

## A 'ticket to ride' or a 'hard day's night'? The importance of music to Liverpool's tourism message.

"City of Music" – UNESCO (2010)

"Most Musical City" - Arts Council England (2008)

"World Capital of Pop" - Guinness Book of Records (2003)

This paper is written to facilitate discussion about the importance, if any, of Liverpool's musical heritage to our enjoyment of the city during our visit to the conference. The consumption of both music and tourism are a 'given' in contemporary Western societies. However, the blend of music and tourism has been insufficiently researched. Gibson and Connell (notably: 2004, 2005, 2007) have dominated the literature on music tourism and its significance in the UK has only been touched upon. The context for this paper is research undertaken for UK Music on the economic impact of UK Music Tourism. The rationale for the overall research was that it was thought that the importance of music to UK tourism was not being recognised and therefore leveraged as effectively as it could. Feargal Sharkey (2010), Chief Executive of UK Music said: 'Music is one of the UK's crown jewels. It is a significant and powerful magnet for both overseas and UK tourists - whether they're attending one of our many music festivals, visiting our music heritage sites or simply drawn by our reputation as the world's pre-eminent music-producing nation.'

Understanding how important music is to tourism is more than economic. The aim of this paper is therefore to further develop our understanding of the consumption of music tourism by:

1. identifying live music and tourism consumption;
2. conceptualising how we can better understand the relationships between music, tourists and place in forming brand identity;
3. discussing this through the case study of Liverpool's music tourism and the issues that this raises for tourism promotion.

The method used here is based on a review of the data and literature on music, tourism and music tourism. A case study approach is taken to assist in conceptualising how best we could understand the different factors that make up the music tourism experience.

### **Live music**

The consumption of live music can be viewed by the type of music that attracts people to events. Audiences Data UK (2010) classifies music into seven main types that are then broken down again. These are: classical, opera/music theatre, culturally specific, jazz, popular, youth and community/amateur. Each of these types of music have their own genre that may attract distinct followers but use the same venue such as the new Echo Arena, Liverpool for live concerts. The music industry is predominantly focused on the creation and distribution of music, the supply side. Tourists are just in the milieu of the audience and are not necessarily seen as a distinct market.

Live music can also be viewed by how many people consume it and at what value (in terms of money spent or generated). The overall size of the live music market is estimated by Page and Carey (2010) at £1,537 million. Results from the Department of Culture Media and Sport *Taking Part* survey estimate that 34.2% of the adult UK population attended a live music event in 2008/09. This would correspond to 17.4 million adults. Mintel (2010) estimate that 45.8 million visits were made to live music events and £2,429 million was spent at these events.

## **Music tourism**

Music tourism is not currently a defined segment within the tourism industry. The United Nations World Tourism Organization does not offer any criteria regarding what does and what does not constitute a 'music tourist' (Mintel 2008). Music tourism is a niche market inside cultural tourism. Gibson and Connell (2005) discuss "music tourism, where people travel, at least in some part, because of music – and the significance of this for culture, economics and identity." The rise of niche tourism has coincided with, and is part of, the growing significance of culture in the construction of tourism, recreation and heritage (alongside nostalgia). The cultural industries include music, literature, film, and art. UNESCO claims that these "relate to tourism in various ways, appropriating myths of place, transforming localities materially and discursively" and make up 40% of global tourism revenue.

Gibson & Connell (2007) created a 'typology of music tourism', identifying mainly where music is consumed by tourists, whether visits to places of performance (such as concert arenas), places of musical composition, places enshrined in lyrics (from the Mull of Kintyre to Strawberry Fields), places of births (Vera Lyn's Rochdale) and deaths (including cemeteries) or museum. A clear distinction needs to be drawn between music tourism involving music as the primary driver for a trip being undertaken and visits by tourists to music events, for which the trip would have gone ahead even if music had not been an available option.

The number of overseas tourists that visited one or more live music events as part of their stay in the UK in 2009 was estimated by the International Passenger Survey as 1.76 million. This is 5.9% of all overseas visits to the UK. These visitors tend to make longer trips than the average for all overseas visitors (14 nights per trip compared to 7), and spend more per trip (£937 compared to £550) than the average visitor, so that total spending by overseas tourists who visited a live music event was £1,646 million, 9.9% of all spending by overseas tourists to the UK in 2009. Domestic music tourism contributed the majority of the total economic contribution of music tourism, with an economic contribution of £322.1. There were 7.164 million domestic music tourism trips taken in 2009, with domestic music tourists spending £522 million. Almost a quarter (24%) of overseas visitors agreed with the statement that music had influenced their choice of holiday destination in the past, however only 5% agreed strongly and 43% disagreed with the statement (Visit Britain, 2010a). This research suggests that music may not be a key driver in deciding to visit a country, but is something that visitors may be interested in doing when here, and is considered a "hidden opportunity" (Visit Britain, 2010b) which can have a positive impact upon the visitor experience and subsequent recommendations.

## **Music and destination brand identity**

As noted by the UNWTO (2007), branding is a powerful tool destinations can use to communicate their competitive positioning to their target markets and signal the type of experiences they can expect. In essence, many researchers agree that a destination's brand is created through its image, and it is this which influences the decision to visit when selecting a destination (Baloglu and McCleary 1999). Visit Britain's Nations Brand Index (Visit Britain 2010c), found that 44% of an international audience mentioned music when asked which words they associate most with the UK, second only behind museums (50%) and higher than films and sports (41% and 39% respectively) (NBI 2009, cited in Visit Britain 2010b).

Although different definitions of destination image have been used by different researchers, there is common agreement that it consists of three components: what we know about the destination (cognitive), how we feel about what we know about the destination (affective) and

how we act on this knowledge (conative) (Hosany, *et al*, 2007; Tasci *et al*, 2007). What individuals know about a destination consists of both tangible (or functional) and intangible (or psychological) attributes (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993), and music can fall into both, for instance a place to visit or by adding to the reputation of the destination. As noted by Gibson and Connell (2005), music is both a cultural industry as well as a way in which destinations are known and represented, and the use of music images and sounds in tourism promotion helps create an overall or holistic perception of the destination.

## **Liverpool**

In Liverpool and other industrial cities, cultural tourism and heritage have been developed as a replacement for traditional industries that have declined or disappeared. Although music tourism generally started with classical music tours (Gibson & Connell, 2005) and The Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) claims to be “the oldest surviving professional symphony orchestra and the second oldest concert-giving organisation in the UK”, it was the Beatles and the sound of the Merseybeat that put Liverpool on the international tourism trail. The success of the Beatles attracted attention and visitors to Liverpool because their music and the artists themselves were consumed and experienced in different countries. They have become part of our quest for nostalgia and contact with a ‘lost’ history (Kruse II, 2005). This led to the emergence of ‘Beatles tourism’ in the city (Gibson & Connell, 2004, 2005, 2007; Kruse II, 2005; Patterson, 2010), and the official branding of Liverpool as a City of Music by UNESCO in 2010.

Liverpool fits within a number of its own and regional strategies, both tourism and cultural (Liverpool First, 2008; The Mersey Partnership, 2003; Visit Liverpool, 2009). Music tourism has been directly identified as part of these but plays an integral rather than isolated part of the cultural tourism of Liverpool and the wider Merseyside region. The *Review of Liverpool City Region Tourism Strategy* (Locum Consulting, 2008) recognised that with the growth of globalisation, where cities have become more alike, “competitive advantage will increasingly be found through cultural distinctiveness and exceptional quality.” This would be achieved through cultural icons and artefacts which help to create an unmistakable brand. As a result of past successes, Liverpool is identified as one of the North West’s tourism attack brands within the regional tourism strategy. The importance of music has resulted in Liverpool creating partnerships with music cities around the world: twinning with Dublin, 1997 and developing ‘official friendships’ with: New Orleans, 1991 and Memphis, 2004. It was also one of the first to name its airport after a music icon, the Liverpool John Lennon Airport. All of these are opportunities for directly communicating the ‘music’ message.

Music has always been part of the cultural mix of Liverpool, along with sport and maritime history. The reputation of Liverpool as a city of music is helping to achieve a vibrant and creative image. This is based on three main attributes: the artists, the venues and now the festivals and events (See Appendices A, B, C, D and E). Whilst artists and their music have reached international audiences they have in turn brought visitors to Liverpool. In recent times this has been encouraged by specific music venues and events, culminating in the incorporation of music as a major ingredient in the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) programme and the opening of the Echo Arena in 2008. See the document *Sound City* at the Liverpool08 website for a general overview of Liverpool’s musical heritage (Liverpool City Council, 2007). In 2008 The Beatles Story was second only to Mersey Ferries as the most visited paid attraction in Liverpool (England’s Northwest Research Service, 2010).

### Music shaping the destination identity

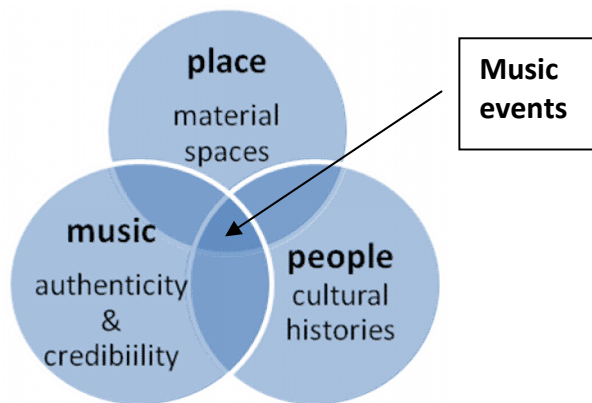
How can music actively shape places and how can these then be communicated to potential visitors? Music tourism is often discussed in terms of ‘image and sounds’ and discourses of ‘authenticity and ‘distinctiveness’ (Gibson and Connell, 2005; Hirschman, 2010; Patterson, 2010; Xiea *et al*, 2007). Table 1 uses these ideas to develop an understanding of music tourism in Liverpool using a few examples. The table also identifies some of the issues that need to be resolved as part of the process of building an image and brand for Liverpool.

	Image and sound	Authenticity and distinctiveness
<b>Discourse</b>	In actual terms but also in reputation (Boland, 2008; Connell & Gibson, 2004; Gibson & Connell, 2005, 2007; Hirschman, 2010; Kruse, II, 2005)	Representation and stereotyping (Boland, 2008; Hirschman, 2010; Gibson & Connell, 2005, 2007; Kruse, II, 2005; Leaver & Schmidt, 2009)
Example	Listening to a recording of the 1960s group Gerry and the Pacemakers on the Mersey trip. Like many of the Beatles albums and number title tracks, they had films of the same title. The Mersey Ferry company uses the ‘Ferry ‘cross the Mersey’ as its main strap-line.	The Mersey river actually exists, as does the ferry. It has been made a tourism attraction with specialist Mersey trips that offer a water-based ‘tour’ of Liverpool’s maritime and industrial history. This has been created from the lyrics and title track of an album and film.
<b>Materiality</b>	(Connell & Gibson, 2004; Hirschman, 2010; Xiea <i>et al</i> , 2007; Schofield, 2009)	(Connell & Gibson, 2004; Hirschman, 2010; Xiea <i>et al</i> , 2007; Schofield, 2009)
Example	<i>Magical Mystery Tour</i> is a Beatles track, an EP/LP and a 1960s TV series. It is now an actual bus tour around Liverpool. The Cavern City Tours’ claims to be the ‘top Beatles tour’ that is the only tour to finish at the Cavern club and to use ‘qualified Beatles Guides’.	Mendips and Forthlin Road, the childhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney now owned by the National Trust. Compared with the rebuilt <i>Cavern</i> club, the ‘new’ Hard Day’s Night hotel filled with memorabilia and <i>The Beatles Story</i> in the Albert Docks?

**Table 1: Music tourism’s means of identity**

It is the place, the music and the people that create a music tourism identity (figure 1). This is based on discussions of music tourism of different genres and different places (Barbieri, & Mahoney, 2010; Boland, 2008; Gibson & Connell, 2004, 2005, 2007; Hirschman, 2010; Kruse, 2005; Patterson, 2010; Schofield, 2009) However, the ‘people’ are made up of residents, workers and tourists. Each of these groupings (and their sub-cultures) bring their own cultural histories with them. These could potentially run counter to each other. In Liverpool for example, Patterson (2010) identifies that there are negative reactions to an event (ECoC) bringing in ‘outsiders’. The nostalgia that could create the emotional pull to visit Liverpool for some reinforces the alienation that residents feel for the Beatles (Kruse II, 2005).

The nexus of figure 1 for Liverpool is predominantly facilitated by live music concerts and festivals. The new Echo Arena opened for the ECoC in 2008 and part of the regeneration of the Albert Dock area will facilitate music tourism for people that live outside of Liverpool. The programme of events and festivals that are now an important way of bringing people to different places and spaces in Liverpool with different types of music. These are listed in Appendix E These demonstrate that Liverpool City Council sees it as important that different genre of music help to facilitate resident communities as well as promoting these as part of the tourism offering. One example of this is the Africa Oyé held in Sefton Park each June. This is similar to Kruse II’s (2005) identification that people establish a meaning of place through an association with the Beatles, in both commercial and vernacular places.



**Figure 1: music tourism identity**

However, it is how these places are ‘brought to life’ and create emotional responses through auditory stimuli that distinguish the music element of tourism. Larsen and Lawson (2010) discuss the nature and consumption of music. They recognise that focusing on music as a product ignores so many important dimensions. They identify a number of philosophical perspectives on music, many of which could be used to help explain what might make music tourism distinctive from other music or tourism consumptions.

As with the tourism branding above, Larsen and Lawson (2010) highlight the emotional and cognitive stimulation and the situational/social factors that are an important part of music consumption. In the context of music tourism, people have moved from their normal place of residence or work and are therefore need a mix of needing to know what a destination is and how to get there (cognitive), but in music terms you could use that to stimulate a visit by linking this to something specific that will directly stimulate the senses before they experience it. The use of music in promotion (advertisements) has been recognised for some time but has not been used in tourism apart from the *England Rocks!* campaign by Visit England (2007) and the Visit Britain partnership with EMI (2007).

	<b>cognitive</b> what we know	<b>affective</b> how we feel	<b>conative</b> how we act
<b>music</b>	Artist ‘must see’	Auditory emotional responses (+ or -)	Listen and/or watch the artist
<b>tourism</b>	Material places e.g. attractions	Nostalgia e.g. birthplace	Travel to include transport & accommodation
<b>music tourism</b>	Concert or festival	Immersion e.g. The Beatles Story	Book a package that enables total experience

**Table: 2: modes of consumption**

### Conclusion

It is the auditory nature of music that means that (a) it exists but also (b) that it produces a different stimuli for our experiences. Added together with authentic places and events, music can act as both an enhancer and a potential driver for tourism. Liverpool is a good example of this, albeit with some of the difficulties of providing ‘authentic’ and ‘inclusive’ experiences for visitors and residents. Further research into the nature of this experience is needed that brings together the cognitive, affective and conative. The research that has been done on ‘listening’ tourism could offer examples of methodologies to use for this (Saldanha, 2002; Waitt & Duffy, 2009). Results could then be used by tourism promoters to not just get the most appropriate images and words, but also the most effective music.

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**Appendix A: Some of Liverpool’s well known musical artists (icons to some)**

<p><b>Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra</b> established in 1840</p>	<p>The (RPO) expanded its reach beyond the North West of England and like ‘ambassadors on tour’, took the name of Liverpool with them, initially to Europe and since to the USA and Far East. The RLPO is now regarded as one of the finest orchestra’s in Europe, winning the title “Ensemble of the Year” at the 2009 Royal Philharmonic Society Music Awards. The Philharmonic Hall has led to the establishment of Liverpool 8 District as a ‘cultural quarter’.</p>
<p><b>Merseybeat and The Beatles</b> put the city on the world map in the 1960s</p>	<p>‘Beatles tourism’ did not become an ‘industry’ of its own until the 1980s (Gibson and Connell 2005). This has included the development of the Cavern Club, the Beatles Story and the Magical Mystery Tour. It has also meant the preservation of Mendips and Forthlin Road, the childhood homes of John Lennon and Paul McCartney by the National Trust and the emergence of successful events such as the annual International Beatles Week which culminates in the Mathew Street Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend.</p>
<p><b>Independent music of the 1970s</b> ‘Eric’s and the punk scene’</p>	<p>OMD, Echo and the Bunnymen, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Teardrop Explodes</p>
<p><b>Dance music of Cream in the 1990s</b></p>	<p>A successful nightclub that has gone on to have international success with its Creamfields festivals</p>
<p><b>Current popular artists</b></p>	<p>The Coral, Little Flames, Zutons, Wombats</p>

**Appendix B: Liverpool’s Wall of Fame, Mathew Street, L2 6RE**



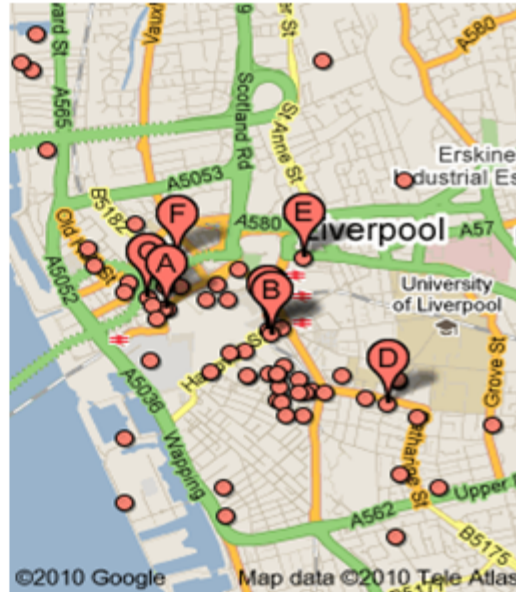
The wall features 54 Liverpool number one chart hits since 1952. It also incorporates an award winning musical themed seat!



## Appendix C: Liverpool's music venues

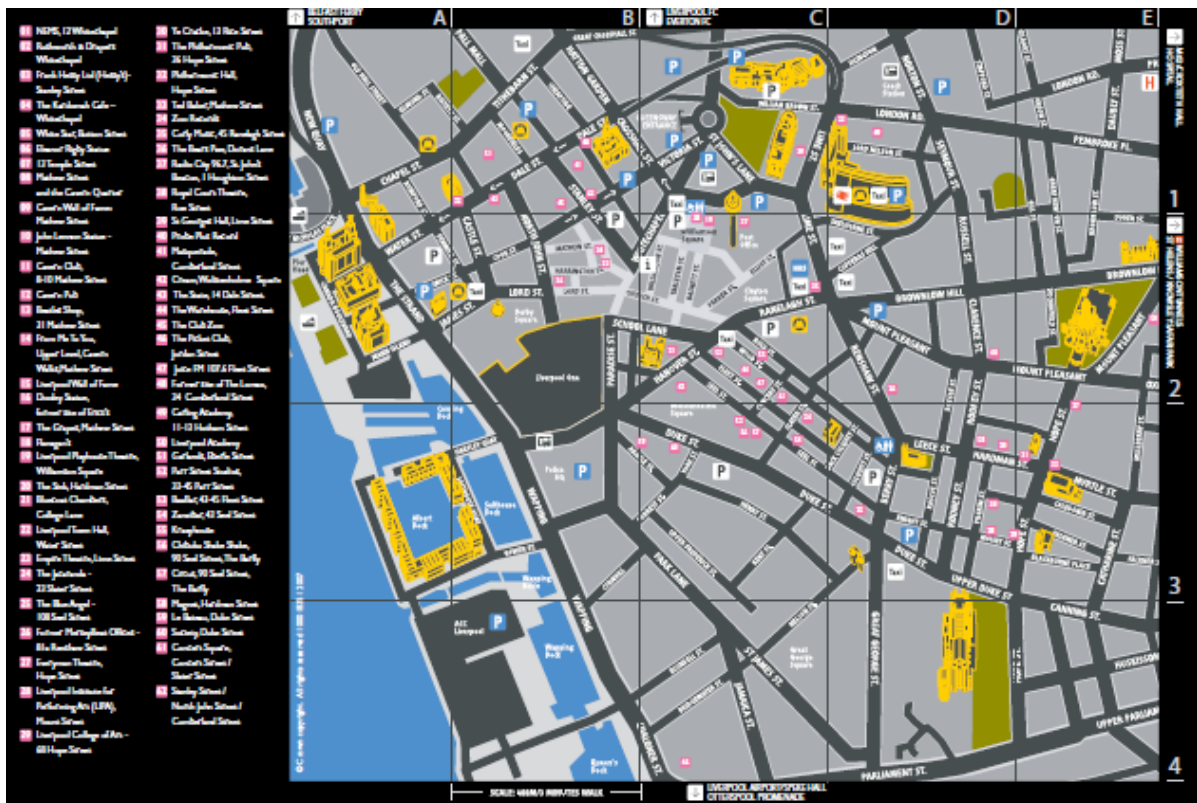
A 'typical' visitor may well access venues via Googlemaps and this is what they would

- A – Cavern Club  
[www.cavernclub.org](http://www.cavernclub.org)
- X – The Beatles Story  
[www.beatlesstory.com](http://www.beatlesstory.com)
- X – Liverpool Echo Arena
- D – Liverpool Philharmonic
- E – O2 Academy Liverpool



see.

## Appendix D: Liverpool's music map



This map is in *Sound City* and is a far more interesting access to music sites. Liverpool University's Institute of Popular Music created a number of music maps as part of their work for the ECoc and for

The Beat Goes On Exhibition at Liverpool's World Museum in 2008 and still available via the website: [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/exhibitions/thebeatgoeson/resource/sounds/mappingcitysounds/](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/wml/exhibitions/thebeatgoeson/resource/sounds/mappingcitysounds/)

#### **Appendix E: Liverpool's annual music events**

- Liverpool Sound City held during May. Artists are also sent to SXSW (South By Southwest) in Texas to promote themselves and the festival.
- Africa Oyé a free African Music Festival held in June that began in the city centre in 1992 and moved to Sefton Park to cope with the high demand
- Summer Pops held in July now hosted at the Liverpool Echo Arena and promoted by CMP. Research found that Summer Pops 2006 generated income of almost £5 million for the City – 80% of which was brought in from outside the City boundaries. Nineteen in every twenty visitors from outside the City had travelled specifically to Liverpool to attend the concert. (The Murray Consultancy 2006)
- International Beatle Week Festival held during August is organised by the Cavern City Tours with bands from over 20 countries and fans from over 40.
- Mathew Street Music Festival (and Fringe since 2008) held at the end of Beatle Week with an estimated 320,000 attending the 18<sup>th</sup> Festival in 2010. Data from 2009 study needs to be added,
- Liverpool Irish Festival held in October
- Liverpool Music Week held at the end of October, beginning of November