed:  ..... Print Name Tom Parkinson Date 03/11/10

**STATEMENT OF ETHICAL APPROVAL FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE ETHICS COMMITTEE**

This project has been considered using agreed Institute procedures and is now approved.

Signed:  ..... Print Name... C. TISSOT ..... Date... 10/11/10  
(IoE Research Ethics Committee representative)\*

\* A decision to allow a project to proceed is not an expert assessment of its content or of the possible risks involved in the investigation, nor does it detract in any way from the ultimate responsibility which students/investigators must themselves have for these matters. Approval is

**Supervisors:**

Dr Mary Stakelum

[m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk](mailto:m.stakelum@reading.ac.uk)

Professor Suzanne Graham

[s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk](mailto:s.j.graham@reading.ac.uk)

Dear

I am conducting a doctoral research project into Popular Music pedagogy at Higher Education level, focussing on the influence of canon and genre on pedagogic approaches. I have already communicated with you regarding your participation in this project, and I am writing to you now to explain the purpose and methods of research in more detail, and to ask for your formal consent.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in an interview with me, lasting approximately 30 minutes. The interview will be recorded and transcribed with your permission and will focus on the design, structure and delivery of the popular music degree programme that you lead or teach on. The transcription will be shown to you in order for you to check its accuracy and to confirm that you are still happy for its contents to be used. I can send the results of this research to you if you wish.

The information gathered will be used as part of a pre-pilot study to gain an overview of popular music degree programme delivery in the United Kingdom, with the aim of identifying pertinent research areas and refining my research question. The information may be included in my PhD literature and in research publications.

It is hoped that in gathering and analysing information and opinion from participants like you, this study will generate understanding related to Popular Music education and the skills and knowledge valued by students, faculty and the professional world. It will be a valuable resource for curriculum design and may positively inform practice in Popular Music Education.

Any subsequent research towards my doctoral project will be reviewed separately by the Research Ethics Committee and further consent will be sought; the consent form attached relates to this pre-pilot study only.

Any data collected will be held in strict confidence. Research records will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet and on a password-protected computer and only my supervisors and myself will have access to the records. Records will be retained for five years after the project end and will then be destroyed securely.

Your decision to participate is entirely voluntary. Also, you are free to withdrawal your consent at any time, without giving a reason, by contacting me on the e-mail given above. I do not anticipate that you will incur any expenses through involvement in any aspect of the project, as the interview will be conducted at your premises.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact us on the details given at the top of this letter.

This project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Signed:

Date:

**Please retain this sheet for your records**

*Consent Form*

I have read the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me by Tom Parkinson the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw them from the project any time, without giving a reason and without repercussions.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

This application has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Please tick as appropriate:

I consent to take part in an interview as outlined in the Information Sheet      Yes            No     

I consent to this interview being recorded      Yes            No     

Name:

Signed:

Date:

# Developing the Musician

## Contemporary Perspectives on Teaching and Learning

Edited by  
MARY STAKELUM  
*University of Reading, UK*

ASHGATE



## Chapter 9

# Canon (Re)formation in Popular Music Pedagogy

Tom Parkinson

While popular music has featured in academe as an object of study for many decades, it was not until the 1990s that dedicated degree programmes emerged under the banner of ‘popular music’ as distinct from ‘music’, which had hitherto referred to programmes with a Western classical focus. In the two decades since the first popular music students enrolled, the discipline has grown exponentially; a search for ‘popular music’ on the UCAS<sup>1</sup> website in April 2012 yielded one hundred and forty-one results for 2012 entry (including joint honours programmes) and programmes are now offered by a range of institutions, including Russell Group universities, post-92 universities, Royal-chartered conservatoires and private colleges. Demand for places is high, with some programmes attracting an average of eight applicants for each place, across a period in which applications to music programmes in general have consistently diminished (Hewitt, 2009). It is clear that significant volumes of musicians now greatly desire and value opportunities to study popular music formally at tertiary level and learning providers are eager to respond to this demand.

In some respects this rate of growth is surprising, given the mutual antipathy that academe and popular music have historically shown toward each other. Although not always overtly disparaging of popular music, the academy has instilled and sustained in its discourses dualisms of positive, affirmative adjectives on the one hand (‘art’, ‘serious’) and those that damn with faint praise on the other (‘vernacular’, ‘light’). More importantly, musicology has seldom engaged with popular music at all (Hesmondhalgh and Negus, 2002), with the result that, when deployed within academe without a qualifying adjective, the word ‘music’ always refers to Western classical music. For its part, popular music has, at least since the 1950s, tended to position itself in direct opposition to authority, wearing its perceived primitivism as a badge of authenticity and emancipation from institutional control. It is unsurprising therefore that, as a research field, popular music studies has proceeded in a self-consciously detached way, with scholars typically preferring to sidestep these tensions and instead ‘observe from a distance and comment on the cultural complexity’ (Wyn Jones, 2009, p. 103) of popular music.

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<sup>1</sup> UCAS is the central organisation through which applications are processed for entry to higher education in the UK ([www.ucas.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk)).

Such an approach is problematic however when the decision is made to teach popular music-making. While the study of cultural phenomena using the methodologies of social science or the study of 'works' in the manner of a humanities subject can be justified straightforwardly according to familiar academic principles such as making sense of the world we live in, the decision to teach music-making carries with it the implicit, positive valuing of that music and the assertion that the *practices* involved in making that music are consistent with the values of higher education and deserving of 'graduateness' (Harland and Pickering, 2011, p. 41). It casts the decision-maker in the role of a valuer, who must make a series of judgements regarding what should be included in curricula, how it should be taught, how it should be assessed and so on. In the case of Western classical music, many of these value judgements are pre-encoded in the canon – a metaphorical body of great works, acknowledged by consensus among academics and other authorities and gradually systematized through their repetition, 'like litanies' (Tagg, 2000, p. 165), across centuries. Popular music on the other hand is without such an academic consensus, having developed outside of academe and only been co-opted into music scholarship late in its development. If we conceive of canon formation as an academic phenomenon, popular music might therefore be considered post-canonical. However, canon formation has occurred, and continues to occur, outside of academic control at a popular level in music (Wyn Jones, 2009). The popular music academic is faced with the dilemma of whether to employ these non-academic canons pedagogically, promote the formation of more academically-oriented canons, or devise new pedagogical paradigms that resist the authority of canons altogether. A common approach to the last has been to draw from faculty members' first-hand experiences of music-making and of working within the music industry – sources of expert knowledge that are of practical value to students. Another has been to utilize *student* experience in the same way via mechanisms of peer-assessment and student-led assignments (see Lebler, 2008; Pulman, 2009).

In the process of devising pedagogy and curricula along these lines however, theoretical and methodological frameworks from education, business and other disciplines are brought to bear on popular music-making. These frameworks bear the trace of other, extra-musical canons that interact with the canons of popular music itself within the higher education setting. Moreover, covert canons enter the education system by stealth, embedded in the experiences of faculty and students and the ideologies of individuals and institutions. In all cases therefore, the collocation of popular music and academe gives rise to uniquely complex intersections of canons and the sometimes oppositional values encoded therein.

This chapter reviews the literature relating to popular music in higher education and draws from a series of semi-structured interviews, conducted between 2010 and 2012, with four senior programme staff from four degree programmes in the United Kingdom as part of an ongoing multi-method study into the values held by students and staff within popular music educational settings. It examines the strategies employed in popular music education to address the absence

of canonical authority of the kind found in classical music and suggests that a broader understanding of the relationships between canon, institutionalization and pedagogy may help popular music educators gain a clearer understanding of the values by which they teach and address the post-canonical *impasse* with greater confidence.

It is worth giving a brief overview at this stage of some significant developments in popular music education over the past twenty years.<sup>2</sup> As already noted, popular music has, for several decades, featured in curricula, and for longer still in research, across a range of subjects including sociology, history and cultural studies but it has done so as an object of study rather than a dedicated field. In the United Kingdom, the first degree level popular music programme was the BA in Popular Music and Production offered by the University of Salford's music department in 1990. The University of Westminster's BA in Commercial Music followed in 1993 as the first degree with an explicitly commercial orientation. Over the following two decades popular music began to establish itself in higher education with some nomenclatural subtlety; degrees in 'Popular and World Musics' (Leeds), 'Popular and Contemporary Music' (Newcastle), 'Popular Musicology' (Salford), 'Popular Music Performance' (various), 'Popular Music Studies' (various), 'Popular Music Production' (various), 'Music (Popular)' (Leeds College of Music, Edinburgh Napier), 'Commercial Music' (various) and other variations gradually sprang up across the country.

Outside of degree programmes, popular music education has developed an infrastructure of access courses (Access To Music<sup>3</sup> and others), grade exams equivalent to those offered in classical music (Rockschool, LCM)<sup>4</sup> and initiatives to implement more popular music at school level (such as Musical Futures)<sup>5</sup>. Two academics behind some of these initiatives, Lucy Green (Musical Futures) and Norton York (Rockschool, Access to Music), are also prominent figures in popular music education research and the development of popular music programmes in higher education respectively. A theoretical, methodological and institutional continuity can therefore be seen to exist across educational strata, although significantly there is little published research that considers these provisions according to prevalent discourses of popular music research, such as canon, social justice, identity politics, race or gender. Indeed, the burgeoning of popular music education should be differentiated from that of Popular Music Studies (PMS) since, though related, the two are not one and the same.

<sup>2</sup> A more thorough overview, along with excellent discussion on issues relating to popular music studies in the United Kingdom, can be found in Cloonan (2005), pp. 1–17, though the rate of change since 2005 must be borne in mind.

<sup>3</sup> [www.accesstomusic.com](http://www.accesstomusic.com).

<sup>4</sup> [www.rockschool.co.uk](http://www.rockschool.co.uk); [www.uwl.ac.uk/lcmexams/Subjects.jsp](http://www.uwl.ac.uk/lcmexams/Subjects.jsp).

<sup>5</sup> [www.musicalfutures.org.uk](http://www.musicalfutures.org.uk).

## Popular Music Studies

Concurrent with the proliferation of educational initiatives, literature began to emerge that not only focussed on popular music itself but was expressly concerned with the *study* of popular music. During the 1990s Richard Middleton's *Studying Popular Music*, (Middleton, 1990), Allan F. Moore's *Rock: The Primary Text, Developing a Musicology of Rock*, first published in 1993, and Roy Shuker's *Key Concepts in Popular Music Studies* (Shuker, 1998) all helped to formalize popular music's place in academia by synthesizing interdisciplinary strands of scholarship into an encompassing discipline and collating some prominent themes. In particular, Moore's book sought to liberate popular music (specifically rock) from traditional musicology by emphasizing its differences from classical music and the need for new musicological approaches. In 2002 Keith Negus and David Hesmondhalgh's edited volume *Popular Music Studies* further cemented PMS's identity as being 'at its best, a uniquely interdisciplinary area of research drawing significant contributions from ... a number of academic fields' (Hesmondhalgh and Negus, 2002, p. 2.)

While each of these books advocates the place of popular music in higher education, not one brings its central themes and issues to bear on the teaching of popular music-making, despite its being a primary element of the majority of popular music programmes. This indicates a discrepancy between conceptions of Popular Music Studies (PMS) as an academic research discipline and popular music education as it is delivered in practice. Outside of two special issues of the *Journal of Popular Music Studies* and a handful of articles, the issue of teaching popular music-making has rarely been discussed within the research infrastructure of Popular Music Studies. To date there has been little crossover between research taking place within the field of PMS and research that focuses on popular music education but is more aligned with the data-driven methodologies of social science and commonly disseminated via the infrastructure of music education research.

As Cloonan suggests, 'Popular Music Studies', along with its acronym, is an unwieldy term that might refer to a number of related but distinct things (2005, p. 82); an interdisciplinary research field; a journal; an educational discipline or a branch of musicology. In the rare instances of PMS research focussing on education, the study of works, society and culture is often foregrounded to such an extent that the music-making aspect of popular music in higher education is rendered virtually invisible. Waksman's perception of the Popular Music Studies landscape is illuminating in this regard:

... the number of graduate programmes within which popular music is a primary field of study can be counted on one hand. Apart from those who graduate from the Institute for Popular Music at the University of Liverpool, there are very few of us who can say that we are trained in popular music studies, and fewer who work or can expect to work in departments or programmes where popular music is the focus. (Waksman, 2010, p. 68)

Leaving aside the fact that undergraduate provision receives no mention here, in the British context alone (for the statement is international in scope) there are far more graduate opportunities than Waksman acknowledges, if we count masters degrees and postgraduate diplomas in popular music production, composition and performance in addition to programmes with a more interdisciplinary, essay-based approach. Waksman's analysis is indicative of an intuitive delimiting of Popular Music Studies to the analytical modes of scholarship discussed in his article and, by extension, a view of popular music-making education as something other. Thus, despite the fact that the vast majority of undergraduate popular music programmes involve a high level of music-making, scholarship and musicianship are effectively drawn apart by the term Popular Music Studies.

### Popular Music Pedagogy: A Counterpoint to Popular Music Studies

Perhaps in response to this climate, the term 'popular music pedagogy' has been used by Lebler (2008), Oehler and Hanley (2009) and others<sup>6</sup> and provides a helpful research distinction between studies of popular music and studies of popular music teaching practice. Hebert (2010) goes a step further, using the acronym 'PMP' as a counterpoint to PMS.<sup>7</sup> The International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) now hosts a 'popular music pedagogy interest committee'<sup>8</sup> and the Society of Music Theory (SMT)'s popular music interest group has convened a roundtable discussion on 'popular music pedagogy'.<sup>9</sup> While most of these examples might be considered grey literature with limited reach, efforts are evidently being made to promote PMP as a distinct research area. Wider use of the term in peer-reviewed research will help establish clearer parameters within which a much-needed research base, germane to the majority of popular music education, can grow.

Discussion relating to popular music in formal settings has taken place in music education research since the 1970s, including some significant book-length studies (notably Vuillamy and Lee (1982)). However, as Green notes in her book *How Popular Musicians Learn* (2001, p. 6), detailed investigations into popular musicians' learning practices have been minimal and have sometimes taken place outside of music education research in fields such as anthropology and sociology. The impact of *How Popular Musicians Learn* itself has been

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<sup>6</sup> David Hebert and Roger Mantle both used the term in their presentations at the 2011 Suncoast Music Education Research Symposium (programme retrieved online; url in webography).

<sup>7</sup> [www.sociomusicology.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/originality-and-institutionalization-of.html](http://www.sociomusicology.blogspot.co.uk/2010/09/originality-and-institutionalization-of.html), accessed 16/04/12.

<sup>8</sup> [www.iaspm-us.net/aboutiaspm/committees/pedagogy](http://www.iaspm-us.net/aboutiaspm/committees/pedagogy), accessed 16/04/12.

<sup>9</sup> [www.societymusictheory.org/societies/interest/popularmusic/past](http://www.societymusictheory.org/societies/interest/popularmusic/past), accessed 16/04/12.

profound and far-reaching. This is both a testament to the exceptional quality of the study and a reminder of the Western classical-oriented hegemony that previously dominated music education in both research and practice. It would seem that, from the vantage points of mainstream music education research, the practices identified in *How Popular Musicians Learn* had hitherto been hidden in plain sight amidst the terrain of potential research; to ask why these overwhelmingly commonplace practices were rarely brought to scholarly light is not to diminish Green's achievement but rather to acknowledge that, prior to her study, a near-pandemic lack of interest within music education research had led to the learning practices of a vast proportion, perhaps a majority, of the UK's musically active population being ignored.<sup>10</sup> It also highlights the absence of popular musicians' voices within education research and suggests that few popular musicians have felt inspired, qualified or welcome (or all three) to bring their practices into the academic realm. Notwithstanding the inescapable irony that it was only after established, classically-trained researchers such as Green had focussed on popular music learning practices that they achieved exposure to anything like a representative degree, popular musicians are increasingly finding voice in music education research. This fact owes much to Green's pioneering work.

Although her main focus has been at school level, Green's influence on music pedagogy in higher education has been marked. Emulating as far as possible the learning environments that occur outside formal education settings has come to be seen as an imperative in popular music pedagogy (Hewitt, 2009; Lebler, 2007) in order to safeguard popular music's authenticity from adulteration by conservatoire-style, transmissional pedagogy. Green's observations in *How Popular Musicians Learn* have achieved almost axiomatic pre-eminence and investigations into how popular musicians *should* or *might* learn in higher education generally presuppose the need to maintain the learning practices that occur outside of institutional frameworks, arguably betraying a well-meaning paternalism that seeks to conserve 'authentic' popular music practices. Ironically therefore, while the idea of importing informal learning practices into formal learning arenas might, *prima facie*, appear consistent with liberal-left agendas (Cloonan, 2005) an inherently conservative approach to preserving and husbanding these traditions has also emerged.

To speak of these processes of institutionalization as canon formation, in and of themselves, is perhaps to exceed the elasticity of the term, yet these processes are inextricably related. Sets of dominant theories and methodologies, as well as influential figures, are already emerging within PMS and PMP and a systematizing of these fields, both overt and covert, is clearly underway. As the hegemony of Western classical music scholarship has been diminished, new academic factions have begun to delimit the fields of PMS and PMP more precisely and have appointed themselves as custodians of non-academic practices and traditions.

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<sup>10</sup> Green's notes (Green, 2001, pp. 217–8) provide a thorough account of exceptions.

As Tagg suggests, ‘we need to be acutely aware of our own processes of institutionalization ... of our own canons’ (2000, p. 165). Canon formation occurs as part of institutionalization and, since popular music achieves purchase in the academy via these newly institutionalized fields and student-musicians study popular music under their purview, we should acknowledge these processes as contributing to canon formation within popular music education.

### **Ideology and Institution**

Higher education is inescapably ideological (Harland and Pickering, 2011) and institutions, departments and academic disciplines are never ideologically neutral. Popular music studies is no exception and its reactionary genesis should not be underplayed. An interviewee who had taught on a pioneering commercial music programme since its inception remembered the radical reform agenda of the founding programme team and, in particular, the programme leader:

[He] didn’t like academe ... his ideal would have been to have such a revolution in pop music education that no music department existed any more at all, other than those studying commercial music ...

and that the programme was purposely designed in opposition to mainstream music degrees:

[It] was explicitly something which was trying to be the opposite of everything else that was available

*So at the time the course was coming into being it was self-consciously radical?*

Very much so, yes.

Furthermore, this was not just a reaction against academe or Western classical music education, but was a highly politicized project motivated by a sense of social justice that still endures:

... it’s something that we’ve always felt we’re here to do, we’re helping some of those voices that otherwise ... I can’t remember how Rancière puts it but it’s from Aesthetics and their Discontents ... [the respondent later provided me with a full quotation] ... ‘[we’re trying to] reconfigure ... the common of a community, to introduce into it new subjects and objects, to render visible what had not been, and to make heard as speakers those who had been perceived as mere noisy animals’. (Rancière, 2009, p. 25)

We cannot generalize from this one example but it is consistent with Cloonan's observation that Popular Music Studies has developed within a liberal/left framework and that, somewhat inevitably, social critique and the challenging of accepted hierarchies have featured heavily in popular music curricula (Cloonan, 2005, p. 88). Kassabian asserts that it was the critique of canon formation, which had engendered the aesthetic hierarchies and dualisms that historically subordinated popular music, that 'made popular music studies possible in the first place' (2010, p. 74); thus the existence of popular music education can be cast as a victory of social justice, and an emblem of popular music's academic acceptance. Since the historiographical narratives of popular music and popular music education chime in with the politics of social justice, it would be surprising if theoretical canons did not begin to occur along these lines, although it would be optimistic to expect any straightforwardly mappable connection between theoretical canons and canons of musical works in PMS. Interestingly however, one respondent identified the punk ethos as having given rise to personal rejection of dominant discourses, which the respondent saw as a foundational principle of Popular Music Studies:

I think it all comes back to the punk ethos. The wonderful thing that I remember about punk, the most liberating thing anyone said was 'don't listen to what anyone else is saying, it's rubbish' and that's a tremendously useful starting point, particularly in our subject area it seems to me.

Similarly, another respondent saw the extra-musical practices of punk and hardcore as useful pedagogical models for promoting innovation:

[It's] a great starting point to get them ripping apart. DIY scenes and the projects that come of that ... if you asked them to define punk, they'd talk about Carnaby Street and McLaren and the Pistols, but there's the sense of what that legacy is within a DIY scene. So is Punk canonical? Only in the sense that it had so much shared ground afterwards. You wouldn't have had the techno or house scenes without it.

Given the tendency within PMS research to focus on the extra-musical aspects of popular music rather than the strictly musical, it is significant that these same elements are foregrounded here in the education of popular *musicians*. This suggests that the cultural dispositions and artistic strategies in popular music's history are valued beyond its various aesthetics and that emerging canons in popular music education function less to mediate tastes or sustain aesthetic traditions than to introduce student-musicians to historical communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) and their extra-musical values (in this case radicalism and innovation). Paradoxically therefore, punk is canonical because of its inherently non-conformist ethos and potential for transgressing musical norms, not for its inherent meanings (see Green, 2001, p. 3).

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Despite these indications that a historiography of popular music is being utilized, and that canon formation is occurring at an extra-musical level, for both occurrences interviewees showed a clear reluctance to engage with overt musical canonization:

*Do you make any attempts to pin things down, even for pragmatic purposes? Do you have a canon that you draw from?*

No. I think it's far too plural to assign. We have this desire to label, because it's easy to communicate to the students and give them the sense. Like teaching Schenkerian theory, it's very easy to do that within the common practice canon. However what I'm at pains to do throughout is get [popular and contemporary music students] to think about what they're currently playing and how it may well work for them. I don't like articles that are 'Schenker for the Stones' and things like that ... it's missing the point. That canonization of popular musicology is incredibly dangerous.

and another respondent said

There's no proscribed or prescribed musical style.

Interestingly, while the inclusion of music theory in the first respondent's curriculum indicates a belief in its value to popular musicians, the respondent was resistant to studies that placed popular music under analysis and often chose instead to draw from the 'common practice canon' when teaching. The process of bringing music theory to bear upon popular music was left to the students in order that they might discover its potential for themselves. Thus efforts were made to enrich student-musicians' understanding without promoting a set of rules or allowing a canon to emerge according to those rules. In stark contrast, another respondent's programme did not feature any notational analysis at all and focused exclusively on the extra-musical socio-political dimension:

... the mere fact that we called what otherwise would be called 'musicology', generally, 'sociology', was to underline that what we weren't going to be doing was pastiche composition, or music analysis ... or very much beyond putting things in a social or political context.

Despite these differences of approach however, both demonstrated a conscious resistance to canonizing popular music in line with the methodologies of classical music scholarship. As noted earlier, this resistance can be seen in PMS literature, notably in the writing of Allan Moore, who is explicit about his

... attempts to subvert the growth of an accepted canon of popular music (which already accepts the Beatles, 'punk' and Bob Dylan at the very least). The study

of European 'classical' music has been greatly hampered by an over-profusion of studies of 'the great composers' ... Popular music studies must not be allowed to fall into the same trap. (Moore, 2001, p. 7 quoted in Wyn Jones, 2009, p. 115)

This exemplifies the high level of unease that surrounds the notion of canon within Popular Music Studies. Few researchers have acknowledged, less still shown a desire for, canonical authority; most express a desire for something broader and more inclusive (see Hesmondhalgh and Negus, 2002, p. 2; Kassabian, 2010, p. 77; Moore, 2001, p. 7; Taylor, 2010, pp. 85–9; Waksman, 2010, p. 69).

However, Kassabian's suggestion for how this might be achieved reveals that, while it may be possible to do away with *particular* canons, thwarting the process of canon formation is frustratingly difficult:

... [instead of constructing a canon] it might indeed be quite useful for IASPM International to put on its website lists of works that people believe to be important in a particular area. What I mean is something along the lines of a Wiki, where we would all agree not to remove things, but to add important works to lists in a subfield, or to add new lists altogether, and to comment in limited and collegial fashion on the works where appropriate. (2010, p. 78)

This would doubtless result in a useful resource for academics and students but, as an alternative to canon, it is problematic. Firstly, IASPM International is suggested as custodian of the imagined Wiki and, although membership of that society is open (for a fee), in practice this arrangement would exclude lay populations from the list making process by dint of its being visible only to the limited demographic reach of the IASPM's website. It might be argued that those for whom the list is intended (academics, researchers, students) would be involved in the process; however, this runs contrary to visions of PMS as an 'inherently democratic' discipline that 'builds on a body of knowledge that most people have' (Cloonan, 2005, p. 89). As Wyn Jones notes in respect of rock albums, 'a canon is not an impersonal issue that concerns only a small number of experts with suitable credentials ... such a canon in popular culture would appear to, and arguably does, potentially involve everyone' (2009, p. 107). If we believe that authority over canons in popular music education extends beyond the academy, then relying on such a limited system would be not only undemocratic but also potentially unempirical. Secondly, incorporating the ideal of collegiality (which is not a universal one) further establishes the control of academic practice by excluding different modes of mediation and debate. In both these respects, authority would be effectively ring-fenced for a small pool of academically enculturated, institutionally-affiliated experts. Such a system would therefore represent, not an alternative to canon formation, but a framework for greater academic control under a different, less regressive-sounding banner. Moreover, considering the potential separation, alluded to earlier, of scholarship and musicianship in Popular Music Studies, keeping value judgement 'in-house' risks privileging the student-as-scholar over the student-as-musician by ignoring the

canon formation occurring in lay populations among whom the student-musician forges a career.

It is clear from these examples that while ideology and canon are not the same thing, they are represented in each other – canons of theories or practices, from Rancière to punk, are born out of, but also give rise to, ideological positions. However, and to add paradox to paradox, while the emerging ideologies of popular music education (both PMS and PMP) are opposed to traditional notions of canon formation and their associated pedagogies of rules, authority and elite control, efforts to impede the latter arguably result in creating the very same thing.

### Theory and Methodology

With regard to canons of theories and methodologies, Kassabian suggests that, although we all have our theoretical frameworks, these must be ‘shared enough across a large body of scholars’ to be considered canons (2010, p. 75). Consensus is certainly a mechanism for canon formation, yet it is problematic to imply, as her statement does, a definitive *level* (‘enough’) of consensus that justifies the use of the term ‘canon’. Furthermore, given the autonomy that higher education teachers have historically been granted (Harland and Pickering, 2011, pp. 66–7), large numbers of students may be educated under the influence of even the most obscure and locally-held canons and, in any case, with today’s access to information and communication, consensus is readily achievable across ‘glocal’ networks. Thus it can be argued that, even where a theoretical framework is niche or marginal, it should still be approached in canonical terms, since it functions as such within education and will be borne in the experiences of learners.

Nonetheless, a broadly-shared theoretical canon that draws heavily from critical sociology is discernible. One interviewee aligned personal attitudes and the underlying critical framework of the degree programme to which the interviewee was attached with the theories of Bourdieu and Rancière, mirroring Taylor’s statement that ‘return(ing) again and again to the classics of theory: Marx, Weber, Bourdieu ... I think I would (currently) align myself with a kind of updated Bourdieusian field of cultural production approach’ (Taylor, 2010, p. 86). The Frankfurt School, in particular Adorno and (to a lesser extent) Benjamin, commonly feature on popular music syllabi, despite Adorno’s highly pejorative analysis of popular music and his ‘lack of historicization, and, more generally, a lack of engagement with the empirical, whether historical or ethnographic’ (Taylor, *op cit*, p. 87). Adorno’s ubiquity in popular music syllabi is particularly significant however for the departure from aesthetic canon formation it represents. As one respondent noted concerning classical music:

... the academies ... see themselves as guardians of the canon, and in classical music there is only the canon, and ultimately it’s what they rate.

The classical music canon is representative of what the academy 'rates', that is, considers good or right. In contrast, Adorno has his place in the canon of popular music education not only in spite of, but *because* of his opposition to popular music; he is there to prompt student-musicians to appraise their own experiences and engage with some of the criticisms historically levelled at their chosen art form and profession (and whatever else it represents for them). A theoretical canon is more readily challengeable than an aesthetic canon of works, crucially because it is denied axiomatic authority and can be readily engaged with through critical discourse. Arguably therefore, the emerging theoretical canon of popular music studies is more in-tune with the liberal educational ideal of critical thinking than an aesthetic canon as found in Western classical music. Similarly, concerns that

... a theoretical canon must not be rockist, it must not prefer or overvalue one methodology over another, it must not be weighted toward one discipline over another, it must not be Eurocentric, and even further must not be Anglo-American centered (Kassabian, 2010, p. 75)

might be partly addressed by inculcating a greater sense of critical scepticism in student-musicians, so that they might feel emboldened to challenge biases.

The liberal ideal of plurality is reflected in the dim view of narrow focus that is evident in literature from both sides of the PMS/music education divide (Green, 2001; Hesmondhalgh and Negus, 2002). Interestingly therefore, it would seem that although subcultural identity politics present rich pickings as objects of study, encouraging students to sustain their own exclusive subcultural allegiances would be at odds with the liberal higher education mission of broadening students' minds and perhaps too close to the 'good versus bad' dialectics that PMS has worked to break down. Again, this is less problematic where popular music is an object of analytical study than where music-making is taught. For the latter the academically-instilled value of pluralism may compete for authority against a student-musician's subcultural values. The importance placed on preserving popular music practices within formal education is widely espoused, (see Green, 2001, 2006; Hewitt, 2009; Lebler, 2007, 2008) and, while it has been acknowledged that total immersion and purposive closed-mindedness are common learning strategies in informal learning, the potential for positive outcomes from narrow en(sub)culturation has been dismissed through widespread advocacy of pluralism. This is not at all to say that pluralism is not espoused in wider popular musical life, nor that practices are not transferable across subcultural boundaries. It is simply that the popular music academy is likely to privilege open-minded musicians over those who maintain a narrow, exclusive focus on the basis of an unchallenged axiom (broad knowledge is beneficial to musicians) that arguably concurs more with the dominant values of higher education than with those of wider popular music practice.

On close examination, advocacy of pluralism and resistance to genre bias can mask clear value judgements about music, but along less easily-identifiable lines than genre:

... [practical musical involvement in a variety of genres], when related to music into which pupils are already encultured, with which they identify and which they like, gives them a musically informed ground from which they are more rather than less able to defend themselves from delusion by the machinations of the mass media, from uncritically embracing mechanical commercialism, from being so partisan that they cannot listen to any music but their own, or from lacking discrimination in taste. (Green, 2001, p. 201)

Green writes in the context of secondary school education but, nonetheless, her intuitive opposition (for it is never explicitly justified) to the ‘machinations’ of mass media and ‘mechanical commercialism’ is significant and is strikingly reminiscent of Adorno’s pejorative casting of popular music as bad music because of its dependency on market-mediated tastes and the mechanisms of mass-production. Similarly, one of my respondents suggested that employing a pluralist curriculum ‘stops the consumerist mentality’. Once again, what makes for academic foci (subcultural identification, the mass-production values of the music industry) is discouraged in learners’ own musical practices. The distinction drawn in these examples is not one of genre; instead a less-easily systematized distrust of commercially-oriented music is suggested. Interestingly, Adorno’s assertions regarding music are not disputed *in toto*. Rather, some music is relieved of the charge of inauthenticity and differentiated on a tacit level from that which is cynically mass-produced and therefore perceived as malign. The lack of clear criteria of differentiation, such as genre or indeed anything obviously related to aesthetics, makes it difficult to identify canons of musical works emerging from all this, but canonical processes of exclusion and inclusion are clearly in evidence.

### **Pragmatism and Employability**

In contrast to the subtle and covert canonizing processes discussed so far, there were suggestions in my interview data of more overt canon formation occurring at curriculum level and reflecting employability agendas. One respondent, who led a Popular Music Performance programme at a college of further and higher education, explained that high proportions of the programme’s graduates pursued careers in function bands, often as part of portfolio careers. The curriculum content was designed accordingly to equip students with the requisite ‘hard’ skills, which included a repertoire of songs and a working knowledge of musical genres:

[The students learn] Eurovision songs ... and it really is some of the naffest stuff you’ve ever heard, you know, ‘Waterloo’ ... last week it was ‘Making Your Mind Up’ by Bucks Fizz ... ‘Congratulations’ ... but I say you’re going to have to play Congratulations at somebody’s birthday party.

[and]

What we've got to try and do is give them the start of the genre and the key things they need to be aware of, and introduce them to it.

Thus the curriculum responded to the demands of the live music market by incorporating popular canons as repertoire and skills sets. In stark contrast to the place of repertoire in Western classical music education, the inclusion of these songs carried no implication of quality, or even value beyond their usefulness as hard skills; the popular canon in this case does not possess any aesthetic authority.

Cloonan (2005) notes that popular music programmes vary in their emphasis on vocationalism. However, these vocational emphases can themselves vary markedly from the development of transferable, 'soft skills'<sup>11</sup> to the provision of subject-specific, instrumentalist knowledge. Indeed, the aims, objectives and even nomenclature<sup>12</sup> of some programmes (typically foundation degrees) relate explicitly to specific music industry professions (such as session musicianship) while others espouse broad-ranging knowledge and adaptability extending across and beyond the music industry milieu. In the former, as the above example suggests, hard skills are more likely to comprise, or at least relate to, market-derived/oriented canons of songs, artists, and playing styles.

### A Reappraisal of Canons

This chapter has focused on some of the challenges associated with offering popular musicians a higher education. It must end with the caveat that just as pedagogical approaches vary in popular music education so do the contexts, resources and aims of programmes. It is not intended in this chapter to advocate certain approaches over others. Rather, I have sought to illustrate the uniquely complex nature of canon formation in popular music education and the implications this carries for pedagogy. Canon formation occurs as a consequence of institutionalization and canons have inevitably begun to emerge since popular music has been institutionalized in academe. While the notion of canon has been considered regressive and undesirable by some popular music educators, attempts to arrest canon formation are unsuccessful as it continues to occur on an intuitive, tacit level. An acknowledgement of canon formation as an ever-present, inescapable reality may encourage educators and learners alike to draw these covert processes to overt inspection, enhancing critical reflection on our assumptions and expectations of popular music programmes. Moreover, a reappraisal of canons as useful indicators of values, to be approached with scholarly scepticism, rather than self-evidently

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<sup>11</sup> Pedagogy for Employability Group, 'Pedagogy for Employability', *Learning and Employability Series 1*, accessed online 16/04/12 at [www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/id383\\_pedagogy\\_for\\_employability\\_357.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/employability/id383_pedagogy_for_employability_357.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> The FdA Popular Music Practice (Session Musician) offered at the Royal Northern College of Music is just one example.

authoritative sources of criteria or outmoded, oppressive edifices will allow popular music educators to employ them as pedagogical tools that are both harmonious with the implications of a higher education and of value in helping to develop the skills and knowledge needed by twenty-first century popular musicians.

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