



Music and (Touristic) Meaning on Cruise Ships: The Musicscape of the MV *Carnival Paradise* as a Semiotic Tourism Product

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Abstract

The cruise industry is a part of the 'post-tourism' sector that, in contrast to cultural tourism, does not seek to represent culture for consumption by the tourist, but fabricates it, creating a hyperreal tourist experience. The music is a core aspect of the cruise experience. This paper investigates the music performed on a 2009 cruise of the MV *Carnival Paradise* and considers how touristic meaning is infused in the live musical product of the cruise ship. It finds that the music of cruise ships is used to construct a cultural cocoon that mediates and protects guests from interaction with the cultures through which they travel. Live musical performance turns attention inwards, constructing the fabricated geography and culture of the ship as the destination. In so doing, it encourages consumption on the ship itself and thereby contributes to the overall profitability of the ship.

Keywords: music, semiosis, cruise, tourism

In 2006, I was working as the pit pianist on Cunard Line's RMS *Queen Mary 2*, a large and technically sophisticated ship. One of the production shows was 'Rock at the Opera', a mish mash of popular songs with operatic overtones (e.g. Falco's "Rock Me Amadeus" and The Who's "Pinball Wizard") along with well-known classical repertoire such as Delibes' "Flower Duet" arranged for rock instrumentation. One night the pianist in the jazz trio was unwell, and I was asked to fill in for him. The idea was that the piano 'sweeteners' (i.e., the pre-recorded backing tracks) would be used instead of a live performer. The only time the orchestra was seen on stage was briefly at the start of the show when the pit was raised to show the orchestra and a theatre technician was to sit in the seat and mime playing piano. It was a perfect fabrication, or so we thought. All went well until the closing moments of the final song, which was Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody". Unbeknownst to the onboard personnel, the piano solo at the end of the song had been omitted from the 'sweeteners'. This oversight at this pivotal moment left the production singers and dancers awash in a sea of silence, guessing the timing for the final chord. It is one of the most memorable occasions when the fabrication of onboard music-culture was exposed to the audience. Needless to say, I was removed from the jazz set, and placed back in the pit for the second show.

The representation of 'authentic' culture – including music-culture – is a necessary but complex issue for tourist operators. Tourism has traditionally required the commodification and representation of 'local culture' for the benefit of tourists (Cohen 1988; Richards 1996; Johnson 2002; Yang 2011). This is particularly true in the cultural tourism sector. Cultural tourists collect the signs of culture via the altered reality of the

photograph (Larsen and Urry 2011: chap. 7), via 'authentic souvenirs' (Hitchcock and Teague 2000) and increasingly by recounting their experiences in social media (Thevenot 2007; Nusair et al 2012). However, the sector known as 'postmodern tourism' (or 'post-tourism') – of which the cruise industry is considered to be a manifestation (Nilsson 2009; Vogel and Oschmann 2013) – neatly skirts the issue of authenticity. Post-tourism is marked by the establishment of hyperreal experiences with which tourists engage in a constructed game. Post-Tourists are

freed from the constraints of 'high culture', on the one hand, and the untrammelled pursuit of the 'pleasure principle' on the other. [They] move easily from one to the other and indeed can gain pleasure from the contrasts between the two. The world is a stage and the post-tourist can delight in the multitude of games to be played [...]. There is no need to make a fetish out of the correct interpretation of cultural representation since the post-tourist can enjoy playing at it. (Larsen and Urry 2011: 113–114)

The consumption of such fabricated culture is particularly evident in the cruise sector. In his discussion of the cruise industry, Garin (2006) describes a scene at the Ocho Rios cruise terminal in Jamaica. Within this terminal is constructed a replica of a 'traditional island community' with huts and tropical plants; however, this is a fabrication, a disguised shopping mall built to present a sanitised and populist representation of local culture, while simultaneously – as the port area is prohibited space – barring locals from entrance. Within this fabrication is a

four-man reggae band giving a free show near the entrance: dancing in front of them is a young woman dressed up like Aunt Jemima, a fake Carmen Miranda fruit basket on her head and, beneath her dress, great big pads to simulate a plantation 'mammy's' enormous rear end and bosom. As the passengers shuffle appreciatively past the twenty-first century minstrel show, none hears the dreadlocked singer's words. "Oh God," he sings as they pass, heads bobbing in time to the song. "Look what they're doing to my soul ... Oh God! Oh God! Oh God! Look how they take control..." (ibid.: 279)

Observers uninvolved in the cruise experience may feel this performance is a corruption of the music and of the music-culture of Jamaica, and its implementation a commentary on the commodification of culture for the benefit of unfettered cruise tourism. However, rightly or wrongly, this view proceeds from a fundamental confusion of the difference between touristic meaning (which is the *raison d'être* of a tourist performance) and the cultural implications of performed music. While tempers may flare at the commodification, such performances are an inherent aspect of tourism, in particular, post-tourism. Such performances are used to add value to the tourism experience (Taylor 2001). This performance of Luciano's "Good God" as a sign for island culture and relaxation increases the exoticism and therefore the value of the touristic experience; however, the original meaning within the music-culture of Jamaica is obscured and distorted. The sincerity of the touristic experience (as opposed to the sincerity of the performance) is negotiated between consumers and the sponsoring body. The intent of the performers and composers is less relevant in this model. Popular music, itself a commodified art form, has been further commodified by the tourism industry until it has lost its context and become a hyperreality of itself, a sign of a sign.

Everyone who has ever been on a cruise – a group that includes 20 per cent of the American public (Glusac 2010) – knows how central live musical performance is to a cruise vacation. The modern cruise industry has increased the focus on the diversions available on the ship to the point where the travel is secondary, and the main destination is the ship and the diversions therein. Why, tourists are subtly asked to consider, risk catching an imperfect wave at the local beach when you can ride the repetitively perfect surf of the onboard flowrider? Why inconvenience yourself searching for a Mexican cultural encounter when there are multiple mariachi bands in colourful costumes plying the port area of Acapulco, Ensenada or Cozumel? You may even care to observe a similarly exotic performance on the ship while sipping tequila made by a multinational company. This paper argues that cruise ship live musical

entertainment is a carefully constructed postmodern tourism product that fabricates a predominantly Western culture onboard the ship, which is ameliorated by touches of unspecifically exotic culture. It is the result of carefully implemented and historically proven practice that is sophisticated and successful in its implementation and outcomes. Onboard musical performance sits in the centre of the contemporary cruise entertainment product and performs a variety of functions: to encourage guests to undertake a cruise in the first place; to guide passengers around the ship to locations of high consumption; and – the subject of this paper – as a bearer of signifiers projecting certain concepts the cruise line wishes projected including the cruise holiday as ‘classy’, ‘exotic’, and ‘fun’. Further, the cruise ship, the central destination of the cruise holiday, is portrayed as unspecifically ‘Western’, and ‘safe’ despite its actual location.

This paper discusses a touristic musicscape, a term coined by Oakes (2000) to describe the constructed and planned aural and musical environment of a tourism experience. This conceptual model is designed for implementation within the tourism industry and is, for musicological purposes, a somewhat blunt instrument but it does highlight the significance of music and other aural signs to the tourism industry. Within the cruise industry, the musicscape is largely comprised of live music, in contrast to the practice of much of the tourism industry, which has a propensity to use recorded music (Milliman 1986; Liu and Mao 2006; Jones 2009; Herten 2010). While recorded music is used on cruise ships (as backing in onboard videos available for purchase, as low-level accompaniment for dining, as aural filler between sets in bars, on the music channels on the onboard television), such music is not designed to be interactive and, with the exception of the recorded dance music in the disco and karaoke performances, such uses fall outside the scope of this paper.

A voyage on the Carnival Cruise Lines ship *MV Carnival Paradise* between 3 and 5 April 2009 forms the case study of a typical cruise. This is a short regular cruise in which Carnival specialises and is typical of the industry. It is the three-day weekend version of the three/four day cruising pattern of Carnival’s run out of Long Beach, California visiting Ensenada, Mexico on Saturday and spending the day at sea on Sunday. This cruise was selected because it is a typical product designed by a large shipping line for mass consumption. Further, this particular cruise run is familiar to the author, who spent six months on the same run in 2005 on the near identical ship *MV Carnival Ecstasy*. Because of the homogenous and – in Ritzer’s (2004) and Weaver’s (2005) term – McDonaldised nature of the industry, the cruise under question is identical to the earlier cruise in all significant respects.

Cultural Tourism vs. the Post-Tourism of Cruise Ships

The division into cultural- and post-tourist is not a discrete one, but involves a spectrum of negotiation and engagement with ‘authentic’ and fabricated culture. Cultural tourism, according to Richards (2001: 7) involves

not just the consumption of the cultural products of the past, but also of contemporary culture or the ‘way of life’ of a people or region. Cultural tourism can therefore be seen as covering both ‘heritage tourism’ (related to artefacts of the past) and ‘arts tourism’ (related to contemporary cultural production).

Cultural tourists are defined by a search for encounters with ‘authentic local cultures’ and their associated performative and concrete artefacts. However, this search is often quixotic given both the timeframe for tourism and the commercial nature of the relationships between ‘tourist’ and ‘local’. Thus, tourism operators construct touristic experiences that replicate and are a facsimile of culture for presentation to the tourist in lieu of an ‘authentic’ encounter. This does not necessarily mean that such encounters are inauthentic; Cohen (1995) and Wang (1999; 2000) have argued convincingly that such ‘contrived’ attractions in post-tourism need not be considered necessarily

'inauthentic', but rather fall outside the somewhat limited authentic/inauthentic paradigm. Waade and Knudsen (2010), using a Peircean semiotic approach, argue that authenticity is constructed through signs that actively involve both the encoder of the sign (the tourism operator) and the interpreter of the sign (the tourist). Authenticity becomes a mutable concept negotiated between the operator and tourist.

Post-tourists, including cruise ship tourists, rarely bother with such issues; theirs is not the search for authenticity and culture, but rather a flight to the luxury of a floating resort. Cruise ships offer a hyperreal and experiential cocoon where the tourist may partake in exotic and fabricated representations of culture should they wish, or may luxuriate in a fabricated geography where the fantasy of social status and escape is portrayed for their pleasure. For this reason, cruise ships are deterritorialised (Wood 2004), – purposely sanitised of anything apart from any representations of the destinations, instead portraying an ambiguous and general Western culture. Onboard semiotic systems rely on cruise ship guests being post-tourists; a more than cursory examination of any given shipboard attraction reveals its inherent fabrication, existing only to project meanings assigned by the cruise ship. This game of interpreting the intended meaning from shipboard signs adds to guests' enjoyment of a cruise.

That is not to suggest that there are no elements of fabrication in cultural tourism nor any engagement with a negotiated 'authentic' culture within post-tourism. McCannell's (1977) framework of authenticity posits that representations of culture for tourism are always fabricated and any authentic encounter by tourists – including cultural tourists – is impossible. Nonetheless, some cruise tourists – nominally post-tourists – desire a mediated encounter with what is promoted by the cruise line (and perceived by the guest) as local culture. Cruise ships respond to this by organising local tours and onboard or dockside choreo-musical representations of local culture called 'local shows'. Such performances and tours are negotiated and constructed, but the desire to encounter the exotic even within such post-tourists is still evident enough for cruise lines to acknowledge and accommodate.

While a discussion of Peircean semiotics is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting that cruise ship signs are often of a similar type repeated over and over again in different settings. Many are *icons*, where the relationship between the touristic artefact and its intended meaning exists because of a physical or aural resemblance. Thus, a Caribbean-themed band references Caribbean island culture because the performers are Caribbean islanders of African descent, may wear dreadlocks or rastacaps, talk in an unspecific island accent, play Caribbean instruments such as the steel drum, and perform music popularly associated with the Caribbean. Thus, such performances represent island-ness because the performance physically and aurally resembles popular representations of such performances. Some performances may be *symbols*, where the relationship is culturally based. A string quartet performing classical music in the atrium of a cruise ship, for example, is a symbol for high social class because Western culture (to which many of the guests belong) links classical music with high social class. Performances may also be *indices*, a mode used specifically by Knudsen and Waade (2010) to consider concepts of touristic authenticity. They argue that:

authenticity can be considered as a relational quality attributed to something out of an encounter. Performative authenticity is dependent on proximity and inbetween-ness. In that sense, its relational quality appears to be highly phenomenological. It signifies a shift towards sincerity as a negotiated value between local and tourist. (ibid.: 12)

Thus, although cruise guests know that the small ensemble performing for the captain's cocktails is *not* a band from the 1930s playing on a luxury liner crossing the Atlantic, they are willing to believe it as negotiatedly real. For these are not cultural tourists with a deep-seated need to engage with the cultures visited, but post-tourists interested in superficiality and surfaces (Berger 2011), for whom the cultural offerings of the cruise vacation are real (and near) enough.

The cruise ship is a prime example of Pine and Gilmore's (2011) experience economy model, which proposes that, in order to produce maximum revenue, businesses construct an experience rather than merely supplying a service. Coffee made from beans bought from the supermarket is often of similar quality as a coffee purchased in the shadow of St Mark's Basilica in Venice – though the cost of the latter will be many times higher. Similarly the experience of lying by the pool of a large cruise ship produces more revenue than visiting a community pool as the cruise ship embodies and encapsulates an experience and guests pay for this time.

In order to access the touristic experience of a cruise ship, a potential guest becomes an actual guest by paying the cost of the cruise. Rather than an entrance fee or a fare, this may be thought of as a payment for time to be spent within the physical confines of the ship experience. Upon the arrival of the date of the cruise, guests are granted access to this experiential cocoon. This includes access to public areas of the ship (restaurants, bars, entertainment venues, gym, etc.), access to private areas of the ship (their accommodation), travel to exotic ports, dining, and entertainment. However, as the typically cheap ticket prices of such cruises barely cover the costs of operating the ship (Vogel 2009) additional funding sources are required to produce the multi-billion dollar profits of the cruise industry¹. These are generated by the purchase of 'experience enhancements' including alcohol, gambling and tours, spa treatments, photographic and video products, and dining in specialty restaurants (which the industry refers to as 'onboard revenue'). These enhancements extend the cultural cocoon and experience of the ship rather than mediating contact with culture. On a ship-approved local tour, for example, guests leave the ship and move into tourist buses within the protected port area of the ship. These become mini-cocoons ferrying tourists on sightseeing tours, and mediating the experience of local culture. In all cases, the ship is a self-contained experience that permits limited engagement with the local culture at certain times of the day (when the ship is in port) and at other times, requires guests to engage with the fabrications of the ship.

Such experiential cocoons mirror post-touristic experiences, such as Disneyland, Club Med, and Las Vegas. Such enterprises separate themselves from the environment in which they are positioned, constructing instead a space within which tourists may interact with a fabricated environment. Tourists encounter Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse in Disneyland and float down a constructed Venice in Vegas. While tourists may also incidentally encounter Anaheim in their trip to Disneyland Resort, or Caribbean music on a cruise, the emphasis is on the construction.

Tourism studies has suffered from a certain ocularcentrism, partly because of the popularity of John Urry's (1990) concept of the 'tourist gaze', which conceptualises the role of sight in the tourism process. Recent research has begun to challenge this centrality, arguing for the role of other senses in tourism (Markwell 2001; Dann and Jacobsen 2003; Hall and Sharples 2003; Pan and Ryan 2009; Tynan and McKechnie 2009). Within the experience economy, Pine and Gilmore (2011: 88–92) cite the need to engage all five senses, a requirement which cruise vacations readily address. As well as engaging all senses – taste and smell, for example, by dining, touch by spa treatments, vision by the spectacle of scenery and entertainment – cruise ships use sound to create the musicscape of the ship. Onboard performances engage the tourist ear and thus contribute to the creation of a successful and memorable tourism experience. Such sensations remain in tourists' memories, allowing them to indulge in nostalgia (for the cruise), fantasising (about new cruises) and evangelising (to their friends on behalf of the cruise experience) (Tynan and McKechnie 2009, 509).

As part of the cruise ship experience, music is technically free (after the fare is paid); however, the cruise industry is pragmatic in the extreme, and all processes on the ship must contribute to the creation of profit. As well as contributing to the experience, music attracts guests to purchase 'experience enhancements' by guiding them to locations on the ship where these products are consumed. Further, guests are kept in

these locations of high consumption and out of non-profitable places such as cabins and restaurants.

The Musicscape of the MV *Carnival Paradise*

MV *Carnival Paradise* is the eighth and last of Carnival's successful Fantasy-class ships built between 1990 and 1998. Fantasy-class vessels are today considered mid-size cruise ships, accommodating just over 2,000 passengers, and possess nearly identical layouts and internal design aesthetics (Cudahy 2001: 50–51). The various public rooms on *Carnival Paradise* are named for historical steamships. Passengers watch shows in the Normandie Lounge, gamble in the Majestic Casino, sip cocktails in the Queen Mary Lounge, dine in the Paris Restaurant, enjoy a cigar in the Rotterdam Cigar Lounge, and dance in the Rex Dance Club. The decor reflects these influences, with the Normandie Lounge decorated in an art deco style with chandeliers and cherry-wood tones. Joe Farcus, who designed all the Fantasy-class vessels, said, "I did not want to simply recreate interiors from old liners; I want to reflect their glamour" (Cruz 1999: 21).

The musicscape of the 60½-hour cruise under examination comprises 110 hours of musical entertainment (see Figure 1). On embarkation day, thirty-five hours of entertainment started around lunchtime (to accommodate guests who may arrive early) and climaxed between 10pm and midnight. On day two, the Ensenada port day, guests may be ashore in Ensenada or on tours during the morning and afternoon. The thirty-four hours of musical entertainment on this day start at 4pm when guests have returned to the ship, and maintain a high level throughout the night. On day three, the sea day, there is the greatest amount of musical performance; 40½ hours, occurs throughout the day, starting at 11am and continuing until 2am. On this day, the guests are 'trapped' onboard and must be entertained and encouraged to spend money in the bars and casino.

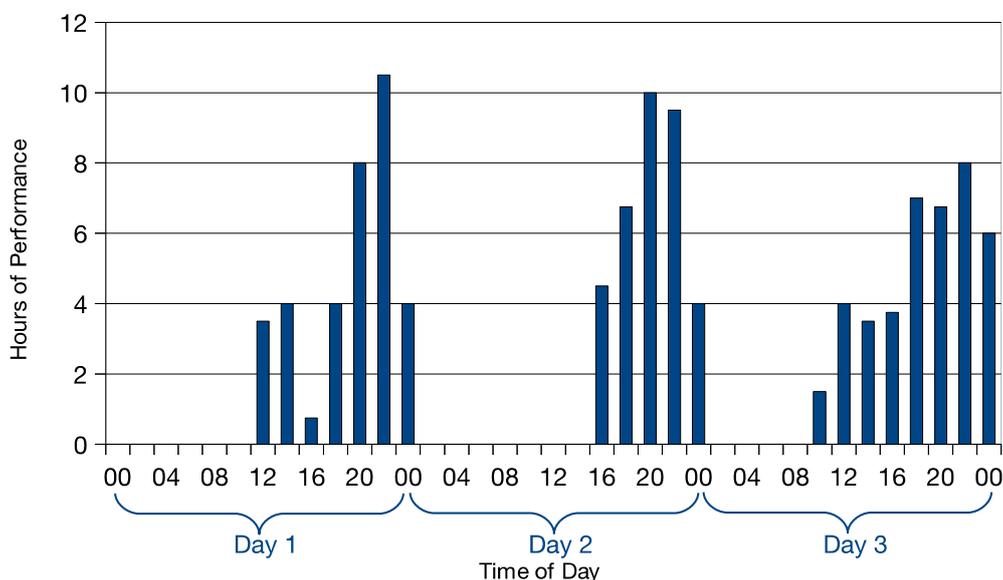


Figure 1 - Amounts of Performance on MV *Carnival Paradise* (3-5 April 2009) by time

The daily sum of performance hours on the *Paradise* is significantly higher – on average 18% higher – on this cruise than on a typical comparable cruise. A recent examination of the type and time of 1,601 cruise performances undertaken by the author found that entertainment on the *Paradise* is significantly higher than average: an embarkation day on average consists of 30.8 hours of performance compared with 35 on the *Paradise*; a port day normally schedules 29.4 hours of performance, as opposed to 34½; and an average day at sea contains 33.1 hours of performance compared with 40½ on the *Paradise*. Most musical performance occurs after 6pm on each day. There

is an earlier spike on day one due to performances occurring in the atrium while guests are boarding. On day three performance starts and finishes earlier due, in the former case, to onboard management's desire to have the guests engaged with the music and consuming on a sea day, and in the latter, to the likelihood that guests will be tired and wanting to retire early on the last night of the cruise.

Two categories of music exist onboard the *Paradise*. The first comprises those occasions where people go specifically for the musical performance (where music is of primary importance), such as the America Piano Bar, the Normandie Lounge, the Leonardo Lounge, the Rex Disco and the Queen Mary Lounge. In going to the theatre, guests immerse themselves in a formal theatrical experience where talking and socialising are not permitted. In attending the piano bar, guests join the sing along, requesting music and interacting with the entertainer. Dance venues, such as the Rex Disco, encourage patrons to participate in the performance via dance; and in the Queen Mary Lounge, where karaoke takes place, guests become the performers. The other category is that where guests go to undertake other activities to which music is of secondary importance, such as the Grand Atrium, United States Casino Bar, Ilé de France Café, Rotterdam Cigar Bar, and the Lido stage. Music functions as an environmental aspect of the venue experience (as demonstrated by Oakes' musicscape model). Patrons go here to undertake other activities, and musicians provide (in their own term) 'musical wallpaper'.

Musicians Onboard the *Carnival Paradise* in April 2009

There may be dozens of musicians aboard a cruise ship but all fall into one of five categories: showband musicians, ensembles, soloists, production singers and guest entertainers (Cashman 2012, 127–138). All of these categories (except guest entertainers) are represented on the *Carnival Paradise* on the cruise in question.

Table 1: Musicians on Cruise Ships in general (and *Carnival Paradise* in particular)

Musician Category	Description	Examples on Carnival Paradise
Showband musicians	Singly contracted musicians who perform in the showband. As this ensemble plays in a variety of situations, performers must be good readers and good improvisers.	Paradise Orchestra: Eight-piece ensemble consisting of four horns and a four-piece rhythm section.
Ensembles	Ensembles are employed to perform in a specific style, such as a jazz ensemble, classical ensemble or Caribbean-themed ensemble. They are contracted as a group.	Island Fever: The Caribbean-themed band.
		Musical Boardwalk: Four-piece Filipino rock band.
Soloists	Musicians who perform in a solo capacity rather than in an ensemble. Common soloists include pianists, piano vocalists, guitarists and harpists.	Jordan Heppner: Pianist/vocalist.
		Jerry Seelix: Solo pianist.
		'Peter': Solo pianist.
		Alfonus Gollu: Guitarist/vocalist.
Production singers	Production singers perform in the production shows. These are lavish Vegas-style productions that occur in the main theatre. These singers are typically young, attractive and marketable.	'Christy', 'Lee Anne' and 'Christopher' ² .
Guest Entertainers	Performers who perform a show that they have created in the main theatre in lieu of a production show.	None aboard for this cruise.

The Production Show: Encouraging Guests to Stay Out

While different lines have differing approaches to production shows, the normal practice is to create high-energy choreo-musical productions performed by the onboard cast (consisting of dancers and production singers) and usually (but not invariably) accompanied by the showband. Most of these shows are between forty-five minutes and an hour in length (though some are as short as thirty minutes) – but no longer as audience members cannot buy more than one or two drinks while attending the show, thus reducing the profit of other venues. These shows are usually themed, permitting easy recognition of the general type of music that will be performed. They provide a focus for the evening's entertainment and encourage guests to stay out and consume rather than retiring after dinner by providing an upbeat and positive performance. To increase attendance, they are advertised prominently in the shipboard daily program and feature in the cruise director's regular ship-wide announcements. Production shows on Carnival are customarily 'flesh-and-feathers' Vegas-style shows, which use three production singers, eight dancers and the showband. The two production shows aboard the *Carnival Paradise* in 2009 were typical of the type: *Here's Hollywood*, a tribute to movie musicals, and *Shout!*, a collection of fast-paced and positive rock songs from a range of decades.

Given that they are designed for all guests to attend, shipboard production shows must be conservative in their content. By contrast, the music provided by land-based hospitality venues can afford to cater to a niche market. If a guest does not like the Cajun music provided by a New Orleans hotel, for example, they can move to a different bar with a different performance. The loss of revenue of the original bar is offset by tourists (and locals) visiting specifically to see the Cajun performance. By contrast, while different cruise performances cater to different tastes, production shows, which all guests are encouraged to attend, must be purposefully as broad and accessible as possible.

Production shows in general (and *Shout!* in particular) contain two types of performance units: individual songs, and medleys where several songs are segued one after the other. *Shout!*, for example, contains such songs as "Livin' in America" by James Brown and "Shake your Groove Thing" by Peaches and Cream as well as a country music medley and a Beach Boys medley. Table 2 outlines a selection of music from *Shout!*. With such a broad theme, memorable and novelty songs are emphasised: the country music section contains Billy Ray Cyrus' 1992 hit "Achy Breaky Heart", and the rock and roll medley contains Boris Pickett's "Monster Mash" (1962) and The Coaster's "Yackety Yak" (1958), songs that are memorable and of novelty value, but unrepresentative of their genre. In order to reference as many songs as possible, these performances are necessarily short, typically including only the most memorable identifiable sections such as the opening section or the chorus.

Table 2: Popular Songs Included in the Carnival Cruise Lines Production Show *Shout!*

Song	Performer/Source/Year
"Joyful Joyful"	Sister Act 2 (Movie) (1995)
"Livin' in America"	James Brown (1985)
"All Night Party"/"Hot Hot Hot"	The Fabulous Five Band (1989)/Arrow (1983)
"Devil with a Blue Dress On" ³	Mitch Ryder & the Detroit Wheels (1966)
"Shake your Groove Thing"	Peaches & Herb (1978)
"Shout!"	The Isley Brothers (1959)
Country Medley	A selection of country songs including: "Achy Breaky Heart" (1992, Billy Ray Cyrus), "Boot Scootin' Boogie" (1992, Brooks and Dunn), "Why Haven't I Heard from You" (1994, Reba McEntire) and "That's What I Like about You" (2001, Cowgirls)
Motown Medley	A selection of songs made famous by Motown singers including: "What's Going On" (Marvin Gaye, 1971) and "Papa Was a Rollin' Stone" (The Temptations, 1971)
Beach Boys Medley	A selection of Beach Boys songs including: "Kokomo" (1988), "I Get Around" (1964), "California Girls" (1965), "Surfin' USA" (1963), "Good Vibrations" (1966) and "Fun, Fun, Fun" (1964)
Rock and Roll Medley	"Rock Around the Clock" (Bill Haley and the Comets, 1954), "Splish, Splash" (Bobby Darin, 1958), "The Monster Mash" (Bobby 'Boris' Pickett, 1962), "Yackety Kay" (The Coasters, 1958), "Rockin' Robin" (Michael Jackson, 1972 ⁴), "Little Darlin'" (Elvis Presley, 1977 ⁵) and "Rock and Roll is Here to Stay" (Danny and the Juniors, 1958)

To create a larger sound, the small shipboard orchestra is supplemented by pre-recorded backing tracks known as 'sweeteners'. Thus, string sections and large horn sections are added to increase the performance presence. These 'sweeteners' also address the notorious variability in musical standard of showband musicians. If a trumpeter or pianist is not performing to the requisite musical standard, with the flourish of a slider they are removed from the mix and a professional performer replaces the showband musician, whose status is reduced from musician to instrument holder. Some lines (such as Carnival, Norwegian Cruise Lines and P&O Australia) have either replaced or are in the process of replacing the showband with recorded tracks for use in the production shows. The orchestra itself is a hyperreal improvement upon reality.

This performance contains entrenched visual and aural signs associated with excitement and high social status. The Normandie Theatre is opulent and luxurious with a stylised chandelier and dark cherry wood tones. The show itself uses a large showband with beautiful instruments. The Las Vegas overtones of scantily-clad dancers and singers accompanied by colourful backdrops, costumes and lighting add to the visual stimulus. The theming of this show is somewhat weak, permitting music from a wide range of disparate genres to be used, but all belong to genres popular in the West, reinforcing the dominant Western culture portrayed aboard. The songs are performed in rapid succession – especially in the medleys – but are instantly accessible and recognisable, contributing to the excitement of the show. The pace and accessibility of the music, combined with the lighting, costuming and backdrops, contribute to the excitement of the show, and the signs of high social class signify that this is happening in a manner which is in line with the classiness of the cruise product.

Western Performances: Easy Rock and Roll

Cruise ships travel to various exotic locations such as Europe, South America, the Caribbean and other regions. While not especially remote from Los Angeles, the destination of this cruise, Ensenada in Baja California, Mexico, is in a different country and many guests are out of their cultural 'comfort zone'. They may be cautious and unable to communicate in Spanish. For this reason, one of the genres used to enclose guests in a recognisably 'Western' aural cocoon is that of Western popular music. Well-known hits from the 1950s to 1980s, music of the youth of many of the middle-aged or older audience members, are emphasised. Several musicians onboard the *Carnival Paradise* perform this repertoire, including Alfonsus Gollu and Musical Boardwalk. The repertoire in both production shows is also recognisably popular music.

Alfonsus Gollu is an Indonesian guitar entertainer who performs rock and popular music accompanied by backing tracks. He performs in the US Casino Bar from the 7.30pm until midnight, except on the sea day when he performed an afternoon set on Lido deck and from 6.45pm until 9pm in the casino bar. Musical Boardwalk performed from 9pm until 1am in the Leonardo Lounge, varying their performance on the sea day as well to 3-4pm in the casino bar and 10-11pm in the Leonardo Lounge. Their instrumentation on the *Paradise* consists of guitar, bass, drums and keyboard and all performers sing, which is fairly standard performance practice for these bands. Musical Boardwalk performs rock music every night until 1am in the Leonardo Lounge located amidships on the promenade deck. Additionally, Musical Boardwalk performs once in the United States Casino Bar.

The repertoire of shipboard rock emphasises well-known and non-threatening rock including 1950s golden-age rock, Brill Building popular music from the early 1960s, British rock and surf rock from the 1960s, and classic rock from the 1970s and 1980s. Some later music may make it into the repertoire, however, more recent and confrontational music such as hip-hop or grunge is not usually performed. An examination of Gollu's songlist (Gollu 2009) reveals the dominance of Billy Joel, Elvis and The Beatles. Alicia Keys and Red Hot Chilli Peppers contribute a few songs. Amy Winehouse's retro version of "Valerie" is also included. A single Nirvana song, "Come As You Are", is listed. Originals, while not specifically prohibited, are rarely performed due to their lack of familiarity to the audience.

Cruise ships portray the main destination of the holiday, the cruise ship, as unspecifically Western by creating aural signs comprising Western popular music performances. Further, by employing performers who play 'safe' rock, often the music of the guests demographic's youth, the cruise ship is signified as a safe place, despite the foreign locations that are visited. No matter where the ship actually is, the mobile tourist enclave of the cruise ship is both familiar and safe.

'Exotic' Performances: The Caribbean Band

In contrast to much of the tourism industry, the cruise ship itself – a combination of hotel, transport, recreation facilities and consumption opportunities – is marketed as the destination. The guests that leave the ship are likely to stick to the few streets of the port area, an area Jaakson (2004) calls the 'tourist bubble'. The 'tourist bubble' is a relatively common concept in tourism studies (e.g. Judd 1999; Newman 2002; Jacobson 2003; Donlon, Donlon and Agrusa 2010; Friedman, Bustad and Andrews 2012), with its origins in Barthes' essay "The Eiffel Tower" (1997). It is typically used to distinguish between the city area for locals and the one for tourists, however, in this case it is an extension of the mobile cocoon (or bubble) of the cruise ship. Therefore, the cruise ship needs to manifest relatively few regional identifiers of culture (leaving this task to the land-based 'bubble'). An ensemble made up of local musicians may perform during a ship-sponsored tour, or may play at the dockside. Occasionally a

'local show' may perform in place of the evening show if a ship is docked late at a particularly exotic port, but such performances tend to be the exception rather than the rule (Cashman 2011).

A cruise, however, is also marketed as an exotic holiday, and it is this general exoticism, rather than visited cultures, which is musically portrayed. This is achieved with the inclusion of a themed Caribbean band (and occasionally a Latin-American themed band). This is a common practice throughout the industry, and may be included on ships far from the actual Caribbean⁶. These ensembles perform a mixture of calypso classics from various decades (such as "Yellow Bird" and David Rudder's "Bacchanal Lady"), Harry Belafonte numbers (such as "The Banana Boat Song"), soca hits (such as Arrow's "Hot, Hot, Hot"), Bob Marley compositions (such as "Jammin" and "One Love") and 'tropicalist' Western pop songs (exemplified by Jimmy Buffet's anthemic "Margaritaville"). The Caribbean-themed band on *Carnival Paradise* in April 2009 was named Island Fever and was comprised of electric guitar, bass and steel drums augmented by backing tracks. This ensemble undertook comparatively long working days, typically on the lido deck, though on day two, after Ensenada, they played a two-hour set on the promenade deck.

'Caribbean' bands, associated with the beach, sun and water of popular images of the islands, customarily perform on the Lido deck near the pools, jacuzzis, deck chairs and waiters pushing fruity rum-based beverages. Over the three-day cruise, Island Fever performed three times on the Lido deck. The first performance occurred over the course of the afternoon while guests were embarking on the first day⁷. This performance encouraged guests, once they were settled in their cabins, to attend the poolside where drinks, food from the open-air burger bar and music flowed freely. The other performance was on day three (the sea day) with a late-morning performance followed by one in the late afternoon. Island culture is reinforced in the production show *Shout!* by including Soca hits "Hot Hot Hot" by Arrow, "All Night Party" by The Fabulous Five Band, and the westernised version of beach culture: a Beach Boys medley.

'Classy' Performances: The Captain's Cocktail and the Cocktail Pianists

Cruise ship music is at pains to emphasise the high social class historically and popularly associated with passenger shipping. Popular cultural images of music on cruise ships often involve situations of high class, as in such movies as *An Affair To Remember* (1957), *Ghost Ship* (2002), *The Poseidon Adventure* (2005) and on television in *The Love Boat* (1977–1986). On modern cruise ships, tuxedoed musicians perform small ensemble swing and cocktail pianists perform the music of the Great American Songbook⁸ specifically to encourage this image. Different cruise lines portray these musical genres differently⁹, but they are popularly implemented across the industry.

Small ensemble jazz is performed twice on the *Paradise*. The higher-profile performance is the captain's cocktail party in the evening of day two. This is a free event hosted by the ship's captain. Guests can have their photo taken with the captain, enjoy cocktails and dance to ballroom dance music played by the showband. The repertoire for this event relies upon arrangements for a standardised eight-piece showband by arrangers such as Dave Wolpe, Dan Higgins and Rusty Dedrick. These arrangements are customarily of swing music from the 1930s or 1940s, or of music made famous by post-war but pre-rock singers such as Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett. Though a specific band singer is not scheduled on the *Paradise* in 2009, other vessels use singers, and occasionally a production singer may join the band for this event. The Captain's Cocktail occurs on the 'formal' night when passengers are encouraged (and crew required) to dress in tuxedos or ballroom gowns¹⁰. This event is specifically designed to portray an idealised image of the glamorous heritage of passenger shipping, and invites guests to participate, in order to experience this heritage vicariously.

The two cocktail pianists are employed to provide classy background music and commonly perform in bars enticing guests to take a seat, relax, and contribute to the bar profits. With the *Paradise* having only two pianists and twelve bars or lounges, these musicians tend to move around a lot rather than having a 'home' venue like other performers. Their performance schedules reflect this range of performance venues.

Day	Time	Event	Location
1	6-9pm	<i>Live Music with Jerry</i>	Grand Atrium
	12-4.30pm	<i>Welcome Aboard Music with Peter</i>	Grand Atrium
2	4-5pm	<i>Live Music with Jerry</i>	US Casino Bar
	5.30-9pm	<i>Live Music with Jerry</i>	Rotterdam Bar
	5-9pm	<i>Piano Music with Peter</i>	Grand Atrium
3	11.30am-2pm	<i>Piano Music with Peter</i>	Café on Promenade
	3-4pm	<i>Piano Music with Peter – Tea Time</i>	America Piano Bar
	4.30-6.30pm	<i>Piano Music with Peter</i>	Grand Atrium

Table 3 – Solo Pianist Performance Schedules Carnival Paradise, 3-5 April 2009

Grand pianos are positioned in various locations around the ship. The shiny black (or white) curves of these large and beautiful instruments emphasise traditional aesthetics associated with high-class. Twelve and a half hours of piano music are performed on the formal night, when musicians wear tuxedos to perform. Though the repertoire may be taken from the Great American Songbook, the choice is left to the performers, who may choose to make the music more inclusive by performing more recent popular music and using backing tracks.

More than referencing a general music-culture, these performances also reference the heritage of cruise shipping itself and are among the most successful onboard performances. The captain's cocktail is always packed, with some patrons mounting the stage and dancing. While the cocktail performances are secondary to the main functions of the ship, they emphasise high social class and the glamour of undertaking a cruise, regardless of the actual social class of the guests.

Participatory Performances: The Piano Bar, Recorded Dance and Karaoke

Interaction and inclusivity of performance are increasingly important in cruise ship music. By participating in the musical performance, guests are made to feel part of the performance, experiencing the joy that musicians do on stage. Guests participate in performance either through joining the musical performance, or through responding to the musical performance through dance. In the former case, participants may attend the singalong piano performances of Jordan Heppner or attend the karaoke sessions run by Karaoke host Al 'Alvincible' Marcellin; in the latter, guests may attend the captain's cocktail party to undertake ballroom dance, or they may groove to the live performances of *Musical Boardwalk* in the Leonardo Lounge or recorded dance music provided by DJ Sandeep.

The layout of the America Piano Bar, with the pianist located on an island in a sea of guests, all with their attention on him, forces the pianist to interact with guests (see Figure 2). The piano vocalist Jordan Heppner takes requests, chats affably and encourages patrons to sing with him. Piano vocalists on Carnival often print a song list from which guests may request songs.

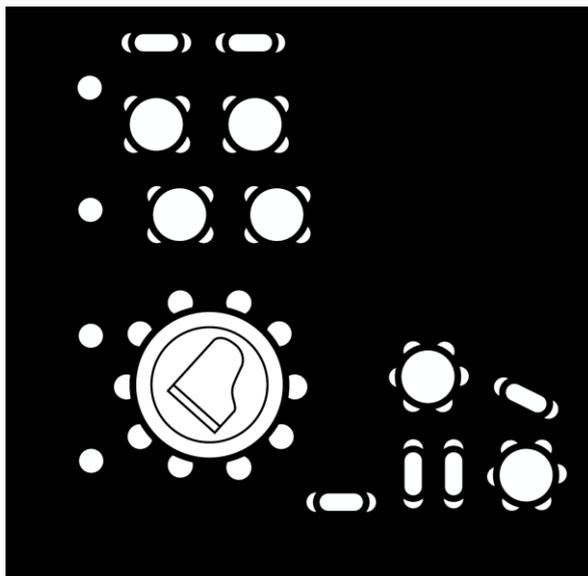


Figure 2: The America Piano Bar on the MV *Carnival Paradise*

The Queen Mary Lounge was originally designed as a secondary theatre where smaller performances could take place. It has a small stage and booths where guests may sit. In the evenings, it becomes the karaoke venue. Karaoke is an extraordinarily popular activity on cruise ships and many guests bring on their own karaoke CDs rather than relying on ship-supplied disks. On many vessels (but not *Paradise* on this cruise), the best karaoke guests are selected by the karaoke host to perform with the showband on the last night of the cruise in an event named for the ship, such as *Triumph Legends* onboard the *Carnival Triumph*. The distinction between audience and performer is blurred, and the amateur guest performer joins the ranks of the professionals for a single performance.

The dance venues include the Leonardo Lounge and the Rex Disco. The principle difference is that the Leonardo Lounge is a live performance venue with Musical Boardwalk performing inoffensive rock (as previously discussed) whereas the Rex Disco is an adults-only venue located amidships on the promenade deck, and is open from 9pm 'until late'. DJ Sandeep provides more modern dance music from a range of genres. In both venues, patrons are encouraged to participate by dancing.

Onboard musical performances are specifically designed to be interactive. In a recent interview, Brian Gilliland, music specialist for Princess cruises, said:

[Princess Cruises'] goal is not just to have a band on a stage, our goal with everything that we're doing right now is to bring in bands that, though they satisfy a pretty common desire amongst the majority of our passengers, that they bring something compelling to the bandstand, there's something about a group, it's a combination of the quality of the music they play, their sound, but personality on the stage, their look is important [...] Whatever we do, we try to vet it as being deliverable and [...] 'impactful' in some way (Brian Gilliland. 2011. Interviewed by David Cashman, Los Angeles, 4 November)

Performances where the performance lines between guests and staff are blurred make good business sense to cruise lines. Karaoke singers not only become "a star for three minutes", but "simultaneously evoke musical technologies, personal experiences and collective memories which go far beyond microphones and pre-recorded accompaniments" (Mitsui and Hosokawa 1998: i). Guests join the collective musical experience of a piano bar. They respond to music by dancing to live or recorded music. In this fashion, the Western and secure environment of the ship is reinforced, the encapsulated playground engaged with, and profits generated.

Theorisation

The consumption of popular music and that of tourism possess certain semiotic parallels. Both involve the consumption and production of aural and visual signs. Both involve commodification of art and culture for popular consumption. Further, both can exist in a symbiotic relationship. The tourism industry provides a ready market for the consumption of popular music products; it is for this reason that, for example, hotels employ musicians to play in lobbies across the world. Visitors often consume musical signs of destination, prepackaged and ready to take home as souvenirs or memories of their trip. Equally, live musical performances offer the tourism industry easily commodified signifiers of destination, of class, of excitement, and many other concepts.

The cruise industry avails itself of many of these signifiers; however, local destination is rarely one of them. As a post-tourism product, cruise ships construct a fabricated geography and culture, and live music is used to signify aspects of this fabrication. Cocktail pianists and ensembles provide aural signs of the familiar music-culture of the West, playing songs known to the audience. Production shows comprise a fantastic and sometimes inconsistent collection of musical signs. *Shout!* thrusts together songs and medleys from disparate genres of popular music including country, Motown, 50s rock and surf rock. Performances of songs so altered by excision and truncation that they have little or no remaining narrative causes them to be interpreted as signs of themselves.

Even when such signs are 'exotic', such as the music of *Island Fever*, they create reassurances of safety because the music performed – such as that of Harry Belafonte and Bob Marley – is well known as popular music in the West. As opposed to much cruise ship music, such aural signs are popular cultural signs of the exotic island cultures.

Other performances involve the portrayal of high class. Tuxedoed pianists perform cocktail sets on beautiful instruments. The small theatre band is invisibly augmented to become a huge orchestra with strings, additional brass and highly talented performers. Visual aspects, such as the large and opulent theatre, and bright and colourful lighting and costumes are also co-opted into such performances.

Such performances occur in a purposefully deterritorialised destination. The ship, rather than the ports, is the destination of a cruise, and the hysterically colourful and high-volume music attracts the attention of guests inwards towards the ship rather than outwards towards the destinations. Local culture and scenery form a backdrop to the vacation rather than (as in a cultural tourism model) a culture with which to interact.

Decoding touristic music involves decoding the constructed meaning designed into the commodified touristic product rather than any meaning inherent in the music. A guest onboard the *Paradise* on the given cruise understands the touristic performance of the portion of Haley's "Rock Around the Clock!" as a sign of the original record. The melody, chord progression and lyrics are the same. It is contextualised within a medley of several songs from the same musical genre. The touristic meaning is clear: this is a sign of a popular song from a particular era with which the audience members are familiar; it reassures the audience that they are safe and secure in a familiar setting rather than in the unfamiliar surroundings of the actual location of the ship. However, it is patently not the original song and an audience member trying to understand the music-culture referenced in the performance will encounter difficulty. This performance of "Rock Around the Clock!" exists outside a Western culture, but in a constructed geography and corporately-imposed culture. It is performed by a showband and singers accompanied by dancers rather than by a 1950s rock band. The actual structure of the song and the narrative is abbreviated. It is so altered as to become a fabrication of 1950s rock rather than actual 1950s rock.

The detractors of cruise ship music cite it as 'cheesy' and fake. Carson's (2004) examination of live music at Disneyland forms a pertinent counterpoint. Citing

Fjellman's (1992) model of theme park touristic authenticity, and how it may be understood as confusing 'actual' culture with 'virtual', Carson cites a Mariachi performance or 'Oom-pa' Bavarian band as a 'snapshot' of culture (2004, 230–231). The live music performed in Disneyland is not considered fake, but as real – or at least hyperreal – within itself, the opposite of the perception of 'cheesy' cruise ship music. Carson questions what music is included and what is excluded, but at no stage questions the touristic veracity of the music performed. The music of Disneyland is, however, referencing a known popular cultural system – that of the Disney itself – rather than, as cruise ships, portraying a more generalised Western or exotic culture.

Conclusions

In most cases, the musical product of the cruise industry is implemented efficiently, portraying a general Western culture and turning the attention of guests inward towards the ship. While the hyperreal musical experience failed in the *Queen Mary 2* anecdote from the start of the paper, for the most part cruise ship music – as demonstrated in the case study of the *Carnival Paradise* – effectively constructs a musical and cultural cocoon protecting the tourists undertaking the cruise from the realities of the areas through which they travel. The various performances onboard the *Paradise* – the big band performances in the captain's cocktail, the rock performances of Musical Boardwalk, and the Vegas-style production shows – are negotiatedly authentic rather than objectively or subjectively real. When, however, the system breaks down, as described in the earlier anecdote, the fabrication becomes all too evident. The mask falls from the automaton to reveal the whirring gears within.

The tourism industry has traditionally used commercial music, itself specifically designed to be consumed, to represent visited cultures (Gibson and Connell 2005) as an accessible semiotic system for tourists to decode. The cruise industry, with its focus on profit and the construction of the ship as destination, has taken this process one step further, purposefully constructing a musical product producing commodified performances that mirror aspects of the cruise ship itself. In this they have been successful. Cruise ship music is a carefully constructed and thoughtful sign-system that does not offend guests and that is capable of highlighting aspects of the ship so that profits are maximized and the guests enjoy their vacation.

Endnotes

- ¹ The cruise industry produced US\$29.4 billion in 2011. According to cruise industry analyst Tony Peisley, onboard revenue (and therefore profit) "is worth something between 25 and 30 percent for the big companies" (Smith 2012: 46).
- ² First names are used when advertising production singers to promote accessibility and because they are part of a troupe
- ³ "Devil with a Blue Dress On" was released in 1964 by Shorty Long, but failed to chart. The Mitch Rider version, which this performance references, reached #4 on the popular charts in 1966.
- ⁴ "Rockin' Robin" was recorded by Bobby Day in 1958, and achieved #2 in the Billboard Hot 100.
- ⁵ "Little Darlin" was recorded in 1957 by The Diamonds.
- ⁶ The *Carnival Paradise* in this cruise was on the west coast of the US and Mexico rather than sailing in the Caribbean. The RMS *Queen Mary 2* includes a 'carribbean' band when sailing in diverse locations such as Europe, South America and the Pacific.

- ⁷ The only other performance occurring at this time is cocktail piano in the atrium.
- ⁸ The Great American Songbook is a hypothetical construct of the greatest American songs of the first half of the twentieth century. Such songs were often written for films or musicals by composers such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers, Cole Porter and Harold Arlen. To be included in this songbook, music must be designed for popular consumption and be uniquely American, but using the harmonic and melodic structures of European music (Wilder 1990).
- ⁹ For example, Cunard ships have a specific dance venue and ensemble called the Queen's Room Orchestra. Holland America vessels use a jazz trio called The Neptunes in a smaller version.
- ¹⁰ While some guests do dress up for this event, many do not. In the author's experience in 2004 on the Carnival Ecstasy, some guests donned a t-shirt printed with a facsimile of a tuxedo.

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