

Football and Music Cultures in Liverpool

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‘Ian McCulloch's a massive Liverpool fan - but how can you be as cool as he is, and look as cool as he does, and be a fan of Liverpool? Imagine a whole crowd like him at the match!’

Pete Wylie (1)

John Peel and Istanbul 2005

The sudden death towards the end of 2004 of the much loved BBC radio veteran DJ, broadcaster and Liverpool FC devotee, John Peel, was a very public reminder that football and music had been synonymous with the city of Liverpool - and substantially with each other in the Merseyside area - for some time before Steve Redhead's (1997: 4) contentious assertions about the emergence of a conceptual ‘black hole’ into which the fields of ‘youth’, ‘football fandom’ and ‘culture’ allegedly disappeared in England in the mid-1980s. Peel is gone – but he will never be forgotten.

Peel's untimely death was a cause for national mourning for football and music fans in the UK and provoked articles on music in Liverpool's premier *football* fanzine, *Through the Wind & Rain* and even a back page memorial. ‘I can take or leave celebrity supporters’, wrote Liverpool fanzine editor Steve Kelly, movingly:

“And while I'm glad men like [Ian] MacCulloch and [Pete] Wylie follow the one true religion [Liverpool FC], there are only three people that I'd praise God because they are Liverpool fans. My dad, myself (which are one and the same thing, I suppose – and John Peel.”

This was likely to be the response of many Liverpool Reds who were older than 25 years. The Liverpool match magazine that week also carried a tribute to Peel, and the music played at the Liverpool v Birmingham City home match that followed

were all John Peel favourites, including his favourite single, *Teenage Kicks* by the punk band The Undertones.

John Peel, perhaps more than any other Liverpool football fan, would have enjoyed the club's return to the pinnacle of European club football in the spring of 2005 in the European Cup final in Istanbul (see Williams and Hopkins 2005). Peel was much loved in BBC broadcasting, in the independent music industry, and in Liverpool. His studied devotion to some of the great names of Liverpool FC's past – especially perhaps the famous ex-manager of the 1960s and 1970s Bill Shankly, and ex-players Billy Liddell (1950s) and Kenny Dalglish (mainly 1980s) – was well known and authentic. Peel was no man to 'pull strings' in order to mix with 'other' celebrities, drawn from sport: though he famously carried Bill Shankly's bag at a European Cup final, a treasured memory, and one he talked often and humbly about. But, more typically, he once *avoided* seeing his football hero Dalglish during a Radio One visit by the Scot for fear that he might burst into tears on meeting his football hero. On another famous occasion he did burst into uncontrollable tears whilst broadcasting live: as the death toll of Liverpool death mounted after the stadium disaster at Hillsborough in 1989.

Peel, a middle class boy from Cheshire and a Shrewsbury fee-paying schoolboy, once revealed that he favoured the sport of football in part as a statement of class solidarity and rebellion, saying that the more people told him, 'only proletarian folk supported a professional football team...the more interested I became.' He hated the public school elitism and ethos – and the many beatings it brought him. His love of Liverpool FC from the early 1950s was cemented by the fact that as a seven year old he found himself in a boarding school full of rival Manchester United fans. As the subject for the BBC Radio Four show *Desert Island Discs* in

1989 Peel asked for a football as his luxury item on the island. He explained this choice by saying – like many men of his generation from Liverpool might – that he was a graceless, inhibited dancer but, ‘When I was playing football, I always felt graceful. I feel as other people would feel when they were dancing, so a football would be essential.’ At Peel’s funeral at Bury St Edmunds Cathedral in November 2004 the men of his family wore Liverpool-red ties.

John Peel alluded, obliquely, to the links between Liverpool fan culture and pop music when he accepted his BBC Sony Award in 1993 and tearfully and modestly told his audience that music radio was, ‘a wonderful medium for short, fat Liverpool supporters.’ Twelve years on and the pop singer and Liverpool fan Elvis Costello had little planned for Liverpool making it all the way to the European Cup final in Istanbul in 2005. This meant that on the night of the final (25 May 2005) Costello was reduced to pacing his dressing room before a gig in Britain, watching the first half torture unfold on TV. As his band, The Imposters, were about to take the stage, and still thinking his beloved Liverpool were down 3-0 to AC Milan, out of the corner of his eye Costello saw that Liverpool had actually pulled back two goals. ‘Hold on’ he told the band, ‘We’re watching this first.’ Liverpool finally won the match on penalties. The gig was massively delayed, 16 people asked for their money back, and Costello music lovers almost rioted as Elvis and the band simply carried on watching. Costello commented later: ‘Despite the greed, vanity and vile bigotry that lurks within and sometimes overwhelms the game today, it can still be magical. For those two hours it was certainly more important than rock and roll.’ And who, for a moment, could doubt that?

In the hours outside the Ataturk Stadium at the 2005 European Cup final, the familiar strains of some legendary Liverpool music could be heard. In a wonderfully

chaotic Liverpool *music* night, Pete Wylie, Amsterdam, and DJ Danny Hunt were all on stage in the car park entertaining the mass Liverpool fans gathering. 45,000 Liverpool followers travelled to Turkey.

Set in a car park, with no food or drink in sight, this was a strange music gig indeed. Danny Hunt put together a John Peel tribute, and first up was the Liverpool fans' song of the season, Johnny Cash's 'Ring of Fire'. 'Teenage Kicks', 'Roadrunner', and a version of 'The Fields of Anfield Road' all made it into the set. An avid Red, Danny had thought he wouldn't make it to the match, never mind be playing to thousands of fellow fans outside the stadium. With a tour starting the day after the final, his only route would be to get himself on an official party flying back that night. But these days, if you're a musical Red and Liverpool is in *this* final there's always the chance that the club might give you a call and ask you to come along.

In 2005 Pete Wylie was invited along again, following on Danny's lead, with some neat adaptations of his own songs. 'Blitzkreig Bop' became 'Anfield Kop' and the opportunity to sing 'The Story of Emlyn Hughes (Blues)' and 'Heart as Big as Liverpool' gave Wylie, 'the best two nights of my life in one night - playing in front of that many fans and the response, and then the come back in the match. We weren't there to entertain the troops: we were there to lift them, and I like to think we played our part.' A rousing rendition of the fans' song 'You'll Never Walk Alone' led to a crowd invasion of the stage, and the panicked Turks declared the gig over. The music may have stopped here to give way to the match, but how have the music and football traditions of the city of Liverpool become so uniquely intertwined?

Yeah, yeah, yeah

Since *The Beatles* signed their first record deal in the early 1960s and Everton FC, and then Liverpool Football Club, began periods of domination of the English and – more briefly - the European game, ‘Liverpudlians’ travelling abroad would, typically, plough cross-cultural common ground with fellow Europeans from whom they were divided by language by using references and allusions to *both* the football and musical traditions in the city. Responding to questions from continentals there has been a common response, certainly from fellow Europeans, when the locals have found themselves talking to someone from this famous northern English city. Even allowing for cliché: “You like the music and the football, yes?”, is still the first thing a ‘scouser’ [a young man from Liverpool] is most likely to hear when engaging a continental stranger in conversation about place.

Sarah Cohen (1995) shows well how ‘Liverpool-ness’ is described through the pleasures and meanings attached to music, and also how music in the city is used to define localities and to tell stories in the city and outside it about people’s strong attachment to place. Moreover, as aesthetics and the over-production of symbols as commodities becomes a key feature of the dissolving distinctions between economic and political conditions and conceptions of culture itself, the ways in which *global* influences shape responses to, and experiences of, both music and football in a city such as Liverpool become central questions. Whilst people in Britain may associate Liverpool with its history as one of the world's great seaports - if not always with the role of slavery in this history - or more unsatisfactorily, with its poverty, left militancy and reputation for petty crime, in Europe and beyond, the city is probably still known, primarily, for its cultural *creativity*: for both its football and its music.

This paper examines the relationship between the city, its football and music. We want to look here, over time, at the shifting relationship between music and football in Liverpool, rather than pursuing, in any depth, debates about ‘post fans’, ‘post youth cultures’ and the increasingly hyperreal nature of popular culture (for this, see Redhead 1997). It draws extensively, instead, on interviews with musicians from the city and material from local documents and debates, with a view to mapping out the ways in which music/football interpolations in Liverpool have contributed to, and reflect, the specific ‘structures of feeling’ on Merseyside which bind, and provide for tensions between, football and music cultures. We look at how the music and football of Liverpool have been both distant relatives and also close cousins over the years, and we look, very briefly and speculatively, at the importance of the city and its landscapes in inspiring the music made by some of its talented inhabitants. Finally, we spend a little time looking at the problems and promises in shaping *policy* for both music and football in post-industrial Liverpool.

Yeah, yeah, yeah

In the early 1960s, the city of Liverpool had established something of a popular cultural primacy in Britain; the city was already internationally known for its music, but it was also thriving in sport, especially football. *The Beatles* as the first wave of the so-called ‘Mersey sound’, were probably the first big ‘pop’ act in Britain to be quite so closely associated with a particular home town and a particular cultural milieu, and the proliferation of other bands from the city - the *Searchers*, the *Merseybeats*, *Billy J Kramer* and *Gerry and the Pacemakers*, to name but a few from the time - meant that Liverpool was celebrated as the British ‘home’ of popular music. In a similar way to Blair’s ‘Britpop’ project of the 1990s, under Labour’s

‘modernising’ Wilson government the pop music the city produced became, “the central symbol of fashionable, metropolitan British culture” (Chambers 1985: 57). The black American-infused cosmopolitanism of the city, its immigrant peoples and shifting community cultures, helps account for the emergence of the ‘Mersey sound’ (Chambers 1985: 63).

In this sense, and despite its strong local chauvinisms, Liverpool as a cultural ‘place’ is also best understood as, the product of *layers* of social relations accumulating over time (Meegan 1995): ‘a meeting place, the location of the intersections of particular bundles of activity spaces or connections and interrelations, of influences and movements’ (Massey 1994: 12). Liverpool’s younger inhabitants, especially, revelled in the excitement generated by its new focus for global interest, a source also of considerable local civic pride. According to Lane (1997: 118): ‘The Beatles were expressive of Liverpool before they were expressive of the 1960s. Nevertheless, the elevation of the Beatles to the status of folk heroes has its effect on Liverpool. Liverpudlians, already confident of being taller than anyone else, were now grown even higher.’

It was during this period too (early 1960s), that the Liverpool Kop developed its extraordinary reputation for terrace songs, humour, and an ability to intimidate the footballing opposition (Kelly 1993; Williams 2001). In 1964, the BBC TV *Panorama* reporting team visited Anfield, and an astonished reporter, speaking in the lofty ‘official’ language of the BBC, related the strong links between ‘Merseybeat’ and the songs of the terraces while he described the cultural richness and tropes of terrace life in Liverpool as if they were mysteries that might be found elsewhere only by anthropologists on distant South Sea Islands. It was easy to think that the two cultures of football and music were intrinsically linked, not just with the city but with

each other. After all, the younger sections of the Liverpool Kop 'naturally' sang *Beatles* songs: 'She Loves You' and 'We All Live in a Red and White Kop', (to the tune of 'We All Live in a Yellow Submarine'). In 1965, as Liverpool FC won the FA Cup for the first time, beating Leeds United, the local newspaper, the *Liverpool Echo*, proclaimed the victory as a sign it was, 'Liverpool's year, yeah, yeah,' and, later, produced a special Cup Final supplement entitled "Hail the Beatleeds". Quite.

The reality, however, is that the *Beatles*, themselves, and football didn't really mix, especially as the band began, increasingly, to desert 'beat' music and to explore the more cerebral and oppositional waters of 'rock'. David Rowe (1995: 10-11) has shown how, in the 1960s and 1970s, there was a definite schism in the ethos of rock and sporting culture. Rock was a quintessentially youth subcultural form, whereas sport was much more compromised by its by its rootedness in 'straight' society. Unlike rock music, football, for example, was a cornerstone of the school curriculum and in terms of spectator and popular interest, most mainstream sport was also still strongly connected to the experiences and aspirations of older, working class men. As Nick Hornby (1992) argues, in England in the 1970s the resistive tenets of rock - aesthetics, 'politics', self expression, and a place in the culture for young *women* - ill-fitted a strong interest in a sport such as football, where strongly masculinist ties of community and class remained the primary keys to authenticity and a sense of belonging.

Later, as both 'rock' and football repositioned to serve new, less discrete and less 'closed off', popular markets as part of the more global 'entertainment' business, these distinctions became much less relevant and less clear cut. Also in England, although it was an early influence in helping to *modernise* the sport aesthetic, as spectator hooliganism became a much less strongly defining feature of football

spectator culture from the late 1980s onwards, the *range* of connections being made in this respect moved from a focus on punk and independent ‘lads’ guitar bands much more into the popular cultural musical mainstream. As Rowe (1995: 10) puts it: “This cultural convergence of rock (now less conceptually distinguishable from pop) and sport can be explained both in terms of the decline and generational and ideological coherence of rock culture and of a shift in the cultural and economic location of sport.”

In Liverpool in the 1960s, *The Beatles* actually favoured neither the game of football nor either of the Merseyside football teams. Paul McCartney's family supported Everton, but despite rumours over the years that he, himself, might invest in the club (wishful thinking, perhaps, on the part of some Evertonians), he has shown little obvious interest in the team his father followed. He is certainly not what most supporters would call ‘a fan’. As Liverpool FC became *internationally* successful later, music/football links on Merseyside tended to coalesce rather more strongly around Liverpool FC, than around Everton. Whilst none of the four *Beatles* had especially privileged backgrounds, they mostly lived in the more affluent south end of the city in relative semi-detached comfort. A visit to Penny Lane and to the childhood Allerton homes of both John and Paul pays testament to this. Essentially, too, John and Paul were part of the Liverpool art school crowd, and football, simply, was off limits in these bohemian circles. The beautiful game was predominantly a proletarian, a working class, pastime and for the young men who played pop at The Cavern, The Jacaranda and the Iron Door clubs, music (and in the case of Stuart Sutcliffe and John Lennon, art) was really all that mattered.

Let's all go to Eric's

In the 1960s, it also simply wasn't important to *know* which pop icons - even those from Liverpool - supported which football team. The later celebrity cultures of the 1980s and 1990s and the fusion of pop, rock and sport into a media-orchestrated 'entertainment' culture in Britain and elsewhere was still some way off (Rowe 1995). Rock'n'roll and its progeny 'pop' were still new and vibrant, and strongly aimed at the young more than thirty years ago, and it stood proudly alone and apart from the older, rather fusty and still 'down market' mainstream *adult* traditions represented by football and football supporters. Situated in Mathew Street, directly opposite the original site of The Cavern club (which closed in 1973 to make way for a ventilation shaft for the Merseyrail system). In the 1970s Eric's club became home in Liverpool for music lovers, art students and just about anybody with an eclectic taste and a liking for the sort of nightclub where your feet stick to the carpet. The club was owned and run by Peter Fulwell and Roger Eagle, two adopted Liverpudlians, with an entrepreneurial spirit and a love of music.

The Clash, The Jam, Elvis Costello and many more of the innovative 'post-punk' bands of that era played at Eric's, and they inspired a new generation of young Liverpool-based pretenders to take to the stage. *Wah! Heat, Teardrop Explodes, Echo and the Bunnymen* and *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*, all played their first professional gigs at Eric's. The London record industry was alerted to this new breed of Liverpool musicians and by the turn of the decade these bands started to enjoy some national chart success. In the early eighties, Liverpool bands threatened to dominate the pop airways once again. It was during this time, of course, that Liverpool FC began to tower over European football, winning no less than four European Cups between 1977 and 1984. So, was this new cohort of Liverpool

musicians also football fans; or, did they immerse themselves solely in their art and music, as had *The Beatles* and the Liverpool music insiders before them?

Many of the local boys (and they *were* almost always *boys*, with the notable exception of the inimitable, flamboyantly dressed Jayne Casey of the esoteric *Big in Japan*), *were* interested in football, but early on at least and in an arena where music was definitely king, football talk just wasn't appropriate. Pete Wylie, legendary figurehead of *Wah!Heat* shows well how football played poorly against the aesthetics and 'politics' of musical subcultures at the time. He recalls:

No one at Eric's talked about football - you were either a swot or a jock and you couldn't be both. I was into music completely and at the time that was an important thing. You would have been seen as a part-timer if you could also like football. The idea of being able to like two things at once was bizarre! Football was working class, and although we were working class we also had this thing of being class-less and we weren't going to be categorised and we were beyond all those definitions. To some extent we rebelled against that football culture - but then we rebelled against everything. I rebelled against being from Norris Green, from being from that kind of background. At Eric's and in that whole scene, I had mates like Paul, Holly, Pete Burns, who were openly, outrageously gay. They could be totally out of the gay closet, yet you hid in the shadows as a football fan. I lived in the football closet! It was like, you can be gay, you can be anything you want, but you can't be into footie. It's bizarre. I'm sure if the subject of football had come up there would have been snobbery about it.

Music journalist and football fan, Kevin McManus, remembers attending the Saturday afternoon matinee shows at Eric's: 'It would have been impossible for me to have gone to the match as well, and I clearly chose music over football at the time.' So, it was clear that many of the 'young and trendy' set who spent their days and nights in and around the Mathew Street area, in cafes, nightclubs and record shops, simply didn't talk much about football, in an era when Liverpool and Everton were both extraordinarily successful. The two cultures simply didn't mix. This was clearly no simple matter of being 'cool' and ignoring the hysteria drifting from the football grounds across Stanley Park. Pete Wylie suggests that there was also something of a

personal 'rebellion' mixed up in this, and it seems that for many of the lads who'd been brought up in a very working-class Liverpool, embracing the music scene and all it had to offer was as much about *escaping* from their supposed 'proletarian' roots as it was about music, at least in the early stages. Michael Head of the *Pale Fountains*, and now critically acclaimed and charts band *Shack*, agrees:

No-one ever talked about football then, when we were in the Pale Fountains. I was from Kenny [Kensington, an area of the city] so being brought up in the north end and on the streets of Kenny, for me to get into music - it just wasn't what people there did. I felt like I was leaving things behind, which was like bus rides with my mates, playing footy, going to the match. To get into music, start going to places like the Everyman, I was leaving something behind, going into a totally different territory. I wanted something different and I felt excited by the music. So I left all the people I'd been hanging around with. So forming the band, doing what we did, was all part of leaving that culture in Kenny behind, and football had been a part of that. We weren't betraying it, or letting it down, we'd just had enough of all that went with it.

'All that went with it', of course, included the bravado and violence that often went hand-in-hand for many 'smart' young urban males following English football in the early 1980s. Many fans who had seen the fighting en route to matches had been frightened by it and felt they either had to opt in or out. You could stand and fight, or you could pick up a guitar, was one trusted line of thinking. The violence, or threat of it, which ran through much of late 1970s and 1980s football terrace culture in England did occasionally spill over into club culture, however. Despite the fact that most of the Eric's crowd football didn't much matter, owners Roger Eagle and Pete Fulwell were astute enough to realise that many of their male punters *did* actually attend matches. Liverpool fan and manager of The Farm, Kevin Sampson, recalls:

Eric's were so on the ball at predicting movements, and getting in first. They put Secret Affair on when everyone was just getting into the mod thing, on the night of Liverpool's first home game of the season against West Ham. Unfortunately, however, they didn't open until late, so there was a big brawl outside as the fans came out of the Why Not? pub and met the West Ham fans waiting for Eric's to open.

The media, in particular the music press of the late seventies and early eighties, only rarely thought to question musicians about their interests in sport. In contrast to the situation later when football and music hybridity regularly featured in the music press, even a cursory glance through copies of *NME* and *Sounds* for the time reveals few articles covering both subjects in any depth. However, glam rock and post-punk music/football crossovers were hardly unknown. Some later 'glam' bands - Garry Glitter, Slade, The Sweet - often used the anthemic style of the football terraces to attract their audiences and to sell records (Rowe 1995: 166). Also, later post-punk bands such as *Sham 69* (West Ham) and *The Stranglers* (Arsenal) directly attracted football followers, especially as the aggressive participatory mode of audience involvement promoted by 'independent' and punk and post-punk bands of the time made specific appeal to the masculinist tribalism of the terraces. *Sham 69*, in particular, a band, like a number of the punk and post-bands, with broadly left wing proletarian political pretensions, later railed at their capacity to attract 'right wing', and sometimes racist, young male football fans to gigs. Strong supporters of the Rock Against Racism campaign of the late-1970s, in frustration the band finally gave up it's increasingly disorderly live performances (Chambers 1985: 205).

In the main, however, questions asked of musical artists in the youth and music press around this time still revolved almost exclusively around the 'politics' of punk and post-punk ideologies and practices, as well as largely on their *musical* influences and role models. In Liverpool, significantly, even in the 'punk' period from the mid-1970s, and in a region of burgeoning local unemployment, 'politics' was never strongly a major theme in local music cultures, save perhaps in some of the local micro-musical cultures around the politics of 'race' in the south end of the city in Toxteth (see Rowe 1995: 62). This may have been to do with the existing

masculinist municipalism which so strongly characterised local politics in Liverpool and which served to stifle voluntarism and other forms of independent and ‘political’ community development in the city (Parkinson 1985). Indeed, signs of a grass roots ‘political’ responsiveness which were strongly rooted in valued local cultural practices, were more apparent later, not in music but in *football*, through the formation in Liverpool in 1985 of the Football Supporters Association (FSA). But even here, there was a forceful determination of the local Liverpool leadership of the FSA to eschew any ideological or formal connections with party politics or the political mainstream, either inside or outside of the city, an approach which sometimes caused frustration later for more politically committed FSA branches elsewhere.

On those occasions when, eventually, Liverpool music artists began, themselves, to bring up the subject of football in press interviews it was often to deal with questions in the city and elsewhere about acceptable forms of masculinity. Bob Connell (1983: 18) and others have linked sport with specific expressions of hegemonic masculinity, especially the assertion of presence, the occupation of space and the corporeal competitiveness of men. Ian McCulloch, an art house Irish-Liverpudlian sporting a strange cockatoo hairstyle and exploring, in his music, mythical and romantic allusions for *Echo and the Bunnymen* in what might have been ‘troublesome’ material for some Kopites and local terrace hard cases, confessed to using his local *football* affiliations to better manage his preferred local identity as a heterosexual man:

I don't remember anyone bringing up the subject of footy - apart from Rod Stewart. But I was the first bastard to say I like music and I go to the match. No-one would ask me about it in interviews, but I'd bring it up. I'd say, 'I'm a sodding Liverpool fan', because I didn't want to come across like some fop.

Later, in a music hall-style pastiche of The Beatles song, 'All you need is love', the *Bunnymen* would, unusually, bring together the great musical and football inspirations in the city by tagging on a lengthy musical *homage* at the end of the song to Bill Shankly, 'Bobbie' Paisley, and the coaching staff of Liverpool FC. Similar to the rather ethereal style of the *Bunnymen*, members of the *Pale Fountains*, a popular 'underground' Liverpool band producing soft, pretty, melodic songs, didn't want to be seen as lacking in the masculine 'right stuff' because of their musical preoccupations. They, too, would regularly bring up the subject of football in their media interviews, and they would sometimes challenge other local bands to stamina-busting five-a-side games. This penchant for musicians and their various advisors and mates on Merseyside to 'test' themselves in this way on the football field lives on from the early 1990s, as Kevin Sampson breathlessly (1998: 32-35) testifies. Robbie Williams, Damon Alban, the Gallaghers all liked a football 'kick-a-bout', too. If the *Pale Fountains* weren't playing football in Liverpool in the 1980s then they were *talking* about playing football. Mick Head remembers:

At the time, the 'Paley's' were, like, soft guitars and this image and all that, but we had a shit hot little team going. And Test Department had this German, industrial sort of sound, and we thrashed the shit out of them. They probably didn't expect us to be such a good team. Our music was acoustic and folky and we probably surprised people, 'cos we are actually very good footballers.

Johnny Mellor, a local musician who played with the *Bunnymen* and the *Pale Fountains*, agrees with the last point and recalls the music/football match-ups to rival those reported later in Birkenhead by Kevin Sampson. He also notes the usefulness for football-mad musicians of the time of the Liverpool sobriquet. It somehow added legitimacy to the claims of musicians that they were also 'serious' about their football. It could open doors:

Mick Head is a great footballer. The *Paleys* were the thoroughbreds of Liverpool football. There used to be a load of people who would play football at Sefton Park on Sunday afternoons - *McCulloch*, the *Pale Fountains*, the *Christians*, Colin from *Black*, and Ian Broudie [*Lightening Seeds*]. One time, Broudie threw a tantrum and walked off because Mac mistimed a tackle. But Broudie was the only one with a car so we had to coax him back the following week...

I went on tour with *Ride* [from Oxford], and they were a football mad band. We went all over Europe and we'd cycle to local football clubs and we'd try and get a game with the apprentices. The Liverpool thing definitely helped - I'd just say we're from Liverpool and they'd let us look around the ground because everyone associates Liverpool with football. We went all over Europe and the only grounds we couldn't get into were the San Siro and Gresty Road [Crewe]!

Altogether now?

Other Liverpool bands of the time experienced problems with openly declaring their football allegiances. To identify with football at this time was not yet to guarantee universal music fan approval. *The Farm*, perhaps the Liverpool band most closely associated with football, and in particular with the 'scally culture' that went with it in the late-1980s, found themselves in a rather different situation than most. Keith Mullin, guitarist in *The Farm*, was asked in 1990 about *The Farm* being labelled the 'original scallies'. He pointed to the deep roots of the concept of 'scallying' in the city: 'It was over five years ago...it was just a word that was bandied about...someone who went to football matches, robbers and that...me grandma used to call me old fellah a scally.' (quoted in Redhead 1991b: 150). *The Farm* quickly became known in music circles as football fans, largely due to the fact that their lead singer, Peter Hooton, had also edited the Liverpool fanzine *The End* from the late-1970s, a forerunner of the shoal of local football fanzines which followed. Music fanzines had grown up as part of the 'do-it-yourself' ideology of the punk era, and there were a number of *music* fanzines in Liverpool in the early 1980s, but none covered football.

Later, of course, specifically *football* fanzines would emerge as part of an irreverent, populist polemical opposition to mainstream football journalism and to the game's administrators (Haynes 1993). *The End* was something very different, however, in the way that it pioneered what Redhead later called 'the musicalisation of soccer' (Redhead, 1997: 70). Here, in Liverpool, and drawing, uniquely, and evenly on *both* of the main popular cultural traditions in the city, was a completely new form of fanzine that actually *bridged* the various cultures, and included features on music *and* football, and, perhaps most importantly, relentlessly on forms of male street fashion which linked for the first time the local [football] clubs to other [night] clubs in the city (see Williams 2001):

The idea of *The End* was to create a *Private Eye* for football supporters in Liverpool,' says Hooton. 'People used to say that we would never get football supporters to buy a fanzine, particularly one that included music, and trying to sell the first few issues was almost impossible. But soon people realised what it was all about. (Thrills 1998: 45)

Although Peter Hooton was well known in local networks as a Liverpool football fan, not all of the members of *The Farm* were actually interested in football at all. But *The Farm* became widely known, not to their their obvious displeasure, as *the* 'scally' band, the band *made up of* Liverpool football fans. But in the early 1980s, before the national 'musicalisation of soccer' had really taken hold, this description meant the band sometimes found it difficult to get gigs. In some cities, however, most particularly Leeds, *The Farm* had developed quite a local following, and one that now included members of the notorious Leeds [United] Service Crew, a group of nationally known football hooligans. Working on the generally pacific relationship between Leeds and Liverpool fans - fans of both clubs held strong and common enmities for Manchester United - Hooton recalls: "When the Leeds Service Crew

(LSC) first turned up at one of our gigs we were really concerned, but they turned out to be our greatest fans. They had a similar scene and were obsessive about football fashion. In Leeds, we'd have 200 fans, but in Manchester, where they didn't have that sort of scene, no-one would turn up.”

Clearly, there was nothing about *The Farm's* Liverpool roots which overly-concerned the LSC, or indeed *Everton* followers of the band; after all, this was *music*, rather than the tribalism of football, despite Hooton's very public and deep Anfield affinity. There were also few Liverpool football fans who would turn out at a gig in Leeds, no matter what *The Farm's* popularity, so there was little scope for intra-audience confrontations. *The Farm's* football-fan following in Yorkshire also worried local police forces, however. On one occasion, the band were booked to play a Leeds' Labour Club, but the police eyed the gathering Leeds Service Crew and stopped the band from going on stage. *The Farm*, followed by their loyal fans, tried to perform at other local venues, but to no avail. Peter Hooton recalls: ‘In the end the police got hold of our car keys and said, “Just get out of our town” - and there'd been no trouble at all.’ But despite problems such as these, the band usually tried to capitalise on their ‘football’ market, contriving, for example, to play gigs in cities where an important football match had already taken place in the afternoon. *The Farm's* manager, Kevin Sampson, remembers:

We arranged a showcase at the Rock Garden in London for a number of record companies when *Everton* were playing *Southampton* at *Highbury* [in an FA Cup semi-final], as we knew that we could be guaranteed a large and enthusiastic following at the gig that night. The atmosphere was incredible.

So, did any of this overt football enthusiasm and self-conscious northern laddism really contribute in a big way to *The Farm's* national success? In the early days, the band certainly struggled to get any sort of attention from the major record

labels. Dressed in jeans, trainers or even plastic sandals, they embraced the working class 'boy [read 'scally'] next door' look. In Liverpool, the youngsters in the know who went to the match adopted, from the late 1970s, what they considered be an 'anti-football', 'casual' look, and *The Farm* and their readers and supporters inevitably became leaders and arbiters in these obsessive and increasingly narcissistic fashion stakes. Sampson recalls the way in which in the early days the band were some way ahead of what record executives *thought* they were looking for: 'The Farm 'look' was so alien to the people at the record companies - they shook their heads in dumb confusion and said - 'it looks like an identity parade': a load of convicts on a day out. ' Today, of course, these same record company executives are likely to have their own private boxes at Chelsea and at other high profile London football clubs, as football has become the cultural and commercial currency of the age.

In the early 1980s, then, this northern 'football' look really was quite alien to the rest of the record industry. *The Farm* claimed to be the first band actually to wear football trainers on stage, and they tracked the new developments in Liverpool back as early as 1978 (Redhead 1991a: 152). It was an image, of course, which was casually promoted by *The Farm*, when it simply wasn't taken seriously, but was emphatically appropriated and reconfigured later by the successful bands of the so-called 'Madchester' scene in the late-eighties (Haslam 1999). Whilst *The Farm* band members still considered themselves to be dressing to the height of [Liverpool 'lads'] fashion, the London record industry simply, it seems, had little interest in signing a band who produced football chants for songs - though none of the Farm's work was actually *about* football - and who looked, as far as southern record company A&R men were concerned, like a gang of northern, wide-boy welders.

One man who clearly *did* understand terrace culture and saw the real commercial potential of the booming football/street style phenomenon on Merseyside, was Robert Wade-Smith. In the early 1980s he worked in an *Adidas* concession in 'Top Shop' in Church Street, the main shopping street in Liverpool city centre. The concession sold an incredible number of training shoes; only the much larger Adidas concession in London's Oxford Circus sold more. Wade-Smith realised that the new competition in football aesthetics meant that the young football fans from Liverpool wanted more, and different sporting styles, and in 1982 he opened his own shop selling rare imported trainers from Europe and the US. He never looked back. These new sporting styles were popular in cities such as Liverpool in part because trainers and tracksuits were flexible, all-purpose wear, if 'reassuringly' expensive. They also helped to emphasise, albeit indirectly, the consistent *footballing* power of the city, when much else in the region seemed to be failing. Smart 'trackies' were also one important way of dealing, symbolically at least, with the economic exclusion which had hit Liverpool hard in the 1980s; the price tag of the 'right' sports wear revealed a determination of young 'scals' not to be excluded from the 'good life' at all (Williams 1991: 174-175). Finally, the trainer fashions and the liking in the city, especially, for more exclusive foreign football tops stemmed, essentially, from the fact that Liverpool FC especially had been remarkably successful in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. Fans from the city could travel abroad for the games, on a regular basis, bringing back 'gear' from beyond the usual local sources. Jegsy Dodd, local poet and Liverpool football fan recalls:

Ski-jackets - Lacoste jackets, Fila, stuff you couldn't buy in England. Some fans made legitimate purchases, but many stole - they'd swarm into a shop like locusts and take the lot. The whole fashion of the time was influenced by the nature of the football trips - by the fact that many of the fans would be 'on the rob'. They'd have

less chance of being suspected in a shop with the tweed jacket and the wedge haircut etc, than looking like the rest. A nice sensible side parting could cover up a multitude of sins.

The Wade-Smiths saw the opportunity for a thriving local market, and the array of Wade-Smith shops originally set up by brothers Robert and David selling designer clothes in Liverpool city centre is a testament to their success. In 1998 the company was, very profitably, sold to an international clothing firm. Today, Liverpool city centre - like most other urban working class centres in Britain - remains awash with sports shops.

Whilst *The Farm* and Liverpool football fans began exploring the symbolic *bricolage* of street wear, combining continental sports wear with 'country fashion' by dressing mysteriously in 'gentleman' Harris tweed jackets and *Adidas* Samba trainers, most of the more successful mainstream pop bands of the late 1980s continued wearing what was regarded as 'unusual' clothing on the High Street, but in terms of the performance traditions of popular music, was considerably more acceptable. The football fans and 'scallies' of Liverpool rarely mixed with the more bohemian, arty crowd that might favour this 'look' and who had attended Eric's, for example. A small number of those at Eric's might dare to sport 'football' wedge haircuts and Lois jeans, but Kevin Sampson remembers well the dress 'apartheid' established between music and football in Liverpool at the time: 'All the musical movements throughout the 70s and the 80s, from a stylistic point of view, were quite bohemian - there was the goth thing, new romantic, wearing black. It's only recently, in the 90s, that you see anyone at a match wearing black - you would have been seen as a 'weirdo' by the football fans.'

TV, 'e' culture and commerce

The two cultures, music and football, though slowly beginning to coalesce in important ways in parts of Liverpool at least, apart from the music/hooligan crossovers around post-punk, *nationally* seemed as far apart as ever. Certainly, bands who dared to *sing* about football were still generally seen as more than a little quirky, a bit of an oddity. Some bands, clearly, enjoyed and played up to this image. Birkenhead's own idiosyncratic *Half Man, Half Biscuit's* wilfully obtuse football classics such as, 'All I Want for Christmas is a Dukla Prague Away Kit', 'I was a Teenage Armchair Honved Fan', and the marvellous, 'Friday Nights and the Gates are Low' (a Bee Gees spoof and a reference to the small crowds at the band's beloved, struggling local football club Tranmere Rovers) passed by, critically acclaimed but commercially, largely unnoticed. The *Biscuits* were sometimes match sponsors at lowly Rovers, however, and the band famously failed to turn up for a 'live' appearance on Channel 4's prestigious TV rock show, *The Tube*, in the 1980s because it clashed with a Rovers' match. In football circles, of course, this could be pleurably read as the working of authentic football attachments against the overly-commercial froth of TV pop. On a more general basis, football and music, at least at the formal level, was still, largely, in a state of 'them' and 'us'. As Peter Hooton, again, points out: 'Football was unfashionable in London media circles during the 1980s. It was looked down on as an horrific game. But it was never unfashionable in the circles I mixed in' (quoted in Thrills, 1998: 45)

Some local musicians in the city had other reasons for rejecting football, of course. The crippling 1980's economic depression had hit Merseyside especially hard. Between 1979 and 1984 alone almost half of all manufacturing jobs in Liverpool were lost as the city became known as the Bermuda Triangle of British capitalism

(Parkinson 1985: 12). With no significant white collar sector in the local economy and with only one of the twenty largest manufacturing company in the city actually locally owned, Liverpool had effectively lost control of its own economic destiny. Unlike neighbouring Manchester, the city also lacked a grounded professional media base and the sort of mixed nighttime economy which might be built around such a core. Severe economic decline had, however, brought artistic and cultural responses from the city, including Alan Bleasdale's politically challenging and darkly comic Liverpool-based TV series, *Boys from the Blackstuff*, and also his football-based comedy series, *Scully*.

The Blackstuff, an elegaic account of the adventures of a Liverpool tarmac gang and also of the near-psychotic experience of unemployment in the city, unusually, contained TV drama scenes involving *real* footballers, current Liverpool FC players. The club's general *association* with a text which was clearly sympathetic to the plight of the city's unemployed was no bad thing, of course, both from a football marketing, and a public image, point of view. *Scully* was a rather different TV piece from *Blackstuff*. It was a popular comedy drama series based around a young man's fantasy of actually playing for Liverpool FC. Implicit here, however, was the strong notion that in post-industrial Liverpool this football fantasy was possibly the *only* available means of escape from enforced drudgery for many working class lads in the city. It included scenes shot at Liverpool FC, and Elvis Costello appeared in the series (with the player Kenny Dalglish). Costello, a Liverpool fan, naturally, also wrote the music and the theme tune for this hard-edged, 'heart of gold', comedy, the catchy and pointed, 'Painting the Town Red'. Was this a political, or a football, message in the lyric? It was probably both.

On the national stage by the mid-eighties, the number of pop bands now making routine reference to football in their songs or onstage and in interviews was steadily on the increase, and the *NME* and other music magazines in Britain had also begun to run more articles on terrace fashion. The distinctions between music and football cultures, slowly at first, began to dissolve more rapidly as part of the general blurring of the boundaries of styles and subcultures (Redhead 1991a). By 1989 an *NME* feature, 'Goal Discs' was determined to explore "every conceivable facet of the growing football/rock connection" (Redhead 1991b:27). The *NME's* Adrian Thrills, in particular, began writing more and more about football, as well as music, interviewing top Merseyside-based footballers, including regularly the 'intellectual' and music-literate Evertonian, Pat Nevin, and the 'cool' John Barnes, amongst others. The Hillsborough disaster forged more strong music/football links in Liverpool and elsewhere, with 'football' bands playing benefit gigs for the bereaved and their families (see, also, Williams 2001).

Arguably the single biggest influence on the blending of musical and football cultures in the late-1980s was the arrival of the 'designer' drug of the time, ecstasy, and its strong association with techno and dance cultures. Although their influence on terrace culture has probably been exaggerated, the arrival of ecstasy and dance *together* as part of the 'new mainstream' in the late 1980s (Thornton 1995: 100) almost certainly did play an important part in changing the lifestyles of at least some of those who had previously followed football, as well as changing the musical landscape of the country (Gilman 1994; Redhead 1991b). It was also probably the beginning of the end of the national music success for popular 'good time' bands such as *The Farm*, for example, who now looked a little off the pace of the new music and

increasingly youthful club scenes. Dave Pitchilingi of the Liverpool band 35

Summers recalls:

Ecstasy played a big part in changing the way people acted. Lads that were in 1987 slashing each other - within 12 months those same people were hugging each other. Liverpool, Man U., Chelsea, West Ham all fought each other and had away crowds. And then ecstasy broke down that barrier. It didn't last long, maybe 3 or 4 years. After that the tablets weren't as good, and people started taking other drugs - Charlie [cocaine], for example, which had a completely different effect. Football fans went to nightclubs, so they were part of that big scene.

Inevitably, as we have said, there is more than a little nostalgia and some distortion here. Not all 'lads' downed their football fighting tools in the 'summer of love', from 1988, far from it (see Haslam 1998: 188). But, substituting ecstasy for beer and dance cultures for lads' gangs did help to 'chill out' some previously fierce football rivalries. Soon after, in 1990, 35 *Summers* seized the moment and produced a promotional tee-shirt with a picture of Bill Shankly emblazoned on its front. The band had brought out their first single, a cover version of The Beatles' song 'Come Together' which now included a spoken football excerpt sampled from the *Shankly Speaks* LP owned by one of the band members, Dave Pitchilingi. A keen Liverpool fan, Pitchilingi adored Shankly, but he also realised that this use of the image of the great man would be a major attention grabber for the band, especially in Liverpool. He suspected that some 'Red' football fans from the city would also get into the 35 *Summers*' records as a result. Airplay on the Liverpool FC-obsessed John Peel's BBC Radio One show was also guaranteed. In fact, the band proceeded to sell many more tee-shirts than they did records, an early signal perhaps of the force of the new merchandising blitz which the game, itself, was about to release. Ten years on, Pitchilingi's Shankly tee-shirts are still on sale in Liverpool, but they now compete with the products - including retro shirts and memorabilia - disgorged from the club's own official city centre store.

The 35 *Summers'* Shankly tee-shirt episode coincided, of course, with World Cup Italia'90, and the official England anthem, 'World in Motion', written and performed by Manchester-based band *New Order*. For the first time an official World Cup song was no novelty shocker sung by the England squad. Instead, it was put together and performed by a 'cool' rock band. And not just any cool band - *New Order*, were one of the 'hippest' of all the independent post-punk bands as well as being one of the most commercially successful. Liverpool's John Barnes performed with the band and took the music/football crossover into the post-Hillsborough, post-hooligan, mainstream (Later, Barnes would lead the Liverpool FC squad in their own 'hip-hop' 1996 FA Cup Final song, though it fell well short of the credibility achieved by the *New Order* venture).

In this way, the figure and the domain of the sports star had begun to merge with that of the rock star, as embodiments of style, just as football and music cultures interacted to produce increasingly short-lived and hybrid cultural forms (Rowe 1995: 167). Football/music crossovers were also increasingly exploring the new terrain which now linked the previously sealed domains of 'high' and 'low' culture. The Three Tenors sang *Nessum Dorma* for international *Match of the Day*). It soon hit the top of the pop charts. British classical composer, Michael Nyman, was now writing music for the 'beautiful game' and its wayward stars (Readhead 1997: 71). English Football was now officially cool. Originally called, transparently and provocatively, 'E for England', the Italia 90 song's lyrics and emphasis was changed considerably before it's final recording. *New Order* singer Bernard Sumner told the *NME* (June 18) in the summer of 1990 that FA had made it clear that the song had to distance itself from hooliganism, but he also claimed that there was a "deliberate ambiguity"

about the words in that they could be read to refer to both music and football. “Pop and football”, he concluded, “are nearer than they have been for a long time.”

In the early 1990s, of course, football in England would be repositioned again, this time as part of a post-hooligan, consumption driven ‘new lads’ publishing genre. Leeds United football fan and rock journalist, James Brown, launched the ‘sex, beer and sport (read football)’ *Loaded* magazine in May 1994, signalling that the post-class lifestyle ‘fanzine’, for lads, had finally gone mainstream. *Loaded*, and its many imitators, boomed. Ironically, Brown ended up, by the late 1990s, editing Leeds United’s rather less provocative official matchday programme. By the year 2000, following English football riots in Brussels and disturbing crime at home, magazines like *Loaded* were being blamed by Government ministers for most of the things which were then perceived to be ‘going wrong’ in terms of the construction of English masculinities, its culpability ranging from boys’ failings at school, through to yobbish hooliganism and even to male paedophilia.

Few Liverpool bands were now able to make any real impact on the national music charts. *The La’s*, *The Real People*, and *Rain* were all bands which were lauded, locally. *The La’s*’ heavily Beatles-influenced, ‘There She Goes’ was an obvious and acknowledged influence on the Oasis music produced by the explosive and Manchester City-supporting Gallagher brothers. Like other parts of the Merseyside economy, however, the music industry in Liverpool was fragile, and lacked even one small, but strong, local record label on which these new artists might successfully establish themselves. Later signed up by major London labels, these late-Liverpool bands, nevertheless, have failed to fulfil their early potential. Whilst ‘baggy’ bands from Manchester, began to dominate the national music scene from the late-1980s, It was not until 1995 when *The La’s* guitarist, John Power, formed his own new band,

Cast, that Liverpool began to make another impact on the mainstream charts. A slightly quirky and unpredictable new Liverpool band, *Space*, then took many by surprise in 1996 with their single, 'Female of the species', launching the band into a period of some critical and popular success. A 'new' Liverpool sound had begun to emerge.

These new Liverpool bands were managed by *local* management companies which were able to combine the necessary business acumen for negotiating in the murky world of pop, with an understanding of the cultural and musical roots of the bands. John Power is an avid Liverpool football fan and, like many pop stars in the late 1990s, he has been astute to state publicly his football club allegiance. When asked by music industry magazine *Music Week*, who had been the most important person in the Merseyside *music* industry, his reply was both perverse and unerring - he said it was Liverpool FC's iconic ex-manager, Bill Shankly. *Space's* lead singer, Tommy Scott, speaks in a similar vein:

Shankly and [Bob] Paisley have been major influences on me in my music career. I love their dedication - anyone who has that sort of dedication to their cause has to be an inspiration. Football is so important to us. We've called our new album 'Love You More Than Football'. You know, all of us in the band wish we were footballers.

Dedicated; pop stars? The Liverpool FC trainer, the fearsome Reuben Bennet, would have asked some harsh questions - and no doubt wondered how the Liverpool 'boot room' of the 1960s and 1970s was inspiring young *musicians* in the city some 25 years later.

Ten years after

When the Liverpool band, the *Lightning Seeds*, along with laddish ‘football’ comedians and television personalities, Frank Skinner and David Baddiel, recorded ‘Three Lions’ for the FA, as the official England Euro ‘96 song, football and pop music seemed, almost indecently - certainly uncomfortably - inseparable. The *Lightning’s* songwriter and singer, and Liverpool fan, Ian Broudie, had been one of the original Liverpool Eric’s crowd, and in the early eighties he had recorded his own music with *Big in Japan* and had also produced *Echo and the Bunnymen’s* early songs. Now, one of Eric’s original, quirky musos was embracing football in mainstream music; it had been quite a journey. Oddly, too, here was a Liverpool band apparently openly embracing the *England* national team - not always a feature in a city with strong Irish roots and some antipathies towards the southern-based England national football team (Williams, 1986). ‘Three Lions’, of course, with its joyous if exclusionary and chauvinistic (Carrington 1998) ‘football chant’ chorus of hope, coupled with its central lyric of England loss and regret since 1966, was a massive number one chart hit, and became the near-ubiquitous anthem of post-hooligan ‘new’ football in the late-1990s.

Liverpool pop/football ‘veterans’, *Echo and the Bunnymen*, too, have had recent popular success with new songs, including a minor one with their, possibly ill-advised, official England World Cup song for 1998. The band had reformed in 1997, some ten years after an acrimonious split. In 1997 singer, Ian McCulloch, still keen on making any possible allusion to his beloved Reds, told *The Guardian* (4th July 1997), mysteriously : “We’re like Ian Rush: he went to Juventus for a year; felt like a fish out of water because he couldn’t speak the language, then came back and was brilliant. Sometimes you have to go elsewhere.”

Whilst the traditional indie and rock bands were struggling to find their way in the city, a new local dance label, *3 Beat*, emerged and Liverpool’s famous and vast

dance nightclub, Cream, opened in 1992. University of Liverpool graduate and Liverpool supporter, Jon Barlow, started *3 Beat*, and Cream was the commercial brainchild of Everton fan, James Barton. In 1998, Jon Barlow got together with one of the artists on his *3 Beat* label to discuss plans for an ‘alternative’ World Cup song. The dance outfit, *Dario G*, named after the mercurial and very ‘localised’ Crewe Alexandra manager, Dario Gradi, but also, cleverly, sounding very much like a ‘placeless’ European dance act, wanted to produce something which had a ‘global’ or ‘world music’ appeal - the video re-situated ostensibly ‘European’ footballing identities within an African context - but one which would also be instantly familiar to European football fans. The tune of the traditional American folksong ‘Clementine’ was adapted for the instrumental single ‘Carnaval de Paris’, which sold 1.1 million copies worldwide and has since been adopted by football fans across Europe. As football fans themselves, Barlow and *Dario G* knew exactly how to create – and to ‘sell’ - a global ‘terrace anthem’. It was an approach, combining music and football, which both reveals and reflects;

[T]he outcome both of the flattening effect of a (hyper) commodifying logic of culture and industries which are no guarantors of stylistic and subcultural boundaries, and also of initiatives emanating from within cultural groupings whose impulse is as much towards innovation and synthesis as it is towards the marking out of separate, consistent identities and styles. Rock and sports cultures, it may be concluded, articulate and interweave in a mutual process of re-articulation and reformulation which is now prevalent in the making of late-twentieth century popular culture (Rowe 1995: 167)

James Barton, for his part, having visited clubs such as *Most Excellent* in Manchester (Haslam 1999: 264), had seen the potential for a real dance club in the city, a ‘cool’ place to go for lovers of rave, house music and all other forms of dance music. He teamed up with local entrepreneur, Darren Hughes, and they began running weekly club nights in an old Liverpool city centre warehouse. By mid-1998 the club

had grown into a business with a multi-million pound turnover. Cream, globalising and franchising, now runs club nights in places as far flung as Sidney, New York, Buenos Aires and it also has a highly successful merchandising operation; like Liverpool FC's own powerful 'sign' value, the Cream brand is known to clubbers worldwide.

Girl Power?

By the mid-1990s, new approaches to the links between music, football and *gender* were also in the offing in Britain. The all-conquering 'post-modern' musical product, the *Spice Girls*, made their *Top of the Pops* debut in 1996, and Liverpool (or, at least, Widnes) girl Mel C, aka 'Sporty Spice', made her own mark. For TV she wore a replica Liverpool FC [Steve] McManaman No. 17 shirt. All things about the Spice's are carefully constructed, of course, including the initial inclusion of one, 'sporty', Spice, and the multi-media promotion of each of the 'band' members as "total star texts" (Dyer 1991). Aiming here for a segment of the thriving youth *football* market was also an astute move for a band which was primarily aimed at young girls. But here, nevertheless, was a popular all-female pop band, with a pleasant, light, frothy image, which included in its ranks apparently a young fan declaring her passion for her football team. It was a further signal that nowhere was now safe from English football's quite rapacious appetite for popular cultural hegemony. Later, another *Spice Girl*, 'posh' Victoria, would become one-half of a celebrity football/music partnership with Manchester United's David Beckham, a relationship played out largely in public which would keep the British tabloid press in almost perpetual thrall.

The *Bunneymen's* Ian McCulloch had even been seduced by the Football Association to produce the banal, '(How Does It Feel To Be) On Top Of The World'. In fact, the verses of an original *Bunneymen* song were altered to fit the FA's own concept of a terrace chant, and none other than the *Spice Girls*, themselves, were recruited to sing on the record. In June 1998 Mel C, sounding for all the world like a young football player in post-match interview mode, told *Melody Maker* that, "Music is a funny business. It's made it possible for me to do things for football. Weird isn't it. I'm well proud." Ian McCulloch, himself, was less pleased with the record; it lacked real fizz and credibility and, worse, the football and music publics were still wedded to their favourite 'Three Lions' anthem at matches. Defensively, McCulloch claimed to be really more concerned about the *football*, telling *Melody Maker*, "To be honest, I'm more worried about the England team than the song. I don't know what the sod's going on with Hoddle at the moment." 'Three Lions' was, in fact, re-recorded in a new version for World Cup 1998 and it made the No.1 spot in Britain for the second time in two years. Mercifully, McCulloch's own rather strange venture into England football/music territory was soon forgotten.

Creativity and the city of Liverpool

Is there anything about the city of Liverpool, itself, which stimulates this sort of musical and poetic creativity, both at the match, and in the clubs, bars and various venues in the city? Born out of trans-cultural exchanges and immigrant performance cultures imported from both Ireland and the USA, combined with hard times, Liverpool does seem to produce footballers, musicians, comedians, poets, writers and actors by the plentiful. Coincidence? Not for *Space's* precocious young Tommy Scott:

It's no co-incidence that Liverpool has had both footballing and musical success. Liverpool people are hungry. When people are poor they're brought up to strive for something different, and Liverpool people seem to have this more than most. We probably wouldn't be doing what we do if we'd lived anywhere else. I don't know why, but it does seem to be a particularly Liverpudlian thing.

Some sentimentality is clear here, along with the sort of sentiments which are not unappealing, of course, to ideologies of the political Right: 'hardship produces innovation', might be a slogan made for the politics of Britain in the 1980s. Liverpool had had plenty of recent hardship, certainly. Ian Broudie may well have been thinking of the creative charge from struggles in the city when he told *The Times* (July 14), enigmatically, in 1997 that he used to be afraid that if he left Liverpool, "Something would leave me musically."

A common theme running through much of the city's music has been the special ecology of Liverpool and especially the work of the river. Even without the obvious reference to Gerry's 'Ferry Across the Mersey', the river and the sea appears many times as a theme in songs written by *Echo and the Bunnymen*, the *Pale Fountains* and others, and is a subject band members frequently like to return to in interviews. The sea as a source of external influences on local music is long established in the city, of course, especially in the Beatles' early debt to American black rhythm and blues artists. For Ian Broudie, the sea represents the freedom and romantic allure of the 'other': "I even used to love the docks before they were regenerated - I would go cycling there when they were deserted and there was this great romantic atmosphere" (*The Times Magazine*, 3 May, 1997). Mick Head, now of Shack, agrees:

'Cos I live near the river I walk down there all the time. It's peaceful and the waves never stay the same. I was down there the other day at the Pier Head and this fella was there with his two kids, watching the waves and looking at how different they are. And then this fella said to his kids, 'Watch the whirlpool', and I thought, 'No way

is there going to be a whirlpool here'. And then it came. I'd been looking at exactly the same thing but I hadn't seen it. I don't know how he knew.

Pete Wylie, too, refers to the sea and the river as having a “profound effect” on his writing; he even called his daughter Mersey. Perhaps echoing again the important Cunard-laden historical influences in music and popular culture in what was essentially a northern decaying sea port (Chambers 1985: 63), Ian McCulloch is also in no doubt about the soothing importance of the River Mersey for stimulating the creative juices. But he also recognises the importance of the unique and intoxicatingly 'dangerous' nature of the city and some of its people:

The Pier Head, it's wide open. It's peaceful and soothing being down there. Other places do up their waterfronts and spoil them but Liverpool hasn't. It retains that feel of days gone by and I think that's one of the strengths of Liverpool. I mean they are doing it up, but to do it up completely would make it just like other cities. Some of the buildings in town that are derelict, it's the only major city in Britain that has this now. It's real and it's part of the city. If you go to Rome and they'd put a few new bricks in the Coliseum it'd look crap. The disrepair and the buildings tell a story. They should leave that legacy of erosion and bombs and what time has done to the city. A lot of it's kind of self-inflicted. You go down Park Road and they burn buildings in their own street - generally the Tory club. It's that self-destruction that's part of our character. Most scousers I know have that self-destructive thing. It's better than graffiti isn't it, to kind of just blow the gaff up. The edge is what's good about the city. The Bunnymen tend to be liked in proper places where there's a spirit to the city.

Football, tourism and policy in Liverpool: a new direction?

Even in a city ravaged by economic depression and the restructuring of the global economy, two locally controlled businesses (music and football) with a combined turnover of not much over £100 million may not sound like an important major focus for regional economic regeneration. But, in an era of ‘cultural citizens’ (Rowe 1999: 69) sports texts also have very high ‘sign value’ in the new global economies of ‘signs and space’ (Lash and Urry 1994: 14-15). Global sports

businesses these days mean selling ‘signs’ globally, and also producing jobs *locally*. In July 1999 a survey of the economic benefits of football in the city of Liverpool carried out by the Football Research Unit at the University of Liverpool (Johnstone, et al, 1999) estimated that in the region of 3,000 full-time jobs in the wider Merseyside economy are dependent on the football industry. The report also argued that 1,400 part-time jobs are produced by the clubs on matchdays and that for every 100 jobs in the retail sector around the two football grounds, five are dependent on matchdays. For every £1 spent by the two clubs combined, 31p remains within the local Liverpool economy. Around 78% of interviewees in service sectors (pubs, bars, sports shops, restaurants) noted a ‘significant increase’ in takings when Liverpool FC play at home and estimate the increase in takings to be between 10-25%. A smaller proportion of businesses (37%) noted the same increase for Everton home games, again reflecting the national and international draw of Liverpool FC *versus* the more local appeal of Everton. Although it is unclear how exactly the figure is arrived at, the report estimates that 750,000 visitors come to the city of Liverpool for what the authors call ‘football-related’ reasons (*op cit*: 26).

Echoing our own observations about the lack of ‘embeddedness’ of the two football clubs in Liverpool in local political and cultural networks and in the local economy - in part, a consequence of these successful clubs being controlled by strong political and economic Conservatives in a city dogged in the 1960s and 1970s by lack of political leadership and a failing economy, and in the early 1980s by economic ruin and a radical form of ‘centralised municipalism’ (Parkinson 1985: 18-20) - the report argues for more collaboration between ‘stakeholders’ in the city. Stakeholders here are taken to include the clubs, supporters, the City Council, the Mersey Partnership

and local businesses. A possible starting point for a new relationship is outlined (*op.cit.* 27):

- A collaborative network of shareholders is needed to ensure that the local football industry adds to the competitive advantage of the entire locality and is used to avoid a competitive cycle of decline within the whole economy
- The two Premiership clubs need to be (and be seen to be) an embedded and highly valued part of the local Merseyside economy
- There is a need to develop a collaborative approach to enticing more football-related tourism into the city centre, i.e. to develop and integrated tourism and football industry strategy

These may seem to be both obvious and important but also relevant recommendations for the City of Liverpool and its people, though how they might play in the new ‘global’ economies of top football - where television income and returns from the internet from a *global* market seem likely to be the major new income generators at clubs such as Liverpool FC - is unclear. The report concludes, unsurprisingly (*op.cit.*: 27):

There is no blueprint to the future of the football industry on Merseyside. There is no co-ordination, or plan, about how this sector might be developed for the benefit of the two clubs, the local economy and the Merseyside community. There needs to be a first step in realising the potential of the football industry on Merseyside.

Since the publication of the University of Liverpool report, there has been a small, but significant, step towards addressing these recommendations, at least on the *international* stage. When the Liverpool City Council took a delegation to Shanghai

in the autumn of 1999 to celebrate a city twinning arrangement, they took with them a Liverpool rock band and a football team. The band, *Space*, played a rare gig in Shanghai and the Liverpool Football Club under-19s team played in a tournament against young Chinese teams. The visit showed, for the first time perhaps, the firm intention of the *city* to promote itself globally - and in a more co-ordinated way - through two of its major, and best known, cultural assets. For once, music and football, the clubs and the public authorities in Liverpool, speak with one voice.

Endpiece: living *with* the past, and *selling* the future

In 2005 Liverpool FC won the European Cup for the first time in 21 years. Whilst some Liverpool bands can claim some measure of commercial success in the past 30 years, none, of course, have come close to that of the older musical pioneers of Merseyside. The legacy of the extraordinary dominance, musically, of the *Beatles* over the past three decades, and also the power of Liverpool FC in the same period has, at times, hung heavily over today's Liverpool like a dark and forbidding cloud. There are other troubling issues here, too. No matter how much it is promoted and celebrated as a new success story for the city, producing public *policy* for music, in order to sell a 'new' Liverpool to tourists, for example, will not solve the city's wider problems of poverty, lack of skills and underemployment. It also raises problems of the relations between music practitioners and public sector workers of the sort we have described here (see, also, Cohen 1991). It points, too, to the real dangers of 'institutionalising' pop music and thus 'sanitising' or diluting its appeal. Like the wider 'Britpop' project, there is a risk that the new publicly supported music structures and cultures in the city will be sustained precisely *because*, Liverpool's

music value, lies in the very ways in which it can be contained against its nature, packaged costed and sold abroad (Glancey 1999). Finally, the effect of an overly-strong focus on the *economic* importance of music cultures and music ‘places’ in Liverpool may be to *reduce* cultural resources and influences simply to preferred *economic* outcomes of consumption:

To go to the Cavern Quarter is to be a witness to its musical history, perhaps without hearing any music. The sponsorship of the area by the retailers within it has led to the design of the quarter which encourages the consumption of more mundane commodities, such as sportswear, on sale there. It is thus hoped that a by-product of a visit to the Cavern Quarter will be shopping, so that the *Beatles* could be considered to be actually marketing trainers and sweatshirts rather than Liverpool the city (Gilmore 2000: 168).

Even in the new Music City of Liverpool another question constantly nags: how could any local band ever get close again to matching the impact of the fab four? By the same token, how can any new team at Liverpool FC, even Benitez’s new stars, ever repeat the club’s near-complete control of English and European football in the late 1970s and early 1980s, before the new accelerated global movement of football talent and Liverpool’s loss of strategic assets? Indeed, King (1998: 207-208) argues that in an era of multinational corporations and global flows *cities*, rather than nations, will be the key economic units and actors of the future. He notes that the football clubs in both Newcastle and Middlesborough have been important in local economic regeneration in those cities and that the displacement of Liverpool FC by Manchester United as the dominant football force in Britain:

[C]orrelates symbolically with the economic development of the cities, where, despite persistent social problems in parts of the city, Manchester has been increasingly able to consolidate and advance its position over the last two decades...It is highly likely that the fame of Manchester United has contributed to this resurgence of the city in the post-Fordist world economy.

The power of cities - and football clubs - in this regard may be exaggerated, but the eventual 'recovery' of both Liverpool FC and the city's other major club, Everton, may yet play an important part in revitalising, in a wider sense, the city of Liverpool. Of course, thoughts of the past will always trouble those who have to follow in the wake of great success. Manchester United are only now exorcising the 'ghosts' of Best, Law and Charlton from the 1960s. But, mostly, this now historic success, in both football and music, is not regarded as a burden in Liverpool; it is still celebrated and enjoyed by its people, who have slowly begun to learn how to live in these incredibly long shadows. Moreover, with Liverpool bands, such as *Space* and *Cast*, now riding high, and with sometimes six young local boys playing for Liverpool FC's current first team (2000), the future is looking a little brighter, both for Liverpool's footballers and for its many musicians – many of whom are also, of course, Reds' football fans.

Note

(1) Most of the material quoted directly here is taken from original interviews with Liverpool musicians conducted by Cathy Long. These include: Jegsy Dodd, Philip Hayes, Mick Head, Peter Hooton, Ian McCulloch, Kevin McManus, Dave Pitchilingi, Kevin Sampson and Pete Wylie. Kevin McManus conducted the interview with Johnny Mellor.

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