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Music cultures of mechanical reproduction

PETER MANUEL

Popular musics are best understood as comprising those genres whose styles have evolved in an inextricable relation with their dissemination via the mass media and their marketing and sale on a mass-commodity basis. While much popular-music activity takes place independently of the mass media, other essential aspects of popular-music production and marketing are inevitably inseparable from technologies of mechanical reproduction, which perforce condition aspects of music culture in general. Hence, just as one could speak of military cultures based around the stirrup, or later the firearm, or agrarian cultures based on the hoe, the ox, or the tractor, so do diverse means of mechanical reproduction form the cores of technocultures with their own attendant characteristic forms of production, exchange, meaning, and even specific musical features. The advent of recording has tended to promote, among other things, the popularity of the three- or four-minute song, an unprecedented standard of perfectionism in performance, and, in a genre like early jazz, a preference for some instruments and techniques (such as slap-bass playing) over others (such as the drum-set, which did not record well) (Katz 2010). The history of popular musics is in many respects a study of how producers and consumers, as active agents, form music cultures conditioned by the distinctive limitations and opportunities presented by specific forms of technologies. In this chapter, I use the notion of technocultures to suggest some broad perspectives on the historical development of popular music, especially outside the mainstream West, and to look at a set of distinctive music subcultures based around specific uses of extant technologies.

In his dense, erudite, and widely cited *Studying Popular Music*, Richard Middleton (1990) sketches a rough history of Western popular music in terms of three “moments” – really prolonged stages – of “radical situational change” (in Gramsci’s use of the term). The first of these is the nineteenth-century era of “bourgeois revolution,” marked, among other things, by the “spread of the market system through almost all musical activities,” with musical production increasingly mediated by commercial music publishers and concert and theater impresarios. New forms of bourgeois song and social

dance emerge, together with commercialized versions of traditional musics, all representing forms of bourgeois synthesis. From c. 1900, the spread of recording technology inaugurates "a second major situational fracture," characterized by the growing internationalization – and especially Americanization – of music culture, in which corporate entities use capital-intensive, predominantly "one-way" mass media (records, radio, and especially film) increasingly to monopolize marketing and production, at the expense of local, small-scale, grass-roots producers. In the decades after World War II, an affluent baby-boom generation cultivates a youth counterculture, whose dramatically new tastes in popular music, combined with the advent of cheaper recording technologies (based especially on magnetic tape), stimulate a third moment – that of "pop culture" and especially rock music. In this period, the oligopolistic music industry, although challenged and forced to diversify in control and product, is able to adapt and expand, even in offering musics associated with auras of rebellion and sensuality (Middleton 1990, 12–15; see also Middleton in this volume).

The acuity of Middleton's scheme, coupled with its specifically Western focus, naturally invites questions as to what extent it might be applicable to music cultures elsewhere. An obvious obstacle to such a broadened application lies in the sheer diversity of non-Western cultures in terms of their trajectories of socioeconomic development, and the absence of any culture that closely resembles the West in this respect. The presence, nevertheless, of certain general affinities – including the uses of some of the same technologies of mechanical reproduction – do afford some minimal use of Middleton's scheme as a template; and further, the very differences that emerge may stand out more clearly when contrasted with such a scheme.

One parallel that does stand out, in the prehistory of popular music both in the West and elsewhere, is the use of printed chapbooks and broadsheets of song lyrics, constituting an early form of mechanical reproduction, not of music per se, but surely of one of its dimensions. Such publications, disseminated by street-hawkers, constituted in many ways appendages to, rather than bases of, extant performance traditions, whether of traditional oral narrative ballads or of emerging proto-bourgeois song forms. But insofar as they stimulated production of certain new genres, with new sorts of commercial lyricists and new forms of marketing and performance, one can also begin to speak of new cultures of mechanical reproduction associated with them. The role of broadside ballads in popularizing British Music Hall music in the latter nineteenth century is well known. In Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868) and to the early 1900s, commercial publishers mass produced cheap songbooks (complete with advertisements for local

products) of old and new genres, initiating a commodification process characteristic of popular-music industries later emerging (Groemer 1995/1996). In Spain, similar chapbooks were called *pliegos de cordel* ("strap-bound folders"), as marketed by blind hawkers who sang excerpts of the songs, including not only traditional long-winded *romances*, but also *fandangos* and topical songs that fed the evolution of commercial popular musics in the early twentieth century. In India, one of the foremost genres of publication in the explosion of vernacular-language printing in the 1800s and early 1900s consisted of songbooks, whether traditional epic ballads, devotional *bhajans*, or commercial Parsi theater songs. Among East Indian singers of "local classical music" in Trinidad and Guyana, something of a "subculture of mechanical reproduction" still remains intact around these dog-eared and now rare turn-of-the-century lyric anthologies, which are zealously prized as sources of exclusive repertory by competitive semi-professional vocalists (Manuel 2000, 77–82).

Moment one: "bourgeois revolution," or the emergence of a commercial public sector?

In Richard Middleton's outline of Western popular-music history, such songbooks and broadsheets constituted one aspect of the extension of commercial capitalist modes of production throughout many aspects of musical life. Such penetration was itself a ramification of a much broader socioeconomic, cultural, and technological revolution linked to the triumph of bourgeois capitalism and modernity in general. Of Middleton's three moments, this is the least broadly applicable outside the mainstream West, in that nowhere else did such an extensive capitalist socioeconomic revolution occur during the nineteenth century, with the partial exception of Edo period and early Meiji Japan. Although Japan's industrial revolution commenced only belatedly in the 1870s, since well before that period Edo/Tokyo did indeed host a lively urban commercial music scene, formed around theater songs, courtesans, and patronage by an idiosyncratic sort of local bourgeoisie consisting of the rising merchant class. Elsewhere in the developing world, however, one can find only pockets of local bourgeois culture, typically consisting of comprador merchants, petty bourgeois clerks and entrepreneurs, and modernizing members of traditional elites constituting urban progressive sectors embedded in and coexisting with otherwise premodern and precapitalist socioeconomic milieus. In many cases, the musical activities of these islands of bourgeois culture might be oriented toward mimicking the culture of their Western colonial masters.

As such, rather than seeking counterparts to a broad bourgeois revolution outside the mainstream West, it may be more appropriate and constructive to focus on those limited, emergent, urban sectors of colonial-era societies in which specific kinds of commercial music production and dissemination took place. The crucial dimension here is the commercial exchange of music in a free market, unmediated by traditional patronage obligations and premodern social hierarchies. During the dawn of the recording era, such exchanges tended to occur in specific kinds of milieus.

One of these was music theater, as performed not as an obligatory offering to some bejeweled feudal prince, but as a commercial venture marketed to a ticket-purchasing, proto-bourgeois urban public. Such music theater was well established in Edo-period Japan, and emerged in the decades around 1900 as a lively aspect of urban music culture in such places as Shanghai, Havana, and Bombay. Music genres used in these contexts were typically mixtures of extant traditional styles (e.g., in India, *ghazal*, *lavni*, and others) and new forms of through-composed topical songs that prefigured and often evolved into the commercial popular-song styles of subsequent decades. While live performance remained at the heart of music theater, mechanically reproduced chapbooks of lyrics (e.g., in Tokyo and Bombay), sheet music (e.g., in Havana), and from c. 1900 commercial phonograph recordings became important ancillary components of composite music-theater cultures.

Another social setting for the commercially mediated but socially "free" consumption of music involved the diverse sorts of performers generically classified or regarded as courtesans. Such women can in many ways be regarded as relics of premodern society, and it may be customary, and not entirely inappropriate, to regard them as socially "unfree" in terms of their specific and delimiting social status in traditional societies. In the early twentieth century, however, courtesans could also embody a certain sort of modernity in being professional performers who were in many ways markedly free from premodern forms of patronage, and who marketed their skills as free agents in an emerging capitalist entertainment scene. In many cases, such a performer might not have engaged in any particular financially mediated sexual liaisons with clients, such that – as may have been the case with celebrated Indian songstress Gauhar Jan – the label "courtesan" constitutes little more than a catch-all category for a socially independent female professional performer (of unknown or irrelevant hereditary caste). Gauhar Jan, like counterparts elsewhere in the developing world, also enhanced her fame and fortune by commercial recordings, for whose production she charged prodigious sums. Courtesan performers, furthermore, were often closely allied with music theater, and the music genres they recorded were accordingly seminal in the

emergence of commercial popular idioms. The existence of a lively courtesan-based performance scene in Oran, Algeria, from the early twentieth century contributed to that city's role as a crucible of a lively popular-music culture centered around *rai*.

A third social milieu was that of the lumpen proletariat, which served as the crucible for genres as varied as Greek *rebetika*, the Argentine tango, and South African *marabi*. Again, the distinguishing characteristic of this subculture was a certain sort of freedom – not only from premodern forms of patronage and exchange, but also from elite, including bourgeois, musical tastes and inhibitions, which could be limiting in their own way. As with courtesan and theater music, access to commercial recording technology provided a catalyst for the evolution of modern commercial popular musics out of what would otherwise have remained "urban folk" genres. Thus, in the absence of an all-encompassing "bourgeois revolution" in non-Western societies, it was particular and limited sociomusical milieus – such as were provided by music theater, courtesans, and lumpen classes, together with emergent pockets of bourgeois culture – that constituted some of the primary crucibles for commercial popular musics once they interacted with the mass media. Although "revolutionary" in constituting free markets for the commercial production and exchange of music, they were in some cases islands of modern capitalist culture rather than constituents of a broader bourgeois revolution such as characterized the developed West.

Moment two: mass culture

If Middleton's first moment – that of bourgeois revolution – finds counterparts only in limited pockets of societies outside the mainstream West during the turn-of-the-century decades, his second moment – that of "mass culture" – does indeed characterize much developing-world music production in the period after 1930. As Middleton notes, Western popular-music culture from the early twentieth century was marked by a trend toward oligopolistic corporate ownership, capital-intensive "one-way" media (with little or no scope for direct consumer input or interaction), and, in many respects, a streamlined and narrow stylistic spread conditioned by formulaic approaches to production. The concept of mass culture was trenchantly invoked by Adorno, Marcuse, and others to highlight the undemocratic, alienating, and politically conservative nature of an entertainment industry increasingly monopolized by corporate elites during a period of European fascism and subsequent Cold War conformism (Marcuse 1964; Adorno 1976; Adorno and Horkheimer 1944 [1987]).

The epoch of mass culture in the West naturally accommodated a fair amount of diverse and independent commercial musical activity at its margins and interstices, especially as represented by "indie" (independent) record companies and grass-roots producers and entrepreneurs. Similarly, the first half of the twentieth century saw the emergence of diverse commercial popular-music styles – from Nigerian *jùjú* to the Spanish *cuplé* – catalyzed by local recordings, whether marketed by growing multinationals or by local producers. If, however, the monopolistic mass-culture model does little justice to the organic, grass-roots ways in which such genres evolved, the same period was also characterized by the emergence of a set of pan-regional music genres, most typically embedded in commercial cinema, whose patterns of production and marketing epitomized the mass-culture model even more radically than did counterparts in the developed West. Film, in the form of melodramas with inserted music and dance scenes, was especially widespread as a medium for popular-music dissemination in regions where most consumers were too poor to afford records and record players, but could afford occasional cinema tickets.

These developments were not ubiquitous, universal aspects of the developing-world music scenes, but were instead associated with a finite set of production centers. In the Arab Middle East from the early 1930s, Cairo became the center for the production of cinematic musicals, whose popular songs became cherished and set stylistic standards throughout the region. In Spanish-speaking Latin America, Buenos Aires and Mexico City emerged as twin lodestars, offering, respectively, sentimental tango-based films (especially featuring Carlos Gardel) and the swashbuckling "charro" films featuring *rancheras* and ballads sung by Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, and others. Yet by far the most long-lasting and vast music cinema center has been Bombay (Mumbai), which has continued to generate over seven hundred cinematic musicals annually, decades after such films went largely out of style in other regions.

Film culture – such as that centered around Bollywood – constitutes a quintessential "culture of mechanical reproduction." For hundreds of millions of enthusiasts in South Asia – and elsewhere – Indian film constitutes a major source and inspiration for fantasy, fashion, moral values, and styles of discourse; one can similarly speak of film-music culture, based around production, consumption, and also rearticulation of film songs, as South Asians recycle film melodies in local style with new lyrics and incorporate songs and dances into live amateur and professional performances. Bollywood cinema – especially the Hindi-language cinema that dominates North India – also epitomizes the most positive and negative aspects of mass culture, illustrating the applicability of Middleton's second "situational conjuncture" outside the West. On the one

hand, film-music culture is enriching, exposing rural Indians, with their often quite limited range of traditional melodies and styles, to an unprecedented breadth of repertory, as produced by teams of highly skilled Bombay composers, arrangers, and vocalists. On the other hand, Bollywood music culture can be also seen as epitomizing the smothering, homogenizing, and arguably alienating aspects of mass culture. Rather than reflecting the extraordinary diversity of vocal styles, languages, lyrics traditions, and song topics found throughout India, mainstream Bollywood cinema has tended to superimpose a relatively homogeneous song style, as generated by a tiny coterie of producers and sound-alike singers, in a single language (Hindi), and generally about a single topic (romantic love). Hence many commentators in India came to regard film music as a menace insofar as it undermined diverse local traditions and replaced them with the songs and dances embedded in the glittery escapist fantasies produced by far-off Bombay studios (see Manuel 1993, chap. 3; see, also, Mason in this volume). Accordingly, production of film music has traditionally been highly monopolistic and undemocratic, dominated as it has been by a coterie of producers linked to the capital-intensive film industry and marketed, for around forty years, primarily by a single multinational: the British-owned multinational with the appropriate logo of "His Master's Voice." Film music produced, in this fashion, allied to the expensive, one-way media of vinyl records and cinema, also thoroughly dominated the Indian popular-music scene in general from the 1940s to the 1980s, in accordance with HMV's monopoly of the nation's recording industry.

Moment three: modern modes of mechanical reproduction

Indian film culture and film-music culture, which continue to flourish vigorously today, reflect the persistence of the mass-culture mode of production in specific regional centers even in the new millennium. The continued domination of much of the world's recording industry by a handful of multinationals (including EMI, Polygram, SONY, and RCA) also reflects a certain sort of oligopolization, although it should not necessarily be taken to imply homogenization of content or superimposition of Western music. In other respects, the flowering of diverse non-Western popular-music cultures since the mid-twentieth century has exhibited a variety of forms of ownership, concentration, and modes of production, most of which depart significantly from the mass-culture model.

In Middleton's analysis of Western popular-music history, the postwar decades inaugurated a third "situational change," that of "pop culture,"

marked by the emergence of rock 'n' roll, a baby-boom youth counterculture, and the spread of electronic (and magnetic-tape-based) rather than electro-mechanical means of production. Like the bourgeois revolution moment, these features apply only in a limited and uneven fashion to popular-music cultures outside the mainstream West. The rock revolution certainly became a global phenomenon, as forms of rock music, whether inflected with local stylistic features or not, came to be widely consumed and even produced throughout much of the world, typically retaining associations with social freedom, modernity, sensuality, and the West. In other respects, however, such as the role of a specific baby-boom generation, Middleton's framework is clearly more applicable to the West than to any broad spectrum of global societies.

What is more evident in this period, and as a global situational change, are the exponential expansion of the regional and transnational recording industries and the concomitant flowering of innumerable syncretic popular-music genres. While the "Big Five" record multinationals grew in size and extended their presence worldwide, so were innumerable diverse regional popular-music styles able to emerge and thrive, whether disseminated by these conglomerates or by small independent producers. Hence, throughout urban Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, and elsewhere, records and record players, while still beyond the reach of many consumers, were able to catalyze the emergence of dynamic new genres, from highlife to cumbia. In Latin America and the Middle East, cinematic musicals declined in popularity, opening the way for a greater diversity of regional or class-based genres to thrive. Democratization of production was further stimulated by the advent of cassette technology, which, in contrast to the capital-intensive, one-way nature of the "old media" like records and film, lent itself to small-scale, grass-roots production. By the late 1970s, cassettes were the dominant medium of music marketing in Africa, the Middle East, and elsewhere, precipitating the flowering of innumerable local genres that would not have been represented on the corporate old media.

The cassette revolution was perhaps most dramatic in India, since import restrictions delayed its advent until the mid-1980s, until which period the mass-culture hegemony of EMI film-music culture had continued. The marked decentralization of the music industry brought by cassettes ended this hegemony, and led to the emergence of several hundred cassette producers, large and small, throughout the country, marketing a variety of music genres which included many regional grass-roots syncretic idioms, and revitalizing innumerable local traditions previously ignored by the capital-intensive commercial mass media. With local entrepreneurs recording and marketing modernized versions of regional folk and folk-pop for local, often lower-class consumers, in

local dialects, one could speak of a particular cassette culture, or set of cassette cultures, based on distinctively democratic-participant and often subaltern modes of production (see Manuel 1993).

The notion of cassette culture – implying its distinctive modes of production, exchange, and consumption – would connote a variety of phenomena. These could include the Rajasthani village enthusiast recording local folk musicians, duplicating copies on his backroom rickety machine, and marketing them on the street. It would include the entire culture – including modes of dance, song, and notions of fashion – based around genres like Andean *chicha* and Sundanese *jaipongan* that arose in connection with cassettes. It would embrace the young Hmong Americans who circulate cassettes of courtship songs via the mail to find spouses (Catlin 1992, 50). It encompassed the progressive Latin Americans living under right-wing dictatorships in the 1970s, who circulated cassettes of *nueva trova* singers Pablo Milanés and Silvio Rodríguez, or Palestinians on the occupied West Bank exchanging cassettes of Marcel Khalife and others. And it would include the cassettes distributed by right-wing Hindu fundamentalists in the early 1990s containing speeches and songs that were effectively used to incite pogroms against Muslims. Meanwhile, needless to say, popular musics disseminated via cassette encompassed an infinitely wide range of styles, target audiences, and recording techniques. In some cases, the recorded genre might be essentially a studio art form, as with elaborate recordings of Hindi film songs that were not meant to duplicate the sound of any particular live performance idiom. Other recorded genres, like Greek bouzouki music, were largely conceived as replicating ideal forms of live performance styles. Another approach would be represented by Algerian *rai*, whose recording process would typically commence with an a cappella vocal track, resembling in style, structure, and (lack of) instrumentation the traditional folk songs that constituted ancestors of the genre. The techno-pop, electrified accompanying tracks would be added later, and live performances in clubs would generally try to reproduce that studio sound.

Cassettes, however, were not the only medium for decentralized popular-music production, nor did they entirely eliminate vinyl records. In many locales, small-scale production of vinyl records by independent labels formed the nuclei of regional popular-music cultures, as in the case of Texan-Mexican (*tejano*) and *norteño* musics before the CD era, or African urban genres like Congolese *soukous*. Elsewhere, vinyl records continued even into the new millennium to be preferred formats, to some extent because of their special capabilities. The use of record players as musical instruments in hip-hop, dating from c. 1980, is well known, with its special techniques of scratching, juxtaposing, or superimposing tracks from disparate songs, and repeating

passages (especially instrumental breaks) as dance music and/or to accompany rappers.

Jamaican dancehall music culture illustrates two distinctive sorts of production and performance technique based on distinctive uses of vinyl records. One of these is what I have called the "riddim method," in which a given instrumental accompaniment track, or "riddim," is recycled in dozens of songs, used as a backing over which vocalists (or deejays) sing or "voice" their original songs. Thus, at any given time, around a dozen riddims are in vogue, and numerous deejays will sing – whether in live performances or on recordings – their own songs over popular riddims. A given song might also be heard over different riddims, whether in a studio remix or a live performance in which the vocalist must sing over whatever riddim the "selector" is playing. In this riddim method, vocalization and instrumental tracks can exist as detachable entities rather than as parts of a unique and autonomous song. Although often produced on CDs today, the system derives from the practice of deejays at sound-system dances, vocalizing over instrumental tracks of hit reggae songs, found on the B-sides of vinyl singles. Such records remain a preferred medium in Jamaica itself, especially insofar as they are used by the over two thousand sound systems, who might offer amateur or established vocalists chances to "chat" over riddims on B-sides of records (Manuel and Marshall 2006).

Another distinctive Jamaican subculture of mechanical reproduction centered around vinyl records is the institution of the "sound clash," featuring a duel between two or more sound systems. Each system has its own equipment, personnel, and, above all, its exclusive collection of vinyl acetate "dub plates," in which known artists, hired by the system, sing new lyrics praising that system, typically set to the tune of one of their hit songs. Sound clashes are unique performance events, whose innovative use of exclusive recordings illustrates how, as Middleton notes, there can be a continuum, rather than a sharp dichotomy, between formats of recorded music and live performance, especially in the sense that recordings can play roles in diverse live performance formats.

Some of the most distinctive music subcultures have been based not on particular genres, but rather around particular *uses* of modes of mechanical reproduction that further blur distinction between performers and audiences. One of the most widespread and best known of such formats is karaoke, which, after emerging in Japan in the early 1970s, has spread throughout East and Southeast Asia and their diasporic communities in the United States and elsewhere. In the typical karaoke format, amateur solo singers, in taverns, rented karaoke halls, or private homes, croon familiar pop songs to the accompaniment of commercially marketed accompanimental tracks, often with the

song lyrics and romantic video scene projected from a television monitor (see, e.g., Lum 1996). Karaoke is a social as well as musical event, and as such constitutes yet another subculture of mechanical reproduction, using a modified music technology in a distinctive manner.

Yet another music subculture involving a distinctive use of technology is that based around Mexican sound systems and deejays called *sonideros*. New York-area sonidero events, as described by Ragland (2003), are attended primarily by Mexican-American, predominantly male, migrant workers, most of whom are separated from their families in the homeland. The deejay, after playing a section of introductory, synthesized "space-age travel" sounds, plays a series of cumbias, while animatedly reading, into an amplified mike, dedications to loved ones at home written on scraps of paper by those present, only some of whom actually dance. After his set, audio cassettes or CDs of the show, complete with dedications, are duplicated on the spot, purchased by attendees, and then sent by the attendees to their relatives at home. The sonideros also travel to Mexico and perform there in the same communities whence the migrants come; both they and their dances serve as conduits for ties between otherwise painfully separated individuals. At such events, far less important than the actual music played is the way the deejays and attendees use the amplification and recording technology – and the postal system – to reaffirm links to loved ones abroad.

Sonidero subculture can be seen as a particular variety of deejay-based popular-music scenes that have emerged in various sites worldwide, which center not around live musicians but around sound systems with their distinctive record collections and charismatic "mike-men" (in Jamaican parlance). In some cases, the music featured by such systems may not even be of local creation, as in the case of the Afro-pop played in Atlantic coast Colombian *picó* dances, in which dancers may not even know the origin of the music selected (see Pacini-Hernandez 1993).

Moment four: the digital age

Middleton's *Studying Popular Music* was published in 1990, when the digital revolution in communications and music was in many ways just gathering steam. In the developed West, personal computers had come into wide popular use only a few years earlier, and MP3 file-to-file sharing technologies did not emerge until the late 1990s. As of the early years of the new millennium, however, it is clear that a new situational change, resulting from a technological development, has taken place, constituting a new moment in the history of world popular musics. From a sociomusical perspective, the intensified

phenomenon of globalization – including transnational flows of people, ideas, money, media, and technologies – can itself be said to have inaugurated a new situational conjuncture in world popular music, but in these pages I restrict my comments more specifically to the ramifications of new technology-driven modes of musical production and exchange, in particular those associated with digital technology.

If the advent of electrical and electromagnetic technologies – including records, cassettes, and magnetic tape – were part of a second industrial revolution, digital synthesizers, computers, and MP3 software can well be seen as creating a third revolution, with dramatic effects on music culture. Many practices associated with this revolution – from burning compact discs (CDs) to using synthesizers to replace live performers – may involve forms of cost-cutting attractive and useful outside the developed world. At the same time, much of the most distinctive and basic features of digital culture – such as personal computers – involves technologies that, for economic reasons, are far less widespread in the developing world than in the West. Hence, it is important to maintain a global perspective on the digital revolution, aspects of which are only beginning to affect music culture outside the industrialized nations and may never become as pervasive as they are in the latter regions. Ultimately of interest is the manner and extent to which new technologies have influenced, or even created, new sociomusical practices of production, dissemination, and consumption, both in the developed world and elsewhere.

Perhaps the first digital technology to make a marked impact on music production worldwide was the synthesizer, including in its simpler forms of Casio keyboards. By the mid-1980s, synthesizers had come to be widely used in a diverse set of international popular-music genres. Although relatively expensive compared to many regionally produced acoustic instruments, synthesizers could naturally be used in place of live musicians and hence had obvious economic utility in the developing world. Thus, one obvious use was to imitate the sounds of acoustic instruments, as in many North Indian “version” cassettes that offered cover versions of classic film songs, sung by sound-alike vocalists accompanied by synthesizer-generated imitations of the original large ensemble backings. In Indo-Trinidadian soca-chutney music, the difficulty of amplifying the *dholak* barrel drum in live performances constituted a further incentive to replace it – both in the studio and live – with a suitably programmed drum machine. In other cases, synthesizers have been used not to imitate extant traditional instrumentation, but to generate distinctively new and clearly synthetic timbres. Hence, the standard timbres that soon became familiar in genres like Algerian *rai*, Andean techno-huayno (Romero 2002), Mexican techno-cumbia, and Jamaican dancehall reggae (and especially ragga)

in the wake of the 1985 “Sleng Teng,” which was the first hit using a synthetically generated riddim. Such distinctively studio-produced timbres naturally convey an aura of modernity and fashion, but they also can come to be widely regarded as cheap, “cheesy,” and tinselly in comparison to other kinds of productions – as with version Hindi film songs in relation to standard ones – which continue to use live ensemble musicians. Accordingly, in some genres, as with the horn-driven salsa ensembles, synthesizers have made no inroads in replacing acoustic instruments, and a genre like the Mexican *banda* illustrates a surprising resilience of traditional instrumentation even in the most contemporary pop circles.

In the realm of recording, much of the impact of digital technology has constituted less the introduction of completely new techniques than the dramatic simplification of practices already possible, though difficult, with extant analog or magnetic-tape-based technologies. Sampling constitutes an obvious example, especially as used to loop repeated excerpts in rap and dancehall accompaniment tracks. Samples highlighting synthetic alterations of familiar vocal or instrumental sounds often reflect an aesthetic postmodernism in their generation of playful simulacra – that is, media images (or in this case, sounds) that have no counterpart in real life – but they can nevertheless be used to affirm ethnic identity or other more quintessentially modernist agendas. Hence, for example, the *tassa* drum is cherished by Trinidad Indians as an icon of ethnic identity; in pop chutney-soca songs one often hears synthetically generated *tassa*-like rolls played at absurdly and inhumanly fast speeds, at once constituting a whimsical blank parody of the original sound and affirming and rearticulating its role as an icon (Manuel 1995).

CDs have in many respects served to intensify the processes – earlier stimulated by cassettes – of decentralization and democratization of the music industry. By the 1990s, CDs had rapidly replaced vinyl records in the developed world, but their adoption beyond upper-class sectors of poorer countries was delayed by their relatively high cost. In the years after 2000, however, costs of production, duplication, retail products, and players (especially walkman-style) dropped to the level of cassette products and even below. With their superior audio fidelity, convenience of playback, and adaptability to computers and internet sources, CDs are increasingly coming to replace cassettes throughout most of the developing world. In countries such as the Dominican Republic in which cassettes never took strong root, the preferred format has changed directly from vinyl records to CDs. A recent parallel development has been the spread of cheap MP3-format CDs, which can accommodate several hours of recorded music, playable either on a computer

or an inexpensive walkman-style MP3 player. Like cassettes and standard CDs, MP3 CDs are particularly hospitable to use by pirates.

The first decade of the new millennium witnessed the extraordinary spread of another new medium, the video compact disc or VCD, which, like the DVD, accommodates moving pictures and sound (as in a music video), but is considerably cheaper than a DVD. Like the technologies discussed in the previous paragraphs, VCDs have not served to invent a new performance format – in this case, the music video – but have made it incomparably less expensive and thus suitable for production and dissemination on an unprecedented scale, even in association with lower-class rural musics in poor countries. In fact, a particularly distinctive feature of VCDs is that despite being a modern digital technology, they are common primarily in the developing world, and especially in association with lower-class genres within those countries. Their adoption in the developed West and Japan was actively suppressed in the 1990s by entertainment corporations concerned about unauthorized duplication, during which period the DVD format became more firmly entrenched.

While the music video format per se may not be new, VCD technology has served to stimulate music video production among genres that were never previously marketed in such fashion, including Nigerian *jùjú*, Andean *chicha*, Thai-Malay shadow puppetry, and Cuban *timba*. The music videos may present a range of styles, variously showing concert footage, studio performances (generally in lip-sync) replete with cheap computer-enhanced graphics, or – a standard in Indian rural folk-pop – a few dancers and singers cavorting (again in lip-sync) in a local park. Unlike MTV music videos, VCD videos are not produced primarily to promote record sales, nor are they isolated song-and-dance scenes in a feature cinematic musical, but rather are marketed as mass commodities in themselves, and are priced accordingly. In India, for example, a low-end Bhojpuri or Punjabi popular music VCD might involve a video production cost of the rupee equivalent of around \$1,700, with editing done on a used PC available for \$350 and a CD writer (\$20), with the finished discs sold wholesale to shopkeepers for around 60 cents and retailing for under one dollar. Consumers can listen to the discs on walkman-style CD/VCD/MP3 players which sell for around \$16; for video viewing, a patch cord can be connected to a black-and-white television, itself available for \$25 and able to run off a car battery. VCDs can thus entertain viewers in villages lacking regular electric power, and whose only other television options might consist of dreary government-produced programming. In Peru, where despite poverty computers are widespread, a remarkable parallel development is the popularity of viewing music videos and performances of *campesino*-oriented music on YouTube.

Another recording technique dramatically facilitated, though not necessarily inaugurated, by digital technology is the multisite production of recordings. It was and remains not an uncommon practice for master tapes to be produced in more than one locale, as with a recording of a Bob Marley song that might commence as a set of tracks laid down in Kingston, Jamaica, and then sent to London to be enhanced with further tracks. Such transnational production techniques have been especially useful to diasporic communities, such as Albanian cassettes with tracks variously recorded in Kosovo, Germany, and New Jersey – and subsequently marketed in all three locales and elsewhere (Sugarman 2004). The ability to send digital files electronically, however, has made such practices incomparably easier and more common.

Digital technology has also had a dramatically democratizing effect on standards and forms of musicianship, often making musical literacy unprecedentedly irrelevant. While keyboard facility has attained a new sort of prominence, virtuoso technique per se is often unnecessary, and even the piano-style keyboard is optional. Using MIDI sequencers, a producer can now generate synthetic versions of drum parts, bass lines (including idiomatic features like slaps), and other effects by entering data on graphic charts, and at his or her leisure rather than in real time. Guitar is the one instrument that has proved most resistant to being eliminated in this fashion. As simple cellphones enable one to construct jingles in different styles by selecting various elements in a composite set of tracks, even teenagers in the developed world develop a basic facility in the elements of digital song production. As with other new audio technologies, such developments blur distinctions between consumption and production, and offer users new kinds of choices and ability to personalize their environments; for example, by selecting or even creating ringtones. At the same time, there is no doubt that such technologies are unevenly spread in the world, being concentrated in the developed countries and the more affluent and modernized sectors of other societies. Personal computers remain prohibitively expensive for most people in Asia and Africa.

The effects of digital technology on modes of dissemination and exchange have been equally dramatic, although similarly concentrated in wealthier and modernized societies or pockets of societies. The development of the MP3 format in the latter 1990s has been especially revolutionary. In the West, as is well known, music is increasingly obtained through the internet, whether via amazon.com, iTunes, or peer-to-peer (“P2P”) file-sharing sites, which pose new challenges to copyright enforcement and, say some, to the basic functioning of the commercial music industry (extensively debated topics which we will not explore here). Traditional forms of promotion and popularization have been supplemented, and to some extent even replaced, by new

ones. In the United States today, a fledgling rock band, without even a constituency in its own neighborhood, can establish a national audience by placing its music, band member profiles, and other data on MySpace sites and selected other websites like purevolume.com frequented by certain sorts of listeners, who may download certain songs and, if inspired, purchase others via iTunes and/or amazon.com. An aspiring hip-hop or dancehall "beatmaker" – who learns composition and marketing techniques on chat sites like future-producers.com – may create "beats" or riddims in her or his bedroom studio, consisting of a MIDI and a computer, and market and distribute them entirely on the internet. Communities of aficionados of specialized genres – from fado to pop flamenco – can exchange, purchase, and discuss new recordings from their home computers, illustrating yet again how new technologies can offer greater choice and access to consumers, and contrasting with the one-way, capital-intensive modes of production and dissemination once associated with the old media of cinema and long-playing records. New consumption formats continue to exert their own influences on music form itself: in Japan, as cellphones become able to download music, combining the functions of internet computers and iPods in the West, song producers have begun to tailor their output to the production of short refrains that can be used as ringtones; in other cases, bands and composers commence by composing and marketing only ringtones, and prepare a full song only if the ringtone catches on (Manabe 2007).

Like earlier forms of mass media oriented toward home usage, the new digital technologies have in some ways intensified trends toward the privatization of music culture. In earlier decades, television was similarly accused of replacing a rich public sphere of taverns, evening strolls, cinema and concert attendance, and other forms of collective recreation with a culture of atomized families staring silently at televisions in their homes. The advent of the walkman and, more recently, the iPod have extended such trends, in which users – whether the commuter on the sidewalk or the teenage daughter at the dinner table – isolate themselves from those around them and experience the world through a private soundscape. Another form of atomization takes place as commercial and amateur recordings are generated not by the creative and social interaction of musicians in the studio but by the hermetic individual at his MIDI. Even such a minimally public act as going to a record store is increasingly obviated by the ability to obtain music online. For its part, the internet itself in many respects intensifies our habituation to experiencing the world in the form of simulacra and cyber-images rather than first-order reality, with its online communities offering what some have described as a mere "illusion" of presence in a digital ghost town (see Lysloff 2003, 23, 32).

At the same time, as Lysloff and others have noted, digital technologies, and especially internet culture, have created new, significant, and unprecedented forms of links between individuals, and new forms of communities with their own validity (Lysloff and Gay 2003). The internet user, whether in Nairobi, New York, or rural Nebraska, can enjoy access to an infinite world of musics, via amazon.com or file-sharing networks. He or she can cultivate interests in specialized niche musics – from death metal to Afro-pop – in ways which have no parallel in earlier decades. And while such specialization might conceivably lead to a narrowing of personal tastes, many consumers attest to the degree to which they are exposed to new musics in the internet, whether via recommendations of internet acquaintances, MySpace lists of favorite groups, or specialist sites. Moreover, via chat rooms, listservs, and other forms of specialist websites, music enthusiasts and producers establish new sorts of internet communities. While these cyber-communities are "virtual" in some respects, in other ways they are quite real, offering their own sorts of social interaction, stimulation, and group identity. Lysloff (2003) provides an ethnography of one such internet community: the "mod" scene in which techno-pop producers exchange and, in many cases, modify each other's creations, in a manner free from commercial concerns, but with its own notions of community, creativity, compositional authority, and sociability. Like other aspects of digital technoculture, nevertheless, such intensive internet communities remain largely limited to the industrialized world and pockets of affluence and modernity elsewhere.

Concluding perspectives

Mechanical modes of reproduction, although originally created by individuals, can soon come to constitute inherited and all-enveloping technocultural environments within which artists and consumers often find themselves obliged to operate. To rephrase Marx, individuals can create music history, but they do not choose the conditions under which they do so. At the same time, individuals and communities may cultivate their own distinctive uses of extant technologies in ways that reaffirm human agency and community sensibilities. Both the limitations imposed by technologies and the distinctive opportunities they present constitute bases of unique music technocultures, which may be more specific but in other ways comparable to familiar entities like print culture, film culture, or internet virtual culture.

One aspect of such technocultures is the way that a mode of mechanical reproduction can affect actual music itself. As has often been noted, notation – especially as printed on a mass basis – tended in Western art music to limit

improvisation and stimulate the use of symmetrical, sectional through-composed forms like the sonata. The mass media introduced their own sorts of influences on music structure, most evident in the realm of popular music. Vinyl records promoted the creation of tightly constructed three- and four-minute songs rather than open-ended structures, in a format that has long outlasted the dependence on vinyl. At the same time, ingenious performers, such as Jamaican deejays, have found ways to use such extant technologies – in this case, seven-inch singles – to create stylistically new genres. Digital technologies, from MIDI hardware to ringtones, have all exerted their own diverse influences on musical styles.

Subcultures of mechanical reproduction have also developed their own distinctive norms of what constitutes musicianship and performativity – which may depart dramatically from earlier norms. For the Afro-Colombia picó deejay, it may constitute a flair for acquiring, selecting, and playing a certain style of record; for the karaoke singer, it may be a question of singing familiar songs to prepackaged recordings. Perhaps most conspicuous is the manner in which technocultures can inaugurate new modes of consumption and exchange, effectively transforming the public sphere. Dancing to a recording in a club in Kinshasa, watching a film song-and-dance sequence in a theater in Mumbai, or listening via the internet to a streamed radio show from across the world all involve distinctive forms of dissemination and exchange, which themselves constitute aspects of unique subcultures of mechanical reproduction.

Modes of mechanical reproduction and their particular uses constitute basic aspects of popular-music cultures worldwide, whether in affluent, industrialized societies or elsewhere. Music cultures outside the mainstream West, nevertheless, do not lend themselves to such a convenient historical framework as in Middleton's three-part scheme. Aspects of his three moments – and perhaps especially the intermediate stage dominated by mass-culture oligopolistic media networks – do find marked parallels in parts of the developing world, but in other respects the global popular-music scene requires a more flexible and nuanced interpretation. Socioeconomic development in the developing world has been strikingly uneven, and even today is marked by the coexistence of highly modernized urban elites – who may be active participants in the postmodern world of the internet – alongside impoverished rural and urban underclasses who perpetuate many aspects of premodern cultures. The extension of capitalist media cultures to such classes – whether via cinema, cassettes, or other technologies – further confounds any attempt neatly to categorize broad historical trends; for example, in terms of a bourgeois revolution. What instead emerges from a global perspective is the striking

diversity not only of media, but also of uses of media, and a concomitant rich heterogeneity of media-based popular-music subcultures.

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Western music as world music

NICHOLAS COOK

Music of hegemony

The transformation of Western music into world music might be seen as quite simply the musical dimension of a much larger historical process: what Ramsay Muir, in his classic book on the subject, termed the expansion of Europe (Muir 1917). As, from the final years of the fifteenth century, explorers and colonizers began to radiate out from Europe, they took music with them, initially to North and South America, India, and East Asia, and thereafter to Australasia and Africa, where settlement around the Cape goes back to the seventeenth century, though the interior was penetrated only in the nineteenth century.

On the basis of contemporary documentation, Ian Woodfield has traced the role of music from the very earliest stages of this process: on board the ships, at the first encounter with indigenous inhabitants, and in symbolic "Acts of Possession." He refers to "the strategy of using musicians as shoreline ambassadors," with trumpets and drums playing the leading role, while drums also served to punctuate the main divisions of the working day in early colonies (Woodfield 1995, 112, 137). Another early site of music in the new worlds that opened during the sixteenth century was missionary activity, from Hispanic Florida and California to Japan, where Portuguese missionary activity began in 1541 and developed with such success that within forty years there were over 100,000 Japanese Christians (Koegel 2001; Harich-Schneider 1973, 445, 457). Instrumental music, particularly for keyboard, proved as effective an aid to conversion as plainchant, and in 1577 Father Organtino Gnechi wrote from Kyoto that "if only we had more organs and other musical instruments Japan would be converted to Christianity in less than a year" (Harich-Schneider 1973, 457). Indeed, virginals and organs proved such acceptable gifts to local potentates that Woodfield speaks of "oriental keyboard diplomacy" (Woodfield 1995, 199).

Western music was also firmly embedded in the culture of more mature colonies, from the religious institutions of seventeenth-century Cuzco

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