

## CHAPTER 6

# Branding the City: Music Tourism and the European Capital of Culture Event

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Music is connected with tourism in diverse ways. As an expression of culture, a form of intangible heritage, or a signifier of place, music provides an important and emotive narrative for tourists. Adopting the qualities of a cultural resource, music is actively used to evoke images and associations with specific places. To this end, musical tourism constructs nostalgic attachments to musical heritage sites, scenes, sounds, or individuals, while relying on musical events and incidents from the past that can be packaged, visualized, photographed and ‘taken back’ home. Nostalgia and memory are thus key motivators for the global music tourist in search for particular kinds of authentic musical experiences. This chapter explores these notions by focusing on the role of music, place branding, and tourism during Liverpool’s year as European Capital of Culture. To do so, the chapter will illustrate the branding of Liverpool as *The World in One City* to promote tourism and urban regeneration under consideration of migration and settlement, while exploring the staging and commodification of music events and activities during Liverpool’s year in 2008 as European Capital of Culture.

Music tourism is often built around specific geographical locations—cities, regions, countries—that have acquired special significance through their musical associations.

Liverpool provides a well-known and often-studied case in point, with specific focus typically placed on the packaging and marketing of the Beatles and Merseybeat (e.g., Brocken and Davis 2012; Cohen 1994, 2007; Connell and Gibson 2003; Leaver and Schmidt 2009). To many Beatles fans, the city of Liverpool is an emotionally-charged place evocative of ideas surrounding pilgrimage, nostalgia, and heritage that center on sites of musical production and performance; the places that shaped their music; the incidents from the past; or the tangible artefacts that can be photographed. A visit to Liverpool is, to many music tourists,<sup>1</sup> a kind of nostalgic and emotional quest in search for an authentic past—a pilgrimage. This prompted local businesses, entrepreneurs, and organisations to package, stage, and market Beatles memorabilia and nostalgia in the 1970s and 80s, while more recently Beatles and Merseybeat tourism has become officially developed by Liverpool City Council in an effort toward the city’s regeneration and reversal of its economic decline (see also Cohen 2003, 383). Initiatives to use culture and the creative industries such as TV, cinema, multimedia, music, books, and festivals to contribute to the economy, employment and cultural diversity of a city for urban renewal and to offset the negative consequences of globalization are also more recently conceptualized under the theme of ‘creative cities,’ which is rapidly attracting the interest of academics and policy makers around the world:

Based upon the belief that culture is more than just an expensive public good but can play an important role in urban renewal as well, the concept of ‘creative cities’ has been most thoroughly tested so far in response to the economic decline of industrial cities in Europe, the US and Australia over the last two decades. (UNESCO 2004)<sup>2</sup>

Such initiatives do not only promote economic development, but also seek to contribute to a city’s ‘charisma,’ diversity, identity, and image, and thereby to promote

cultural tourism (see, e.g., Hughes 2010). According to UNESCO, cultural tourism ‘is increasingly important as the tourism industry is moving away from mass marketing towards tailored travel focussed on individuals, and tourists now rate cultural and heritage activities among their top five reasons for travelling’ (UNESCO 2004), an issue already raised in the introductory chapter. Today it is estimated that a significant proportion of Liverpool’s annual 54.5 million tourists visit the city at least partly due to its musical heritage, and it is estimated that over £400 million per year is now spent in Liverpool as a direct result of Beatles tourism (It’s Liverpool 2012), a considerable increase from the estimated £20 million that Beatles tourism generated in Liverpool in 2000 (Cohen 2007, 15). The city’s effort to boost its economy through music tourism became most evident in 2008, Liverpool’s year as European Capital of Culture (ECOC), during which I conducted an ethnographic study that sought to shed light into the interrelatedness between music, mediation, and place by examining the array of musical events and activities that were mobilized as heritage myths and tourist packages, and the impact of this experience on the city and its people (Figure 6.1) (see also Adams 2012 for a useful summary about the nature, scope, applicability, advantages and limitations, and future issues surrounding ethnographic approaches in tourism studies).<sup>3</sup> The data collection was vast, including recorded interviews with city council officials (e.g., Liverpool City Council and the Liverpool Culture Company); researchers of the Impacts 08 team; executive members of local cultural organizations like the Beatles Museum, Liverpool Philharmonic, FACT, Tate, Bluecoat, etc.; and local musicians, composers, and audiences, including local people from all sorts of backgrounds. I also completed observations at a vast number of music concerts, events, performances, festivals, exhibitions, museums, theaters, etc., taking note of the musics, musicians, and audiences in terms of their experiences, perceptions, and attitudes. Collections of print materials in the form of official and promotional material published by Liverpool City Council and Impacts 08; media coverage in

local and national newspapers; websites; and flyers and other non-commercialized publications complemented the ethnographic portion of the research, alongside semiotic analysis, statistical analysis, and virtual observations.

<INSERT FIGURE 6.1 HERE>

**Figure 6.1** On my way to work: A bus depicting Liverpool 08 slogans, architecture, and The Beatles drives along Hope Street (here outside Liverpool Philharmonic Hall). Januar 2008. Photograph by Simone Krüger.

### **Branding Liverpool: *The World in One City***

The Liverpool ECOC program, an initiative launched by the European Union in 1985, operates particularly in the context of broad urban regeneration for long-term economic and social change. The ECOC event delivers both a ‘major cultural festival,’ involving multi-annual events with international reputation, and a ‘cultural mega event,’ usually a one-off event attracting the largest range of participants and media coverage (Langen and Garcia 2009, 7-8). The ECOC event can be seen as an effort to develop, promote, and market a ‘place brand’ (Hjortegaard 2010; Nobili 2005) in order to enhance a city’s image, to attract tourists, and to stimulate regeneration.<sup>4</sup> At the heart of the Liverpool ECOC vision was an aspiration to regenerate and reposition the city nationally and globally. For instance, in the narrative constructed by Liverpool City Council when bidding for the ECOC title,<sup>5</sup> Liverpool became branded under the theme *The World in One City* in reference to and celebration of its

apparent multiculturalism.<sup>6</sup> Liverpool's 'multiethnic' identity, most notably from the African, Arabic, Chinese, and Indian communities, was actively used and promoted in the media campaigns accompanying the ECOC event as a positive signifier of an exoticized and Orientalist form of multiculturalism that sought to stage and museumize Liverpool's diverse cultural heritage. In doing so, the LCC represented Liverpool as a diverse and inclusive festival city based on its multicultural heritage resulting from the movement, migration, and settlement of people (see Belchem 2006 for a comprehensive historical and cultural overview, specifically Belchem and MacRaid 2006:311-92).<sup>7</sup> More specifically:

The cultural map of Liverpool is grounded in the experiences of traditionally under-represented groups and individuals. As a port, it acted as a magnet for social migration, as a focus for the slave trade and as a place of settlement for different communities, beginning with the Irish, then the Chinese, West African, seamen from many countries, in particular Somalia and the Yemen, and more recently as a location where refugees and asylum seekers have come for sanctuary. It has a cultural identity which is both local and international – The World in One City. (Liverpool Culture Company 2002, 101)

Indeed, Liverpool's role as a port city and, resulting from that, its multicultural heritage is often considered to be one of the key drivers for the city's musical scenes, which also tends to be the starting point in many academic and journalistic writings (e.g., Cohen 1991; Brocken 2010):

... the big factor about Liverpool was it being a port. There were always sailors coming in with records from America, blues records from New Orleans. And you

could get so many ethnic sounds: African music, maybe, or Calypso via the Liverpool Caribbean community. (Foreword by Sir Paul McCartney in Du Noyer 2007:xi)<sup>8</sup>

Liverpool was founded by King John on 1207 as a strategic port from which the monarchy could access Ireland and remained a small fishing village for good 500 years, when the city rose in prominence as a port for American cargo, sugar refineries, and the slave trade, and later (after the abolishment of the transatlantic slave trade) as a center for the cotton, sugar, and tobacco industry. As industrialization and colonialism in the Americas, Africa, and Far East strengthened during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Liverpool –the gateway of Empire (Lane 1987)—became one of the most powerful cities in the world. Liverpool’s port shaped the population, as seafarers and migrants from all over the world arrived in the city during the height of British imperialism. Liverpool had strong Celtic influences, specifically from the Irish, but also Welsh and Scottish; Europeans and Scandinavians passed through the city on their way to America; seafarers from Africa and China settled in the city after gaining employment in the docks. Liverpool’s financial decline began with the demise of the British Empire (Wilks-Heeg 2003, 44-9), followed by global changes at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which left Liverpool in drastic economic decline with 25% of its population unemployed. This, together with the 1980s riots, left an image of Liverpool that was highly negative, connoting a place of deterioration, race-riots, decreasing population, crime and unemployment: a symbol of ‘urban decline’ (Cohen 2007,1).

As the city came to symbolize the economic and political decline of Britain and its former empire, Liverpool was in desperate need for a new image, urban regeneration, and economic growth. Liverpool City Council recognized the role of tourism here and in the late 1990s began emphasizing Liverpool’s cultural heritage, most notably The Beatles and football, in its marketing campaigns (Cohen 2012). The most dramatic turning point came

when bidding for the ECOC title in 2002, while establishing the focus for the Liverpool brand as *The World in One City* (see also Nobili 2005, 316). The constructing of Liverpool as a vibrant multicultural festival city was reinforced subsequently in the promotional materials accompanying the 2008 ECOC event. For instance, images in the official Liverpool 08 program often depicted Orientalist representations of people of Indian, Arabic, or African descent (Figure 6.2), while slogans like ‘wondrously diverse’ and ‘melting pot’ used in the backgrounds of most promotional materials further romanticized and celebrated difference and otherness, all of which reaffirm a certain narrative of collective memory and imaged diversity that became the pinnacle of Liverpool’s place brand. The official narrative thereby condensed Liverpool’s history into an easily promotable image: a city of movement, initially ‘for the slave trade’ (Liverpool Culture Company 2002, 101), but today a contemporary global city, marked by diversity and inclusivity. In doing so, the official and promotion material not only constructed the concept ‘Liverpool,’ but also adapted EU rhetoric and agendas to produce and promote ‘Europeanness’ or European identity (Lähdesmäki 2009), manifested by both the canons of ‘high’ European art and other forms of European popular culture, and by the cultural diversity of the city.

<INSERT FIGURES 6.2 (a), (b) AND (c) HERE>

**Figures 6.2 (a), (b), and (c).** Liverpool 08 Program containing images depicting Indian women in arm bangles and brightly colored skirts, dancing in the (monsoon?) rain (08 Liverpool ECOC 2008, 25 and 94); young Arabs in turbans holding large daggers, similar to the characters in *1001 Night* and *Aladdin* (ibid., 56); a man of African descent with colorful face paint, wearing a costume accessorized with beads, strings, and feathers (ibid., 74).

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Yet while representations by migrant groups are clearly evident in the branding of Liverpool as a multicultural city, the particular choices made by LCC also created an ‘official culture,’ that played on and reaffirmed difference and otherness in the depictions and representations of these groups. This is evident by the fact that local Yemeni culture (rather than international music by, e.g., *rai*-singer Khaled) was featured in representations of Liverpool’s migrant Arabic community in official and promotion materials, or that local musicians from African migrant communities like Nigerian Oludele Olaseinde and Senegalese Mamadou Diaw felt the need to ‘perform their ethnicity’ and thereby tap into preconceived assumptions about ‘authentic’ African music (Andersson 2011).

In highlighting Liverpool’s history as a port city of migration and settlement, the narrative constructed by Liverpool City Council evoked notions of past and present, local and global as shapers of Liverpool’s identity as a ‘cocktail of cultures’ (Liverpool Culture Company 2002, 1102). Branding Liverpool as *The World in One City*, which functioned as an umbrella for the multiple strands of cultural experiences that Liverpool had to offer, including heritage, art, football, and music, was sought to be achieved via a vast program of activity, specifically through the main program of events and related activity branded as ‘Liverpool 08’ that was co-ordinated by Liverpool Culture Company (Garcia, Melville, and Cox 2010:12), and included around 300 events themed around music, literature, art, streets, stage, participate, conversation, sport, and exploring.<sup>9</sup>

In considering music, specifically, the Liverpool ECOC event featured an impressive range of musical activities (Figure 6.3), including ‘big’ names like Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr, and an equally impressive budget (e.g., Garcia, Melville, and Cox 2010, 17; ECOTEC 2009, 60-1). Yet since the staging of an event concentrating on international, rather than local, culture had already caused controversy among some local groups during Glasgow’s ECOC event in 1990 (Richards 2000, 4), so LCC was keen to involve a nuanced



range of international, national, and local artists, with a strong focus on community access and participation:

Of the artists and performers in the programme procured, delivered or large grant funded by the Liverpool Culture Company..., 32% were from a Black and Minority Ethnic background.... Up to 50% of professional artists employed as part of the programme for the Liverpool ECOOC were locally based. This was complemented by 30% national and 20% overseas based artists. (Garcia, Melville, and Cox 2010, 14)

Accordingly, around sixty six music events of different sizes and musical styles were staged during 2008 (Figure 6.3), which can be grouped according to size of event type on a sliding scale from global—glocal—local: (i) ECOOC flagship or highlight events, typically ticketed large-scale (even mega) events with a one-off nature, which attract the largest range of international participants and media coverage; (ii) mid-range ticketed events like larger concerts, performances, or festivals, which attract a large number of participants from the region and beyond the Northwest and national media coverage; and (iii) small-scale events such as free community events and music competitions that attract largely local participants with minimal media coverage.

<INSERT FIGURE 6.3 HERE>

**Figure 6.3** Overview of the music program of activity and events during 2008. Provided to the author by Gordon Ross, Music Co-ordinator at the Liverpool Culture Company.

Reproduced with permission.

## **Music, Tourism, Impact: Back to the Beatles!**

The staging and promoting of events of differing scale, varied musical styles, and multicultural nature is reflective of more inclusive, democratic concerns, and shows LCC's attempt to combat the often-voiced criticisms that regard the ECOC event as a capitalist exercise purely aimed at stimulating a city's economic activity and improving the image of a city to attract inward investment, which is, in fact, reflective of a trend toward economic and urban regeneration goals (and away from purely cultural ones) in the shifting policy emphasis of the ECOC event since its inception in the mid-1980s (Richards 2000, 3; see also Hughes 2010, 122-23 for discussions on city marketing more generally). For instance, a local resident raised the following critique early in 2008 titled *Culture of Capitalism?*:

I AM concerned that the events taking place for the Capital of Culture 2008 are, in most cases events, which would be taking place no matter if Liverpool was the host of Capital of Culture and that these events cost money. All the theatres are open and the Grand National take place each year. I would actually like some one to let me know what I can do with my children that will not cost me a whole day's salary. Also, it would be good to find out what there is for children to do free of charge during the school holidays. Or is the Capital of Culture 2008 taking place for the city council staff and the Liverpool MPs to attend events at the Liverpool resident taxpayer's expense? (Peter R Anderson – Makinson, reader letter, Liverpool Echo, January 8, 2008)

To combat such initial criticisms in the local media surrounding affordability and accessibility, more than 70% of cultural activities were free (ECOTEC 2009, 59; see also McLoughlin 2008, which makes special mention of the ‘free’ nature of The People’s Opening). Moreover, LCC actively involved a vibrant scene of local grassroots musical activity inspired by the ECOC title itself—here grouped into the third category of small-scale events—and made efforts to open up cultural participation via, for instance, the Creative Community Programme (Figure 6.4) that encouraged community-based projects by local artists and organizations. In other words, LCC sought to deliver an inclusive program of activity, evident in a vast number of community-based projects. This intensive public engagement program consisted of local events, competitions, or festivals, which attracted predominantly local participants and audiences, and minimal media coverage. Among these activities was the Open Culture initiative that engaged around 6,300 individuals and organizations (ECOTOC 2009, 66). For example, the Liverpool Song project as part of the Open Culture initiative called locals to compose a new ‘Song for Liverpool post ’08,’ which was taken up by hundreds of residents and reflects people’s enthusiasm to contribute toward and participate in a celebration of ‘their’ city. One good example of such ‘grassroots’ engagement is the writing and recording of the song called ‘This City’ (2008) by former rock band Damascus,<sup>10</sup> which is characteristic of the band’s influential New-Wave-Of-British-Heavy-Metal (NWOBHM) musical style and emotionally expressive of place-based ‘Scouse’ identity commonly known for working-class pride and good-humoured people (Boland 2008), and here includes references to the Catholic influence to the city (Example 1).

*Chorus:*

This city is mine

This city is yours

Stays deep inside my heart

This city is ours

[Repeat]

*Verse:*

If you wanna know what rocks about this city

It's not the lights or buildings pretty

It's not the statues, church or steeple

What makes it rock, it's gotta be the people

[Repeat]

You think the good things never last

You think the music's in the past

You think the cast have all been cast

*Etc.*

**Example 6.1** 'Your City' (2008) by Damascus. Lyrics by David Bridge (guitar) and Billy Downes (vocals); bass guitar by Mike Booth, drums by Bill Campion. Provided to author and reproduced with permission.

However, hundreds of songs (but one) ended up 'in the draw' and were never performed or recorded, while the winning song 'The Pool of Life' by Phil Jones and The Pool Band (the three band members wrote the lyrics) was released as a single recorded at Waterloo-based Mersey Sound Studios (Jones 2008). It is interesting to note here that the winning song was not performed by a local amateur musician, but well-known singer songwriter Phil Jones with an already established profile, which most certainly helped to boost beyond-local recognition, media coverage, and single sales.

<INSERT FIGURE 6.4 HERE>

**Figure 6.4.** A page from the promotional brochure 08 Participate, which promotes the Creative Communities Programme in order to inform the general public about these activities. Published by Liverpool City Council, 2008. Reproduced with permission.

The Liverpool ECOC program of music activity also featured a significant number of mid-size concerts, performances, and festivals—here grouped into the second category of events—that attracted a large number of participants locally and from beyond the Northwest, alongside regional and (in some cases) international media coverage, while the latter involved predominantly specialized media aimed at niche, rather than global, media audiences. In this category are typically events like the Matthew Street Festival and Liverpool Pops, as well as the ‘multicultural’ festivals like Milapfest (Indian), Brazilica (Brazilian), the Arabic Arts Festival, and Africa Oyé, although these festival events are already well-established and would have taken place in the absence of ECOC designation.

The Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival was first held in 2002, formerly known as the London Yemeni Festival and held under the auspices of the Yemeni Community Association (YCA). Since 2002, and growing out of the efforts of Nadey Al-Bluecoat (a partnership between Liverpool Arabic Centre, formerly known as Liverpool Yemeni Arabic Club, and the Bluecoat Arts Centre), the festival attracted sponsorship from the North West Art Board and witnessed rising national and international success (Qassim and Hassan 2009). The 2008 festival (during the ECOC year) was launched at the Family Day in Sefton Park’s Palm House, attended by 2,500 people, including the Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen and

Councillor Paul Clark, Lord Mayor of Liverpool. While the launch event was broadcast by BBC Radio Merseyside to an estimated audience of 50,000 people (Andrews 2008, 3), the festival was also radio broadcast on national (BBC Radio London) and international (Dubai Eye Radio; BBC Arabic World Service) level, and covered on Sky Channel 166 as part of their 'Best of Summer' 2008 program (ibid.). A total of 27,000 visits to 41 events were recorded (ibid.), while the highlight of the festival was a performance by international *rai*-star Marcel Khalife (known internationally as Khaled) in the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall.

Meanwhile, Africa Oyé resembles the largest African music festival in the UK, which is held annually over two days in Sefton Park, popularized with African food, drinks, arts, crafts, and fashion stalls and workshops (Figure 6.5). Beginning in 1992 as a series of small gigs in the city center, the event grew steadily, moving to its present Sefton Park location in 2002 to cope with rising audience numbers; for instance, the 2007 event attracted an audience of over 40,000 people, which was expected to be exceeded in 2008. While the festival lineup typically involves international bands and musicians,<sup>11</sup> the festival is attended largely by local and national audiences, and features in the national and (to a growing extent) international media. For instance, Oyé 2008 was recorded by BBC Radio 3 and The Africa Channel (Sky channel 281) for future broadcast in the UK, Africa, and The Caribbean, and was thus promoted to niche, rather than global, media audiences. As in previous years, the festival did not feature local African bands or musicians like The River Niger Orchestra (headed by Oludele Olaseinde) or The Super Libidor Band (headed by Mamadou Diaw), which may be so because the festival directors/organizers, Kenny Murray and Paul Duhaney, seek to promote a 'beyond-local,' international appeal.

<INSERT FIGURE 6.5 HERE>

**Figure 6.5** Africa Oyé festival, June 21 and 22, 2008. The festival is held in Sefton Park, here also featuring (in the background) the high-rising apartment towers, Brompton and Sydenham House in the L8 area of Liverpool. Photograph by author.

The fact that Liverpool's Arabic or African (or Indian, or Brazilian, or Chinese, for that matter) heritage and (the staging of this heritage during festivals) featured strongly in LCC's bid and subsequent promotional efforts is particularly important, as it taps into the narratives spun around the concept 'Liverpool' as *The World in One City*, which, as already argued, served the strategic performance of multiculturalism. Here, pluralism and difference were turned into a spectacle for consumption through 'museumizing' culture (after Appadurai 1990, 304), creating a staged environment where musicians performed their ethnicity to resemble that of the festival, a common mechanism used in official narratives surrounding multiculturalism.

Meanwhile, LCC supported fourteen local artists and organizations (from 150 applicants) for the Liverpool Commissions strand by commissioning 'exciting, innovative art projects of international quality' (ECOTEC 2009, 66) from local artists and organizations. Noteworthy here is The Rightful Owners of the Song project, led by Jonathan Ross, which brought together a small number of Liverpool's pub 'karaoke' singers to perform a one-off concert of pub classics with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra providing the backing music. Jonathan explained the context for this project as follows:

The Rightful Owners of the Song seeks to acknowledge and celebrate 'working' culture. Working class.... To place this economically impoverished musical culture in relation to the incredible richness of resources available to a Symphony orchestra offers the possibility of exposing and bridging such cultural 'rifts.' ('The Rightful

Owners of the Song' Project Description, provided to author and reproduced with permission)

While the audience apparently consisted of 'both fans of the orchestra and those of the singers themselves' (McNulty 2008), some selected pub singers clearly already enjoyed a certain musical career: 'William Wenton, 60, who once toured the world with Chris Rea is one of the chosen singers.' (Anderson 2008). Even so, the coupling of 'working class' and 'high art' is noteworthy here; indeed, the staging of the event in Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, a resemblant of the art deco period and its idealistic notions of exoticism, exploration, and travel (see Henley and McKernan 2009), and accompanied by the RLPO, is important, not least because 'the award-winning Royal Philharmonic Orchestra is... at the height of its powers [with] a global reputation for excellence under the leadership of Chief Conductor Vasily Petrenko.' (Flyer, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, 2011) The appointment of Petrenko brought global connections and tourists not only to the Philharmonic Hall, but to the city more widely. The decision to commission this project seems to, at least to me, be made on the basis of its promotional potential to officially celebrate Liverpool's 'working class' people (local culture) alongside 'high art' (global culture).

The Liverpool ECOC event sought to emphasise both, economic and cultural objectives, which it achieved through a combined emphasis on the local and glocal aspects of Liverpool's cultural heritage. It has even been suggested that the commissioning of Liverpool-born high profile international artists and performers (and their visibility) was not a significant priority for Liverpool's ECOC (ECOTEC 2009, 67). Indeed, 'the city's Beatles connections were deliberately downplayed in official Capital of Culture documents (including the original bid and published programme of events) in order to highlight local cultural diversity' (Cohen 2012, 13). Yet despite the official narrative in certain publications



that certainly sought to promote the ECOC event in a positive light,<sup>12</sup> a key aim of the Liverpool ECOC was to attract more visitors to the city, and thus

to use tourism as a driver for economic development, both directly through visitor spend and the subsequent growth of the visitor economy, and indirectly through changing the image of the city in order to attract inward investment and emphasise the quality of the city's offer for potential residents. (Garcia, Melville, and Cox 2010, 24)<sup>13</sup>

A glimpse at the number of visits to Liverpool motivated by the ECOC title and events program reveals an interesting peak during January/February, May/June, and July/August (Garcia, Melville, and Cox 2010, 25), and, perhaps predictably, this increase in visits to Liverpool coincides with the staging of global music events and international stars, events here grouped into the first category of mega events. These musical highlight or flagship events, also described as 'world class' events (ibid., 35), included the Liverpool ECOC Opening Events (January, 11 and 12), the MTV Europe Music Awards (November, 6), and the Paul McCartney/Liverpool Sound concert (June, 1), as well as classical music events (ibid.: 35).<sup>14</sup> These global music events achieved maximum impact economically and culturally, while being themed around 'high art' (e.g., classical music) and Liverpool's popular music heritage (e.g., the Beatles and Merseybeat – the Liverpool Sound, as well as other well-known pop music artists) (see also ECOTEC 2009, 59). For instance, the musical billing during the Opening Events drew predominantly on Liverpool's popular music heritage, including Ringo Starr, The Wombats, Echo and the Bunnymen, Pete Wylie, Ian Broudie, Shack, and The Christians (for a useful description of the opening event at St George's Hall, see Cohen 2012, 2-3 and Cohen 2013).<sup>15</sup> Local Echo Newspaper published an article entitled "Ringo kicks off a city spectacular," announcing the Opening Events and playing on sentiments surrounding The Beatles and Beatles-influenced music:

This week marks the first big events of 2008, with one of the biggest taking place outside St George's Hall this Friday.... , this is a free event which includes former Beatle Ringo Starr on top of the historic hall.... "The People's Opening promises buckets of spectacle, emotion, humour and surprises with music ranging from Ringo Starr to the Wombats. "It's for the people of Liverpool and it's free. (McLoughlin 2008, 5).

It was specifically the city's 'white' popular music heritage (see also Cohen 1994, 123; Cohen 2012, 13-14), staged as large-scale/mega events, that were used as key drivers for national and international tourism and travel.<sup>16</sup> Music was, once again, actively used to 'sell' place, and place in turn used to market a particular sound, the Liverpool Sound, which began to emerge with the Merseybeat groups of the 1960s like The Beatles, Gerry and the Pacemakers, and The Searchers. Ever since, Liverpool has continued to produce its own particular brand of guitar bands like Echo and the Bunnymen, The La's, The Coral, and, right up to the present day, The Wombats, The Zutons, and The Rascals. The most successful band, The Beatles, became undeniably the biggest global music product and is accredited with lending Liverpool its world-renowned reputation as the Capital of Pop. Both the jingly-jangly guitar sound of early Beatles records and their later experiments with psychedelic pop have become staples of the Liverpool Sound and can be heard in the music of The La's, and Echo and the Bunnymen, who in turn have influenced more recent Liverpool bands that specialize in jingly-jangly guitar pop, as well as featuring that popular psychedelic twist.

The Paul McCartney/Liverpool Sound concert that took place on June 1, 2008 in the Anfield Stadium of Liverpool FC resembles another powerful example of a large-scale music event—attended by more than 32,000 fans—that successfully tapped into the pleasures and

expectations of the city's global 'customers' by satisfying their nostalgic imaginations and romanticized desires for first-hand experiences with The Beatles and Beatles-influenced music (Figure 6.6). Headlined by Paul McCartney himself, the event also featured Peter Kay as MC and younger bands like Leeds-based Kaiser Chiefs and Liverpool-based The Zutons.<sup>17</sup> Paul McCartney performed the usual Beatles classics,<sup>18</sup> thereby tapping into the city's desire to stage Beatles heritage and nostalgia in order to attract a substantial number of international tourists and, with it, international recognition and revenue. A visitor from Alaska described her 'Beatles pilgrimage' to Liverpool as follows:<sup>19</sup>

Last winter, Judie and I were offered the opportunity of a lifetime to attend the Liverpool Sound Concert in Liverpool which was being headlined by Sir Paul McCartney on June 1st, 2008.... The Magical Macca Tour started on May 29, 2008 at the Premier Inn on Albert Dock, where the tour group was residing for the Liverpool expedition.... The next morning, Friday May 30th, we had the customary wonderful English breakfast then went through the Beatle Story Museum & Exhibition.... Later that morning Judie and I, along with several other group members, went on the National Trust Tour to see John and Paul's childhood homes. It was a mystical experience to walk in the homes where the two musical geniuses grew up.... Sunday, June 1st - Paul McCartney Concert Day!.... The Magical Macca Tour group rode to the Anfield Stadium in the Cavern's 'retired' Magical Mystery Tour bus, which was a magically mysterious way to start the evening.... It was a surreal occasion to be in Liverpool watching Paul McCartney, from the Beatles, perform in his hometown.... When riding back from the concert, we were in the Magical Mystery Tour bus singing Beatle songs with windows down, while people on the streets waved and took pictures of us. The entire evening was the ultimate magical phenomenon! (Leslie Baker

Nikiski, Alaska. Accessed January 16, 2013.

<http://www.liverpool tours.com/2008maccatourreport.htm>)

<INSERT FIGURE 6.6 HERE>

**Figure 6.6** The Liverpool Sound concert, here promoted in the official Liverpool 08 Program as ‘once-in-a-lifetime event.’ Published by Liverpool City Council, 2008. Reproduced with permission.

Perhaps because the Liverpool Sound concert, as local rumour had it, was supposed to feature a significantly larger number of bands and musicians, both locally and internationally,<sup>20</sup> but did not manage to do so due to financial problems, the concert reinforced—once again—a particular Liverpool Sound that is closely associated with The Beatles and Beatles-influenced music, a reality that differed significantly to the branding of Liverpool under the theme of *The World in One City*. At least in regard to mega events, Liverpool was promoted as the city of the Beatles and Capital of Pop, and not necessarily as multicultural festival city, the new city brand, a reality that shows that music tourism tends to build upon, model, and reinforce a certain music canon.

### **Carnavalesque Utopia, Or Capital of Capitalism? Concluding Remarks**

Liverpool ECOC provides a striking example of the ways in which music, place branding, and tourism intersect in a post-globalized world. Under the overall theme of *The World in One City*, the ECOC event sought to promote Liverpool as a world class cultural city with a positive reputation, to promote international tourism, and to promote urban regeneration

through culture. This economic revival of Liverpool due to the ECOC event could be seen as a reason to celebrate globalization, in the local setting of the city at least, where economic ambitions were officially underpinned by more democratic concerns with building community access and participation. The dual nature of LCC's efforts shows how cultural mega events like the European Capital of Culture can contribute toward a 'culture of collaboration,' a modern-day cultural phenomenon that helps to explain collective feeling during festivals, and construct an artificial atmosphere of inclusivity, eclecticism, and tolerance. In this context, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept/social institution of carnivalesque is highly significant, as the advent of the carnivalesque reflects the transition of city marketing (Hughes 2010, 132). While there exists a historical link between modern-day festivals and the medieval carnival, in carnivalesque audiences are active participants, not simply spectators, which emphasizes the apparent participatory nature of such events and overrides any significance placed on specific, individual performers:

Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people.... Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants [...] as an escape from the usual official way of life. (Bakhtin 2008, 7-8)

While carnival is regarded as a spectacle where the serious (as exemplified by 'higher' renaissance culture) and the comic (as reflected in medieval 'folk' consciousness) were simultaneously present and in this process subverting hegemonic assumptions, one pivotal characteristic contained within carnivalesque and relevant here is the suspension of political order and, with it, hierarchical social structure, transforming the carnival into a classless social potpourri of people of different backgrounds. This 'classlessness' is indeed reflected in the official aims of the Liverpool European Capital of Culture event. In this

regard, the official narrative aimed at dismantling the authoritative voice of the hegemony through the celebration of collaborative culture (and the inclusion of alternative voices) has thus been central to the branding of Liverpool as *The World in One City*. Liverpool ECOC and its representations portray a new urbanity, a post-industrial city that is carnivalesque and festive.

Even so, however, it seems that the staging of different event types and the representations of culture in the promotional materials, as was illustrated in this chapter, reflects the workings of the global, capitalist media and music industries, and thereby reinforces certain hegemonic cultural practices. For instance, ECOC official materials emphasized *local* Yemeni culture rather than international Arabic music (e.g., rai-singer Khaled). Representations in the official and promotion materials thereby functioned to ‘strengthen some forms of culture or culture of some groups in the city or region, and in turn, other forms or other cultures are pushed towards the margins’ (Lähdesmäki 2009, 217). Meanwhile, with complete control over what musics or musicians were being heard, ‘big names’ were staged on the basis of ‘international’ impact for high costs, who were heard by thousands, worldwide, globally, while other musicians, particularly from Liverpool’s local communities and so-called minorities remained in the periphery and/or were seen by only small audiences, pointing toward the tensions that emerge from initiatives targeted at tourists and international audiences versus those targeted at local residents:

Yet the Liverpool events also illustrate the emphasis on White, male Anglo-American rock in dominant accounts of Liverpool’s popular music past, and how diversity sometimes appeared to be tacked onto such accounts rather than a central component. (Cohen 2012, 13)

Thus while community engagement and participation featured high on the ‘official’ agenda, local Liverpoolians did not necessarily agree. Many musicians like Senegalese-born Mamadou Diaw or Nigerian-born Oludele Olaseinde,<sup>21</sup> whom I became acquainted with over the years while residing in Liverpool, felt that the contribution made by ‘black’ residents to Liverpool’s soundscape, which featured heavily in the bid and subsequent promotional campaigns surrounding the ECOC event, had been overlooked, overshadowed, or marginalized during the actual event (see also Andersson 2011). Meanwhile, Paul Duhaney from Africa Oyé explained that:

It was a weird one, Capital of Culture, because originally we [Africa Oyé] were... would kind of be at the forefront of that. You know we were featured in the bid video... as one of the jewels in the crown of the city, but as time went on... we realized that... there was more interest in projects that were being brought in from outside of the city, as opposed to existing projects that were going on in the city, which was quite frustrating because... most of the arts organizations in the city thought, you know, this is a chance for us to shine and show the world what we are about. But that didn’t transpire and they brought in... Ringo Starr for £2 million and this mechanical spider thing [for] £2 million pounds.... And you know we really didn’t benefit in any shape or form from Capital of Culture. (Interview transcript, available in Andersson 2011, 107-12; reprinted with permission from Paul Duhaney)

Liverpool’s apparent multiculturalism that resulted from its borderland or gateway city status—a ‘melting pot’ where different cultures meet and merge as these became constructed in the bid and ECOC event (and, once again, reflects EU rhetoric)—also distracts away from actual injustices, such as racial segregation, and with it, social, economic, and cultural exclusion of certain (notably ‘black’) ethnic communities in Liverpool (Brown

2005). This shows that the ECOC event tended toward a particular place brand that reflected an ‘official culture,’ rather than to promote to the ‘outside’ international world an organic culture that already existed within the city (see Wilks-Heeg 2004, 353). These forms of culture did and still do exist, but ‘local’ culture did not feature for the gazes of the world tourist. Instead, in order to reposition, brand, and market Liverpool internationally as a global, inclusive cultural city, particular emphasis was placed on ‘high art’ and Liverpool’s ‘white’ popular heritage, reflexive (once again) of EU rhetoric to highlight those works of art and cultural sites valued in western art and cultural history, and seen within the frames of high culture (Lähdesmäki 2009, 219). Important questions may be raised here about what culture is for, as there seem to emerge tensions between more liberal views about using culture to enhance mutual respect and understanding to lead happier and harmonious lives, versus views that regard culture as a means to bring about quantifiable economic benefits, and so to promote an official culture aimed at improving a city’s image and enhancing economic regeneration. While LCC clearly sought to combine the two, the reality is that globalization and late capitalism have forced cities to use culture as a driver for income generation, a practice usefully termed ‘city imageneering’ (Hughes 2010). Culture, including music, in the postmodern age is an intangible commodity for potential economic gains, which turns places like Liverpool and its Beatles-themed locations and events into a postmodern tourist site (Urry 1990). Besides a carnivalesque utopia, Liverpool ECOC may thus also be seen as a brand product of a mixture between British neo-colonialism and forms of global capitalism and its dominant meanings and experiences.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Leaver and Schmidt (2009, 225) found during their research that local Liverpoolians categorized Beatles tourists into four categories, namely fans (who like the music),



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- anoraks (who have a detailed knowledge of the music and recording history), fanoraks (a more extreme fan with greater knowledge), and fundamentalists ('ultra' fans).
- <sup>2</sup> Two years after the ECOC event, Liverpool City Council (under the project leadership of Gordon Ross) submitted a bid under UNESCO's Creative Cities programme to become UNESCO City of Music (see also <http://www.liverpoolcityofmusic.com/>, accessed March 13, 2013).
- <sup>3</sup> The project was entitled 'Liverpool '08 and Beyond: Music, Mediation and Place' and supported by Liverpool John Moores University.
- <sup>4</sup> Place branding is by no means unique to Liverpool and first occurred in the late 1970s in the US as a response to the changes in the global economic system, which left key industrialized enters in decline (Ward 1998, 186).
- <sup>5</sup> Liverpool City Council (LCC) is the governing and administrative body of the city, which set up Liverpool Culture Company (LCC), the managing and commissioning body for the Liverpool ECOC. Note that Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Culture Company are both abbreviated as LCC and used here interchangeably, as the latter remained a subsidiary to Liverpool City Council when managing the ECOC event.
- <sup>6</sup> For a useful overview on and critique of multiculturalism, see Werbner (2005, 759-63).
- <sup>7</sup> The celebration of multiculturalism in the media campaigns that accompanied the ECOC event is overshadowed with controversy. While Liverpool's role as a port city brought people (seafarers, migrants, etc.) from all over the world, Liverpool also played a key role in Britain's empire building project with its association to the transatlantic slave trade, from which it is said to have benefited (Brown 2005, 3). Furthermore, the infamous (in the British press) 1980s riots were a direct result of the racial tensions bubbling under the city's glossy cover, and even today there are reports about the city's racial and social segregation (Boland 2008).

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- <sup>8</sup> Interestingly, Du Noyer's 2007 edition of the book used the Capital of Culture logo with permission from the Liverpool Culture Company, thereby officially validating the book's relevance to the ECOC event (Cohen 2012, 5).
- <sup>9</sup> More specifically, 276 highlight events were listed in the official Liverpool 08 Program, while 830 events were listed on the Liverpool 08 website, which included details of cultural activities which were not explicitly branded as 'Liverpool 08' or directly funded through the Liverpool ECOC (Garcia, Melville, and Cox 2010, 14). A total of 7,000 cultural events took place in 2008, highlights of which included La Machine, a giant mechanical spider as part of the Street strands of events; the visit of the Berliner Philharmoniker conducted by Liverpoolian Sir Simon Rattle as part of the music program; and the Gustav Klimt exhibition at the Tate Liverpool, the first comprehensive exhibition of the artist's work ever shown in the UK (ECOTEC 2009, 59).
- <sup>10</sup> While the band, like so many other bands from Liverpool, never 'made it,' given the positive reviews of their EP *Open Your Eyes* (1984), they recently released an album *Cold Horizon* with High Roller Records (Germany 2011), which contains remastered recordings of their 1980s releases (see [http://www.hrrecords.de/high\\_roller/sites/release\\_detail.php?id=203](http://www.hrrecords.de/high_roller/sites/release_detail.php?id=203), accessed on March 12, 2013).
- <sup>11</sup> The lineup during the 2008 festival, as during prior festivals, was largely international: Odemba OK Jazz All Stars (Congo), Body Mind and Soul (Malawi), Les Freres Guisse (Senegal), Bedouin Jerry Can Band (Egypt), Massokos (Mozambique), Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni Ba (Mali), Candido Fabre Y Su Banda (Cuba), Kenge Kenge (Kenya), and Macka B (Jamaica/UK).

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- <sup>12</sup> It must be remembered that the Impacts 08 team was commissioned by Liverpool City Council, thus it is not surprising that in their publications there is an underlying agenda to promote the Liverpool ECOC event as a positive success for the city and its people.
- <sup>13</sup> In the original bid to win the ECOC title, Liverpool Culture Company identified tourism as a key driver for broader regeneration: ‘Tourism is big business for Liverpool.... Our vision is to double the annual visitor spend to £1 billion and create 12,000 new jobs in the sector.’ (Liverpool Culture Company 2002, 1001)
- <sup>14</sup> For example, the world premiere of Sir John Tavener’s *Requiem* at the Metropolitan Cathedral, Jah Wobble’s *Chinese Dub*, and Sir Simon Rattle’s *Berliner Philharmoniker* at the Philharmonic Hall.
- <sup>15</sup> The *People’s Launch* outside Liverpool’s St George’s Hall, attended by 50,000 people, featured performances by former Beatle Ringo Starr and Liverpool band The Wombats; while *Liverpool – The Musical* in Liverpool’s ECHO Arena, attended by 10,000 people, featured ‘a host of musical stars including Ringo Starr, Dave Stewart, Vasily Petrenko, RLPO, No Fakin DJ’s, Echo and the Bunnymen, Pete Wylie, Ian Broudie, Shack, and The Christians’ (BBC 2007).
- <sup>16</sup> Specifically, non-resident visitors made up the majority with 63% of attendees at the Liverpool Sound concert (ECOTEC 2009, 70).
- <sup>17</sup> The Zutons formed in 2001 while studying music at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts—LIPA, which was co-founded by Lead Patron Paul McCartney and is housed in his former school.
- <sup>18</sup> When I attended the concert, I was surprised also to see Dave Grohl (lead singer of the Foo Fighters) who accompanied McCartney during three Beatles songs, as he did not feature in any promotional material for the event. In local circles it is generally assumed that Grohl performed for free, while fulfilling a lifetime dream of performing live with

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Beatles legend Paul McCartney in Liverpool, which is once again evocative of the nostalgic and romanticized perceptions of Liverpool and its Beatles heritage.

<sup>19</sup> While discussions of ‘pilgrimage’ as a modern-day phenomenon in music tourism are outside the purpose of this chapter, rhetoric of this kind illustrates that people—tourists—‘acquire languages of spirituality in which they come to interpret their own acts as acts of devotion and pilgrimage through complex routes and for complex reasons’ (Stokes 1999, 151), while this rhetoric is also exploited by the city’s tourism industry and music press.

<sup>20</sup> For instance, a local newspaper article by Catherine Jones entitled ‘£700 Macca tickets row’ explained that: ‘More than 32,000 fans will pack the football ground to see Macca along with other major names from the pop world who have been inspired by Liverpool music. Rumoured acts include U2, Oasis and the Kaiser Chiefs, although culture chiefs have not yet revealed any other names....’ (Liverpool Echo, January 15, 2008)

<sup>21</sup> Other local musicians may be named here too, including Oludele’s brother Tunji Olaseinde, Liverpool-born Ogo Nzeakor, Congolese-born Felix Ngindu Kasanganayiad, and Pierre Balla from Cameroon.

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