

## **Richard Witts**

### **Manpool, the musical: harmony and counterpoint on the Lancashire Plain.**

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### **Abstract**

Since 2015 Liverpool has been designated a UNESCO ‘City of Music’. Not so its neighbour Manchester, which has nonetheless been hailed in the press as the ‘capital city of music’. They remain globally valued as two of the chief cities identified with the development of popular music in the second half of the twentieth century. As de-industrialised centres seeking new engines of growth, they have invested in these cultural reputations in order to attract for themselves tourists, university students, the conference trade and foreign business. Yet across the past decade numerous claims have been made in a range of journalistic outputs that Liverpool and Manchester are cultural rivals. These claims appear to be predicated principally on sport and music, key meeting points of commerce and leisure.

There are certainly *differences* between the two conurbations – the industrial site of Manchester grew at the interstices of three rivers while Liverpool evolved as an Atlantic port. Yet the

major transport initiatives in the area (the 1830 Manchester-Liverpool Railway, the 1894 Manchester Ship Canal, the 1934 East Lancs Road, the 1976 M62) were constructed in order to accelerate connections between the two cities. Most recently urban strategists such as Andreas Schulz-Baing have fused the diarchy by describing them as a potential polynuclear metropolitan zone, a megalopolis. From this the businessman Lord O'Neill has popularized the union as 'Manpool'. Taking this as its cue to correct the music history of the 'adversary' cities, this chapter examines three diverse examples of musical figures associated with one city who played in vital, but forgotten, part in life of the other. Firstly, Tony Wilson (1950-2007) who was associated with Factory Records and the building of the Hacienda nightclub in Manchester, but started his career in Liverpool (the 1979 festival 'Zoo Meets Factory Halfway' will be referred to). Secondly, Roger Eagle (1942-99) who was associated with Liverpool post-punk club Eric's but also Manchester's Twisted Wheel (1960s) and The International (1980s); Eagle played a leading role in converting post-punk Frantic Elevators into soul-based Simply Red. Thirdly, the Griffiths brothers (The Real People, Liverpool, 1988-), the Gallagher brothers (Oasis, Manchester, 1992-2001), and the formation of 1990s 'laddism'. Other cases are cited. A critique is made of contemporary and historical literature on the music scenes of the region. Examples of co-operation, reciprocation and solidarity remain hidden when ethnographic assumptions about separate 'scenes' are not tested by examining the common patterns of behaviour between sites of activity. Actors and events that are vital to the stories of both cities get consigned to one. Where the cohesive factor is music, there is a tendency to underestimate the extent of the patterns of interactions. The problem is that of the spatial relations between the administrative frame and the functional terrain of flows and exchanges. This chapter challenges that ethnography which cannot see the wood for the trees.

**Keywords:** Liverpool, Manchester, North-West England, UNESCO City of Music, ethnography, ethnomusicology, popular music studies, Hacienda, Eric's, Burtonwood, post punk, Oasis, Simply Red, The Fall.

Liverpool is officially a 'City of Music'. This UNESCO sobriquet was awarded in 2015 and it is alleged to bestow global status, though no funding comes with it<sup>1</sup>. There are nine such Cities of Music around the world as part of a UNESCO 'Creative Cities Network' of 116 members, each of which petitioned a committee in order to obtain this rather nebulous cachet (UNESCO 2016). Around the same time, and in contrast, Liverpool's neighbour Manchester was titled the 'Music Capital of Britain'. A survey jointly commissioned by Ticketmaster and the newspaper publisher Trinity Mirror produced this laurel (*Manchester Evening News* 2014). The two competing and troublesome titles contribute to a common view that the dual cities, thirty-five miles apart, are chronic economic and cultural adversaries, competing for grants, kudos and football cups.

In 2010 a BBC1 television programme titled *A Tale of Two Rival Cities* claimed that the feud was 'personified by sport and music' but that it had begun a century earlier 'with hard-headed financial calculations' (BBC 2010). In 2012 an online poll asked voters which music scene was better, 'The Hacienda or the Cavern? Morrissey or Macca?', resulting in a slim win of 50.96% for Manchester against Liverpool's 49.04% (*The Tab* 2012). For the record, both Liverpool's Cavern club and Manchester's Hacienda were long defunct, but their names had begun to represent typifying scenes of mythological dimensions. As for 'Macca' (Paul McCartney of The Beatles), the American magazine *City Journal* published '21 reasons why Liverpool outclasses Manchester', in which five of those claims featured The Beatles (*City Journal* 2015). The notion of Scouse chalk and 'Manc' cheese is now so legitimised in media discourse that it deserves scrutiny.

## **The South North-West**

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<sup>1</sup> When in February 2016 a local MP asked the national government's Culture Secretary what support the government would give Liverpool for this accolade, the minister merely listed the Arts Council and Lottery grants the city had received that year.

The land that made up Lancashire, between the rivers Ribble to the north and Mersey to the south, was considered by the Domesday commissioners in 1086 to be a unified tract (Jewell 1994: 17). The two locales that would become Manchester and Liverpool formed the southern base of the Duchy of Lancaster's province from 1265, providing along the Mersey<sup>2</sup> a transport infrastructure for the region. Up to the seventeenth century the chief port of the area had been Chester, but the silting up of its river allowed Liverpool to take charge. By adding an innovatory wet dock system in the early eighteenth century, Liverpool merchants boosted an infrastructure for the economic development of the region, notably the export of Lancashire coal and Cheshire salt together with the import of raw cotton for the increasingly systematic production of cotton goods (Belchem 2004: 11). Replacing fabric workshops with mills and factories, the county's landscape 'changed... from green to black' (Alderson 1968: 11). The population of the county tripled from around 230,000 in 1700 to 700,000 by 1800.

In his visit to the region in 1727 the diarist Daniel Defoe hailed Liverpool as 'one of the wonders of Britain... a large, handsome, well built and encreasing or thriving town'. In turn he described pubescent Manchester as 'the greatest meer village... I cannot doubt but this encreasing town will, some time or other, obtain some better face of government, and be incorporated' (Defoe 1986). By 1795, chronicler John Aiken reported that Manchester had become 'the heart of this vast system' of mass production, 'the circulating branches of which spread all around it'. To Aiken, Manchester was a city of manufacture ('Cottonopolis') while Liverpool was its port, complementing it as a city of commerce (Aiken, 1968: 3). As the cities expanded, thought was given to improving transport links between them. The history of improved access may be summarised as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> The Mersey river runs from the edge of the Peak District near Stockport, forming a southern flank to Manchester, before entering the Irish Sea north-west of Liverpool.

1. 1726: Turnpike road route operational between the conurbations;
2. 1772: the extension of the Bridgewater Canal to the Mersey, which heralds the 'canal boom';
3. 1829: the Rainhill Locomotive Trials, leading in 1830 to the Liverpool-Manchester Railway, the world's first passenger train service;
4. 1897: Manchester Ship Canal opens;
5. 1914: Liverpool-Manchester Monorail (not realised)<sup>3</sup>;
6. 1934: East Lancs Road, Britain's first inter-city arterial road (dual carriageway);
7. 1976: M62 motorway.

It is the Manchester Ship Canal at the end of the nineteenth century that raises the most controversy in any history of relations between the two cities. Some argue that the canal allowed goods ships to sail directly from the Mersey estuary to the Salford-Manchester docks and bypass the monopolistic Liverpool docking charges; it became the very source of the cities' commercial antagonism alluded to earlier in the BBC film. On the other hand, Manchester merchants were already avoiding Liverpool by using the east coast ports of Hull and Goole for some categories of freight; the Ship Canal circumvented the associated overland costs. By this time Liverpool had anyway reached its tonnage capability in handling 11,000 ships annually while it had massively developed its passenger traffic of emigrants to the Americas (Littlefield 2009: 15-16). The ambivalent economics of the ship canal was in any case off-set by the incremental improvements in road and rail access: the general direction of policy lay in co-operation and mutuality. How then is there a common assumption that the cultural story of the cities is one of autonomy and singularity, of friction and factionalism? To summarise my argument: rivalry principally exists between the

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<sup>3</sup> see <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C2580564>

conurbations at the administrative level and it was imposed relatively recently by central government dealing with the postwar de-industrialisation and economic decline of the North-West region. A narrative of cultural distinction has been constructed to serve the current disposition of rival civic governance, competing directly in a climate of entrepreneurship for grants and guarantees. The remainder of this essay attempts to explain this situation and its impact on two academic areas that may be unsuspectingly complicit in establishing the dominance of that narrative: popular music studies and ethnography.

### **Liverpool *versus* Manchester**

To deal first with this hapless emphasis on division, it is well explained by CB Phillips and JW Swift in their long history of the region:

Between 1920 and the late 1970s... the decline of cotton, coal and, later, heavy engineering diluted the common vocabularies and shared experiences that had united the most populous parts of the region... By the 1920s [Liverpool and Manchester] each had all the trappings of a regional capital... The economic roles were, in many ways, complementary but their regional ambitions... increasingly split the region between east and west.' (Phillips & Swift 1994: 302-3).

While postwar manufacturing was outstripped by the service industries - impacting on Manchester's vast manufacturing and engineering quarter Trafford Park - various attempts to save Liverpool dock life failed when the cargo vessels became too large for Victorian wharves (Phillips and Swift blame in part 'the dockers' resistance to change'), and both cities faced imperilling falls in population; Liverpool's 1938 tally of 880,000 was halved to 440,000 by 2001 (Munck 2003: 54). Local government appealed to central government to support a number of visionary schemes, a peak reached in 1969 when Manchester's Planning Officer proposed 'a giant dispersed city extending from the Pennines to the sea through Manchester and Liverpool', later labelled the 'Mersey Belt' (Phillips & Swift 1994: 339). Instead, the Labour government of the time, caught up in calls for total devolution in Scotland and Wales, had proposed a radical modernisation of England's regional and con-

stituency borders. The Redcliffe-Maud Commission's report of 1969 (Cmnd.4040) proposed a new system of unitary authorities to include a small number of grand metropolitan counties. But the recommendations were taken up for implementation by Edward Heath's Conservative government (1970-4), fiddled about with under the rubric of localism or subsidiarity and introduced in 1974 just as another Labour government took over<sup>4</sup> (Heath 1998: 447). Up to then the two cities had together formed the southern bed of Lancashire. Now they were split into Merseyside and Greater Manchester and placed in competition for funds in a period of acute economic decline and growing unemployment.

When the reformist Conservative Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister (1979-1990) she visited the North West for one whole day, stating confrontationally that people in Britain had to understand that improved public services could only be paid for out of higher levels of productivity (Thatcher 1979). This speech, in a region where unemployment of 16 to 24-year-olds had hit fifty per cent, heralded the 'Thatcherite' neoliberalism of deregulation, the free market and the pull away from the communal to the individual (Belchem 2006: 428, 440). As for Liverpool, her Chancellor of the Exchequer (a finance minister) advised her that it was fit only for 'managed decline... We must not expend all our limited resources in trying to make water run uphill' (Pye 2014: 179-80). Her cabinet saw the consequent 1981 riots in Toxteth and Moss Side as inner-city problematics. They set up centrally-controlled Task Forces and unelected Urban Development Corporations. In doing so they overrode the elected metropolitan councils and indeed abolished them in 1986 (Munck 2003: 60). Thatcher appointed cabinet member Michael Heseltine as 'Minister for Merseyside'. To his credit he thought up a dextrous reclamation project - an International Garden Festival in 1984 - that foreshadowed cultural schemes which both cities

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<sup>4</sup> The Times, leader, 1st April 1974: '[The] new arrangement is a compromise which seeks to reconcile familiar geography which commands a certain amount of loyalty, with the scale of operations on which planning methods can work effectively.'

would soon turn to, predicated on tourism, heritage and commercial investment (Heseltine 2000: 216-27; Pye 2014:181-5).

Thatcher's successor John Major (1990-7) acknowledged that coherent provincial strategy had been lacking hitherto and announced a selective range of spending programmes. A *City Challenge* initiative was instated for which local authorities had to compete against each other to secure regeneration funding. Each contender had to engage a range of private and voluntary bodies in the programme's design (Munck 2003: 62). Manchester used this funding to demolish the modernist crescent flats of Hulme and return it to a traditional layout (Mackay 2006: 8).

Yet what the Major government achieved was little more than a 'hotchpotch of agencies' in Belchem's words (470). The cities were placed in contention for thematically unconnected portions of central government funds. Nevertheless, in both cases the informal development of advisory networks, local agencies and action groups involving the private sector (*Liverpool First, Manchester Growth Company*) galvanised a new entrepreneurial approach to renewing in gentrified fashion the city centres (Wainwright 2009: 67-8; Littlefield 2009: 36-41). These were based in part on 'success' stories of revitalisation like Lille and Barcelona in mainland Europe, together with the achievement of Glasgow as the 1990 European City of Culture (Quilley 2002: 77). In fact at this time Merseyside and Greater Manchester each started to receive structural funding from the European Union under the terms of its Regional Development Fund and Social Fund. However, the areas were treated, then (and now) as standing on different strategic platforms. This is somewhat ironic, by the way, as the regional policy's prime aim is 'cohesion'.

From 1993-4 Merseyside was designated Objective One status as a 'poor region' with a gross domestic product rating 75% or so of the European Union average; it received £1.25 billion of aid between 1994 and 1999. Manchester has attracted less funding as a 'More Developed' region attaining 90% or higher of gross domestic product against the Eu-



ropean average. In the midst of this programme, Tony Blair's 'New Labour' government gained power (1997-2010) and brought new systems into play, changing the administrative shape and scope of both Liverpool and Manchester. These changes were carried through by the succeeding coalition government (2010-5). Manchester led the way as a 'statutory city region' with devolved economic powers in 2011 under the title Greater Manchester Combined Authority, serving a population of 3.3 million (AGMA 2009; GMCA 2106). The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority ('a local enterprise partnership') was set up in 2014 to serve a population of 2.7 million, holding elections for a Mayor in May 2017 (LCR-CA 2016).

In 1997 New Labour talked brightly of a 'New Regional Policy' and soon a North-West Regional Development Agency was established (Harrison 2006). It had been a tradition of parliamentary policy that where socialists see regions, Conservatives see villages. But the entrepreneurial turn in Manchester - pragmatic governance by local elites - sat well with New Labour and the business-friendly 'Third Way' of its policy architect Anthony Giddens (2010), and indeed may have contributed to such behaviour; one thinks, for example, of the jargon of 'boosterism' employed shamelessly by both. While Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott attempted to kindle regional devolution, he was 'hung out to dry' and the project collapsed when voters in the North-East region rejected its own devolution proposals by 78% to 22% (Wainwright 2009: 245-6). Voters in Liverpool, more supportive of Prescott's position than many, having in the 1980s moved beyond Old Labour to the 'hard Left' ways of the 1980s Militant tendency, deserted the socialist camps and instead gave municipal power to the Liberal Democrats (1998-2008), before returning to Labour (2008-present). Thus, in summary, at every turn since 1974 the two neighbours have had no option but to compete with each other at the level of regeneration and 'growth'. Yet a comparative account of the political economies of Manchester's expedient New Labour and Liverpool's less stable regimes may well show in practice more similarities than differ-

ences, that is, competing to do identical things. While both regimes have played down homelessness and played up office space and tourists, they have both been using European Union funds, and now - as city regions - allocations devolved from the UK government which are channeled into specific, parallel objectives to benefit most an urban elite, before which each city dangles its cultural quarters, street food bistros and festivals of this or that.

## **Manpool**

But there is a counter-movement. By observing the history of complementarity between the two cities, new analysis of the diarchy as a polynuclear metropolitan zone has focused also on the towns 'in between' such as St. Helens and Warrington. The potency of economic coordination has already been credited to projects in Germany, such as the Ruhr's 'region of cities'; Düsseldorf, Cologne and Bonn have fostered between them a revitalising polycentric balance along the Rhine. This in turn has been compared historically to Baden-Württemberg, the successful union of two 'rival' states in south-west Germany, first unified by public referendum - of all things - in 1952. At a conference at Essen in 2015, the urban strategists Andreas Schulze-Baing, Sebastian Dembski and Olivier Sykes described Manchester and Liverpool as key nodes of the 'Mersey Belt' urban corridor. They examined how the potential of intermediate towns might gain from 'the emerging new forms of regional and sub-regional planning and governance' (Schulze-Baing et al 2015).

This unifying principle has been dramatically translated into 'Manpool', where 'Liverpool and Manchester might bring together their populations and resources to create a "supercity" in the north', according to Lord (Jim) O'Neill of Gatley, who coined the term (O'Neill 2014). O'Neill is an outspoken macro-economist well known for contriving acronyms such as 'BRIC' (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and chairing the coalition government's Cities Growth Commission (2013-4). He is most vocally associated with the notion of the 'Northern Powerhouse', whereby the chain of cities from Liverpool in the west to

Hull in the east would apparently gain commercial traction by using devolved funds and foreign investment, in this way fuelling national growth. O'Neill's Manpool project has already taken taken visionary shape in form of the massive 'Ocean Gateway' scheme of Peel Holdings. According to Tom Harper of *The Independent* newspaper, the Peel Group property parent is 'owned by the reclusive tax exile John Whittaker' and his aim is to:

transform fifty miles of bleak industrial land between the Port of Liverpool and Salford Docks into a £50 billion redevelopment... The scheme, which will take at least five decades to complete, will include a £5.5 billion overhaul of [Liverpool's] waterfront with 50 skyscrapers, four hotels, a marina and a cruise liner terminal.  
(*The Independent* 18.10.2013)

This commercial step, to return the two cities to their complementary roles, ironises the governmental practice of dividing them (*Economist* 2014). It is significant that, thanks to the ingress of neoliberal practice in local government policy, a speculative project on this scale can now be considered a way forward after forty years of contrived administrative rivalry. Yet there have been acts of co-operation, reciprocity and synergy between the two cities for all of that time. That these events have not been featured in accounts of the lives of the cities is surely down to the failure of these endeavours to conform to the governing narrative of difference and rivalry. Given the conventional claim from the BBC at the head of this essay that this self-determination is 'personified by sport and music', and this being a journal about music, I wish to turn to that subject, with apologies for the long but unavoidable preamble to reach this point.

### **The case of popular music history.**

The essentialist representation of the Manchester and Liverpool music scenes has crossed a wide range of media forms, from academic ethnography to tourist brochures. Whilst Manchester offers guided tours around the town to display post-punk shrines, Liverpool subsidises a permanent exhibition called *The Beatles Story* (Gill 2016). Commercial films have portrayed each city's music scene, such as the Liverpool characterised in *Pow-*

*der* (2011) and *The City That Rocked The World* (2013), or *24 Hour Party People* (2002) and *Closer* (2007) depicting Manchester. One difference worth noting lies in the fact that Liverpool University has had since 1988 an Institute of Popular Music. There, Sara Cohen has researched splendid ethnographic accounts of the everyday music scene in the city (*Rock Culture in Liverpool* 1991; *Decline, Renewal and the City in Popular Music Culture* 2007). In contrast Manchester has had to depend on the precarious facility and bent of freelance journalists such as Dave Haslam and Mick Middles, while oral histories are limited there to the likes of Raquel Morán's *Mancunions and Music* (2011).

In the need to define and promote a distinctive, re-born cultural character for the Millennium, Manchester's elite political networks started to construct a modern history for the city. They centered it on their entrepreneurial selves, opening the civic biography in 1996 with an Irish Republican Army bomb explosion in the city centre, a blast which permitted physical reformation of what it destroyed and the hinterland of that. This 'renaissance' story is predicated on urban renewal, lifestyle manifestations such as the gay village, the Atlas bar, the bohemian Northern Quarter redeveloped by the property entrepreneurs Urban Splash, and the promotion of the city by the Manchester Independents action group and others as a centre of popular culture, in order to advance student residency (Madenorth n.d.; Wainwright 2009: 67). This history replaced and exscribed the narrative of decline and collapse on the local music scene associated at the time with the bankrupt Factory Records (1978-92) and its troubled nightclub The Hacienda (1982-97) (Hook 2010: 239-40; Nice 2010: 437-40, 481-9; Reade, L: 2010 131). Both were the subject of drama and embarrassment, while Manchester's main band at the time, Oasis, made it clear that it had nothing at all to do with Factory (although it had tried; see Nice 2010: 457).

In retaliation, those journalists who had invested heavily in the Factory story were anxious to raise their heritage status in the Manchester revival. They constructed a 'noble failure' history centred around Factory, Joy Division (1977-80) and the lynchpin of the

Factory brand, regional television presenter Anthony (Tony) Wilson (1950-2007). On Wilson's death three films were produced on the subject and no fewer than five books (Witts 2010: 19-20)<sup>5</sup>. Since then a rapprochement has been made with Manchester's urban peers to incorporate the Factory story as a prehistory to the city's renaissance, and a new 'Northern Powerhouse' arts venue scheduled for 2019 will be called The Factory, placed as it is on the site of the television studio where Wilson worked. The project has been grandly promoted by the city fathers as 'the next critical piece of infrastructure to support the area's "creative eco-system"' (BBC 2015). To support this, local music journalism has been assimilated into the city's renaissance enterprise, promoting a narrow story of an eternally hip Manchester which now excludes on the one side the most successfully international of local acts, the nostalgic Simply Red, and on the other the highly radical yet inveterately scruffy band The Fall.

### **The case of ethnography.**

If we cannot rely on this menial brand of music journalism to provide transparency, then there is always the cooler-headed approach of ethnography. For some years ethnography has vividly advanced our understanding of music in everyday life and practice. As Sara Cohen has claimed, 'Music plays a unique and often hidden role in the production of place' (1991: 288). But there comes a point where ethnography can't see the wood for the trees. This occurs at that stage where the operative boundaries under study are set too tight, especially so in terms of genre and setting. Where the cohesive factor is music, there is a tendency to underestimate the extent of the patterns of interactions. The problem is that of the spatial relations between the administrative frame and the functional terrain of flows and interactions, one that this essay is attempting to describe. Where a process of journalistic mythologizing is underway, such as that kind which presupposes that aesthet-

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<sup>5</sup> In Grant Gee's documentary *Joy Division* (2007), Tony Wilson says, 'I don't see this as a story of rock group. I see it as the story of a city... The revolution that Joy Division started has resulted in this modern city.' See Witts 2010: 22.

ic difference is a defining condition of a city's identity, ethnographic study is not immune to this tendency, and indeed comes to be in danger of sanctioning it. Sociologist Michael Burawoy has persuasively advocated ways by which ethnography can grow outwards, 'releasing [fieldwork] from solitary confinement, from being bound to a single place and time', though his ambitions are global more than regional (Burawoy 2000: 4). Meanwhile George Marcus has elaborated on multi-sited ethnography which allows for an analysis of ideas that spread across space (Marcus 1998). Yet these practices are essentially comparative, and what I have experienced by living in both Manchester and Liverpool is that together they have retained across the decades a dynamic and mutual relationship, including in this the production, performance, reception and circulation of music of all kinds. For these neighbouring cities, time and space are often identical rather than contrastive.

### **The regional circulation of American popular music.**

As an example of how assumptions about distinctiveness may skew the historical narrative, let us consider the postwar traffic of American popular music in the region, a story that is often used to explain why Liverpool had the Beatles and Manchester had nothing to compare with them<sup>6</sup>. A claim often made is that the postwar circulation of American popular music was distinctive in Liverpool because it was a port where passenger liners crossed back and forth to New York. These liners were staffed by the 'Cunard Yanks' who brought back with them records as family gifts, with some for sale. Bill Harry, who founded the paper *Mersey Beat* in 1961, calls this 'something of a myth' (Harry 2009: 12-13). Given the postwar reduction in dock life, he considers the specialist record stores to be more important as agencies for foreign songs. Another source was the radio (Luxembourg, American Forces Network). Yet a far more direct supply of recorded and live music was available to Liverpool and Manchester in equal measure from a nearby American military base, that of Bur-

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<sup>6</sup> Groups associated with 1960s Manchester include The Hollies, Herman's Hermits, Freddie and the Dreamers, the Bee Gees, and Barclay James Harvest.

tonwood. Sited north of Warrington, a small 1930s airfield, which started out as a joint civic venture to serve the two cities, was taken over in 1938 by the RAF which built a fake church and football field to hide Spitfires and Hurricanes. Burtonwood was handed over in 1942 to the United States 8th Airforce as a base air depot (BAD1). It expanded to accommodate 18,000 soldiers and air crew, and was soon known as 'Lancashire's Detroit'. A 1,000-seat theatre was built (there were six venues in all) and American stars were flown in, such as Irving Berlin, Frank Sinatra, Nat 'King' Cole, and The Ink Spots. It held public dances and a range of sports events. By the 1950s Burtonwood had grown to the size of a small town (Ferguson 1986). It was handed back to the RAF in 1965 when the Americans were planning to move to France. But President De Gaulle, unwilling to support the US war in Vietnam, refused to accommodate the military and they remained at Burtonwood until 1994.

Burtonwood had segregated procedures during World War Two, but not so afterwards. From 1942 to 1945, 1948 to 1965, and 1967 to 1994, black and white American military personnel lived there and took weekend furloughs to Manchester and Liverpool. Some of them were singers and musicians who performed in the legal and the illegal clubs, known as Blues and shebeens, that could be found mainly in Manchester's Moss Side and Liverpool's Toxteth. Manchester promoter Tosh Ryan remembers that 'you got Americans bringing albums over, you got Americans who were playing in bands at weekends - that includes dance band music, moving from dance bands to jazz, small groups.' (Bourne 2014: 26). One particular technique in the late 1950s and early 1960s that was passed on from servicemen to local black artists was doowop. Liverpool's group The Chants honed their skills in this way. Burtonwood Americans recalled visiting the various black and Irish clubs and bars associated with the cities, but private houses too, and teaching new popular songs to the locals (Ferguson 2016; Brocken 2010: 50). The fact that they moved between the two cities even-handedly suggests much more 'hip' activity in both scenes than writers have so far led us to believe.

I will now offer three sets of examples, at different levels, in order to challenge those indolent, mediated presumptions about rivalry and difference which ethnographic isolation has tended to enhance. They concern (first) entrepreneurship, (second) musical influence, and (third) political solidarity.

### **Mutuality: Entrepreneurship**

There were many minor entrepreneurs during the North-West's post-punk period (1978-84), some running club nights, others 4-track studios, agencies, rehearsal rooms, and writing for fanzines or the nation's music press. Two of the most famous of these figures remain associated entirely with 'their own' city. Roger Eagle ran a club in Liverpool called *Eric's* (1976-80); Tony Wilson was a Manchester-affiliated television celebrity who co-created *The Factory* club nights at the Russell Club (1978-9), Factory Records and The Hacienda nightclub. Yet, in fact, their work and projects affected both cities in tandem. Wilson's first job in the region was a reporter for the *Liverpool Daily Post*. When he started as a presenter at Granada Television in 1973 he covered Liverpool issues; an engaging video clip from 1974 survives of Wilson recording disbelieving Scouse 'voxpath' reactions to Bill Shankly's retirement as manager of Liverpool football club<sup>7</sup> (Reade 2010: 33). Wilson had taken an interest from his university days in the anarchist current of Situationism. He savoured the notion of playing an entrepreneur who would ironise capitalism by inverting or transgressing mercantile conduct (Nice 2010: 29). Interested in musical trends more than in music, he was stimulated to develop *The Factory* nights at the Russell Club in Manchester (1978-9) by Roger Eagle's creation of *Eric's* in Liverpool two years before (Hook 2012: 68,107). Eagle booked and supplied bands and other acts for the weekly Manchester club night (Nice 2010: 35, 42). This arrangement allowed visiting groups to play the two cities in sequence.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rHrp8A3dYOk>, from 01:06.



Factory Records was a joint enterprise Wilson created with freelance actor Alan Erasmus and designer Peter Saville (ibid: 44). It had emerged from a plan to create an independent joint Liverpool-Manchester label managed by Roger Eagle, Peter Fulwell of Inevitable Records, and Wilson. An argument over which bands should be represented on the joint label led to a rift. Among bands considered were two from Manchester (Durutti Column, Joy Division) and, from Liverpool, Pink Military (ibid: 43). Wilson evangelised for the Merseyside band Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, which the others didn't rate. Wilson therefore chose to go it alone, yet it can be seen on the second (ERIC.S) and third column down (FACTORY) on the grid on the draft label of his first offering, *A Factory Sample* (Fac 2), that it was intended to be a joint enterprise between Eric's and Factory (see Fig.1). Wilson continued to support the musical traffic between the two cities, attempting to find television slots for artists from both. He was always careful to call himself a 'Son of Salford' in Manchester but a 'Lancashire Lad' in Liverpool. At the untimely close of his life Wilson contributed a rhapsodising, reflective chapter on Liverpool and the Mersey to an anthology on that river (Wilson 2007: 94-102).

While Wilson's career began in Liverpool, that of Roger Eagle (1942-99) started in Manchester. Born in Oxford, from 1960 this 'gentle giant' as Wilson called him, traveled around the country in beatnik fashion on his 350 Enfield motorbike, paying an influential visit to *The Scene* Rhythm and Blues (R&B) Club in London's Soho, a place that developed the role of the record-based DJ. Moving to Manchester in 1962 ('I just thought I'd see a different city'), Eagle played R&B records in coffee bars and by chance met a family of brothers who were setting up an all-night city centre R&B club called *The Twisted Wheel* which eventually acquired with Eagle's help a near-mythical status as a progenitor of Northern Soul. Eagle opened his own rented club, *The Magic Village*, 'a psychedelic dungeon', in 1968, at the age of 26. During all of this time in Manchester he would promote and look after visiting acts such as Muddy Waters, Chuck Berry, and the new hippie

bands (Sykes 2012: 19, 88, 107 ). Struggling to make money, he ‘moved on’ to Liverpool in 1970.

Table One lists the venues in Manchester or Liverpool associated with Eagle.

Table 1: The career of entrepreneur Roger Eagle.

Year	City	Venue
1963-1966	Manchester	Twisted Wheel
1968-1970	Manchester	Magic Village
1970-1976	Liverpool	Liverpool Stadium
1976-1980	Liverpool	Eric’s
1980-1982	Manchester	Zodiac (Rafters)
1980-1984	Liverpool	Crackin’ Up
1982	Liverpool	Adam’s
1984-1992	Manchester	The International
1986-1990	Manchester	The Ritz (RTR)

In Liverpool Eagle ran a boxing stadium ‘built out of corrugated iron’ as a concert hall during what has been described as a ‘fallow period’ after ‘the heavy rock boom and just before punk’, although visiting bands included the likes of Captain Beefheart, Led Zeppelin and the New York Dolls (Biggs 2011: 102; Brocken 2010: 223-4; Sykes 2014: 123). He supported the few local groups then active, but by 1976 his desire to ‘create a club for people who don’t normally go to clubs’ chimed with the punk and ‘new wave’ scene, and so with his business partners Peter Fulwell and Ken Testi he set up a crammed venue in the city centre at a site opposite the old Cavern Club, by then demolished.

*Eric’s* - a parody on names like *Annabelle’s* or *Genevieve’s*, but apparently also a reference to the jazz pioneer Eric Dolphy - became a venue of high value to touring post-punk bands, who Eagle would then book for Manchester’s Factory nights at the Russell Club (Nice 2010: 35). The for-

midable flowering of new bands at this time, such as Echo and the Bunnymen, Wah! Heat and The Teardrop Explodes, is traced back by Biggs to:

the musical atmosphere of Eric's and its inspirational co-owner Roger Eagle. The club's eclecticism was an education, its DJs combining dub reggae, vintage rockabilly, New York punk and almost anything else in ways that would profoundly shape local musicians' tastes. (Biggs 2011: 103)

Following a heavy police raid on Eric's in 1980 accompanied by a VAT tax bill which between them closed the club down, Eagle moved swiftly back to Manchester. In the 1980s he programmed Manchester's International Club at a time when Wilson had opened the Hacienda. The latter became notorious for its emptiness, while Eagle had the International patrons 'jumping and dancing' with quality live acts such as Lee 'Scratch' Perry, The Bhundu Boys and Curtis Mayfield (Sykes 2014: 242-60, 344-53). In his biography of Eagle, Bill Sykes points out that the 'gentle giant' lived hand to mouth and never made any money Yet the list at the end of the book of bands he promoted and cultivated is astonishing. And, as Table One shows, Eagle divided his energies fairly evenly between the two cities. Like Wilson, he enhanced the music life of both, and he nurtured music-making.

### **Mutuality: musical influence.**

Here are two examples out of many where correspondence between the two cities has led to a significant musical turn. Firstly, the Frantic Elevators was a Manchester punk and post-punk band, formed in 1976 and fronted by the sweet-voiced Mick Hucknall, who was then 17 years old. After failing to gain much attention, with one languishing single on a local label followed by another on Eric's Records, Eagle offered to manage the band. However, the project dissipated and resolved itself in an unexpected direction. Hucknall moved to Liverpool where Eagle used his extensive record collection of R&B and Soul to foster the youngster's vocal style and knowledge of repertoire. In

Hucknall's words, 'The jukebox in *Eric's* just summed Roger up... That eclectic thing had a huge effect on my attitude towards the music I make, because I don't make one type of music. They classify [Simply Red] as soul music but we have reggae tunes and jazz tunes.' (Sykes 2012: 166). In effect Eagle closed down the Elevators and erected in its place Simply Red, so far the most internationally successful popular musical act from the Manchester area.

My second example is that of The Real People. This Liverpool band was formed in 1987 by the Griffiths brothers, Tony and Chris. They were in turn influenced by the Manchester band Inspiral Carpets, who they toured with. The Real People had a distinctive look, wore parkas and sunglasses on stage, used back lighting, and made a sound clearly derived from that of The Beatles. One of the Inspiral Carpets' roadies was the Manchester guitarist Noel Gallagher. The Gallagher brothers, Noel and Liam, stayed for a time with the Griffiths brothers in Liverpool. According to Tony Griffiths, 'They were quite naive about recording, so we'd show them how to play the songs, how to think about the structure of the songs and the dynamics. We were just helping them because that's what bands do in Liverpool' (Moody 1996). The result was an eight track music demonstration tape through which Oasis signed its first record deal. The Manchester band consensually took the sound, the light and the physical look of Liverpool's The Real People, including Liam's iconic posture in front of the microphone, and even songs. For example, the anthem *Rockin' Chair* is in fact a Real People song, although it is doubtful if the stadium audiences who have sung it back to the Gallaghers were aware of this. While Oasis split up in 2009, the Griffiths brothers can still be found playing in Liverpool bars (McKechnie 2015).

### **Mutuality: political solidarity.**

There are three examples offered here. The first was a one-day festival that took place on August bank holiday 1979. It was titled *Zoo Meets Factory Halfway* – a reference to the two regional record labels (Zoo being a Liverpool indie). It was Wilson's idea, telling Zoo's Bill Drummond,

‘We do a festival, you bring your bands and I bring mine.... Don’t worry, Bill, people will come’ (Drummond 2001). The affair took place off the East Lancs Road in Plank Lane, Leigh, which was approaching midway between the two cities but not easy to reach. The line-up included Liverpool’s Echo & The Bunnymen and Manchester’s Joy Division (see Fig.2). Any profit was to be given to Rock Against Racism. However, the event made a disastrous loss (Middles 2009: 184-8). According to Nice:

the bands found themselves playing to an empty field beside a disused colliery, where audience numbers never rose above 200. With punters outnumbered by police, the event raised no money for the good causes proposed, leaving the organisers virtually bankrupt. (Nice 2010: 76)

The Leigh Open Air Pop Festival, its alternative title, may not be a successful symbol of solidarity, yet it remains an illustration of bands from the two cities sharing time and space. The second example took place at Liverpool’s Royal Court Theatre 8 February 1986 and was titled *From Manchester With Love*. Tony Wilson was friends with Liverpool’s Militant council leader Derek Hatton. The concert, given by Manchester acts New Order, The Smiths, The Fall and John Cooper Clarke, was a fund-raiser for the Family Support Group of the 48 Labour councillors who had been surcharged by Thatcher’s government for not setting a balanced budget. This concert did raise money, and even the t-shirts made a profit (McKechnie 2015).

The final example is one that has only recently found resolution, in raising funds for the Hillsborough Justice Campaign. It was at the Hillsborough football stadium in 1989 that 96 Liverpool supporters were killed in a crush as a result of incompetent police control. The police subsequently fed the press a collection of untruths which *The Sun* duly printed on its front page four days later. Two weeks after that Tony Wilson (who, we should remember, was a former reporter) organised a successful benefit at Manchester’s *Haçienda*, which the local band Happy Mondays headed. The twenty-fifth anniversary of the tragedy in 2014, together with the phone hacking scandals sur-

rounding *The Sun*'s publisher News Corporation, revived the campaign against mendacious journalism. The Liverpool 'scally' (lad) band, The Farm, set up a small tour, on which they were joined by members of Manchester's band The Stone Roses, as an act of solidarity between the two cities whose four football clubs are often presented by the press to be the epitome of social and religious intolerance.

## **Conclusion**

These seven examples of co-operation, reciprocation and solidarity between the two cities remain hidden when assumptions about separate 'scenes' are not tested by examining the common patterns of behaviour between sites of activity. This is nothing new, by the way. In 1963 the singer Billy J.Kramer teamed up very successfully with The Dakotas. He was from Bootle, they were from Manchester. The Dakotas were the house band of the Plaza Ballroom in Oxford Street, where the manager had asked them to dress each week as American Indians, hence their name.

Actors and events that are vital to the stories of both cities get consigned to one. Ethnographic network analysis may be the way forward. But ultimately, when it comes to music, regional frameworks may offer richer stories about music-making than local ones.

Fig.1 FAC2, A Factory Sample, detail of cover (1978).

Fig.2 'Zoo meets Factory half-way.' Leigh Open Air Pop Festival 27 August 1979

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**ZOO MEETS FACTORY HALF-WAY**  
BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY  
AUGUST 27th  
LEIGH OPEN AIR POP FESTIVAL  
ADMISSION £2  
FIRST BAND 1.00 p.m.  
Zoo records and Factory records bring you the flesh  
Zoo records and Factory records bring you  
the flesh that brought you the vinyl.  
THE DISTRACTIONS  
ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN  
X-O-DUS  
ORCHESTRAL MANOEUVRES  
ELTI-FITS  
CRAWLING CHAOS  
LORI AND THE CHAMELEONS  
A CERTAIN RATIO  
THE TEARDROP EXPLODES  
JOY DIVISION  
Use your wits or use the bus:  
No. 26 from Manchester Victoria  
No. 39 from Liverpool  
Festival site—Plank Lane, Leigh, Lancs.

