

## Introduction to the special issue: Music and tourism

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“Is there anything else, other than music that has the power to transform the utterly mundane, like a pedestrian crossing in north London, into an international tourist hotspot?”  
 - UK Music CEO, Feargal Sharkey (2011: 2)

This special issue of *Tourist Studies* explores critical links between music and tourism: How does music transform particular places into tourist hotspots? Why does tourism struggle in other ‘musical places’? What of power and resistance and change – for people and for places – through music tourism? In attempting to address these questions this special issue follows two lines of development. The first is the extraordinary growth of interest, including a burgeoning body of scholarship, at the interface of music and tourism (e.g., Gibson and Connell, 2005; Kruger and Trandafoiu, 2013; Waitt and Duffy, 2010). These scholars, and others including those in this special issue, have illustrated that music provides an important and emotive narrative for tourists, as an expression of culture, a form of heritage, a signifier of place, and a marker of moments. Indeed, it is increasingly difficult to imagine tourism ‘in silence’, outside of the scores and songs which accompany and punctuate journeys. From touristic performances of traditional dance, pilgrimages to the homes and graves of composers and singers, impromptu street entertainments, tours to concerts, attending festivals, to the sounds of the car radio, travelling with iPods and the ‘muzak’ of hotel lifts, music can both activate and shape journeys, and passively permeate its duration. Music both defines and transcends the borders of destinations, while it emphasises and challenges notions of tradition, provides opportunities for liminal play, transgression and resistance, and helps define the identities of visitors and the visited. Broadly, these tensions between music and tourism underscore the special issue.

A second line in this issue’s development passes through the international *Soundtracks: Music, Tourism and Travel* conference held in Liverpool in July 2012. Echoing in the footsteps of work by Connell and Gibson (2003), the *Soundtracks* conference invited papers that explored music in the context of new and old global mobilities, musical pilgrimage, the material and social flows of travellers and musicians, the cultural and economic policies that promote music tourism, festivals and performances for tourists, ethnographies of touristic encounters with music, the place of music in the representation of tourism destinations and, the role of music in the construction of tourist discourses, narratives and memories. The conference, spread over three days in (arguably) the foremost ‘musical city’ in the UK (Du Noyer, 2007; Leonard and Strachan 2010) included 88 paper presentations given by over 100 scholars from institutions around the world. From these outstanding presentations, five papers were invited for this special issue.

In addition to questioning critically the relations between music and tourism, ongoing debates about place and heritage also interconnect the papers in this special issue. Leading

off, Les Roberts conjures up some 'magic' in his article on sites of popular music heritage in the UK. Through anthropological theories of contagious and sympathetic magic, Roberts explores how the marketing and promotion of music heritage tap into its symbolism as part of civic boosterism and urban regeneration strategies. This is done in hopes that some of the 'magic' of those artists and places may 'rub off' on visitors or 'spill over' to enhance civic image.

Tensions when musicians 'busking' for tips and the sale of recordings of their work to tourists clash with the regulations that tourism agencies and local government authorities seek to impose at major tourism sites are discussed in the paper by **Adam Kaul**. The case he explores is the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland, a spectacular coastal landscape that is a major destination in that country. Attempts by the authorities to control access by musicians to the site following the opening of a visitor centre led to a lively public debate played out through the media, including interventions by high profile Irish musicians. The prominence of music (and the Cliffs of Moher) in Irish tourism promotion reinforces the significance of such tensions for local communities, politicians, officials and visitors.

In contrast, **Phil Long** discusses relationships between music, tourism and place in the context of a Northern English city that is not regarded widely as a major tourism destination – Sheffield. However, this city can lay claim to prominence in genres such as electronica, folk, pub rock and, 'Britpop' scenes past and present. Artists from the city such as Jarvis Cocker, Richard Hawley and the Arctic Monkeys have also explicitly and implicitly sketched a 'psycho geography' of music tourism spaces in the post-industrial city which, again, highlights tensions with 'official' tourism narratives and invites comparisons with the music tourism geographies and strategies of cities elsewhere.

Questions of performativity, authenticity and festivals also link the contributions. The article from **Robert Fry** explores the performativity of music fandom through blues music tourism pilgrimages to the King Biscuit Blues festival in Helena (Arkansas, USA). He recognises that the festival is a product of the commercialisation of the music scene, and notes the ways in which localism and authenticity are carefully constructed by the organisers of the festival. However, for Fry, the performative nature of the pilgrimage and celebration allows blues music fans (and musicians) to control their own identity making. As such, the festival becomes a space where performances of localism, identity and authenticity can continue to take place, where the traditions of the blues are protected and honoured, and where blues fans can continue to (re)construct 'true' blues fandom.

Finally, **Karl Spracklen and Beverley Spracklen's** paper is a case study of the goth scene in the north of England, and its ambivalent relationship with the development of music festival tourism centred on the English coastal town of Whitby. The Whitby Goth Weekend has become an established part of local and regional tourism strategies, offering one key music festival for the town amongst a number of other music festivals (such as the Whitby Folk Week and Musicport). Spracklen and Spracklen explore the circumstances in which the town

of Whitby came to be associated with the gothic and the goth scene. They explore the ways in which older goths in the north of England identify with the festival, and the ways in which goth identity and goth tourism is performed, to argue that performative identities still remain ontologically coherent for those at the heart of the goth scene.

This special issue is, of necessity selective in its coverage of cases, theories and methodologies that may be applied to the study of music tourism. We recognise the need for more critical research on this phenomenon and suggest an overarching imperative to investigate other genres of classical and contemporary music forms in diverse settings and their packaging and consumption as tourism 'product' and in conveying senses of place. Attention might also be directed to 'world' music genres and the ways in which they 'travel' among diaspora communities around the world (e.g. Afro-Caribbean, African, Indian, Celtic, etc.)

The intermediation of music and tourism through for example the output of specialist channels such as BBC Radio 3 and 6 Music, magazines, guide books, promotional clips (such as for David Bowie's 2013 album "The Next Day" with its references to locations in Berlin), tourism board maps and trails is also a rich field for further study along inevitably to the implications of how emerging mobile technologies are changing our relationships with music and place. For researchers, the beat well and truly goes on.

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### References

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