

#SOUNDS OF OUR TOWN

THE WOLLONGONG EDITION



Edited by
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#SoundsOfOurTown: The Wollongong Edition

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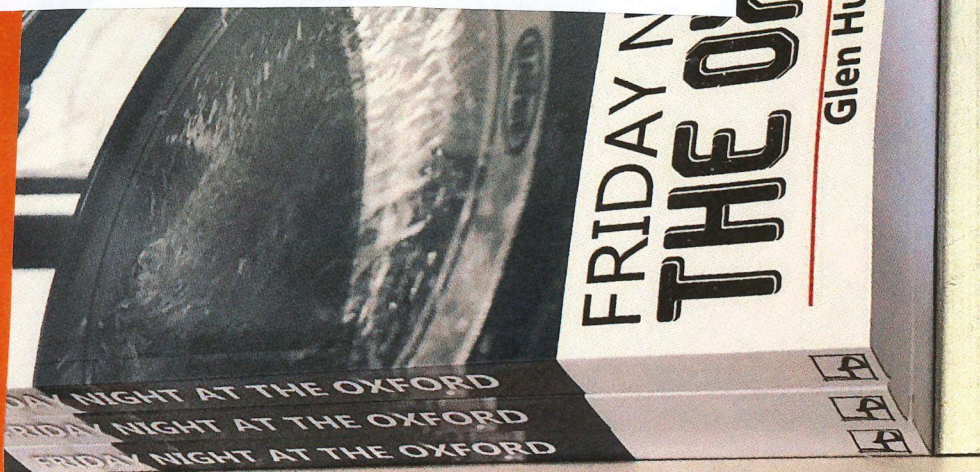
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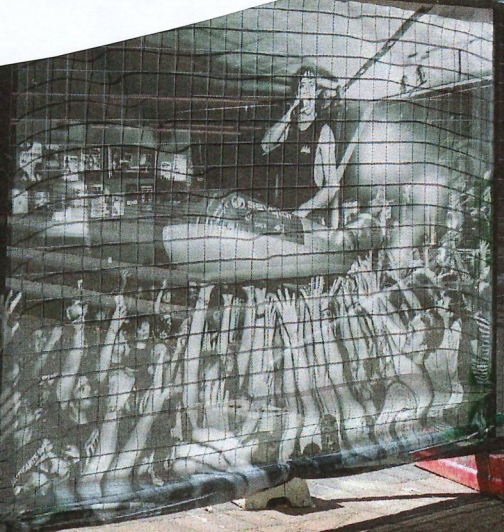
Editorial

➤ Why should we preserve popular music heritage?

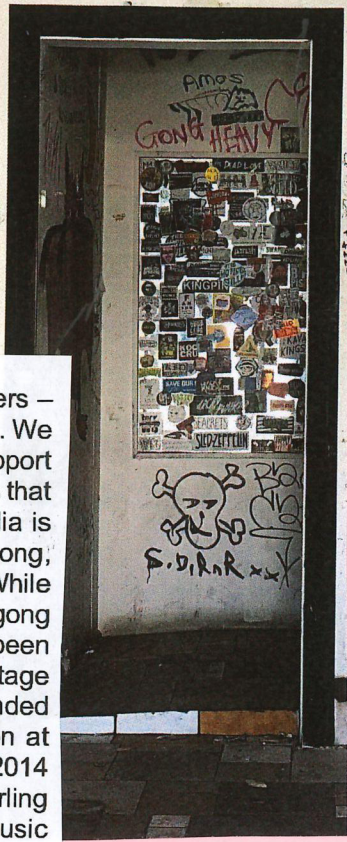
➤ What can the music made in a city tell us about its people and histories?

➤ What role might Wollongong's popular music past have to play in strengthening the city's creative and heritage futures?

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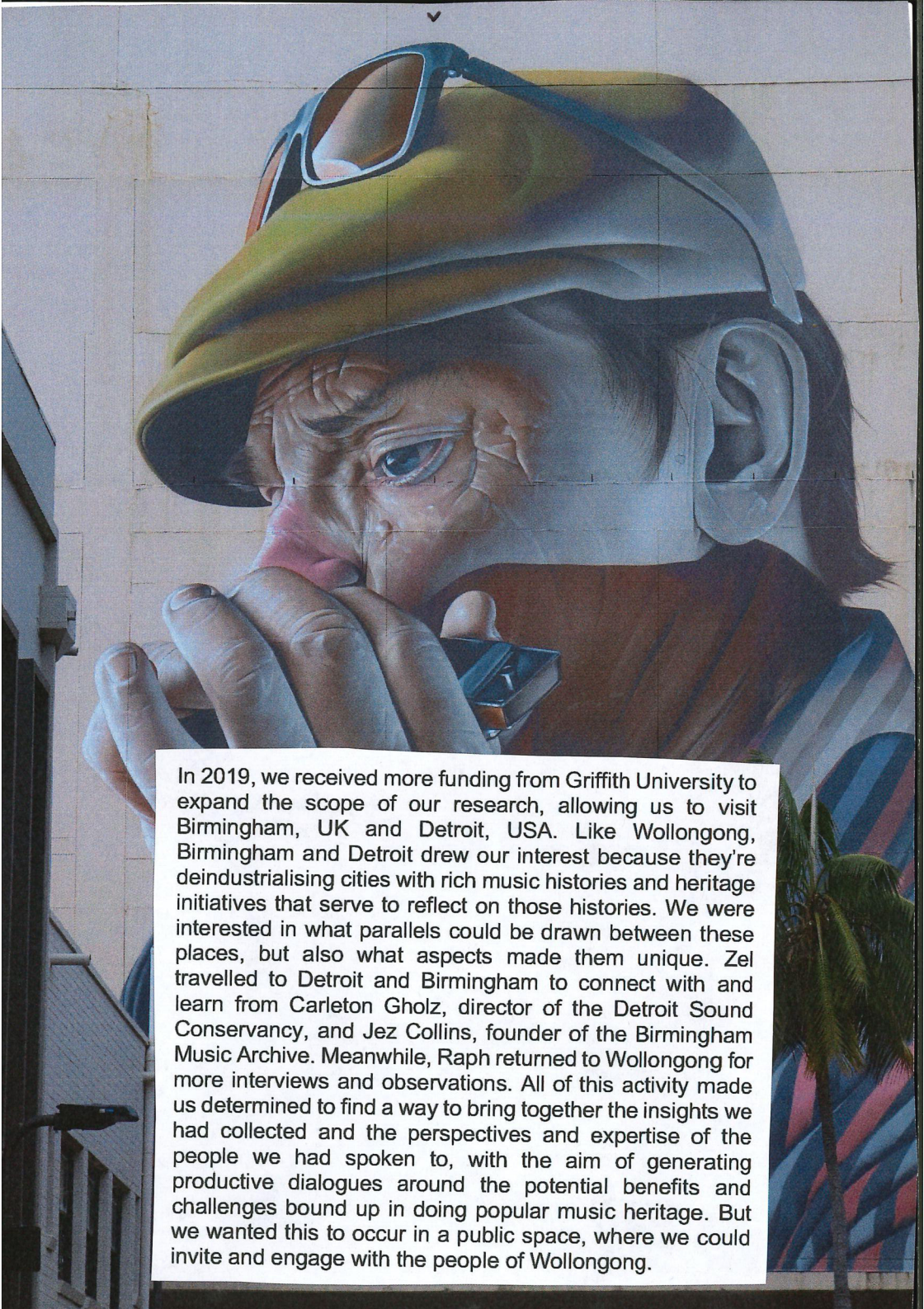


LONG
LIVE
RAD!
Z
HOME IS
RAD
RAD IS
HOME



This zine arises out of a project run by three researchers – Sarah, Raph and Zel – from Griffith University, Australia. We received a small grant from Griffith in 2018 to support research into popular music heritage initiatives in places that have gone through industrial decline. Although Australia is home to many deindustrialising cities – Newcastle, Geelong, Elizabeth – we selected Wollongong for our study. While each of these places has a rich music history, Wollongong was an example of a city where various efforts had been made to document and celebrate this history. Heritage initiatives like Steel City Sound (an online archive founded by Warren Wheeler in 2010 and subsequent exhibition at Wollongong Art Gallery) and *The Occy: A Doco* (a 2014 documentary produced and directed by Nathan Burling commemorating the Oxford Tavern, an important live music venue that closed in 2010) highlighted an emerging recognition of popular music's value to people's lives and sense of community. In October 2018, Raph and Zel spent a week in Wollongong exploring the town and talking to locals involved in heritage projects and the live music scene. One of the key things we took away from this visit was the importance of passionate, committed individuals in the community who were taking a grassroots, do-it-yourself, do-it-together approach to telling stories about popular music's past.





In 2019, we received more funding from Griffith University to expand the scope of our research, allowing us to visit Birmingham, UK and Detroit, USA. Like Wollongong, Birmingham and Detroit drew our interest because they're deindustrialising cities with rich music histories and heritage initiatives that serve to reflect on those histories. We were interested in what parallels could be drawn between these places, but also what aspects made them unique. Zel travelled to Detroit and Birmingham to connect with and learn from Carleton Gholz, director of the Detroit Sound Conservancy, and Jez Collins, founder of the Birmingham Music Archive. Meanwhile, Raph returned to Wollongong for more interviews and observations. All of this activity made us determined to find a way to bring together the insights we had collected and the perspectives and expertise of the people we had spoken to, with the aim of generating productive dialogues around the potential benefits and challenges bound up in doing popular music heritage. But we wanted this to occur in a public space, where we could invite and engage with the people of Wollongong.

All of this led us to hold the 'Sounds of Our Town' event at the Wollongong Art Gallery on the evening of Thursday, 17 October 2019. The event consisted of a panel of 6 people involved in heritage preservation in different capacities and in different places. We include the full transcript of the panel conversation on the pages that follow.

The purpose of this zine is to document and share our experiences and reflections on what we found in Wollongong. We start with an overview of some of the ideas that informed our research project, followed by the flyer that we circulated to promote the Sounds of Our Town event, a transcription of a radio interview that Sarah, Raph, Jez and Carleton did with Lindsay McDougall ('The Doctor') at ABC Illawarra, and a transcription of the Sounds of Our Town panel discussion. The zine concludes with contributions from two of our panel members, who reflect on their short time in Wollongong through the lens of the 'sounds of their towns' of Birmingham and Detroit.

Sarah Baker, Zelmarie Cantillon and Raphaël Nowak
(editorial team)



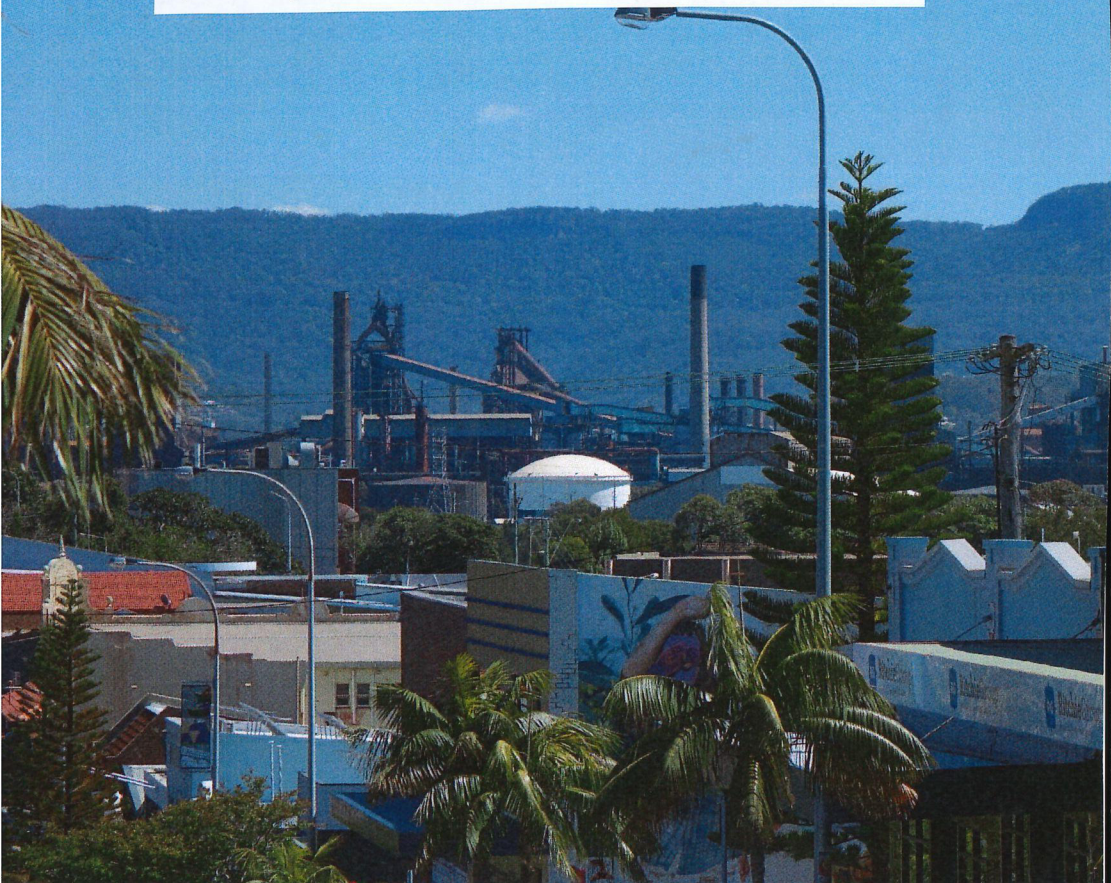


What is popular music heritage?

After the second world war, popular music has taken a variety of aesthetic and material forms, symbolizing the cultural identities of places it emerges from. The mass production of music and its diversification into different styles has reinforced the notion that a place, with its geographical features, its history, its people, is conducive of the development of styles of popular music. Liverpool is for example known for the Beatles, Seattle for Nirvana and the grunge scene. Popular music has not always been considered as a 'legitimate' form of heritage. But increasingly, popular music artefacts (e.g. costumes, instruments, photographs, ticket stubs, posters etc) are finding a place in archives and museum collections. Alongside institutions dedicated to the display of popular music's past, like the Australian Music Vault in Melbourne, exhibitions celebrating different aspects of popular music history are now regularly held in museums and galleries across the globe. The Steel City Sound exhibition held at the Wollongong Art Gallery in 2014/15 is a good example of this phenomenon.

What are deindustrialising cities?

Deindustrialising cities is a phrase that describes the loss or reduction of the industrial sector in a city that has been traditionally characterised by a strong industrial presence. Wollongong was known as a 'steel city' with metal manufacturing and coal industries; Detroit was the 'motor city', a hub for car manufacturing; while Birmingham was the birthplace of the industrial revolution, the 'city of a thousand trades'. Each place suffered with the decline of these industries, which led to massive job losses, urban decay, and high rates of crime, poverty and unemployment. Deindustrialisation can lead to an erosion of a sense of place, bringing feelings of despair and a loss of individual and community well-being. In our research project, we explore how different cities have dealt with these economic, social and cultural changes brought about by deindustrialisation, and the role that popular music history and heritage might play in the rejuvenation of urban areas (for example by re-igniting community members feelings of pride in, or attachment to, the place they live).



What is cultural justice?

The main aim of our research is to analyse the extent to which popular music heritage produce 'cultural justice' outcomes. Like the idea of 'social justice', cultural justice is about resisting the inequalities and injustices produced by austerity measures and neoliberal politics. Cultural justice, however, has a specific focus on how inequalities and injustices can be countered through cultural expressions (e.g. music, art, films), cultural institutions (e.g. music venues, art galleries, museums) and cultural identities. Cultural justice can be sought through celebrating, reaffirming and/or challenging cultural narratives (e.g. the stigma attached to deindustrialising cities) such as through community-based, do-it-yourself heritage initiatives like Steel City Sound.



Drive with Lindsay McDougall

on ABC Illawarra, 17 October 2019

Lindsay McDougall:

What do you think Detroit in Michigan and Birmingham in the UK and Wollongong right here have in common? Well, arguably amazing music scenes. May I kick out the jams for a second [music plays]. In fact, I think there's a few bands in Wollongong that would love being compared, and have certainly been compared to both the MC5 and Black Sabbath. They also have something in common called deindustrialisation. And, representatives from all three places and more are here in Wollongong to look at the way music helps towns that have experienced industrial decline, and what they can do to keep that music safe, I guess. Jez Collins from Birmingham Music Archive. Hello Sir.

Jez Collins:

Good morning.

Lindsay McDougall:

I'm sorry, I've got to play a little bit more Birmingham music [music plays].

Jez Collins:

Good, a bit of Duran Duran.

Make me feel at home.

Carleton Gholz:

We didn't talk about that last night, that's great, Duran Duran, of course.

Lindsay McDougall:

Duran Duran's one, yeah, yeah. Carleton Gholz right there from the Detroit Sound Conservancy. Hello Sir.

Carleton Gholz:

Morning [music plays].

Lindsay McDougal:

Very smooth, Four Tops, from Detroit, they're from Detroit, aren't they? They're on the list.

Carleton Gholz:

Absolutely.

Lindsay McDougal:

Absolutely, very good. And, Raphaël Nowak and Sarah Baker from Griffith University, hello there.

Sarah Baker:

Hi there.

Raphaël Nowak:

Hello.

Lindsay McDougal:

Thank you all for coming in today.

Well Jez, what would you say is your? Tell us a little bit about the Jazz Archive and what goes on in there?

Jez Collins:

Okay, there's two things. I am a trustee of the National Jazz Archive. My own archive is more about Birmingham music in general, so they're slightly different things, but what I'm attempting to do is to document, capture and then celebrate Birmingham's music history, heritage and culture. And so, while the bands are important, so we've heard Sabbath and Duran Duran. While they're really important, I'm really keen on collecting the stories of the bands that maybe never were, that might have played for a couple of months to 30 people. The venues where we went to go and listen to music have been and gone, record shops, you know the managers, the press, the fashion areas. So, the whole culture aspect of music. And, I do that for a number of reasons. One, because I don't think in Birmingham, and we'll talk about Detroit in a minute, but I don't think that Birmingham really understands its music history and its heritage and what it can do. So, in the UK in particular, we all think about Liverpool with the Beatles you know, so -

Lindsay McDougal:

Manchester perhaps?

Jez Collins:

Manchester, absolutely with Factory Records and those great bands. And that brings in tourism, you know visitors, and they spend money in the city. They support jobs, so in Liverpool, I think Beatles tourism supports 3,000 jobs every year, so there's an economic reason for it. But also, it adds to that cultural cache, so people know about Manchester and Liverpool, they know about Detroit. And, I'm trying to change that narrative and say, "Look, Birmingham's got this incredible history of popular music over 50 - 60 years". And, actually, if we understand it, if we celebrate it, there's a whole range of benefits, both for the city itself, for the individuals, the communities, and our culture offer, so more people come and visit us.

I'm laughing, but a bench has just been unveiled for Black Sabbath, so an Egyptian guy -

Lindsay McDougal:

A bench?

Jez Collins:

A bench. So, an Egyptian guy, a huge metal fan from Cairo has made a bench, a metal bench with the four Sabbath guys, and you can sit on the bench overlooking the canals in Birmingham. There are a little bit of walk of stars that you've mentioned. But there isn't really, there's nothing, it's all fragmented, and what we're trying to do is make a cohesive argument, and say, "Actually, you know all these things fit together" and together, you know, people go off and do individual things, but if you bring them together, it's a much more cohesive, strategic way, and there's a much better story and narratives to tell that will help us tell the stories of Birmingham. And, Carleton and I were talking last night, music is a great way of telling the story of a city. So, whether it's Wollongong, whether it's Brisbane, Detroit, Birmingham, music's the way in, and you can understand a lot about the city and its communities through its music, and its music heritage.

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah, well tell us about Detroit, Carleton and how the Detroit Sound Conservancy works.

Carleton Gholz:

Well, thanks for having me, first of all. Absolutely what Jez says, I think there's multiple audiences to the kind of work we do, there is a national and international audience to what we do because of the internet and all that. But then, there's also a local audience persuasion, right, we're trying to persuade our brothers and sisters to have a certain level of pride about certain things that maybe aren't the first thing. So, you know Motown this year, the big deal is it's the 60th anniversary of the first Motown singles this year, so -

Lindsay McDougal:

Who was that? Who was the?

Carleton Gholz:

Marv Johnson, he did a song, he was sort of a -

Lindsay McDougal:

So, Motown was in Detroit, the Motown -?

Carleton Gholz

Oh yeah, absolutely. So, Berry Gordy was just home, he was the owner of, you know, black owned record label. So, the pride around Motown is just immense, but we did things before Motown and we've done things since. And actually, that first single was not cut - So, if you come to Detroit, and you should, the easiest thing to do is to come into the Motown Museum, there's a little - You can actually get in the studio where a lot of that stuff was cut, you can stand in the place where the Four Tops was. And, people do, and it's incredibly nostalgic and powerful and people love it. But just maybe about a mile, not even a mile away, is United Sound Systems, which is actually an older recording studio, goes back to 1939. It's where John Lee Hooker recorded Boogie Chillen, and it's also where the first Motown single was actually done. So, the house where Motown started wasn't even built yet. And that building is now owned by the people who make highways in Detroit, and they were threatening to tear it down for over ten years - 15 years. So, the Sound Conservancy has been at the forefront of trying to protect spaces like that. So, I think sort of idea of not the usual suspects. I mean, Motown is universal, it's lingua franca, there's no-one who doesn't know who Stevie Wonder is, but there is the city has so much more to say.

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah, and I mean, is it, do the archives just focus on sort of classics and smaller older bands, or can new bands get involved in the archive as well?

Carleton Gholz:

I mean right now, we're about eight years in, which sounds like a long time, but it feels like it was yesterday, and absolutely we want young bands. And, I mean, everybody who creates a flyer or creates something that might be thrown into vertical file or a box is we're in, but -

Lindsay McDougal:

This is what I love about archives, and you see it online on Wollongong-related or Illawarra-related Facebook pages, Steel City sort of Facebook pages, that people find these old flyers from back in the day when street press was around, which wasn't that long ago. But there were people put a lot of effort into these flyers, more so than they put into say a Facebook event.

Carleton Gholz:

Well, that's all that stuff needs to get archived too, and there's a world about that. I mean, I come from music journalism, I was a writer, I was a local rock writer. You know Detroit started Creem Magazine, so Lester Bangs was sort of my uncle in a way. And so, we really are, we started off as a bunch of journalists and librarians and nerds basically, we just loved the music, and saw a whole generation of materials dissipating because of the digital wink. And so, now we can get vinyl again and records have come back, and it seems like a miracle, but in the middle there, we lost quite a bit. And, so we're trying to remember the 20th century before it's blink and it's gone, or something like that.

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah.

Jez Collins:

There's a really important thing that you bring up there Lindsay in terms of the sort of Facebook and heritage. And, I'm really keen not to just be nostalgic, you know to look back to the golden days, and it's a little bit trite, but if you don't know your history, you can't create your future. So, all those sorts of materials, those bands, those venues, if you take from the past and you repurpose it with the present. So, somewhere like Wollongong, those bands need to know all those musicians, all those promoters, all those managers, it's important to have those sort of archive materials. So, actually something did happen in Wollongong, you know these sorts of bands did exist. I can do that sort of job. I can recognise my face or my sound in the bands that have gone past and create new futures. So, they're really important, and we're at danger of losing all of those materials, and we'd never - I mean, I don't know Australian art or Australian history too deeply, but you'd never think about not collecting those types of artefacts that belong in museums. And, our argument's, I think, all four of us, our argument's those sort of flyers, while they're ephemeral and easily disposable and used for commercial purposes, but actually they're really important to people, and they keep them under their beds or in their lofts, and then they put them online, and you get all of these people coalesce, say, "Oh, I remember that, I remember this." So, they're really important historical facts, and they play a role within civic pride, and as I said, people can look back and say, "Actually, you know I can see myself reflected in those materials, and actually I can go and be a musician," or whatever it is they want to be; radio person, whatever.

Lindsay McDougal:

Exactly. And, we should bring in Raphaël and Sarah from Griffith University. Now, tell us exactly about the Sounds of Our Town and what this sort of joining together of these three cities or four cities if you include Brisbane is all about?

Sarah Baker:

So, Sounds of Our Town is based on a research project that's been running for the last 12 months, which has been looking at Wollongong, Detroit and Birmingham, and thinking about these three cities which have amazingly rich music histories, but also are cities which have been facing deindustrialisation. When you think about Motown, I mean, Motown is just that, it reminds us of Motor City, of what was so important to Detroit. And -

Lindsay McDougal:

And, Birmingham was the same.

Sarah Baker:

The same with Birmingham - Well, Birmingham had a great automotive industry.

Lindsay McDougal:

Rolls Royce.

Jez Collins:

Yeah, yeah, well Birmingham - Just, not to jump in, but Birmingham was arguably the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, you know, so steam engines and factories and foundries and steel, and had a huge -

Sarah Baker:

City of a thousand trades.

Jez Collins:

City of a thousand trades, yeah, and had a huge car - Not as prestigious as Detroit, but yeah, the famous Mini, we still make cars like Land Rover and Jaguar, so it's still there.

Lindsay McDougal:

Oh, you're still making them?

Jez Collins:

Yeah, yeah.

Sarah Baker:

And then obviously Wollongong, an amazing steel city, and so these are cities that, as the reliance on industry kind of fades and wanes, and new forms of things, other manufacturing industries or hospitality industries, IT, they kind of rise up. But a lot of music has been connected to industrial suburbs or places within these towns.

Lindsay McDougal:

But why is it? What is it about deindustrialisation, or I guess a working-class town that can provide such a fertile place for music?

Sarah Baker:

I think music is just something that people turn to, music or other forms of culture as well. And so, Sounds of Our Towns is about thinking how can we capture what music has to offer for places? Carleton and Jez, they both talked about this kind of idea of civic pride that can come from being involved in music, in contemporary music scenes, but also in preserving the music of the past. And so, that's what Sounds of Our Town as an event at the Wollongong Art Gallery is going to try and capture, but is also what our project, our research project is about.

Lindsay McDougal:

In only two hours tonight, at the art gallery.

Sarah Baker:

Yeah, I mean -

Lindsay McDougal:

I think we could talk for two hours just here.

Sarah Baker:

The interesting thing is that we also want this to be a conversation, so we can already see, we've got a bit of a conversation here between Jez and Carleton and us, and that's what tonight is supposed to be about with the audience of Wollongong. So, we want the audience to be participating and saying, "what is the future of the town"? And, what is music's part in that, both the contemporary music scene and thinking about the past?

Lindsay McDougal:

And, also ask some cool questions about say Funkadelic in Detroit or Pop Will Eat Itself in Birmingham or whatever.

Sarah Baker:

Absolutely.

Lindsay McDougal:

That's great. This is a question, and this is something that I've seen happen. The music and culture turns a place into a town of note, you know people think they want to come and visit the town because of the great music there. And, maybe a working-class town's been deindustrialised, so people start moving to the place. The low prices that made it so attractive to the musicians then go away because of the demand, and so those bohemian artists that made the music in the first place can't afford to live there anymore. Is that something that these towns may potentially have in common?

Carleton Gholz:

Well, just for Detroit, just really briefly, we were just talking about how working class these towns are, and I feel that I need to say that, I don't know if I can put things politically, but United Auto Workers right now, is on strike. It's the longest running strike since 1970, right now in Detroit. So, these Detroiters are still trying to live in their city and fight for jobs and in the United States, we're really struggling to keep what we claimed was the middle class, which really produced those musicians. So, even the punk rockers or the MC5, they all had really strong public music educations and public educations, right, and so we're still fighting for those things. And so yes, we had some, the bohemian stuff that you're talking about, I absolutely, I was gentrified out of a place called the Cass Corridor, where MC5 used to hang out and Joni Mitchell came out of that sort of bohemian area.

Lindsay McDougal:

Oh, she did too, wow!

Carleton Gholz:

But yeah, I'll never be able to buy in the Cass Corridor again, but the bread and butter of the music culture of Detroit is in its African American neighbourhoods. And, there was a housing crisis in 2008 again, and I mean this is global, but people are still struggling to keep their water from being shut off, they're struggling to keep their water clean, they're struggling to stay -

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah, just down the road Flint Michigan, yeah.

Carleton Gholz:


- in their homes, even though they've foreclosed on, even because they weren't able to pay their taxes, and illegal foreclosure. So that, the neighbourhood that we've recently bought a venue, an old historic jazz venue, which we're bringing back slowly, but it's right in the centre of a neighbourhood where our biggest neighbour is the Detroit Land Bank, which is where the properties go when people have lost their homes. So, this is a - It's definitely not a nostalgic project for us, and you know how do we leverage things that are not - that we still remember, that are in our hearts to keep our neighbourhoods?

Jez Collins:

I think, I mean, this is a global issue, isn't it?

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah.



Jez Collins:

That, all three cities will face, and Birmingham's going through a renaissance at the moment. There's a massive infrastructure of buildings going up, you know high speed rail lines, condominiums, city living, building offices, it's just ridiculous. And, they sell that dream in terms of live in the city and have that vibrant culture, and have music venues, and then the reality is these things get built, people complain about the noise, the music venues get shut down, artists get pushed out of the sort of low rent places, and it becomes a homogenous city, it could be any town. So, there are real tensions around this, and I think, as Carleton said, music again is a way in. We played Sabbath at the start, and there's the venue that they played their first ever gig is similar in the very centre of the city centre, which has been closed for like five years. It's owned by a Japanese company who want to build a hotel, but they're just land grabbing, sitting on it. And, we're trying to make that argument, "So actually, you know, okay, think differently about how you might use that building. Instead of just tearing it down and building flats on it, there are ways of incorporating it in, and that'll have benefits for you." But it's very, very difficult, as there are often times faceless multimillion - billion-pound developments. And we're, in Birmingham, we're trying to make those arguments with developers and say, "Well, just let's stop and think about how you might do things slightly differently that have benefits both for the city, but will satisfy your sort of economic needs." So, it's a real struggle, and I'm for sure, Wollongong are going to have the same. Sarah just pointed out the old cinema, the Regent Cinema I think it was.

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah, just across the road, up there.

Jez Collins:

Across the road, and the sign, and I hadn't seen it, and the sign said something like respect your history is it, or..?

Carleton Gholz:

Honour the past.

Jez Collins:

Honour the past. To build a future, yeah.

Lindsay McDougal:

It had been a church for a very long time, and it's been bought and hopefully turned back into a theatre, yeah.

Jez Collins:

Fantastic, well that'd be great if that happens.

Raphaël Nowak:

And, so Wollongong had the same history with the Oxford in the city.

Lindsay McDougal:

Yeah, of course.

Raphaël Nowak:

Which was very iconic for many people and many people still remember the Oxford as being the place they used to hang out at. And, that was a great place for live music as well. So then, you lose the Oxford in 2012, then you've got all of these high rises and it's like where do the music people?

Lindsay McDougal:

And, it gets pushed out a little bit, the Servo in Port Kembla feeds that, I mean we had Rad Bar until earlier this year, which has shut down.

Raphaël Nowak:

Rad Bar just shut down three months ago.

Lindsay McDougal:

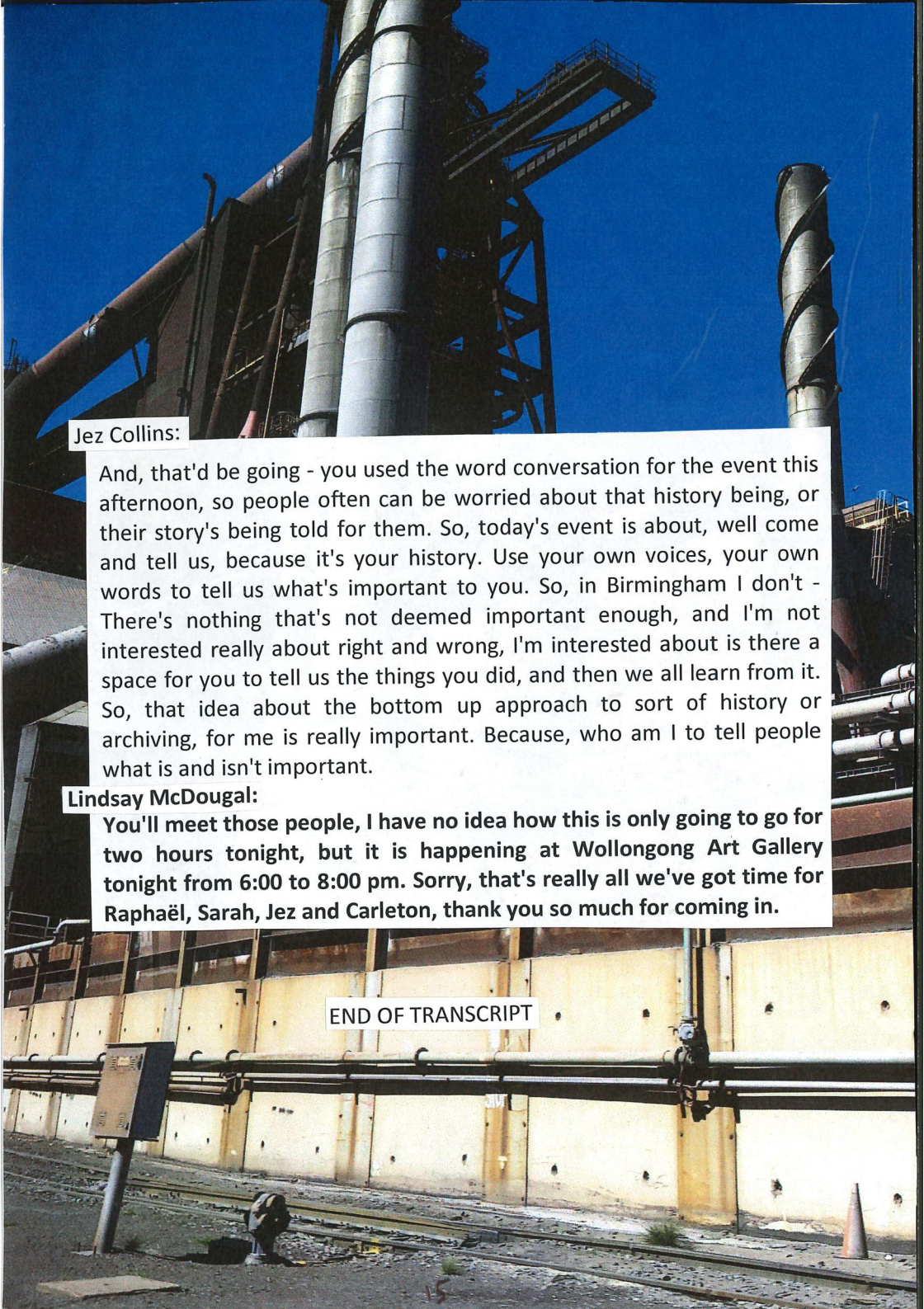
But we also have other places popping up and also outdoor festival scenes, and there's always, I guess house parties and all those kind of things.

Raphaël Nowak:

But it's always a very fragile situation, and you need the people to push for those kind of places to emerge and to cater for the people who are interested in music.

Sarah Baker:

And, I think, I mean that's also one of the interests of the project about these being initiatives that are led by the people, whether you call them 'do it yourself', or grass roots heritage preservation. And I guess that's a slower build form of capitalising on music's history, and so perhaps the kind of gentrification is also then a slower build and hopefully, that means that a city can kind of come to terms with how it's changing without things being kind of foisted upon them from above. And, it's the importance of the people's voices. I mean, the Birmingham Music Archive that Jez started, that was pretty much - And Jez can correct me, but one guy thinking there's a gap, no-one's collecting this stuff, and starting it from below and generating a whole community of interest around that to contribute to an archive, which is not just about the kind of tangible and physical artefacts, but about collecting people's memories of going to venues and seeing different bands, and connecting with other people in the community. So, it's a really interesting form of heritage preservation.



Jez Collins:

And, that'd be going - you used the word conversation for the event this afternoon, so people often can be worried about that history being, or their story's being told for them. So, today's event is about, well come and tell us, because it's your history. Use your own voices, your own words to tell us what's important to you. So, in Birmingham I don't - There's nothing that's not deemed important enough, and I'm not interested really about right and wrong, I'm interested about is there a space for you to tell us the things you did, and then we all learn from it. So, that idea about the bottom up approach to sort of history or archiving, for me is really important. Because, who am I to tell people what is and isn't important.

Lindsay McDougal:

You'll meet those people, I have no idea how this is only going to go for two hours tonight, but it is happening at Wollongong Art Gallery tonight from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. Sorry, that's really all we've got time for Raphaël, Sarah, Jez and Carleton, thank you so much for coming in.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



SOUNDS OF OUR TOWN

Wollongong Art Gallery, corner of Kemplab and Burelli Streets
 Thursday, 17 October 2019, 6–8pm. Drinks and nibbles from 5.30pm.
 RSVPs essential. Contact: Raphaël Nowak at r.nowak@griffith.edu.au

'Sounds of our Town' will explore the role of **popular music heritage** in the revitalisation of cities that have experienced industrial decline. Featuring panellists involved in popular music heritage initiatives in international deindustrialising cities, the event aims to open a discussion about what more can be done to preserve and celebrate Wollongong's rich musical heritage. All are welcome to attend, participate and share their ideas. Questions from the floor are actively encouraged!

Moderator:
 Professor Julianne Schultz AM FAHA (Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research)

Confirmed panellists:
 Jez Collins (Birmingham Music Archive, UK), Carleton Gholz (Detroit Sound Conservancy, USA), Synnøve Engevik (Rockheim, Norway), Carolyn Laffan (Australian Music Vault), John Monteleone (Wollongong Art Gallery), and Daina Pocius (City of Playford).

This event is organised by Professor Sarah Baker, Dr Raphaël Nowak and Dr Zelmarie Cantillon for the project 'Music heritage and cultural justice in the post-industrial legacy city'. The event is sponsored by Griffith University, Griffith Centre for Social and Cultural Research and Wollongong Art Gallery.

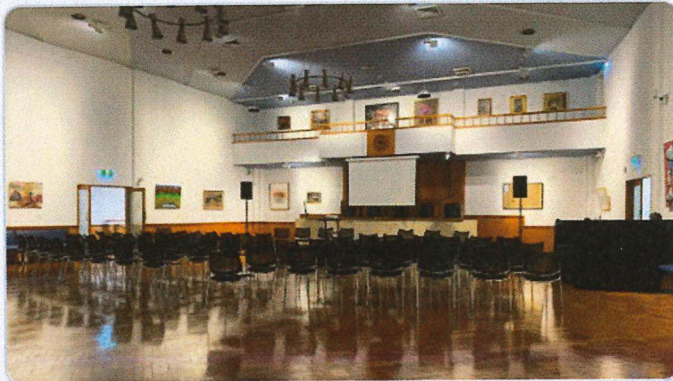
Raphaël Nowak @raphahead · Oct 17

Our pre event photo feat @csgholz @zelzelzel @jezc
@_sarahbaker_ @SynnoveEngevik @Birdwiththegold
@JulianneSchultz John Monteleone & Daina Pocius
#SoundsOfOurTown



Raphaël Nowak @raphahead · Oct 17

Venue is all set. Now waiting for everybody to arrive.
#SoundsOfOurTown



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Before we begin the proceedings, I would like to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of the land in which we are meeting this evening. The Dharrawal is beautiful, awe inspiring Country. Tonight we are talking about the recent past, but always in our mind must be the rich and long ancestral histories of the people who have forever called Dharrawal Country their home. So as we share our knowledge, research and heritage practices this evening, may we also pay respect to the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal custodianship of Country.

SOUNDS OF OUR TOWN

Transcript, held at Wollongong Art Gallery

on 17 October 2019

Julianne Schultz: This is an interesting panel on an important subject, because cities like Wollongong, and the other cities that are represented by our panelists this evening, have gone through extraordinary change, or are still going through extraordinary change. And in all the economic turmoil that gets thrown up by changing industrial patterns and so on, we often tend to lose faith, and can stop paying attention to the cultural glue that holds a place together. And one of the things which I think has been really terrific to see in Wollongong is the way that that cultural fabric of the city has been preserved and enhanced over the period since when I wrote *Steel City Blues*, more than 30 years ago. To see how the momentum for that, which was there then, has continued, and emerged in all sorts of different ways.

My daughter's partner, who's a very active professional involved in music, said, "Oh, are you going to Wollongong? *The* most interesting music in Australia is now coming out of Wollongong." And he gave me a list of bands, and gave me a list of promoters, and he said, "It is the most interesting place in the country." So there's a long tale in Wollongong from what happened in the past to what happens now, and that's what we're going to explore with this really extraordinary panel that Sarah and her team have managed to pull together. Let me introduce them to you, starting over on my far left.

Dr Carleton Gholz is here from Detroit, and Carleton's been bootstrapping an arts non-profit in Detroit, with the mission of making Detroiters' lives better through music and preservation. As you know, Detroit is a city which has really been hit hard, especially in the last 10 years. But it's been undergoing transformations for a long time period. Carleton was born Port Huron, raised in Troy, lived the majority of the last twenty years in Detroit. He's taught high school history and government, and college-level communications and media courses, and written professionally since 1999. His big passion was being a rock musician and a reviewer. He has a PhD in Communications from the University of Pittsburgh and taught at Northeastern University in Boston before returning to Detroit to become Executive Director of the Detroit Sound Conservancy. Please welcome Carleton.

Sitting next to him is Carolyn 'Caz' Laffan, who's the Senior Curator at the Australian Music Vault at Arts Centre Melbourne; which is a dynamic visitor experience developed in collaboration with the Australian music industry, to tell the story of Australian contemporary music, in what, I guess, Melbourne would like to claim as being the cultural capital of the nation. Since 1990 she's worked in a variety of roles in the Australian Performing Arts Collection, the country's largest and most important collection of performing arts and music tradition. It is now home to over 660,000 items, including circus, dance, music, opera and theatre artefacts. As a researcher and exhibition curator, she's interested in using technology to broaden and deepen community engagement with collections, especially within communities not viewed as traditional music museum goers. Please welcome Caz.

And next to her we have John Monteleone, who because he's a local, he's got a much shorter bio, because you already know him. John's been the Programs Director at Wollongong Art Gallery, for Wollongong City Council since 2009; and he's very much involved in both conceptualising and then supporting the Steel City Sound exhibition here in 2015, which has been an impetus for a lot of the work that Sarah and the team are doing, because that exhibition captured the music history of this town over the previous 50 years and in the process, I think John is going to say, drew together networks that may not necessarily have been connected. So thank you for being here and making this venue available for us.

Next we have Daina Pocius, who, since 2010, has been working as the Heritage Coordinator for the City of Playford in South Australia. For those of you who are not familiar with the geography of local government zones, the City of Playford is where Elizabeth is. In this role she's been involved in collection development, storage, promotion, preservation and research of the area's rich social and cultural histories. For her, history is a powerful tool to understand oneself and other cultures, it has the ability to build bridges, filling gaps and shading our lives. And as you would all probably know, Elizabeth was the place where Jimmy Barnes and a whole bunch of music, from another era, really got its start. And from what Daina was saying to me before, there's a whole lot of really interesting contemporary music being produced in Elizabeth as well. So please welcome Daina.

Next we have Jez Collins, who's come all the way from Birmingham. Jez is the Founder/Director of the Birmingham Music Archive, a not for profit online resource, which was founded in 2008, that documents and celebrates all aspects of music activity in the City of Birmingham, in order to engender civic pride. He's a social and cultural entrepreneur, who has extensive experience in the public and private sector, including creative industries and higher education. He was an executive producer of the film *Made In Birmingham*. And in his role, he's really been important in drawing international attention to the rich musical history of Birmingham, which we'll hear a little bit about tonight. So please welcome Jez.

And finally, last but not least, Synnøve Engevik, who is a curator and conservator of the Cultural History Collection and Exhibition Team at Rockheim, Norway's National Museum of Popular Music - so we're really covering a whole lot of the world - where she's worked at, also since 2009. That was obviously a big year for people wanting to start careers in music heritage! She's also undertaking a PhD on popular music and cultural heritage at the Institute of Art and Media Studies, Norwegian University of Science and Technology. She's currently attached to Griffith University. That museum's done some really interesting stuff, which we'll talk a little bit about in the, sort of, digital and virtual space, as well as in the actual present moment.

As you can see, we've got a large panel and a lot to discuss. So I want to start with you Carleton. I'm interested in the particular power of music, what makes it unique and important for both place making and place keeping, what is it about music?



Carleton Gholz: So 2008, 2009, I'm not as aware of how it looked out here in Australia, but in Detroit people lost their homes, people lost value in their homes. And so since then a lot of newcomers have come to the Detroit area, and there was a narrative for a while, that was in the popular press, especially in the United States, that Detroit was a blank slate, that people could come to Detroit and make of it what they would. They could buy a \$50 home and start anew, and that was very compelling to a lot of people who were looking for something new at that point. Brooklyn came to Detroit looking for the new thing. And so what music can provide is that we're not a blank slate, right, music is uncomfortable history, and it brings us together, but it also presents us with some of the raw history of the 20th century.

So it's a pretty fantastic strategic site to push back on that blank slate narrative. An example would be, the ruins of Detroit, in pictures of the Packard plant. Maybe you've seen all these pictures, but these were where raves happened in the 1990s, which I was a part of some of that. So one of the examples of the Sound Conservancy has been the Blue Bird Inn, where we actually recently brought an old jazz club on Detroit's west side, and we're reopening it, rebuilding it. But it's in a neighbourhood that the mayor doesn't particularly care about, it's not in a strategic neighbourhood. Literally it doesn't have a name anymore, it was called the Old West Side, it was the traditional African-American west side, black people have lived there for over a hundred years.

Incredible musicians have come from the area, politicians, judges. But now, when the developers come through and they map out all the neighborhoods, it doesn't even exist. And so the Blue Bird is an inconvenient reminder of a hundred year history that hopefully can't be removed any time soon.

Julianne: Right, so Detroit is obviously, we all know about Motown in Detroit, but Detroit has a really rich and diverse musical history, doesn't it?

Carleton: You know, I'm going to toot my own horn. The city, one of the things we fought for is a place called United Sound Systems. United Sound Systems in Detroit predates Motown, John Lee Hooker, anybody heard of John Lee Hooker? Boogie Chillen's recorded there. Dizzy Gillespie ran his record label there in the 1950's. Parliament Funkadelic, anyone? Funkadelic did all of their records there, Cosmic Slop. So yeah, absolutely we didn't invent all the genres, we would never claim those things, we didn't invent jazz, we just made it all better.

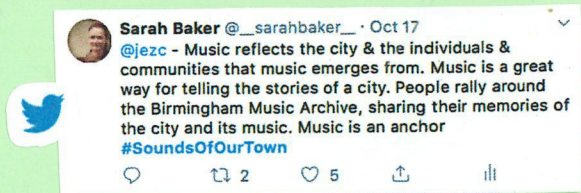
Julianne: So Jez, in terms of Birmingham, was it the same sort of impetus as Carleton's describing in terms of the 2008 crisis? Birmingham was going through deindustrialisation for a lot longer wasn't it?

Jez Collins: Yeah, so Birmingham, historically, was the cradle of the industrial revolution, lots of inventions that gave rise to the industrialised world. And then post-war, you know, after the war there was a lot of destruction and the need to rebuild. But it's always had that, from those early days. The City of a Thousand Trades it's known as, so there was always a making, always a doing, always an invention element to the city. And there was a need, as I say, post-1945, which is a little bit further back than Detroit, to rebuild the city. So we called upon people from the Commonwealth, and that could be a loaded term. So we had people from Afro-Caribbean communities, mainly Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad; we had people from South-East Asia, mainly India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, who came in to help rebuild the city, and of course brought their cultures with them.

And once that happened, they were living, working, playing with the traditional populations of Birmingham, and that fused into the music that came out. So slightly different, as I say, to Detroit, but Birmingham is unique, I think, in how those communities lived, worked, played, how they fused that music. So we can claim that heavy metal certainly had its seeds in the city; certainly Bhangra music, which is Punjabi folk mixed with reggae baselines and white guitar lines. So the city's had a longer gestation period than Detroit, but it never really understood or recognized music, or harnessed the opportunity to celebrate our music heritage and what that can bring. And I think the question you asked around place making, or the initial question about place making, and the power of music, is that it actually reflects the city that it comes from, because it reflects the individuals and the community it's come from.



Birmingham, as I mentioned, it's fairly unique, and people brought their culture into a city, helped rebuild a city, and then have thrown it back out into the world. So the idea of place making is becoming more and more important, in terms of challenging dominant narratives, in terms of what's the uniqueness of a city, so the 'what makes you Wollongong, or Birmingham different from anywhere else?' And I think in Birmingham, through the work that I and others have done, not just me, we're starting to realise that a community's music is a great way of telling stories of a city.



Julianne: One of the things that I love about your archives is the number of people who are sharing their memorabilia, but also their stories of their engagement with music. Did I read somewhere there were 7,000 different postings that you had.

Jez: Yeah, so again, a bit of context, the Birmingham Music Archive started out online, as a digital archive, and it's very much from the bottom up. So the idea is that I know a little bit about the history of Birmingham, but actually the history resides out there, in the people in the audience, and in Birmingham's case out there in the community. And I asked people, 'well tell us what's important to you?' Instead of the top down, its bottom up; nothing is not important enough to be in the archive. People understood that and rallied around that, and you get all manner and types of comments.

It's a very heavy textual site. Somebody might say 'the good old days, I wish we could go back there', so there's a little bit of nostalgia. But often times people talk about the places that they went; they have met their wives, their husbands, their lovers, their boyfriends, their girlfriends, et cetera – those places. How they got home. They'll be talking about one particular club, but then talk about 10 other different clubs. So it replicates how we talk in our vernacular language, and I think through that approach the archive really does rebuild the role that music plays for individuals and communities; and it reveals how music is an anchor in the city, and it reveals social, cultural lives of a particular place. I think we have about 8,000 now, people, who are active across the country participating in the forum. And as I said, it really reveals the depth of music activity, and how those individuals have contributed to that.

Julianne: So we'll come back to that, about the difference between building something from the bottom and policies being developed at the top. Caz, tell everyone a little bit about the bus, the Melbourne bus.

Carolyn 'Caz' Laffan: As part of the Australian Music Vault, we run a bus tour, and it runs fortnightly, and it's a co-production with the Australian Music Vault and two incredible enthusiasts; and I think every town has their enthusiast who knows everything about the history of the place. Whether they've been a practitioner, or someone who's worked in publicity, or as event coordinators. And we have two very special people in Melbourne, Bruce and Mary, and they give these tours. But they go around all the streets of Melbourne, and they look at all the different places where, not just recording studios, but places where people have lived, where specific incidents have happened, venues that used to be there that are not there anymore; and they have a special guest every time. You don't know who that guest is going to be.

Julianne: So it's not always Paul Kelly.

Carolyn: I'm not even sure if Paul Kelly's done one, but he should! They can be anyone from a quite underground person that you might not know. Someone from Sonic Youth took it last week, which I did not know about. So there's always a different flavour, even though they go to the same places. And it's a minibus, so it's quite an intimate experience, and it's as much about who's on the bus, and all those things that you were talking about – it's the memories that bring the texture to the history. It's not just a historic building, it's actually a place that is replete with memories for different people for different reasons.

Jez: And can I just add onto that, what's really interesting, in terms of my work, and what we were talking about earlier, is that oftentimes it's not really the bands that they talk about, I mean that's important, but we're not musicologists. We don't talk about the music, but we talk about seeing these bands. But then it's also about the place, so the places the spaces, also the engineer or the people who worked behind the scenes. It's the whole culture of music, and I think taking that approach really opens up the opportunity for people to get involved. So you don't have to know about music to be invested in music, and you can reveal the places and spaces when you're going round on a tour, for example, that really enriches that history.

Julianne: So Daina, you've relatively recently come to thinking about music as an important part of the historical connections with a place. Tell us a little bit about how your thinking has developed in that space?

Daina Pocius: I hadn't specialised in music, it's just part of the history of Playford. Elizabeth certainly had a very big music scene in the 60's and 70's, which is probably the glory days of the city. When it was newly established, 45% of the population were British migrants, and they were creating music that was different from the rest of Adelaide. Some well-known names have come out of there, one was Jimmy Barnes. But Glenn Shorrock, Doc Neeson, John Swan, that type of thing, have come out of there. And I suppose after that period, well not just the music scene, but all of Elizabeth declined. In more recent years, in the last 12 years, the council is investing in rejuvenating the city itself, but they've also invested in the music scene.

Before it was individuals creating that music, and now it's actually being stimulated by the council. They've created a music hub, which is there for the community to use, and mainly for youth, so it's a music hub combined with a Youth Centre type of thing. But the aim of it is to create pathways for employment and education, and, I'd be tempted to say Elizabeth's still on the music scene, and is creating some well-known hip hop artists at the moment.



Julianne: Which is reflective of the current pattern of migration, as well?

Daina: Yes, so the early years were British migrants, and now more recently Elizabeth is home to African refugees, and they're the ones that are actually creating the hip hop scene.

Julianne: So Synnøve, in Norway, your museum was much more of a top down thing, I take it.

Synnøve Engevik: No. It all started, of course, with a group of people interested in popular music and music history. They were music journalists or librarians, archivists, but also private collectors. As a group of idealists they had the idea in 1998, and then politicians kind of tagged along in the process, and there were initiatives in different Norwegian cities. Then finally the government decided, I think it was in 2005, that we would have a national centre, or archive, or institute, or museum, for popular music in Norway, and they arranged a contest between different cities, and they landed on Trondheim, which is not the capital in Norway, but a city in the middle of the country. So it's both bottom-up and top-down.

Julianne: And one of the things, that you've done there, is this virtual engagement, virtual experience, so that people can participate while not necessarily being present at the museum.

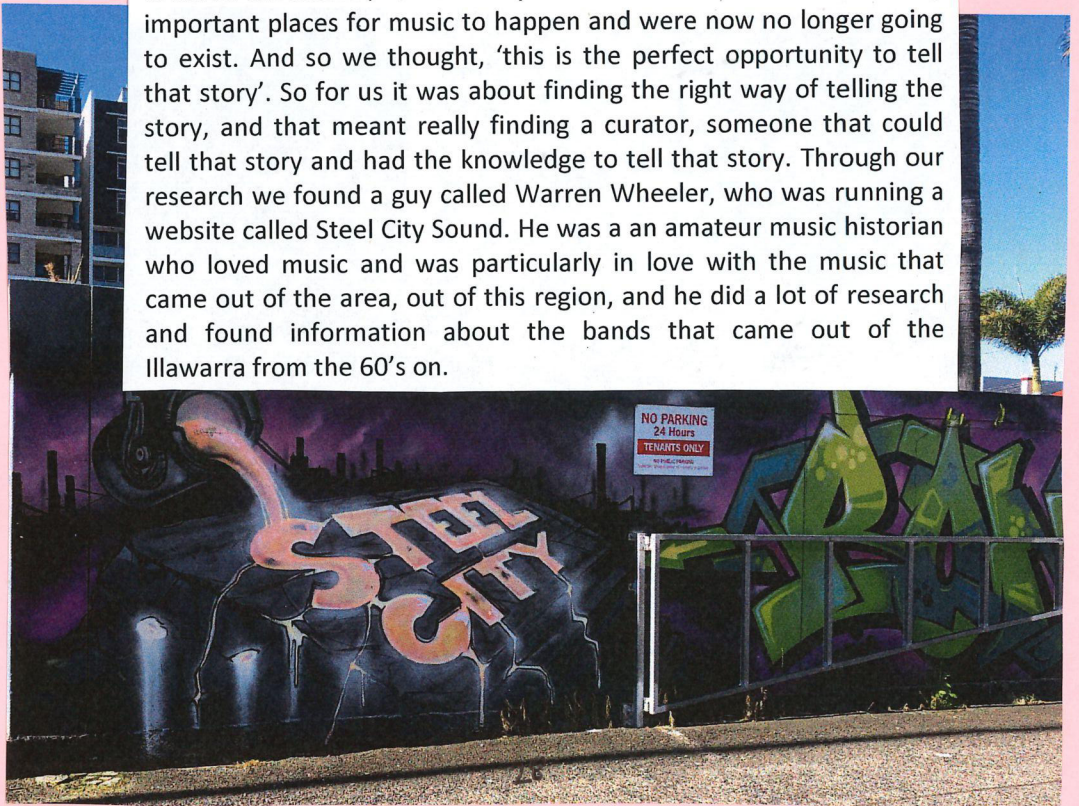
Synnøve: Yeah. When we talked to musicians about building a museum of popular music, the main response was negative, that popular music does not belong in a museum, that it's impossible to capture the essence of popular music within the museum context, or archive; so this kind of dichotomy between popular music as something alive and in the moment, and the stereotyped idea of a museum being dusty and dull. We were met by this opinion in the beginning, and so we thought really hard about how we could break this dichotomy down, and make two worlds meet. So from the beginning, the project was an arena for popular culture, we have a rock venue at the museum, and at the same time it is a heritage institution, and the key word has always been participation.

We think that everyone is an expert on the soundtracks of their lives. So already in 2007, before the museum opened, we established something we called Rockipedia, which is an open, online encyclopedia based on a lot of already existing databases with information and music. The national broadcaster is a part of it, and the national library. So we have these already existing encyclopedias which were made available on the internet, but it's also got this Wikipedia function, so everyone can upload their own content on this site. There's articles on bands, and pictures, and videos. So that's our collection, and it's built for Norwegians in general, because Norway is a long country, with huge geographical spread.

Julianne: There's a pattern here that's emerging of people's active participation from the bottom up. John, you would have had that experience, I guess, when you were conceptualizing the Steel City Sound exhibition here, that popular music's not really something that should be in an art gallery.

John Monteleone: Yeah, well that's true. When we first started thinking about having an exhibition about the music scene, or the history of music in Wollongong, the first question was, 'well what sort of exhibition would it be?' Our core business is visual art, contemporary art, and how do we then present an exhibition that tells the story of music in the Illawarra? And I suppose one of the ways that we looked at it is that a regional gallery is a place where stories that help delineate who we are are told; and the problem for us was how do we do that in this particular context? We'd been thinking about it for quite a while, but the impetus, the thing that really pushed us along was the fact that the Oxford Tavern had closed; and the Oxford Tavern locally was one of the venues where live music had really flourished for a long time.

We thought, 'well this really is the way the Illawarra is moving, towards the future', in that many of these venues that had been very important places for music to happen and were now no longer going to exist. And so we thought, 'this is the perfect opportunity to tell that story'. So for us it was about finding the right way of telling the story, and that meant really finding a curator, someone that could tell that story and had the knowledge to tell that story. Through our research we found a guy called Warren Wheeler, who was running a website called Steel City Sound. He was an amateur music historian who loved music and was particularly in love with the music that came out of the area, out of this region, and he did a lot of research and found information about the bands that came out of the Illawarra from the 60's on.



So I contacted him and said, 'Look, I love what you're doing, and we'd love to do something in the gallery in regards to the subject of, about looking at music in this area', and he was really enthusiastic. When we got together we started discussing what that would look like, and we thought it was important to tell the history of music here, because the history of music really ran parallel with the evolution of the community. Much of the music that came out of the 50's and 60's was really a product of the mass migration that came to the Illawarra to work in the steel works. Illawarra had been a pastoral community for many many years, but after the Second World War we had mass migration here, people who came to work at the steel works, and all of a sudden we became an industrial community, a working class community, and became working class people, and it was a lot of change, because the status quo had changed in Wollongong because of all these migrants from southern and northern Europe.

So everything started to change here; and that is a real point of place where creativity ferments. Not just in music, but also in art, in writing, all sorts of creativity. I think it provides that impetus for people to tell their stories in the way that they can, so music is one of those ways. We thought, well that's a terrific way to tell that story, tell it chronologically in a way; so if you pick up Steel City Sound exhibition catalogue, it will tell you the story of music in the Illawarra in a chronological way.

The way we formed the exhibition, was that we had one room which was turned into, like a bar. It had a bar with stools, sticky carpet, instruments set up on the stage, and then video footage of local bands playing here, playing in the background; and there was a set list there, so you could just sit there at the bar, and perhaps feel like you're in a pub watching live music happening. We had another room which we turned into a share house, and we brought old furniture, painted the walls like they would have been in the 70's, had old posters up, an old box TV with an LED screen inside which showed videos, and had some iPads and headphones where you could listen to music, all produced by local musicians and local bands.



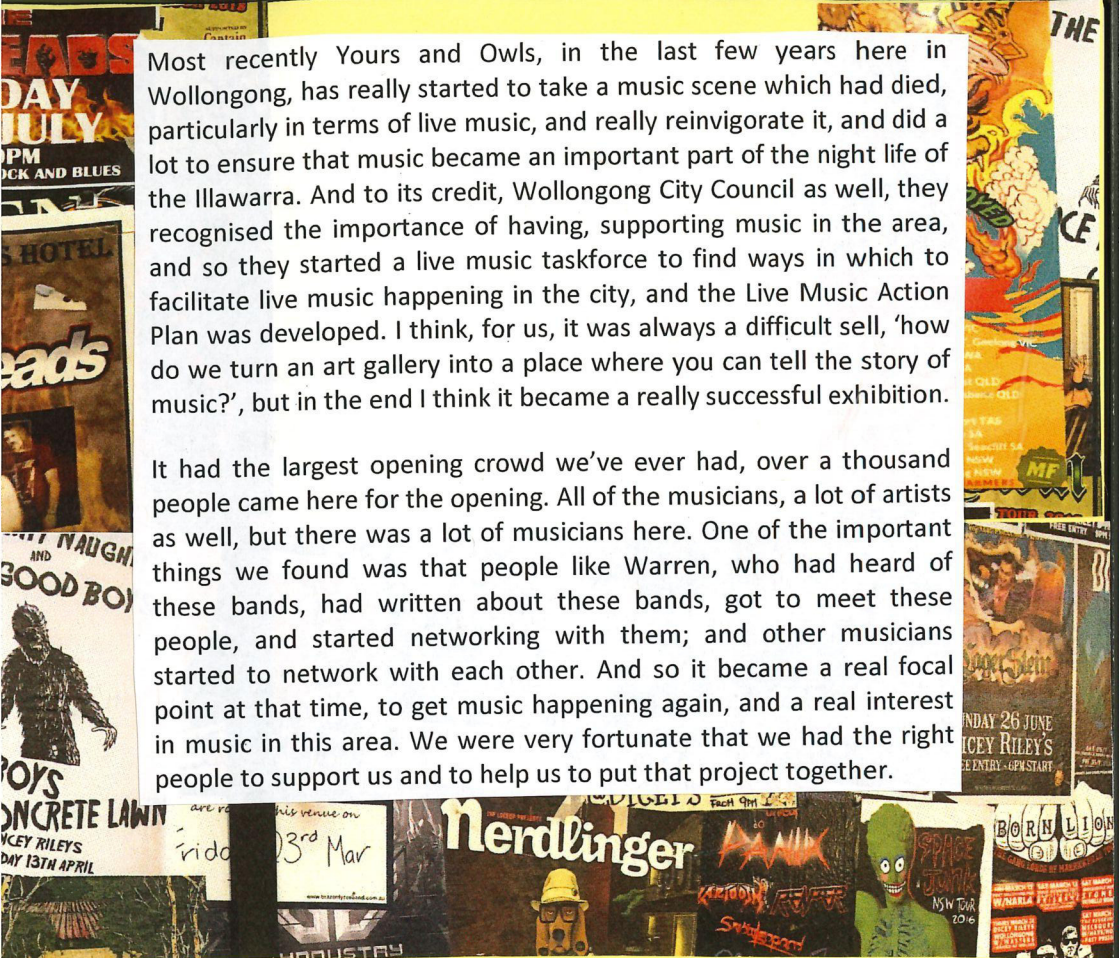


Then we had one wall which was all posters from bands playing locally here over the last 50 years, a lot of them hand produced by the bands themselves. And one of the things that we found, was there was this fantastic intersection between visual art and music. A lot of the musicians were also artists; a lot of artists played musical instruments and were in bands. We had one wall which was all t-shirts with designs from different bands. We then had the social historical part of it, where we had a eight large glass cabinets, and each one was devoted to one genre of music, or one band, or one aspect of a local music scene. And one of the most important ones there, for me, was a cabinet which was about Zondrae King, and Zondrae is here with us this evening.

Zondrae was hard wired to the music scene here in the 60's. She opened a venue where local bands could play; blues she brought bands to Wollongong as well, and it became a real hub. I was talking earlier on in regard to how a lot of working class cities and towns have burgeoning music scenes, and often what they require is something to create a focus, or to bring them together so that it isn't just all these bands playing in different places – that there's a sense of urgency in the place, in the town, and that music becomes something that's at its core. And I think Zondrae provided that when she opened her place. But every decade there's been different things, or different people, or different bands, or different groups that have done that, that have, in Wollongong, become a focus for music, and through that actually spread music throughout the region.

Most recently Yours and Owls, in the last few years here in Wollongong, has really started to take a music scene which had died, particularly in terms of live music, and really reinvigorate it, and did a lot to ensure that music became an important part of the night life of the Illawarra. And to its credit, Wollongong City Council as well, they recognised the importance of having, supporting music in the area, and so they started a live music taskforce to find ways in which to facilitate live music happening in the city, and the Live Music Action Plan was developed. I think, for us, it was always a difficult sell, 'how do we turn an art gallery into a place where you can tell the story of music?', but in the end I think it became a really successful exhibition.

It had the largest opening crowd we've ever had, over a thousand people came here for the opening. All of the musicians, a lot of artists as well, but there was a lot of musicians here. One of the important things we found was that people like Warren, who had heard of these bands, had written about these bands, got to meet these people, and started networking with them; and other musicians started to network with each other. And so it became a real focal point at that time, to get music happening again, and a real interest in music in this area. We were very fortunate that we had the right people to support us and to help us to put that project together.

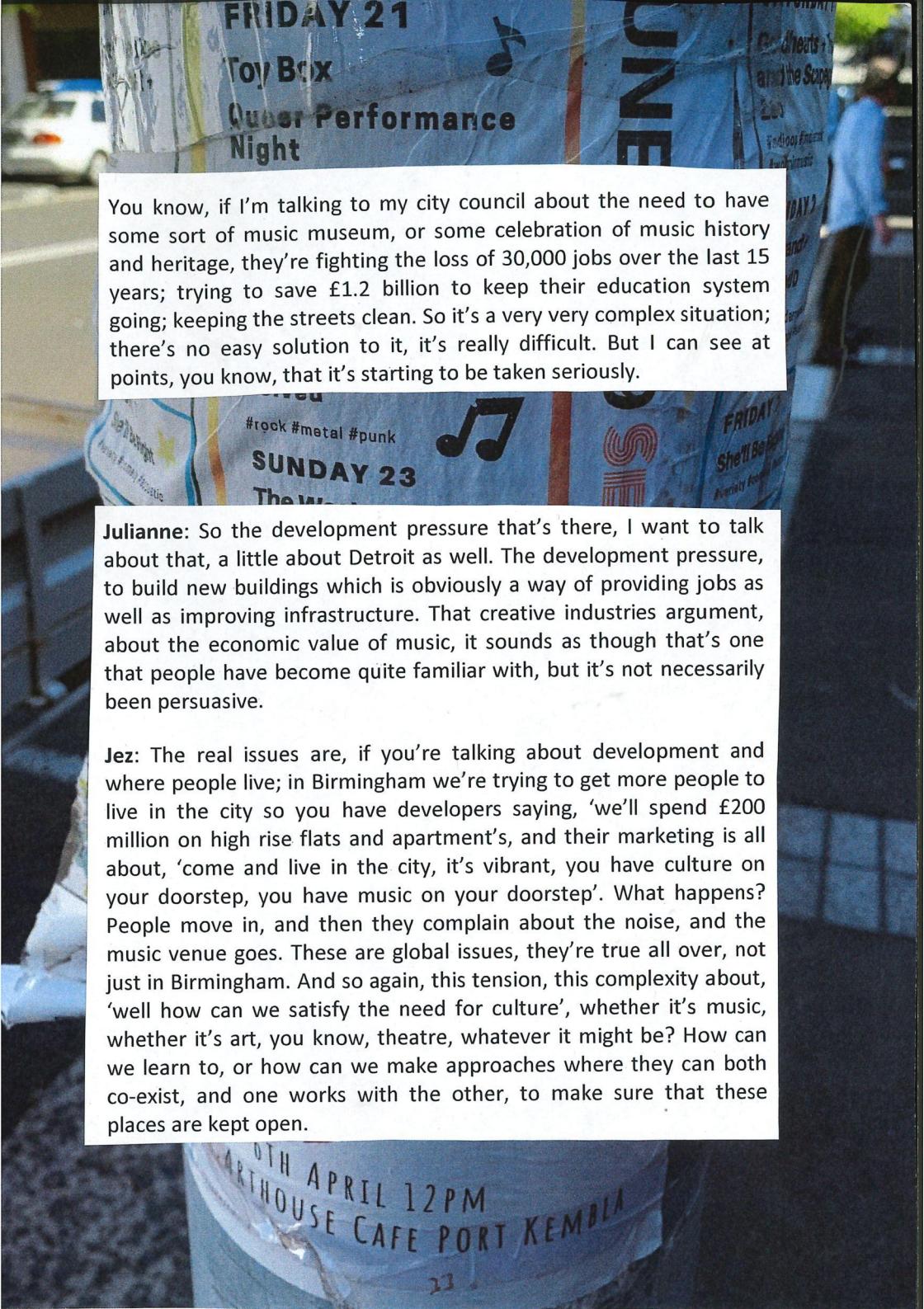


Julianne: So that's a very different model than what the others have been talking about. I'm interested in how with council, local government, whatever the body might be, how that sort of activity can be stimulated and brought to life. In Birmingham, obviously there was a sense, at some point, as part of the whole Creative Britain stuff, that Birmingham needed to have a toehold in it. But the powers that be tended to go towards the, sort of, high culture, ignoring popular culture, and the development issues, which I'm sure others will talk about as well, were very real. So maybe by contrast, tell us the Birmingham story.

Jez: In Birmingham's it's been an uphill struggle, in terms of policy and strategy. We are a city of 1.2 million people, so it's a big city. There's four and a half million within a 20 minute drive, so it's a big conurbation, and that brings all of the social and health issues, and things that you might associate with that.

And then you have regional bodies who are there to stimulate income and growth; then you have a mayor's office, which is a combined mayor's office, that looks after eight million people, so there are layers of bureaucracy there. And I found in particular that it was a struggle to try and break those barriers down or to pinpoint the person who might be the individual to talk to. So in all the city's promotion, in order to talk about the culture of the city, they'll use music and they'll use culture to make a point of the viability of the city, who we are. Well actually the reality of it is hand to mouth. We just had at the municipal museum and art gallery of Birmingham – which is one of the largest in the UK, or in Europe, with a fantastic pre-Raphaelite collection – they've just had their most successful event ever, it was about metal, it was called the Home of Metal, about Black Sabbath. Like you, John with the Steel City Sound exhibition, they had thousands of people queuing at the door to go in. So when these activities go on, they are always massively popular. But then to try and translate that to some sort of policy is very difficult I have to talk in the language of policy, so I have to talk about, in the West Midlands, you know, we have a music spend worth around £250million per year, it supports 6,000 jobs. So you have to make those arguments, and then say, well that's why you should support music heritage, so that's why we should have policies around this, why we should think about having some proper support in there.

And that's also about contemporary music, like you said, we have to make the argument about how heritage is important but also about contemporary music practices that go on. So it's an ongoing discussion, and it almost never comes down to 'well Black Sabbath are a fantastic band and we should just celebrate them'. It's always about, 'well what would that mean in terms of jobs, in terms of visitor economy, in terms of rethinking or the culture of the story telling of the city'. So it's a long long winded process. It's 10 years in, as you mentioned, that I've been doing this. I think I'm making more progress, there's more and more people who are starting to understand, who are starting to celebrate music. But it's not easy, and I'm sure that's true to Detroit, and we were talking earlier, that it's probably the same in Australia, particularly in times of austerity.



You know, if I'm talking to my city council about the need to have some sort of music museum, or some celebration of music history and heritage, they're fighting the loss of 30,000 jobs over the last 15 years; trying to save £1.2 billion to keep their education system going; keeping the streets clean. So it's a very very complex situation; there's no easy solution to it, it's really difficult. But I can see at points, you know, that it's starting to be taken seriously.

Julianne: So the development pressure that's there, I want to talk about that, a little about Detroit as well. The development pressure, to build new buildings which is obviously a way of providing jobs as well as improving infrastructure. That creative industries argument, about the economic value of music, it sounds as though that's one that people have become quite familiar with, but it's not necessarily been persuasive.

Jez: The real issues are, if you're talking about development and where people live; in Birmingham we're trying to get more people to live in the city so you have developers saying, 'we'll spend £200 million on high rise flats and apartment's, and their marketing is all about, 'come and live in the city, it's vibrant, you have culture on your doorstep, you have music on your doorstep'. What happens? People move in, and then they complain about the noise, and the music venue goes. These are global issues, they're true all over, not just in Birmingham. And so again, this tension, this complexity about, 'well how can we satisfy the need for culture', whether it's music, whether it's art, you know, theatre, whatever it might be? How can we learn to, or how can we make approaches where they can both co-exist, and one works with the other, to make sure that these places are kept open.

John: I think one of the difficulties we've found is that governments of all stripes, whether federal, state or local, often find it difficult to understand the value of things like the arts, music, because everything is measured in terms of output, you know, how much money. It's always about the economic thing attached to it, how much money will this bring, how many jobs will it bring? And the value of the arts, that's not the way to value arts. We value outcomes rather than outputs. We should be looking at what is the value that it brings to a community? And doing things that are very difficult to measure, and then very difficult to take into account when looking to get funding or support for things.



Caz: I think the experience in Melbourne has been quite different from that. There was a galvanizing moment in 2010, when there was the SLAM rallies, Save Live Australian Music Rally, and it was because the government had reintroduced an old statute, off the books, which meant that if you had live music, and you have alcohol in your venue, you had to have a security presence. And I think it was one security guard for every 20 people or something. It was quite strict, and it meant that a lot of places would have to close, and it didn't distinguish between the types of venues. So if you were a restaurant and you had an 80 years old bouzouki player, you needed a security guard. And regular people, as well as the music industry, really took umbrage at both the closure of the venues and the economic impact that would have, but also of equating violence and music, and that somehow there's a connection between those two things.

So there were between 10 and 20,000 people, depending on who you listen to, at the rally, and that government actually lost the election. And so the next government that came in - so it was Labor that lost, and the Libs came in, and when Labor came in again they didn't make that mistake again, and they worked very closely with the people from the SLAM Rally. There was a roundtable created, there were changes of law, so the Agents of Change law, which meant that if you move into a place and there's already a venue there and it's making noise, that's your lookout, and you need to double glaze your windows. But also they put in place grants whereby venues could get double glazing, they could get sound proofing for the venues, they could get upgrades, even within their venues, so that you could have parts that were quiet, and parts that were louder.

And a lot of that work has now been taken up in different countries around the world as a way forward, for not penalising people for playing music and liking music. As part of that there was a \$22 million commitment to the music industry, as part of an election campaign, and a lot of that went in grants to artists, but it also went to creating the Australian Music Vault, and the Victorian Music Development Office, which is there to help musicians, particularly in an export sense. But it also led to an economic impact report, so that they knew how many millions of dollars it was bringing into the economy, they know that there are more live venues per head in Melbourne than there are anywhere in the world. So they actually went and did all of this research, and it's in black and white, it's very easy for people to understand, it's a vote winner, it's kind of a purple patch in Melbourne at the moment, it's not a complicated thing.

Julianne: And so in Detroit, tell us, how does that fit with these experiences?

Carleton: Just, I feel like I may be a little bit of a wrench. So I know what I look like. I'm the director of the Sound Conservancy, but my board, the majority are black, the co-founder's black; our president, who passed away last year at the age of 51, Lovell Williams, worked in the record and retail industry and was my true north in building this up. The reason why I am here is because I was a grad student, you know, so I got my doctorate, couldn't find a job and had time to go to the nine o'clock in the morning government meeting where they were talking about destroying United Sound Systems, and I could also be at the two in the morning club to explain to the punter why they need to be involved. So that's why I'm here. Detroit went through a black revolution in the 1960's and 70's, you know, it was a post-colonial situation.

And so when you talk about the value of arts, I mean there was, just a brief history - Mr Coleman Young was the first black mayor of the City of Detroit in 1973, he came in, he integrated the police force, you know, police beatings and all that kind of stuff, he addressed those issues, and arts was central to an argument. There were arts councils, they had no money, austerity had already begun, but there was absolutely a value in arts and culture. I mean we put value on arts and culture when we value humans; and we don't value humans anymore. So I think that's where that comes from. But in Detroit it's the memory, right now what we're trying to have a memory of is that revolution. The current mayor, we've actually elected a white mayor, the first white mayor in my lifetime.

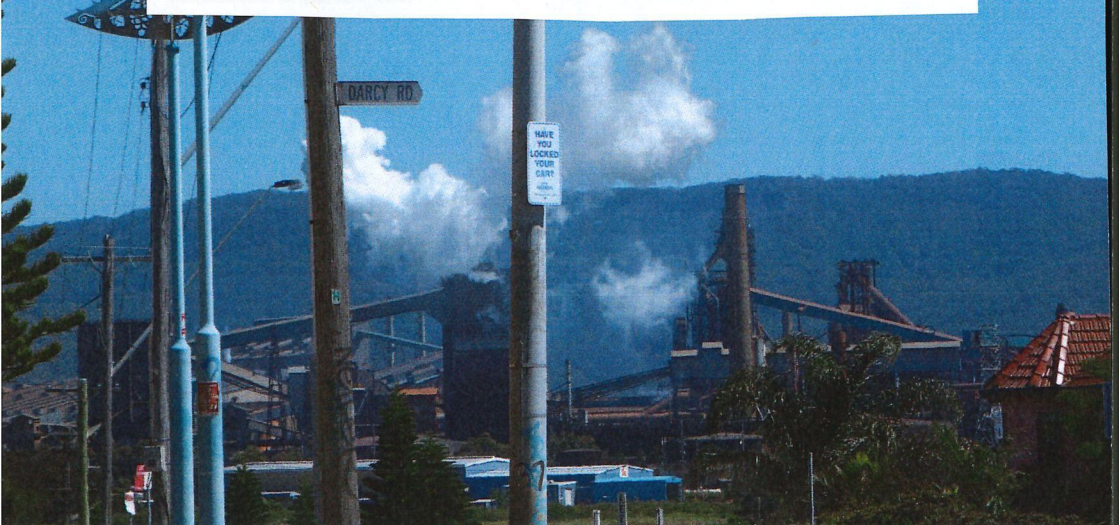
He's from the whitest suburb in the city, Livonia, just to the west; he's a machine guy, he gets things done, but there's no arts and culture. Aretha Franklin passed away, and he stood up at her funeral, which I was at, and renamed one of our local amphitheatres after her, which was very nice. Nips that in the bud, that's a very good political thing to do, but that doesn't improve school systems or age and obtain policies, or any of that stuff, right. So I guess my - each of us I think is doing incredible work to harken back to a time where we as a culture valued these things, even if we were working class, and we were slaving away at the steel mills, or what have you. We didn't have, you know, the union fought for that extra time, and that was the pay off, that was the deal we made.

STEELWORKS HOTEL

Our families and grandparents said, "Okay fine, we'll work our butts off, but we get this," you know, and I think we are fighting for the memory of the thing we negotiated for. We said, you know, in Detroit the example is, the UAW gave up the revolution, and we got rid of our communists out of the union, but the pay-off was everybody got a boat and could be on the river, kind of have vacations, and send their kid to college, right. So I think that's a shared value here, and so the question for the next generation as a succession is going to be "who will be the next director of the Sound Conservancy; I'm 43, will there be younger generation?"

Julianne: The bigger question you're getting to, so this isn't just about nostalgia and sentimental capturing of something that happened in the past. I mean you're talking about it as a tool for the future.

Carleton: It has to be.



Jez: Maybe, it's a bit of a glib phrase; if you don't know your history how on earth can you inspire your future. You need to know what's come before, and I can only speak to my own experience, but art is all about repurposing what's gone before. Music is very bombastic, it's very much, 'I've never heard anything like this', it's fresh, it's new. Well you just need to know your history, to go back. If we erase those histories, or we don't actually bring those histories to the fore, how can a generation on, and I'm talking now about Birmingham particularly, but how can that generation, or that younger generation, which is now going to be a majority, a majority minority city, so a lot of black, a lot of Asian youth, if they don't know what their parents, their parent's parents, their parent's parents parents have done, and the fight, as Carleton was saying, they have gone through, how on earth are they going to be able to create new music that reflects both themselves and that situation.

For me it's really important, this whole thing about value is a really critical question, particularly about popular music. Because popular music is deemed to be commercial, is deemed to be throw away, you know, it's in the charts one day, it's gone the next. But actually these materials, the tickets, the photographs, the flyers, the posters, these are really important to people, they keep them and they keep them under their beds, in their garage, in their life, and then when you give them the space, whether it be a gallery or online, people coalesce around them. And I might be wrong about this, John, but I'm pretty sure that your wall of posters at the Steel City Sound exhibition, that was a great selfie background, people wanting to take their pictures against that.

John: People would go there and say, "I remember going to that." It was one of the most popular parts.

Jez: Yeah, and that's what art is, it's about the shared experience, about recognising things and creating those new discussions.

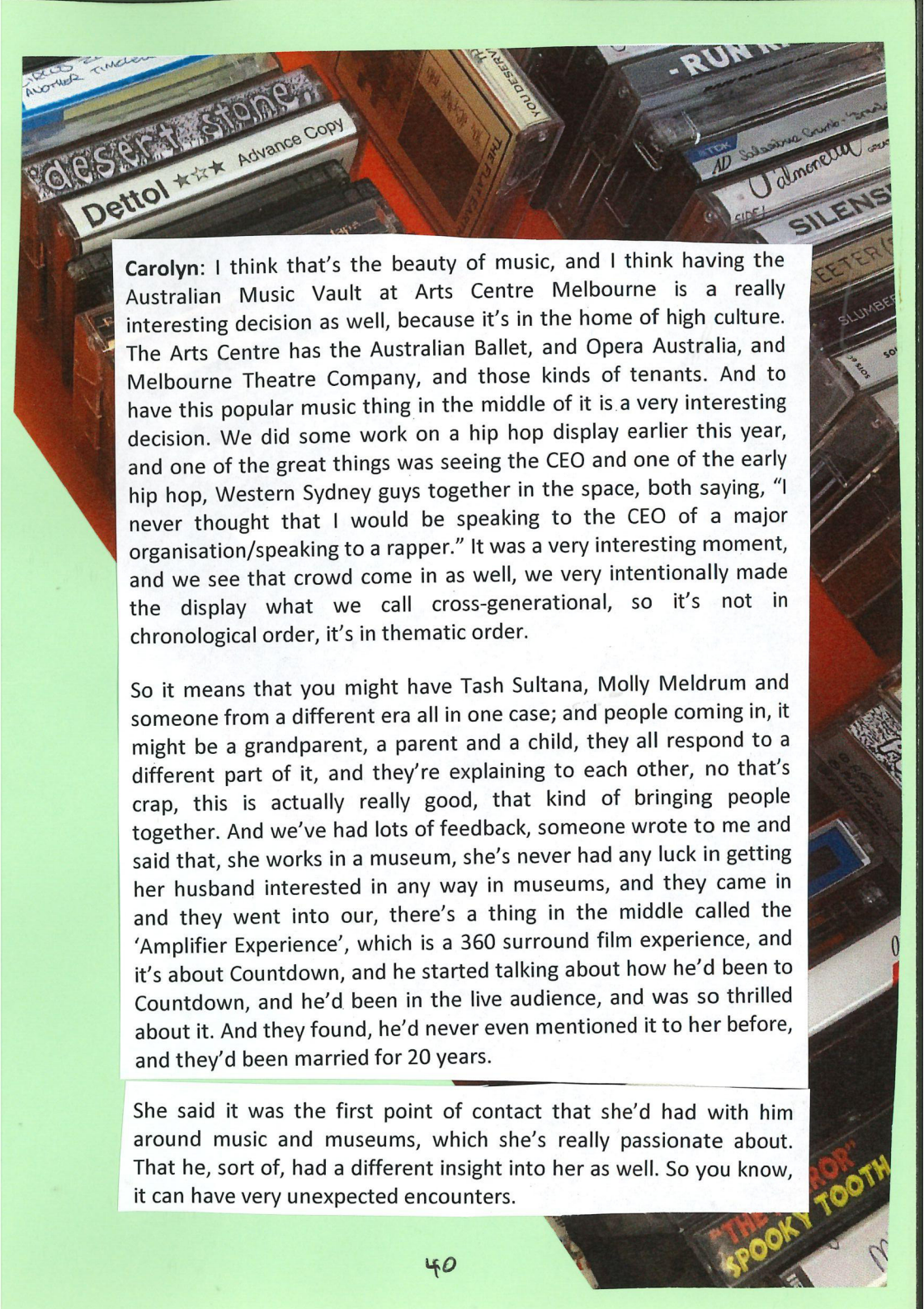


Synnøve: I totally agree. And I'd just like to add that I think institutions like ourselves, within the heritage sector, we can try to enrich the history, or the knowledge of the past, and dig up new stories from our archives and the narratives. And when we see that the past then I think we will see also several opportunities for the future.

Julianne: The layering gives you a different perspective of things. It's interesting, the point about the commerciality of popular music in particular, and how on the one hand, your creative industry crowds, when they say, 'well there's the value', you've measured it in dollars. But you're suggesting that works against the cultural value in a way, because it's seen to be purely commercial it's not recognised for its other intrinsic values.

Jez: Yeah. So it's an industry thing, it's called a music industry, so it's economic by its nature. And what that label does, it misses the nuances about what people do, with culture. So whether you're a gig goer, you just go to gigs, or whether you play; whether you work in a bar; behind that, whether you're an engineer. We are all invested in music, or affected by music, not perhaps invested. But affected by music and it provides us with great life experiences. And everyone likes to talk about it, so it's not in an egotistical way, but they like to remember, they like to think about who they are. And I think when I'm having discussions in the UK, and that's why it saddens me that it always has to be that economic discussion about, you know, how many jobs we do, how many people can you bring in, how much money is it worth, and I understand that.

But we miss the essence of what music and art is, and that's about the enrichment of, I think Carleton said it, about the experience and a very scrappy flyer, or ticket stubs, of Black Sabbath playing in Birmingham Town Hall in 1971, you know, doesn't mean much of itself, but it's a prompt for people to come around. And it brings people together -



Carolyn: I think that's the beauty of music, and I think having the Australian Music Vault at Arts Centre Melbourne is a really interesting decision as well, because it's in the home of high culture. The Arts Centre has the Australian Ballet, and Opera Australia, and Melbourne Theatre Company, and those kinds of tenants. And to have this popular music thing in the middle of it is a very interesting decision. We did some work on a hip hop display earlier this year, and one of the great things was seeing the CEO and one of the early hip hop, Western Sydney guys together in the space, both saying, "I never thought that I would be speaking to the CEO of a major organisation/speaking to a rapper." It was a very interesting moment, and we see that crowd come in as well, we very intentionally made the display what we call cross-generational, so it's not in chronological order, it's in thematic order.

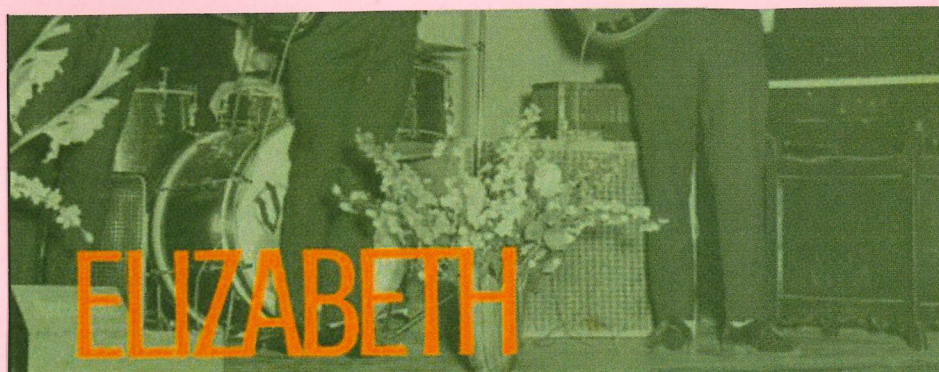
So it means that you might have Tash Sultana, Molly Meldrum and someone from a different era all in one case; and people coming in, it might be a grandparent, a parent and a child, they all respond to a different part of it, and they're explaining to each other, no that's crap, this is actually really good, that kind of bringing people together. And we've had lots of feedback, someone wrote to me and said that, she works in a museum, she's never had any luck in getting her husband interested in any way in museums, and they came in and they went into our, there's a thing in the middle called the 'Amplifier Experience', which is a 360 surround film experience, and it's about Countdown, and he started talking about how he'd been to Countdown, and he'd been in the live audience, and was so thrilled about it. And they found, he'd never even mentioned it to her before, and they'd been married for 20 years.

She said it was the first point of contact that she'd had with him around music and museums, which she's really passionate about. That he, sort of, had a different insight into her as well. So you know, it can have very unexpected encounters.



Julianne: So Daina have you had any of those unexpected encounters at the Hub in Playford?

Daina: We're working on it. I think for the council itself, to get the Northern Sound System up and running, it needed to be presented in the dollars and cents type of way. But I don't think the council actually saw it as music being made for music sense, it was more of a, 'well if we create this music hub, we'll be engaging youth, we'll give them skills and training, and get them employed'. It was more that side, but of course it works the other way as well.



ELIZABETH

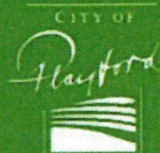
THE CRADLE OF ROCK

The City of Elizabeth quickly developed into a cultural centre of rock music in its early years. A number of bands and musicians began their musical journey in the dance hall atmosphere of Elizabeth.

The City of Playford Library would like to celebrate the unsung heroes of the music scene, its artists, its listeners, its influence.

If you have a story or memory to share, photographs, memorabilia of that period we would love for you to get in contact with us.

Please contact Daina Pocius on 8256 0382 or dpocius@playford.sa.gov.au



Julianne: It's interesting that some new research has just been done about the level of public expenditure on arts and culture, and Commonwealth government money has fallen per capita, state governments have fallen, but the local governments have really stepped up in the amount of money that they're spending in this space. And it's not just on building venues, it's actually on content stuff as well.

John: Because local governments work directly with their communities. At a state level it's much broader, and at the federal level even broader still. It's the core business of local governments to work within community. So if they see a need, that's where the funds should be going, should be trying to service the need in the community. Wollongong City Council's very supportive, but it's difficult for them as well; they have a community to answer to and they've got limited funds, and they have to try and spread their funds out. And it's always difficult to justify spending funds on the arts, on music or whatever, because there's so many other needs in the community. So how do you do that, how do you make that the focus, it's very difficult.

Jez: We went to the record shop earlier, the Music Farmers, and there's three huge buildings being built, two big towers and then one next to it. So we have this in the UK, you know, a very limited amount of funds. There are developers who are spending millions and millions of pounds, so what are you doing for the place that you're building? So we've talked not only about the ground floor level, but even more than that, what are you going to do for the city that you're building in, what effect - so construction is good, but construction will end and they'll move on and build the next building. So how can they actually put some of that huge amount of reserves and money they have into the social fabric, and cultural fabric of the city? And that's where I'm interested as well.

John: Council do do that. Maybe, Anne's in the audience, she's a councillor, so she could maybe speak to that.





Anne: Wollongong has a history of cultural planning over a long period of time, about 22 years of cultural plans with various actions out of that, and certainly as a city we've been allocated funds to cultural programs; and obviously we have institutions, which is this institution and the theatre and others. But certainly there is a history of Australia, Melbourne more particularly, but also in Parramatta, requiring developer contributions through an arts plan or whatever. But I also think that that type of work has become more sophisticated, and you have planners who are also artists, and you also have developers who occasionally are committed to cultural practice. And certainly Wollongong has two practicing artists who are councillors, a musician who's a councillor, I also part own a venue.

So as a city I think we've come a long long way in the last 22 years recognising - I don't think we actually have that many arguments about the value of culture. We might have an argument about what *types* of culture, but we don't argue about the value of culture, because we recognise that Wollongong is more than the steel works, and part of the way we talk about ourselves is as an innovator, and part of that is about being creative. And I would like us to spend more, from every budget.

Julianne: I think it's terribly interesting, where we're talking about the different ranges of music and styles of music, and genres of music that are being played. That it is such a vast spread. I mean Carleton, you were saying that in relation to the Detroit experience, but when I think back to the work that I was doing when I was researching for the book *Steel City Blues*, there was the jazz stuff; there was an incredibly strong folk tradition; there was a lot of, sort of, protest stuff happening through the unions and the opposition movements; there was the conservatorium with the really active program they had for little kids, you know, right through. You had Richard Tognetti from here, there's a really rich and quite diverse musical history, which is not just one genre or another, it's spread widely across.

Jez: It's not always about the musicians, or the famous people, but how Wollongong has developed, and the people who played a role in its social and cultural life, and it's really important that people like Zondrae are also celebrated. I don't mean statues in the main square, but just recalling the oral histories or those memories before they're lost, and I think it's, for me, a really important point, that those sorts of voices and the things that people like Zondrae do are captured. And that's what I tend to do in Birmingham, it's hard, but just in the thinking and saying, 'well there's a lot of history there', social history.

Carleton: Well if I can just directly, part of the reason the Sound Conservancy exists is because so much art history is walking out the door, and it's going to other cities. And I can say for Ann Arbor, I don't assume you guys know these geographies, but the University of Michigan is actually not in Detroit, it's 35 minutes out. And there was, sort of, a benevolent feeling from those archives that Detroiters couldn't take care of our own things, and so our stuff was walking. So yeah, the answer is to keep this stuff as close to people who created it and their descendants as possible.

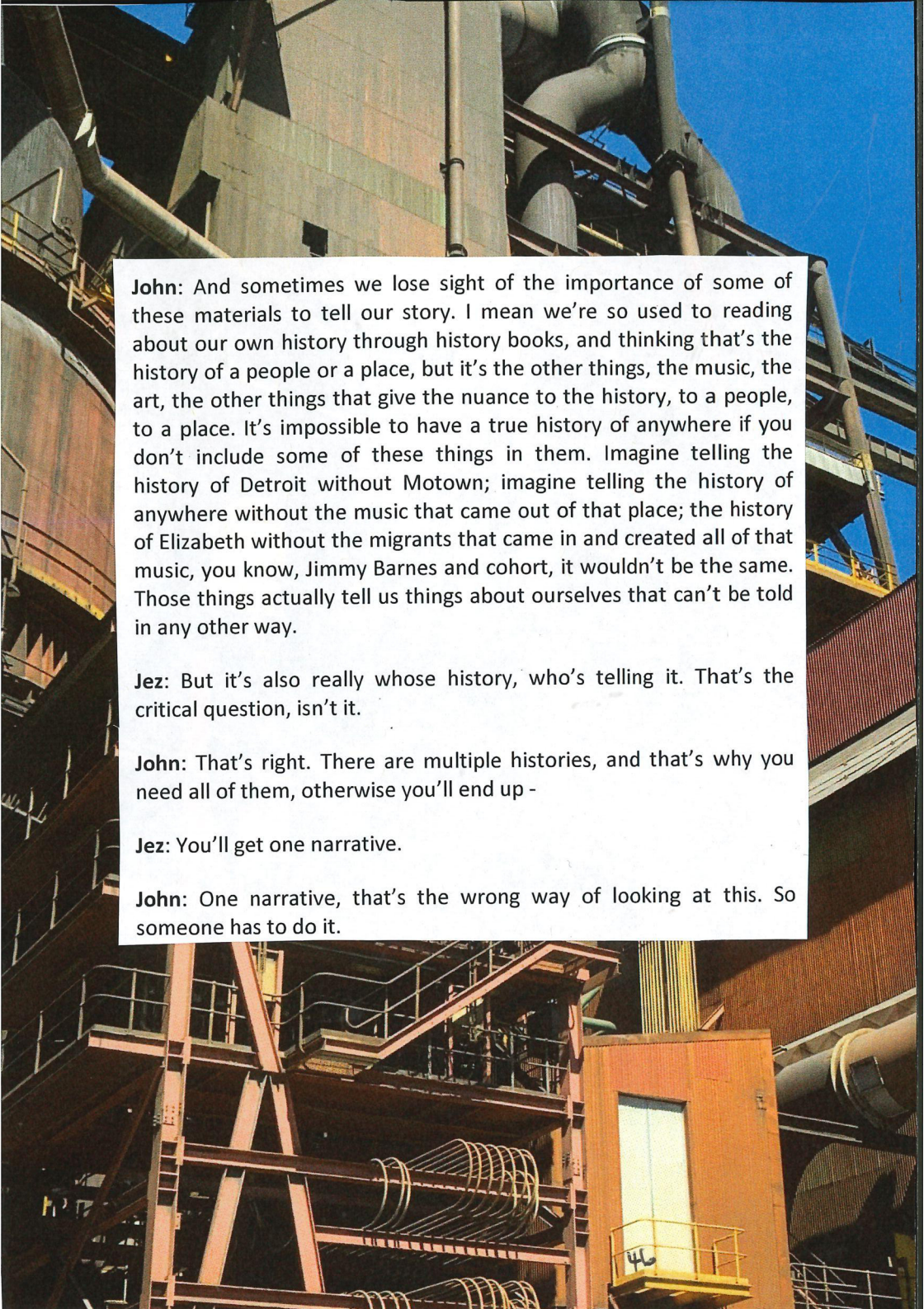


Jez: So in Birmingham it's not actually tied to economic output or development it's just, that's the argument you have to make, My work comes from a background of citizen archiving, community archiving, activist archiving, and that's basically because no one else was doing it, we were losing all this. It wasn't walking out the door, out of Detroit, as Carleton said, but we were just losing it, no one was thinking about, is it important? No one was valuing it, no one was thinking, actually we should be documenting, capturing, archiving. I'm not really an archivist, you know, I have papers going back to the 1960's that show articles about Robert Plant, who lived in Birmingham and played - they're in a box in the shed in my garden, you know, it's outrageous. So I can't claim to be -

Julianne: I'm talking to you about that!

Jez: I know, I get in big trouble about that. So I'm not a professional archivist, but I'm someone who deeply cares about my culture and my heritage. No one was documenting that, or if they were they were talking about, you know, I'll use Black Sabbath again, or Duran Duran, they were saying, "*This is Birmingham music,*" and while it was, I wasn't going to see Black Sabbath, or I wasn't going to see Duran Duran, I was going to see a band called Nigel The Spoon in a pub called The Barrel in 1986, with 30 other people. That was my culture, so I wanted to document that and preserve it, because I think it does have value. And the way I've done it is, as I said earlier, is not so that it's my history, it's all our histories, and you talk to all of us, or not all, but we create those spaces for people to archive or document, it's a loaded term, you're absolutely right to pick up on that.

But if someone doesn't just collect stuff it's going to be lost. I'll worry about the newspapers, 60 odd newspapers in my shed, at some point, but at the moment I just want to save it. And it doesn't matter if its music, in my case, or if it's gender or queer, or race, or disability, those histories often aren't in an art collection, right, because they're not deemed to be important enough. So people like me and others take it upon themselves to document it. So that's a bit of my, sort of, background.



John: And sometimes we lose sight of the importance of some of these materials to tell our story. I mean we're so used to reading about our own history through history books, and thinking that's the history of a people or a place, but it's the other things, the music, the art, the other things that give the nuance to the history, to a people, to a place. It's impossible to have a true history of anywhere if you don't include some of these things in them. Imagine telling the history of Detroit without Motown; imagine telling the history of anywhere without the music that came out of that place; the history of Elizabeth without the migrants that came in and created all of that music, you know, Jimmy Barnes and cohort, it wouldn't be the same. Those things actually tell us things about ourselves that can't be told in any other way.

Jez: But it's also really whose history, who's telling it. That's the critical question, isn't it.

John: That's right. There are multiple histories, and that's why you need all of them, otherwise you'll end up -

Jez: You'll get one narrative.

John: One narrative, that's the wrong way of looking at this. So someone has to do it.

Carolyn: We work really closely with artists over a long period of time, that's kind of how we do it. So we don't have an acquisition budget, so we don't buy anything, so we sometimes work with artists for 20 years, and often when we approach people they almost always say they don't have anything, or they have nothing of value, "We don't have anything you would be interested in." And just last year, one of the best days of my life, I went to a recording studio, and we'd been talking to Spiderbait about whether they had anything, and Kram came down from Byron Bay or somewhere with a suitcase, and he's like, "I don't know, I've got all of this stuff I just kept," and while they were playing and rehearsing, we were going through their archive, and making sense of it.

And when they'd finished rehearsing, they came over, and saw their life in a very different way, and saw their journey in a very different way, and they go round telling everyone this story now. Which is great, and one of the band came in as a volunteer to actually really help us document it. Because while it has a face value when you understand what it is, every object and every petrol receipt for 10 bucks has a story behind it of how they had to scrape that \$10 together. It was just a whole lot of stuff in a suitcase "Go through it and if there is anything take it otherwise we will throw it all away". I think all these exhibitions and projects and museums really help to give a worth to musicians as well so they can say to their parents "see I wasn't wasting my time, I actually did something really great."

R.I.P
RAD
BAR.



MOON
OH
THE JUE

Julianne: I'd like to ask you to join me in thanking the panel. We've been on a wonderful trip around the world with this subject.

WOLLONGONG
@YEA WOLLONGONG!
KALL
BENJAMIN

JACK
STEFFEN

Jez Collins's potted history of Birmingham, its music and the Birmingham Music Archive's connection to Steel City Sound

Birmingham and Wollongong share a history that may not be apparent from 10,601 miles away. Birmingham was forged in the white hot heat of the Industrial Revolution, a place where the world's first single span iron bridge was cast, the first coke-fired blast-furnace opened, the first manufacturing factory opened and James Watt patented the steam engine and at one time 75% of all the world's pen nibs were produced in the city and it was (and still remains) one of Europe's centres for jewellery and precious stones. It also has an often hidden history of gun making and things like shackles and chains that were exported for slave traders. In essence, Birmingham was the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, shaping the world as we know it today.

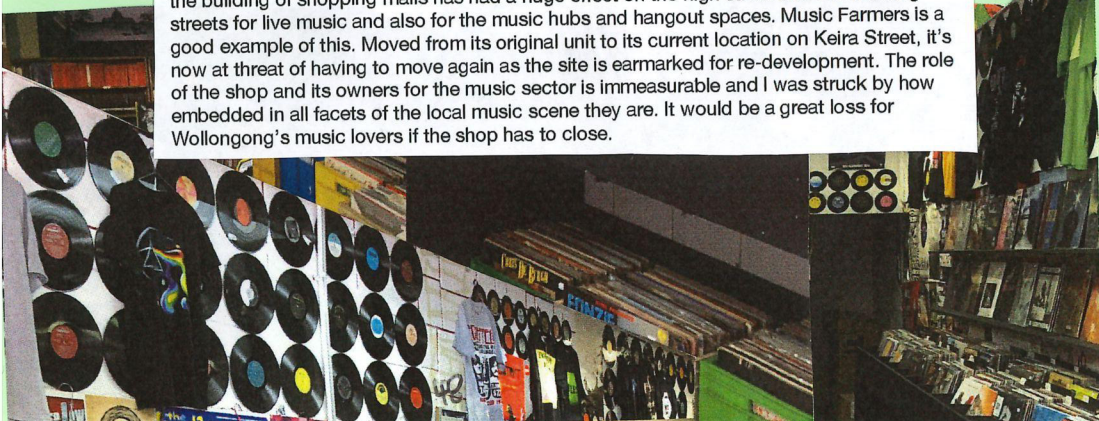
It was this history and diversity of creating and making that has led to the city being called The City of 1000 Trades. Post-war, the city became the centre of the UK car industry, the iconic Mini was designed and built there, and it's the site of the Land and Range Rover and Jaguar car plants. To help in the post-war re-building, Birmingham welcomed migrants from the former Empire countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago.

Growing up in Birmingham in the 1970s and 80s, with the 3-day week, economic austerity, mass unemployment and militant trade union activity, it was apparent that the city was a tough, working class city, a place of people who pulled themselves up by its bootlaces and reinvented itself (particularly with the continual physical rebuilding of the city, something that continues to this day) and this has reminded me of Wollongong.

Birmingham has had to move away from its traditional production and manufacturing industries as they shifted to cheaper countries across the global south and this has necessitated a move towards the service sector; banking, insurance, business travel and so on and this has meant the physical loss of the spaces and places associated with this industrial heritage.

Arriving in Wollongong it's hard not to be aware of the Steel Industry's role in the development of the city and how that has dominated much of its narrative. It's also hard not to see the huge plant works that dominate the skyline. Like Birmingham, with the reduction in the manufacturing of steel, Wollongong has been forced to look elsewhere to reinvent itself with a loss of over 17,000 jobs from the plant. It's not 'just' the jobs that are lost but the knowledge and skills associated with such a huge workforce.

In our short time here, it seems that Wollongong has also moved towards the service sector as the answer to its reinvention and the skyline is now dominated with cranes building high-rise apartments offering the promise of city living and 'culture on your doorstep'. But we've been told of all the venues that have been lost, chief amongst them The Oxford, and how the building of shopping malls has had a huge effect on the high street and surrounding streets for live music and also for the music hubs and hangout spaces. Music Farmers is a good example of this. Moved from its original unit to its current location on Keira Street, it's now at threat of having to move again as the site is earmarked for re-development. The role of the shop and its owners for the music sector is immeasurable and I was struck by how embedded in all facets of the local music scene they are. It would be a great loss for Wollongong's music lovers if the shop has to close.



So both Birmingham and Wollongong face similar challenges and tensions as they seek to reinvent themselves. How does the music sector in Wollongong honour its heritage so it can inform its future? How does it work with developers, planners, architects, councillors and state and national politicians to harness and grow the music ecology, how or can it partner with similar individuals, communities and organisations across NSW and beyond to build a more viable, robust and vibrant music ecosystem?

The Music!!

In all of this I forgot to talk about the actual music of Birmingham and Wollongong. Both towns are predominantly working towns and some of the music reflects this. Heavy guitars, rock, grunge and indie sensibilities all seem at play and of course there is the iconic Jimmy Barnes' Working Class Man and the video shot at BlueScope Steel Works.

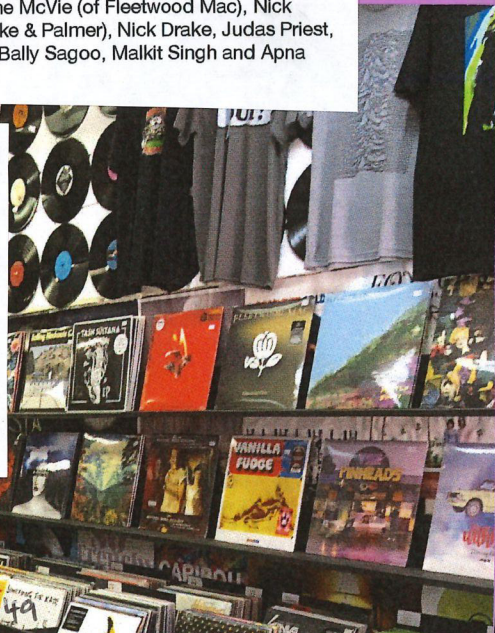
For those that don't know about Birmingham or its music it's fair to say it is very eclectic covering everything from Jazz, Rock, Metal, Hip Hop, Bhangra, New Romantics, Electronica and all things in-between. It's Heavy Metal that Birmingham is arguably best known for. Bands such as Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin (John Bonham and Robert Plant lived on the outskirts of the city and played in local bands in their formative years), Judas Priest, Napalm Death and Diamond Head are some of the best known names in this genre. For Tony Iommi, working in the factories and pressing plants in Birmingham with the big machinery and associated noise he had to make 'heavy' music as that was his environment. Incidentally, the famous sound of Iommi's guitar came about when he cut the tops of his fingers off on the very last shift he was working. He then glued the tops of washing-up liquid bottles to his fingers, de-tuned the guitar and bingo, Heavy Metal was born!

But the interesting thing is that Tony was working on the same bench presses, in the same factories as Black, Indian, Pakistani people and they weren't making 'heavy' music, they were creating ska, bluebeat and reggae or Bhangra and Qawwali music and it's this diversity and proximity to different cultures, the cross-pollination and cross-fertilisation of communities that I think makes Birmingham's music history, heritage and culture so unique.

To briefly highlight some of the most well known bands and musicians to come out of Birmingham; Black Sabbath, Led Zeppelin, The Move, The Moody Blues, The Spencer Davis Group, Stevie Winwood, Electric Light Orchestra, Joan Armatrading, Apache Indian, Dexys Midnight Runners, Duran Duran, Andy Hamilton, The Move, Felt, Ocean Colour Scene, The Streets, Laura Mvula, Lady Leshur, Broadcast, UB40, Steel Pulse, Musical Youth, Pop Will Eat Itself, The Wonderstuff, Christine McVie (of Fleetwood Mac), Nick Mason (of Pink Floyd), Carl Palmer (of Emerson, Lake & Palmer), Nick Drake, Judas Priest, The Beat, Fine Young Cannibals, Au Pairs, Dodgy, Bally Sagoo, Malkit Singh and Apna Sangeeta. This is just the tip of the iceberg!

Here's a TOP 11 to start you off:

- Black Sabbath - Iron Man
- Joan Armatrading - Love and Affection
- The Streets - Dry Your Eyes
- Duran Duran - Rio
- UB40 - One In Ten
- Steel Pulse - Handsworth Revolution
- Nick Drake - Five Leaves Left
- Apache Indian - Boom Shack-A-Lak
- Electric Light Orchestra - Mr Blue Sky
- The Beat - Mirror In The Bathroom
- Dexys Midnight Runners - Seven Days Too Long
- Lady Leshur - Queen's Speech 5

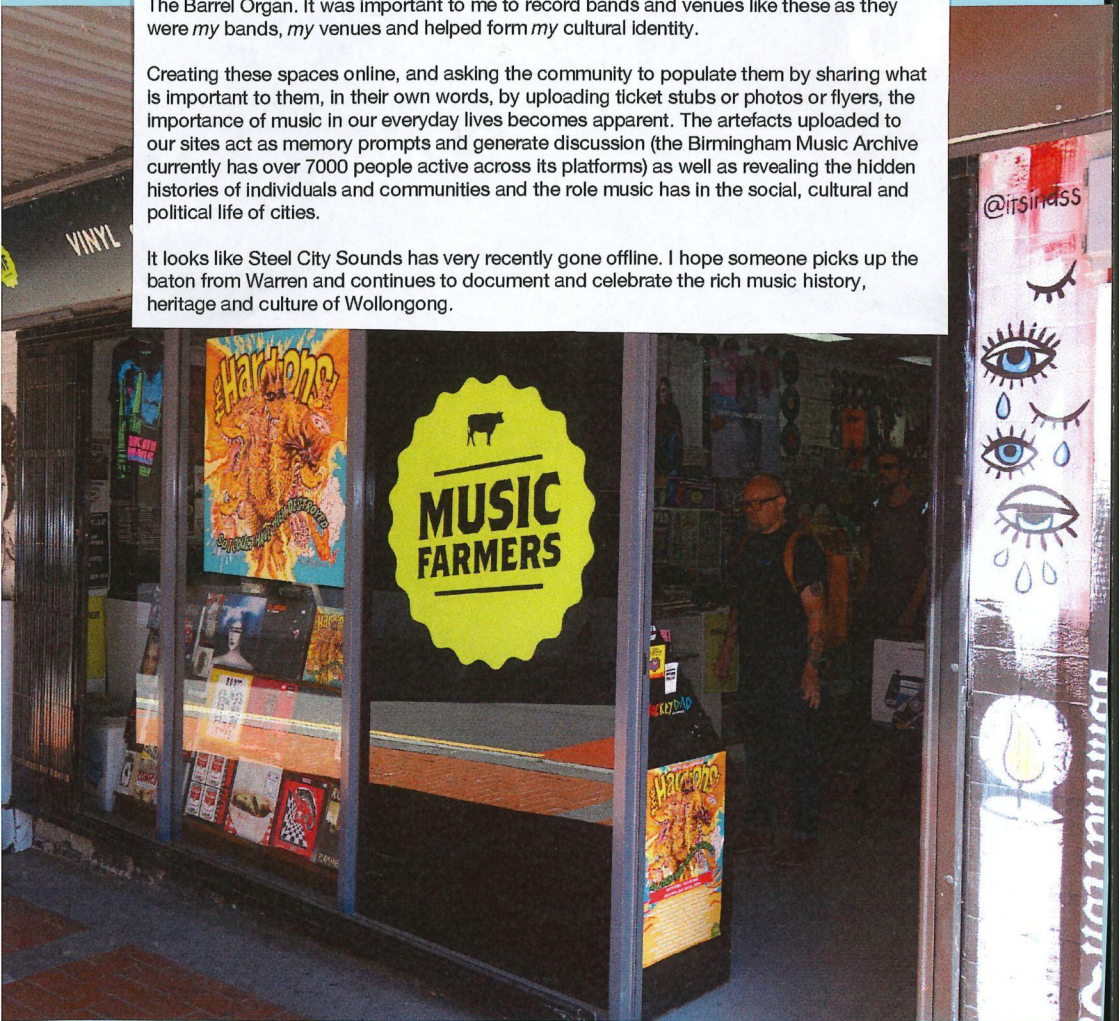


I first came across Wollongong and its music history and heritage when Warren Wheeler emailed me out of the blue in 2011. He'd come across the Birmingham Music Archive in his research while setting up the Steel City Sound archive and for a brief time we wrote to each other complimenting the other's work, comparing notes and offering tips and suggestions about how to develop our archives and practice. In time, I'd come to call the things Warren and I were doing activist, citizen, community and doing-it-together archiving. The terms come from academic work which describes the actions of communities (whether they are communities identified through race, gender or sexuality, or maybe through communities of practice) that take it up themselves to capture, document, share and celebrate their history, heritage and culture as a response to the absence of their histories and culture in official city or national narratives. It's a way of saying that our history matters, our heritage is important and our culture should be celebrated.

Both Warren and I have a great love for our respective cities but felt that our music history, heritage and culture weren't represented or valued or what had been documented or celebrated didn't reflect our history. For example, whilst I like Black Sabbath I'm not a huge fan, I didn't go to their early gigs or to school with them etc. I wanted to document bands like Nigel The Spoon who were my mates and played to about 30 people in a venue called The Barrel Organ. It was important to me to record bands and venues like these as they were *my* bands, *my* venues and helped form *my* cultural identity.

Creating these spaces online, and asking the community to populate them by sharing what is important to them, in their own words, by uploading ticket stubs or photos or flyers, the importance of music in our everyday lives becomes apparent. The artefacts uploaded to our sites act as memory prompts and generate discussion (the Birmingham Music Archive currently has over 7000 people active across its platforms) as well as revealing the hidden histories of individuals and communities and the role music has in the social, cultural and political life of cities.

It looks like Steel City Sounds has very recently gone offline. I hope someone picks up the baton from Warren and continues to document and celebrate the rich music history, heritage and culture of Wollongong.



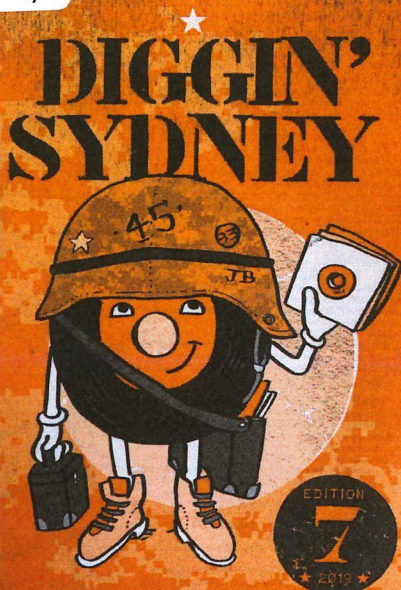
From Waawiiyatanong to Mt. Keira: Popular Music Impressions from #SoundsOfOurTown

By Carleton S. Gholz, PhD



The first and second psychogeographic commandments: Know thy City's imagination through its sounds and map its urban capacities by visiting its record stores. Like a good sonic pilgrim I prepare my #SoundsOfOurTown experience by securing my playback device, a new walkman [sic], before I leave for Aus (locals remind me not Oz, not "down under"). The deck, bought for \$20 US and a shadow of the market options we had back in 1989, is my preferred option to being always-already connected to my iPhone. Tapes selected: Detroit's Majesty Crush, London's Robyn Hitchcock and Talk Talk, New York's Living Colour, Dundee's Average White Band.... Elton John live with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra (recorded 1986) included in the free music on my Virgin-Australia in-flight player coming into Sydney....

First stop, [Birdland Records](#) in an arcade building along George Street. A light conversation about the state of music in Sydney quickly turns to gentrification of record stores off the high street. Sydney is five million in population and cranes are everywhere. No rust. Cruise ships in the harbor. Music venues on retreat. This is a city of 'high art.' I purchase a CD by New Zealander born, Australian-based, Jonathan Swartz. The liner notes quote Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* ("This is thy hour O soul thy free flight into the wordless. Away from books, away from art, the day erased..."). I also pick up a promotional tour map of the City's record shops and am thankful to be off GPS....

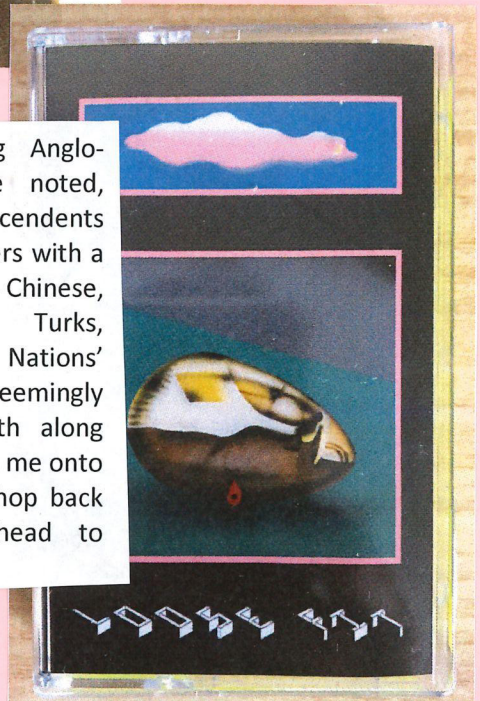


VINYL LOVERS' TOUR GUIDE



So tired I stumble upon [The Opera House](#) which I had, momentarily, forgotten existed. Mind-blown immediately: its shell-like surface not solid white! Instead, an off-white-and-light-sky-blue scale-patterned surface. A monolith marker welcomes me to [Gadigal Country](#)....

Then to [Red Eye Records](#). Aging Anglo-Australian clerk (Unless otherwise noted, everyone in my interactions were descendents of Anglo-Celtic prisoners and/or settlers with a minority ostensibly of Asian descent -- Chinese, Thai, Vietnamese -- but also Turks, Macedonians, Lebanese, Greeks. First Nations' populations honored everywhere but seemingly not included in the obvious wealth along Australian's southeastern coast.) turns me onto a few tapes and encourages me to hop back onto the commuter train and head to Newtown....



[My first Australian cassette: Sydney's Loose Fit purchased at Red Eye Records](#)

Repressed Records in Newtown makes the trip worth it immediately. Nick behind the counter remembers the Board President of the nonprofit I direct from his days as bassist in the Detroit punk band [Tyvek](#). They stayed at Nick's house. We snap a photo. King Street is littered with record stores and each include a nod to Detroit music exports. The techno-focused [Something Else Records](#) features a Rod Modell (he and I both lay claim to Port Huron, Michigan as a hometown) record on its wall; [Network Connection Records](#) across the street has a poster for Detroit's house-hero Theo Parrish on the wall; [Egg Records](#) has a pile of pianist Barry Harris's records which I wish I could stuff into my mind for lack of luggage room. Back in Sydney, at [Mojo Record Bar](#), I spied an old Cass Corridor Unitarian Church Stooges / MC5 poster by the late Gary Grimshaw....



Nick in Newtown says hello.

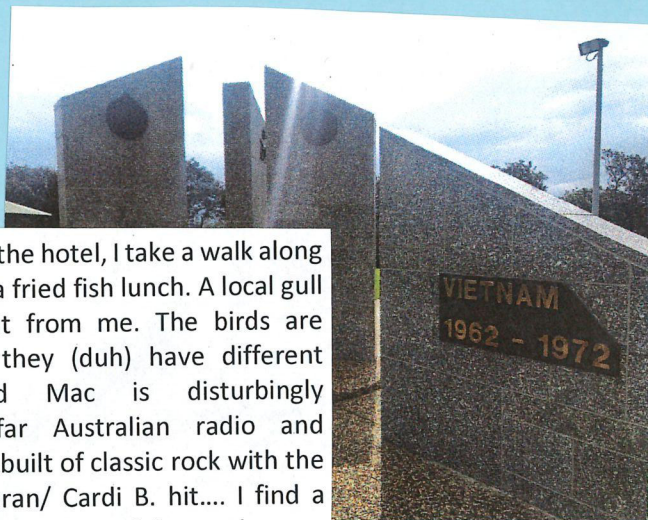
When I had left Detroit, the United Auto Workers (UAW) was on strike. Longest since 1970. The 1970 strike, along with a recession caused, in part, by the cost of the Vietnam War and, later, the OPEC Crisis, will begin the 40 plus years of slow-and-steady austerity that has largely governed the possibilities of my generation. In a breakfast conversation at my airport hotel with a local TV cameraman, I learn that UAW strike is getting no coverage here. Australia really doesn't make cars anymore. Besides, Trump soaks up local TV coverage from U.S....

Betty Davis outside of Music Farmers.



I get to Wollongong via train. As I'm putting my notes together for my panel presentation I receive a tweet from my City council member back in Detroit that Indigenous People's Day (the aspirational name for the still-recognized Federal Holiday Day named after Columbus) will now be named Waawiiyanong after the Anishinaabe's original name for Detroit ("where the water goes around.") As a decedent of white settlers (my G9 helped "found" Hartford, Connecticut in New England) I am ashamed-relieved as I can already tell that Australia at least pays lip-service to Aboriginal presence and impact publicly far better than back home.... But first things first, before I hit the hotel, before I put down my bags: [Music Farmers](#). Nick behind the counter is courteous but frank. In terms of live music, the city is "the worst it's ever been." I nod and listen. Then I grab a [Tees](#) cassette and a book by Peter Read called *Belonging: Australians, Place and Aboriginal Ownership* (2000).

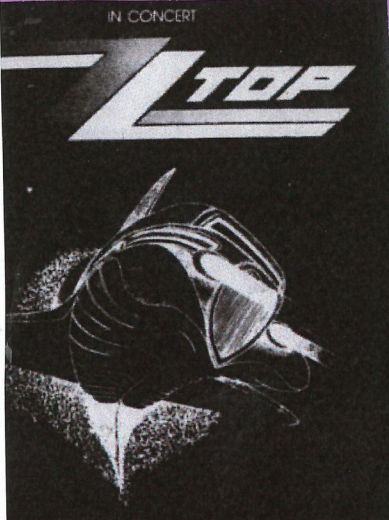
After checking in at the hotel, I take a walk along the coast and grab a fried fish lunch. A local gull attempts to take it from me. The birds are different here so they (duh) have different calls.... Fleetwood Mac is disturbingly everywhere. So far Australian radio and restaurant music is built of classic rock with the occasional Ed Sheeran/ Cardi B. hit.... I find a Vietnam Veteran memorial and am embarrassed to learn, for the first time, the we dragged Australia into that abyss....



The next day I join the music heritage team for some local radio promo before our event at [Wollongong Art Gallery](#). Our friendly radio jock plays Black Sabbath and Duran Duran clips to introduce Jez Collins from [Birmingham Music Archive](#). He chooses MC5 and Four Tops to introduce me. He is unsure about the Four Tops geographic connection to Detroit: "They're from Detroit, right?" A reminder that Motown is not universally known as a Detroit "product." Event also covered in [local paper](#).... A second hand store next to the radio station is selling a tape by local band [Scab Baby](#). The shopkeeper describes the band as "sick." That's all I need to hear. Sold.

After our event day, a tour of the Port Kembla steel mill. Steve, our "[Inside Industry](#)" tour guide, had a self-described "heavy metal" band in the 1970s called Woden. Now he is an apologist for the company which has green-washed its name to [BlueScope](#). The mill once had approx. 30K workers. Now it has 3K. This is "hipster steel," made to order, matte finish, any color you want.... I had seen a Jimmy Barnes mural on the nearby rugby stadium near my hotel but the name had not rung a bell for me. Now Steve brings it all home by saying that Barnes' "[Working Class Man](#)" was filmed in front of a pot of molten steel here in '85. When I watch Barnes performance later it makes the hair stand up on my arms. It makes Springsteen's "Born in the USA" seem like a new wave album track. Barnes played Joe Louis Arena in 1986 opening for ZZ Top for two nights. I was only 10 then but now dream to be in the crowd....

55



IN CONCERT

ZZ TOP

AFTERBURNER TOUR

WITH VERY SPECIAL GUEST STAR
JIMMY BARNES
APRIL 17 — 8:00 P.M.
JOE LOUIS ARENA

RESERVED SEAT TICKETS GO ON SALE THIS TUESDAY AT THE JOE LOUIS ARENA BOX OFFICE AND ALL TICKETWORLD LOCATIONS EXCEPT HUDSONS.
ANOTHER BEAVER PRODUCTION



The next day we actually see Port Kembla itself, a suburb of Wollongong, with our guide Nathan, a local rocker, vegetarian, and Green. There are still some venues, cafes, artists, and people here but the overall feeling was all too familiar. A little Del Ray, a little River Rouge, a little Hamtramck, Braddock, Lawrenceville... Detroit. These cities are uncomfortable because they don't lie. They have to be bulldozed to be forgotten or else they continue to be a reminder that the bosses don't have our best interests in mind, that this is not "the best of all possible worlds," and that we all, channeling Mary Lease, ought to raise far less corn and more hell. I think about the striking teachers in Chicago.... [The Vault](#) looks fantastic. Later I see that the queer scene has found itself there. That, and the fact that a local tells me that Barnes used to have a spot just over the hill leaves me with some hope....

Revised Detroit 19-10-19

CLIVE "FUCKHEAD" PALMER

AFTER THE SUN
CRUZIN TO THE NIGHTLIFE

If you think he did shit his pants

TRANCE

FAT MIDDLE AGED WHITE GUYS & 16yr

MOTHER EARTH

FLAK JACKET

GUERRILLA

I AIN'T THE ONE

HEATHEN

Standing here like a loaded gun

BARRIE

SONIC

NOW THAT GINGER HAS LEFT THE BUILDING

MILEY

MFP

After a tour of the local Uni and lunch, I go to the mall on the high street for a sweater (wool from Australia, made in China). The second half of Barnes's autobiography is on the top of the reading shelf at [Dymocks](#). I head home, nap, and later was able to recover enough to catch the opening band at [Dicey Riley's Hotel](#) which Nathan tells us is a reunion for the Oxford Tavern, now closed. I catch [The Dark Clouds](#) who cover Cleveland's Dead Boys. I sing along and grab the set list.



On my day off, before committing myself to write a response for this zine, I climb Mt. Keira just outside of the CBD. A sacred spot for the local Aboriginal "Mob," the local government has opened up the area for mountain biking despite protests. It is inhospitable for an approach by foot but, like the poorly guided tourist I am, I press on. After reaching the top, I take an obligatory selfie and grab a burger from the cafe off the parking lot near the lookout. As life returns to my body, I turn on my radio and happen upon a show called 45 RPM ("Songs will finish... gigs will end... and bands will break up. But you'll never forget the 45s that touched your heart and soul."). I catch the end of T Rex number and then hear a caller phone in and request Detroit Glenn Frey's "The Heat Is On." Despite the familiarity of Frey's voice ("Tell me, can you feel it."), this is absolutely not my town. And "our town," which Barnes makes use of on his new album, rings of misplaced possession for the Illawarra which I now stare across exhausted.



I stumble back down the mountain.

Contributors

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Zelmarie Cantillon is a Vice Chancellor's Research Fellow in the Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University. Her research focuses on the intersections of heritage, space/place, tourism and cultural policy.

Jez Collins is founder and Director of the Birmingham Music Archive (BMA). As well as being a key online resource for Birmingham music heritage, the BMA is also involved in a range of heritage projects in the local community. Jez is an independent researcher whose work examines popular music, community archives and participatory heritage.

Carleton Gholz is founder and Executive Director of the Detroit Sound Conservancy. His organisation aims to improve the lives of people in Detroit through celebrating and preserving the city's music heritage. Carleton has a PhD in Communication from the University of Pittsburgh.

Raphaël Nowak is a cultural sociologist conducting research on music technologies, cultural consumption, and popular music heritage.



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Thank you for reading!