

# **HOW MANCHESTER WAS MADCHESTER? THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE MADCHESTER SCENE**

Dave Fawbert, University of Cambridge, Part II Dissertation, 2004. Any  
questions/queries email: [fawbs@cantab.net](mailto:fawbs@cantab.net)

## Contents

1. Preface and Acknowledgements
2. Introduction
3. Literature Review
4. Methodology
5. Findings, Discussion and Analysis
6. Conclusions
7. Appendix
8. Bibliography

## **1. Preface and Acknowledgements**

I chose to study the geography of the Madchester music scene despite many accusations that popular music is not worthy of study and is not a relevant topic in Geography. I argue that music is not only of tremendous importance in an economic and political sense, through the music industry, but also that music, and music scenes, are to many people the most important part of their lives, and this alone makes this topic important. I argue that to truly understand how and why Madchester came to be, geography is utterly fundamental.

I would like to thank those people who responded to my questionnaire for their time, and salute them for their passion towards this scene which shone through in their answers. I would also like to thank Tony Wilson for giving up his valuable time to be interviewed and also Tom Hingley for answering some provocative questions. I would also like to thank the bands, the DJs and everyone involved in the scene for their legacy of great music which will outlast all of us.

## 2. Introduction

*“We were good bands, us and the Roses. Better than most, or there wouldn’t be all this fuss. It really was about the bands more than Manchester though. I don’t think Manchester really gave anyone music, it’s the bands that did it. You know, the ‘Manchester scene’ is just the same today as it was back in Madchester times. It’s still grey, overcast and looking like it might rain at any minute.”*

*Bez<sup>1</sup> (Kessler (ed), 2003)*

Of music, it is certainly true to say that ‘geographers have largely neglected it relative to other cultural forms’ (Kong, 1995). Specifically, ‘popular music has not been explored to any large extent’ (ibid). This is a staggering oversight on the part of geographers, since the creation and consumption of music are inherently geographical events. Furthermore, the processes that can occur between these two events, namely the appropriation of music as a cultural, an economic and a political product, are, again, highly spatially dependent. It is obvious that a song, inspired by Icelandic fjords, recorded in a Reykjavik studio, distributed across the world by a multinational corporation, and consumed by a disaffected youth in Britain, enabling him or her to become a member of a ‘post rock’ subculture which finds the mainstream national charts abhorrent, is a geographic phenomenon<sup>2</sup>.

Kong (1996) outlines reasons why popular music has tended to be overlooked in geographical studies, citing ‘longstanding cultural geographical focus on elite culture’ (Kong, 1996) and the overarching ‘visually orientated’ focus of geography where ‘soundscapes’ have been overlooked. The conceptualisation of high art’s ‘purity’ and as possessing intrinsic worth - high art as ‘universal, self-justifying, ostensibly placeless’ (Leyshon et al 1998, p.5) – renders geography irrelevant, and thus has led to geography ignoring music as it has overlooked ‘low’ culture. The folly of the academic concentration on high art is apparent when it is noted that the division of music into the three sociological discourses of high art, folk art and pop art (Frith 1996, p21-46) is a relatively recent event, taking place during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and is

---

<sup>1</sup> Dancer with the Happy Mondays

<sup>2</sup> In this example, the music of Sigur Ros

laden with inconsistencies of intrinsic worth<sup>3</sup> challenging the assumed view in academic study of the ‘worthiness’ of high art as opposed to pop art. In addition, neglect of popular art can also be critiqued by understanding of ethnocentric privileging of ‘Western sophistication and complexity’ (Leyshon et al 1998, p.7) against the ‘primitiveness’ of pop music, a predominantly black origin music. On a less ideological level, popular music is worthy of study purely due to its importance from an economic point of view. Worldwide music industry sales were \$29bn in 1992 (Leyshon et al 1998, p10)), and at least £785.7m in Britain in 1992 (Halfacree and Kitchin 1996, p47).

Four topics for popular musical exploration are outlined by Kong (1996): the analysis of symbolic meanings, music as cultural communication, the cultural politics of music and musical economies. It is my intention in this study to explore all four of these themes through the analysis of a musical ‘scene’ apparently delineated in space and time; that is, the ‘Madchester’ scene, a regional scene commonly held to have occurred in Manchester, over the period 1987-1992<sup>4</sup>, which comprised bands, DJs, clubs, fashion, an image (baggy) and a drug (Ecstasy). This particular case study is of optimum potential for analysis.

Firstly, we can study the evolution of the economics of the scene, the extent to which location and localisation (ie. how centralised the scene was and where it took place) were present and important and the extent to which the presence of Tony Wilson, owner of Factory records (hereafter FR) and the Hacienda nightclub, alongside other industry institutions, was crucial or otherwise in enabling the scene to happen. Secondly, we can elucidate how location and localisation affects cultural communication and politics through the geographical conditions which enabled two distinct musical cultures, ‘rock’ and ‘dance’, with entirely different cultural value systems, to come together to form one distinctive scene which has been hugely influential in subsequent years. Finally, in the study of the music itself, we can analyse any symbolic meanings present which are geographically linked. Ultimately, my aim is to establish a theory of what geographical factors are necessary to create and sustain a regional music scene. This is important and necessary as a policy

---

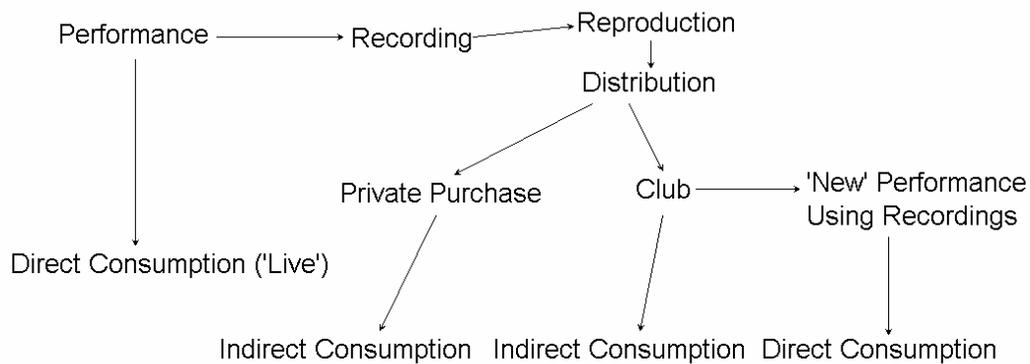
<sup>3</sup> For example, the paradox of the fact that ‘talent’ which is supposed to be an intrinsic property of the high art performer, can only be recognised by someone else (the teacher) and thus students’ talent ‘is never in their possession at all: it exists only in its validation by others’. Therefore is it truly intrinsic? (Frith 1996, p.37-38)

<sup>4</sup> These dates are open for debate, as will be discussed. The commonly held Manchester-centric perception is beyond doubt, not least in the name of the scene.

imperative, particularly since the recent appointment of Fergal Sharkey as the Government's Live Music Czar with a mandate to promote live music venues (BBC Website, 2004) and also due to the potential of regional music scenes to aid in urban regeneration (Cohen 1991). In order to create and promote music scenes, it is crucial to understand the geography behind them, and Madchester offers a fascinating case study. We must discover whether Bez's proclamation that Manchester was unimportant in Madchester is true, or whether, conversely, Madchester could not have happened anywhere else.

### 3. Literature Review

In order to establish a theoretical framework within which to work, it is necessary to start at a very general level, defining the links between the creation of music, its basic starting point, and its consumption, the end point. The schematic shown below (Fig 2.1) demonstrates the most basic view of the production and consumption of music.



**Figure 2.1**

#### **Basic Schematic of Music Production and Consumption**

The music industry as a whole may be thought of as bridging the gap between performance and consumption and between the supply and demand of musical commodification (Scott 1999, p1965). We must theorise the workings of the industry in order to situate the case study of Madchester within a global context of music commodification. Notions of musical globalisation and simultaneous localisation, incorporating economic theories behind agglomeration and Neo-Marshallian nodes then enable us to cast our focus to the economic regional and local level.

The next step is then to discuss broad distinctions of cultural discourses within popular music, specifically folk, rock, and dance, and their associated histories and value systems, in order to understand the nuances of the demand side, and the nature of direct and indirect consumption. Finally, previous work on the geography of

Northern Soul, an earlier regional scene, and Madchester then place this in a regional context and also allow us to study the geography of the actual music making itself.

### **The Music Industry**

Scott (1999, p.1966) describes how the recorded music industry 'is organized into a handful of large corporate entities, or majors, together with a great many so-called independents, most of which employ only small numbers of people'. There are five majors (for example Time-Warner Inc), which are all multinational organisations, have a plethora of recording artists, and are highly capitalized and almost exclusively profit-driven (ibid.). The smaller independents have less working capital and are frequently (though not always) less profit driven. Increasingly, independents are not truly independent at all, taking part in joint ventures and agreements with majors as a means of coping with market volatility and increasing the distribution potential they have. Conversely, the majors exploit this relationship through using independent record labels as an unofficial scouting source (Sadler 1997; Scott 1999). Independent labels have a reputation for being less profit driven and more creatively focussed than the majors, tending to specialise in long-term artist development rather than short term, high return 'pop' (in this context, to infer that the product is of little creative worth) acts<sup>5</sup>. However, the strict divide between majors and independents is increasingly blurred; for example, Britney Spears' debut album was released on Jive Records, officially an 'indie' but in fact heavily associated with Bertelsmann Music Group (BMG) and all its associated promotional and distributional armoury, so it is wise to check the actual independence of an 'independent'.

Record companies, therefore, must be theorised as being predominantly capitalist organisations which make money primarily from sales of records, a purely symbolic good valued by the consumer only for its aesthetic and semiotic content (Bordieu 1993). Around record labels themselves there exists a myriad of other associated activities, all concerned with the actual mechanics of recording the music, promoting and distributing it, and organising remuneration for the composers and performers. In a simplistic commercial capitalist model of the music industry, the artists that are

---

<sup>5</sup> There are exceptions to this. Frith (1996, p22) describes how Decca Records had a classical division which was 'a matter of prestige rather than profit'.

selected for promotion are simply those that will sell the most records and thus make labels the most money.

The industry as a whole may be thought of as mediating the music that is selected for distribution from all that is produced at any one time; acting as ‘gatekeepers’ (Hirsch 1969; 1972, in Scott 1999) and thus analysis of the industry is as important to studying a musical ‘scene’ as the music itself, since it is the industry that determines what music is allowed through to the marketplace.

### **Music Scenes**

A musical ‘scene’ is most succinctly defined as ‘that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization’ (Straw 1990, p.373). It is important to note that a scene is not necessarily bound by physical space. It may be temporal; for example, the ‘Britpop’ era 1994-1997<sup>6</sup>, or along lines of genre (or similar ‘soundscape’), for example, there has been a hip-hop ‘scene’ since the 1970s. It is also important to note that the definition of a specific ‘scene’ can be a difficult task, since it depends who is defining it, and who has the power to define it, a topic related to the demand side of music commodification, addressed later. Halfacree and Kitchin (1996) suggest that the music industry’s natural tendency, led by multinational record companies, is towards the homogenisation of popular music, in order to reap the rewards of establishing a global market where one artist may be sold to as large a market as possible. It is suggested that the persistence of regional scenes is a postmodern neo-tribal reaction to globalisation and, while this has significant credence, this work looks for the more fundamental processes underpinning ‘scene-building’, rather than an explanation for why they still occur *per se*.

In the area of ‘regional scenes’ and agglomeration, where there is clustering of commercial musical activity, theory must start with the economic observations of Marshall (1890) who suggested that like industries situated themselves in close proximity in order to minimise transaction costs, to enjoy external economies of scale

---

<sup>6</sup> More accurately, Britpop is said to have ended on July 30<sup>th</sup> 1997 when Noel Gallagher of Oasis attended a Downing Street drinks party, suggesting that perhaps Politics and Music are uneasy bedfellows (Harris 2003), an important consideration for the government’s live music ‘Czar’.

that would not otherwise be available to isolated companies and also because spatial proximity contributed to a creation of an industrial atmosphere; the feeling of ‘something in the air’. Recent rediscovery of this by geographers (Amin and Thrift 1992; Henry et al 1996, Keeble et al 1999, Saxenian 1994), and even more recently by economists (Krugman 1991), has led to a focus on neo-marshallian nodes, or New Industrial Districts (NIDs), of interest due to the huge economic power of examples such as Silicon Valley, USA. By analogy, applying this to the music industry this would suggest that labels, and other music industry activities, would agglomerate for the same economic reasons (see Nachum and Keeble 1999 for the media in general). Scott (1999, p.1974) goes further, establishing a corollary to ‘something in the air’, suggesting that ‘we need...to examine the repercussions of the entire apparatus of production...on creative outcomes in the cultural economy’ (ibid.), since the music industry contains ‘evolving pools of human skills and aptitudes’ (ibid.) that rely on interactions and encounters between artists and industry workers in order to foster innovation, crucial to the success, or otherwise, of a regional music area. Maximising interactions therefore maximises creativity.

Halfacree and Kitchin’s (1996) analysis of Madchester suggests that ‘the existence of local record labels, venues and other promotional facilities has helped Manchester bands develop within their home area, which meant that they did not have to jump immediately onto the train for London’ (ibid, p.51). The presence of an active local press, independent record stores and local radio stations are all cited as crucial factors in fostering a regional music industry success story. In addition to this, Halfacree and Kitchin emphasise the importance of the bands within the scene feeding off local geographical references, both lyrically and in their material containing ‘localised feelings and experiences’ (ibid). They suggest clear and important roles for localisation and location, but do not explore the linkages, if any, of Madchester to surrounding areas, other than to note that as the scene gained momentum, bands from places other than Manchester were appropriated into the Madchester scene. In addition, they do not examine the exact nature of why having *local* labels, an active *local* press and so on contribute to a regional scene developing, and any notions of cause and effect. The issue of whether there were local labels because there was great local musical activity or whether there was great musical activity because there was a strong industry presence is a crucial one.

## Music Discourses

The next relevant theoretical analysis concerns the consumers of a regional scene; those that determine whether a scene is successful or not. The three discourses of music that are relevant to Madchester are folk, rock and dance. Pure, young pop (as opposed to 'old pop') is not considered here, since pop is very much defined as being popular to the masses at the time it is released, and possessing little lasting creative importance. The fact that Madchester is still artistically relevant today<sup>7</sup> justifies this omission, allied to the fact that Madchester records never made a significant dent on the charts at the time.

Folk music is not commonly thought of as a component of Madchester, but it is justified as the antithesis (alongside classical music, not considered for obvious reasons) of purely-for-profit pop music; that is, since folk is essentially non-capitalist and possesses an 'anti-modernist ideology' (Frith 1996, p.40), it will become relevant if Madchester is found to have operated in a non-capitalist manner. Folk ideology emphasises the importance of tradition (for example, the minimal use of amplification, and the emphasis on acoustic, 'natural' instruments), sets of performing rituals and spaces (for example, the small club and the festival), which do not include records, and has as its ideal the non-separation of art and life. Folk clubs, in particular, manifest this by aiming to minimise the distance between performer and audience (Frith 1996, p.39-41), in contrast to rock ideology which has a greater emphasis on maintaining a physical, and discursive, distance between 'the performers' and 'the audience'.

Furthermore, rock culture 'carries intimations of sincerity, authenticity, art – noncommercial concerns' (Frith 1983, p.11). This gives it common ground with folk ideology, but where rock deviates from folk is in its desire to reach a mass youth market via the use of records, and also in the meaning of 'rock' as 'an ideological suffix' (ibid) relating to an attitude, an intention and an effect (ibid). To define rock ideology is notoriously difficult, since in its history it has variously passed through ideologies of rock as pure mass culture, rock as folk music (despite arguments that this was not possible due to rock's cultural products, records, being produced under

---

<sup>7</sup> The mere fact that Madchester warranted a feature issue of NME Originals (Kessler (ed), 2003), a series dedicated purely to perceived important musical eras, supports this.



Rock-as-live and dance-as-disc subsequently has a host of dualisms which demonstrate the oppositional nature of the cultures. Art versus technology (see Frith 1986), 'real' sounds versus 'fake', listening to a performance versus dancing to it. These dualisms have, in recent years been contested<sup>9</sup> but not prior to Madchester, and not so explicitly as in this scene.

### **Northern Soul and Subcultural Capital**

Hollows and Milestone (1998) analyse a case study which is of particular importance to Madchester, Northern Soul, which they describe as 'a regionally based dance and club network that centers around "rare" soul records from the 1960s and 1970s' (p.83). Northern Soul predates Madchester, originating in the 1960s and was a fiercely regional scene which was 'a genuinely secret subculture of working-class youngsters dedicated to acrobatic dancing and fast American soul' (Hebdige 1979, p.25) which incorporated rare and 'underground' soul records imported from Detroit, thus making this an example of a 'dance' disc culture, albeit an archival one<sup>10</sup>. The clubs at the centre of the scene were in parochial outposts, such as the Wigan Casino, the Wheel in Manchester and the Blackpool Mecca and frequently involved 'all-nighters' and 'weekenders' aided by the consumption of amphetamines. Hollows and Milestone's analysis contains three key theoretical points: the importance of the 'northernness' of Northern Soul, in that it operated in wilful opposition to what was seen as the musical dominance of London (p.87); the importance of rarity and exclusivity in assigning value to commodities in the scene (for example, the rarer the record, the more cultural value it had); and the importance of place and pilgrimage – to be considered part of the Northern Soul 'crowd' one had to visit the aforementioned clubs as well as other places important to the scene. In addition, the exploration of this scene contains a discussion of the way in which Northern Soul aligned itself with the sounds of America's Rust Belt cities, and its 'respect for the music of Black America' (p.92) rather than the pop, 'Americana' myth of much rock music (Frith 1983).

---

<sup>9</sup> For example, the entrance of dance acts such as Chemical Brothers into the world of live gigs. Thornton (1995) now argues that there is more of a continuum between rock and dance.

<sup>10</sup> In that the music used was 'discovered' from a past era when it was not commercially successful.

A final important concept to consider is Bourdieu's (1993) idea of cultural capital, and Thornton's extension of this to subcultural capital. In short, possession of cultural capital governs who has the authority and power 'to make distinctions between the legitimate and the illegitimate' (Hollands and Milestone 1998, p.88), while within a subculture, such as trance, a DJ may be said to possess subcultural capital; it is he or she who has the authority to make a record 'cool' or not (similarly, it is those in possession of subcultural capital that had the authority to define Madchester). These forms of capital are unevenly distributed across geographical space and are important to musical scenes in obvious ways, for the possession of cultural capital determines where scenes may start, or conversely a lack of it may determine where subcultures develop in opposition to the hegemony.

### **Holistic View**

While this discussion of theory is extremely broad in its scope, it is hoped that these elements of economic and cultural theory together with historical case studies are the most relevant to Madchester. While accusations that the scope is too broad may be justified, it certainly seems that one cannot analyse the cultural aspects of musical scenes without considering the economic arena in which it occurs, so a holistic view is the most appropriate to take.

#### **4. Methodology**

The fundamental questions that I am looking to ask in this work relate to location, and localisation, and the extent to which each of these was important to Madchester occurring, and being sustained during the period 1987-1992. Essentially this disseminates into three key questions: location and localisation in a) the creation of the scene, b) the music industry's facilitation, or hindrance of this creation and c) the consumption of the scene's cultural products, that is, how the two apparently distinct cultures of rock and rave came together. Essentially, as stated in Chapter 1, I am looking to understand what geographic elements are necessary to create, and sustain a musical scene.

In order to explore these questions, I utilised a whole range of research devices, the majority of them being qualitative rather than quantitative. Firstly, I interviewed two leading members of the scene: Tony Wilson, the owner of FR, an independent Manchester label which operated from 1979 to 1992 and the Hacienda nightclub, situated in Whitworth Street West in Manchester which existed from 1982 to 1997, and Tom Hingley, the lead singer of the Inspiral Carpets, a Madchester band. For the former I conducted an in-depth semi-structured face-to-face interview, and for the latter I used a set of questions which were asked and answered via email, with several subsequent emails querying any unclear answers or digging deeper into interesting avenues. Tony Wilson was questioned on all three research aspects outlined above, as was Tom Hingley. Attempts to interview Peter Hook, the bassist of New Order and Ian Brown, the lead singer of the Stone Roses were unsuccessful due to the former's touring commitments and the latter's refusal to talk about his involvement in the Madchester scene.

To address this problem, I used secondary data, namely biographies and autobiographies of bands and DJs involved in the scene whose members I was unable to interview. For the most part this technique was extremely successful since, while biographies are necessarily biased, they contained a plethora of direct quotes from interviews which, while naturally selective, provided useful insights.

I then researched as many official publications and published works as possible, focussing on the more widely read magazines such as the NME and non-academic volumes written about Madchester, whilst ruling nothing too small or insignificant for consideration if it happened to cross my path (for example, articles in newspapers that

I read in a non-academic capacity). The sheer volume of publications referring to Madchester made an exhaustive picture practically impossible so I used word-of-mouth, recommendations and Madchester fan suggestions to pinpoint the most widely read. In addition, this also led me to discover the most important unofficial publications, such as Madchester fanzines and websites which provided me with another research avenue, albeit one with particular difficulties of accuracy and bias, which were both taken into consideration when deciding how much weight to attach findings.

In addition to this material, I conducted an email questionnaire of 25 Madchester fans, obtaining respondents from postings on Madchester-related and general music websites, messageboards and forums. A copy of the questionnaire is included in the Appendix. While 25 is below the commonly accepted 'good sample size' of 30, I feel it is justified since the majority of questions were qualitative, the questionnaire was of substantial depth and, being a historic, and subcultural scene, fans are notoriously difficult to find. In addition, whilst it is noted that bias will be present since every respondent was a self-defined 'fan' of Madchester, this was unavoidable since people who were not fans were not likely to know anything about the scene, and thus would have been of no functional use to the survey. Every effort was made to refrain from leading questions, and all respondents were encouraged to add any comments that they felt might be relevant and useful. This instruction had a particularly good and unexpected result since respondents commented that this conveyed a sense that I was genuinely interested in their opinions (which, of course, I was) and thus encouraged more in-depth replies, in addition to passing on of questionnaires to fellow fans.

Finally, the cultural products themselves were studied: the Madchester music, the artwork, particularly that of Peter Saville, a co-founder of FR and a celebrated graphic designer<sup>11</sup>, and films, notably 24 Hour Party People, and associated documentaries.

Quantitative data proved extremely hard to come by, especially since record companies and artists would not divulge details of their business dealings, and FR, kept no authoritative record of their sales or attendance figures at the Hacienda. However, the importance of quantitative data in this instance is debatable, since, as various work shows, simple record sales figures are not neatly correlated to, nor a

---

<sup>11</sup> I attended an exhibition of his work at Urbis, in Manchester.

proxy guide of, cultural musical value, even if it may be important to economic concerns (Frith 1983; Frith 1996).

## 5. Findings, Discussion and Analysis

*“Madchester – what a name! Best name ever for a scene, wasn’t it?”*

*Clint Boon<sup>12</sup> (in Luck 2002, p.9)*

### Definition

A fundamental starting point for analysing Madchester is its definition: what elements constituted the Madchester scene. Luck (2002) takes an entire page to define it (p.10) without ever really coming close to a definitive answer. Each source puts the emphasis on the most important part of the Madchester scene according to their own agenda: Tony Wilson cites his bands, the Happy Mondays and New Order together with his club, The Hacienda (and Schoom in London), The NME emphasises all the bands, the aforementioned two plus the Stone Roses, The Inspiral Carpets and The Charlatans, since its audience is predominantly familiar with a ‘live’, band culture, Hacienda DJ Dave Haslam concentrates on the clubs and DJs and so on. In short, there is no easy definition, so it perhaps best to simply describe a brief history of Madchester-related events.

Madchester was certainly about the coming together of a rave scene that was relatively new, and a rock scene that was established in Manchester, and announced itself to the country as a whole on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1989 when the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays played on Top of the Pops (Luck 2002). The fact that it took a performance from two bands to announce the birth of the scene is probably due to the public’s familiarity with bands, as opposed to clubs or raves. The name for the scene had been coined around this time, although debate raged about who exactly was responsible. The Happy Mondays released an EP entitled ‘Madchester Rave On’ (FR 1989) with the idea apparently inspired by associates of Tony Wilson. The NME’s subeditor Danny Kelly also claimed credit, particularly believable due to the media’s necessity to label and ‘delimit an era, as a yardstick, for analogies and for the shorthand explanations or lessons it can provide’ (Edy 1999) and thus in order to comment on the scene happening, it needed a label. Regardless, Madchester was born and was underpinned by a sound, Chicago House and to a lesser extent Detroit

---

<sup>12</sup> Keyboard/organ player with the Inspiral Carpets.

Techno, played in the clubs, bands which were (said to be) influenced by this sound, a clothing style, baggy, and an image, influenced by the drug ecstasy and 1960s psychedelia (manifested in the use of primary colours). Exactly which bands and clubs is debatable; my survey found the Happy Mondays, The Stone Roses, Inspiral Carpets, The Charlatans, 808 State, The Farm, New Order, Flowered Up and, possibly, Northside as being the main bands involved. Respondents were asked to select which bands from a list they considered to be a Madchester band, and also to name any they thought I had omitted. My control came from my deliberate non-listing of New Order, cited in almost all other material as being part of Madchester, with the cut-off point being 20% of positive responses necessary to be 'defined' as a Madchester band. All bands listed above achieved this, although the fact that New Order only received the minimum votes required led to me include Northside (16%), who also were not listed, since this suggested that respondents were far less likely to cite bands not listed, even if they were undoubtedly part of Madchester. An interesting omission was James, who released early material on FR and interesting inclusions The Charlatans, who only released their first single in 1989 when the scene was at its height, Flowered Up, whose debut release was in 1991, and also the Farm, a Liverpool band; both of these suggested Madchester as a 'sound' rather than on the basis of a record company roster (that is, Factory's), or a strict time period. In addition, the Charlatans hailed from Wolverhampton and Flowered Up from London, suggesting early on that Madchester does not necessarily equate completely with Manchester. In all 32 bands or artists were named as being perceived as part of Madchester which demonstrates the fluidity of the concept of a scene, depending on who is defining it.

Clubs named by correspondents were The Hacienda, Legends, Band on the Wall, the International, Conspiracy, The Boardwalk, Thunderdome and the Sound Garden in Manchester, together with a few others dotted around the country. Dave Haslam, a Manchester fanzine editor and Hacienda DJ describes how, from 1986 to 1988, while London clubs explored hip hop and go go, northern clubs in Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester found Chicago House, 'and for two years a North/South divide of a different kind was established' (Haslam 1999). Reynolds (1998) concentrates on London clubs, such as Shoom (started by DJ Danny Rampling), The Trip, Spectrum

(Paul Oakenfold) and The Fridge as pioneering Acid House<sup>13</sup>, with no mention of a Manchester involvement until the sound spread nationally. However, the fact that the approximate date of London discovery is November 1987 suggests that Haslam may be correct in claiming a Manchester discovery of the music. To add to the confusion, Tony Wilson pinpoints the arrival of Chicago House and the stylistically similar ‘Balearic Beats’<sup>14</sup> to the precise months of April and May 1988 after being picked up the previous summer in Ibiza, and its import into the UK *almost simultaneously* at the Hacienda and Schoom, a club in London. This demonstrates the difficulty of trying to spatially pinpoint the origin of a club culture that spread nationally quickly (in contrast to Northern Soul) due to the lack of data available; for example, DJs’ do not keep lists of the records they play, and Acid House was a culture which was almost entirely club-led – followers did not tend to purchase the records they danced to since, similarly to Northern Soul, it relied on imports from Chicago and Detroit.

By the end of 1988, however, acid house was a nationwide phenomenon, yet Madchester was not established until November 1989. This may be a consequence of the inability of the media to understand a club, or disc culture, or to the fact that bands are easier to tie to a geographic location than a style of music. Alternatively it may be that acid house was a nationwide phenomenon which Madchester interpreted through its bands; that is, Madchester was a particular ‘strand’ of the national acid house scene which existed from 1988 which it was entitled to claim since the North had discovered acid house before the rest of Britain and thus had authenticity. In addition, its bands had had the extra time to be influenced by it which the rest of Britain had not.

### **The Madchester Bands and the Music Industry**

If the latter explanation is true, this lends greater analytical importance to the bands involved in Madchester and it is clear that Manchester provided the bulk of the band component of Madchester; it is not necessarily clear why Manchester and not, say, Liverpool should be the focus, since it was the North as a whole that had embraced acid house. Halfacree and Kitchin (1996), who mistakenly attributed the Madchester

---

<sup>13</sup> Acid House being a particular type of House music. Reynolds and Oldfield (1990) describes it as ‘the purest, barest distillation of house, the outer limit of its logic of inhuman functionalism’.

<sup>14</sup> Described as ‘laid back, sunkissed’ by Reynolds (1998)

bands as leading the way into a rave culture, when it appears to be the other way round, attribute this almost entirely to initial localised growth facilitated by a supportive environment before being given an identity which enables it to be 'disembedded' (Giddens 1991, in Halfacree and Kitchin 1996, p.52) and sold nationally. There is an element of truth in this, but it does not tell the whole story.

The city had certainly had noteworthy activity in the aftermath of punk, led by Factory Record's first signings since starting in 1979, Joy Division. They were preceded by the punk acts formed in the direct wake of the Sex Pistol's explosion onto the music scene such as the Buzzcocks, Ed Banger and the Nosebleeds alongside more locally known acts such as the Chameleons. Through the 1980s, the Manchester sound was led by the Smiths, who were resolutely anti-club and anti-DJ<sup>15</sup>.

For brevity's sake, my analysis of the Madchester bands will be restricted to New Order, The Stone Roses, The Inspiral Carpets and The Happy Mondays, since the latter three were cited as Madchester bands by most of my respondents and New Order were the first Madchester band to exist, having been brought into existence when the lead singer of Joy Division committed suicide. The first seeds of the rock/rave crossover can be seen in their seminal single Blue Monday (FR 1983), which featured programmed drums, explicit use of synthesisers, and the repetitive 4/4 bass drum characteristic of Chicago House; Derek Brandwood, a studio owner stated that New Order were 'the biggest technophiles I have ever come across' (Middles 1996, p.210). In addition, their 1983 single, Confusion, was produced by Arthur Baker in New York, a dance pioneer. In addition to this, the Hacienda opened on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1982, jointly owned by FR and New Order. Yet at this time, journalist Paul Morley stated, 'I don't think there is a scene at all. Down in London everything seems possible all the time' (Middles 1996, p.161). In addition, producer Martin Hannett stated 'It is impossible, to simply create something by building an empty space' (in Middles 1996, p.167). This cynicism is not surprising, since the Hacienda was initially a live bands venue and thus was indifferent to exclusively disc-based club cultures, it was four years before acid house arrived in the North, and New Order were the only band ploughing a dance/rock furrow. What conditions were present to enable other bands to be created, and nourished to ultimately become part of Madchester?

---

<sup>15</sup> Morrissey, the lead singer of the Smiths sang 'Hang the blessed DJ' in the Smiths' 1986 single, Panic (Rough Trade Records, 1986).

The first essential institution required for any band is a place to practice. Manchester seems to have had a healthy supply of these: Happy Mondays rehearsed at Little Peter Street, underneath the Boardwalk club, as did New Order; The Inspiral Carpets rehearsed at keyboard player Clint Boon's factory, T'Mill in Ashton, alongside other local bands; The Stone Roses rehearsed in Spirit Studios, Chorlton. The Little Peter Street rehearsal rooms seem to have been a hive of local activity, and, due to their proximity to the Boardwalk, meant that the venue had a steady stream of bands to choose from to perform there. Alongside the Boardwalk, The International and the Hacienda were the main gig venues for up-and-coming bands and Tom Hingley found that 'there were always loads of gigs that we found easy to find and do' (email interview 2004). Likewise, the Happy Mondays apparently had relatively little trouble finding gigs in Manchester during their formative years, though this may be a result of them signing to Factory early and thus being able to exploit Tony Wilson's local venue links and, of course, the Hacienda. For the Stone Roses, however, it seems it was a different story. Middles' states that 'Manchester's venues were uninspiring', while Ian Brown (in Middles 2000, p.51) described 'the deadening sub-Hacienda gig circuit' with some contempt. The Roses reacted to what they perceived as a lack of suitable venues by playing in 'alternative spaces'; that is, they played innovative 'warehouse parties', gigs under railway arches, and gigs away from Manchester, for example a 1985 gig at Preston Clouds. However, a large reason for the Roses' appropriation of unusual performance spaces is that they felt excluded by the dominant Factory clique. Middles felt that 'the Factory bands...had the highest profile...not so the Stone Roses who remained distinctly outside looking in' (Middles 2000, p.62). In July 1986, the Roses were not given a slot at the Festival of the Tenth Summer, a major Factory-run event despite having a large local following at this point. They were undoubtedly outsiders in the Manchester *industry* since their breakthrough single, Sally Cinnamon (Revolver Records, 1987), was released by FM Revolver Records in Wolverhampton, and they eventually signed to Silvertone, a subsidiary of Zomba – a London record label. Therefore it is useful at this juncture to examine the exact working nature of FR, who dominated the Manchester scene.

There can be no doubt that Factory did not operate as a typical capitalist record company. Their mantra was art above profit and was described by Tony Wilson as ‘an experiment’; he claims that not a single decision made in the history of Factory was motivated by profit. There was no interference in the creative process of writing and nothing of a creative nature was compromised at any stage. There are myriad examples of this vision manifesting itself: Factory refused to release tapes, since they were considered ugly; the record sleeve for New Order’s Blue Monday single was so expensive that every copy sold lost money; Peter Saville, a Factory co-founder and designer of New Order’s sleeves, had complete creative freedom and was allowed to design sleeves with no mention of the band name<sup>16</sup>; the Hacienda lost thousands for the first five years at least; they signed bands with almost zero commercial value: Middles asks, ‘could any other label possibly spend 17 years nurturing Durutti Column...with absolutely no possibility of large commercial returns?’ (Middles 2000, p.3). Naturally, such wilful subversiveness often had the opposite effect with many anti-commercial moves garnering publicity, thus fuelling sales.

An easy claim to make would be that Manchester could not have happened without Factory – since they signed New Order and the Happy Mondays – but this does not logically follow: surely if Factory had not existed, they would have been signed by, say, a London label like the Roses, and thus still given Manchester some exposure. However, on a practical level, signing to a London label early may have resulted in the bands moving to London to be nearer their label, and also to have signed to another label of similar size to Factory (in order to gain similar levels of publicity) would almost certainly have meant signing to a predominantly capitalist label, who may have stopped the creative freedom, and the kudos, they enjoyed at Factory<sup>17</sup>. The Roses signed to Silvertone when they already had a substantial local Manchester following, and thus were anchored there in order to maintain their core support.

In addition to these factors, there is evidence to suggest that Factory was not an entirely closed clique which looked after its own interests: Haslam (in Middles 1996, p.226) recounts the Hacienda freely allowing him to distribute flyers for a rival night at the Boardwalk and claims that ‘they were intelligent enough to see the overall

---

<sup>16</sup> For example, *Power, Corruption and Lies* by New Order (FR 1983).

<sup>17</sup> In 1987 Factory commanded 0.5% of UK single sales and 0.4% of UK album sales (BPI Yearbook 1987).

picture...that we, down at the Boardwalk, were helping to build an overall scene and the Hacienda would benefit also' (ibid).

It seems clear to me that a subtle mixture of competition and co-operation was at work here. Factory's non-capitalist nature enabled bands who would not normally have flourished – pioneering bands making innovative music – to develop slowly while simultaneously providing them with a ready made venue, The Hacienda, and access to the elite in Manchester, while their non-capitalist refusal to stop rival clubs taking their customers helped in the long run. However, their competitive side and their ostracising of the Roses, for example, forced bands like the Roses to create their own territory and forge their own way by utilising devices more commonly associated with raves, such as warehouse parties and railway arch gigs. Thus, a label heavily associated with club culture (through its ownership of the Hacienda) created the conditions for a rock/dance crossover from its bands, while the Roses, on the outside, ended up unexpectedly employing elements of dance promotion in order to progress which brought a band which was musically straightforward rock<sup>18</sup> into the dance sphere. Once in this sphere, they then became part of Madchester, and in addition, of course, this exposed many of the Roses fans, predominantly rock fans, to dance culture for the first time.

The Inspiral Carpets' experience was something between this. Factory's shambolic image meant that they did not appeal to the Carpets. Tom Hingley states: 'Factory signed three fantastic bands - Joy Division, New Order and the Happy Mondays – but they were shit businessmen. We would never have signed to them' (email interview 2004). The Carpets released their first few records financed by themselves, together with a small Manchester label, Playtime Records, built up a local following, then signed to Mute, a London label. However, unlike the Roses, it seems that the local gig circuit met their needs and thus they were not part of Factory, but not against it either in such an explicit way as the Roses.

Thus we can see that localisation of labels was not a prerequisite to enable a group of bands to develop; after all, The Inspiral Carpets and the Stone Roses signed to London labels. But the presence of Factory in Manchester was vital firstly for the bands it signed, but also that the other bands had something to define themselves against. In addition, localisation of labels meant that Manchester bands in early stages

---

<sup>18</sup> Up until Fools Gold (Silvertone Records 1989), which is viewed by most of my respondents as 'a great record, but not as good as their other material'. Thus the Roses were primarily a rock band.

of development could stay in Manchester, which is important in the geography of music creation, as will be seen.

Localisation seems to be far more important in promotion and publicity. The four Madchester bands I studied all utilised the existence of local radio stations such as Piccadilly Radio and Greater Manchester Radio, and fans described a host of Manchester record stores where they purchased Madchester bands' records before they were nationally available, such as Eastern Bloc, and Piccadilly Records. Eastern Bloc in fact served a dual purpose as an importer of Chicago House records. In the most stark example of localisation of publicity, the Stone Roses were all but ignored by the national press right up until the Top of Pops appearance with the Happy Mondays. Their second manager, Gareth Evans stated that 'no London papers will listen to us' (in Middles 2000, p.91) and the impression is backed up by the simple fact that the Roses received one single review, one live review, and only one main story in the NME prior to April 1989. Coverage only exploded after their gig on July 29<sup>th</sup> at Blackpool's Empress Ballroom by which time they already had a substantial local and national following. In fact, NME subeditor Danny Kelly has described Madchester as 'the first music scene to happen without the permission of the [national] music press...the punters led and journalists caught up' (Kessler (ed) 2003). Local fanzines, such as Debris, and other Manchester magazines such as City Life helped the Madchester bands build a loyal local following and it was not until later that the bands received nationwide publicity.

### **The Geography of Music Creation**

A crucial part of the creation of the Madchester bands are what I term 'musical nodes'. A close look at the bands, and their interaction with the music industry reveal an extraordinary amount of blurring of the lines between the industry and the creators of the music and 'musical nodes' are those people that seem to have bridged the gap between bands and the industry, bands and clubs, and between different bands involved in Madchester. They acted in ways analogous to workers in NIDs who move between companies, exchanging tacit and embodied knowledge and it seems undoubtedly true that their activities were enabled by the close proximity of the bands, and the localisation of industry agents – even when the band was signed to a London label (for example, the Stone Roses' managers were based in Manchester).

Figure 3.1 demonstrates the internal linkages of the Madchester bands through musical nodes.



As can be seen, there is barely a single ‘industry’ person who does not have some sort of connection to the music itself, be it the bands, or the clubs. All of the bands were connected in some way, many as friends, particularly in the case of Factory, where bands were often signed on the recommendation of existing Factory acts, a point aptly demonstrated by Tony Wilson’s recollection of a performance by a ‘Factory All-Stars’ at a gig<sup>19</sup>; a label loyalty and band friendship rarely seen in the music industry. Furthermore, Tony Wilson stated: ‘I have no idea why...but there was a family ethic [at Factory]’ (interview 2004) when asked whether there was ever any resentment from Factory acts selling thousands, towards acts selling next to nothing. He explains that this may have originated from the fact that acts signed to Factory tended to recommend bands they were friends with: Joy Division recommended Section 25; New Order brought in James. Musicians acted as talent scouts for Factory, blurring the music and industry boundaries once again. Thus, musical and creative localisation and interactions appear to be important in fostering a scene.

### **The Rock/Dance Crossover – Enabling Geographies**

Having looked at the workings of the industry in Madchester, and the supply (or production) side of the scene, we must move onto the demand side; how was the clashing of musical discourses enabled, and what part did location and localisation play?

Tony Wilson would claim that location was everything: ‘Manchester music before [house] was open. Open to all kinds of cultures. Dance and rock – this is the one city in the world where you could be into both.’ (interview, 2004) This implicitly questions whether in fact there was a clash of cultures, or whether they had in fact co-existed for years. However, Wilson cites the precedence of Northern Soul as evidence of this yet Northern Soul was a disc culture, and an archival one. There were no Northern Soul bands, only old, ‘discovered’ records. Haslam writes that on the occasions where attempts were made to host nights mixing Northern Soul with modern soul and funk fans was attempted, ‘the crossover was rarely successful’ (Haslam 1999, p.149). Further evidence of a separation of cultures prior to Madchester is found when Haslam states that ‘The Hacienda in 1983 found that it was

---

<sup>19</sup> The same night as Madonna’s performance at the Hacienda for *The Tube* – Madonna’s first ever UK gig.

still serving a community for whom disco music was anathema' (ibid, p.150), and this separation was manifested in the way 'the dance music versus rock music battle was still being fought in the music press in the mid 1980s' (ibid, p.157).

The techniques used to achieve crossover were varied, but there is without doubt a debt owed to Northern Soul. The Roses in particular show this in one of their biggest gigs being at Blackpool's Empress Ballroom – a parochial outpost reminiscent of Wigan Casino which was 'a manic Manchester day out' (Middles 2000, p.124). Similarly, their biggest ever gig was an outdoor concert at Spike Island in Widnes. The two events being 'as far from sophisticated London as it is possible to travel, culturally speaking if not geographically' (ibid, p.122) and a direct descendent of Northern Soul weekenders. The Mondays gave nods to Northern Soul in both their sound, in vocalist Shaun Ryder's stealing of old soul vocals<sup>20</sup>, the use of a black soul singer, Rowetta on songs from Step On onwards and indeed their covers of Step On (FR 1990) and Tokoloshe Man (FR 1990) - relatively obscure soul/African 1970s songs originally recorded by John Kongos<sup>21</sup>. Thus live bands in a rock culture appropriated aspects of a disc culture. The Mondays used more direct techniques, borrowing House's use of repetition (both in basslines and drum patterns), having their records remixed to be played in clubs from the very start of their career<sup>22</sup> and going even further by employing DJs Paul Oakenfold and Steve Osbourne as producers for their biggest selling album, Pills N' Thrills and Bellyaches (FR 1990). Employing remixes and dance producers were subtle ways of ensuring outreach to both rock and dance communities without alienating either. My survey suggested that rock fans were indifferent to remixes and most did not even realise that Oakenfold and Osbourne had produced Pills N' Thrills. From the dance fan's perspective, they cared little for who had written the song - more whether you could dance to it and Oakenfold and Osbourne provided this.

Both the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays redefined the concept of a gig, subtly altering it to appeal to dance fans: The Roses took to using DJs instead of support acts at their gigs, and the Mondays advertised their biggest gigs, at Manchester's G-Mex and London Wembley Arena in 1990 under the banner, 'The Rave is On' and both

---

<sup>20</sup> For example, the chorus of Kinky Afro (FR 1990) contains a vocal line from Labelle's Lady Marmalade (Epic 1975)

<sup>21</sup> The original version of Step On (called He's Gonna Step On You Again) is, in fact, credited as being the first sample ever used on a record and is thus another reference to dance culture – many dance records being constructed using samples.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Vince Clarke of Depeche Mode remixed Wrote for Luck (FR 1989)

emphasised gigs as being ‘events’ rather than simply a show, implying audience participation - the essence of disc cultures, and arguably folk culture.

Taking this even further to a very subtle reading of the Happy Mondays and Stone Roses group composition would argue that the presence of Cressa, the Roses dancer, and Bez, the Mondays counterpart, as full members of their respective bands (at least on stage) was an echo of the folk ideology of minimising the distance between performer and audience. Cressa and Bez were, in effect, representing the audience on stage. Anyone watching knew that they could be that person on stage and thus perceived ‘distance’ between audience and performer was obliterated. Similarly, the presence of Cressa and Bez on stage, *as dancers and no more*, with no pretence other than dancing, gave authenticity to dancing itself – it made dancing, and therefore dance culture, important and legitimate. This is in stark contrast to the traditional rock ideology of defining itself against dance. The Mondays, the Roses, the Inspirals and New Order’s knowledge of which aspects of dance culture to incorporate into their music arguably owes a debt to the North’s initial discovery of acid house. Tom Hingley states: ‘We loved acid house music, soaked it up and incorporated elements of it into our music’ (email interview 2004).

The crossover of dance and rock cultures could also be said to have been helped by Peter Saville’s artwork for New Order, arguably creating ‘the start-up visual furniture for an entire generation’ (King 2003, p.14). Saville’s penchant for neoclassical postmodernism created a visual crossover; rock’s backward looking, ‘classical’ notion of authenticity combined with the profoundly new postmodern, experimental and minimal ideology of dance. Perhaps this is overstating something of limited importance, but it is certainly worth noting; after all, Saville had complete freedom when designing record sleeves for New Order and Factory searched for a complete artistic product – the packaging being almost as important as the music. Extending this to image in general, the fact that the Mondays and the Roses embraced the ‘baggy’ style of clothing (and the Inspirals’ famous ‘Cool as Fuck’ t-shirts), worn predominantly for ease of dancing in clubs, endeared them to the dance community – again, similarly to the Cressa/Bez argument - by wearing clubbers’ clothes on stage, it gave authenticity to dance culture in a rock setting.

All these factors, together with the Roses appropriation of rave space and New Order’s embrace of technology, described earlier, provided the mechanisms for crossover. There was however, a crucial and more urbane mechanism, the existence

of Moss Side as a major junction for Ecstasy supply. I have not dwelled on the part Ecstasy had to play in Madchester, but it is perhaps best viewed as the oil which greased the coming together of rock and rave culture, and it was provided in Manchester by Moss Side.

### **‘Scene’ as Creating External Economies of Scale**

Yet, while a scene was created, was it advantageous to those involved to have one – were external economies of scale enjoyed in a manner similar to New Industrial Districts? My research would suggest that ‘scenes’ are hugely important to all bands and clubs involved, and that this is indeed the case. Using the Madchester bands defined earlier (excluding Northside and New Order), I asked respondents whether they liked them. These were then summed, using  $-1$  for ‘dislike’,  $0$  for ‘ambivalent’ and  $1$  for ‘like’, thus meaning a range of  $-7 \leq \alpha \leq 7$  for each fan ( $-7$  if all bands disliked,  $7$  if all bands liked). A null hypothesis of zero correlation between liking bands would suggest a mean score of  $1$  would be recorded from all correspondents (since they must like one band to define themselves as a fan). I obtained a mean score of  $3.28$ , suggesting that fans of any Madchester band, on average, like at least  $2$  others. This is an important finding, since on a purely musical level, many Madchester bands were not linked (for example, the Stone Roses and the Happy Mondays<sup>23</sup>) and thus without Madchester, there would be no other reason to associate the bands. By being part of a scene, each band exposed themselves to fans of every other band within the scene: effectively each new recruit to a band was also a recruit to at least two others as well. The crossover aspect of Madchester undoubtedly recruited new rock fans from rave, and vice versa. Two respondents stated: ‘It was good to see indie kids dancing to black music at the time’; ‘I was well into Chicago Acid House Music, and hip hop...but after Madchester I felt a more open attitude towards all music’.

---

<sup>23</sup> Many people mistakenly group the Roses and Mondays sounds together, using the example of Fools Gold as the Roses’ ‘dance track’. My survey suggested that Fools Gold was not the most important song for most Roses fans and that, on the whole, they preferred their more standard rock songs.

## **The Death of Madchester**

Halfacree and Kitchin (1995) suggest two reasons to explain why the Madchester scene ended. The shallowness of the music and its lack of links to everyday experience, or scene death as the inevitable consequence of a capitalist industry undermining the scene's subversive potential. While I did not set out to understand the reasons why Madchester ended, it is pertinent to point out that there is substantial evidence contrary to these explanations. Firstly, Madchester music was and continues to be, highly influential. Questionnaire respondents listed nine bands heavily influenced by the Happy Mondays and thirteen influenced by the Stone Roses. The Music, a Leeds band, recently performed shows at Blackpool Empress Ballroom and Bridlington Spa in a direct echo of the Roses (similarly the Charlatans played at Blackpool in March 2000) with Robert Harvey, their lead singer saying 'the history of the venue...made his hair stand on end' (Marshall 2003, p.3). Secondly, Factory's capitulation in 1992 was not due to outside, conventional industry interference, but rather a bizarre sequence of events. Wilson states: 'for Factory to have gone down, everything that went wrong had to go wrong' (interview 2004) including such factors as an international housing market crash, the fact that the Hacienda suffered a high-profile Ecstasy death on its dancefloor and so on. This throws further doubt on Halfacree and Kitchin's explanations, though I do not seek to suggest alternatives.

## 6. Conclusions

Contrary to Bez's statement at the beginning of this dissertation, I believe that Madchester could only have happened in Manchester, and was facilitated by the localisation of certain elements of industry apparatus. However, in addition Madchester relied on links to other places, such as Chicago and London. While localisation of labels was not crucial, localisation of artists and musical nodes, and the blurring of lines between 'the industry' and 'musicians' was. The presence of one major label, Factory, was essential, but for a dual reason – its importance by itself, but also as an institution for others to react against, and its non-capitalist outlook helped this. Manchester's music venues were part of scene creation, yet the apparent lack of desirable ones gave impetus for the Roses' appropriation of rave space. Finally, Manchester's history of Northern Soul, and its early discovery of acid house gave reference points and authenticity to its bands.

So then, how does this affect thoughts on policy – specifically the government's live music czar. In order to create a scene, basic institutions are essential: practice rooms, supportive local press, some venues and so on. Yet it seems that if too much is offered, innovation (such as the Roses) may be threatened – this is an analytical step further from Halfacree and Kitchin (1996). A delicate balance of some help, but space for entrepreneurialism would seem to be ideal. Trying to blur the lines of industry and creation, and introducing elements of non-capitalism would also seem to be required, yet this would be highly problematic to implement. Finally, the historical context would seem to suggest that a nationwide strategy would not be successful; there would be no sense trying to encourage a rock scene, for example, where there was no history of one. It seems that only basic provisions should be made; for a scene to achieve 'take off' (to borrow an analogy from Silicon Valley) requires an innovative step, which an outside hand cannot provide.

Sheffield made widely publicised efforts in the 1990s to create conditions for popular music growth yet failed and it would be an interesting avenue of further research to see if my elements of scene creation were present (or absent, as the case may be) in Sheffield to see if they hold true over space and time. More generally, the field of geomusicology is an area full of important and interesting topics to explore.

## 7. Appendix

### Example of Madchester Fan Questionnaire

#### Madchester Questionnaire – Now and Then

##### Section 1 – General

1. Name: (optional)
2. Age:
3. Town/City where you currently live:
4. Current Favourite Bands/DJs: (name three)

##### Section 2 – Opinions of Madchester Now

5. Which of the following artists are you a fan of now? (Please type Y by any you a fan of. If you dislike a band, please type N. If you have no opinion, leave blank)

808 State  
Buzzcocks  
Charlatans  
The Fall  
The Farm  
Flowered Up  
Happy Mondays  
James  
Joy Division  
Inspiral Carpets  
Oasis  
The Smiths  
The Stone Roses

6. Which, if any, of the above bands, would you consider to be a ‘Madchester band’? (“Just because” is an acceptable answer!) Are there any, not on the list, that you would consider to be a ‘Madchester band’?

7. Of the bands that are your answer to question 5, which do you listen to regularly, and which do you listen to infrequently, compared to your current favourite bands?

More regularly than current favourite bands:

More infrequently than current favourite bands:

8. What styles of music are you a fan of? (eg. Nu-metal, funk, classical)

9. Do you know of any current bands or singers that you think have been influenced by the Happy Mondays and their lead singer, Shaun Ryder, musically, or stylistically? Do you like them?

10. Do you know of any current bands or singers that you think have been influenced by the Stone Roses and their lead singer, Ian Brown? Do you like them?

**If you are not a Happy Mondays fan, please go to question 14.**

11. What is your favourite Happy Mondays album?

12. How important are these factors in you liking the Happy Mondays, on a scale of 1 to 5? (1=Not important, 5=Very important)

The Music

The Lyrics

The Attitude

The Image

13. Which of the following words best describes the Mondays' lyrics?

Dirty/Funny/Storytelling/Nonsense/Profound/Everyday/the best poetry since Keats/Other (please state)

**If you are not a Stone Roses fan, please go to question 19.**

14. What are your two favourite Stone Roses songs?

15. How important are these factors in you liking the Stone Roses, on a scale of 1 to 5? (1=Not important, 5=Very important)

The Music

The Lyrics

The Attitude

The Image

16. Which of the following words describes the Stone Roses lyrics?

Inspiring/Pretentious/From the streets/Mundane/Strange/Emotional/Other (please state)

17. Did you think Fools Gold was:

- a) The best thing they ever did
- b) Boring and repetitive
- c) Good, but not as good as their other material
- d) Other (please state)

18. If the Stone Roses had released a third album, which style would you have wanted it to be, if it had to be one style:

- a) Jangley guitarry – like She Bangs the Drums
- b) Led Zeppelin rocky – like Love Spreads
- c) Dancy – Like Begging You
- d) Other (please state)

**If you are not a New Order fan, please go to question 23.**

19. What is your favourite New Order album?

20. How important are these factors in you liking New Order, on a scale of 1 to 5? (1=Not important, 5=Very important)

The Music

The Lyrics

The Attitude

The Image

The Joy Division History

21. Which band's work do you prefer – Joy Division, or New Order, or both equally?

22. Was Blue Monday:

- a) The best thing they ever did
- b) An embarrassment – synth choir sounds for goodness sake!
- c) A great record, but I preferred Temptation
- d) Other

23. Have you seen the film 'Twenty-Four Hour Party People'? (Yes or No) Did this change or reinforce your perception of the Madchester scene?

24. Did you have any involvement with the Madchester scene *at the time*? (Yes or No)

**If Yes, please go to Section 3. If No, please go to question 25.**

25. Have you ever (be honest!):

- a) Bought a retro Madchester T-Shirt
- b) Gone through a 'baggy' fashion stage, long after it was first popular
- c) Tried to talk in a Manc accent (if you're not from Manchester)
- d) Visited Manchester just to see where your favourite bands grew up
- e) Gone to a Madchester-themed Club night
- f) Felt a strong affinity to Manchester despite not being from there
- g) Done none of the above

Please go to the end of this questionnaire.

**Section 3 – Opinions of Madchester then (remember please only complete if your answer to Q.24 was 'yes')**

1. Where did you live during the scene?

2. Which clubs, if any, did you go to, and how frequently? Please list the club, location and follow with a) Every week, b) Every month, c) every so often, or d) Once, ever (eg. Hacienda, Manchester – Every week)

3. Where did you buy your records? (Shop name and location, if possible)

4. Who were your favourite DJs/producers (if any)
  5. Had you ever been to a Northern Soul night before, or during, the Madchester scene? Were you a fan of this music?
  6. Were you a fan of the Chicago House music that was part of the scene?
  7. How did you first hear about an aspect of the Madchester scene?
    - a) Heard a record on local radio
    - b) Heard a record on national radio
    - c) Found out from friends
    - d) Noticed the 'baggy' fashions on the street
    - e) Heard about it on the TV
    - f) Saw a Madchester band live that you'd previously never heard of and liked it
    - g) Other (please specify)
  8. For the following, please say how important these were to you (1=Not important, 5=Very important)
    - a) Owning the Madchester Records
    - b) Knowing information about the bands (members' names etc)
    - c) Knowing the DJs' names
    - d) Going to the clubs playing Madchester music
    - e) Taking Ecstasy
    - f) Watching the bands live
    - g) Following the Madchester fashions
    - h) Being a 'Manc'
  9. Were you:
    - a) a raver that liked what the Madchester bands were doing
    - b) a rock fan that liked the Madchester bands then discovered rave culture through it
    - c) Someone who just liked the Madchester bands
- If a) or b), please go to question 10. If c), please go to question 11.
10. Did the Madchester scene change your perception of the 'other' scene – rock or rave – and the people that were part of it? In what way? (eg. "made me realise that not all rock fans were depressive shoegazers")
  11. What music do you consider to be harder to make – electronic music, or music made with 'traditional' instruments (eg. guitar)? Or both equally hard? And why?
  12. Did you look for new records first and foremost by:
    - a) Artist
    - b) Label (eg. Factory)
    - c) A DJ's taste/a club's playlist
    - d) That particular record being commonly associated with the Madchester scene
    - e) Other (please state)

13. Did you ever refer to yourself, or be referred to, as a scally?

14. What was your view of the concept of the remix, when it was first introduced?

- a) Ruining a good song-what's wrong with the original?
- b) Great way of making rock music danceable
- c) Didn't really care
- d) Other (please state)

15. Which of the following do you think were important factors in making Madchester distinctive, and still popular today?

- a) The music
- b) The fashions
- c) The characters and icons (eg. Bez)
- d) The stories and myths (eg. Factory's unorthodox dealings)
- e) The Hacienda
- f) The rise of Ecstasy
- g) Other (please state)

16. If you are from Manchester, did the Madchester scene make you proud to be from Manchester? If so, why (you may use some of the phrases below)?

- Proud that people were taking notice of my city
- Proud that my city was creating an original style of music
- Proud that my city was producing something London wasn't

If not, why not (you may use some of the phrases below)?

- Promoted my city as being a party capital when the reality of life was much less fun
- The spokespeople for the scene embarrassed me (eg. Shaun Ryder's homophobic comments) and my city
- The scene encouraged an influx of 'foreigners' into my city, who stole our 'manc' identity

17. How important were the following to you during the scene, on a scale of 1-5 (1=Not important, 5=Very important)?

Your schoolwork (if applicable):

Your job (if applicable):

Playing or watching sport:

Clubbing and music (in general):

Taking part in the Madchester scene (specifically):

Television and the arts:

Other (please specify):

18. When the Happy Mondays employed Steve Osbourne and Paul Oakenfold to work on their album Pills n Thrills and Bellyaches did you think:

- a) This was a great move – made the Mondays more danceable
- b) This ruined the Mondays' raw, shambolic sound
- c) They were good raw, but also good polished for the dancefloor
- d) Didn't even know they'd produced it

e) Other (please specify)

19. If you saw the film 'Twenty-Four Hour Party People' – do you think this gave an accurate description of the 'feel' of what Madchester was about? In what way?

This is the end of the questionnaire – Thank You!

## 8. Bibliography

Amin and Thrift, 1992, "Neo-Marshallian nodes in global networks" *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, **16 (4)**: 571-587

BBC Website, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/music/3369495.stm>

BPI Yearbook, 1988/89, British Phonographic Industry Ltd.

Berry and Faulkner, 1998, "*Freaky Dancin' – Me and the Mondays*", Pan Books

Bourdieu, 1993, "*The Field of Cultural Production*" Polity Press, Cambridge

Cohen, 1991, "Popular music and urban regeneration: the music industries of Merseyside", *Cultural Studies* **5**, 332-346

Edy, 1999, "Journalistic Uses of Collective Memory", *Journal of Communication*, Annenberg School Press, Philadelphia

Frith, 1983, "*Sound Effects – Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll*", St Edmundsbury Press, Suffolk

Frith, 1986, "Art versus technology: the strange case of popular music", *Media, Culture and Society*, **8**, 263-279

Frith, 1996, "*Performing Rites – Evaluating Popular Music*" Oxford University Press, Oxford

Halfacree and Kitchin, 1996, "Madchester Rave On: placing the fragments of popular music", *Area*, **28 (1)**: 47-55

Harris, 2003, "*The Last Party: Britpop, Blair and the Demise of English Rock*", Trafalgar Square Books

Haslam, 1999, "*Manchester, England*", Fourth Estate, London

Hebdidge, 1979, "*Subculture – The Meaning of Style*", Routledge, London

Henry et al, 1996, "In Pole Position? Untraded Interdependencies, New Industrial Spaces and the British Motor Sport Industry" *Area*, in Bryson et al (eds), 1999, "*The Economic Geography Reader*" 232-238. Wiley and Sons Ltd, Chichester

Hollows and Milestone, 1998, "Welcome to Dreamsville – A History and Geography of Northern Soul", in Leyshon et al (eds), 1998, *The Place of Music*, 83-103. London, Guildford Press

Keeble et al, 1999, "Collective Learning Processes, Networking and Institutional Thickness in the Cambridge Region" *Regional Studies* **23**

Kessler (ed), 2003, "*NME Originals: Madchester*" IPC Ignite Publishing

King, 2003, "When Routine Bites Hard", in King (ed) 2003, *Designed by Peter Saville*, 11-22. Frieze, London

Kong, 1995, "Popular Music in Geographical Analyses", *Progress in Human Geography*, **19 (2)**: 183-98

Krugman, 1991, "*Geography and trade*" Leuven: Leuven University Press

Leyshon et al, 1998, "Music, Space and the Production of Place", in Leyshon et al (eds), 1998, *The Place of Music*, 1-30. London, Guilford Press

Luck, 2002, "*The Madchester Scene*", Pocket Essentials, Herts

Marshall, 1890 [1920], "*Principles of Economics*" Macmillan, London

Marshall (ed), 2003, "*Blackpool Rocks!*", NME, 10<sup>th</sup> May

- Middles, 1996, *“From Joy Division to New Order: The Story of Factory Records”*,  
Virgin Publishing
- Middles, 2000, *“Breaking into Heaven: The Rise and Fall of the Stone Roses”*,  
Omnibus Press
- Nachum and Keeble, 1999, “Neo-Marshallian Nodes, Global Networks and firm  
competitiveness: The media cluster of central London” *ESRC Working Paper No.138*  
University of Cambridge, Cambridge
- Reynolds, 1998, *“Energy Flash”*, MacMillan Publishers Ltd, London
- Reynolds and Oldfield, 1990, <http://www.jahsonic.com/AcidHouse.html>
- Robb, 1998, *“The Stone Roses and the Resurrection of British Pop”*, Ebury House
- Sadler, 1997, “The Global Music Business as an Information Industry: reinterpreting  
economies of culture” *Environment and Planning A* **29 (11)** 1919-1936
- Saxenian, 1994, *“Regional Advantage: Culture and Competition in Silicon Valley and  
Route 128”* Harvard University Press.
- Scott, 1999, “The US Recorded Music Industry: On the relationships between  
organisation, location and creativity in the cultural economy” *Environment and  
Planning A* **31 (11)**: 1965-1984
- Straw, 1990, “Systems of Articulation, Logics of Change: Communities and Scenes”,  
*Cultural Studies* **3**: 368-388
- Thornton, 1995, *“Club Cultures”*, Polity Press, Cambridge