International Journal of Music Business Research

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AIMS AND SCOPE

The International Journal of Music Business Research (IJMBR) as a double-blind reviewed academic journal provides a new platform to present articles of merit and to shed light on the current state of the art of music business research. Music business research is a scientific approach at the intersection of economic, artistic, especially musical, cultural, social, legal, technological developments that aims at a better understanding of the creation/production, dissemination/distribution and reception/consumption of the cultural good music. Thus, the IJMBR targets all academics, from students to professors, from around the world and from all disciplines with an interest in research on the music economy.

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Editorial

Peter Tschmuck[1]

This October 2014 issue of the International Journal of Music Business Research opens with the award-winning paper from the 4th Vienna Music Business Research Days 2013. In this Francisco Bernardo & Luís Gustavo Martins of the Catholic University of Portugal in Porto pose the crucial question of whether, in the digital age, disintermediation is reshaping the music industry and fostering independent approaches to the market. They argue that digital network media enable ordinary people to adopt a do-it-yourself or "DIY" approach to producing and disseminating music by eliminating intermediaries such as record labels. To support their analysis they reference Christian Handke's study on the independent music scene in Germany as well as certain findings from the US 'Artist Revenue Project'. Despite the obvious advantages of the DIY approach (such as artistic freedom, independence, self-determination), Bernardo and Martins also highlight certain disadvantages and ultimately argue for a mixed approach. Even though DIY is an important aspect of launching a career in the music business, to achieve sustainable artistic and economic success new artists will need to continue to rely on established as well as new intermediaries.

Aspects of Bernardo & Martins' article are echoed in the subsequent paper by O'Hare entitled, "Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Music Business Education". The author argues these days a music business education is essential to achieve success in the music business. O'Hare, who is the Head of Higher Education (Music Business) at Box Hill Institute in Melbourne/Australia states: *"There has been an increasing professionalisation of the music industry, which requires industry per-*

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[1] Peter Tschmuck is Professor for Culture Institutions Studies at the Institute for Cultural Management and Cultural Studies of the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Austria with a focus on music business and industry research. He is the author of the book "Creativity and Innovation in the Music Industry" (2nd edition, Springer, 2012) and co-edited "Music Business and the Experience Economy. The Australasian Case, Springer, 2013). He annually organizes the Vienna Music Business Research Days and runs the blog on http://musicbusinessresearch.wordpress.com.

sonnel to acquire more complex skill sets. Notions of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship need to be applied to music business education." Later on he gives a comprehensive overview of the literature of music business and models the interrelationship of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship.

The third article in this volume is a contribution by Beatrice Jetto of the University of Technology and Notre Dame University in Sydney, Australia. In this she focuses on the relationship between music blogs and the music industry by analysing 18 semi-structured interviews with bloggers specialising in music. Therefore she "… argues that music blogs enter into a series of collaborative relationships that are one aspect of their practices. In particular, they collaborate with labels and PR sponsors to determine the kinds of materials they will present on their sites, importantly connecting these materials with their posts."

Each of the articles within the October 2014 issue of the IJMBR address the impact of digitization on the music industry from disintermediation to new concepts of music business education and the role of music blogs.

The IJMBR is aimed at all academics, from students to professors, from around the world and from all disciplines with an interest in music business research. Interdisciplinary papers are especially welcomed if they address economic and business related topics in the field of music. Thus, we look forward to receiving as many interesting papers as possible and request that you send papers for consideration to: music.business.research@gmail.com.

Disintermediation Effects on Independent Approaches to Music Business[2]

Francisco Bernardo & Luís Gustavo Martins [3]

Abstract
In the aftermath of the digital revolution, business models are changing and disintermediation is impacting the music economy. In these circumstances, we observe the widespread claim that music artists are able to successfully reach the market on their own, leveraging access to networked global communications and the use of digital network media as a means of production. This paper argues such arguments feed on the ideals of independence in the context of an experimental and transitional stage that the music industry is currently undergoing, and that may be part of a recurrent cycle leading to the establishment of a new generation of intermediaries.

Keywords: Independence, disintermediation, digital network media, music industry

1   Introduction

With the advent of the digital revolution and the Internet, business models and strategies of the traditional players within the music industry's landscape have significantly changed. In this new reality characterized by easy access to networked global communications and the matu-

ration of Web technologies, the effects of disintermediation are increasing (Chircu & Kauffman 1999: 112-114). The major record labels that created and developed a lucrative business model and had been the main driver of the industry over the past few decades, have been badly hit (Young & Collins 2010: 341). They have been reducing investment by cutting costs, laying off staff, and contracting ever fewer artists, mostly those who have proved themselves in the independent circuit (Dahl 2009: 210).

At this juncture, independent music production has become the most significant model of production (Hracs 2013: 6). With the introduction of digital technologies and the decrease of production costs, independent artists are making extensive use of home studios for production, and of digital networked media for dissemination and promotion (Leyshon 2009: 25). These platforms are continuously emerging with open and decentralized business models that take advantage of social networks and community resources (Benkler 2006: 138).

Digital networked media can be considered as a means of production within the context of a transformed music culture, that shifted from a push music culture, in which the few produce for the many, to a networked on-demand music culture, in which networks enable participation through music-related activities such as production, publishing, commenting and sharing (Winter 2012: 47). By offering affordances based on functions that typically integrate the value chains of traditional industry agents (record labels, distributors, record promoters, radio stations, etc.), these platforms are an example of media innovation that may support alternatives to an artist's autonomous and independent approach to his creative and business endeavours, as well as a more direct and successful relation with the consumer of his music.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss and to understand how the conditions and the affordances of digital network media, as a means of production and allocation, seem to affect intermediation processes in the independent sector of the music economy. Traditional intermediaries of the music industry organized these processes, but "ordinary people", "artists" and their networks are now able to have control of them.

The new business models that are developing in the digital networked media may help to understand the transformation of relationships within the context of contemporary independent music business.

We start by contextualizing the emergence and motivation of independent music artists. We then propose that disintermediation may support independent and do-it-yourself (DIY) approaches to music business, to which the affordances of digital networked media offerings contribute. Based on empirical support on disintermediation in independent music production, we will discuss how and to what extent the business approaches are changing. Finally we will address how disintermediation fits in with media innovation and explain how the music industry may be going through transitional stage that is part of a recurrent cycle leading to the establishment of a new system and new intermediaries.

2   Contextualizing the emergence and motivation of independent music artists

Within the context of the music industry, the term 'independent' or 'indie' is aplied to agents with no ties to a major record corporation. It derives from the industrial organization behind it, the independent record company (Hesmondhalgh 1999: 35) and it is commonly applied to music artists and business professionals.

Hibbett (2005) contextualizes the political ideals behind the indie music movement as derived from the punk and anarchist ideals of democratization, decentralization and free access to the music market. The indie music movement *"demonstrates the principles and politics of a 'superior' art"* in which *"obscurity becomes a positive feature, while exclusion is embraced as the necessary consequence of the majority's lack of 'taste'"* (Hibbett 2005: 34). Indie correlates to artistic integrity, aesthetic quality and to the cutting edge; it stands as both 'trendy' and exclusive, acquiring meaning from opposition to the mainstream, in a perpetual construction that seeks and encompasses novelty (Hibbett, 2005: 58).

However, capital markets conflict with the ideals and political background of the independent movement. Hesmondhalgh (1999: 35-36) analysed the causes and the consequences that pushed independent record companies to adopt the practices of professionalization and partnerships with major corporations. Factors identified include working in a high-pressure business and industry, facing a high risk of bankruptcy, work overload and general management difficulties based on the dilution of personal and professional life areas and relationships. Nonetheless, professionalization was seen as undermining the 'indie' principles, given the implied compromises needed to secure commercial success and pecuniary rewards to the detriment of the original purism and idealism. Such circumstances led independants to professionalize to better cope with the industry's needs and by overriding the original ideals of independence and 'selling out', while driving other musicians and staff out of the industry (Hesmondhalgh 1999: 35-36).

With the restructuring of the music industry, following the digital revolution, independent music production has evolved from a niche market position to a mainstream model (Hracs 2012: 6). In the pre-digital revolution, *"traditional independent production was really an ad hoc system with inherent limitations"* (ibid.: 454); money and specialized professionals were required even for basic productions and distribution was limited to the streets and after-shows (ibid.). With the introduction of digital technologies and the decrease in production costs, home studios emerged, and music production was made more accessible to the general public (Leyshon 2009: 25). Independent artists are now making extensive use of home studios for production, and of digital networked media for global dissemination and promotion. However, while this may better provide them with a long sought-after autonomy and creative control over their music, it also demands more effort from a variety of required activities including musicianship, performance, technical, through to business aspects.

3 Disintermediation as a support for independent and DIY approaches to music business

In economics, an intermediary offers intermediation services between two trading parties, a supplier and a costumer, or between other intermediaries. The intermediary acts as a channel for goods or services offered by the supplier, providing added value to the transaction. Disintermediation, also known as "cutting out the middleman", occurs when intermediaries are removed from the supply chain. The term was first used as a result of changes in the financial services industry, with the diversion of savings from bank accounts with low interest rates to direct investment in other financial instruments (Gellman 1996: 2). Several factors seem to explain this phenomenon such as the supplier's internalization of activities traditionally performed by intermediaries (Sarkar et al. 2006) and the extent of market transparency leading to increased knowledge of supply pricing for the buyer. (Picot & Bortenlanger 2006: 117).

Benjamin & Wigand (1995) argue that, within a ubiquitous communication network such as the Internet, the ability to support direct exchanges efficiently would benefit both a producer and the consumer: the manufacturers are able to retain more surplus value or generated profits, while the consumers benefit from both a larger choice and lower prices. This is what happened with the emergence of electronic commerce at the beginning of the dot.com boom (circa 2000), which was seen as a tool of disintermediation given that the Internet would allow consumers to purchase products directly from producers. According to Whinston, Stahl & Choi (1997: 555) the emergence of technologies for electronic commerce on the Internet provides new ways of interaction between the players in a market. In fact, the use of an information technology infrastructure shortens the supply chain, cutting costs, optimizing operations, and allowing as a consequence higher value capture and redistribution of profit along the value chain.

The most clear cut example of disintermediation in the music industry is posed by so-called 'Music 2.0' (see Leonhard 2008) which claims to create a world without major record labels, building on the communica-

tion and distribution potential of the Internet. Encompassed within the Music 2.0 ideal, is the incentive for individual musicians to adopt a do-it-yourself (DIY) and direct-to-fan business approach, to build a fan base independently and publish their music using the plethora of web tools and online platforms that keep emerging in the online landscape. The underlying argument appears to have permeated throughout the media, and can be observed in studies involving groups of musical artists (Young & Collins 2010; Hracs 2012) which confirm their awareness of the fundamental importance of the direct engagement with their audiences, of the resources that are required to build this relationship, and of the role of new technologies in enabling and developing it.

4   The affordances of digital networked media and their contribution to the independent approach

Perceptual psychologist James Gibson (1978: 18) introduced the concept of affordances as objective, actionable properties of objects that are perceivable as such, denoting action possibilities that an environment provides to an individual. For Norman (1988: 9), a perceived affordance is a design aspect of an object which suggests how it should be used. In recent research, Gibson's theory of affordances has been extended in several directions, from collaborative affordances (action possibilities for joint actions) (Davies et al. 2010) to instrumental, auxiliary, maintenance, aggregation and learning affordances (Kaptelinin & Nardi 2012).

We propose to use of the concept of affordance analogously to Winner's (in Benkler 2006: 17) definition of affordances as "political properties" of technologies. Benkler considers the dynamic relation that regulates the tension between the technological affordances, the social and economic practices, the law, and its consequences in the *practices of human interaction with information, knowledge, and culture and with production and consumption"* (ibid.: 26). We look at the affordances of digital network media in the same sense as Benkler does when referring to the characteristics and functions that social software is designed with

and *"that have a certain social-science or psychological model of the interactions of a group"* in order to enhance the survivability and efficacy of that group (ibid.: 374).

In this sense, digital networked media provides not only effective functional elements, but also cues about their importance and the possible ways for its target audiences to interact with in order to fulfil their needs. This suggests that what needs to be done to grow a successful project is available to anyone with the knowledge to use these tools, failing which is, willing to expend the required effort to learn how to. This converges with the notion that digital networked media can be seen as means of production available to everyone (Winter, 2012).

Figure 1 presents a diagram with mappings between a sample of selected digital network media and the affordances that they provide. Overall, these platforms seem to afford many, if not all, of the functions provided by traditional intermediaries. That covers financial support, management, marketing, promotion distribution, and social affordances.

Others have provided research on the impact of digital network media on the business practices of independent music artists. Wendel (2008) examines the significance of the role that social networks play in the practices of independent music artists, both in the offline and online contexts. The author provides a com-parative analysis of two cases studies: UK-based Rough Trade independent record label (1978–1991) as an offline social network, and MySpace (2003–present) as an online social network. Wendel examines the structure and the affordances of each of the social networks, focusing on similarities and diffe-rences that have affected independent artists' practices. The author concludes that social networks are fundamental for the success of any music project, both in the context of a record label or provided by a dedicated online service.

Valladares (2011) explored the landscape that web-based and social media tools have provided for independent music producers. He identifies production, promotion, and distribution as key areas where digital network media is having a significant impact on the strategies and practices of producers of independent music. He concludes that artists have

a diversified and flexible approach to online social networking platforms and Internet based tools.
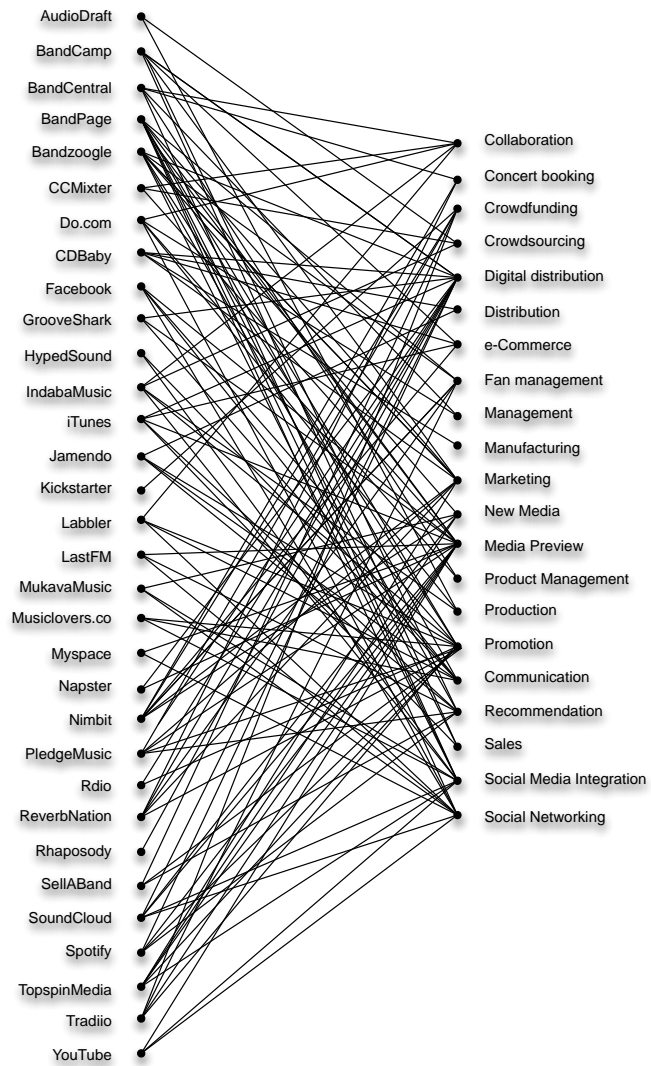
Figure 1: Affordances of digital network media

Besides distribution and promotion, independent music artists may currently assume other functions performed by the traditional label. Online management tools such as project and task management applications are now delivered in the cloud as software-as-a-service. Asana[4], Do[5] and Trello[6] are generic tools that enable project, task and team management in a social and collaborative environment. In fact, these have paved the way for more specialized music management applications such as ArtistGrowth[7] and Bandcentral[8]. ArtistGrowth has both web and mobile versions that help musicians and their staff to manage their careers. It provides a general utility toolset that aims to enhance the productivity of the artist, agency, manager and label, in exchange for a monthly fee. Functionalities range from smart calendarization through to financial management with revenue projections, expense tracking and reporting, facilitated submission of live set and royalty lists to BMI and ASCAP, merchandise inventory, contacts, social media and even access to an extensive database of venues, press and radio outlets.

Online social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Myspace, and YouTube, provide great tools to market products, services, and ideas. Several sites, online marketers and blogs provide guidance on how music artists can make the best use of these tools. Their use is considered essential to build awareness of music sales, ticket sales and merchandise, and for engaging with fans anywhere in the world. Other apps such as Topspin, Reverb Nation and Nimbit, are more focused on music promotion, and more oriented to the independent and DIY music artist. The Topspin web application, for instance, *"allows an artist to harvest, organize, analyse, and capitalize upon marketing information"* (Schafer, 2009). Topspin users can access recent music sales and marketing data, manage their assets catalogue, use embeddable widgets to create storefronts and acquire fans through email collection, and manage the fan base and customer orders.

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[4] Asana (n.d.), retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://www.asana.com
[5] Do (n.d.), retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://www.do.com
[6] Trello (n.d.), retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://www.trello.com
[7] Artist Growth (n.d.), retrieved June 8, 2014 from https://artistgrowth.com
[8] Band Central (n.d.) retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://www.bandcentral.com

A recent phenomenon is crowdfunding, a web-based funding model that potentially substitutes the funding muscle of record labels. In a crowdfunding campaign, promoters request funding from a multitude of individuals through an on-line platform, usually in return for rewards, such as future products or personalized gifts. Kickstarter[9], Indiegogo[10] and Rockethub[11] are crowdfunding platforms have emerged and support different types of creative projects from musicians to filmmakers, writers, developers, visual artists, through to creative start-ups. Ordanini et al. (2009) argue that crowdfunding sites like SellABand[12] serve as a *"network orchestrator, in that they do not execute specific activities, but create the necessary organizational systems and conditions for resource integration among other players to take place"* (Ordanini et al. 2009: 35), and consequently, have the potential to substitute traditional intermediaries such as traditional recording companies.

These tools illustrate how particular kinds of digital networked media that potentially serve as means of production available to everyone, enable essential functions that were previously handled by record labels. Some of them are even marketed to independent artists, managers and labels. They seem to embody Music 2.0's ideals and enable disintermediation, by empowering independent and DIY artists in their business practices as suppliers internalizing traditional intermediaries' functions. However, claims such as the one underlying the Music 2.0 concept are far from universally accepted.

In a market where technology has levelled the playing field and entry barriers have been lowered, the competition levels are higher than ever before. Although DIY practicing musicians can now have full creative and business control, they face many challenges and trade-offs such as the administrative burden, the work overload, and the lack of connections and expertise in the required business areas. These issues may steal time for creativity and interfere with focus, lower the appeal for business and ultimately, compromise the quality of the artistic product.

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[9] Kickstarter (n.d.), retrieved June 7, 2014 from http://www.kickstarter.com
[10] Indigogo (n.d.), retrieved June 7, 2014 from http://www.indigogo.com
[11] RocketHub (n.d.), retrieved June 7, 2014 from http://www.rockethub.com
[12] SellABand (n.d.), retrieved June 7, 2014 from http://www.sellaband.com

The current scenario seems promising for independent music artists to leverage disintermediation and achieve success, but it is crucial to establish to what extent it is actually implemented as an effective practice within an artist's business.

5   Empirical support for disintermediation in an independent music business

To be considered truly effective, a successful disintermediated approach should be observable and show the way independent music artists are building their fan base from scratch, typically what constitutes the biggest challenge for an act at the beginning. The Artic Monkeys are a meaningful example of a new act that achieved success by taking a disintermediated approach to sales and marketing. Their early success is mostly attributed to the way they engaged their fans through their MySpace[13] profile (Young & Collins 2010: 346).

However we need more than an isolated case to better understand this issue and therefore we must turn to empirical evidence to illustrate the scale of changes.

In his study of the German music sector, Handke (2010) focused on determining the market context and significance of self-releasers[14] among amateurs and more conventional indie record companies. Handke observes self-releasers are a "significant minority" in the indie market but observes an apparent boom among these small independent record companies in the period between 1994 and 2004, revealing what appears to be a sustained *"trend that more creators set up record companies rather than record companies picking creators to cooperate with"* (Handke 2010: 345-348). The author appoints disintermediation as one of the possible causes (along with amateurisation) that may explain the increase of market competitiveness of 'indies' in the middle of the recession of the record industry (ibid.).

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[13] Myspace (n.d.), retrieved June 7, 2014 from http://www.myspace.com.

[14] A self-releaser *"predominantly commercialises sound recordings by composers or performers who also work in another function in the firm or who own the firm at least in part"* (Handke 2010: 345)

Handke's findings suggest that the benefits of a disintermediated approach may have been assimilated and operationalized by a growing share of independents, allowing them to obtain more market power. Although not entirely conclusive, Handke's study supports the idea that the disintermediated approach is not only possible but also that it may be gaining relevance and critical mass. However, will disintermediation remain merely a fragment of the market or will it grow to become an established creative path? Will there ever be full disintermediation in the market? Further research has to proceed in this direction.

Other research worth considering is the Artist Revenue Streams (ARS) project led by the Future of Music Coalition (FMC)[15]. The ARS project consists of a multi-method, cross-genre examination of US-based musicians. It used three data collection methods: face to face interviews with about 80 different musicians and composers, case studies based on the detailed financial data from 10 different individual musicians, and on-line survey data from 5,371 US-based musicians and composers. This study aims to assess the earning capacity of individual musicians concerning the diversity and dynamics of revenue streams by Future of Music Coalition (2000).

One ARS report[16] indicates that the majority of participants demonstrated good levels of awareness and comfort in making effective use of technology for common musician-related activities (Thomson 2012) such as communicating directly with fans, collaborating with other musicians and self-managing their careers. The report concludes that emerging technology has had a measurable impact on the careers of musicians and composers, empowering them and levelling the playing field.

Another ARS report[17] focuses on the impact of the team and of partnerships on the artist's revenues and concludes that some team members had more impact on income than others, and either represent

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[15] The Future of Music Coalition, retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://money.futureofmusic.org.
[16] "Are Musicians Benefiting from Music Tech?", retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://money.futureofmusic.org/are-musicians-benefiting-from-music-tech-sf-musictech-presentation/.
[17] "Musicians' Team Mates and their Effect on Earnings", retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://money.futureofmusic.org/teams/.

a net positive or increase an artists' capacity. The understanding of which teammates could have a most positive impact on earnings is considered fundamental.

The final ARS study[18] we focus on highlights a case study of a indie composer-performer profile, which is characterized by working full time in music, and taking on several roles such as that of the performer, composer, bandleader, sideman and session musician, and reveals discriminated financial information.

The findings seem to indicate that both the efficiencies and the hypercompetitive market have been acknowledged as technological outcomes, for the good and bad. This also indicates that a mixed approach is most often taken to deal with the workload and the use of a team is highly regarded to build capacity. However, results seem to highlight the indie music artist's urge to follow the independent path. This was observable in the practice of subsidization the project with most creative freedom, through other acts and occupations through time, even by taking on more risks and costs. So would indie artists typically opt for a mixed approach, or have a dual approach? Or would this be analogue of growing a side business aside in the hope that it becomes sustainable?

In our previous research (Bernardo 2013; Bernardo & Martins 2013), we performed a multiple-case study in which seven independent music artists and professionals were selected and analysed, based on the strategic approach they had taken to business and on the evolutionary career path they had been pursuing.

The independent artists that made up our sample were selected using a range of organizational structures, business models and approaches. The spectrum of selected subjects varied from the minimal structure (Zoë Keating) with a full DIY approach, to the independent band that managed to successfully deploy a global infrastructure of physical distribution with the support of their professional manager (Metric). For the sample centre, we chose a set of independent Portuguese artists that are employing strategic approaches to business and music professionals

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[18]   "Case Study: Indie Rock Composer-Performer", retrieved June 8, 2014 from http://money.futureofmusic.org/case-study-a/.

that work in the independent music sector, some of them in different roles such as managers, agents, and executives at indie labels.

Among the Portuguese artists, we identified the most common pathway the option to take an initial DIY approach, followed by a flexible and mixed approach to business with the introduction of traditional intermediaries and professional services in their business models, following an initial period of growth. One project returned to the independent path, after saving enough money as result from mixed approaches towards the support of a self-release and the constitution of their own label.

Participants considered the use of digital networked media as invaluable and effective, as it increased productivity and facilitated the execution of essential business functions. Digital networked media was acknowledged as a potential alternative to traditional media and intermediaries, but with a limited and specific reach was unable to fulfil the needs of professional services and address traditional media. This was confirmed across all the Portuguese subjects, in the evolution of their practices from a strict DIY approach based on digital network media, to an approach that also focused on traditional media with the support of professional services.

We observed a highly concentrated use of digital network media technologies, supported by an attitude of resistance or lack of interest to try new platforms or to acquire more advanced or specialized ones, when the essential functions were already available. Business-supporting technology seems to be approached as a means to an end and on a needs-only basis. For the majority of the participants, music and creativity is the core; that is the main focus rather than the technology or business. This supports the notion they tend to outsource the management of these areas to focused professionals, and are therefore inclined to adopt a mixed approach.

However, amongst all the case studies, Zoë Keating was shown to be an interesting example of the fully disintermediated approach; she has no band, no manager, no entourage, even though occasionally there is someone selling merchandise. She performs alone and usually tours

with her son, her husband and a nanny, which cuts costs.[19] Keating's DIY and activist approaches to the music business brought her public attention. It attracted great attention because she was making good money on her own, something considered by many as an "anomaly". In fact, in 2012, Keating disclosed the details of her earnings with Spotify, Pandora, radio plays, and from her affiliation to ASCAP by releasing them publicly in a Google Doc spreadsheet (Keating, 2012a).[20] The document comprised all the accounting data of her online music sales and streaming from the period October 2011-March 2012, and its release made quite an impact on the community.

Keating admits that she would be in a worse financial position if she were a signed artist. She considers her instrumental cello music has very few chances of breaking through to the mainstream and that any label investing in expanding the reach of her music's would not recover its costs.

Overall, results seem to indicate that independents appear to be taking a flexible and mixed business approach that depends on their team structure, business knowledge and financial viability (Bernardo 2013). They appear to be configuring the use of intermediaries and professional services within their business models, in order to optimize revenues and workload. But the question of creative control and freedom seems to play an important factor as well.

There are some artists who are regarded as reference models that reflect the appeal of full disintermediation. Radiohead released the "In Rainbows" album independently through their own website, retaining full ownership of the recordings and compositions rights and introducing the "pay-what-you-want" model. Later in the same year, Trent Reznor announced the end of the contract between Nine Inch Nails and Interscope, presented the band as a free agent in direct relationship with their audience (NME 2007). Nevertheless, it should be noted that, even if each example demonstrated that mainstream artists could succeed

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[19] "On-demand touring", retrieved June 8, 2014 from
http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2013/06/music-industry.
[20] "My Streaming data", retrieved June 8, 2014 from
http://zoekeating.tumblr.com/post/16086277627/my-treaming-data.

with a disintermediated approach to distribution and compensation, the previous conditions that created their mainstream careers must be considered as responsible for their large fan base. In fact, these are most likely consequences of traditional intermediated careers, and the accumulated efforts of previous record labels in building their fan base are a most probable cause for the success of such actions.

6   How disintermediation and independence fit with media innovation

Tschmuck (2012: 223) conceives innovation, from the perspective of innovation and creativity in the music business, as the process of collective action that leads to emergence of novelty, with changes in existing action routines. The continuous evolution that is taking place in independent music makes this sector ideal to observe innovation practices. The motivation that emerges from the political and aesthetic ideals seems to provide independents with a greater impulse to innovate. These ideals align with the socio-psychological causes for innovation appointed by (Schumpeter 1911/2008: 93):

"First of all, there is a dream and the will to found a private kingdom, usually, though not necessarily, also a dynasty … Then there is the will to conquer: the impulse to fight, to prove oneself superior to others, to succeed for the sake, not of the fruits of success, but of success itself … Finally, there is the joy of creating, of getting things done, or simply of exercising one's energy and ingenuity."

The aesthetics of new independent music is based on the creative urge to push new music through and takes place by breaking with the control of gatekeepers; on the one side, the academia and their strict impositions based on theory, performance practices and historical music traditions; on the other side there is the mainstream music industry, exerting market control through high-entry barriers and bottlenecks, based on safe investments in pre-established styles in the market. At the same time, the less sophisticated structures of independents give them

more flexibility to engage and experiment with new business processes and actions. They leverage contemporary digital network media as a means of production, for their structural arrangement, technological, creative and connective affordances they provide.

Wendel (2008: 104) argues that independent artists will continue to depend on these networks for cooperation and proximity with fans, and that the future entails a progressively diverse set of models to achieve viability and sustainability. It still remains to be seen however if this will continue as an independent reality, in the process of media innovation, or if new intermediaries will control these models.

In the beginnings of the dot.com boom, between 1995 and 2000, electronic commerce was seen as a tool of disintermediation given the potential of the Internet to allow consumers to purchase products directly from producers. Sarkar et al. (2006) contend that intermediation will remain a structural feature of electronic marketplaces, given the roles of intermediaries can be multifaceted and cover a set of functions that are not easily assumed by producers. This is evidenced by events, i.e., the emergence of new intermediaries in the digital landscape (Sarkar et al. 2006). This phenomenon can be designated as reintermediation and takes place with the reintroduction of an intermediary between supplier and consumer, whenever disintermediation had previously occurred (Chircu & Kauffman 1999) or as the reformulation, realignment and pruning of intermediaries, but without total elimination (Carr 1999).

Chircu & Kauffman (1999) provide a model for the changes occurring in market interactions in terms of a cycle of three stages: (a) intermediation, (b) disintermediation and (c) re-intermediation (IDR). This cycle is repeated recurrently with the introduction of new technological innovations, and according to this model, a reintermediation stage should follow a disintermediation stage. Evidence of both disintermediation and reintermediation may be found in the dynamics of market interactions within the music industry, with the introduction of new intermediaries such as Apple, Google Music, Spotify and YouTube. In fact, YouTube has begun showing aggressive sign to indie music community,

as well as new intermediaries piggybacking the model such as music networks.

This is also convergent with the model of paradigm change (Tschmuck 2012: 239) that suggests we enable an increase of diversity and complexity, based on the emergence of new social actors and interactions, new technological possibilities and new music and business practices.

The innovation impulses lead to either incremental or disruptive innovation. Either the disintermediated and mixed approaches to music business by independents, or the developments in the mainstream and in digital networked media, can be framed within innovation theory. They are emergent innovation patterns and creative trajectories that among others may be eventually be controlled by new actors implementing routinization and standardization.

According to both models, it is foreseeable this diversity of actions will eventually converge to more stabilized paths, which in turn will shape and establish a new system of production, distribution and reception, new intermediaries and ultimately, a new paradigm.

7   Conclusion

Considering the current phase the music industry is going through, and all the available means of production that currently exist in the digital landscape, there seems to be more than ever a great appeal for an independent, DIY or disintermediated approach.

On the one hand, we have the intrinsic motivation based on independents' political and aesthetic ideals, which provides them with a greater innovation impulse. In addition the independents' less sophisticated structures give them the flexibility to engage and experiment with new business processes and actions.

On the other hand, we have the affordances and conditions offered by digital networked media as means of production available to everyone. Digital networked media are designed with affordances that pro-

vide cues about the importance of their functions and that allow ordi-nary people to easily operationalize them.

The general argument that has been gaining attention and dividing opinions claims that digital network media enable independent and DIY music artists to fulfil their business needs, and provide a closer, stronger, and more meaningful connection with their fans. It also helps digital network media to attract users and gain traction and market power. Contemporary mainstream examples of success strengthen this ideology and reinforce the dissemination of these practices.

We argue that although the disintermediated approach is possible, the mixed approach seems to be more effective and efficient for inde-pendent music artists. In fact, the disintermediated approach may be successfully operationalized, which is demonstrated by an apparent sus-tained upward trend in the market share of self-releasers. Nevertheless, this approach is residual and highly dependent of the idiosyncrasies of each case, such as the organizational structure, business knowledge, technological skills, financial availability and fan base. The mixed ap-proach appears to be a mature choice, most commonly adopted and leading to greater creative freedom and higher revenues. This may pro-vide the necessary competitive advantage to deal with the hypercom-petitive music field.

Moreover, we argue that this context, apparently favourable to a disintermediated approach, may be elusive and based on the conditions and characteristics of a transitional stage that is part of recurrent cycle. This is convergent with both the IDR cycle model (Chircu & Kauffman 1999) and the model of paradigm change (Tschmuck 2012) that suggest that this cycle iterates with the introduction of disruptive technological innovations in the direction of a new system of production, distribution and reception, new intermediaries, and ultimately, a new paradigm.

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9   Acknowledgements

Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Music Business Education

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Abstract
This study surveys existing literature, which place music business entrepreneurship in context, in terms of traditional business entrepreneurship. Considerations of the music business entrepreneur sit within a larger discourse of entrepreneurship, creativity, innovation and popular mythologies around the differences between typical entrepreneurs and music business entrepreneurs. This research concludes by making some observations regarding music business curriculum.

Keywords: Music business education, music entrepreneurship, music industry, music business creativity, music business innovation, music business curriculum

1   Introduction

The prevailing view in the music industry is that an education in the field of music business is not required; all that is needed is 'gut instinct' and intuition is a more likely determinant of success. Some courses (in Australia at least) have developed with little or no genuine input from the industry, which rarely requires employees to possess a qualification in the field; however, they do claim to value the entrepreneurial spirit of potential candidates. Courses have developed with entrepreneurship in mind and often have large components dedicated to developing entrepreneurial skills. There are two parallel worlds – one of a growing field of education and the other of an increasingly complex industry that largely ignores the existence of the education programs. There has not been much thought given to best practice in linking the courses to the as yet

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undeclared needs of the industry. Music business refers to all of businesses that operate the managerial and organisational processes involved in the production, distribution, promotion and consumption of creative works and all of its sundry products, services and activities linked to the music industry. This includes, for example, record companies, publishers, retailers, distributors, concert promoters and event management.

There are a number of overlapping concepts to be considered in the largely creative act of writing, performing and recording music that contribute the cultural texts required by the music industry to exist as economically viable and entrepreneurial entities. In addition there is the growing complexities and fragmentation of the music industry as it enters the digital age where diverse income streams become the norm and innovation is required by industry personnel in order to maximise opportunities in this complex new environment. There has been an increasing professionalisation of the music industry, which requires industry personnel to acquire more complex skill sets. Notions of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship need to be applied to music business education.

This paper, which is largely an overview of existing literature, aims to connect notions of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship within the context of music business education.

2   Defining the contemporary music industry

Since the 1980s there has been a growing cognizance of the cultural and economic value of the contemporary music industries, particularly in terms of government awareness of the commercial value of the sector. This growing interest has given rise to a number of attempts to identify the music industry and to define its sectors and activities. Commonly an industry can be defined via a study of its outputs resulting from its industrial activity (Wikstrom 2009: 47). This view leads to the music industry being broadly defined by lists of outputs such as *"musical theatre and other performances; production and sale of sound recordings; admin-*

istration of copyright in compositions and recordings; manufacture and distribution of musical instruments and of professional recording and amplification equipment; and education and training" (Laing 2003: 433). An alternative view considers the types of businesses that participate in the industry. The Blair Labour Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) defined the music industry by dividing it into 'core activities', 'supporting activities' and 'related industries' (DCMS 1998). Laing (2003) notes that the Music Industry Advisory Council (MI-AC) in Australia took yet a different approach to defining the music industries, stressing that the *"activities of the music industry involve a chain of different professions, each of which adds value to the creative work of musicians and composers"* (Laing 2003: 433). The MIAC saw that there were two levels of investment in creative music works: primary investors who would supply financial and other resources to exploit the creative work (likely to be record companies and artists managers for example); and secondary investors and facilitators who provide specialist services and advice (likely to be accountants and lawyers for example). There is a strong case that what is often referred to as 'the music industry' is actually better referred as 'the music industries' (plural) as it is in fact, at least in a post- 2000 view a collection of *"disparate industries with some common interests"* (Williamson & Cloonan 2007: 305). For the purpose of this study I will follow the MIAC's value chain definition and I will refer to the music industries (plural). Viewing the music industries via a value chain model offers a good fit with a number of early attempts to define the structure of the music industries (Hirsch 1970, 1972; Burnett 1989; Leyshon 2001), and it also assists in providing a clear view of the competing agents that make up the music industries as a field. Each step in the value chain shows the competing interests and the ways in which these agents are also in partnership with each other to achieve their power related goals.

3 Entrepreneurship

The study of the entrepreneur is a relatively recent academic pursuit (Landstrom et al. 2012). Despite substantial academic investment over several decades, the concept of what constitutes an entrepreneur is still elusive. It is a contentious term, meaning many things to many people (Hisrich 1990). In order to understand the music business entrepreneur we must first explore scholarly work that deals with the generic business entrepreneur, and related meanings of the creative entrepreneur, before considering the mythologies and rhetoric often attributed to music business entrepreneurs. In order to examine the student or entrepreneur in training in the context of their entrepreneurial development, three key areas of influence on entrepreneurial outcomes from start-up will be considered. The Praeger Perspective series on entrepreneurship (Minniti et al. 2006) considers entrepreneurship from three perspectives; People, Process and Place. The section on 'People' adopts a broad view of the existing academic literature around entrepreneurial character traits and signals the 'cognitive, economic, social and institutional factors that influence entrepreneurial behavior' (Timmons & Spinelli 2009: 46). 'Process' follows the decision-making processes and choices that are taken in an entrepreneurial lifecycle, with an emphasis on idea generation to new venture start-ups, while 'Place' refers to the contextual, environmental factors that influence the entrepreneur. These three terms provide the broad context in which to consider entrepreneurship studies in terms of the possibility of influencing the student or entrepreneur in training.

People

Much of the existing and early academic work on entrepreneurs concentrates on the 'construction' of the entrepreneur focusing on the person (Schumpeter 1934; McClelland 1961; Kirzner 1973); character traits, environments, skills, special qualities and personality are all important factors in successful entrepreneurs. The inference is that if a person can build these traits within themselves, success will be guaranteed. For

example, Timmons & Spinelli (2009: 42) state that *"… effective entrepreneurs are internally motivated, high-energy leaders with a unique tolerance for ambiguity, a keen eye towards mitigating risk, and a passion for discovery and innovation"*. There is the inference that such traits can be learned and practised, and eventually mastered. Timmons & Spinelli (2009) suggest that if we are able to review and combine the existing academic literature on the entrepreneurial personality, we can reveal the character traits required to determine a potential entrepreneur with a stronger chance of success than a non-entrepreneur that does not possess the commonly seen character traits.

Timmons & Spinelli (2009: 45) provide an overview of the existing work on entrepreneurial people, synthesizing over 50 studies to determine attitudes and behaviors in entrepreneurs that can be acquired, and those that are desirable. These characteristics are considered an undeniable core, which each entrepreneur either has or does not have. Entrepreneurs are born with certain character traits and are simply made better with other behaviors and attitudes that can be *"acquired, developed, practised, and refined through a combination of experience and study"* (ibid.). Timmons & Spinelli's seven dominant themes of acquirable and desirable attitudes and behaviors of an entrepreneur are largely economically based character traits. They give little consideration to sociological or psychological discourses.

Hisrich (1990) considers the construction of the entrepreneur from a psychological perspective. Much like Timmons & Spinelli, Hisrich synthesizes existing work with a view to producing common psychological themes in the potential constitution of an entrepreneur, taking into account the desirability and possibility of being an entrepreneur; the childhood family environment of the entrepreneur; the education level of the entrepreneur and spouse; personal values, age, work history, and motivation of the entrepreneur; and role models and support systems (Hisrich 1990: 209-215). Hisrich insists that there is no such thing as a 'typical' entrepreneurial background; there will always be exceptions to the rule. He notes that *"… although many of the various aspects of an entrepreneur's background have been explored, only a few have differ-*

entiated the entrepreneur from the general populace of managers" (ibid.: 211). Hisrich's work suggests that although there is some evidence of common themes and broad psychological traits among entrepreneurs, they cannot be relied upon to predict entrepreneurial behavior. There are similarities to the attributes listed by Timmons & Spinelli: again, there is an inference that if you review and synthesize past literature, the dominant psychological traits of successful entrepreneurs will be revealed, and how the likelihood of entrepreneurial success can be measured. Yet there is little evidence of this approach working in reverse. In addition there are too many other elements are at play, such as the disciplinary lens through which the entrepreneur is being viewed, the opportunities presented to the entrepreneur and factors related to the potential entrepreneur having an opportunity to serve an apprenticeship.

There is a focus on common 'age windows' and amounts of time spent preparing to start the entrepreneurial journey, suggesting that successful entrepreneurs are *"likely to be older and to have at least 8 to 10 years of experience"* (ibid.). Apprenticeship time is required as a vital aspect of entrepreneurial education. The term 'intrapreneur' appears throughout the literature (Pinchot 1986; Hisrich 1990; Thompson 1999) and is used to refer to the type of employee entrepreneur who is working within an existing firm thus serving a period of time as an apprentice. These suggestions match the conclusions of Hisrich in terms of professional support networks. One common area of agreement is that successful entrepreneurs tend to know (or have known) other entrepreneurs before commencing their own entrepreneurial journey. This implies that the skills needed for successful entrepreneurship may be diverse, but they also can be learned. The concepts of apprenticeship and intrapreneurship are clearly linked. The leap between apprenticeship and intrapreneurship, to undertaking an actual venture, depends on the entrepreneur's ability to spot an entrepreneurial opportunity; the possession of prior information; and the cognitive properties necessary to value it (Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 220-224).

Is it possible to determine if the possession of the required cognitive ability can be measured via the study of character traits? Bygrave & Zacharakis think not; indeed, attempts to prescribe important character-istics to entrepreneurs has been based on *"flimsy behavioral research into the differences between entrepreneurs and nonentrepreneurs"* (Bygrave & Zacharakis 2004: 52). For them, further research has shown that entrepreneurs have a higher locus of control (a higher desire to control their own fate) than non-entrepreneurs, and that there is no neat set of behavioral attributes that can predict who will and won't be an entre-preneurial achiever. Achievers appear in all fields and within all types of personality traits; the thing that they have in common is their desire for achievement. Bygrave & Zacharakis (2011) present the '10 Ds' to de-scribe characteristics found in entrepreneurs that show direct correla-tions to Timmons & Spinelli's list of common attributes. This reveals that regardless of how the distinctions are made, or the types of language used, there are similarities in characteristics, behaviors or techniques used by entrepreneurs. Perhaps the most consistent theme in the study of entrepreneurial people is the need to try to find categories that show common ground between entrepreneurs. Rather than trying to build these lists of character traits, regardless of the discipline through which it is viewed, are there other ways of looking at the potential of a person to become an entrepreneur?

Shane & Venkataraman (2000) argue that entrepreneurship should be seen as a process and not as the embodiment of a type of person at all. Instead, entrepreneurial opportunities must present themselves in order for entrepreneurship to follow, rather than the suggestion that some people are more likely to be entrepreneurs than others. They see the opportunity as the start of the process, not the person. They also suggest that it is the possession of prior information that assists the en-trepreneur to identify the opportunity, which leads to entrepreneurial activities. No two people share all the same information at the same time, so it is information and opportunity that are more likely drivers of entrepreneurial activity. The alternate point of view, in terms of charac-terising entrepreneurs and character traits, is to take a psychological

approach, as Hisrich does. While it is not entirely possible to marry Hisrich's traits to those of Bygrave & Zacharakis and Timmons & Spinelli, the approach is still the same: the desire to characterise and to attempt to recognise a potential entrepreneur via discrete character traits. The principle that entrepreneurial success is likely to come from a set of pre-determined, or possibly acquired, traits is an assumption in much of the literature.

Chell (2008) considers issues relating to disciplinary lenses and contends that when economists (for example) have examined the 'entrepreneurial personality', the results have inferred that an entrepreneurial personality exists, but those results have been skewed by the bias of the particular disciplinary perspective (Chell 2008: 245-249). Sociologists are more likely to *focus on the entrepreneur from the perspective of the socio-economy and society"* (ibid.: 245). Chell refers to Shane & Venkataraman (2000) and their emphasis on the 'opportunity nexus', and suggests that psychology approaches were (at least initially) obsessed with three traits: *"the need for achievement, the internal locus of control and propensity to take risks"* (Chell 2008: 247). Later research in this field centres on *"opportunity recognition, proactive personality, self-efficacy, social competence and intuition"* (ibid.). These traits are more solidly focused on the cognitive capacity of the entrepreneur and entrepreneurial process rather than simply character. This blurring of traits with processes makes it even harder to measure common traits in entrepreneurs. The crossover between personality and process is demonstrated by Chell as the concept of 'affect', which is defined as being *"indicative of what a person feels about an idea, the importance they place on it and how they believe it is valued: it is thus a crucial aspect of a person's drive and motivation"* (ibid.). The recognition that an opportunity exists may fall into the 'process' category, but how the person feels about the opportunity falls into the 'people' category. Chell concludes that it is possible to use all three disciplines to create an interdisciplinary model of the entrepreneurial personality. First the flaws in each disciplinary model must be removed and then the strands of similarity combined. However, the model needs to be more than a simple list of traits; it

needs to also consider in a holistic way the social-economic environment, 'agentic related interactions' and the 'cognitive affective ability'/capability of the entrepreneur (Chell 2008: 255-256). In this way the individual is defined in terms of 'cognitions, affect and behavior' (Chell 2008: 247-249). Chell observes that entrepreneurs do engage in particular behaviors that are typical of entrepreneurs when observed in this multi-disciplinary way.

Chell's model gives a far richer and more detailed view of the entrepreneur, bringing together multi-disciplinary views. Her model allows for a greater understanding of the entrepreneur as a complex social construction that is prone to exceptions to the rule and contradictions. The implication from an education and training viewpoint is that perhaps not everybody can become an entrepreneur. Anyone can pursue a career in the area and attempt to develop the requisite skills and motivations, but not all are likely to be successful. In a more practical way, Chell suggests that entrepreneurial training should be focused on students' judgmental decision-making, enabling them to be more discerning about which opportunities are good and which are poor. An emphasis should be placed on opportunity formation, increasing self-awareness and developing social and interpersonal skills (Chell 2008: 267).

Process

Understanding the entrepreneurial process enables understanding of the practices of successful entrepreneurs. The literature suggests principles that can be identified, taught and learned in terms of the entrepreneurial process and decision-making. What is less clear is the extent to which external factors impact upon the entrepreneurial process. By understanding the processes that are likely to be followed, are we more able to identify or train successful entrepreneurs and is there a process template that successful entrepreneurs employ?

Timmons & Spinelli (1999: 101) suggest core fundamental processes account for a far greater chance of entrepreneurial success, regardless of business type, size of business, personality traits, geographical features or technologies. These are controlled components of the entre-

preneurial process that can be measured and assessed, influenced and altered if they need to be, to improve the ventures' chances of success (ibid.: 109-110). The process starts with the recognition that an opportunity exists, followed by a willingness to act on the opportunity in the face of potential risks (ibid.: 111- 112). The entrepreneur then progresses to a calculation of the potential risks in order to shift the odds of success in their favour as they carefully balance the potential risk to reward while ensuring that the most is made of limited resources (ibid.). They add that the "Timmons model" is fluid and adaptive and can occur many times over before success is achieved (ibid.: 116).

Moore's (1986) model takes a far more linear approach, suggesting that the differences between entrepreneurial people, processes and place are limited. The process has a step-by-step format, unlike the Timmons model, which allows for greater ambiguity and influence of external forces. In Moore's model four external categories are crucial: personal attributes, environmental factors (place), sociological factors and organisational forces. The entrepreneurial process in this sense is fairly simple and linear in its design (innovation meets a triggering event which drives implementation and eventually growth of the business). Yet the external non-process factors have significant impact upon outcomes, many of which are out of the entrepreneur's control. This makes it difficult to suggest that a simple template of entrepreneurial processes could be created or followed; there are too many impacts from external forces to consider.

Bygrave & Hofer (1991) support this view, suggesting some crossover between the study of people and process. Their model shows the entrepreneurial process viewed through the lens of the entrepreneurial person as an "ideal" model of entrepreneurship (Bygrave & Hofer 1991: 17).

This model suggests that it is problematic to attempt to create a mathematical model that reveals the ideal entrepreneurial process because of the human elements (and therefore unpredictable variables) listed above. These models of entrepreneurial process explain certain behaviors that entrepreneurs have displayed; they are not models of

best practice that prospective entrepreneurs should follow to ensure success. They take a positivistic approach to explaining the steps needed to ensure entrepreneurial success. With this in mind, one must consider the following questions: do different types of entrepreneurs have different approaches to their processes? If their approaches are recognisably different, do entrepreneurs who display different strengths and weaknesses in terms of character traits show strength or weaknesses in their approaches to certain parts of the process models? The positivistic standpoint is too simplistic to allow for the range of entrepreneurial processes and character traits that can be observed in successful ventures.

Place

The third lens is that of entrepreneurial place, which considers the environmental factors that are likely to encourage successful entrepreneurship. Does location have any significant effect on entrepreneurial outcomes? This section will also consider similarities with entrepreneurial process and people, and the implications for best practice to ensure entrepreneurial success.

Rice & Habbershon (2007) suggest that entrepreneurial place is really a discussion about the flow of resources. This posits an input-output model, with the acquisition of resources by the entrepreneur occurring at the same time as the delivery of value to the environment (Rice & Habbershon 2007: viii-ix). The effectiveness and the efficiency of the input and outputs of the business are largely affected by the place in which it does business. External factors (e.g. global forces, government policy and infrastructure, educational environment, population and societal factors, population factors and industrial conditions) and internal influences (e.g. ways of doing business, organizational processes and systems, stage of development, organizational culture, sources of capital, stakeholder relationships, market channels and outlets and the entrepreneurial team) are crucial (Rice & Habbershon 2007: xi).

Hisrich argues that an entrepreneur is more likely to emerge from a place where the culture is to value the successful creation of a new

business than a place where new business creation is seen as less desirable. He gives the perhaps somewhat dated example of the USA having a high desirability for new venture start-ups and the Soviet Union having a lower desirability (Hisrich 1990: 210). Teachers have a significant role to play in terms of entrepreneurship and career paths, where 'a strong education base is almost a prerequisite for entrepreneurial activity and company formation in an area' (ibid.). Peers are also important as they provide positive reinforcement. Government's role can include attractive tax rates, a country's infrastructure, utilities and economic stability (ibid.: 201-211). Rice & Habbershon (2007: xiii) add to this, suggesting that entrepreneurial activity generates more entrepreneurial activity, which in turn can create entrepreneurial regions like Silicon Valley. Silicon Valley is an exemplar because there are a high number of 'high–tech' entrepreneurs, potential investors, landlords willing to offer cheap rent to state-ups, and credit companies willing to take risks and even politicians who are supportive. Bygrave & Zacharakis (2004: 52) link the idea of having an entrepreneurial mentor as being more related to place than to people. The recurring use of Silicon Valley as the perfect example of an entrepreneurial place is at the expense of equally useful locations, for example the Bollywood and Nollywood film industries of India and Nigeria (McCall 2004). In terms of Rice & Habbershon's criteria, such places would perform quite poorly. In addition, Rice & Habbershon's conclusions read as a list of recommendations for government support of entrepreneurship.

Perhaps of equal importance to entrepreneurial people is to review entrepreneurial actions. Possession of the suitable character traits, process and place are not enough to ensure the entrepreneurial activities take place (much less to ensure success). Action is required from the entrepreneur and their actions may allow them success even if they do not fit the models presented in this section. Mishra & Zachary (2004: 4) argue that entrepreneurial actions are often overlooked. Shane & Venkataraman (2000: 217) similarly argue that most researchers consider only what an entrepreneur is, and what he or she does, at the expense of the presence of opportunities and enterprising individuals; concentra-

tion upon *"attributes confound the influence of opportunities and individuals"* (Shane & Venkataraman 2000:. 128). 12 years after their initial paper, Shane (2012: 14) laments that

"… we still have a limited understanding of how the business ideas formulated by entrepreneurs affect their decisions to exploit opportunities, as well as what influence the difficulty and risk inherent in the pursuit of opportunities have on the exploitation decision. Our understanding of how context influences the identification and exploitation of opportunities continues to be sparse, with very little learned about the impact of institutions and firm characteristics on these processes. Last, we have not explained much about the process of identifying and exploiting high-potential opportunities …"

Putting opportunity and action at the forefront shifts the focus away from individual traits based theories. Yet *"at any point in time, only some subset of the population will discover a given opportunity"* (Shane & Venkataraman 2000: 221). Further, Carroll & Mosakowski (1987) conclude that entrepreneurial behavior is transitory; and Shane & Venkataraman (2000) cite Reynolds & White (1997) as well as Aldrich & Zimmer (1986) who suggest that between 20 percent to as much as 50 percent of the population engage in entrepreneurial behavior. If such a large number of people engage with entrepreneurship in a transitory way, is it reasonable to only attempt to categorise them by a simple list of character traits? This requires consideration of some of the wider social and industrial contexts in which entrepreneurship has been examined.

4   Innovation

Schumpeter (1934) was the first to make the distinction between invention and innovation by suggesting that small entrepreneurial firms were the sources of most innovation. Academics such as Brooks (1982) (who distinguishes between technological innovation and social innovation) and Mansfield (1968) (who introduced the notion of incremental and radical innovations) have added to our understanding of innovation not

needing to be just product focused or radically new. Afuah (2003) defines innovation as *"the use of new knowledge to offer a new product or service that customers want"*. However, this definition excludes processes innovation (changing the way that business is conducted) and systems innovation (changing the way processes are controlled and organized). Despite the type, the emphasis is on the commercialisation of a new product, service, system or process: there has to be an audience interested in receiving the innovation for the innovation to truly take place. Tschmuck (2012: 197) argues that innovation follows after invention: *"an innovation has occurred only after the invention is successfully put on the market … we must not equate the inventor with the innovator"*. The invention, the prototype or the ideas are precursors to the innovation. Weisberg (2012) suggests that innovation is the outcome of the creative process plus other market forces that are attached to the product, service, system or process. Unlike entrepreneurship, there is less discussion around the innovators' likely characteristics but there is a focus on models of innovation and impact of various models on firms from an economic point of view. Afuah (2003) highlights five kinds of individuals that have been identified as playing key roles in recognising potential innovation and exploiting opportunities. His discussion focuses on the person's knowledge and skills, style of management or leadership or a person's position within a firm. Missing from the discussion is an analysis of character traits of those individuals involved in innovation. Townley & Beech (2010) include products and processes (using the example of desk top publishing as an innovation) and the impacts of control, stating that the more tightly creativity is controlled the less likely innovation is to occur therefore industry has a role to play in the management of innovation and creativity.

Wilson & Stokes (2005) argue that managing creativity and managing innovation are two different processes. Creativity is "the generation of new ideas" (ibid.: 366), which they argue is principally an individual act that ultimately relies on interactions from others within the same field (evoking parallels with Bourdieu). Innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas which is generally a collaborative effort involving

venture capitalists, lawyers and industry professionals, in order to lever-age resources (Wilson & Stokes, 2005). Managing creativity and managing innovation require different levels of collective activity, carried out by different agents.

5   Creativity

Creativity is most commonly aligned with the ability to think of something new, a novelty or originality that can be acted upon to create something that did not previously exist (Tschmuck 2012: 213). In addition there are definitions that include the criterion of usefulness (Lumsden 1999), appropriateness as a solution to a problem (Amabile 1983) and that the creative accomplishment must be intentional (Weisberg 2012). Boden (1994) discusses the differences between everyday creativity (coming up with a new cooking recipe for example) and capital 'C' creativity which involves adding to a domain of knowledge. She describes these differences as 'P-creativity' and 'H-creativity'. P- creativity is personal, the value coming from that person having not had the idea before. H-creativity refers to historical creativity, where the creativity is both personal and no one in human history has had the idea before (Boden 1994: 77). This section will consider several different definitions of creativity and the differences between artistic and other forms of creativity. Weisberg's (2012) review centres on the notion of the genius, the creative individual who is able to make conceptual leaps 'outside the box': *"the genius view shapes much of modern psychologists"* thinking about creativity (ibid.: 5). For Weisberg (2012: 247-248), trying to make distinctions between creative thinking people and non-creative thinking people is problematic; he suggests that creative thinking is an ordinary act, that we all possess the ability to do creative thinking and to have a creative capacity.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996) notes that when we are involved in creativity we all feel similarly: the type of creative output may vary but at its heart creative people share the joy of discovery, of problem solving and of being able to express an observed relationship in a simple form.

Csikszentmihalyi (1996: 110) describes this creative mode as experiencing 'flow', when *"things were going well as an almost automatic, yet highly focused state of consciousness"* regardless of the type of output or field of creativity. This applies to just about any activity that a person can be seen to enjoy doing; there are elements that are regularly mentioned in descriptions of how it feels to have an enjoyable experience. The process of creativity, which Csikszentmihalyi defines as the production of novelty, is *"one of the most enjoyable activities any human can be involved in"* (ibid.: 113). It is the process of being creative that is important. McIntyre (2003 quoted in Morrow) observes that Csikszentmihalyi moves the debate from 'what is creativity?' and 'who is creative?' to 'where is creativity?' in terms of complex interactive systems and the interrelationships of Bourdieu's individual, field and domain. McIntyre dismisses the notion of the single creative genius creating in isolation; rather, creativity occurs in complex systems of interaction. Morrow (2006) uses this to support his argument that both artistically creative and managerially creative people enjoy the state of 'flow' that fits within this more widely defined version of creativity.

Toynbee (2000) looks at creativity as it applies specifically to the music industry, and places the musician at the centre of the field of creativity. Drawing on Bourdieu's work on cultural production, he argues that the musician (or the artistic creator) draws on a range of possible choices available within their habitus and then applies the rules of their field to their creative practice.

Bourdieu (1993) uses habitus to mean the mix of dispositions, which inform subjectivity and ultimately actions. A 'field' is a 'space of positions' governed by rules which are proper to it (Bourdieu 1993: 72). Habitus involves the formation of a worldview in the form of knowledge, inclination to act in certain ways, methods of problem or conflict solving that manifest in a person in unconscious ways. From the available conditions of habitus and field, individuals make their creative choices, but the conditions are set by wider societal and structural norms, and concrete situations. In this context, Toynbee (2000: 35) suggests that musical creativity is made by those *"who make musical differences in the*

form of texts, performances and sounds". He adds however, that the differences are likely to be incremental, that the *"unit of creativity is a small one"* (ibid.). Toynbee observes that Bourdieu 'imagines the artist's career in terms of a sequence of key moments in the complex interrelationship between field and habitus. Each moment produces possible constituents of the next one' (2000, p. 38).

Both Csikszentmihalyi and Bourdieu put forward systems models, arguing that creativity is the result of interacting with systems and making judgments beyond the individual creator. Csikszentmihalyi concludes that *"… creativity does not take place in an individual's head but in the interaction between individual thinking and socio-cultural context"* (Csikszentmihalyi 1996: 41). Bilton (2007) argues that it is these systems and contexts that give the creative work and individual talents both meaning and value. There is a two-way exchange, where the systems (society at large, the individual's habitus, audiences, and business systems) help inform and ultimately influence the act of creation and the systems give definition to the ultimate usefulness and value of the creative work itself. This is a valuable leap in conceptual thinking and has possible implications in terms of the music industry. It is impossible to think of the music industry as only a creator of cultural texts, equally the music industry cannot stand alone as a purely economic activity. The music industry operates as system where culture and commerce are equally important.

6   Creative entrepreneurship

The links between innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship are considered in the emerging field of creative entrepreneurship; much of the literature concentrates on the self-managed artist, that is, the creative individuals who find themselves undertaking business-related tasks as well as creative ones. Aggestam (2007) reminds us that defining and identifying entrepreneurs continues to be problematic. Defining a creative entrepreneur is even more so. Creative entrepreneurship is focused on the entrepreneurial development of ideas and creative works. The

creative entrepreneur is primarily concerned with the creation and strategic commercial exploitation of creative or intellectual capital. Eikhof and Haunschaild (2006) argue that this conflict between art and business results in most creative entrepreneurs having to integrate two personalities; it is

"… their identity as an artist, which provides them with work motivation and creative impetus, and their identity as a 'small firm' (Menger 1999), which enables them to make a living out of being an artist" (Eikhof & Haunschaild 2006: 234).

In terms of character traits used to describe creative entrepreneurs, Howkins (2001: 125) defines them as being persistent, even in the face of others not believing in their talent. As a result of their persistence they become deeply and passionately engrossed in their work, even at the expense of actually making a profit. Howkins (ibid.) insists that *"their job is to believe and imagine"*, which results in the development of a 'sixth sense' for what works within their particular field. They are more likely to be 'lone wolves' in the sense that they are more interested in the creative project than management or financial structures. Howkins (ibid.: 130) asserts that there are five characteristics common in creative entrepreneurs: vision, focus, financial acumen, pride and urgency. Much like the examples of entrepreneurial character traits suggested in the previous section, Howkins continues the obsession with listing character traits but with potentially two areas of at least slight difference: Pride – creative entrepreneurs must believe in their idea and that in fact they are the only person who can make it work (ibid.). Their pride and ego is seldom dented by failure. Howkins' second point of difference is urgency – creative entrepreneurs always want to achieve their goals immediately. Many of their ideas are 'right now' ideas.

Poorsoltan (2012: 85) looks at character traits in artists compared to generic business entrepreneurs in more detail and identifies tolerance for ambiguity, risk-taking, and internal locus of control as the *"the most agreed upon traits ascribed to entrepreneurs and have been mentioned and tested by many authors"*. These are also present in creative artists

are who are found to be tolerant of ambiguity, are prepared for unstructured situations and are risk takers because the simple act of the creation of new things requires them to take risks. They must be risk takers in order to stand out in highly competitive creative environments. Artists also have internal locus of control: *"… creative people not only are risk takers, and are comfortable with ambiguities, but also believe in themselves and state they are in control of their decisions and activities"* (ibid.: 83).

Are there perhaps more subtle character traits that have less in common with the traits listed by Timmons and others that help creative entrepreneurs to achieve successful outcomes? Fillis & Rentschler (2010: 5) argue that the common characteristics found in entrepreneurs and creative people are the less obvious ones:

Whiting (1988) identified independence, the drive to achieve, curiosity, self-confidence and deep immersion in a task as the five main characteristics of the relatively more creative individual.

They affirm that although there are differences between the meanings of being creative and being entrepreneurial, there are also many areas of overlap including the similarities with the beginnings of a creative work or idea and the startup phase of a business. They use Amabile (1997) and Hisrich (1992) to demonstrate these similarities, stating that *"entrepreneurial creativity has been defined as the generation and implementation of novel, appropriate ideas to establish a new venture"* (Fillis & Rentschler 2012: 54). However, these lists of character traits on their own do little to help us determine the likelihood of entrepreneurial success. The mere existence of these traits is of less importance than what the person may actually do when presented with an opportunity, looking at creative businesses rather than creative individuals may shed some light on the qualities of managers within these organisations.

Bilton & Leary (2002: 57-58) argue that creative businesses need creative managers as they are *"the brokers who add value to the creative process by directing the traffic of ideas and resources, and by 'matching' ideas, individuals and organisational tasks"*. While they do dismiss the attempts by psychologists to measure or predict common traits found in

creative entrepreneurs as having *"never resulted in a consistent pattern or personality"*, they concede that the creative broker will have *"an eye for the market"* (ibid.) and that while not always being creative themselves, they know how to broker other people's abilities. They cite Frith's (1983) 'huckster' as an example of this but state that the role of the huckster (a streetwise, small time broker of music industry acts) is increasingly centralised as corporations develop their own departments and methods. Bilton & Leary (2012) hail the role of the broker in the creative industries and ultimately look to creative managers to broker between the creative talent and those who look to exploit that talent for profit. This view is helpful when considering the role that the music business entrepreneur is likely to play. The view that the creative entrepreneur is far more likely to know how to deal with and monetise the works of others, begins to create a picture that can be applied to the music business entrepreneur. Defining the nature of the work, that is, what they do rather than who they are, is a more important way to define their role.

Beyond Bilton & Leary, the literature on creative entrepreneurs has a tendency to focus on the artist themselves and their entrepreneurial skills. It is less focused on the artist manager. In terms of the creative entrepreneur and the differences between business entrepreneurs as presented by Howkins (2001), Poorsoltan (2012) and Fillis & Rentschler (2012) suggest that it may be possible to produce a more dynamic character trait table to describe the common characteristics and decision-making processes likely to be shared by creative entrepreneurs. Wilson & Stokes (2005) conclude that processes may be different for creative entrepreneurs, as they tend to look inwardly for assistance and collaboration. For others the focus on creative entrepreneurship can be centered on the notion of place. Fillis & Rentschler (2010: 53) suggest that not enough attention is paid to the role of the social environment in entrepreneurial research. Creative entrepreneurship can occur in the most unlikely of places, as creativity often exists in unexpected environments. The view that there is a simple checklist of environmental 'must haves' is too simplistic and takes a positivistic view. Both Howkins

(2009) and Florida (2002) provide these checklists, implying that if a city is able to offer these factors then creative entrepreneurship will follow. At the very least they need to be combined with economic, physiological and sociological factors in much the same way that Chell (2008) provided when trying to define the entrepreneurial personality.

There is a short leap from this overview of creative entrepreneurship to music business entrepreneurship. Discussion of the structure of the music industries exist within a number of wider ideological debates including dichotomies between commerce, arts and culture communities, studies in terms of the arts as a commodity and debates around what industries activities should be included or excluded in various definitions of industry or culture. This paper will not explore the creative/cultural industries debate but will consider the role of the cultural intermediary.

Creativity and creative work is seldom mentioned when considering music business careers in terms of skill sets and attributes. The most common skills and attributes required include communication skills, generalist music industry knowledge and business management skills (Hannan 2003: 3). Hannan's findings demonstrate that in 2003 music business personnel were unlikely to indicate that creativity or partnership were required skills or attributes in their daily work roles: in fact it also shows a general lack of sophistication in identifying skills and attributes required. A far deeper level of analysis of skills and attributes required of music business personnel is offered via the study of cultural intermediaries and creative managers.

There is an inherent interplay between 'gatekeepers', those who decide which artists get to record and release music, and the cultural intermediaries who interact with an artist once that gate has been opened (Negus 1999: 177). By focusing on the collaboration that takes place once the artist has been accepted into the company, rather than a filter model (such as the model offered by Hirsch (1970)), new skills and attributes can be uncovered. The term 'cultural intermediaries' is used to emphasize that *"music industry workers are not simply filtering 'raw materials' or making decisions about 'cultural product' that is passing*

along a chain" (Negus 1999: 62). Cultural intermediaries occupy a position between the creators of cultural products and the consumers of creative products (audiences). Negus (1999) highlights the work that music industry personnel do in shaping the final product; they are *"reorganizing, circulating and mediating the words, sounds and images of popular music to audiences across a range of entertainment media"* (Negus 1999: 23). Cultural intermediaries do not work as gatekeepers who filter products, rather they act as mediators *"who blur a number of formal distinctions associated with working life"* (ibid.: 63). This is exemplified by music industries personnel often blurring the lines between work and leisure. They attend 'gigs' as part of their 'work', their personal taste in music is a factor when recruiting and there is often demarcation between roles, as a single individual might have a portfolio career moving between being an artist, an administrator and an audience member (ibid.: 63). This view places a greater emphasis on new skills and attributes such as creativity and mediation to the list of possible requirements of music industry personnel. For the purposes of this study, the entrepreneurial activity of the artist manager, as a cultural intermediary provides a link between creative and cultural work on the one hand and entrepreneurial personality on the other.

7 Music business entrepreneurship

Rogan (1988) and Frith (1983) were among the first to present the study of the popular music industry as a legitimate field of study within leisure studies and sociology. It is no surprise that entrepreneurship studies are an emerging sub-discipline within popular music studies. This section determines the differences in music business entrepreneurs, and why the music industry considers their form of entrepreneurship so disparate and disconnected from others. Interestingly, much of the literature that does exist tends to paint the music business entrepreneur simply as a caricature rather than offer behavioural or psychological analysis. These caricatures are presented in something that approximates a chronological order as to how they are perceived to have appeared in music indus-

try histories. Much of the literature focuses upon the artist manager as the entrepreneur; there is less written about other music business roles or music business intrapreneurs.

Some of the existing literature makes reference to the early days of the rock 'n' roll music industry, and the simple approaches of 1950s managers (Rogan 1988). Alan and John Lomax are used as an example of the Svengali type of early rock and roll manager by Barker & Taylor (2007). The pre-1950s music manager tends to be looked at nostalgically for their simple and naïve approaches. Peterson & Berger's (1971) music business entrepreneur is a maverick whose ego and Svengali-like approach to making stars (exemplified by Colonel Tom Parker's management of Elvis Presley) has to be controlled and contained by ensuring that they are accountable to the company at large: *"In the recording industry, environmental turbulence leads to the emergence of entrepreneurship. It is possible, however, that entrepreneurship might be exercised in anticipation of turbulence"* (Peterson & Berger 1971: 104). Given that the paper was written in 1971, perhaps when the study of entrepreneurship (let alone the creative entrepreneur) was still in its infancy, we can forgive them for this simplistic view of the entrepreneur. Given that many of the music industry systems that are in place today stem from the way things were done in the 1960s and 1970s (when the recording industry really boomed) the systems that currently exist have largely been built with this kind of entrepreneur in mind. When considering the decision-making processes of music business entrepreneurs, Peterson & Berger draw on Thompson & Tuden (1959) to define entrepreneurship as 'inspirational strategy' when, under turbulent conditions, businesses traditional methods of leadership are inappropriate. They suggest that music industry processes are almost always enacted in the face of this turbulence, as it is an industry that depends on the rapidly changing tastes of young record buyers. They rely heavily on the work of Schumpeter (1934) to locate the entrepreneur, not as an individual business owner, but more likely a leader in a firm (of any size) who "carries out new combinations" (Peterson & Berger 1971: 98) working outside of normal systems. They define the workings of a record label in

three principal functions: production (including A&R), sales and promo-tion, and manufacturing. The last two tasks are largely standardised, but the production of records by its very nature requires an element of crea-tive entrepreneurship. Their description of the producer and A&R role paints a picture of manipulative Svengalis whose aim it is to trick the artist and those around him into giving a commercially viable product. Peterson & Berger's (1971) maverick music business entrepreneur needs to be controlled to limit the liability that is potentially created through these maverick entrepreneurs and 'intrarepreneurs'. On a basic level entrepreneurial activity is encouraged but there are some requirements that they must adhere to, to ensure that they do not put the company too much at risk, so while they are encouraged to foster business crea-tivity they are limited by forces, such as monitoring their recent track record for producing hits, budgets being approved by senior company executives, spreading the risks across a large number of artists and the hiring/firing policy of businesses dependent on A&R managers' commer-cial success (Peterson & Berger 1971: 98).

Frith (1983) introduces 'the huckster', an aggressive petty capitalist who has an eye for a quick buck but is also in touch with the needs of the market and can mould talent to fulfill the unmet needs of the mar-ket. The huckster is largely a self serving manager who *"will tend to ex-tract as much as he can for the least payment possible from the musi-cians contracted to him"* (Toynbee 2000: 13). The 'hustler' is also high-lighted by Doyle (2011) who rejects the traditional view of the music entrepreneur as some sort of a backroom evil mastermind or Svengali who is out to swindle the musicians. He re-casts the music entrepreneur as a hustler who is partnered with the artist exposing *"the hustler in the artist and the artistry in the hustle"* (Doyle 2011: 169). This view of the music entrepreneur allows us to focus less on the backroom evils and more on the street smarts of day-to-day business running; the focus remains on the artists themselves and the role that they have to play in the hustle.

Toynbee's (2000: 28) music business entrepreneur shows an addi-tional level of entrepreneurial sophistication as he observes that they

need to have a *"complex array of skills"* including the ability to *"buy low"*, recruiting artists before anyone else sees their potential and *"sell high"* to the next agent in the distribution chain. They also need to have the street smarts to predict what *"the kids"* will be interested in next but also have the ability to be a *"vulgarizer"* presenting unique new products in a way that is assessable to the mass market (ibid.: 28). He also observes that the music business entrepreneur needs to *"adopt the role of the protector"* as they build relationships with the musicians assuring them that they will not be turned into commodities to be exploited by the larger music industry machine (ibid.).

Negus (1992) considers the visionary type of music business entrepreneur and observes that the typical A&R department worker (the most entrepreneurial of all record company positions) must have a 'vision' of the acts that they partner with, in terms of their musical direction, audience appeal and future development. The A&R manager offers up a pre-assessment of the 'raw talent' that they discover. They then need to convince the rest of the firm that their 'vision' is sound and that the talent is likely to return profits to the company (Negus 1992: 48). As Toynbee (2000: 28) notes, this is contradictory to the common emphasis on *"'following hunches', 'gut feeling', 'intuition' and 'instinct'"*. It may appear simple guess work on the surface (or following a hunch); in fact it is a carefully constructed assessment of the options and opportunities available to the act and a consideration of the potential profits that they may bring to the firm.

McIntyre (2001) examines 'the enabler' type within his broader study of how creativity is produced and exploited, and discusses music industry personnel who are able to act as 'mediators' in terms of artistic output and business decisions. We need to discount the ideal of the *"solitary creative genius"* in the music industry (McIntyre 2001: 140). Using Bourdieu's field and habitus, he constructs the creative entrepreneur working within particular 'fields', which are influenced by music business people in ways that are not always in the control of the creative. McIntyre argues that thinking of industry players as just a filter through which creative works pass is too simple. The industry tends to

blur the conventional distinctions of a simple filter because of personal taste, previous success (or lack of success) of the artist and the fact that there is a blurring of the occupations of artists anyway as many of them also act as producers, engineers, performers, studio owners and other related roles. This *"illustrates the potential for music industry personnel to act as mediators in the creative process"* (McIntyre 2001: 151).

McIntyre's music business manager exemplar is the first to show some genuine sophistication and is closer to the kind of music business entrepreneur that is likely to thrive in today's complex industry. Similarly, the 'Creative Manager' is described by Morrow (2006) as a music business entrepreneur who is also a co-collaborator in the creative process, and whose innovative strategic work can be seen as being equally important to the development of the artist. It is not an 'art versus commerce' debate; it is art and commerce. Morrow (2006) looks at creativity in a different manner to McIntyre, arguing that equal attention must be paid to both art and commerce for an artistic career to flourish. He also suggests that focusing too much attention on achieving a successful recording career (i.e. signing with a major record label) risks missing out on all of the other opportunities that an artist manager should be aiming to achieve in the areas of potential income. In this sense, managerial creativity is the key to enhancing artistic creativity, and can be responsible for *"building, developing and nurturing the relationships that form a system, art world or field that generates artistic products"* (Morrow 2006: 368). Artist managers are likely to become more important as income streams diversify, technology changes and traditional business models cease to work. This portrait of the characteristics required of a music business entrepreneur echo the findings of Chell (2008), where the entrepreneur presents an ever-evolving and ultimately unpredictable set of traits, actions and decision-making processes. The music business entrepreneur must carefully assess the balance between risk and reward and the balance between creativity and established systems.

8   Conclusion

Successful entrepreneurial ventures tend to be built around innovation. That is, something new that adds value. Many ideas may be generated before one of them can be identified as a potential innovation, (the innovation does not need to be radical or only product-based). Broadly defined idea generation is centred around creativity, this is certainly the case in the cultural industries where commercial and economic value is considered alongside the cultural or symbolic value of the cultural texts produced. Entrepreneurship focuses far less on invention than innovation. Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship can exist independently, for example for entrepreneurship to exist, there does not need to be creativity or innovation present at all, merely a person looking to exploit an opportunity. Creativity appears a step before innovation resulting in the creation something new and worthwhile, it can exist for its own sake and not be exploited on a commercial level. Creativity focuses on the novel idea first, not the factors that influence whether or not that idea becomes an innovation. Innovation is bringing a new idea to the marketplace in the form of a new product, service, system or process that allows for the commercialisation of a new product, service, system or process. The continuum can be expressed as follows:
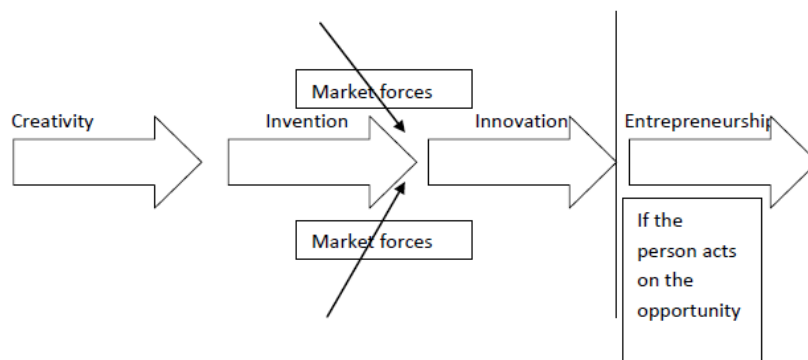

Fig. 1: The process of entrepreneurship

Typically music business education has had a tendency to concentrate on the entrepreneurial training of industry aspirants. There has not been much thought given to the inclusion of creativity and innovation in terms of music business curricula. While music courses focus on creativity, music business courses have focused on entrepreneurship. In much the same way as Engelmann et al. (2012) discuss the training of the classical music 'artrepreneur' and suggest that both creativity and economic principles need to be acquired by music students to develop their careers, innovation and creativity should be included in order to develop their music business students *"careers and scope of action by acquiring and exchanging social and cultural capital within their networks"* (Engelmann et al. 2012: 31).

To focus on just a single point on the continuum is to underestimate the influence of the other points in training an ideal candidate for music business success. There is a clear disconnection between industry and education with industry not greatly valuing the role that education has to play in the development industry personnel. Perhaps this disconnect occurs because of the over emphasis on entrepreneurship and not enough focus on the pre-cursor elements of creativity and innovation. It is beyond the scope of this paper; which is largely a literature review to suggest how entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation are best integrated into music business curricula, this is clear an area for further study. What is clear is that applying creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship to music business education would allow for new dimensions to be explored in terms of curriculum mapping and adopting appropriate skills sets towards the development of best practice in terms in terms of industry needs and as yet unexpressed entrant requirements.

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Music Blogs and the Music Industry: Collusion or Independence?

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Abstract
As the music blogging culture is becoming a core component of the musical experience of many music listeners slowly replacing more traditional forms through which the audience experience music, this article explores how music blog practices fit into the broader discourse of music promotion and how their relationships with the music industry are articulated. Ideally music blogs should operate with values that are distinct from those of the record companies, but because they often rely on record companies for access to material, that relationship might be a source of tension. This article argues that music blogs enter into a series of collaborative relationships that are one aspect of their practices. In particular, they collaborate with labels and PR sponsors to determine the kinds of materials they will present on their sites, importantly connecting these materials with their posts.

Keywords: Music blogs, music industry, ethnography, cultural intermediaries, fans cultures

1   Introduction

Over the last few years there have been numerous examples of independent bands whose sudden fame has been attributed to music blogs. Clap Your Hands, National, Sufjan, Arcade Fire, Vampire Weekend, Kid Cudi and Band of Horses are only few examples of indie bands whose success has been mainly attributed to the combined praise of a number of small blogs with significant followings (Bemis 2005; Fink 2011). The above bands exemplify what, in the last few years, have been informally

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called blog bands. A blog band is a band that is discovered and becomes well-known or famous thanks to the hype generated by music blogs. These bands tend to succeed because one blog discovers them first and from there they spread all over the Internet (Fink 2011).

Quite large claims have been also made in the press about the significance of music blogs, without much being known about them. Rolling Stone calls them *"The best place to get free music, from hot rap remixes to garage-rock obscurities"* (Verde 2004); the Guardian calls them "The Internet DJ" (Alden 2005), and CNet News calls them "The New Wall of Sound" (Sandoval 2008), while The Times alludes to them in the title "Is the party over for the NME" (Dalton 2008).

Music blogging is a phenomenon, which started to emerge as a consequence of the fragmentation of the musical landscape into smaller niche markets (Anderson 2006; Jennins 2007). Music blogs are challenging the authority of traditional media as they can appeal to specific music tastes with greater ease than large publications. It is very unlikely that national music magazines would be able to give any sort of deep coverage to alternative or underground music scenes, or obscure music genres (Weiner 2009; Wodtke 2008). The rise of blogging has created the potential for informed, localised and free information on music, especially for niche communities and specific music scenes (Anderson 2006; Lenarcic & Sarkar 2008; Jennings 2007).

The discussions and debates surrounding music blogs and their potential impact, either positive or negative, on the discourses on popular music have been prominent in the press, music forums, websites and the music blogosphere itself since 2004. Although music blogs have received some attention as personal music diaries (Morris 2008), as spaces for fan interaction (Baym 2007; Hodkinson 2005) and as an alternative way of promoting and discovering new music (Wodtke 2008), little has been published about their interaction with the music industry. Other research provides empirical evidence on the impact that music blogs have on music promotion and consumption (Dhar & Chang, 2007; Dewan & Ramaprasad 2009) as well as on their presumed legality in relation to copyright infringement (Goldstone 2006).

Given the preceding literature, the aim of this paper is to examine the relationship between music blogs and the music industry. In particular, it will be argued that music blogs, born mainly out of music fandom and fans' impulses, have become an important source of information for music scenes and fans communities. Eventually, they also became a crucial promotional space for the music industry. Music blogs' relevance in promoting music will be confirmed by a detailed analysis of how industry professionals develop strategies to pressure and influence music bloggers to cover specific content.

The paper is organised in three parts. The first part contextualizes music blogs within fans cultures. It describes their emergence as a new category of intermediaries challenging the consolidated authority of traditional media. The second part, discusses the research methodology and data collection. The third part, drawing on primary data, provides a detailed analysis of how the relationships between music blogs and industry professionals are articulated. Some implications on music blogs independence from the music industry are drawn in the conclusive part.

2   Music blogs as music fans

Music blogs represent a digital manifestation of a participatory culture that has emerged over the past decade (Jennings, 2006). Blogs are commonly defined as frequently updated web-based chronological publications, logs of personal thoughts and web links, a combination of what is happening in one's personal life, and reports or comments on what is happening on the web and in the world (Lovink, 2008). Typically, blogs are published by individuals and their style is informal and personal. They first appeared in the mid-1990s and became popular as easy and free publishing tools became widespread.

Music blogs have also been defined as a combination of music magazine, personal diary, fanzine, and pirate/alternative radio because they combine elements of all of them (Wodtke 2008). The term music blog is, in fact, quite broad. It comprises a number of different types of music blogs: personal music diaries, more professional sites discussing music

news, blogs discussing a particular music genre or music scene, review blogs, mp3 blogs, and blogs which are a combination of all or some of the above. Despite such a variety, most music blogs have quite similar formats. According to O'Donnel & McClung (2008: 57):

"A band, artist, or song is introduced with a paragraph or two detailing some biographical or background information. A description of the music, often with comparisons to similar sounding bands, followed by a link to download a few songs in MP3 format from that artist often follows […] MP3 blogs rarely feature music found at the top of the current popular charts. Instead, the blogs showcase independent bands or obscure hard-to-find songs from the past. Many of the most popular MP3 blogs focus on up-and-coming bands in the indie music scene".

Music blogs first emerged from a passionate community of music lovers whose personal touch made them comparable to musical diaries (Morris 2008). Soon music blogs started to spread across fans communities and music scenes as a major communication platform for fans to interact with each other and share information (Hodkinson 2006; Baym 2007). Bloggers are seen as ordinary people and, because of their transparency grounded in their personal tone of communication, they are often perceived as representing greater credibility since most audience find them more accessible than faceless institutions or elites of experts (Pasick 2004). Jennings (2007) calls music blogs: savants, music experts, and musically literate opinion leaders who occupy an important and persuasive sphere between the music and the wider public. They are people that others will turn to for advice on record purchases. According to Jennings (2007: 146-147) a blog:

"has the personal touch that lends it an immediacy and authenticity we don't get from more mass-scale professional media [...] Blogs represent a refreshing a credible source of information. Readers are more likely to believe information in an opinion-leading third-party blog than in an ad, whilst the informal style of avoiding sales-speak and overt promotion in business blogs enhances the credibility of the medium".

The important role that some music blogs played in the discovery of new talents, which eventually got signed to record companies, contributed to their relevance as intermediaries. This sort of indirect artist promotion made the music industry recognise their importance in promoting new music and convinced record companies and others to include music blogs in their promotional strategies (ibid.: 83). Duncombe (1997: 155) argues, once the commercial industry recognises that some form of underground indie media starts to become influential within music scenes, they will attempt to incorporate them into the system through a co-option process. Ideally, intermediaries should retain critical independence if they are to be considered as a trusted source. If this autonomy is compromised blogs risk becoming like traditional music journalism, which is commonly dismissed for selling out and serving the record labels' interests (Frith 2001; Negus 1992, 1996). In theory, music blog should operate with distinctive values from those of the record companies and mainly embedded in music fandom and indie culture (Baym 2007; Wodtke 2008). Record companies, want their acts to be promoted in music blogs, while music blogs theoretically should write about what is of interest to themselves or to their audience (Jetto 2010). The ideological discourse of music blogs draws upon indie culture, generally empathising with both the independent artist and the reader in creating the perception of independence from the labels (ibid.). The centrality of values such as authenticity and integrity are in opposition to the nature of the music industry (Fonarow 2006: 26-27).

While literature on blogs mostly presents blogs as a form of "autonomous,'' or "citizen's'' media which participates in a kind of counter public sphere struggling against a hegemonic cultural environment (Fairchild 2005), the model of a counter public is not uniformly applicable when studying the social and cultural practices of music blogs. More traditional counter public models of independent media, such as pirate radio, do not reflect the layers of collusion that make the music blogs here under scrutiny what they are (Fairchild 2005). In particular, in this paper, it will be argued that music blogs often enter into a series of collaborative relationships with the music industry for the promotion of

artists. Drawing from information collected through semi-structured interviews and online observations, this article examines how such a relationship is managed on both sides.

3   Research methodology and data collection

The analysis centres primarily on an ethnographic study of Australian indie music blogs and, to an extent, of the music blogosphere at the broader level. Ethnography describes particular cultural practices, grounded in data obtained through fieldwork and situated in conversation with a broader theoretical framework (Boyd 2008: 46). Ethnography makes possible the analysis of the complexity of culturally driven practices and norms and produces a topological map of a particular set of cultural practices (ibid.: 47). As a methodology for investigating the relationship between music blogs and the music industry, ethnography provides a mechanism for determining the norms and processes that inform the ways blogs select content as well as the values and routines that shape their practices.

The focus of this paper is on Australian indie music blogs because of their reflection of a specific music scene. Choosing to concentrate a part of the analysis on Australian music blogs was an intentional act of defining the boundaries of observation to a particular music scene. The music blogosphere is too big and diverse for a consistent and homogeneous analysis. Additionally, such an approach is consistent with emerging trends of media fragmentation and long tail scenarios, which suggest that the true potential of blogs lies in the millions of blogs that only get a few views per day (Anderson 2006). Finally, the fact that ethnographic research requires interviewing people in person, a geographical constraint was necessary. Not only do Australian music blogs have a significant role in the coverage of Australian and international indie music at a local level, but they also present a serious opportunity for Australian music to get exposure at an international level. Nonetheless, the Australian music blogging community is also linking to the international mu-

sic blogosphere and to minority blogging communities all over the world (Jetto 2013).

The data, consistently with Liav Sade-Beck's (2004) integrated ethnography, came from a variety of sources and were collected during an extended period of time. Liav Sade-Beck (2004) provides a good framework for developing an integrated ethnography. In her analysis of people behaving on the Internet, she relied on online observations, offline in-person interviews, and the analysis of a mixture of documents: traditional, hard copy press, the online press, internet databases, etcetera (ibid.: 10). In this article, such an integrated approach was fundamental in the analysis of music blogs practice. Online postings, interviews, discussions in forums, online and offline press were all taken into considerations when examining music blogs' interaction with the music industry.

Specifically, ethnographic data collection took place over a period of two and a half years, beginning in March 2009. The body of data that informed such analysis consists of digital content captured online, semi-structured in-person interviews, and both online and offline press content analysis. Data from both online and offline observations also shaped the descriptions and analysis.

From May 2009 to April 2010, 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted: 18 with Australian music blogs, three with PR companies, two with independent record labels, one with a major record label, and four with Australian artists. Semi-structured interviews allowed an understanding of the practices of music blogs from the subject's point of view (Bogdan & Taylor 1975) and provided a fuller understanding of their viewpoints on a number of issues. Interviews were crucial because they provided information on the bloggers' practices, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions about what music blogs do, why they do it, and how they are organised. This information provided a comprehensive understanding of bloggers' intrinsic motivations and views on the role of blogs in relation to the music industry and the overall perception of their own work within the space in which they operate. Content analysis of coverage of music blogs in the press usefully complemented the subjects' points of view, either confirming or invalidating the set of social

and cultural practices revealed in the interviews. Finally, content analysis of the Vanilla forum was conducted. As interactivity in music blogs has been shown to be quite limited (Nardi et al. 2004), the Vanilla forum was thought to be the perfect setting to observe how music blogs were openly voicing their very divergent opinions in relation to how blogs should interact with music industry professionals. Comments, opinions and judgments, all central constituents of the information found in the forum, were analysed through a discourse analysis (Brown & Yule 1983). Overall, the forum was a perfect space to identify the values and principles that guided music blogs in interacting with music industry professionals.

4   The relationship between music blogs and the music industry

As previously argued, most music bloggers are music fans and they find in blogging a chance to write passionately about the music they like. They can indulge in writing about acts that have a limited cult appeal and sell no more than a few dozen albums. Such a commitment to the music they like, or that they consider to be aesthetically important, often clashes with the interests of PR firms and labels. Music bloggers often have different values from the record labels. Promoters work with the economic goal of selling their artists; music blogs ideally should work as intermediaries ensuring that the economic goal of promoting an artist is filtered through their own taste and through notions of what is good and important. As Jason from the blog One Louder says (2006: 1):

"Promoters want real fans to talk up bands. Bloggers achieve what a PR release could never do, speak with the voice of a loyal supporter who promotes the music because it's good".

This quote shows how music blogs, like other media, have become an essential outlet in the promotion strategies of record companies and PR companies, which started to consider music blogs as key outlets for their promotion strategies. In particular, the increasingly important role

of PR companies focusing on music blogs means that the relationship between the two sides requires frequent contact and resources. Krissy (2010) from Delinquents, a Sydney-based PR company focusing only on *"below the line promo"*, says:

"The main aim of my role is getting news up to blogs before it's released to mainstream media. So the idea is music labels or band managers come to me immediately before they release a new single or before an album is released, or if a band's going on tour. The idea is that we try and get this news out to the blogs before the mainstream media gets hold of it".

PR agencies and record labels started to approach music blogs around 2004, generally via standardised mass mail-outs containing press releases, and sometimes MP3s or videos and photos, with the aim of having their artists featured in the blog. However, this practice proved to be not particularly effective since music bloggers felt like labels and PR companies were not considering their musical taste or personality at all. Bloggers felt as if they were being exploited as a marketing tool. Steven from the blog Letters Have No Arms commented on the Hype Machine blog (Volodkin 2009: 1):

"When we started we naively expected to get mainly personal messages from smaller bands, perhaps with a link or a song or two attached. We also hoped to get RELEVANT stuff, i.e. bands with some form of affinity with the stuff we actually post. What's happened however is that now we seem to be on just about everyone's mailing list. These mailing lists are just run by labels, usually by the designated 'blog person', whose job it is to basically spam us half to death".

From a PR perspective, though, the most time-efficient way to communicate with bloggers is, once new content is received from an artist or a label, to get exposure for the artist by sending out the same email to everyone in the hope that many blogs will post the story. However, this approach did not seem to be positively embraced by music blogs. Niklas from Discobelle – an influential blog based in Sweden – states:

"When you, like me, get around 300 emails a day it is hard to keep up with it all and if you don't address me directly I won't even read the email" (Utwom 2009: 1).

Bloggers seem primarily concerned about keeping their taste consistent. Many blogs express disapproval if they receive information that is not in line with their focus – what they like and write about. Understanding a blogger's individual subjectivity is therefore crucial for PR firms aiming at building personal relationships with them. As Niklas articulates (Utwom 2009: 1):

"Of course the more personal a connection I feel with the PR person the better, but I understand that for them it's a job and they're interacting with MANY other people besides me. Anyone that I develop a friendship with certainly tends to get more of my attention though and I'll give their e-mails a read almost all the time".

Accordingly, recently PR managers and labels appear to have adjusted their contact strategies with blogs. They are more attentive of a blogger's taste and they try to build long-term relationships with them. Will from Heapflash, a PR company based in Melbourne, comments:

"We don't do it by some massive send out, I send out every email individually and so I go through my database and I check out people's blogs and stuff and I just find out what sort of music they like, because I don't want to send them something they don't like because they're not going to read my emails and they're going to mark me as spam. Heapsflash is all based upon the personal relationships. So ultimately what I'm trying to do is really just get people to respond to me and then try and develop actual relationships with them from music exchange and not disband them".

Identifying the taste of the blogger and keeping track of his work over time becomes, consequently, a crucial task for PR firms and it increases their chances of success.

Another crucial aspect of how PR firms manage their relationships with music blogs is the offer of freebies such as CDs, merchandise, free

tickets and invitations. These might appeal to music bloggers since they could increase their status as professionals in the local music scene. As Jason (2006: 1) from the blog One Louder writes:

"It's no secret that if you run a music blog of any note, promotion companies will offer to supply you with the latest news, free CDs, tickets to shows, MP3 streams, contests and other wares. Who doesn't like free stuff? If you happen to already like the band, even better. You just want to help your favourite bands get heard".

Dan from The Boudist affirms the point made by Jason:

"As soon as you are a music blog you start receiving free CDs, tickets to shows, people offer you merchandise to give away, they invite you to listening parties. The PR industry has realised how influential a music blog can be and they are now chasing music bloggers as back then the traditional press".

It can be argued that this type of influence is a sort of payola with no direct cash exchange, or "blogola", as some bloggers calls it. For some bloggers, the immediate payoff is increasing their professional status:

"If you're breaking the news – supplied by PR releases – going to all the hot shows – with free tickets – offering exclusive contests – with prizes supplied by promoters – then you are seen as an insider. The audience might also drastically increase" (Jason One Louder 2006: 1).

The above quote seems to suggest that the relationship between bloggers and the record labels they endorse (openly or otherwise) is one of mutual benefit. The PR companies supply the freebies and exclusives whereas the bloggers legitimise their music by obtaining street credibility. Due to the large number of requests music blogs get every day, especially the more established ones, bloggers can select and decide which promotional occasions they want to take advantage of. For many bloggers therefore, the blog become more than a special space in which to express their music taste. It becomes a platform to gain professional status in the music industry. Amanda (2010: 1), a Brisbane music blogger, recently wrote:

"With all the hype dedicated to the music industry, I've found that everyone wants to be a part of it. I've had friends state to me that they wish to become music bloggers purely because they will get free passes to gigs … They don't care about giving an honest and unbiased opinion about a band's performance; they'll do anything to get access. And that, to me, is the flipside of blogging; sure, it gives everyone the opportunity to express themselves, but it can also be a part of the problem. Fans who blog are giving assurances to their idols that anything they write will be positive; it's like unpaid PR".

If the relationship between music blogs and the music industry is one of convenience, it is also one of struggle because the two sides operate with very different values and develop different perspectives on the same subject. Therefore, conflicts often arise. Although both parties may be equally interested in maintaining the relationship, often their interests might diverge. Music blogs are eager to receive content from PR companies, which is in line with their personal taste and agenda. In particular, they like to receive personal emails as well as build a proper collaborative relationship with the PR firm, which makes them feel important and unique. On the other hand, for the PR firms, individual blogs are not crucial for their success. It is the combination of a number of blogs discussing the same topic that helps in generating hype. The reality is that the more blogs exist, the less each one of them matters on its own to a PR publicist. So publicists might prefer to send mass mail outs rather than personal emails, not only for efficiency, but for effectiveness. Some blogs seem to be aware of this, as shown in the following quote taken from the thread "The blogs are in charge" in the Vanilla forum:

"I personally dislike pr campaigns because I like to discover new music myself and not have it force fed to me. I have no interest in writing about a band that's been covered dozens of times in the last week alone and that's what you get with these PR driven bands" (Songsillinois 2009).

In addition, because of the often unmanageable quantity of emails that music blogs receive, blogs might still not take them into considera-

tion. This generates a sort of disappointment among PR persons. For example, Will says:

"It's a long an arduous process in sending out sometimes over 100 to 150 emails to individual people and trying to make them so that like, you know I know particular things about all the people and I have some level of relationship with them but in terms of response rate I'd say maybe about 15–20 percent of every email I send out".

According to Will Alexander (2010) the relationship between the industry and music blogs is structured as follows: PR firms send copies of new releases, promotional material, MP3s and press releases to music blogs. Additionally, they may also invite bloggers to attend gigs and events. These acknowledged practices occur through two types of communication. Firstly, there is a formal style of contact. An example of formal contact is the announcements on new releases or upcoming events, which are communicated through press releases or by sending emails to mailing lists, which include all music blogs. In this approach, the PR firms make sure that the information reaches all members of the blog community, and that the information reaches the largest possible number of blogs. Some PR companies will take into account the blogs' taste and will deliver the information only to those blogs, which they believe are more likely to post the content.

Personal emails or mass mail outs, though, are not the only type of contact. Another form of contact practice is becoming far more relevant to understanding the ambivalent relationship between PR firms and music blogs. This is the more informal contact, through which PR firms choose a music blog to which they will provide information first hand. They are free to give the privilege of first-hand information to whichever amateur critic they believe is most suited to covering or reviewing their artist or event. PR firms with a developed knowledge of the music blogosphere will be able to identify the blogger who will be most useful to cover a certain act. A blogger may be targeted if he specialises in a certain area, has a particular taste, or simply because he/she is well regarded. "Privileging" one source is the perfect alibi for the PR firms to pro-

mote their acts in the way that best suits their interests. It creates the illusion that the bloggers are being privileged in a legitimate way when it is the labels' goal of promoting their acts through the right channel that is being fulfilled. According to Krissy from Delinquents:

"So, we want the track to get to them before it gets to anyone else. Before it's on the bands My Space. The more exclusive the more interested the blogs are going to be in it".

Giving information first hand can be a very effective way for PR firms to win the trust of music blogs. Blogs, on the other hand, might become dependent on the PR firm for exclusive access, making the relationship between the two unavoidable. Being the first to post about a new song, album or artist, viewed favourably, especially in the music blogosphere, as it might drastically increase a blog's popularity. As Stuart (2009) from New Weird Australia (a Sydney-based music blog featuring experimental Australian music) says in his interview: *"blogging is becoming pretty much chasing the exclusive"*. He adds:

"Blogging it very much became about cachet based on being the first as opposed to cachet of having a good volume of curatorial work behind you. It became this kind of race and now there are way too many blogs which do that maybe taking a far less serious and professional approach to the leaking of track as well".

Stuart seems to criticise the emerging practice of "chasing the exclusive". He sees it as a destabilising factor to the original purpose of music blogs of offering a consistent and genuine curatorial approach. In particular, new bloggers, since they need to build a following, have been criticised as being the ones who are more likely to post whatever PR firms give them, just to boost their popularity. Krissy believes that:

"If they're really established blogs then you tend to find they're already receiving a lot of information from labels and everything like that, so sometimes I'll get responses sometimes I won't. If they're up and coming blogs, like they're just starting out, they're always like super keen

to be getting that new information and getting whatever they can get their hands on".

This extract shows how the articulation of the dynamics generated around the circulation of exclusive content among PRs and bloggers is, in fact, quite complex. Because of the hyper-immediacy of the music blogosphere (Wodtke 2008: 64), being the first one to post new content will boost traffic through increased readership and incoming links (ibid.: 65). As a general rule, the more traffic a blog has, the more its popularity in the blogosphere will increase. Therefore, one reason why blogs try to showcase new music before others is because they are likely to quickly achieve popularity in the music blogosphere. Cameron (2009) from Before Hollywood thinks that:

"If the blog has the scoop or the exclusive, that denotes status to me because it means a lot of other people are reading it and taking note of what it's saying, circulating that throughout the internet".

Exclusives, though, will not only confer to bloggers popularity but they will also increase the sub-cultural status of the blogger in the indie community, especially if the new artists and music are considered to have indie credibility and the blogger will gain credit of being the first to discover them. In fact, as Will and other PR professionals put it, there are bands that are more likely to appeal to bloggers than others. As Will explains:

"It all depends upon the band. If you've got a band, particularly a band that talks to blogs themselves, or is blog friendly, I mean a band that has a bit of Indie cred and that sort of stuff, you're going to do a lot better but if you're trying to service a blog with music that's either too mainstream or a little bit too out there the response rate is going to be tiny. The best response rate I've gotten is with Indie cred bands".

Will's quote seems to suggest that not every artist/music will appeal to music blogs: indie bands which are not too mainstream but, at the same time, not too unknown either, are the ones that are more likely to succeed.

5   Conclusion

This article has argued that music blogs, through their subjective curatorial work, represent an important space not only for fan communities but for the music industry as well. The interest of the music industry in music blogs caused a significant shift in music blogs' practices. The altruistic promotion of music that the mainstream media ignores is one motivation, which contrasts with the fact that often bloggers are blogging to promote themselves and achieve recognition. Music blogs achieve autonomy in relation to the industry when blogs are able to define their agenda according to a set of criteria they have themselves devised as opposed to an agenda imposed from outside. Instead of approaching music blogs either in a positivistic way, as autonomous cultural intermediaries, or in a cynical way as by-products of the music industry, a discerning examination should consider the degree of autonomy achieved by bloggers and view it against the constraints of operating within the music industry, whose main purpose is to maximise audiences and make profits. The answer to the question of whether music blogs are independent from the music industry or not lies not in whether music blogs can operate outside of a relationship with the labels. It lies, instead, in the ability of the blog to manage that relationship by matching a good use of resources with their sub-cultural values. As Eric Harvey (2006: 1) writes:

"Music blogs exist in a parallel universe to the methodologies of music promotion, criticism and distribution, and it's crucial to acknowledge that that they have internalised large amounts of both forms, reforming them through the lens of fandom".

The rapid development of digital communication is having a massive impact on the music industry. In an age where online media is becoming more popular than print media, music blogs are becoming the prime portals for accessing new music information. In response to this situation, this article examined how entities in the industry – PR agencies in particular – are taking advantage of the new media. As the music industry is embracing the new digital culture, it is important to acknowledge

that PR agencies need to find new ways to reinvent themselves. From the analysis it has also emerged how PR companies need feedback as they are trying to find new ways to harmonise with such changes.

To conclude, this article has shown how the interest of the music industry in music blogs was a determining factor in their evolution from fan-based personal outlet toward a more professional outlet centred around ideas of becoming popular and collaborating with the commercial interests of the industry. The fact that the music industry, which prosecuted thousands of file sharers for copyright infringements, started to provide music blogs with music that might end up in the same file sharing communities, was a further sign of the indisputable power of blogs.

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7 Appendix

The sample for the 18 semi-structured interviews with bloggers was chosen to ensure a representation of a range of cultural settings. Precisely, 10 interviewees were from Sydney, 4 from Melbourne, 2 from Brisbane and the remaining 2 from rural areas. The recruitment was done using a combination of networks of personal contacts and emails introducing the research and the researcher.

The 85 percent of the interviewed bloggers was males and the remaining 15 percent females. The majority of the bloggers was aged between 25 and 35 years old. Only four of them were younger than 24 and five older than 35. They were all English native speakers, coming from a mid-high socio-economic background.

Four of them were still studying and university and the remaining 14, they all had tertiary education, working in professional roles. However, only three of them worked in the music industry and only one as a journalist. Two of them considered themselves as musicians, 3 had their own radio show consistent with the content covered on their blog and one involved in radio programming.

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Article in newspaper:
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