

**Pre-existing Music in United States Presidential
Campaigns, 1972–2012**

Dana C. Gorzelany-Mostak

Schulich School of Music
McGill University, Montreal

August 2012

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of Ph.D. in Musicology

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents	i
Abstract	iv
Résumé	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
List of Musical Examples.....	viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures.....	x
Chapter 1	1
Introduction: “A little musical priming...”	1
Beginnings.....	1
Literature Review.....	4
What Can Campaign Songs Do?	8
Methodology.....	19
Chapter Outline.....	33
Chapter 2	39
Getting [Off] the Raft with Taft: The Emergence of Pre-existing Campaign Music.....	39
Who ya gonna call? “Fritzbusters”	39
A Short History of Campaign Music: From Parody to Pre-existing	40
George McGovern “You’ve Got a Friend”	53
Ronald Reagan “Thank GOD I’m a Country Boy”	67
Bill Clinton “Can’t Help Falling in Love”	84
Staying Afloat <i>Without</i> Taft.....	93
Chapter 3	94
“Grits and Fritz” and a Few Good Ol’ Boys: An Untold History of Southern Rock and the 1976 Jimmy Carter Presidential Campaign	94
Grits: The Impossible Candidate.....	94
Selling Tickets/Selling Carter.....	100
The South’s Gonna Do It Again	111
From Peanuts to President.....	130
Chapter 4	133
“We all know who the real Boss is, right?” John Kerry, His Friend Bruce Springsteen, and the Politics of Political Redemption Post-9/11.....	133
Celebrities and Other Politicians	133
The Vote for Change Tour.....	137
<i>Rising</i> from 9/11 to Rising from the Bush Administration	142

The Symbolic Capital of Vote for Change.....	152
Who's the Boss?.....	155
Rock Out.....	161
Chapter 5	165
"Beautiful Girl" or "big strong tower?" Hillary Clinton's Sonic Identity and <i>Feminist</i> Destiny	165
Campaign Songs... <i>serious</i> business	165
Campaigns 2.0	168
Clinton and the Double Bind.....	171
Will the Real Hillary Clinton Please Stand Up?.....	175
Choose Our Campaign Song	212
Embracing <i>Feminist</i> Destiny.....	222
Chapter 6	225
Keepin' it Real (Respectable) in 2008: Barack Obama's iPod as Proof of Cultural Blackness	225
I like hip hop and I cannot lie... ..	225
The Hip-Hop Dalai Lama?.....	228
"Tell Ya Mama Vote 4 Obama"	244
The Joshua Generation	253
"My President is Black"	257
Chapter 7	262
Conclusion: Barack Obama and the Infinite Playlist	262
Appendix A	277
"Why Not the Best"	277
"(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher"	278
"Think"	279
"Respect"	281
Appendix B	282
2004 Republican National Convention Live Performances	282
Appendix C	283
Vote for Change Tour: Participating Artists and Venues	283
Washington D.C. Vote for Change Finale Concert Set list.....	285
Appendix D.....	286
Music at Obama Rallies (2008)	286
Popular Music after 1945 "24 Hours of Music"	288
Bibliography	289

Secondary Sources	289
Music.....	308
Archival Materials	309
Select Audio/Visual.....	312
Mainstream Press/Music Press.....	316
Speeches, Reports, and Other Online Sources.....	328
Interviews.....	330

ABSTRACT

Over the past forty years, pre-existing popular music has played an increasingly significant role in the soundscapes of United States presidential campaigns—rallies, conventions, advertisements, and fundraising concerts have all featured such music—yet this phenomenon has received little attention in musicological circles. Drawing on various modes of analytical inquiry from the areas of cultural studies, political theory, media studies, and the semiology of music, this dissertation establishes a critical framework for the analysis of pre-existing popular songs within the context of campaigning, and then applies it to case studies that demonstrate how music factors in the formation of candidate identity, party identity, and American identity. In addition to examining the social, cultural, technological, and economic factors that precipitated the shift from newly composed to pre-existing music in campaigning, my work draws on documentary evidence to examine the cultural and institutional factors that engendered alliances between musicians and candidates. This work contributes to a burgeoning body of scholarship that seeks to re-evaluate the complex relationship between popular music and politics, and engages with recent scholarship in film and popular music studies that examines the use of pre-existing music in various contexts.

N.B. Due to copyright restrictions some images and lyrics have been omitted from this file. If you wish to view a complete version of this dissertation, please feel free to contact me at dana.gorzalany-mostak@mail.mcgill.ca.

RÉSUMÉ

Musique préexistante utilisée lors de campagnes présidentielles américaines,
1972-2012

Depuis les 40 dernières années, la musique populaire préexistante a joué un rôle toujours grandissant dans le paysage sonore des campagnes présidentielles américaines – rassemblements, conventions, publicité, et concerts bénéfiques ont tous mis en valeur ce genre de musique – pourtant ce phénomène a reçu peu d’attention dans les cercles musicologiques. En se basant sur divers modes d’analyses issus des études culturelles, théories politiques, études des médias, et sémiologie musicale, cette thèse établit un cadre théorique pour l’analyse de chansons populaires préexistantes dans le contexte d’une campagne présidentielle, et l’applique ensuite à des études de cas démontrant de quelle manière la musique peut être prise en compte dans la formation de l’identité du candidat, l’identité du parti, et l’identité américaine. En plus d’examiner les facteurs sociaux, culturels, technologiques et économiques ayant mené au passage de la musique nouvellement composée à de la musique préexistante lors de campagnes présidentielles, mes travaux se basent sur des preuves documentaires afin d’examiner les facteurs culturels et institutionnels ayant engendré des alliances entre des musiciens et des candidats. Ce travail apporte une contribution à un nombre croissant de recherches universitaires cherchant à réévaluer la relation complexe existant entre la musique populaire et la politique, et amorce un dialogue avec les recherches universitaires récentes dans les domaines du film et de la musique populaire examinant l’utilisation de la musique préexistante dans différents contextes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to sincerely thank my wonderful advisor David Brackett for his enthusiastic support of this project. From my first days in his Crossover seminar to the last days of the dissertation-writing process he has been an inspiration to me, and I feel truly fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with such an outstanding scholar. I would also like to thank my second reader Lisa Barg for providing feedback on my draft and especially for sharing her expertise and insight on race issues in music and 1970s culture.

During my time at McGill University, I have benefitted from the encouragement and guidance of my colleagues. I would like to thank Michael Ethen, Melvin Backstrom, Mimi Haddon, Remi Chiu, and Kimberly White for their thoughtful critiques of my chapters, Caitlin Martinkus for providing musical examples, and Claudine Jacques for transforming my abstract into a résumé. I offer my sincerest gratitude to my favorite theorist Meghan Goodchild for her assistance with formatting my work and for always showing up at the office with a cookie and a smile when I needed it the most. I would also like to single out my brilliant colleague Eric Smialek who has assisted me at every stage of this project. The depth of his knowledge, his enthusiasm, and generosity truly inspire me. I will always fondly remember his penchant for tacos and our engaging discussions about Bourdieu, black metal, and metalanguage over sandwiches at Bofinger.

At McGill University we are fortunate to have a dedicated, extremely knowledgeable group of music librarians. From the beginning of my degree to the end Cynthia Leive, Cathy Martin, David Curtis, Andrew Senior, Brian McMillan and the rest of the library staff have made themselves readily available to assist with even the most obscure research questions. I am especially grateful to Brian McMillan for his assistance with bibliographic and copyright-related issues.

I would also like to acknowledge the librarians and archivists from various libraries across the United States that assisted me with my research. These include Albert Nason at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Herbert H. Ragan IV at the William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Kenneth G. Hafeli at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library, Christine A. Lutz at the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, and the Music Division staff at the Library of Congress. I also would like to thank

Carter Center consultant Jay Beck; Carter campaign staffers Tom Beard, Phil Conlon and Alexander Cooley; and Phil Walden Jr. for sharing their unique insiders' perspectives on southern rock and Carter's 1976 campaign.

My attendance at McGill University would not have been possible without the Schulich Scholarship (2006–2009). Thank you Mr. Schulich for being a true supporter of the arts! I would also like to thank Steven Huebner and Lloyd Whitesell for employing me as a research assistant and for always offering their guidance and encouragement. Conference and research-related travel would not have been possible without the additional assistance provided to me by the Society for American Music, the American Musicological Society, the Schulich School of Music, and my advisor David Brackett.

Last, I would like to thank my Catan group, Jacob Sagrans, Mikhail Smilovic, and Keven Lee for bringing much needed levity to my life, my wonderful parents Connie and Stan for their unending support of my academic endeavors, and my twin sister Jenn (also known as Stweebs, MN, the Bank of Jenn, and the Oracle) for always being my biggest fan.

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Example 1-1 “Happy Days Are Here Again,” mm. 5–20 (piano/vocal score).....	29
Example 5-1 “Ready to Run” Chorus, mm. 21–24 (reduction)	187
Example 5-2 “Ready to Run” Chorus, mm. 17–20.....	188
Example 5-3 “Ready to Run” Pennywhistle Countermelody, mm. 76–82.....	188
Example 5-4 “Suddenly I See” Chorus (vocals only), mm. 34–42	198
Example 5-5 “Beautiful Day” progression (reduction)	201
Example 5-6 “Beautiful Day” Interjection One, mm. 65–72	204

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1 Music in Presidential Campaigns, 1972–2008.....	15
Table 2-1 Types of Campaign Songs (Post-1972)	52
Table 2-2 George McGovern Campaign Concerts	57
Table 2-3 “God Bless the U.S.A.” Images, Ideograph, Text.....	79
Table 2-4 Bill Clinton’s 1992 Campaign Playlist.....	88
Table 3-1 Concerts for Carter Revenue	102
Table 3-2 Descriptions of Southern Rock Bands in the Music Press	128
Table 4-1 Bruce Springsteen in Print	140
Table 4-2 Vote for Change Finale Concert Performers	153
Table 5-1 “Ready to Run” Secondary Signification, Star Text, Connotation.....	190
Table 5-2 “Beautiful Day” Secondary Signification, Star Text, Connotation	208
Table 6-1 Four R&B Campaign Songs	243

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1 What Can Campaign Songs Do?	13
Figure 2-1a–c <i>The Clay Minstrel; or, National Songster</i> (1844)	43
Figure 2-2a & b <i>The Garfield & Arthur Campaign Songster</i> (1880)	44
Figure 2-3 “Together for McGovern at the Garden,” Advertisement	59
Figure 2-4 “Together for McGovern,” Advertisement	61
Figure 2-5 Wirthlin’s Ideographs and Buckley’s Themes in Country Music	74
Figure 3-1 Concerts for Carter Poster	104
Figure 3-2 <i>Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter</i> Telethon Advertisement	106
Figure 3-3 Jimmy Carter Party Invitation	125
Figure 4-1 “Mary’s Place” Lyrics, <i>The Rising</i> (2002) and Vote for Change (2004)	146
Figure 4-2 “Mary’s Place” Lyrics, Verses One–Three (Album Version)	150
Figure 4-3 Vote for Change Tour Poster	164
Figure 5-1a–c Hillary Clinton and the Femininity/Competence Double Bind	174
Figure 5-2 YouChoose ’08 Candidate Channels	176
Figure 5-3 Choose Our Campaign Song Ballot	177
Figure 5-4 <i>Entertainment Weekly</i> , Cover featuring the Dixie Chicks	179
Figure 5-5 “Ready to Run” Lyrics	183
Figure 5-6a–d “Ready to Run” Video	186
Figure 5-7 “Suddenly I See” Lyrics	197
Figure 5-8 “Suddenly I See” Video	200
Figure 5-9 “Beautiful Day” Lyrics	203
Figure 5-10a–e “Beautiful Day” Video	207
Figure 5-11 Choose Our Campaign Song: Round 2 Ballot	216
Figure 5-12a & b Images from Clinton’s <i>Sopranos</i> Parody	221
Figure 6-1 “Obama Gets That Dirt off His Shoulders”	232
Figure 6-2a–c “Dirt off Your Shoulder Remix”	234
Figure 6-3 “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” Lyrics	239
Figure 6-4a & b Women Loving Obama Images	248
Figure 6-5 Obama and His Female Voters: The Personal Becomes Political	251
Figure 7-1 <i>Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots Movement</i> CD, cover	262

Figure 7-2 Barack Obama Spotify Playlist Announcement on Tumblr	265
Figure 7-3 Tumblr Community Responses to Obama’s Playlist.....	266
Figure 7-4 Barack Obama Tumblr Archive, June 2012.....	267
Figure 7-5 2012 Campaign Playlist–Barack Obama (Spotify).....	268
Figure 7-6 2012 Supporter Picks–Barack Obama (Spotify).....	269
Figure 7-7 “Obama” Search on Spotify, Author’s Account	274

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: “A LITTLE MUSICAL PRIMING...”

A campaign song never elected anybody. Or even got anybody a vote. They're written because even political conventions, like any other big “show” or spec, needs a little musical priming.

– Irving Berlin

Beginnings

From the earliest elections with popular participation to the present day, United States presidential candidates have dazzled the citizenry with “a little musical priming.” The typical campaign song from the mid-nineteenth century to the 1970s featured a newly written text set to a contemporary popular song, well-known melody, or newly composed tune. In the introduction to his colorful history of the campaign song, Irwin Silber claims the “campaign song [has] passed into history” with the advent of the electronic age.¹ Indeed the campaign song as defined by Silber and bibliographer William Miles, which began its demise in the 1930s, played only a marginal role in campaigns between 1972 and 2004.² But just as newly composed and newly texted campaign songs moved to the periphery, candidates increasingly turned towards what are commonly referred to as “pre-existing” songs—that is, unaltered popular songs that have already circulated on record, radio, film, or television—for their campaigns.³ (The most frequently cited example of this phenomenon remains Democratic candidate Bill Clinton’s use of Fleetwood Mac’s 1977 hit song “Don’t Stop” for his successful 1992 campaign.) Although only one of many factors that precipitated this change in campaign music practices, Silber rightly points towards electronic media as sounding the death knell for the old tradition. By the second half of the twentieth century, media technologies made recorded music more accessible to broader audiences, and therefore, pre-existing popular songs like “Don’t Stop,” which had already been tested, advertised, and disseminated to a market, became

¹ Irwin Silber, *Songs America Voted By: With the Words and Music That Won and Lost Elections and Influenced the Democratic Process* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1971), 18.

² William Miles, *Songs, Odes, Glees, and Ballads: A Bibliography of American Presidential Campaign Songsters* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990). Journalists and scholars often point to Bill Clinton’s 1992 campaign as the “extinction” date for campaign songs, at least, newly texted or newly composed ones; however, several earlier campaigns did make use of pre-existing music in various ways.

³ Although I limit the scope of my project to presidential campaigns, the use of pre-existing music in local, state, and gubernatorial campaigns also increased during this time.

viable alternatives to newly composed or newly texted songs. In the past forty years, speeches, rallies, conventions, campaign-related concert performances, and fundraisers have all featured pre-existing songs.

Although music has assisted candidates with communication since 1840, entertainment media have increasingly played a significant role in circulating political information and providing commentary on presidential campaigns. Researchers in the areas of media studies and political communication have addressed the myriad ways that the alliances between the entertainment industry and the political sphere, as buttressed by advances in communications technology and changing social and cultural climates, have impacted campaign strategizing, and, ultimately, the formation of candidate identity. And applying a cultural studies-oriented approach, others have addressed celebrity politicians, films, fake news shows, and their surrounding discourses, as well as the symbiotic relationship between popular culture and politics more broadly, but the notion that pre-existing music can act as a potential vehicle for the formation of candidate identity or as a cultural language that might participate in the construction of “voting” subjects (in the Althusserian sense), seldom occurs as more than a footnote in these studies.⁴

Unlike the newly composed (or at least newly texted) didactic music of pre-1972 campaigns, which lacked a substantial history and faded into oblivion after a particular election, the unaltered pre-existing popular songs selected for campaigns post-1972 had already achieved a significant amount of symbolic capital and held an embedded position within the voter’s imagination *before* a candidate’s appropriation.

⁴ Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 127–86; esp. 170–77. See Jeffery P. Jones, “The Shadow Campaign in Popular Culture,” in *The 2004 Presidential Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, ed. Robert E. Denton Jr. (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 195–216; Christian Lahusen, *The Rhetoric of Moral Protest: Public Campaigns, Celebrity Endorsement, and Political Mobilization* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1996); Darrell M. West and John M. Orman, *Celebrity Politics* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003); John Street, “The Pop Star as Politician: From Belafonte to Bono, from Creativity to Conscience,” in *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest*, ed. Ian Peddie (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 49–64; “Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 6, no. 4 (November 2004): 435–52; and John Street, Seth Hague, and Heather Savigny, “Playing to the Crowd: The Role of Music and Musicians in Political Participation,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 10, no. 2 (2008): 269–85. Some of the material in the Street articles listed above was recently revised and published in a collection titled *Music and Politics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012).

For Richard Middleton, meaning in popular music is “produced through dialogue at many levels; within the textures, voices, structures, and style-alliances of the individual musical event; between producers and addressees; between text, style, and genre and other texts, styles, genres; between discourses, musical and other; between interpretations, mediators, and other involved social actors.”⁵ As popular texts, the individual pre-existing songs (and performances) I interrogate in this study hold the potential to signify on multiple levels; they offer up rich histories, associated cultural texts, a complex web of intra- and extra-musical connotations, a body of criticism, and communities already culturally invested in them. And, as Middleton suggests, discourses *about* the songs, their representative genres, and artists (who maintain their own star personas, fan bases, political orientations, and histories) can be equally implicated in the constitution of musical meaning. Or, as James McDonald writes, songs can “take on metatextual possibilities, each of which can change in nature given either the specific nature of the performance(s) under consideration, or given the manner of the subsequent audience response.”⁶ Indeed, Middleton and McDonald position musical meaning as both socially and historically contingent and dialogically constituted. When a candidate uses a pre-existing popular song for his/her campaign, they essentially initiate a restructuring of the song’s socio-cultural meaning—a process that has increasingly accelerated due to the infinite reproducibility afforded by digital technologies. That is to say, although campaign strategists recontextualize and restructure music with a certain political agenda in mind, and, therefore, limit the range of meanings available, evidence shows that voters often interact with music in ways that may not necessarily be predetermined.

Taking Middleton and McDonald’s suppositions regarding popular music’s multivalence, I come to the following questions: How might the “metatextual possibilities” of individual songs or music performances be expanded when they are rearticulated as “campaign music”? What system of values and ideologies or what

⁵ Richard Middleton, “Introduction: Locating the Popular Music Text,” in *Reading Pop: Approaches to Textual Analysis in Popular Music*, ed. Richard Middleton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.

⁶ James R. McDonald, “Rock and Memory: A Search for Meaning,” *Popular Music and Society* 17, no. 3 (1993): 11; quoted in Bethany Klein, *As Heard on TV: Popular Music in Advertising* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 111.

conceptions of gender, race, and class are encoded in the song's words and sounds, or an artist's particular performance thereof, and how might the meaning of a specific repertoire be (re)interpreted when two separate, but often interconnected, fields of power—the political field and the cultural field—intersect during an election cycle? How might pre-existing popular music participate in a campaign's larger branding strategy for a candidate? And last, how might this music participate in the establishment of voting communities (both real and imagined) and highlight the common bonds or shared values within a particular group of constituents?

Positioning the struggle for ideological hegemony as equally cultural *and* political, Antonio Gramsci argues that popular culture can be “a powerful factor in the formation of the mentality and morality of the people.”⁷ In other words, popular culture, here in the form of campaign music practices, holds the potential not only to *reflect* ideology, but to bring it into being as well. In this dissertation, I examine the soundscapes of post-1972 presidential campaigns and examine the myriad ways they both construct and intersect with political ideologies, ultimately contributing to the formation of candidate identity, party identity, and American identity.

Literature Review

A handful of scholars have addressed the role of music in presidential elections; however, seldom do they situate it within the context of broader campaign strategies or larger discussions regarding the music-politics nexus. In such studies, lyrics usually serve as the focal point of analysis. In 2012, music scholar Benjamin S. Schoening and political scientist Eric T. Kasper penned *Don't Stop Thinking about the Music: The Politics of Songs and Musicians in Presidential Campaigns*, a history of the campaign song in American presidential politics. Although the authors provide an excellent overview of the practice from 1789 to 2008, they place much of their emphasis on music's potential to “carry a message” and exclude issues related to its identity- and community-building potential. Similarly, the authors address celebrity-candidate relationships, but they do not consider the impact such alliances have on public's reception of candidates or the symbolic capital such allegiances afford a campaign. Schoening and Kasper draw on a large corpus of articles from the

⁷ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, trans. William Boelhower (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 34, 398.

mainstream press to craft their narrative, but their text shows little awareness of other work in the area of music and politics that might add depth and critical insight to their study.

Schoening and Kasper's book covers the most terrain, but several earlier writings touch on the topic: Irwin Silber's *Songs America Voted By* gives a brief historical survey of the campaign song complete with music examples from each campaign, and Vera Brodsky Lawrence's more general survey of political music addresses a few key examples of the genre.⁸ Taking a more partisan approach, Donald Pickens examines the imagery in Republican campaign song lyrics pre-1900.⁹ Focusing on the period between 1840 and 1972, Janet Nicoll and Douglas Nicoll address the genre's conventions as well as delve into its lyrical content and use of popular tunes.¹⁰ Embracing a similar approach, Jodi Larson provides an overview of campaign music practices post-1945.¹¹ And, most recently, Carol Vernallis explores the intertextual and aesthetic dimensions of viral media that emerged during the 2008 Barack Obama campaign, including "Yes We Can" and the Barack Obama RickRoll'd videos.¹² William Miles and Danny Crew have done a considerable amount of bibliographic work on the topic: Miles on songsters and Crew on both presidential sheet music and political music.¹³

⁸ Silber, *Songs America Voted By*. Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents* (New York: MacMillan, 1975). Lawrence's book covers political music in general and includes hundreds of facsimiles of newspapers, pamphlets, songsters, broadsides, and printed sheet music.

⁹ Donald K. Pickens, "The Historical Images in Republican Campaign Songs, 1860–1900," *Journal of Popular Culture* 15 (2004): 165–74.

¹⁰ Janet I. Nicoll and G. Douglas Nicoll, "Political Campaign Songs from Tippecanoe to '72," *Popular Music and Society* 1, no. 4 (Summer 1972): 193–209.

¹¹ Jodi Larson, "American Tune: Postwar Campaign Songs in a Changing Nation," *Journal of Popular Culture* 42, no. 1 (February 2009): 3–26.

¹² Carol Vernallis, "Audiovisual Change: Viral Web Media and the Obama Campaign," *Cinema Journal* 50, no. 4 (Summer 2011), 73–97. Viral media are broadly defined as Internet messages, images, or videos that achieve popularity through circulation via video sharing hubs such as YouTube, email, blogs, or social networking sites.

¹³ Miles, *Songs, Odes, Glees, and Ballads*. Beginning with the election of 1840, Miles limits his bibliography to music printed in songsters, which he defines as "[collections] of three or more secular poems intended to be sung." He also includes campaign handbooks that devote a separate section to songs. This book offers a good bibliography of secondary sources on campaign music;

Perhaps in response to the increasing visibility of celebrity studies, several researchers have investigated the connections between artists and specific candidates. John Street, for example, explores the reasons *why* musicians become politically engaged and the circumstances under which they do. He argues that only rarely is pop music overtly political. Rather than focusing on the perceived correlation between cultural and social change and music's content, Street advocates focusing on the biographical aspects of musicians' lives and their ability to transform their fame into political communication.¹⁴ Street also provides an overview of a handful of artists, their activism, and its impact on the political landscape. Two scholars, Gerald Meyer and Michael Nelson, have addressed the political involvement of Frank Sinatra, the artist generally considered the first "A lister" to engage in partisan politics.¹⁵

Like John Street, sociologist Christian Lahusen studies the processes through which musicians become politically involved, in this case, with campaigns launched by social movement organizations such as Artists United Against Apartheid.¹⁶ Drawing on the work of Jean Baudrillard, Lahusen examines how such campaigns transform representation and discourse and ultimately produce a new reality, or hyperreality. Musicians, through their performances and participation in mobilization efforts, play a central role in establishing this reality. As Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison argue, stars (especially musicians), with their ability to draw in an audience,

these mainly include general readership newspaper articles that report on the phenomenon (pp. 153–79). Miles also provides a discography that includes campaign song collections issued on 33 1/3 records and sound cassettes (pp. 143–51). Danny O. Crew, *Presidential Sheet Music: An Illustrated Catalogue of Published Music Associated with the American Presidency and Those who Sought the Office* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001); and *American Political Music: A State-by-State Catalog of Printed and Recorded Music Related to Local, State and National Politics, 1756-2004* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2006).

¹⁴ Street, "Pop Star as Politician," 49–64.

¹⁵ Gerald Meyer, "Frank Sinatra: The Popular Front and an American Icon," *Science & Society* 66 (2002): 311–35; and Michael Nelson, "Ol' Red, White, and Blue Eyes: Frank Sinatra and the American Presidency," *Popular Music and Society* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 79–123. For more on Hollywood culture and politics, see Ronald Brownstein, *The Power and the Glitter: The Hollywood-Washington Connection* (New York: Pantheon, 1990); and Steven Joseph Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right: How Movie Stars Shaped American Politics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹⁶ Lahusen, *Rhetoric of Moral Protest*.

are appealing to politicians because they can act as truth bearers to political causes when communicating through their music.¹⁷ Street, Seth Hague, and Heather Savigny rightly point out the limitations of Eyerman and Jamison's work and other studies that reduce music to its ability to reproduce or represent the goals of a particular movement already in progress.¹⁸ Dismissing the idea that mergers between music and politics are engendered by either coincidence or a certain cultural climate, Street et al. argue that closer attention should be paid to the specific conditions that make the link possible, and they consider strong connections as those where music does not merely illustrate public action, but rather constitutes it.¹⁹

Focusing squarely on presidential politics, Jeffery Jones examines the interaction between the formal campaign and what he refers to as the "shadow campaign" in popular culture during the 2004 election cycle, and argues that both rely on similar strategies to invoke representation.²⁰ According to Jones, while the candidates espoused their respective values and visions in traditional arenas, popular culture—music, film, "fake" news programs—with its shadow campaign, offered voters a "language of expression" through which they could construct their own campaign narratives and affirm their respective roles in the democratic process. Street also examines this phenomenon, focusing specifically on the rhetorical styles and self-fashioning strategies shared between celebrity culture and political culture. In his examination of stars who fashion themselves as politicians, and conversely, politicians who assume celebrity-like personas, Street argues, "representation has to be understood as both a political process and a cultural performance, and that the issue of whether celebrity politics, in either form, constitutes a legitimate basis for representation depends on the characteristics of both the process and the performance."²¹ As pre-existing campaign songs are often readily identifiable with a

¹⁷ Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 21–24.

¹⁸ Street et al., "Playing to the Crowd," 274.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 275.

²⁰ Jones, "Shadow Campaign in Popular Culture," 198, 213–14.

²¹ Street, "Celebrity Politicians," 437. Street separates celebrity politicians into two categories: The first type (potentially a presidential candidate) is "the legitimately elected representative (or

particular performer (in some cases a self-appointed truth bearer for a campaign), their celebrity offers an additional signifying force that can be harnessed to meet a set of political goals, or to use Lahusen's words, construct a new reality.

What Can Campaign Songs Do?

In reference to newly texted campaign songs, Irwin Silber positions the politician's desire "to obfuscate issues and manipulate minds" as the primary objective for their composition and performance.²² Although no one has leveled such charges at pre-existing campaign music, journalists, scholars, politicians, and bloggers have eagerly tackled the question "what *can* campaign songs do?" During the past three election cycles, campaign music became the subject of countless articles in the mainstream press. Although many of these pieces are simply veiled attacks or comedic barbs concocted at the candidate's expense, at moments, such commentary provides some critical insight into what pre-existing popular songs may offer the presidential candidate, or at least what people *think* campaign songs can do.

Responding to a journalist's inquiry on music selection, Gary Ginsberg, who served as the head of Bill Clinton's 1992 advance team claimed, "We're looking for something exciting, enthralling, a captivating song that can *rouse a crowd*, can enthuse the candidate, can just set a--*set a mood* for--for whatever event we're walking him into with this song."²³ Much earlier, Horace Greeley, the driving force behind the compilation and publication of the Whig Party's 1840 *Log Cabin Song-Book*, made a similar claim for newly texted music's mood structuring capabilities: "After a song or two they [the voters] are *more ready to listen* to the orators."²⁴ In addition to its ability to "set a mood," media consultants and communications experts claim music holds

the one who aspires to be so)—who engages with the world of popular culture in order to enhance or advance their pre-established political functions and goals," or, one "who uses the forms and associations of the celebrity to enhance their image and communicate their message." The second type is an actor, artist, or musician who "use[s] their status and the medium within which they work to speak out on specific causes and for particular interests with a view to influencing political outcomes."

²² Silber, *Songs America Voted By*, 18.

²³ "Clinton's Team Looking for Theme Song," *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, April 3, 1992 (emphasis mine).

²⁴ Robert Gray Gunderson, *The Log Cabin Campaign* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), 125. See Miles, *Odes, Songs, Glees*, xxvi–xxvii (emphasis mine).

the potential to convey a message. According to Clinton's media consultant Frank Greer: "[Music] is like every other part of the message in a campaign. If it says something about the candidate and connects with the American people, it reinforces the message."²⁵ Music may indeed reinforce a candidate's message if it connects with the people, but it may also establish a connection between the candidate and the voter. In reference to a 2004 John Kerry rally, one young interviewee affirmed this, stating

I feel that these songs are geared toward the twenty and thirty somethings to try to connect with them on a level that the candidates can't do in their speeches. When you are at a rally, you don't remember everything they say. But you remember the music. I don't remember everything Senator John Kerry said. But I remember he played U2.²⁶

During the same election cycle, one journalist even referred to campaign theme songs as "political shorthand," noting, as Greer did, that songs reinforce "[candidate] biography and political message."²⁷ But music does not only carry the message, it can prepare an audience to accept it: as presidential historian Michael Beschloss has argued, "Music lets a campaign telegraph to voters, 'you and I think alike, so when I suggest certain things, you should take it on faith.'"²⁸ In other words, if voters connect to the song, they can by extension connect to the candidate and his/her message.

By choosing certain music, candidates believe they can connect with certain audiences. In the 1972 and 1976 elections, rock music allowed candidates George McGovern and Jimmy Carter to reach out to new cohorts of young voters; in 1992 it brought baby boomers into Bill Clinton's fold. As candidates increasingly diversified their playlists in the twenty-first century, music (and in some cases, activist artists) allowed candidates to connect with voters of various ethnicities, backgrounds, and

²⁵ Lloyd Grove, "Democrats' Different Drummers; Rap, Reggae or Rock, the Music Carries the Campaign Tune," *Washington Post*, October 25, 1991, B1.

²⁶ Oscar Corral, "Campaigns Use Popular Songs to Connect with Voters," *Knight Ridder Washington Bureau*, February 10, 2004, 3C.

²⁷ Scott Shepard, "Campaign Theme Songs are Political Shorthand for Candidates," *Cox News Service*, March 14, 2003.

²⁸ Quoted in David Segal, "Musical Ballots; For Voters Who Can't Decide, A Look at Candidates' Records," *Washington Post*, March 7, 2000, C01.

regional identities. As journalist Margaret Talev notes, “All modern presidential candidates have song playlists for their rallies, a cross-section of popular music that’s meant to energize different segments of the crowd and send cues about the images a candidate wants to project.”²⁹

Here, Talev actually points out the aspect of campaign music most often addressed by journalists and others: music’s potential for building a candidate’s image. Country music helped to solidify Ronald Reagan’s traditionalist values in the minds of voters, and more recently, Mike Huckabee’s guitar playing greatly increased his coolness quotient, if only among evangelicals. Like Greer and Beschloss, rock critic J. D. Considine emphasizes music’s potential to forge a bond between the candidate and the voter:

What you are seeing . . . is the use of music that goes beyond the old-fashioned campaign approach of getting the crowd pumped up. It is being used the very same way as popular music is used in advertising. *It conveys image and style. It expresses a common bond between the average rock-fan voter and the candidate.* And it gives the candidate a free ride on all the *good feeling* that a Top 40 hit generated in its audience. I mean, if you like “Soul Man,” unless you really hate Bob Dole, you are going to feel uplifted when “Dole Man” comes on.³⁰

Additionally, the critic draws out the similarities between the ways candidates and advertising companies use music to generate good feelings surrounding the “product” and to enhance its (or in the case of campaigns, his/her) image. I will return to this point in my discussions of Ronald Reagan’s 1984 campaign film and Bill Clinton’s 1992 playlist.

Evangelicals aside, Huckabee’s respectable attempts to jam out on bass to a Boston classic at campaign appearances probably damaged his credibility more than anything else once Boston artist Tom Scholz fired off a cease-and-desist letter to the presidential hopeful; however, other candidates’ efforts to establish hipness through music have proven successful (case in point, Barack Obama in 2008).³¹ According to

²⁹ Margaret Talev, “Classic Soul Ballads Light up Obama’s Rallies,” *McClatchy-Tribune News*, October 31, 2008, accessed August 4, 2012, <http://www.allvoices.com/news/1674069-ohio-ballads>.

³⁰ Quoted in James A. Fussell, “Candidates Add Pop (Music) to Their Images,” *St. Louis Post* (Missouri), March 18, 1996, 3D (emphasis mine).

David Segal, “[Music is] useful for image-building, and hobnobbing with pop culture heroes can rehydrate even the driest personas.”³² But sometimes the rehydration backfires; during the 1996 election cycle, rarely did the press report on a Bob Dole rally without derisively commenting on his choice of Sam and Dave’s “Soul Man” (reworded as “Dole Man”) as a campaign song. Candidates can however rest assured that criticism of pop music’s presence on the campaign trail remains a non-partisan pastime. In 2004 Tony Hicks quipped, “So, while there was enough campaign song embarrassment for both parties back in the good old days, we now have a new standard of music to which middle-aged guys with no rhythm can climb onstage and awkwardly rally the masses.”³³

Setting aside the light-hearted barbs directed at the septuagenarian Dole, perhaps the most scathing criticism of the practice comes from scholar Eric Weisbard. In a *Village Voice* piece titled “Proxy Music,” he draws an analogy between twentieth-century politicians’ appropriation of rock and pop culture and nineteenth-century candidates’ reliance on minstrelsy for their campaign music.³⁴ Citing Clinton’s famous saxophone performance on *The Arsenio Hall Show*, Carter’s alliance with southern rockers, and George H. W. Bush’s performance (with Lee Atwater) of the blues at his 1988 inaugural ball, he claims “Rock, or its Uncle Sambo ancestor blackface minstrelsy, has been used to sell presidents ever since Jackson dispelled the notion that presidents should manifest the patrician dignity of the Founding Fathers.”³⁵ Although Weisbard focuses on alliances and appropriation, his discomfort with candidates’ problematic performances of music bearing racial connotations, and their obliviousness to its cultural baggage, acts as a subtext that requires further

³¹ For band member Tom Scholz’s letter to Mike Huckabee, see Andy Greene, “‘More Than a Feeling’ Writer Says Mike Huckabee Has Caused Him ‘Damage,’” *Rolling Stone*, February 14, 2008, accessed November 28, 2012, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/more-than-a-feeling-writer-says-mike-huckabee-has-caused-him-damage-20080214>.

³² Segal, “Musical Ballots,” C01.

³³ Tony Hicks, “Pols Crank Up Campaign Songs,” *Contra Costa Times*, July 7, 2004, D01.

³⁴ Some of the pre-existing tunes used in campaigns between the mid-nineteenth century and the early-twentieth century became popular through their performance in minstrel shows. Abraham Lincoln (and others) may have had minstrel performers entertain at their campaign events.

³⁵ Eric Weisbard, “Proxy Music,” *Village Voice*, October 31, 2000, 153.

inquiry. During the 2008 election cycle many voters expressed their own discomfort with politicians and popular culture in online forums. Some argue such alliances strip the electoral process and candidates of their dignity while others focus on the devaluation of music they believe occurs when it serves political or commercial functions. More than one critic dismissed 2008 Democratic candidate John Edwards' Mellencamp-heavy playlist as too commercial, noting a Chevy advertisement featured the same anthem ("Our Country").

When the critics target a specific song rather than the practice as a whole, a perceived "misfit" between candidate and music raises eyebrows, but "inappropriate" lyrics generate the most consternation. In an article titled "The Political Beat Goes Awry," journalist Philip Terzian criticizes the Gore-Lieberman selection "You Ain't Seen Nothin' Yet," and claims "it will be fun to watch Joseph Lieberman, scourge of rap and heavy metal, deconstruct these lyrics: 'I met a devil woman/She took my heart away/She said, I had it comin' to me/But I wanted it that way/I think that any love is good lovin'/And so I took what I could get.'"³⁶ Indeed, the criticism becomes all the more vitriolic when the commentator does not actually believe the candidate listens to or knows the music. Much of the conversation regarding the music of unsuccessful Democratic candidates Al Gore in 2000 and Hillary Clinton in 2008 revolves around such critiques.

A song with a colorful pre-campaign history can be a recipe for disaster as well. In 2004 Republican candidate John McCain chose John Phillip Sousa's "Liberty Bell" march. Laughter ensued as voters recognized Sousa's tune as the theme for *Monty Python's Flying Circus*.³⁷ The former POW also used Mellencamp's song "Pink Houses" at various appearances. Although the chorus features a rousing "ain't that America home of the free," the song actually speaks of the failure of the American dream. One journalist's response: "Shouldn't presidential hopefuls bother to get a culture maven to idiot-proof song choices—or, at the least, print out a lyric sheet?"³⁸

³⁶ Philip Terzian, "The Political Beat Goes Awry," *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, August 25, 2000, B10.

³⁷ Richard Roeper, "Keep on Rockin' in the Free World; Gore, Bush Try to Get in Tune with Young Voters," *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 29, 2000, 4.

The article also points out the fact that Mellencamp, a long time Democrat and activist, openly supported the campaign of McCain's rival, John Edwards.

To summarize, according to the above statements, pre-existing music can serve various functions in a campaign. Figure 1-1 lists these functions:

rouse a crowd/prepare the crowd for a candidate
set a tone or mood
convey a message
build candidate image/identity
connect a candidate to a particular audience (solidarity/community building)
establish hipness (through engagement with popular music/music artists)

Figure 1-1 What Can Campaign Songs Do?³⁹

The journalists and scholars I cited earlier speak almost exclusively about the candidates' use of music at campaign rallies. Not surprisingly, this remains the focus of the majority of studies on campaign music; however, rallies are only one of many contexts where candidates have harnessed the potential of pre-existing music. Here I would like to consider the campaign soundscape in a more holistic manner, taking into consideration additional live contexts (fundraising concerts), mediated contexts (campaign films), and online forums (YouTube, Spotify) where voters may engage with candidates and their music. Table 1-1 outlines the contexts where voters might experience a candidate's music and gives an example of a song used in each. (I will discuss these in greater detail later in the dissertation.)

³⁸ Ted Anthony, "Candidates Plug into Pop Songs, Find It's Hard to Capture Harmony," *Virginian-Pilot*, May 29, 2008, A3.

³⁹ Schoening and Kasper also argue that music holds the potential to sway emotions and to establish a bond between candidate and constituent; however, their work does not consider the connotative power or historical context of genres, or the possibility that songs, *as* campaign songs, might expand the semantic field and embody meanings only tangentially related to the music itself. See *Don't Stop Thinking about the Music*, 19–20.

Event/Placement of Music	Type of Song	Live or Recorded	Example
OFFICIAL			
Rally/Convention/Concert Introduction and exit of candidate (these selections are often referred to as the campaign songs)	pre-existing (almost exclusively after 1984)	Recorded/ sometimes Live	Bill Clinton (1992) “Don’t Stop,” Fleetwood Mac
Introduction and exit of other speakers		Recorded/ sometimes Live	Sarah Palin (2008) “Barracuda,” Heart ⁴⁰
Candidate Performance		Live	Bill Clinton (1992) The <i>Arsenio Hall Show</i> , “Heartbreak Hotel,” Elvis Presley; Mike Huckabee (2008) at various rallies, “More Than a Feeling,” Boston
Entertainment – performances on the main stage		Live	At conventions: DNC (1996) “Rent Medley” [performed by the cast of <i>Rent</i>]; DNC (2008) “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours,” Stevie Wonder
Rope line – as candidates enter the venue or disembark from a vehicle		Recorded/ sometimes Live	
Suture – before the event commences or between speakers		Live or Recorded	In recent years R&B has been used as suture at both parties’ conventions
Television/Radio/Internet Advertisements (background music)	usually newly composed instrumental, sometimes newly composed or pre-existing	Recorded	Newly composed: Jimmy Carter (1976) “Why Not the Best,” Radio Ad; Pre-existing: Walter Mondale (1984) “Teach Your Children,” Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young, “Arms Control 5,” Television Ad; ⁴¹ John McCain (2008) “Running on Empty,” Jackson Browne, Energy Policy Television Ad ⁴²

⁴⁰Ken McLeod notes the use of pre-existing music to introduce athletes at sporting events. According to the author, “As the theme music is chosen by the players themselves, it is typically closely aligned with their identity and often reflects their ethnic or national heritage or else is simply a reflection of their personal music tastes.” We see music used in a similar way at campaign rallies and conventions. See *We Are the Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 82.

⁴¹ “Arms Control 5” [TV ad], Museum of the Moving Image, The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952–2008, accessed May 25, 2012, www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1984/arms-control-5.

⁴² Daniel Kreps, “Jackson Browne Settles with GOP over ‘Running on Empty’ Ad Use,” *Rolling Stone*, July 21, 2009, accessed July 18, 2012, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/jackson-browne-settles-with-gop-over-running-on-empty-ad-use-20090721#ixzz215i2gfMk>.

Event/Placement of Music	Type of Song	Live or Recorded	Example
Singles/Compilation CDs Entertainment – songs can also be made available via internet or radio	newly composed, pre-existing	Recorded	Gerald Ford (1976) “I’m Feeling Good About America;” Barack Obama (2008) <i>Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots Movement</i> , compilation
Candidate/Party-Sponsored Fundraising Events Entertainment	pre-existing, sometimes newly composed or parody	Live	Jimmy Carter (1976) Concerts for Carter; John Kerry (2004) “People” parody, Barbra Streisand
Campaign Films underscore/montage (often introduced at conventions and then aired elsewhere)	newly composed instrumental, sometimes pre-existing	Recorded	Ronald Reagan (1984) campaign film “God Bless the U.S.A.,” Lee Greenwood
UNOFFICIAL			
Television/Radio/Internet Advertisements	usually newly composed instrumental	Recorded	
Entertainment (also compilation CDs, singles)	pre-existing (with campaign images added), newly composed, parody	Recorded	Barack Obama (2008) “Dirt off Your Shoulder Remix;” “Yes We Can,” will.i.am; <i>Audacity of Hope Mixtape</i> , FMB Crew; (2004) non-partisan, “Good to Be in DC,” Gregg and Evan Spiridellis (JibJab); Howard Dean (2004) Songs for Howard Dean Website; ⁴³ (2004) <i>Rock against Bush</i> , Vols. 1 & 2
Fundraising Events Entertainment – organized by private citizens or PACs	pre-existing, newly composed, parody	Live	John Kerry (2004) Vote for Change Tour; [Anti-Bush] Vote Damnit! Tour (2004) organized by Ani DiFranco
News reporting Recycled from above			

Table 1-1 Music in Presidential Campaigns, 1972–2008

As this table demonstrates, between 1984 and 2008 candidates primarily used pre-existing music in live contexts such as rallies, conventions, and fundraising events, whereas newly composed music (usually instrumental) served as the music of choice for campaign films and for television and radio advertising. In terms of genre, between 1992 and 2004, rock served as most candidates’ genre of choice for official campaign theme songs, but country, pop, R&B, and, on occasion folk could be heard

⁴³ The campaign set up this website, but users generated the content. See www.songsfordean.com (accessed November 4, 2011).

on the campaign trail as well. Beginning in 2004 with social networking and candidate websites, and continuing in 2006 with the advent of user-generated content sites such as YouTube, such platforms have contributed to the dissemination of newly composed campaign music. This trend continues to rise. User-generated videos (with pre-existing music and/or mashed-up images or footage of candidates) have become increasingly popular, and news outlets, on occasion, have addressed the videos' contents and implications. Even more recently, amateur and professional composers alike have incorporated candidates' speeches (especially those of Barack Obama) into their creations. "Yes We Can," will.i.am's viral music video, remains the most well known example of this phenomenon.

In addition to limiting their analyses to only one forum where campaign music makes an appearance, campaign song scholars have neglected to recognize the diverse ways people listen. As Table 1-1 shows, music in one form or another saturates the campaign soundscape, yet analyses of its function and impact are often limited to sly critiques of the candidate's themselves, the effectiveness of the general "mood" established by the music, or most typically, the inappropriateness of lyrics. In embracing such a narrow focus, journalists and others exclude the myriad ways listeners/voters engage with music during campaigns and how, as agents, they construct meaning out of campaign-related performances. Would Mitt Romney's supporters consider the candidate's use of "A Little Less Conversation" as an endorsement of sexual promiscuity? Would Barack Obama's supporters consider Aretha Franklin's "Think" to be the candidate's warning to men who might stray?

Drawing on the work of scholars such as Street, Lahusen, and Jones, I propose a framework that will open up the possibility for critical inquiry into campaign music practices. I approach this topic from four interrelated angles. Guided by voter comments posted online and material gathered from interviews with rally attendees, I subject campaign songs and larger candidate playlists to close music analysis. This analysis will show how campaign music and its surrounding discourses can not only reproduce a candidate's message, but also play a role in constructing both the candidate and a voting community. This approach allows for a more nuanced reading of popular music's "political" connotations, which takes into consideration not only the songs themselves, but also the political exigencies and

historically constituted social relations that allow them to perform “cultural work” within the context of campaigning. Second, using case studies from each decade starting with the 1970s, I address specific relationships between candidates and artists and the implications that these alliances have for the interpretation of musical meaning, rather than simply theorizing the impact of artist activism more broadly.⁴⁴ Third, my project draws on Street’s framework in order to evaluate the specific conditions that enable music and politics to merge and become constitutive of political action in campaigning. Like Street, I examine the connections between music and political movements and determine the effects of such exchanges in certain contexts. And last, following Vernallis’s lead, I consider the various ways voters engage with music through user-generated sites, but I extend the discussion to include how such sites participated in the development of both Clinton’s and Obama’s campaign music strategies and investigate the possibilities and challenges these sites afforded them in their respective campaigns. In addition to shedding light on campaign music and offering insight into how the voting public engages with it, this dissertation contributes to a growing body of scholarship that examines the use of pre-existing music in various contexts (film, television, sporting events, and genres such as hip hop).⁴⁵

This brings me to the issue of scope. My dissertation is *not* a history of the campaign song, but rather a group of separate studies that attempt to document and investigate specific instances of music use and their relationship to, and engagement with, other aspects of campaigning. Although the snapshot of the post-1972 campaign soundscape documented in Table 1-1 shows both major parties engage with music, it will become evident in my following chapter outline that the bulk of my work addresses the Democratic Party’s use of pre-existing music. There are several reasons for this disparity. While the Republican Party pioneered the use of

⁴⁴ David Brackett makes an argument in favor of evaluating biographical aspects of the performer that may influence the public’s interpretation of their music. See “Family Values in Music? Billie Holiday’s and Bing Crosby’s ‘I’ll Be Seeing You,’” in *Interpreting Popular Music* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 34–74.

⁴⁵ See Phil Powrie and Robynn Stilwell, *Changing Tunes: The Use of Pre-Existing Music in Film* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music* (New York: Routledge, 2001); and Jeff Smith, *Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

music (predominantly newly composed) in advertising, as Paul Christiansen's work suggests, the Democratic Party was the first to embrace the pre-existing popular music of the counterculture for their campaign events.⁴⁶ Furthermore, left-leaning artists have spearheaded the majority of large-scale fundraising concerts that have taken place over the past decade. Indeed this does not come as a surprise, as many of the charity mega-concerts organized in the 1980s and 1990s (which I would argue are precursors to events such as the 2004 Vote for Change Tour) championed causes historically affiliated with social progressivism.

Similarly, progressives have initiated the majority of music-related grassroots efforts, such as the Concerts for Kerry (also in 2004). This is not to say musicians entirely avoided endorsements and performances on behalf of Republican candidates; some did come out in support of the GOP. Furthermore, although the Left provoked the ire of musicians on occasion, Republicans frequently met resistance when they attempted to use the pre-existing music of artists adamantly opposed to both the candidates' platforms and the appropriation of their music.⁴⁷ In some instances, alleged unauthorized usage has resulted in cease-and-desist letters and, on occasion, lawsuits.⁴⁸ Journalists, legal scholars, and voters have hotly debated the ethics of unauthorized use in various online forums.

Although I would argue that we witness more creative deployment of music on the Democratic side, the lack of available sources for Republican candidates must also be considered. The audio-visual holdings at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library are not accessible to the general public, and in accordance with the

⁴⁶ See Paul Christiansen, "'It's Morning Again in America:' How the Tuesday Team Revolutionized the Use of Music in Political Ads" (paper, American Musicological Society Conference, New Orleans, LA, November 3, 2012).

⁴⁷ For more information on instances where artists have objected to candidates' uses of their music see Abby Schreiber, "A History of Musicians Issuing Cease and Desists to (Mostly) GOP Politicians," *Papermag*, accessed November 12, 2012, http://www.papermag.com/2012/08/cease_and_desist_letters.php.

⁴⁸ For more on politicians' legal troubles, see Robert W. Clarida and Andrew P. Sparkler, "Singing the Campaign Blues: Politicians Often Tone Deaf to Songwriters Rights," *Landside* 3, no. 2 (November–December 2010): n.p. ASCAP provides a document on their website that briefly outlines the guidelines for campaign music use. See The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, "Political Campaign Music Use," *ASCAP* website, n.d., accessed November 10, 2012, http://www.ascap.com/~media/Files/Pdf/advocacy-legislation/ASCAP_Political_Campaign_Music_Use_02022012.pdf

Presidential Records Act and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the presidential records of George W. Bush will not be made available until January 20, 2014. With more recent elections (2004-2012), much of the music activity can be more thoroughly documented, as maintaining an online presence has become a significant part of a candidate's total strategy, including their music strategy. Democratic candidates, by-and-large, have been quicker to exploit the possibilities afforded by new media. For this reason, the bulk of my project deals with the 2004 and 2008 campaigns.

Methodology

The approach that I have developed to answer my earlier question, "what can campaign songs do," draws from and freely adapts methodological frameworks established in scholarly work in the areas of film (especially studies on pre-existing music), cognitive linguistics, gender and politics, media studies, cultural studies, and social theory in order to investigate pre-existing music's communicative potential. According to Thomas Goodnight, four main streams of communication appear in national campaigns: The first, *deliberative discourse*, "is constituted in policy papers; debates over programs; questions of law, taxation, and justice; party platforms; and other serious discussions of issues." The second, *performance*, includes the visuals, slogans and celebratory "campaign hoopla" associated with rallies, conventions, and other political activities. *Commentary*, the informal discussions regarding political messages and their perceived genuineness that take place between citizens and in mass media reportage, comprises the third stream of communication. And last, the fourth stream, *artistic production*, which "spreads on the oblique across the first three," is the realm of art and celebrity. Goodnight argues artistic production—that is, music, theatre, and film—enjoys greater freedom in its expression of political viewpoints, because art's content can be "discounted or disguised." In the end, it is only art, and the celebrities that bring it to life are only actors.⁴⁹

As Jones' and Street's work has shown, the increasing number of celebrities fashioning themselves as politicians and politicians' appropriation of celebrity rhetoric has precipitated the effacement of the boundary between political culture

⁴⁹ G. Thomas Goodnight, "The Passion of the Christ Meets Fahrenheit 9/11: A Study in Celebrity Advocacy," *American Behavioral Scientist* 49 (2005): 410–35, esp. 411–12.

and popular culture. Although, as Steven Ross's work on the Washington-Hollywood nexus has shown, this trend is *not* an entirely new one. The rise of television in the 1960s only heightened the public's awareness of this phenomenon, which bears serious implications for the process of political image making.⁵⁰ In the television era, actor Ron Silver argues, effective communication trumps expert level knowledge.⁵¹ In a study similar to Ross's, Ronald Brownstein argues that Hollywood's awareness of its own political legitimacy, changing attitudes towards the value of fame, and politicians' loss of credibility in the wake of scandals in the 1970s transformed *how* celebrities engaged with politics and politicians.⁵² And by extension, the involvement of celebrity musicians in campaigns has changed candidates' music strategies as well as the public's engagement with campaign music.

Although I adapt various (non-musical) analytical frameworks established by the above-cited authors, the work of social theorist Pierre Bourdieu, especially his concept of the *cultural field* and his theories for examining the sociological basis for taste, profoundly informs my theoretical frame. In his essay "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," Bourdieu posits a total context approach to the study of culture. Rather than limiting his analysis to the internal features of the work itself, he considers the relationship between the individual work and other works as well as the social conditions that dictate the work's production, circulation, and consumption.⁵³ If we concur with Street's claim that an "underlying logic" connects the fields of politics and popular culture, Bourdieu's model offers a method for evaluating *how* these affinities not only influence political strategy but also how they shape civic participation.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Ross, *Hollywood Left and Right*. Starting with Charlie Chaplin and MGM studio boss Louis B. Mayer, Ross interrogates the Hollywood-Washington nexus, bringing to light the activism of celebrities as well as their influence on candidate image building.

⁵¹ Ron Silver founded the Creative Coalition, a non-partisan advocacy group that includes members of the entertainment industry. He endorsed George W. Bush's re-election campaign and spoke at the 2004 Republican Convention. Quoted in Brownstein, *Power and the Glitter*, 9.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3–18.

⁵³ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed," in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. and intro. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 29–73.

According to Bourdieu, agents (the producers of works) and those who confer legitimacy upon works (e.g., audiences, critics, or institutions), as well as these players' respective social positions, form the cultural field. The opposition between mass and elite art, the distribution of available positions, and the struggle between agents for various forms of capital determine the field's structure. In order to participate in the field, agents must possess a certain habitus, in other words, a certain disposition, set of skills, or behaviors that allows them to produce or decode the cultural products available for consumption.⁵⁵ Political scientists argue for a similar principle in their analyses of voting patterns among persons of various educational, geographic, and economic backgrounds. For example, cognitive linguist George Lakoff, in his work on American politics and political strategizing, examines how *cognitive frames*—mental structures that determine one's values—shape voters' perceptions of a political candidate and influence their political decision-making process.⁵⁶ As a system of subconscious, durable, but transposable “structuring structures” acquired through education and socialization, cognitive frames predispose voters to identify with candidates that share their worldview, much in the same way that individuals' habitus shape their taste preferences for art, their ability to “decode” the works, and their eligibility to legitimately participate in the cultural field.

Bourdieu argues that social formations are comprised of a hierarchy of fields, each with its own laws and inner logic. Although each field operates autonomously, it remains structurally homologous with other fields and situated within the overarching field of power. Since the cultural field functions “in reverse” of the

⁵⁴ John Street, *Politics and Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 21.

⁵⁵ Bourdieu defines habitus as the system of “durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.” See, *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 53; quoted in Randal Johnson, introduction to *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 5.

⁵⁶ See George Lakoff, *Whose Freedom? The Battle Over America's Most Important Idea* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006); *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006).

economic field (it lacks economic capital but is high in symbolic capital), it holds a dominated position within the field of power. Agents and players from the fields of politics (politicians and voting communities) and culture (artists and community activists) have attempted to assume positions on the opposing fields with the agenda of acquiring the capital they may lack. Recognizing the structural homology that exists across fields, Bourdieu notes that agents can make *double plays*, in other words, they can simultaneously operate on multiple fields.⁵⁷ For example, the artist Bono's dominant position on the cultural field allows him to simultaneously "play" on the political field.

For Bourdieu, the consideration of an agent's *strategy* (how they play or interact with others in the field) and their *trajectory* (the position they occupy over time) must be taken into account when analyzing an artistic work. And this works both ways: a study of the artistic work as a *symbolic form* can elucidate the relationship between the player and the cultural field. Just as cultural works rely upon individuals and institutions to afford them legitimacy, such works, which are the products of social relations, can reproduce social structures or legitimize them. Systems of domination, or more broadly, power, are reinscribed through the cultural practices and symbolic exchanges that define the structure of the cultural field. Music, as a campaign-related cultural practice, can serve this same function. For example, in chapter two, I consider how Ronald Reagan used country music and its surrounding discourses not only to legitimize his own values and vision, but also to implicitly exclude those who did not conform to his brand of Americanism.

Although the term *capital* refers to economic exchange in general parlance, Bourdieu posits the existence of various forms of capital and considers how it functions within "a wider system of exchanges whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex networks or circuits within and across different fields."⁵⁸ I do consider the economic capital certain artist-politician alliances

⁵⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Social Structures of the Economy*, trans. Chris Turner (Cambridge: Polity, 2005), 271.

⁵⁸ Robert Moore, "Capital" in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, ed. Michael Grenfell (Stocksfield [UK]: Acumen, 2008), 102. For example, a highly popular art form may generate economic capital, but due to its mass appeal, may be dismissed by critics or other apparatuses that value art, and therefore fail to acquire symbolic capital. In general, works that are too popular may be

bring to campaign coffers, especially in the case of Jimmy Carter; however, when performing a valuation of music within the context of campaigns, what Bourdieu refers to as *symbolic capital* holds the most significance. Whereas economic capital can be described as essentially self-interested but lacking in inherent value, symbolic capital, a non-material form of capital that may come in the form of prestige or consecration, fashions itself as both disinterested and possessing intrinsic value. Ultimately, the possession of capital can improve an agent's position in the field, and those that hold such authority possess the ability to espouse a particular interpretation of artistic works, affirm their legitimacy, and determine their aesthetic value. How might a certain musical work, genre, or artist, imbue a campaign with symbolic capital? And, how does each maintain the illusion of intrinsic worth and disinterestedness despite obvious connections to commerce? As my work will show, artists, critics, and fan communities adopt various rhetorical (and in the case of artists, musical) strategies to affirm their cultural status, legitimacy, and intrinsic worth. Their discourses often revolve around the concept of *authenticity* (somewhat of a buzz word in popular music circles). Similarly, the notion of *keepin' it real* becomes relevant to my discussion of Obama's complex relationship with hip-hop. To hold these distinctions is to hold symbolic capital.

Cultural capital (a sub-type of symbolic capital) exists in three sub-forms, two of which are relevant to this study. The first, *embodied cultural capital*, which is acquired through hereditary transmission or accumulated through socialization, can be connected to economic capital, as money allows one leisure time to access the requisite skills and the education necessary to comprehend works of high cultural value. Second, cultural capital can exist in its *objectified* state in the form of objects such as art, paintings, and literature; however, capital in its objectified state, which can be appropriated both materially and symbolically, can only be defined through its relationship to embodied forms of cultural capital. At the same time, the boundary between embodied and objectified cultural capital is a tenuous one when dealing with music; music as an art is both material and non-material. This is especially the case

denigrated due to their popular status. Of course a work or artist's symbolic capital can increase or decrease over time (e.g., the position of jazz music in the 1930s versus its place in the academy today). At the same time, a highly regarded, creative art form with a high level of symbolic capital may not be financially profitable.

for popular music since multiple aspects of performance cannot be notated or replicated and because our perception of musical value often lies at the nexus between performer and work, composer and work, or even producer and work.⁵⁹

I consider how a candidate's *cultural competence* (knowledge or "feel for the game") might allow him/her to establish a connection with a particular community—in the case of Bill Clinton, baby boomers, and in the case of Jimmy Carter, countercultural communities and disenfranchised, working-class southern men. For politicians, competence in the area of music can also help them to convey a particular worldview or system of values, a *habitus*, so to speak. For musicians, holding a dominant position in the cultural field can in many cases afford them access to the political field. As Street argues, artists who wish to engage in politics cannot assume an influential role in this arena unless the public considers them to be legitimate agents in their own artistic profession. (They must hold a dominant position in the cultural field). To put it another way, without sufficient symbolic capital (in the form of prestige), they cannot gain access to the political field, or at least cannot assume an influential position. Returning to the example of Bono, consider the relationships between the Irish musician and world leaders, and how such connections have allowed the artist to advocate on behalf of various humanitarian causes. Such unfettered access to the political field would not be permitted if he were not a highly respected artist.

The application of Bourdieu's theory elucidates *how* the exchange and conversion of capital between artists, politicians and the public, the artists' and politicians' position takings on the opposing fields, as well as the shift in power relations that ensues, engenders a restructuring of the fields of culture (specifically

⁵⁹ In "Forms of Capital," Bourdieu identifies the three primary forms as "*economic capital*, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as *cultural capital*, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications [or competencies]; and as *social capital*, made up of social obligations ('connections'), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility." See Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. J. Richardson (New York: Greenwood, 1986), 241–58, accessed March 1, 2012, <http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/bourdieu-forms-capital.htm>.

the sub-field, popular music) and politics.⁶⁰ However, the particular idiosyncrasies of my project and its topic of focus, popular music, require applying Bourdieu's theories with a bit of latitude. Frequently I employ his terminology within the context of other theoretical models. In outlining the structure of the literary field in nineteenth-century France, Bourdieu argues for an opposition between bourgeois art and "art for art's sake." He argues the former attracts large audiences and deals in economic capital whereas the latter deals in symbolic capital, which comes in the form of prestige for the artist or consecration of his/her works.⁶¹ When he refers to symbolic capital, he uses the term to assess the value of works of restricted production, that is, elite art.

My study deals exclusively with popular music, which is situated on the side of mass art, or the field of large-scale production; but within mass art, in this case popular music, resides a hierarchy of genres and artists—some possess more symbolic capital than others. The majority of songs used for campaigns are widely popular (or at least were at one time) and highly commercial, yet this does not necessarily diminish their symbolic capital *as* campaign songs when they are appropriated by those holding positions on the political field. As Bourdieu argues, positions on the field remain in constant flux, and the changing status of one genre or artist may impact the overall composition of the field. My study considers how these positions are reconfigured during individual election cycles and from one cycle to another. Whereas Bourdieu's interpretation of symbolic value lies in a more universal aesthetic, I consider the symbolic value that a work holds for a particular audience, or in the case of politics, a particular constituency, as well as the public-at-large.

In this study, I attempt to situate campaign music within the context of deliberative discourse, performance, and commentary as they coalesce during particular campaigns. Music, I argue, holds the potential to reinforce narratives disseminated by the official or "shadow" campaign, expand on these narratives, or, in some instances, bring to the surface something about the candidate or campaign

⁶⁰ For more on cultural competence, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁶¹ Bourdieu, "Field of Cultural Production," 46–52.

that may only be implied in other narratives or “streams of communication,” through various non-oratorical or paralinguistic means. These streams, which intersect with each other in complex ways, shape *and* are shaped by the institutional, social, and cultural factors that structure the fields of popular music and politics. Drawing on this premise, my analysis considers how the composition of these fields at particular points in time inflects the meaning of the musical works, as well as the role music can play in reconfiguring relationships between institutions, individuals, and cultural products.

To examine how music participates in the production of political meaning, I draw on the music-semiologic analytical approaches developed by Richard Middleton and Gino Stefani, as well as traditional music-analytic techniques. I also consider artists’ biographies, or more broadly, what Richard Dyer calls “star text”—the totality of multiple texts across various media that contribute to the formation of the star identity—as another locus with connotative potential.⁶² As I suggested earlier, campaign songs generally did not carry an association with a particular artist before the 1970s.⁶³ This of course changed as pre-existing music became the music of choice for campaigns. An artist’s star text may shape the listeners’ hearing of the work and therefore can contribute to their perception of its cultural value, ideological position, and social relevance. In my analysis of the music, I consider how syntactic structures, metalinguistic interpretants (such as journalistic and critical discourses), and star texts shape its connotations, and I show how the restructuring of music in campaign contexts and its presence alongside Goodnight’s streams of communication transform music into *campaign* music, and therefore expand its semantic capacity. As Middleton states, musical codes are relatively “open”; however,

⁶² Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1979); and *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986).

⁶³ There are some exceptions: Al Jolson performed his song “Harding, You’re the Man for Us” at rallies in 1920; Frank Sinatra released a special version of the song “High Hopes” for John F. Kennedy’s 1960 campaign, and Peter, Paul and Mary penned and released a 45 record (“Eugene McCarthy for President”) to raise funds for McCarthy’s campaign and also appeared with other folk artists, such as Phil Ochs, at campaign events. Apparently a songbook was compiled during McGovern’s 1972 campaign as well. There are undoubtedly other pre-1972 instances of this practice.

these codes can be closed or “narrowed” when merged with more precise means of signification, such as words or visual images.⁶⁴

Although I do not always refer to his terminology, Middleton’s eight categories of secondary signification inform my analysis of the connotative aspects of specific songs.⁶⁵ These are as follows: (1) *Intensional values* refer to the connotations of specific structural or thematic elements in the music. This can include the overarching structural organization of a song as well as parameters such as timbre, rhythm, and melody. For example, I argue that much of the Dixie Chicks’ music connotes America’s preindustrial past due to its folkish timbres, melodic structure, and harmonic syntax. (2) *Positional implications* refer to connotations that arise due to the structural position of a musical event. In my analysis of Bruce Springsteen’s post-9/11 song “Mary’s Place” I show how the alteration of the song’s structure and the artist’s articulation of the text recast the song as one of communal, rather than personal, mourning. (3) *Emotive connotations* refer to the affective implications of the music. In chapter five, I argue the use of a repeated chord progression in U2’s “Beautiful Day” helps to establish the song’s contemplative aura. (4) *Ideological choices* refer to the “preferred meanings” of a group of possible interpretations of a song. For example, Republican candidates frequently include country music at their events, as they associate it with authenticity, personal sincerity, traditional values, and plain speaking. (5) *Links with other semiotic systems* refer to visual, kinetic, or verbal associations conjured up by a specific song. In chapter four, I show how the visual style of the Vote for Change finale concert worked to establish community. (6) *Rhetorical connotations* refer to correspondences that music may have with other rhetorical forms (e.g., proposition, dialectic) or styles (e.g., irony, hyperbole, sincerity). For example, in chapter six, I consider how songs with call-and-response

⁶⁴ See Richard Middleton, “Articulating Musical Meaning/Re-Constructing Musical History/Locating the ‘Popular,’” *Popular Music* 5 (1985), 41; and “‘Roll over Beethoven’? Sites and Soundings on the Music-Historical Map,” in *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes [UK]: Open University Press, 1990), 3–33.

⁶⁵ On semiotics, see Philip Tagg and Bob Clarida, *Ten Title Tunes: Towards a Musicology of the Mass Media* (New York: Mass Media Scholars’ Press, 2003); Tagg, “Introductory Notes to the Semiotics of Music,” *Philip Tagg’s Homepage*, July 1999, accessed June 8, 2010, www.tagg.org/xpdfs/semiotug.pdf; and Brackett, Introduction, 1–33, esp. 9–14, and chap. 4 “James Brown’s ‘Superbad’ and the Double-Voiced Utterance,” in *Interpreting Popular Music*, 108–56.

texture established an imagined dialectic between Obama and his female constituents. (7) *Style connotations* include the particular associations of a musical style. In this same chapter, I discuss the association between the sounds of '60s soul and the Civil Rights Movement. (8) *Axiological connotations* refer to the “moral or political evaluations of musical pieces, styles, or genres.”⁶⁶ This comes into play most prominently in chapter five where I discuss U2’s connection with care ethics and humanitarian causes.

How songs are “read,” or, in some cases, “misread” as campaign songs remains contingent on the coding of the work, as well as on the listener’s competence, which Stefani defines as “the ability to produce sense through music.”⁶⁷ Drawing from the Production-Object-Fruition scheme, Stefani defines “code” as “the organization and/or correlation of two fields of elements viewed respectively as expression and content. . . . [W]e have on the one hand sound events, and on the other, every reality which can be connected with them.”⁶⁸ Listeners can make sense of the code in one of two ways: they can identify, decode, and recognize codes that are already constituted, or, drawing on their previous knowledge, they can “identify and/or establish additional or structuring correlations as well as correlating organization between sound events and cultural environment” for new codes.⁶⁹

According to Stefani’s musical code hierarchy, the listener’s level of music specialization or knowledge (what Bourdieu would call embodied cultural capital, or *cultural competence*) informs which codes he/she can decode or which codes “make sense.” Drawing from his model, I refer to three levels of popular music competence: the lowest, “common competence,” the middle range, “popular competence,” and the highest, “high competence.” In my case studies, I try to maintain an awareness not only of how listeners with various competencies might interpret pre-existing music in campaigns, but also of how the broader social

⁶⁶ Richard Middleton’s discussion in “‘From Me to You.’ Popular Music as Message,” in *Studying Popular Music* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1990), 232.

⁶⁷ Gino Stefani, “A Theory of Musical Competence,” *Semiotica* 66 (1987): 7. Stefani indicates the five levels as follows: General Codes, Social Practice, Music Techniques, Style, and Opus.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

relations that dictate an individual song's production might inform the listeners' perceptions of the song's value as well as its ability to signify for a candidate. To elucidate the ways in which I will apply this terminology in subsequent chapters, let us consider the first sixteen bars of the opening proper of "Happy Days Are Here Again," Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1932 pre-existing campaign song (Ex. 1-1).⁷⁰

Chord symbols for Example 1-1:

- System 1: C, G7(#5), Cmaj9, Dm7, G13(b9), C6, Dm7, G+
- System 2: Em7, A7(b9), Dm7, G13, Dm11
- System 3: G7(b9), C6, F, C/E, Eb7, Dm7, G13

Example 1-1 "Happy Days Are Here Again," mm. 5–20 (piano/vocal score)

⁷⁰ Democrats have consistently used this song; however, in 1984, the Republican Party played it at their convention. Speech, Edward Kennedy, *Memorial Services in the Congress of the United States and Tributes in Eulogy of Ronald Reagan, Late a President of the United States* (Congress, Joint Committee on Printing, 2005), 242.

According to Stefani, listeners at the common competence level interpret their experiences through the basic categories used to describe objects or events (high/low, strong/weak, continuity/discontinuity, similarity, symmetry, etc.).⁷¹ All listeners have access to this level of competence. Taking these categories into consideration, persons at this “anthropological level” might note the song’s modest range (c1-c2), the incessant repetition of the germinal rhythmic motive (quarter-rest-quarter-half) that permeates the melody, and the regular rhythmic pulse.

Moving a step higher, listeners at the popular competence level might recognize the codes that are associated with specific modes of material or symbolic production within a society; this includes music practices such as concerts, ballet, or opera.⁷² In this case, the mode of production is that of the stage or film musical. With its light-hearted lyrics and sprightly melody, “Happy Days Are Here Again” bears the traits of the customary *lieto fine* number that punctuated the romance-themed musicals of the 1930s. The singer possesses a light, slightly nasal lyric tenor voice with only a touch of vibrato, as was typical of the male leads in musicals of this period. The song opens with a fanfare-like, ascending triadic melodic gesture, which implies an introduction of sorts, and it features a clearly articulated melody. Listeners at the level of popular competence might also recognize the theories, methods, and devices that are somewhat exclusive to a particular music-making practice.⁷³ Here we have an up-tempo song in a cut-time common meter. The characteristic “hiccup” created by the placement of quarter-note rests in the second beat of some measures of the vocal line, and the syncopation which emphasizes the second beat in the opposing measures gives the song a lilting feel, thereby emphasizing the lyrics. These musical traits, combined with the occurrence of the same text in the first and last lines of the verse and the repetition of the word “again” at the ends of each phrase, contribute to the song’s tuneful character. Overall, these stylistic features strongly situate the work in the musical theater genre.

⁷¹ Stefani, “Theory of Musical Competence,” 11.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

And last, listeners at the high competence level might recognize the work as belonging to a specific historical period, composer, or group of works. In this case, they might be able to pinpoint the *specific* features that classify the song as 1930s Tin Pan Alley: most prominent, the song's orchestration (high strings doubling the vocal melody, plucked string bass, and muted horns), the jazz-inflected harmonies created by the use of flat-3 in the melody and extended triads (7th, flat-9, and 11) in the accompaniment, and symmetrical four-bar phrase structure. In other words, the song is highly typical of both the genre and its respective period.

Listeners engaging at any level may also recognize the distinct traits of the work itself. In the 1930s, the public consumed the music products of Tin Pan Alley through mass media—film, radio, records—and many stage artists, vaudeville singers, and swing bands performed “Happy Days Are Here Again.” Additionally, publishers made various sheet music versions available to the amateur musician for home consumption. However, audiences' first exposure to the song most likely would have occurred during a film. Between 1929 and 1932, no less than nineteen films featured the song as part of their soundtracks. This is to say, voters would have known the song *before* the Roosevelt campaign appropriated it.

If we follow Stefani's logic and position the act of recognizing a work as an exercise that contributes to the reproduction of identity, what exactly was reproduced when eager voters sang or heard “Happy Days Are Here Again” as Roosevelt's campaign song in 1932?⁷⁴ In circulating this pre-existing song with its accrued history and web of connotations as a campaign song, Roosevelt rearticulated a particular attitude, worldview, and way of being. And in addition to molding the mindset of his community of voters, the song could potentially shape Roosevelt's own identity as a candidate and the content of his political platform. This connection operates in both directions: the *content* connoted by the song's *expression* may shape the public's perception of the campaign and candidate, while the candidate's rhetoric, campaign slogans, image, etc. may in turn shape the public's interpretation of the song's *content*. Or, as Goodnight argues, the fourth stream of campaign communication, that is, artistic production, may engage with the first three, deliberative discourses, performance, and commentary.

⁷⁴ Stefani, “Theory of Musical Competence,” 15.

In addition to its uplifting text, the song's placement in films reinforced its associations with renewed hope, optimism, and triumph over adversity. With this appropriation, the presidential hopeful not only allied himself with a single "feel good" song, but also a specific social act—theatre going—and the associations that go along with it. Campaign rallies can be described as a social practice, much in the same vein as concert or theatre going. The song's presence in both social contexts establishes a link between them. But what did the act of theatre going bring to audiences in the Depression era? During the 1930s, the film musical presented a romanticized view of life during troubled times; it offered show goers a form of pure escapism. At the time, Will Hays even claimed that "historians of the future" would argue that the films of the 1930s had "literally laughed the big bad wolf of the depression out of the public mind."⁷⁵

In addition to fostering a mindset appropriate for show going, the socially accepted rules that regulate the song's genre (the film musical) signaled for the consumer specific ways of behaving in an economically depressed climate.⁷⁶ As a result of the Hays Code, the majority of American films produced during the 1930s, including the general audience-targeted film musical, adhered to high moral standards and presented a way of life compatible with conservative values.⁷⁷ By aligning himself with the most popular film genre of the era, its idealism, and its system of values, Roosevelt projected this same orientation onto his campaign; a vote for Roosevelt was a vote for a promising future, prosperity, and optimism. A positive affect is embedded in the lyrics and the structure of the music itself and

⁷⁵ David Nicholas Eldridge, *American Culture in the 1930s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 65. Film historians have called into question whether or not the films of the 1930s can truly be considered "escapist." Those that assume this stance argue that even the most innocuous seeming genres often employed fantastical settings as a means of veiling their political nature or social commentary. See pp. 68–69.

⁷⁶ Franco Fabbri, "A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications." In *Popular Music Perspectives: Papers from the First International Conference on Popular Music Research, Amsterdam, June 1981*, ed. David Horn and Philip Tagg (Gothenburg [Södra Vägen 61, S-41254 Gothenburg] and Exeter: International Association for the Study of Popular Music, 1982), 52. Also available online: *Philip Tagg's Homepage*, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://www.tagg.org/others/ffabbri81a.html>. Fabbri defines music genre as "[a] set of musical events . . . whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules."

⁷⁷ See *The Motion Picture Production Code of 1930* (Hays Code), *ArtsReformation.com*, accessed February 16, 2012, <http://www.artsreformation.com/a001/hays-code.html>.

confirmed by song's extra-musical associations. In other words, the song exudes positive emotion on both the iconic and indexical levels—iconic in that the musical material embodies the emotion, and indexical in that its extra-musical context (film-going/the film musical) equally reinforces this mental outlook.⁷⁸

In his campaign, the candidate promised the voter more than just a celluloid figment of such idealism; through political participation voters could engender the return of “happy days.” Unlike film, with its partitioning line that separated the passive spectator from his desired fantasy world, campaign rallies offered the voter the opportunity for active participation. As the citizenry contributed their singing voices to the soundscape, they actualized the message and held the potential to enact change through their participatory acts.

Chapter Outline

The theories I have outlined above inform my approach in the following chapters, each of which examines music in a different campaign context. Although these theories represent the crux of my approach, in each case I combine them with additional modes of critical inquiry in order to create a framework that best suits the topic under discussion. After providing a short history of the genre (spanning the second half of the nineteenth century to the first half of the twentieth), I consider the increasing use of pre-existing popular song in campaigns during the 1970s-80s and analyze the cultural, economic, and technological factors that precipitated its emergence. In addition to theorizing the factors that contributed to this change, I draw on three case studies—the concerts Warren Beatty organized to benefit George McGovern's unsuccessful 1972 campaign, Ronald Reagan's use of country music in his 1984 campaign film, and Bill Clinton's development of an expansive “classic” playlist in 1992—to illustrate the ways pre-existing music functioned as symbolic capital for candidates.

Although earlier campaigns featured benefit concerts and sought celebrity endorsements, George McGovern's team organized the first large-scale, rock-concert style events with lineups of numerous top performers. Drawing from news reportage, campaign advertisements, and various studies on social attitudes and

⁷⁸ Jay W. Dowling and Dane L. Harwood, *Music Cognition* (Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1986), esp. chap. 8.

political culture in the 1970s, I consider how the concerts—the performances, the connections between participants, and the ensuing discourses—afforded the candidate symbolic capital that ultimately reinforced both his connection to countercultural communities as well as his image as a Party unifier.

Moving into the 1980s, I consider country music's position in the cultural field as the country-western social trend became a mainstream phenomenon, and I show how Reagan positioned his candidacy in relation to this trend. First, I investigate the five key ideographs Reagan pollster Richard Wirthlin established as the guiding principles for the former actor's first and second presidential campaigns, and then I analyze the rhetorical strategies the candidate used to align country music values with his own political values. An analysis of the musical montage in Reagan's campaign film, *A New Beginning*, shows how the candidate solidified this connection.

I conclude chapter two with a discussion of Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign. The candidate from Arkansas was the first to establish an expansive playlist of pre-existing music that included popular songs that had been absent from the charts for a number of years, in Clinton's case for eight to twenty-eight years. Drawing on various texts that theorize nostalgia and Bourdieu's work on taste, I consider how "pastness," as packaged by his campaign, resonated with larger prevailing cultural trends of the time and show how the public came to draw a connection between music "tastes" and political disposition.

Whereas in chapter two I primarily focus on pre-existing music specifically given the designation "campaign song," in chapters three and four I examine the performative dimension of pre-existing music by shifting my focus towards the alliances forged between musicians and candidates. Here I engage with scholarship in the areas of film and political science in order to address how various texts interact to formulate a star or candidate's image. Although Richard Dyer deals with film stars, his theoretical framework, particularly the concept of star text, can be applicable to the study of music stars as well. His critical excursions are equally applicable in the realm of the postmodern political landscape where, according to Shawn Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles, the conflation of candidate rhetoric and media narratives shapes the image of the politician. These narratives can derive from the official campaign or the unofficial campaign (Jones's "shadow campaign"), and can interact

with each other in intricate ways. In the two case studies presented here, I examine how the exchange and conversion of economic and symbolic capital afforded candidates Jimmy Carter and John Kerry positions on the cultural field and how their cultural competence ultimately furthered their respective presidential campaigns.

Using archival documents I located at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and new material from personal interviews with concert organizers, in chapter three I investigate the vital role southern rock played in the viability of Carter's 1976 presidential campaign. Although alliances such as these can naturally be interpreted as an intersection of music and politics, following in the critical methodology developed by Street, I closely examine the three dimensions of this linkage: organization, legitimation, and cultural performance. As part of my discussion on organization and legitimation, I first examine the socio-cultural factors and institutional conditions that allowed artists such as Gregg Allman and Charlie Daniels to act as political representatives.⁷⁹ Second, I consider how discourses regarding southern distinctiveness shaped the self-fashioning strategies of Carter and the bands and how such strategies engaged with the region's complicated history and traditions. For the dimension of cultural performance, I focus on five fundraising concerts southern rock groups performed on Carter's behalf and show how they participated in the construction of Carter's image as a Washington outsider and "authentic" southern candidate. Ultimately, I show how both Carter and the bands cultivated "new" southern identities that appealed to both Leftists and the more traditional-minded southerners Richard Nixon targeted with his Southern Strategy in earlier campaigns.

Taking a celebrity-candidate relationship from a more recent campaign as the focus, in chapter four I address the alliance formed between long-time activist-musician Bruce Springsteen and Democratic-hopeful John Kerry during his unsuccessful 2004 presidential bid. In addition to discussing the media narratives that emerged from this affiliation and the ways in which they influenced the formation of Kerry's political image, I show how these narratives might engender a political reading of Springsteen's campaign performances. My analysis elucidates how apolitical songs can become aligned with a particular political ideology through

⁷⁹ Street et al., "Playing to the Crowd," 269; and "Celebrity Politicians," 435–52.

formal and textual alterations to the music and the particular paralinguistic or sonic qualities of a specific campaign performance. Using Springsteen's "Mary's Place" performance at the Vote for Change Tour finale concert as an example, I illustrate how such changes altered the established semantic codes of the song by shifting the primary focus to political/societal redemption rather than spiritual/personal redemption as suggested by the original version of the song on *The Rising* (2002). Ultimately, the broader music-aesthetic values of southern rock and classic rock that Carter's and Kerry's audiences admired could easily be translated into political values when framed by the rhetoric of their respective campaigns.

Combining the analytical approaches employed in chapters three and four, in the next two chapters I turn to the playlists of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama. Using scholarship in the area of gender and rhetoric, recent writings on the 2008 campaign, and Clinton's own statements and autobiography as points of departure, I analyze the gendered identities the former First Lady offered with her playlist and the ways her music engaged with other media narratives circulating at the time of her campaign. Although Clinton used a pre-established playlist for her stump events, she created an online "Choose Our Campaign Song" contest and left the selection of her one official campaign song up to her supporters. That is to say, she allowed the voting public to *choose* a sonic identity for her. In order to publicize the contest, Clinton created three promotional videos and posted them on both her website and YouTube, offering voters the opportunity not only to vote for songs, but to debate their particular strengths or weaknesses and create their own video responses. My analysis shows how Clinton's videos established a space where she could adopt a warmer, more stereotypically feminine persona as well as establish a "pact of intimacy" with the public. Taking into consideration how voters responded to Clinton's engagement with music, I argue the playlist and the contest format allowed her to negotiate the femininity/competence double bind that inflected the public's perception of her legitimacy as a candidate.

Obama's success in the 2008 primary was to some extent contingent on his ability to draw in both black voters and women voters, two constituencies historically

aligned with the Clintons.⁸⁰ Using Obama's own statements about hip-hop and the public's responses to his position, in chapter six I explore how notions of authenticity in the hip-hop community were mapped onto Obama's legitimacy as a candidate and how his stance on the genre shaped discourses regarding his perceived "blackness."⁸¹ Then, I show how a handful of songs from his playlist, which feature the typical semiotics of R&B love songs, tapped into the "women loving Obama" phenomena. My analyses and interviews with rally attendees show how these songs sonically evoked idealized romantic relationships that acted as metonymical stand-ins for the desired, ideal candidate–voter relationship. I continue by demonstrating how Obama's use of 1960s–70s R&B classics also allowed the candidate to appeal to the older black voters who responded to his candidacy with skepticism. That is to say, Obama's list forged a connection with the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and, thus, broached the significance of his racial and cultural identity to his candidacy—albeit in a cautious way that mirrored the tone of his verbal discourses and rhetorical

⁸⁰ See Mark Hugo Lopez and Paul Taylor, "Dissecting the 2008 Electorate: Most Diverse in U.S. History," *Pew Research Center Report*, April 30, 2009, accessed November 20, 2009, <http://pewresearch.org/assets/pdf/dissecting-2008-electorate.pdf>.

⁸¹ For scholarly contributions, see Ron Walters, "Barack Obama and the Politics of Blackness," *Journal of Black Studies* 38 (2007): 7–29; Charlton D. McIlwain, "Perceptions of Leadership and the Challenge of Obama's Blackness," *Journal of Black Studies* 38 (2007): 64–74; Charlton D. McIlwain and Stephen M. Caliendo, "Black Messages, White Messages: The Differential Use of Racial Appeals by Black and White Candidates," *Journal of Black Studies* 39 (2009): 732–43; Carly Fraser, "Race, Post-Black Politics, and the Democratic Presidential Candidacy of Barack Obama," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society* 11, no. 1 (2009): 17–40; Doug Hartmann, "The Social Significance of Barack Obama," *Contexts* 7 (2008): 16–21; Wanda V. Parham-Payne, "Through the Lens of Black Women: The Significance of Obama's Campaign," *Journal of African American Studies* 13 (2009): 131–38; Marnel Niles, "Black Woman Identity Politics: Barack Obama or Hillary Clinton?" (paper, National Communication Association 94th Annual Convention, San Diego, CA, TBA); and Nicholas A. Yanes and Derrais Carter, eds., *The Iconic Obama, 2007–2009: Essays on Media Representations of the Candidate and New President* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012). Articles in middlebrow mainstream magazines and newspapers include: Ta-Nehisi Paul Coates, "Is Obama Black Enough," *Time*, February 1, 2007, accessed September 11, 2009, <http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1584736,00.html>; Stanley Crouch, "What Obama Isn't: Black Like Me on Race," *New York Daily News*, November 2, 2006, accessed September 11, 2009, http://www.nydailynews.com/archives/opinions/2006/11/02/2006-11-02_what_obama_isn_t_black_like.html; Brent Staples, "Decoding the Debate over the Blackness of Barack Obama," *New York Times*, February 11, 2007, accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/11/opinion/11sun3.html>; Louis Chude-Sokei, "Redefining 'Black,'" *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 2007, accessed November 12, 2007, <http://www.latimes.com/news/printedition/opinion/la-op-chude-sokei18feb18,0,1047776.story>; and Candy Crowley and Sasha Johnson, "Is Black America Really Ready to Embrace Obama?" *CNN*, March 1, 2007, accessed November 12, 2009, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/02/28/obama.black.vote/index.html>.

style. Ultimately, Obama's public statements with regards to hip-hop, his playlist, and his engagement with celebrity rhetoric allowed him to appeal to diverse communities of voters by projecting a black identity that was both "real" and "respectable."

And finally, in chapter seven I consider the most recent trends in campaigning, including the 2012 candidates' establishment of Spotify playlists and the increasing visibility and relevance of newly composed campaign music.⁸² (As this campaign will still be in progress at the time of submission, my conclusions will be only preliminary.) From the earliest public campaigns, citizens have composed campaign music to apotheosize their favorite candidate or denigrate his opponent. However, with the advent of user-generated media platforms, individual voters now have access to a forum where they can freely distribute their creations; with such unrestricted access to the electorate, they hold the potential to shape campaign discourses in a profound way. What implications does the decentralization and democratization of the campaign music composition and distribution processes have for the formation of candidate identity and the boundaries of the genre? I conclude by considering the impact these changes might have on pre-existing music's position in future campaigns.

⁸² Launched in the US in July 2011, Spotify is a music-streaming service that allows its subscribers to access a huge catalog of music, create their own playlists, and share them via social networking platforms. As of August 2012, Spotify boasted fifteen million active users. See Josh Sanburn, "Spotify is Growing — But Why Isn't It Growing Faster?" *Time*, August 16, 2012, accessed August 27, 2012, <http://business.time.com/2012/08/16/spotify-is-growing-but-the-idea-of-music-ownership-is-holding-it-back/>.

CHAPTER 2

GETTING [OFF] THE RAFT WITH TAFT: THE EMERGENCE OF PRE-EXISTING CAMPAIGN MUSIC

Who ya gonna call? “Fritzbusters”

In the late spring of 1984 my mother let me skip school so I could attend a Ronald Reagan campaign rally in my hometown of Fairfield, Connecticut. I cannot remember what the incumbent Republican candidate spoke of in his short speech, but I do have two music-related memories: one, the high school band’s out-of-tune rendition of “Hail to the Chief;” and two, a male quartet in grey coveralls singing the newly penned “Fritzbusters” to the tune of Ray Parker’s hit song “Ghostbusters” from the blockbuster film of the same name. The song, as well as buttons and tee-shirts emblazoned with the same slogan and film-inspired logo, warned voters against electing opponent Walter “Fritz” Mondale, “a ghost of administrations past.” Reagan’s cheeky musical parody falls in line with the same tradition of campaign music composition defined by bibliographer William Miles: “[W]ritten by aspiring but uninspired lyricists, as well as by composers employed by commercial music publishers, [campaign songs], usually set to the more common airs of the day, review in verse the qualifications and strong points of the candidates, the popular issues of the particular campaign, and the foibles and weaknesses of the opposition.”¹

By the 1970s, the performance of songs like “Fritzbusters” at official campaign events was in decline, and pre-existing popular songs had begun to assume their place. As such, Miles’s narrow definition of campaign music bears re-examination. Taking into consideration the routine use of pre-existing music and the

¹ William Miles, *Songs, Odes, Glees, and Ballads: A Bibliography of American Presidential Campaign Songsters* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), ix.

Popular tunes such as “Rosin the Bow,” “Auld Lang Syne,” and “Yankee Doodle” appeared in many collections. For “Rosin the Bow,” see “Old Tippecanoe,” “Lincoln and Liberty,” and “Straight Out Democrat,” for “Auld Lang Syne,” see “Jackson Toast,” “Little Mac Shall Be Restored,” and “The Log Cabin and Hard Cider Candidate,” for “Yankee Doodle” see “Harrison,” “Taft and Sherman,” and “Hurrah for Prohibition.” Lyrics and melodies are included in Irwin Silber’s collection, *Songs America Voted By* (Harrisburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1971). Some of these early songs were written for inaugurations or for candidates *after* they assumed office; in some cases these songs were used to promote a candidate’s run for a second term, or as Benjamin Schoening and Eric Kasper argue, boost his approval rating. See *Don’t Stop Thinking about the Music: The Politics of Songs and Musicians in Presidential Campaigns* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2012), 36–37.

increasing level of celebrity involvement in campaigns, I use the term *campaign music* to describe *any* music (newly composed or pre-existing) composed, played, or performed with the intention of enhancing a particular campaign. In expanding Miles' definition, a series of questions arises: What can a pre-existing song that lacks a candidate-specific text bring to a campaign when performed before or after a candidate's speech? And what about music performed at benefit concerts where the candidates themselves make appearances, sometimes taking up an instrument in order to join the music making?

To contextualize the shift from newly composed to pre-existing music and evaluate the performative force of the genre post-1972, I offer three case studies. The first addresses the role fundraising concerts played in both community building and image formation for 1972 Democratic candidate George McGovern. Taking a campaign film and country music spectacles as its topics, the second will consider Lee Greenwood's song "God Bless the U.S.A." and the broader role country music played in the construction of values for Ronald Reagan's 1984 reelection campaign. Using the trend toward nostalgia in late-1980s/early-1990s popular culture as a focal point, the third study examines Bill Clinton's campaign playlist and analyzes the way the candidate used "old" music to carve out a hip persona as well as to establish a connection with his baby boomer comrades. Before delving into these studies, which will shed light on pre-existing music's function in campaign contexts, I give a brief history of the genre and outline the terminology I will use in subsequent chapters.

A Short History of Campaign Music: From Parody to Pre-existing

Although in 1786 various dailies published the text of several George Washington songs, including "God Save Great Washington," scholars point to "The Son of Liberty" (composed for Thomas Jefferson's campaign in 1800) as the earliest example of a campaign song.² For this campaign, the second bipartisan election, the *Gazette of the United States, and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser* printed a song for Federalist candidate John Adams, and the *Centennial of Freedom* responded with a song for Republican candidate Thomas Jefferson.³ During this period, almanacs and campaign

² "God Save Great Washington," *Philadelphia Continental Journal*, April 7, 1786.

³ *Gazette of the United States, and Philadelphia Daily Advertiser*, May 28, 1800; *Centennial of Freedom*, July 15, 1800. For more on early campaign songs, see Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Music*

newspapers printed texts to such songs, and campaigns also distributed music on broadsides. However, the genre did not gain momentum until the election of 1840, the first to include widespread popular participation. Whig candidate William Henry Harrison's campaign team became the first to promote singing as a worthy campaign activity. Unfortunately, Harrison's detractors derided the throngs of unruly singers, but their obstreperous tactic worked. At least one commentator proclaimed Harrison as the first candidate "sung into office."⁴ "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too," set to the melody of the minstrel song "Little Pigs," remains the most well known of the hundreds of songs composed to support Harrison's noisy but effective campaign.

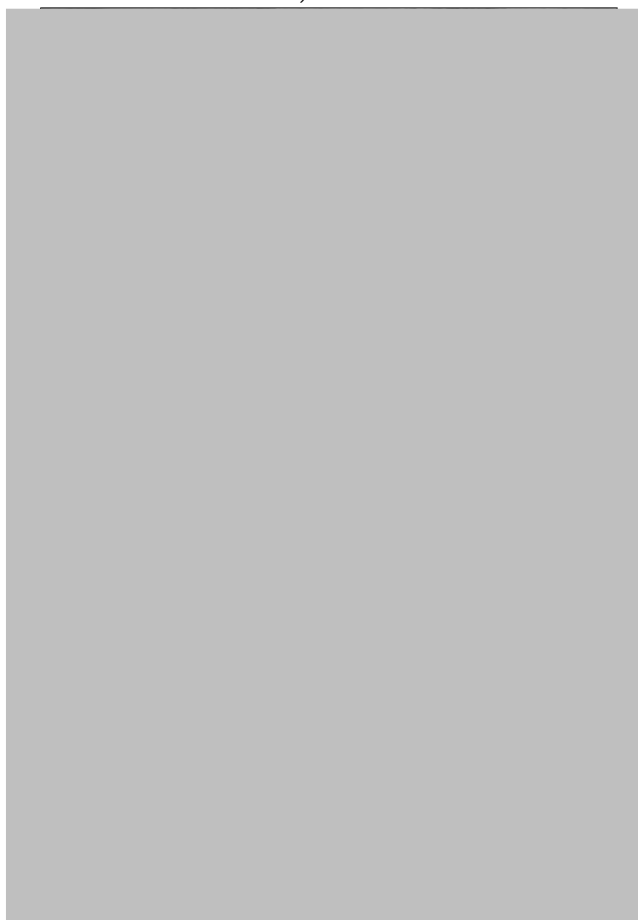
From roughly the 1840s to the 1930s, political parties distributed campaign songs in songsters, small booklets that typically provided text and indicated the appropriate melody for each song. The contents of *The Clay Minstrel; or, National Songster*, compiled for Whig candidate Henry Clay in 1844, are typical for this period (Fig. 2-1a).⁵ In this songster, short prose passages, which either describe the candidate or refer to something the opposing candidate stated in a speech, are interspersed between sets of song lyrics. A song that refutes the statement or disparages the competitor usually follows. Although penned by "uninspired" lyricists, as Miles suggests, in some instances the texts engage with the platform of the candidate and his opposition in sophisticated ways. The songsters sometimes include etched drawings as well: *The Clay Minstrel; or, National Songster* includes images of Henry Clay's birthplace and Kentucky estate, as well as a short biography (Fig. 2-1b & c). A table of contents and several ads are also included.

for *Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents* (New York: MacMillan, 1975), 162; and Schoening and Kasper, *Don't Stop Thinking about the Music*, 29–57.

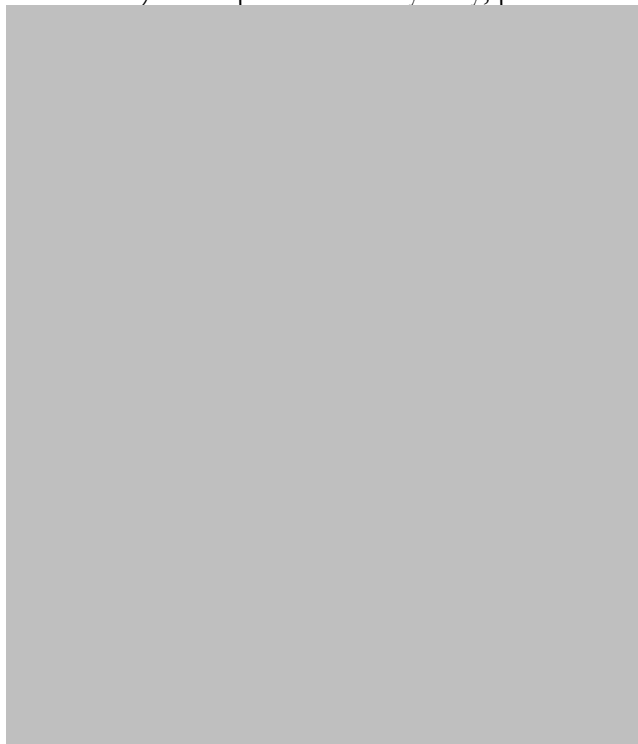
⁴ The *Wheeling Times* reported, "We have been sung down, lied down and drunk down." Quoted in Merrill D. Peterson, *The Great Triumvirate: Webster, Clay, and Calhoun* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 296.

⁵ *The Clay Minstrel; or, National Songster* (New York and Philadelphia, 1844). Library of Congress.

a) Cover



b) Birthplace of Henry Clay, p. 210



- c) Ashland Image and Text for “Harry of the West” (parody campaign song),
pp. 4–5

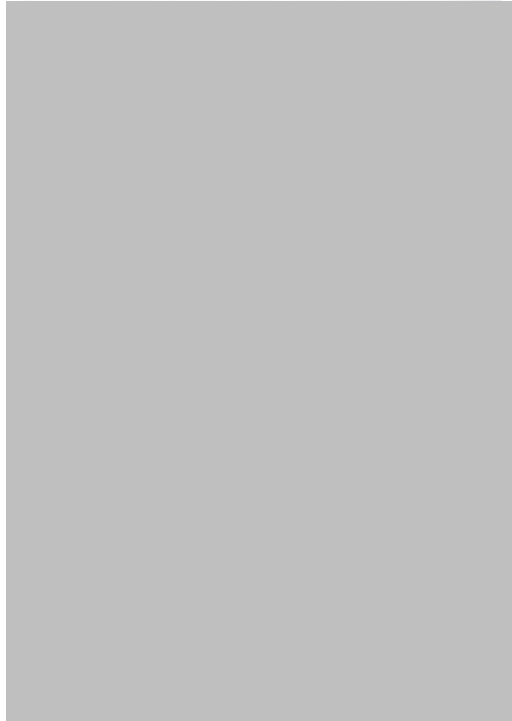


Figure 2-1a–c *The Clay Minstrel; or, National Songster* (1844)

Some of these pocket-sized booklets, such as *The Garfield & Arthur Campaign Songster* (1880), include music as well as lyrics (Fig. 2-2a & b). While some selections give only the melodies, others include three- or four-part a cappella choruses at the songs’ refrains. Glee clubs, which presumably included some individuals with musical training, often entertained at campaign events, so publishers may have intended songsters such as this one for a more musically educated market. Both this songster and *The Clay Minstrel; or, National Songster* include songs in Negro dialect.⁶ The majority of the tunes in both can be described as simple folk melodies with modest ranges.

⁶ *The Garfield & Arthur Campaign Songster* (New York: New York Popular Publishing Company, 1880). Library of Congress.

a) Cover



b) “Jim Garfield Leads Us” (parody campaign song), pp. 4–5



Figure 2-2a & b *The Garfield & Arthur Campaign Songster* (1880)

Political organizations performed these satirical or didactic ditties at political meetings, parades, and rallies. Although cost prohibitive, parties sometimes used brass bands, drums, fifes, or fiddles to lead campaign song singing.⁷ Commercial publishers or party organizations generally published and distributed the songsters;⁸ however, in several instances, parties encouraged amateurs to submit their own campaign songs. In 1856 the Philadelphia Republican Club sponsored a campaign song contest and then published the top one hundred songs in a songster. Similarly, the National Association of Democratic Clubs presented the winning selections from a 1900 contest in a songster published by the *New York Journal*.⁹ Wendell Willkie did the same in 1940. Even when unsolicited, constituents often bombarded candidates with their musical offerings. In the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and the George McGovern Collection at the Mudd Manuscript Library I located hundreds of songs submitted by eager citizens. Some of these may have been performed at local gatherings.¹⁰

By the mid-nineteenth century sheet music publishers jumped on the bandwagon, and starting in the late 1880s, Tin Pan Alley produced a vast amount of newly composed sheet music, a potentially influential form of mass media during the pre-industrial era, dedicated to particular candidates.¹¹ Professional and amateur composers alike created newly composed campaign songs. In 1864 Stephen Foster penned “Little Mac! Little Mac! You’re the Very Man” for George McClellan’s campaign.¹² Better known for his marches and other patriotic music, John Philip

⁷ Miles, *Songs, Odes, Glees, and Ballads*, xxxii.

⁸ *Ibid.*, xxii, xxxi.

⁹ *Ibid.*, xxxiii.

¹⁰ See “Unsolicited Occasional Music,” Records of the Inaugural Committee Parties, Entertainment, Simon, Joey through Parties, Entertainment, Performers, Unsolicited Performers [1], Box 44, Jimmy Carter Library; and Music, Songbook Materials, 1972, The George S. McGovern Papers, Box 110, Princeton University, Mudd Manuscript Library; and Campaign Songs, 1972, The George S. McGovern Papers, Box 111, Princeton University, Mudd Manuscript Library.

¹¹ “Campaign Songs: For Over a Century Politicians Have Depended on Tin Pan Alley to Turn Out . . . Ballads for Ballots,” *Detroit News Pictorial Magazine*, July 10, 1960, 18–21.

¹² Although attributed to Foster, Crew suggests his sister likely penned the lyrics and set them to an unpublished Foster tune. See Danny O. Crew, *Presidential Sheet Music: An Illustrated*

Sousa composed songs for Republican candidate James G. Blaine's 1884 campaign, including "We'll Follow Where the White Plume Waves" and "The White Plumed Knight of Maine."¹³ A vocal supporter of Warren Harding, Al Jolson composed "Harding, You're the Man for Us," the official Republican campaign song of the 1920 election.¹⁴ Tin Pan Alley composer Abe Holzmann and lyricist Harry Kerr composed "Get on the Raft with Taft" for William Howard Taft's 1908 campaign, and Irving Berlin penned words and music to "(Good Times with Hoover) Better Times with Al" for Democratic candidate Al Smith in 1928.¹⁵

Newly composed compositions included an array of songs, marches, and even polkas.¹⁶ While voters did sing some of this music at rallies and conventions, much of it was primarily intended for home use. This did not, however, prevent campaign organizers from finding gimmicky marketing strategies for their campaign songs. In 1924 the John W. Davis campaign printed the song "In Democracy We Trust" on a cardboard fan to keep constituents cool at the 1924 convention. The Calvin Coolidge campaign also used a fan for "Keep Cool with Coolidge," but their fan could also be folded into a megaphone for use at rallies.¹⁷

Despite the production of newly composed campaign songs, the practice of setting new texts to old music—parody—still proliferated. Whereas Berlin offered a new composition, Pioneer Music Company published a new text set to Charles B. Lawlor's popular tune "The Sidewalks of New York" for New York governor Al Smith's 1928 campaign. Another popular selection for Smith included an arrangement by Albert von Tilzer and A. Seymour Brown that combined "The Sidewalks of New York," "Yankee Doodle," and "Auld Lang Syne" in a campaign

Catalogue of Published Music Associated with the American Presidency and Those Who Sought the Office (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2001), 8.

¹³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁴ Silber, *Songs America Voted By*, 236–37.

¹⁵ Irving Berlin, "(Good Times with Hoover) Better Times with Al" (New York: I. Berlin, 1928). Francis G. Spencer Collection of American Popular Sheet Music, Baylor University.

¹⁶ Crew's book includes sheet music composed for specific candidates and campaign use, and also includes sheet music dedicated to, or inspired by, sitting presidents.

¹⁷ Crew, *Presidential Sheet Music*, 19.

song titled “He’s Our Al.” This practice wasn’t restricted to the publication of sheet music: vaudeville entertainer Jack Kaufman released a recording of the song through Cameo. While scholars and journalists point to the 1920s as the final decade where the campaign song (as defined by Miles) functioned as an integral part of campaign-related pageantry, parody campaign songs such as those Miles describes continued if only to a small degree until the 1980s.¹⁸

An analysis of news reporting at the time does not suggest that the practice of singing campaign songs ended, but rather that well-known entertainers increasingly became commonplace at campaign events and, as such, songsters and singing voters moved to the periphery. This shift coincided with the rise of radio and sound trucks, which Miles argues replaced singing voters and contributed to the declining significance of the songster.¹⁹ Radio made its first public, politically oriented broadcast in 1920 when it aired the presidential campaign election results. By the 1924 election, political speeches sometimes featured popular singers. The Republican Party even aired several rallies featuring performers such as Al Jolson and Elsie Ferguson, and it ended the election season with a huge rally, complete with speeches and performances from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City.²⁰ By the 1928 election, radio had become an integral medium through which candidates presented their platform. At this time politicians relied on vaudeville stars or famous local sons and daughters to spice up their radio spots with campaign songs or other popular songs.²¹ Listeners found political broadcasts dreadfully boring, so the use of various expert reporters rather than a single announcer, and the injection of musical interludes and vaudeville numbers added to the unfolding

¹⁸ In chapter six, I discuss the re-emergence of newly composed campaign music and its circulation through user-generated content sites such as YouTube.

¹⁹ Sound trucks (vehicles fitted with loudspeakers) would play political advertisements.

²⁰ For more on the Met event, see “Hughes Here Sees Coolidge Victory; Assails His Foes,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1924, 1, accessed April 28, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/103376815?accountid=12339>. See also Schoening and Kasper, *Don’t Stop Thinking about the Music*, 95–102.

²¹ Schoening and Kasper, *Don’t Stop Thinking about the Music*, xvii.

drama, thereby increasing the public's interest in the political process.²² For example, at the 1928 Democratic Convention in Houston Texas, Miss Melvina Passmore, a "Houston girl and member of the Chicago Civic Opera" entertained the audience with Edward Laska's campaign song "Goodbye Cal, Hello Al! C from Cal Leaves Al" as well as a handful of patriotic tunes, including "Dixie," "The Star Spangled Banner," and "My Country 'Tis of Thee."²³

Between the 1940s and 1960s candidates increasingly chose tunes originally featured on stage or screen and provided them with a new text, capitalizing on the popularity of the musical at that time. Rather than attacking the opposition, as was customary in earlier songs, these offerings instead lavished praise on the candidate and cited his noble qualities. Hoping to generate enthusiasm, Harry Truman used "I'm Just Wild about Harry" from Eubie Blake's musical *Shuffle Along* in 1952.²⁴ Irving Berlin reworked the song "They Like Ike" from his musical *Call Me Madam* to "I Like Ike" for Dwight Eisenhower's campaign the same year. "Hello, Dolly!" became "Hello, Lyndon!" for Lyndon Johnson in 1964, and Richard Nixon used "Buckle Down with Nixon" set to the tune "Buckle Down, Winssocki" from the musical *Best Foot Forward* in 1968.

Perhaps the most famous of these parody campaign songs was Frank Sinatra's recording of the number "High Hopes" for John F. Kennedy's 1960 campaign. Audiences first heard the song from Sinatra in the 1959 Frank Capra film *A Hole in the Head*; the artist later performed it on the *Frank Sinatra Timex Show*.²⁵ After Sinatra recorded the new version for Kennedy, the candidate's campaign team

²² See R. L. Duffus, "Forty Millions Tune in on Convention," *New York Times*, June 10, 1928, 123, accessed April 28, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/104549871?accountid=12339>.

²³ "Day Session Stirred by Picture of Smith," *New York Times*, June 27, 1928, 2, accessed February 8, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/104306910?accountid=12339>. See Edward Laska, *Good-Bye Cal Hello Al! C From Cal Leaves Al* [The Song Hit of the National Democratic Convention in Houston] (New York: The Democratic Song Co., 1928). Johns Hopkins University, Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music.

²⁴ Schoening and Kasper, *Don't Stop Thinking about the Music*, 114–15.

²⁵ In this show, which aired on October 19, 1959, Mitzi Gaynor, Bing Crosby, and Dean Martin opened with a performance of the song (with an altered version of the lyrics), and Sinatra performed it with a group of children later in the same broadcast. In the February 15, 1960 episode of the same series, Eleanor Roosevelt recited the song's lyrics.

shipped 25,000 copies of the 45 record to Wisconsin during its crucial primary.²⁶ With “High Hopes,” Kennedy had a performer and an award-winning song frequently heard on the radio and visible in both television and film. Before 1960, only a few select campaign events were televised; when they were, the size of the audience was minimal since few Americans had televisions in their homes, a situation that would change radically by the end of the 1950s. It is no coincidence that the decline of sheet music for campaigns coincided with the rise of television.²⁷ Candidates did, on occasion, use music in their television ads, but in most instances they gravitated towards newly composed music in either a theatre or march-like style, or towards instrumental underscore.²⁸

While Sinatra was *not* the first famous singer to perform at political events or record a campaign song, he was one of the first highly visible celebrities to engage with partisan politics on the public stage.²⁹ And Kennedy was not the first presidential candidate endorsed by the singer. While still a teen idol in the 1940s, Sinatra stumped for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and often sang standards (with altered lyrics to fit the occasion) at political rallies. Not surprisingly the press commented on the fact that Sinatra, the man who made the ladies swoon, himself swooned over the sitting president who was seeking out a fourth term.³⁰ In addition

²⁶ Ronald Brownstein, *The Power and the Glitter: The Hollywood-Washington Connection* (New York: Pantheon, 1990), 151.

²⁷ Crew marks the late 1950s as the end of published campaign music, but does not connect this with the emergence of television culture. Crew, *Presidential Sheet Music*, 29.

²⁸ The Museum of the Moving Image’s Living Room Candidate page includes various types of candidate commercials from 1952 to 2008. See, for example, the commercials for Dwight Eisenhower “Ike for President” (1952), John F. Kennedy “Jingle” (1960), and George H. W. Bush “Family/Children” (1988), accessed July 4, 2012, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>.

²⁹ See Gerald Meyer, “Frank Sinatra: The Popular Front and an American Icon,” *Science & Society* 66 (2002): 311–35; and Michael Nelson “Ol’ Red, White, and Blue Eyes: Frank Sinatra and the American Presidency,” *Popular Music and Society* 24, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 79–102. For another good article on Frank Sinatra’s engagement in politics and shift in party allegiance, see Jon Wiener, “When Old Blue Eyes was ‘Red’”: The Poignant Story of Frank Sinatra’s Politics,” *New Republic*, March 30, 1986, 21–23.

³⁰ Edward T. Folliard, “Rooseveltian Charm Made Sinatra Swoon Tea-Mate Says,” *Washington Post*, [undated clipping] 1944, 1, accessed October 20, 2011, <http://sinatrafamily.com/forum/frank-sinatra-8/newspaper-clipping-sinatra-meets-president-roosevelt-41716/>. For more on this meeting, see “Sinatra for Fourth Term; Bing Crosby Backs Dewey,” *Daily Journal World – Lawrence, Kansas*, September 29, 1944. Sinatra also stumped for

to Sinatra, other musicians came out in support of candidates in the 1960s: American Independent Party candidate George Wallace, who used Tammy Wynette's "Stand by Your Man" during his campaign and featured country singers at his rallies, famously quipped in 1968 that "the people who like country music are going to elect me as president."³¹ Jodi Larson makes note of the fact that Wallace embraced the genre in his efforts to appeal to the white lower class. This trend towards celebrity appearances, and the inclusion of genres such as country and folk, rather than just the pop-styled songs exemplified by artists such as Sinatra, became more pronounced in the 1970s.

Those who study the campaign song generally agree that the 1970s represented a transitional period for the genre. In her survey of campaign music post-World War II, Larson positions changing trends in song composition or selection during this time as a response to the public's general sense of discontent with the country's political system. Additionally, Schoening and Kasper note the change in content and distribution that occurs when candidates embrace pre-existing songs. Here I would like to further interrogate the political circumstances that might account for the emergence of pre-existing music and broaden the discussion to take into consideration the social, cultural, technological, and economic factors that also contributed to the transformation of the campaign soundscape. In addition to examining these factors, I would like to move beyond the idea of "message," and engage with the question I posed in chapter one: What can campaign songs do in certain contexts and how might they act as a form of capital for the candidates who use them (see Table 1-1)?

Before moving to the case studies, I would like to briefly explain my terminology. Historically, publishers appended the term "campaign song" to songs

the candidate and even made a speech on his behalf at Carnegie Hall. Both Sinatra and Roosevelt were criticized for this alliance. See Arnold Shaw, *Sinatra: Twentieth Century Romantic* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968).

³¹ J. Lester Feder, quoted in "The Conservative Evolution of Country Part I," National Public Radio, February 18, 2007. Cited in Jodi Larson, "American Tune: Postwar Campaign Songs in a Changing Nation," *Journal of Popular Culture* 42, no. 1 (February 2009): 14. Dan Carter briefly discusses George Wallace's use of country musicians in his election campaigns; I believe these alliances deserve further inquiry. See *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

printed in party songsters and to sheet music dedicated to a particular candidate. Because these songs included candidate-specific texts, audiences would immediately recognize them as campaign songs (or at least candidate tribute songs). As parody and newly composed songs decreased in importance in the 1980s, journalists began to refer to non-newly texted, pre-existing songs played during campaign events as “unofficial” campaign songs. This practice ended around the time of Clinton’s first campaign, most likely because he was the first candidate to use a diverse and extensive list of songs at his campaign events. As pre-existing music became common practice, the press began to label the selections candidates used most frequently to introduce or punctuate their speeches as their *campaign songs* or *campaign theme songs*. Table 2-1 outlines the terminology I will use in subsequent chapters:

General	
campaign music	Any music composed, played, or performed with the intention of enhancing a particular campaign. (This includes music performed at campaign-related fundraisers or conventions.)
Lists	
candidate playlist	1. The term I use to refer to a group of campaign songs regularly used by candidates at rallies. <i>or</i> 2. A list of songs candidates specify as such (e.g., candidates' Spotify playlists in 2012).
supporter picks	Online playlists of songs recommended by voters for a specific candidate.
Types of Campaign Songs	
pre-existing campaign song	An unaltered song circulated in other media before being used by a campaign.
newly composed campaign song	A song with a new, candidate-specific or candidate-inspired text set to newly composed music.
parody campaign song	1. A song with a new, candidate-specific text set to a pre-existing tune. <i>or</i> 2. An online, user-generated mashup or remix of a newly composed or pre-existing campaign song. (This can be audio only or audio and video.) <i>or</i> 3. An online, user-generated mashup or montage of candidate images with songs not directly associated with any particular candidate or campaign.
speech parody campaign song	A song with newly composed <i>or</i> pre-existing music that appropriates texts from candidate speeches or audiobooks.

Table 2-1 Types of Campaign Songs (Post-1972)

Rallies and conventions, in general, feature *a lot* of music—live performances of local artists or celebrities, the town's high school band (hopefully in tune), recorded music to fill space between speakers, etc. I reserve the term *pre-existing campaign song* for the tunes candidates frequently use during their entrances and exits at events, or for the group of selections they officially announce as their *playlist*.³² I also recognize the *speech parody campaign song* as the practice of taking a candidate's pre-recorded speech

³² Although it fits under the general designation "campaign music," I do not address instrumental music used in campaign ads, as in most instances it is newly composed.

and using it as the basis for a new composition, has become somewhat of a cultural phenomenon since 2008. With some exceptions—for example, “Mary’s Place” which, as I discuss in chapter four, Springsteen pairs with a specific political frame—I do not consider the music performed at fundraising concerts to be campaign songs (unless a candidate has used it elsewhere in an official capacity).

George McGovern “You’ve Got a Friend”

In the wake of the Vietnam War and the activist movements of the 1960s, the mainstream increasingly became fragmented by demographic traits, ideology, culture, and social ties; and what was formerly considered counterculture moved from the periphery to the center.³³ As a result of the perceived failures of government, baby boomers, many of which aligned themselves with various countercultural movements during the 1960s, increasingly disengaged from the political process. With the ratification of the twenty-sixth Amendment in 1971, which lowered the voting age nationwide to eighteen, the nation attempted to bring back into the fold the young people that were disengaged from the deliberative process. At the same time, changes in the structure of election primaries and the delegate selection process resulted in a power shift that could potentially increase the influence of younger voters and diminish the clout of former Party bosses.³⁴ Therefore, young people became a significant contingency, one that politicians could not afford to neglect. According to Frederick G. Dutton, “a fundamental reshaping of political power could be attained by a candidate tailoring his appeal to the millions of young people to be enfranchised in the seventies and those of their labor elders who shared a desire for peace, social justice and access to the levers of government.”³⁵ In his role as campaign advisor, Dutton encouraged 1972 candidate

³³ Claude S. Fischer and Greggor Mattson, “Is America Fragmenting?” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (August 2009): 435–55. There is some dispute in sociological circles with regards to the true nature of fragmentation, in other words, is the widening gap marked by the differentiation of education and social class or by race or ethnicity? For more on the destabilization of the center, see Frederick G. Dutton “The Changing Mainstream” in *Changing Sources of Power: American Politics in the 1970s* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971), 219–47.

³⁴ Steven J. Ross, “President Bulworth, or, Will Mr. Beatty Go to Washington? Warren Beatty,” in *Hollywood Left and Right: How Movie Stars Shaped American Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 325.

³⁵ Dutton, *Changing Sources of Power*.

George McGovern to base his campaign on an anti-establishment platform, in contrast to incumbent candidate Richard Nixon, and to use up to seven million dollars in campaign funds to recruit twenty-five million available youth voters.³⁶ If these efforts added eighteen million new voters, the majority of whom would favor the left-wing candidate, it would, according to Dutton, “completely change the ball game and even the ball park of this year’s general election campaign.”³⁷ In addition to voter registration drives, artistic production represented one way candidates could reach this new bloc of voters.

The political polarization defining this period aside, the party system, the primary entity through which the public accessed information about candidates, began to decrease in influence due to the emergence of mass media.³⁸ By 1960 87.3 percent of households owned a television. Responding to television’s growing popularity, campaigns became more costly as politicians utilized this medium to deliver their campaign message. But television also changed *how* candidates communicated with their constituents. Before television became widespread, politicians focused on issues, but with the availability of an image, the focus shifted from policy and issues to the person. Addressing the challenges of candidate image construction in an age defined by what they call “political scopophilia,” Shawn Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles argue the candidate “still must strive for a presidential image, and they must utilize and associate the myths and images of the presidency with their candidacy. Because of the presence of television and the intimate gazing that this medium invites, candidates must also exhibit their private and intimate selves to voters in order to appear credible and forthcoming.”³⁹

³⁶ Frederick G. Dutton memorandum to George McGovern, “The Determining Margin of Difference.” Quoted in James M. Naughton, “A Reporter’s Notebook: McGovern and Youth,” *New York Times*, June 20, 1972, 24.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Martin P. Wattenberg, *The Decline of American Political Parties, 1952–1992* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998). Although several scholars have made claims for a correlation between the rise in cynicism and the decline of party identification, Wattenberg claims they are unrelated parallel trends.

³⁹ Trevor Parry-Giles and Shawn J. Parry-Giles, “Political Scopophilia, Presidential Campaigning, and the Intimacy of American Politics,” *Communication Studies* 47, no. 3 (1996): 194.

According to Dutton, “the politics of the seventies offer[ed] one of those rare chances to rally a new following, or at least provoke a different configuration” of the American political landscape.⁴⁰ This combination of factors—the need for additional campaign funds to cover the rising costs of advertising, the greater emphasis on self-presentation, and the need to connect with average voters during the primary period—encouraged candidates to align themselves with celebrities, experts in self-fashioning with an already established fan community that could be transformed into a voting community. Ron Brownstein claims the movie star’s value increased “once candidates were forced to sell themselves directly through primaries to the public.”⁴¹ He even goes so far as to argue that “in the era of photo opportunities, sound bites, and manipulative thirty-second campaign commercials, the work of the modern politician does not appear to be different from that of the actor.”⁴²

In choosing the music of Peter, Paul and Mary, and Simon and Garfunkel for his campaign, McGovern not only aligned himself with visible celebrities but also with the “truth bearers,” to use Eyerman and Jamison’s term, of the leftist causes of the 1960s. As the soundtrack of that era, the artists’ music—and the ideology and values encoded in its sounds and performance aesthetic—functioned as symbolic capital for the candidate as he sought to unify voters that held various leftist positions. McGovern’s choice (no doubt due in part to Warren Beatty’s influence) made sense. “Name” songs (Schoening and Kasper’s term), in other words, campaign songs that focused solely on the person, such as the one used in Kennedy’s commercial “Jingle” (1960) and Dwight Eisenhower’s commercial “I Like Ike” (1952), may have received a cool reception in a climate where the public greeted politicians with suspicion. As truth bearers, groups like Peter, Paul and Mary held more credibility.

Aesthetics and ideology aside, pre-existing songs afford certain economic advantages, as popular music circulates through an already established system of

⁴⁰ Dutton, *Changing Sources of Power*, 20.

⁴¹ Brownstein, *Power and the Glitter*, 234.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8-9.

distribution. Once a candidate becomes associated with a particular song due to its repeated performance at a rally, he/she essentially acquires free publicity when that song is heard on television, radio, record, or in live performance. With the Party no longer acting as the primary conduit for information, voters increasingly gleaned political content from other sources. Songs and celebrity activists became two such sources of political information. And some celebrities certainly relished this role; actress Shirley MacLaine and her brother, actor Warren Beatty, both of whom played pivotal roles in McGovern's campaign team, were no exception. As communications advisor, Beatty, in addition to working with McGovern on his presentation style, organized five concerts on the candidate's behalf. MacLaine also organized a concert, this one exclusively featuring women performers.⁴³ Each of the McGovern Concerts offered the Party faithful performances by the most famous musicians of the day, various skits and sketches, and in some cases, a political speaker or two.⁴⁴ Table 2-2 indicates the concert dates, locations, performers, and revenue:

⁴³ For more on the McGovern concert for women, see Don Heckman, "Rally for McGovern; Women Stars Turn Out at the Garden in Solid Testimony to Their Worth," *New York Times*, October 29, 1972, 69.

⁴⁴ Warren Beatty's invitation for the event can be viewed on the following website, accessed March 28, 2012, <http://www.myspace.com/georgemcgvorn/photos/772035#%22ImageId%22%3A772035>.

Date	Event	Venue	Performers	Revenue (Net)	Organizer
April 15, 1972	"Four for McGovern"	Los Angeles Forum; Inglewood, CA	Barbra Streisand, Carole King, James Taylor, Quincy Jones and His Orchestra (an appearance by George McGovern)	\$250,000/ \$300,000? (by McGovern's estimate)	Warren Beatty
April 28, 1972	Fundraising Concert	Cleveland Arena; Cleveland, OH	Joni Mitchell, Paul Simon, James Taylor	\$70,000	Warren Beatty
May 5, 1972	McGovern Benefit Concert	San Francisco Civic Auditorium; San Francisco, CA	Chicago, Judy Collins, Merry Clayton		Warren Beatty
NA		Lincoln, NB			Warren Beatty
June 14, 1972	"Together for McGovern at the Garden" also billed as "Stars for McGovern Rally"	Madison Square Garden; New York, NY	Peter Yarrow, Paul Stookey, Mary Travers, Paul Simon, Art Garfunkel, Dionne Warwick, Mike Nichols, Elaine May (an appearance by George McGovern)	\$400,000	Warren Beatty
October 27, 1972	"Star-Spangled Women for McGovern-Shriver"	Madison Square Garden; New York, NY	Dionne Warwick, Tina Turner, Melina Mercouri, Mary Travers, Shirley MacLaine, Judy Collins, Bette Davis	\$180,000 ⁴⁵	Shirley MacLaine (supported by Rose Kennedy)

Table 2-2 George McGovern Campaign Concerts

Although live performances by musicians at campaign rallies and fundraising dinners featuring musical acts commonly occurred during earlier presidential races, George McGovern was the first candidate to blur the line between presidential rally and rock concert, as well as the first candidate to garner the vocal support of a large, highly visible cadre of musicians and actors. Various newspapers noted this phenomenon: in an article titled "Stumping Stars: Everyone's Campaigning," one

⁴⁵ Talent, *Billboard*, November 11, 1972, 13.

reporter noted that “[s]o many Hollywood stars are becoming involved in 1972 presidential politics that the Academy Awards may have to give an Oscar for the best supporting performance in a political campaign.”⁴⁶ The advertisements for the first of the two McGovern events at Madison Square Garden play on the rally/rock concert confusion in both their wording and imagery. Consider this “Together for McGovern at the Garden” advertisement published in the *New York Times* during the week before the event took place (Fig. 2-3):

⁴⁶Philip S. Cook and Tom Matthews, “Stumping Stars: Everyone’s Campaigning,” *Boca Raton News*, April 28, 1972, 5, accessed May 1, 2012, http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1291&dat=19720428&id=k_5TAAAIIBAJ&sjid=LI0DAAAAIIBAJ&pg=5615,6631600.



Figure 2-3 “Together for McGovern at the Garden,” Advertisement⁴⁷

The wording of the advertisement leaves some ambiguity as to what kind of event will take place. The description of the types of acts (songs and skits) suggests some sort of variety show, while phrases such as “the Garden will be jumping” and “Night of Nights” portray the event as something on par with the Academy Awards Ceremony. After some mention of the need for campaign funds, the advertisement closes by imploring the voter to “make possible our greatest production of all”—a

⁴⁷ Display Ad 31, *New York Times*, June 7, 1972, 33, accessed May 1, 2012, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=83447004&sid=3&Fmt=10&clientId=10843&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

turn of phrase that clearly draws from showbiz rhetoric. (The term “production” would most likely imply a film or stage show, rather than a rally.) However, the ticket order form in the lower-right-hand corner mentions that those who purchase \$2000 dollars in tickets will receive the “patron of the rally distinction.” So should this be considered a rally?

The sketch included in the advertisement further complicates the distinction. A banner, rather than a stage curtain, frames the whimsical depiction of the event’s headliners, and as such, places the performance within the realm of the rally rather than the concert. McGovern, depicted with an unusually large head, stands front and center, circled by the performers. Rather than standing behind a podium he casually holds a microphone at chest level. Will George be giving a speech or singing lead vocals? A second ad, which also circulated as a poster for the event, listed the headliners and escorts and emphasized that McGovern would be the only speaker at the event, again deemphasizing the rally angle (Fig. 2-4).



Figure 2-4 “Together for McGovern,” Advertisement⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Display Ad 116, *New York Times*, June 4, 1972, D2, accessed May 1, 2012, <http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=103476855&sid=2&Fmt=10&clientId=10843&RQT=309&VName=HNP>.

It would appear that the rock concert/rally confusion spilled over into the reporting of the event as well. In his piece “Rock ‘n’ Rhetoric Rally in the Garden Aids McGovern,” McCandlish Phillips describes the event as follows: “In the three hour concert, a few dashes of politics were blended with heaping portions of comedy and music, with the senator getting star billing and last-act exposure.”⁴⁹ As in the *New York Times* advertisement in Figure 2-3, Phillips describes the candidate in terms usually reserved for celebrities. He also deemphasizes the political nature of the event as the advertisement in Figure 2-4 does. The McGovern campaign alternatively referred to the event as both the “Stars for McGovern Rally” and the more non-specific “Together for McGovern at the Garden.” Later the campaign released the LP of the performances under the title “Come Home America McGovern Benefit Concert,” thus directly tying into one of the prominent themes of McGovern’s campaign.⁵⁰

The reviews for the other concerts, especially the one held at the Los Angeles Forum, also downplay the political nature of the performances and highlight the novelty of the “political rock concert” concept. *Village Voice* reporter Maureen Orth, in a somewhat hyperbolic article titled “Will They Snort Coke in the White House?” writes,

Although it appeared to be the sidewalk in front of the Academy Awards, the scene was El Lay at a new kind of political event: the concert for George McGovern at the Inglewood Forum. Good ole George, honest and bland, is being transformed into sexy George, George the Hip, George the Magnetic, all because of a powerful new magic weapon in his campaign. The weapon not only attracts Now Hollywood and rock royalty to the McGovern fold, but also raises enough dough in a single night to give the contributors at ITT a run for their money. The magic weapon is not a multi-million dollar media campaign nor even vitamin E. It’s Warren Beatty.⁵¹

⁴⁹ McCandlish Phillips, “Rock ‘n’ Rhetoric Rally in the Garden Aids McGovern,” *New York Times*, June 15, 1972, 1; 36.

⁵⁰ This theme first emerged in a March 21, 1970 speech McGovern gave at an event in Denver, Colorado. In his autobiography, McGovern describes it as follows: “[The speech] bore the title ‘Come Home America – a theme suggested by Eleanor from some remarks she had read by Martin Luther King, Jr. The speech represented ideas I had been evolving for months calling upon the American people and their leaders to return to the enduring ideals with which the nation began.” See George McGovern, *The Autobiography of George McGovern* (New York: Random House, 1977), 169.

Orth notes the symbolic capital “rock royalty” could offer the “honest and bland” candidate as well as the fact that the stars brought him potential voters, or in her words, “hordes of nubile screamers, who paid up to \$100 a ticket to hear their favorite artists and gawk at the ushers.”⁵² She also remarks that the concert “barely mentioned politics,” a point Phillips later made about the first Madison Square Garden concert as well. Although stars generate economic capital by functioning as the intermediary that brings the voter to the candidate, they also model for potential voters modes of political engagement, or to use Richard Dyer’s words, “stars represent typical ways of behaving, feeling, and thinking in contemporary society.”⁵³

McGovern certainly was the first presidential candidate to attract celebrities (what Orth refers to as Beatty’s “Glamour Brigade”) in record numbers. One journalist noted that the emphasis on music (rather than political rhetoric) irked some McGovern staffers “who could not resist the urge to proselytize to 16,000 people.” One stated, “We’ve been trying to point out to them [the musicians] that George McGovern is not likely to sing his way into the White House. There is a definite political component here.”⁵⁴ And the staffer undoubtedly was correct: the audience, especially those under twenty-five, boisterously responded at moments within the performances that carried a political subtext. According to one journalist who attended the first Madison Square Garden event, the younger set broke out into applause as Peter, Paul and Mary sang, “take your place on the great mandala.”⁵⁵ A handful of songs performed at the events certainly carried political connotations, but even in the absence of overtly political texts, Peter, Paul and Mary and Simon and Garfunkel’s earlier advocacy for pacifism, participation in anti-nuclear proliferation efforts, and support for Eugene McCarthy in 1968 (PP&M) would leave no doubt as to the fact that the artists’ politics meshed with those of the candidate.

⁵¹ Maureen Orth, “Will They Snort Coke in the White House?” *Village Voice* 17, no. 17, April 27, 1972.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Richard Dyer, *Film Stars and Society* (London: British Film Institute, 1986), 18.

⁵⁴ Steven V. Roberts, “Film and Music Stars Raise \$300,000 at a McGovern Concert,” *New York Times*, April 17, 1972, 38.

⁵⁵ Chris Chase, “Love Is Hell, Warren,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1972, D1, 9.

Reporters also commented on the fact that the concerts brought political types and rock concert types into the same arena. According to Phillips, “The \$100 seats were generally occupied by an older and more fashionably dressed crowd, and from there the scene suggested a political banquet. But in the upper reaches, it looked like a rock concert with most seats occupied by the dungarees-and-polo-shirts set.”⁵⁶ A wide range of ticket prices assured the McGovern campaign a mixed crowd in terms of age and wealth. Images that circulated after the event, which included representatives of both the new and old Left mingling together, may have also offered symbolic capital to McGovern, who wanted to position himself as a unifier, or as the man who could bring people together. The advertisements for the first Madison Square Garden concert make reference to this as well. Consider the headline in Figure 2-3: “Who else could bring them all together? Mike Nichols and Elaine May, Peter, Paul and Mary, Simon and Garfunkel, Dionne Warwick! [sic] Only One Man. “Together for McGovern at the Garden.”” The sketch included in the advertisement reinforces the theme of togetherness. Peter, Paul and Mary, arms circling each other, appear to engage in a three-way dance—a strong sense of motion is implied by Mary’s outturned hair and flowing beads and the group’s splayed out feet, which make it seem like the trio hovers above the ground.⁵⁷ Elaine May and Mike Nichols are turned towards each other, eyes closed, and Simon and Garfunkel appear to be literally attached at the hip.

To the fans of the artists, the “Together for McGovern” event was not simply a gathering of various groups on the same stage, but rather, it was *togetherness* in spite of personal and professional quarrels or diverging career paths. All three groups were essentially defunct at the time of the performance. Trio Peter, Paul and Mary had amicably parted ways in 1970 to pursue solo careers, and Simon and Garfunkel had also sought individual careers, although the circumstances of their parting were less amicable. The same holds true for improvised comedy duo May

⁵⁶ Phillips, “Rock ‘n’ Rhetoric Rally,” 1, 36.

⁵⁷ The rendering of Peter, Paul and Mary in this ad bears very close resemblance to one of the widely circulated publicity shots of the group that circulated in the 1960s. The artist most likely modeled the drawing after the earlier photo. The original photo can be accessed at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Peter_paul_and_mary_publicity_photo.JPG (accessed May 8, 2012).

and Nichols. Nichols even told the audience, “We feel we are laboring at a disadvantage in comparison with the other groups on this program. They quarreled viciously and broke up only a few months ago, but we have not spoken for twelve years.”⁵⁸ The campaign team consistently drew attention to McGovern’s ability to bring people together despite their differences; the Madison Square Garden concert’s inclusion of reunions between two famous duos and a trio worked to affirm this.

Not only limited to the reunions dramatized on the stage, the theme of people coming together shaped the action on the floor as well. Beatty used his influence to convince Hollywood celebrities, musicians, and other luminaries to act as ushers for the McGovern events; he courted stars of an earlier generation, such as Bette Davis, as well as many younger stars, such as Goldie Hawn, Julie Christie, Jack Nicholson, Paul Newman, and Raquel Welch. One might argue the performances, at least in appearance, came across as great equalizers, as they featured celebrities serving as ushers for common folk. Beatty also highlighted the one-of-a-kind nature of the events in order to frame the “togetherness” of the artists as an extraordinary feat performed by McGovern—he could inspire performers that would not usually share the same stage to come together. Beatty told the press, “It’s not like C. Arnholdt Smith contributing money or Frank Sinatra going out and doing a bunch of concerts for Hubert Humphrey. It’s a whole group of artists, independent and intelligent people, getting together on the same bill behind McGovern, the man with an immaculate slate.”⁵⁹

The candidate accomplished an equally impressive feat with Barbra Streisand’s performance. Although immensely popular at the time, the stage-fright-prone singer publically claimed just a few months before the Los Angeles Forum concert that she would no longer give public performances.⁶⁰ In 2008, at an

⁵⁸ Phillips, “Rock ‘n’ Rhetoric Rally,” 1; 36.

⁵⁹ Quoted in “Four for McGovern,” Barbra Streisand Archives (unofficial), accessed May 12, 2012, http://barbra-archives.com/live/70s/forum_streisand.html.

⁶⁰ Come Home America: A Daily Republic Blog on the Life and Times of George McGovern, “Concert featuring Streisand was a high point in McGovern’s ’72 campaign,” blog entry by Denise Ross, April 19, 2012, accessed May 13, 2012, <http://mcgovern.areavoices.com/2012/04/19/concert-featuring-streisand-was-a-high-point-in-mcgovern-72-campaign/>. McGovern’s hometown newspaper, *The Daily Republic*, maintains this blog.

American Film Institute event in honor of Beatty, Streisand claimed, “I wasn’t doing live performances then, but Warren is very persuasive and impressive, as a matter of fact. He masterminded everything from the invitations to getting famous people to be ushers. . . . After all the insecurity and stage fright, I was really glad that Warren made me perform because it was for a man I truly admire.” Clearly Beatty knew the impact such a performance could make in the minds of voters.

Ultimately, the McGovern concerts offered a vision of togetherness—a visual and musical representation of a functional community coming out to support the people’s candidate, a man who fosters reconciliation between artists and actors, gathers the most powerful women performers to come together in performance, coaxes a diva out of her retirement, brings the apolitical into the progressive fold, and gathers the old and new Left into a single space.⁶¹ But while McGovern’s symbolic capital may have improved his standing among younger voters, it ultimately decreased his status and alienated him from the other half of his party. When the former candidate discussed the concerts years later in an interview with *Rolling Stone*, he lamented the fact that his campaign’s association with the countercultural movement negatively impacted his relationship with labor leaders and traditional democrats.⁶² At the time of McGovern’s bid, AFL-CIO leader George Meaney even pejoratively claimed “the speaker of the House [Carl Albert] said that he thought McGovern’s campaign staff looked like the cast from *Hair*.” If there is some truth to Albert’s assessment, Maureen Orth’s vision of a coke-snorting McGovern White House is not all that shocking.

In general, politicians did not acknowledge masters of style and rhetoric from

⁶¹ Simon and Garfunkel released their *Greatest Hits* album on June 14, 1972, the same day as the Madison Square Garden event. Presumably their desire for free publicity, and the opportunity to bring their music to a new youth audience had something to do with their willingness to perform on behalf of McGovern.

⁶² Douglas Brinkley, “George McGovern; Section Fortieth Anniversary,” *Rolling Stone*, 1025/1026, May 3, 2007, 114–16. McGovern’s advertising campaign did not establish a strong connection between the candidate and the Democratic Party until the general election was underway. This may have contributed to his loss. Kathleen Hall Jamieson also points to McGovern’s appropriation of Old Testament rhetoric in his speeches and controversy surrounding vice-presidential nominee Thomas Eagleton (who was later replaced by Sargent Shriver) as sounding the death knell for his presidential bid. See “1972: The President vs. the Prophet,” in *Packaging the Presidency: A History and Criticism of Presidential Campaign Advertising*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 276–328, esp. 310–312 and 325–28.

the realm of film as legitimate players in the political field during the 1970s. Shirley MacLaine responded to such criticism in a *New York Times* op-ed piece that lauded the unique insight of actors and underscored the responsibilities they share as ordinary citizens:⁶³

It is the actor's special task to emulate life with as much power and faithfulness as he or she can command. Our perceptions and knowledge of human motivation govern how good we are at what we do. Those same perceptions should help determine the quality of our politics. Politics that are void of the insight of art—its compassion, humor and laughter—are doomed to sterility and abstractions.⁶⁴

The question as to whether or not musicians could be legitimate political actors, and whether or not the rhetoric of celebrity and popular culture could bring distinction to a campaign or instead bring it to the level of vulgarity would only continue to rage on. It is, perhaps, ironic that the spectacles intended to unite, in the end, lodged an even larger wedge between opposing factions within the Democratic Party.

Ronald Reagan “Thank GOD I’m a Country Boy”

Country musicians have maintained a presence on the campaign trail and at presidential events since the 1930s. As Diane Pecknold notes, country musicians of *all* political affiliations—Democrats, Republicans, and Populists—participated in campaigning mid-century, but due to George Wallace’s consistent use of the genre during his gubernatorial and presidential campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s, audiences began to align the genre primarily with conservatism.⁶⁵ Much to the delight of his guests, Lyndon B. Johnson frequently featured acts such as the Geezinslaw Brothers at his Texas barbecues. Seizing the opportunity to align himself with artists who maligned war protesters and liberal values, Richard Nixon extended invitations to singers such as Johnny Cash and Merle Haggard, and showed his support for the

⁶³ The Artists for McGovern movement, which included prominent visual artists, did not ruffle as many feathers. It could be due to the fact that the support was strictly financial and that the subject matter did not attempt to engage with politics; or it could be the elite cultural status of fine art as opposed to popular music lent the artists greater credibility.

⁶⁴ Shirley MacLaine, “Politics and Performers,” *New York Times*, May 18, 1972, 47.

⁶⁵ Diane Pecknold, “Silent Majorities: The Country Audience as Commodity, Constituency, and Metaphor, 1961–1975,” in *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 218.

genre by making an appearance at the dedication of the Grand Ole Opry House.⁶⁶ Jimmy Carter, a true lover of country music, featured performers at his campaign events: black country artist Dobie Grey performed at the “Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter Telethon” which benefitted the candidate’s 1976 campaign, and outlaw country artist Willie Nelson campaigned on Carter’s behalf in 1980.⁶⁷ Ronald Reagan, in his 1984 campaign, continued the trend, becoming the first major party candidate to prominently feature a pre-existing country song in his campaign.⁶⁸

Increasing social fragmentation and dissolution of the mainstream, as I discussed earlier with George McGovern’s campaign, may have encouraged candidates to expand their sonic palates beyond Tin Pan Alley-styled pop in hopes of appealing to niche audiences. Carter’s newly composed 1976 campaign song “Why Not the Best” features raw, untrained country-styled vocals accompanied by strings. In addition to the intimacy the lyrics establish, the low production quality of the recording gives the song a natural “down home” feel. The musical elements—especially the singer’s slight drawl and the relaxed tempo—connote both sincerity and simplicity. Carter ran on a platform that emphasized moral integrity and plain speaking, so one can argue the musical values of the song resonated with his political values.⁶⁹ In response to anxieties regarding industrialization and cynicism directed towards Washington, Carter’s campaign literature emphasized his rural, small town upbringing, working class roots, and background as a farmer, and continually referenced how this way of life shaped his values. Indeed he may have intended for the song to “speak to” country music fans—a large community at this time, especially since droves of country artists began to adopt pop-oriented styles and

⁶⁶ Bill C. Malone and Jocelyn R. Neal, *Country Music U.S.A.*, 3rd ed. rev. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 372–73. For more on Richard Nixon and country music, see Pecknold, “Silent Majorities,” 200–235, esp. 218–26.

⁶⁷ Advertisement for Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter Telethon,” n.d., Gerald M. Rafshoon Collection, 1976 Campaign–Subject Files, Ad/Proof Sheets through Contribution Report by State, “Brochures and Samples–Misc. File 5,” 7, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁶⁸ Journalists often refer to “God Bless the U.S.A.” as Reagan’s campaign song; however, as I stated in chapter one, in the 1980s the majority of pre-existing songs used at campaign events were referred to as “unofficial” campaign songs.

⁶⁹ Carter featured this song in radio spots. See Radio Ad, “Why Not the Best,” Carter Audio-Visual Files, Jimmy Carter Library. Please see Appendix A for the lyrics.

production methods and experienced success as crossover artists. However, general audiences, those with popular competence in music, likely would have equated these values with country music as well. In short, Carter's own personal narrative and the geographic spaces in which he circulated resonated with those frequently explored and expounded upon in country music. The campaign used the song to confirm the centrality of these values as the guiding force in Carter's personal and political life.

Incumbent candidate Gerald Ford also adopted an innovative approach that year. Rather than releasing a single record like Sinatra did for Kennedy, he recorded and distributed several different versions of his newly composed campaign song, "I'm Feeling Good about America;" these include choral, marching band, and Latin versions.⁷⁰ His television commercials featured the choral version with rock-oriented instrumentation (think: *Hair* the musical), whereas his campaign offered the Latin-flavored version with Spanish lyrics in areas that catered to large Spanish-speaking populations.⁷¹ Presumably Ford's strategists felt using the same song would provide a sense of continuity, while changes in style might allow him to target specific constituencies.

Both of these examples signal a shift in how campaign strategists conceived the role of music genre in campaigns in the 1970s.⁷² Rousing a crowd and delivering a message became *less* important than conveying a sense of style and appealing to a specific community, and in Carter's case, establishing a system of values. At this point in time, strategists began to show a more keen awareness of the ways in which music genres—their connotations, fan communities, histories, implied values—might signify when considered alongside other campaign discourses.

With the political realignment that occurred in the 1984 and 1988 elections, an increasing emphasis on candidate-centered campaigns, described by Martin

⁷⁰ Jodi Larson cites Ford's song in "American Tune," 15–16. For the Mexican and Puerto Rican versions of "I'm Feeling Good about America," see Peace: Mexican XXPFB766 and Peace: Puerto Rican XXPFB866, Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

⁷¹ For Gerald Ford's commercials with "I'm Feeling Good about America," see "Children/Achievements" and "Peace," *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952–2008*, Museum of the Moving Image, accessed December 4, 2011, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1976>.

⁷² We do see the beginning of this trend in campaign music a bit earlier. As I mentioned, Eugene McCarthy used folk musicians at his campaign events and Wallace used country music.

Wattenberg as the shift of attention “from measures to men, from ideas to character,” and on values, defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “[t]he principles or moral standards held by a person or social group,” had profound implications for *how* candidates campaigned.⁷³ Similar to Wattenberg, Wynton Hall considers the rise of candidate-centered politics and investigates the pivotal role values played in Reagan’s rhetorical strategy.⁷⁴ Although some praised Reagan’s rhetorical flair, his lack of engagement with issues vexed others. In 1984 Howell Raines lambasted Reagan for placing style over substance:

Mr. Reagan has mounted a campaign in which “issues” are clearly secondary. His re-election effort is based on the macro-politics of mass communications. Issues take a back seat to invoking such themes as leadership and opportunity, to creating visual images, communicating shared values and stimulating moods and feelings in the audience.⁷⁵

Raines also mentioned the use of “God Bless the U.S.A.” and noted the role songs play in creating “manufactured happiness”:

In combination, slogans and songs create the sensation of being immersed in the manufactured happiness of an infinitely extended television commercial. They also demonstrate the application of two guiding concepts of Reagan re-election strategists—“repetition” and “simplicity.”⁷⁶

With repetition as a guiding concept, it is easy to see why Greenwood’s song appealed to Reagan’s strategists: “God Bless the U.S.A.” hit the Billboard Hot Country Singles in May, eventually reaching number seven on the chart, and it

⁷³ According to Robert Denton, “social and value issues have always dominated American politics. During the years of the Great Depression and New Deal, electoral success focused more on economic issues. However, since the 1960s, social issues and values have increased in importance in American politics.” See “Religion, Evangelicals, and Moral Issues in the 2004 Presidential Campaign,” in *The 2004 Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, ed. Robert E. Denton Jr. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 255–81. For more on political realignment, see Wattenberg, *Decline of American Political Parties*, 133. Wattenberg writes: “In particular, the cementing election of 1984 and the polarizing candidacy of Ronald Reagan stimulated the trend towards candidate-centered politics to new heights” (158).

⁷⁴ Wynton C. Hall, “The Invention of ‘Quantifiably Safe Rhetoric’: Richard Wirthlin and Ronald Reagan’s Instrumental Use of Public Opinion Research in Presidential Discourse,” *Western Journal of Communication* 66, no. 3 (2002): 324, accessed May 30, 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10570310209374740>.

⁷⁵ Howell Raines, “Reagan Appears to Succeed by Avoiding Specific Issues,” *New York Times*, September 23, 1984, Sec. 1, Pt. 1, pg. 1, Col. 1.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Raines incorrectly refers to Greenwood’s song as “I’m Proud to Be an American.”

accompanied the closing ceremony video montage of athletes' most triumphant moments in the Summer Olympics that year. During this same period, radio and television stations used the song to sign off in the evening.⁷⁷

Rather than offering a response to Reagan's "Fritzbusters" parody, Democratic challenger (and ghost of administrations past) Walter Mondale made use of an extremely popular pre-existing song of the time. With "Gonna Fly Now" from the blockbuster *Rocky* films, Mondale assumes a certain gritty, urban working-class hyper-masculine identity while also emphasizing triumph over adversity—and as Schoening and Kasper suggest, the glorification of the underdog.⁷⁸ In addition to tapping into the film's heroic narrative, Mondale's appropriation of the song conjures in the imagination of his audience the values of hard work, perseverance, and optimism. Clearly both candidates' pre-existing songs project core American values (and mythologies).

Raines' above comparison between the "manufactured happiness" of commercials and the feel-good sensations engendered by candidates with their campaign songs comes as no surprise: commercial advertisers and campaign strategists embraced pre-existing music with the same goals in mind. Between 1970 and 1985, compiled film scores became increasingly significant,⁷⁹ and by the 1980s, pre-existing music became commonplace in television commercials.⁸⁰ The ubiquity of pre-existing music in these media contexts may have encouraged candidates to embrace the practice. As I suggested earlier, Nixon chose country music to appeal to the silent majority, and Wallace hoped to attract poor whites. But why might country music have appealed to Reagan in 1984? Where did country music stand on the

⁷⁷ Lee Greenwood and Gwen McLin, *God Bless the U.S.A.: Biography of a Song* (Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2001), 156–57.

⁷⁸ Schoening and Kasper, *Don't Stop Thinking about the Music*, 150. Similarly, Ken McLeod writes, "Songs such as these typically trigger a state of optimism and excitement in the listener that reinforces the paradigmatic heroic narrative of the drama itself." See *We Are the Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 186.

⁷⁹ See David Brackett, "Banjos, Biopics, and Compilation Scores: The Movies Go Country," *American Music* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 248; and Austin Wade, "Hollywood Barn Dance: A Brief Survey of Country Music in Films," *Southern Quarterly* 22 (Spring 1984): 111–24.

⁸⁰ Jeff Smith, *Sounds of Commerce: Marketing Popular Film Music* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

cultural field at the time, and how did the candidate position himself in relation to its agents and disposition in an age where values trumped issues?

Although country music gained popularity via radio performances of the Grand Ole Opry as early as the 1920s, the broader public's fascination with "cowboy" culture and everything country-western reached fever pitch in the late 1970s and early 1980s.⁸¹ *Vogue* mentioned the trend as early as 1978, and in 1980, a *Time* magazine author describing the tendency wrote, "From the canyons of Manhattan to the chic watering holes of Beverly Hills and, of course, the salons of the Southwest, it is Lone Ranger and Tonto time. City dudes are sporting wide-brimmed cowpoke sombreros, yoke shirts, off-the-range Levi's, brass or gold-buckled belts and high-steppin' boots of alligator or snakeskin."⁸² During this period, television programs such as *The Dukes of Hazzard* featured depictions of country life, and films such as *Tender Mercies* and *Urban Cowboy* included compiled scores of country music.⁸³ Also cashing in on this trend, Country Music Television launched in 1983, and an array of awards shows and specials featuring country music followed. (In a two-hour television special dedicated to Roy Acuff, Reagan enthusiastically proclaimed the artist as "the epitome of the American dream."⁸⁴) While country music held only ten percent of the American radio market in 1973, by 1983 it had reached twenty-five percent.⁸⁵ On the eve of Reagan's first election *Billboard* magazine noted, "Country music is exploding across the radio dial, knocking out all

⁸¹ Journalists and others citing the trend often used the term "country-western" in reference to fashions and lifestyles, but the music industry replaced this generic distinction with the label "country" by the mid-1940s. Western (cowboy) music did influence the subgenre outlaw country, which reached the height of its popularity in the 1970s.

⁸² "Lone Ranger Meets Tonto," *Time*, August 4, 1980, 43.

⁸³ For more on country music and film in the 1970s/80s, see Brackett, "Banjos, Biopics, and Compilation Scores."

⁸⁴ "Roy Acuff," *The Kennedy Center: Explore the Arts* website, accessed May 14, 2012, http://www.kennedy-center.org/explorer/artists/?entity_id=3686&source_type=A.

⁸⁵ John Lomax III, *Nashville: Music City USA* (New York: Abrams, 1985), 215.

songs of other formats.”⁸⁶ Acknowledging the marketability of this trend, print media followed suit, using various signifiers of country-western identity in advertising.⁸⁷

At the same time, as people became culturally invested in country-western music and fashion, belief systems and values associated with southern identity, especially patriotism, moved into the mainstream. Various explanations have been given to account for the popularity of the country-western social fad—the increasing sophistication of country music, the relocation of country fans to urban areas in the post-war period, and anxiety regarding cultural homogenization, to name a few.⁸⁸ Gerald Schorin and Bruce Vanden Bergh specifically tie the trend to political figures, noting the “cowboy” persona of Lyndon B. Johnson (a southerner born in Stonewall, Texas), Nixon’s allegiance with country artists in the early seventies, Carter’s southern “down-home” politics, and Ronald Reagan’s personal philosophy and its connection to the mythology of the Old West, not to mention his appearance in B westerns.⁸⁹ Keenly aware of the broader cultural and political shift towards southernization (even as early as his first presidential bid in 1976 where he was narrowly defeated by Gerald Ford in the primary), Reagan embraced a value system and rhetorical style that would thoughtfully engage with it. Country music served as the linchpin that would reaffirm Reagan’s allegiance to these ideals in his re-election year.

Values, to some extent, shape every campaign platform, but Reagan, Wynton Hall argues, communicated his values in a different way than his presidential predecessors. Rather than simply reiterating his position by repeating words such as “family values,” he favored a rhetorical approach that relied on narratives. Instead of

⁸⁶ Doug Hall, “N.Y. WRVR Now Country,” *Billboard*, September 20, 1980, 1.

⁸⁷ Gerald A. Schorin and Bruce G. Vanden Bergh, “Advertising’s Role in the Diffusion of Country-Western Trend in the U.S.,” *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (1985): 515–22, accessed May 30, 2012, <http://jmq.sagepub.com/content/62/3/515.citation>.

⁸⁸ For more on southernization, see Walter Dean Burnham, *Critical Elections and the Mainsprings of American Politics* (New York: Norton, 1970), 189; and James C. Cobb, “From Muskogee to Luckenbach: Country Music and the ‘Southernization’ of America,” in *Redefining Southern Culture: Mind and Identity in the Modern South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 78–91; and Zachary J. Lechner, “The South of the Mind: American Imaginings of Rural White Southernness, 1960-1980” (PhD diss., Temple University, 2012).

⁸⁹ Schorin and Vanden Bergh, “Advertising’s Role in the Diffusion,” 518.

simply *telling* people how they should act, Reagan introduced value structures through his storytelling.⁹⁰ The values espoused in country music of the period resonated with these value structures and relied on similar rhetorical conventions. Writing in 1979, John Buckley located eight basic themes in country music. These included home and family, country (positive agrarian image), work, individual worth, rugged individualism, and patriotism.⁹¹ Drawing from his research findings, Reagan strategist Richard Wirthlin devised a value cluster, or five ideographs—family, work, neighborhood, peace, and freedom—that would not only resonate with swing voters, but would also hold broader appeal, and he worked to incorporate them into Reagan’s speeches.⁹² Figure 2-5 shows the commonalities between Wirthlin’s ideographs and Buckley’s themes:

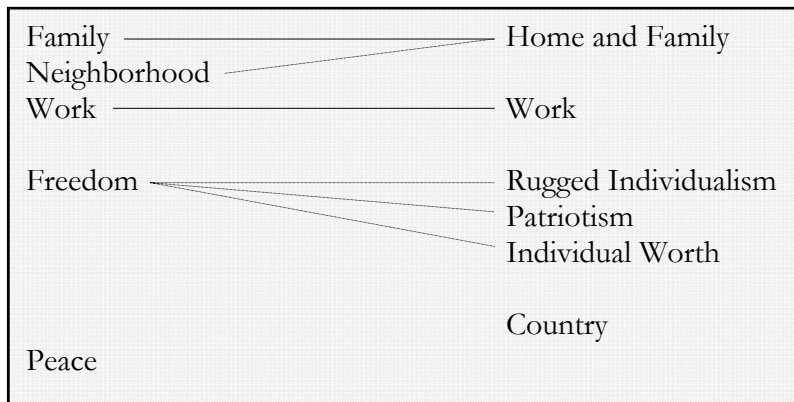


Figure 2-5 Wirthlin’s Ideographs and Buckley’s Themes in Country Music

When given the opportunity, Reagan highlighted the commonalities between his own vision for America and the values that defined country music. In March of 1983, the Country Music Association celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary with a

⁹⁰ Hall, “Invention of ‘Quantifiably Safe Rhetoric,’” 324–25.

⁹¹ John Buckley, “Country Music and American Values,” *Popular Music and Society* 6, no. 4 (1979): 293–301, accessed May 30, 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03007767908591135>. Buckley indicates satisfying and unsatisfying love relationships as the other two themes.

⁹² Hall, “Invention of ‘Quantifiably Safe Rhetoric,’” 327. Wirthlin developed this strategy for Reagan’s 1980 election; however, the same ideographs remained the focus of his speeches during the first term of his presidency as well as his reelection campaign. Michael McGee’s definition of ideograph is as follows: “A high-order abstraction representing collective commitment to a particular but equivocal and ill-defined normative goal” (Ibid.). Swing voters are voters who might vote across party lines, or who identify as independent.

visit to the White House and a televised performance from Constitution Hall. In his speech at this event, Reagan positioned country music as a “language” that conveyed the emotional sentiments and character of the nation and proclaimed country values as America’s values:

Seriously, since country music is one of *only a very few art forms that we can claim as purely American*, it is a special pleasure to welcome its brightest stars to the White House and our national home. You belong here. Your music belongs here, and I hope you agree it sounds pretty good when it bounces off these historic walls. Someone once said that it’s easier to understand a nation by listening to its music than it is by learning their language. And when you listen to country music, you hear the beauty of our wide open spaces, the emotions of a people whose hearts are as big and full as the land they live in. The country sound has become a good will ambassador for us all around the world—through its variety, spreading an understanding of our basic values, our high spirit and determined self-reliance. And as others understand this music, they also understand and appreciate our deep-seated love of country, freedom, and God.⁹³

Here Reagan praises self-reliance (or individualism, a value Buckley aligns with country music) and claims those who “understand” country music appreciate “freedom” and demonstrate a “love of country.”

The president aligned country music’s values with his own political values in an even more direct way during a campaign-related trip to Tennessee where he spoke at a birthday celebration for Roy Acuff. Although the celebration was not a political appearance per se, several journalists noted how Reagan used the event to his political advantage. According to Raymond Coffey, “Reagan came to Nashville to plug high technology as the new frontier of economic growth and prosperity and to bale some political hay at the eighty-first birthday celebration of singer Roy Acuff.”⁹⁴ At the beginning of his speech Reagan cites Opry founder Ken Dudley’s ruminations on the institution’s appeal: “The Grand Ole Opry is as simple as sunshine. It has a universal appeal because it’s built upon good will, it expresses the heartbeat of a large percentage of Americans who labor for a living.” Then Reagan concludes by saying,

⁹³ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a White House Reception for Members of the Country Music Association,” March 15, 1983, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed June 2, 2012, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=41052> (emphasis mine).

⁹⁴ Raymond Coffey, “Campaign ’84: Reagan Waltzes in Tennessee; Mondale Sweats in Mississippi,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 14, 1984, 24.

“well, I agree.”⁹⁵ With this statement, the incumbent candidate aligns the Opry’s values with working-class America’s values.

Reagan also positions Nashville as a site for the revitalization of patriotism nationwide and applauds country music as an art form that expresses this core value:

Now, there are a lot of reasons, I guess, why this good spirit has returned to our land. But it got a lot of encouragement from Nashville. *It’s the people of this city who never forgot to love their country, who never thought patriotism was out of style.* And I know you were just expressing how you felt; you didn’t know that you were doing your country a great service by keeping affection for it alive in your songs. But you were doing it a service, and I don’t know if anyone has ever thanked you. But if not, thank you. People like you make me proud to be an American.⁹⁶

But in his view, country music does more than just share these values; because of its status as an “original” American art form, it is uniquely positioned to preserve and promote these values as well. In an earlier speech for a televised Country Music Association performance, he applauds the institution for fostering the development of home-grown music and for serving as a cultural ambassador:

For a quarter of a century, C.M.A. has been encouraging, developing, and promoting the musical sound that comes straight from America’s heart. *They’ve spread a home-grown music around the world, and I can’t imagine a better ambassador.*⁹⁷

And, as he stated at Acuff’s celebration, Reagan indeed was “proud to be an American.” Since he upheld country music as the conservator of America’s core values early on in the re-election campaign, it is no surprise that he chose a popular country song for performances at his rallies and for his campaign film. Conventions have featured such films since 1952, but Reagan’s was somewhat of a novelty, as his campaign used the film in lieu of an introductory speech at the Dallas convention. The film, narrated by the incumbent, includes short interviews, news footage, images

⁹⁵ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks at a Birthday Celebration for Roy Acuff in Nashville, Tennessee,” September 13, 1984, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed June 2, 2012, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=40379>.

⁹⁶ Ibid., (emphasis mine).

⁹⁷ Ronald Reagan, “Remarks to Members of the Country Music Association during a Television Performance,” March 16, 1983, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed June 2, 2012, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=41060> (emphasis mine).

of America and Americans, speeches, and a Reagan home video.⁹⁸ The films prepared for conventions usually make use of orchestral underscoring, and while the majority of Reagan's eighteen-minute film follows this precedent, it also features "God Bless the U.S.A." The Tuesday Team (the group responsible for Reagan's advertising) included the song's first verse and chorus a few minutes into the film and then inserted its final chorus at the film's culminating moments to accompany video and photo montages.⁹⁹ In the interviews that precede the song, a diverse group of Americans express their patriotic sentiments and position the nation-wide renewal of optimism and patriotism as the fruit of Reagan's efforts in his first term. The last man interviewed before the beginning of the song suggests artists found inspiration in this cultural trend as well, and with his statement, the song's introduction swells in the background. Table 2-3 indicates the film's images, the ideographs that they imply, and the lyrics that accompany them.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Joanne Morreale, *A New Beginning: A Textual Frame Analysis of the Political Campaign Film* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 1–2.

⁹⁹ Several of Reagan's television advertisements used the same newly composed music that was featured in this film. See "Train," "Foreign Policy," "Statue of Liberty," "World Leaders," "Peace," and "Inflation." "Prouder, Stronger, Better" also uses some of the same footage and narration as the film. See Museum of the Moving Image, *The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952-2008*, accessed May 30, 2012, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1984>. For more on Reagan's Tuesday Team commercials, see Paul Christiansen, "'It's Morning Again in America:' How the Tuesday Team Revolutionized the Use of Music in Political Ads" (paper, American Musicological Society Conference, New Orleans, LA, November 3, 2012).

¹⁰⁰ Lee Greenwood, "God Bless the U.S.A.," from *You've Got a Good Love Comin'*, 1984, MCA B000OB4TY8.

Man #1 The bottom line with President Reagan is that he has brought back respect to the White House. Period. That's it.

Man #2: There's a whole new attitude in America today and I think that needs to be continued.

Woman #1: It used to be that Americans took it for granted that they were American now it seems like they're really proud.

Man #3: I feel more patriotic towards my country, and I feel more proud to be an American.

Man #4: He put me into work, he's gonna keep me there. The man did a good job and I hope he's gonna go for another four years. God Bless America! **Man**

Man #5: I even hear songs on the radio and TV now that says [sic] "I'm Proud to Be an American."¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ "Reagan Tuesday Team Ad 1984," uploaded by Capitol Square ONN, March 15, 2012, accessed May 3, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6XDMQPtQKw>. (The first half of the song begins at 3:29 and ends at 4:42, and the second half runs from 17:35 to 18:14.)

Image	Ideograph	Lyrics
aerial view of cityscape	(landscape)	
ship sailing into harbour	(landscape)	
Niagara Falls	(landscape)	
child running through tulips to father	family	If tomorrow all the things were gone,
bride and groom surrounded by family exit church	family	I'd worked for all my life.
men raising the frame of a house	work/ neighborhood	And I had to start again,
family moving into new house	family/ neighborhood	with just my children and my wife.
welder	work	I'd thank my lucky stars,
tractor ploughing at sunset	work	to be livin' here today.
child saluting waving flag	freedom	'Cause the flag still stands for freedom,
scaffolding surrounding the Statue of Liberty	freedom	and they can't take that away.
White House	(leadership)	
cattle farmers	work	And I'm proud to be an American,
man watching a parade/small waving flags	neighborhood/ freedom	
child in rabbit costume in crowd on parent's shoulders	family	
man removing his hat		where at least I know I'm free.
child waving flag	freedom	
military funeral	freedom	And I won't forget the men who died,
soldier greeting his family	family	who gave that right to me. And I gladly stand up,
fireman hoisting a flag	work/freedom	next to you and defend her still today.
group of women watching a parade/waving flags	neighborhood	'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land,
Reagan in front of flags	freedom	God bless the U.S.A.
	Break	
aerial shot of a river	(landscape)	And I'm proud to be an American,
aerial view of cityscape	(landscape)	
fireman hoisting flag	work/freedom	where at least I know I'm free.
shuttle launch	work	
military funeral	freedom	And I won't forget the men who died,
Arlington Cemetery/flags	freedom	who gave that right to me.
1984 Olympic Team with Reagan	(leadership)	And I gladly stand up, next to you and defend her still today.
construction worker clapping	work	
woman holding sign "USA How Sweet it is"	freedom	
scaffolding around the Statue of Liberty	work/freedom	'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land,
Reagan and Bush walking outside the White House	(leadership)	God bless the U.S.A.
Reagan standing outside Air Force One	(leadership)	

Table 2-3 "God Bless the U.S.A." Images, Ideograph, Text

God Bless The U.S.A.

Words and Music by Lee Greenwood

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The lyrics primarily focus on the value of freedom, one of the five core ideographs in Reagan's value cluster, but the video's images connect freedom with three other ideographs espoused in the Reagan campaign and inherent in the country genre: work, family, and neighborhood. The images also emphasize strong leadership, which according to Hall, Reagan needed to convey to voters in order to win the re-election campaign.¹⁰² In many instances the images reflect the lyrics in a hackneyed, cliché manner. For example, references to family in the first verse are matched with idyllic depictions of normative family life—a small child running to her father, a bride and bridegroom, and a family moving into their new home, complete with white picket fence. Images of a military funeral and graves at Arlington National Cemetery accompany lyrics in the song's chorus that remind the listener to remember those who died. Although the images are contemporary, the scenes—a farmer at sunset, a traditional wedding, and a family behind a white picket fence—impart a strong sense of nostalgia. The film's overarching narrative, which focuses on the cultivation and preservation of values, reinforces this quality. As Beardsley Ruml writes, nostalgic sentiments play a significant role in "social institutions and in the foundation of patriotism and nationality."¹⁰³

Although ideographs are by their very nature ill defined and vague, the images selected for the video bring the specific nature of Reagan's values into focus. To Reagan, freedom is the freedom to work. Almost all of the men portrayed in the song segment wear plaid shirts or uniforms and are shown "at work." These images of blue-collar workers—carpenter, welder, fireman, and farmer—equate working class identity with American identity. Aside from the image of Reagan standing

¹⁰² Hall, "Invention of 'Quantifiably Safe Rhetoric,'" 326.

¹⁰³ Beardsley Ruml, "Theory of Nostalgic and Egoic Sentiments," *Psychological Bulletin* 30 (1933): 656.

alongside Olympic gold medalist Mary Lou Retton and other Olympic athletes, women only appear in the song segment as mothers, wives, and bystanders.

Put it another way, the portion of the campaign film that features Greenwood's song unabashedly assaults the emotions of the voter with its heteronormative, idyllic imagery of American life. Conceived by his campaign team, these emotional appeals pervade Reagan's advertisements. In the *New Republic*, Tuesday Team board member Philip Dusenberry claims emotional advertising is not "designed to think about, to understand, so much as to feel. It's the most powerful part of advertising. It stays with people longer and better."¹⁰⁴ Greenwood's song and the broader connotations of the genre, combined with the images, not only construct Reagan's ideographs, but also reaffirm his own aesthetic disposition. In other words, Reagan's preference for a particular music allows him to position himself as belonging to a specific community. Country music becomes the "practice" that affirms their shared disposition.

But the consumption of a particular genre of music, in this case, country, can also legitimize social differences, or more importantly in campaigns, define an "us" and a "them." This may only be subtly implied in the campaign film, but Reagan jovially made statements to this effect when he spoke about country music. At his Roy Acuff appearance, where he took the stage to the tune "Wabash Cannonball" rather than the formal "Hail to the Chief," he stated,

[a]nd I don't know about our opponents, but there's an old country and western song called 'Home on the Range,' where seldom is heard a discouraging word. I guess they haven't campaigned there yet. You could invite them here. If you don't, that's just as well. But they couldn't perform here anyway, because all they do is sing the blues.¹⁰⁵

Although Reagan frames the generic difference here as one defined by attitude (country = optimism, blues = sorrow) and affirms country's separate geographic space (the range), the racial connotations cannot be ignored. People generally associate Acuff's style of country music with middle-aged and older southern and mid-western whites and the blues with black artists and younger audiences who

¹⁰⁴ *The New Republic*, November 19, 1984, 12; quoted in Jamieson, "1984: Presidential Prerogatives; Presidential Preemptions," chap. 10 in *Packaging the Presidency*, 449.

¹⁰⁵ Reagan, "Remarks at a Birthday Celebration for Roy Acuff."

reside in urban areas. Although Reagan speaks of music in this context, the generational, regional, and racial differences connoted by the genres reinforce his allegiance to the “us,” his core demographic. Voters who “sing the blues” (them) cannot “perform” in country music’s hallowed space, or perhaps more broadly, the America Reagan attempts to create in his campaign film.

Evoking World War II, at the same appearance, Reagan even goes so far as to imply that those who despise Acuff despise America:

It’s no exaggeration to say that Roy Acuff brought country music into the mainstream of American life. And he and his music were so much a part of our lives, it’s said that during World War II when the Japanese would storm a beach they would yell, “To hell with Roosevelt, to hell with Babe Ruth, and to hell with Roy Acuff!”¹⁰⁶

After claiming the Opry was no place for the opposing party, the celebration concluded with everyone singing “God Bless the U.S.A.”¹⁰⁷ With his appearance at the Opry, the sacred center of country’s tradition, Reagan positioned country music as the genre that represented the brand of American values espoused by the Republican Party, and he elevated his own standing in the cultural and political fields. Furthermore, competence in the genre and knowledge of its artists and traditions, as well as his allegiance with Acuff, the “king of country music,” not to mention the artists’ approval of his presence, solidified Reagan’s connection with communities who shared the same aesthetic as well as political values.¹⁰⁸ And, during the height of the country-western social trend, many voters identified with this community.

Country music as a genre may have appealed to Reagan for another reason; many of the discourses surrounding it from the 1950s forward revolved around maintaining the purity of the genre in the face of “outsiders.” These threats could be technology, the rise of rockabilly, or some musicians’ acquiescence to the demand for a more marketable sound. In 1980 Jack Hurst described network TV as a threat to the institution of country music, stating, “[t]he decade’s first year could prove

¹⁰⁶ Reagan, “Remarks at a Birthday Celebration for Roy Acuff.”

¹⁰⁷ Francis X. Clines, “Reagan Plays His Campaign Song at Country Music’s Capital,” *New York Times*, September 14, 1984, Friday, Late City Final Edition, A18.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. Roy Acuff states: “This feller, Mr. Reagan, has put our country back in order where it should be.”

pivotal in another respect, too. It may someday be looked back on as the year in which country music made an effort to safeguard its integrity from the increasingly dangerous influences of network TV.”¹⁰⁹ Richard Peterson frames these struggles as “circles of death and renewal” in the genre and ties them to changing notions of authenticity.¹¹⁰ In other words, he argues that, in 1953, informed outsiders “understood the genre as expressing *authenticity*, and that authenticity was not contrived or copied but was based in the history of a people and was drawn from the experiences of those who lived in the everyday world.”¹¹¹

Similarly, the concept of preservation played a key role in Reagan’s re-election campaign. Part of his 1984 “Morning in America” strategy relied on convincing the public that the gains made in the past four years (better economy, lower taxes and inflation rates, increased employment) were “under threat” and needed to be preserved by his continued leadership. Discourses regarding the preservation of tradition, and the importance of maintaining country’s authenticity despite the rise of television, circulated during the same time Reagan blanketed the airwaves with his own message calling for the preservation of American values. Ultimately country music offered Reagan a compatible value system, complementary discourses, and similar rhetoric, but more importantly it afforded him a medium through which he could engender the public’s emotional engagement with them. As Wirthlin stated, “[y]ou can persuade by reason, but if you want to motivate you have got to do it through emotion. You do that by tapping into people’s values.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Jack Hurst, “Country Roots Live Again, as Crossover Craze Dies,” *Chicago Tribune*, December 28, 1980, F8.

¹¹⁰ Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 222; see chapter 14.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹¹² Richard Wirthlin interview, quoted in Hall, “Invention of ‘Quantifiably Safe Rhetoric,’” 326.

Bill Clinton “Can’t Help Falling in Love”

*A presidential campaign is like a film...it never comes together until it's scored and tracked.*¹¹³
 – Paul Begala, Bill Clinton’s Senior Strategist

While celebrities continued to participate in electoral politics in the 1990s, candidates increasingly began to appropriate the rhetoric of celebrity in their campaigns and engage with popular culture in unprecedented ways. In their work on the emergence of hyperreality and US political culture, Shawn Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles discuss the consequences that the collapse of the copy and the original, or image and its referent, have had for the construction of the presidential image. In the postmodern world, they argue, the cultural meanings and expectations attached to the presidency are shaped by both its mythic, symbolic dimensions as well as the intimacies forged through mediated technologies. To this end, televisuality plays a role in constituting presidential image, but as Parry-Giles and Parry-Giles argue, “Presidentiality is an amalgam of different voices and divergent texts.”¹¹⁴ Indeed the Parry-Giles’ dialogically constituted presidentiality bears similarity to the discursive formation Richard Dyer calls star text.

No one illustrates the celebrity politician trend (as noted by John Street) better than Democratic candidate Bill Clinton. Noting this phenomenon in 1992, *New York Times* journalist Maureen Dowd writes,

Who would have thought that a Democratic candidate desperately seeking stature would book himself repeatedly on Don Imus’s morning radio show to play the saxophone and banter about his mother’s peccadillos, his brother’s misplaced aspirations as a country-music singer and the mystery of Sam Donaldson’s hair?¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Robert Costa, “Songs for Campaign Seasons Past and Present,” *Wall Street Journal*, October 7, 2008, B14, accessed September 10, 2011, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122290103509796055.html>.

¹¹⁴ Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles, *Constructing Clinton: Hyperreality & Presidential Image-Making in Postmodern Politics* (New York: P. Lang, 2002), 1–5.

¹¹⁵ Maureen Dowd, “The 1992 Campaign: Political Memo; Populist Media Forums and the Campaign of ’92,” *New York Times*, November 3, 1992, Sec. A, p. 14, col. 5.

Clinton even appeared in an MTV special titled *Choose or Lose: Facing the Future with Bill Clinton* where he answered questions about his brother's drug use and his own experimentation with marijuana (which he did not inhale).¹¹⁶

Although many candidates before 1992 to some extent relied on music as a part of their identity-building strategy, Clinton brought this practice to new heights. Aside from George H. W. Bush and Lee Atwater's feeble attempts to play the blues at the former's inaugural celebration in 1988 (the performance Eric Weisbard compared to minstrelsy), Clinton might be the first presidential candidate to display respectable musical skills on national television.¹¹⁷ In June 1992 the young candidate from Arkansas donned a pair of shades and performed Elvis' "Heartbreak Hotel" on *The Arsenio Hall Show*. Clinton never attempted to conceal his fandom. He once referred to Elvis as "the major cultural figure of [his] childhood," and the press frequently made connections between the two:¹¹⁸ Maureen Dowd once stated, "[t]he candidate was not flustered. He offered his trademark 'Elvis' look, featured heavily in his commercials, of biting his lower lip and crinkling his eyes a bit, a look meant to convey an appealing combination of decency and devilry."¹¹⁹

Informal forums such as *The Arsenio Hall Show*, *Larry King Live* (where Ross Perot announced his candidacy), *The Phil Donahue Show* (where Clinton also

¹¹⁶ Gwen Ifill, "The 1992 Campaign: Youth Vote; Clinton Goes Eye to Eye With MTV Generation," *New York Times*, June 17, 1992.

¹¹⁷ Other politicians have joined in the music making at events, and a handful of musicians who have taken a swing at office have played at their own appearances, but Clinton was certainly the first to perform an extended solo on a non-campaign-related entertainment show.

¹¹⁸ Jonathan Freedland, "Hum Along With Bush; Country Music Sweeps the Campaign," *Washington Post*, August 21, 1992, B1. Also see Elizabeth Kolbert, "The 1992 Campaign: Media; Whistle-Stops a la 1992: Arsenio, Larry and Phil," *New York Times*, June 5, 1992, accessed July 27, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/05/us/the-1992-campaign-media-whistle-stops-a-la-1992-arsenio-larry-and-phil.html>.

¹¹⁹ Maureen Dowd, "The 1992 Campaign: Democrats; After Ordeal, Is Clinton Tempered Now, or Burned?" *New York Times*, February 2, 1992, Sec. 1, Pt. 1, 24, Col. 1. Clinton also appeared on *The Tonight Show*; in this appearance he performed "Summertime."

Clinton's problematic performances of raced music deserve further inquiry, especially considering Toni Morrison's famous article in *The New Yorker* (penned during the impeachment hearings) that declared him, "the first black president," and gave his saxophone playing as evidence of this identity. Clinton, Morrison writes, "displays almost every trope of blackness: single-parent household, born poor, working-class, saxophone-playing, McDonald's-and-junk-food-loving boy from Arkansas."

appeared), and MTV granted voters the opportunity to witness a more human side of the candidate that stood in stark contrast to the images of leadership such as those promulgated by the Reagan campaign.¹²⁰ And, entertainment media outlets provided candidates with a platform where they could communicate their personal values. These appearances had an added benefit: they offered the candidate a forum where he could reach what Russell Neuman referred to as the “marginally attentive public,” a politically inert cohort that relied on less news-oriented sources for information about contemporary politics.¹²¹

Out of all instances of the use of pre-existing music in campaigns over the past few decades, Clinton’s campaign song “Don’t Stop” appears particularly memorable for a great deal of the population.¹²² One can argue rock music “worked” for Bill Clinton in a way that it had not in previous campaigns. In one interview, political scientist Andrew Seligsohn claimed, “The biggest chunk of voters these days are aging baby boomers and they all grew up with rock music. It’s a comfortable part of their world.”¹²³ Whereas McGovern probably did *not* pass a doobie at a James Taylor concert in between Senate meetings, and Nixon probably did not tap his toe to Merle Haggard while dictating policy, the public *could* imagine a sax-wielding Bill Clinton grooving to “Twist and Shout.”

The perception of rock as “comfortable music” during the period may have contributed to its appeal for the Clinton campaign. In the late 1950s, rock emerged within mainstream culture, but by the 1960s, it defined itself through an oppositional stance towards that culture.¹²⁴ Although the genre may have aspired to this stance, Lawrence Grossberg, writing in the mid-1980s, argues the genre was subjected to an

¹²⁰ Joanne Morreale examines the central role of myth creation in Reagan’s film, see *New Beginning*.

¹²¹ W. Russell Neuman, *The Paradox of Mass Politics: Knowledge and Opinion in the American Electorate* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), 170.

¹²² Almost every time I discuss my dissertation topic with fellow colleagues, friends, or acquaintances (young and old) they begin to sing Clinton’s campaign song “Don’t Stop” or bring up Reagan’s attempts to appropriate Springsteen.

¹²³ Quoted in Daniel P. Finney, “Rock Tunes Rule as Political Hopefuls Strive to Hit the Right Note,” *Tribune* (Port St. Lucie/Fort Pierce, FL), February 3, 2004.

¹²⁴ Bethany Klein, *As Heard on TV: Popular Music in Advertising* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2009), 129.

endless cycle of cooptation by hegemonic forces and resistance by musicians and fans culturally invested in the genre. Subsequently, the boundary between center (dominant culture) and periphery (subculture) became effaced as the dominant culture subsumed the baby boomer generation, a sizeable cohort that held the potential to shape the nation's political and economic future. He goes on to suggest that the desire to placate the baby boomer "threat" played a role in this cooptation. This socio-cultural shift profoundly impacted what Grossberg refers to as rock's "affective powers," and the genre's status as nostalgia neutralized its capacity to function as a symbol of rebellion. Although the structures of earlier styles remained on a surface level, the quest for commercial success and popular appeal solidified rock's *adherence* to the dominant culture.¹²⁵ That is to say, rock *is* a mass-marketed commodity, yet as Keir Keightley has argued, the purchase of rock music has "produced intense feelings of freedom, rebellion, marginality, oppositionality, uniqueness, and authenticity."¹²⁶

In addition to amusing television viewers with his soulful sax-playing and energizing rally-goers with his "official" campaign theme song "Don't Stop," the Elvis president offered an expansive playlist of pre-existing music at his appearances on the campaign trail. Clinton may not have been the first candidate to feature a diverse playlist of pre-existing popular music at his campaign appearances, but 1992 was the first time the press made a conscious effort to note the role of music in these events. Interestingly enough, as one journalist claimed, Clinton's life seemed to resonate with the narratives of country music, yet while 1992 incumbent George H. W. Bush embraced the genre, he did not, and instead featured a hearty playlist of classic rock (with some R&B and pop thrown in for good measure). Table 2-4 lists the songs Clinton frequently used at his campaign events:

¹²⁵ Lawrence Grossberg, "Another Boring Day in Paradise: Rock and Roll and the Empowerment of Everyday Life," *Popular Music* 4 (January 1984): 252–56.

¹²⁶ Keir Keightley, "Reconsidering Rock," in *The Cambridge Companion to Pop and Rock*, ed. Simon Frith, Will Straw, and John Street (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 109.

Song	Artist	Date	Genre
Don't Stop	Fleetwood Mac	1977	soft rock
Power to the People	John Lennon	1971	rock
Revolution	The Beatles	1968	rock
My Guy	Mary Wells	1964	Motown
Right Here, Right Now	Jesus Jones	1991	alternative rock
U Can't Touch This	MC Hammer	1990	pop rap
*various	Elvis Presley	c. 1956-1960	rockabilly/ rock & roll
We Shall Be Free	Garth Brooks	1992	country
Born in the U.S.A.	Bruce Springsteen	1984	rock
Sweet Home Chicago	Blues Brothers	1980	blues
Surfin' USA	Beach Boys	1963	surf rock
Lean on Me	Bill Withers	1972	soul
Takin' Care of Business	Bachman-Turner Overdrive	1974	hard rock
Good Vibrations	Beach Boys	1966	surf rock
The Boy in the Bubble	Paul Simon	1986	pop
Graceland	Paul Simon	1986	pop
Scarlet Begonias	Grateful Dead	1974	rock
Margaritaville	Jimmy Buffett	1977	pop
Twist and Shout	The Beatles	1963	rock & roll
All Along the Watchtower	Jimi Hendrix	1968	blues rock
O Happy Day	Edwin Hawkins Singers	1967	soul/gospel

Table 2-4 Bill Clinton's 1992 Campaign Playlist

With his performance style and professed music tastes, Clinton exuded a hip, retro sensibility, and this sensibility extended to his campaign playlist as well. Rather than relying solely on the most current hits (think Reagan with “Fritzbusters” and “God Bless the U.S.A.” in 1984), Clinton’s team selected songs that had reached the height of their popularity almost two or three decades earlier. As Seligsohn implies, one can argue that Clinton used his playlist to establish a connection with other baby boomers, a substantial voting bloc. However, I would like to consider the Clinton-classic rock “fit” from another angle that might explain its success: shortly before Clinton’s campaign moved into full swing, nostalgia became increasingly visible in marketing, advertising, and entertainment media, and baby boomers and senior citizens were the targets of such products.¹²⁷ That is to say, the success of Clinton’s music strategy may indeed be partly due to his authentic attachment to the music

¹²⁷ William J. Havlena and Susan L. Holak, “‘The Good Old Days’: Observations on Nostalgia and its Role in Consumer Behavior,” in *Advances in Consumer Research* 18, edited by Rebecca H. Holman and Michael R. Solomon (Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1991), 323–29, accessed June 15, 2012, <http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=7180>.

represented on his playlist and in his own music performances, but the public's pre-established predilection for pastness equally contributed to its efficacy.

What did "old" music signify for listeners in the early 1990s? Leon Botstein argues the listener's ascription of meaning depends on both the function of musical memory in a specific culture as well as the transaction between performer and listener.¹²⁸ Let's suppose that Clinton's playlist assumes the function of "speaking for" the candidate; in such a transaction, Clinton is the performer and the voters are the listeners. Considering the position of rock as described above by Grossberg and Keightley, what capital did rock hold in the early 1990s and how did Clinton's overarching campaign strategy, with its dual focus on past and future, harness the public's nostalgic impulses and channel them in a way that would further Clinton's candidacy?

Citing the impact of the nostalgia trend in 1989, journalist Jamie Beckett wrote, "[t]here's no time like the past—if current advertising messages are any indication. More and more advertisers are using old music, dead celebrities and nostalgic images to sell everything from cars to fast food."¹²⁹ Indeed Coca-Cola's 1990 advertising campaign exemplified the trend identified by Beckett: in order to evoke nostalgia for the early 1970s, the soft-drink giant offered the public a "new" "I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing" commercial, which reunited the commercial's original multi-ethnic cast and their offspring on the same Italian hillside.¹³⁰ Using the same tune, but with an added countermelody jauntily sung by cast's progeny, the 1990 reunion commercial reminds audiences of the original's message of peace, love, global fellowship (and sugar coma!) and affirms the continuing legacy of these values. Also commenting on advertising, journalist Marcus Mabry claimed "[c]ompanies are

¹²⁸ Leon Botstein, "Memory and Nostalgia as Music-Historical Categories," *Musical Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (2000): 532.

¹²⁹ Jamie Beckett, "Nostalgia is Newest Selling Tool," *San Francisco Chronicle*, November 6, 1989, C5.

¹³⁰ "Coca Cola Commercial – I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing (In Perfect Harmony) – 1971," uploaded by marigold1930, December 29, 2008, accessed October 20, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ib-Qiyklq-Q>; and "Coke Cola Hill Top Reunion TV advert [1990]," uploaded by throthelens, January 20, 2011, accessed October 20, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wqd5K5goiIo>.

so high on the past that they'll sometimes go to almost any length to re-create it."¹³¹ Some companies used commercial footage that looked old, and others, such as the Leaf Candy Company, which produced the classic candy Good & Plenty, recycled their own old footage.¹³² And this trend extended to music as well. Advertisers frequently used popular 1960s songs to sell their products: the California Raisins danced to Marvin Gaye's "I Heard It through the Grapevine;" Nike chose the Beatles' "Revolution."

But advertisers were not the only ones to capitalize on the nostalgia craze. Launched in 1985, the Nostalgia Channel offered a steady diet of classic movies, vintage TV shows, Liberace concerts, Jack LaLanne exercise programs, and "new" shows such as *Dancin' to the Oldies*. By 1990, 450 cable systems with over 8.5 million subscribers carried this channel. The channel's equally popular syndicated radio show *Flashback* featured music and interviews from the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.¹³³ Tapping into this craze, Steve Gottlieb produced *Television's Greatest Hits* and *TeeVee Toons*, compilation cassettes of classic television theme songs and commercial jingles, respectively.¹³⁴ Shows such as *The Wonder Years*, which featured young Kevin Arnold's upbringing in 1970s suburbia, gained a large following, and older television shows such as *The Honeymooners* and *I Love Lucy* were successfully marketed on videocassette. Films set in the 1960s, such as *Good Morning Vietnam* (1987), *Dirty Dancing* (1987), and *Hairspray* (1988), found success at the box office.

According to sociologist Fred Davis "[w]here nostalgia once would have focused on specific places—homes and so forth—the objects of nostalgia are increasingly celebrities of the past, of music, films, et cetera. This makes it easier for the media to capitalize on it, because the material is in their archives." In other words, people long for objects from the past rather than the places associated with it.

¹³¹ Marcus Mabry, "Remembrance of Ads Past," *Newsweek*, July 30, 1990, 42; quoted in Havlena and Holak, "Good Old Days."

¹³² Mary Huhn, "Making Fresh Use of Vintage Commercials; Some Advertisers Find That Footage from Their Old Spots Can Solve Tricky Creative Problems," *Adweek*, February 1, 1988.

¹³³ "Nostalgia Channel Hires Program Syndicator as Exclusive Ad Sales Rep," Associated Press, March 14, 1990.

¹³⁴ Dottie Enrico, "'TeeVee Toons': Advertising Kitsch as Cultural History; Maven of Television Nostalgia Puts Together An Anthology of Classic Commercial Jingles," *Adweek*, July 11, 1988.

Through the consumption of these objects people experience feelings of safety, contentment, and belonging. But how does this translate to nostalgia for certain music? Morris Holbrook and Robert Schindler define nostalgia broadly as “a preference (general liking, positive attitude, or favorable affect) toward objects (people, places, or things) that were more common (popular, fashionable, or widely circulated) when one was younger (in early adulthood, in adolescence, in childhood, or even before birth).”¹³⁵ According to their research on nostalgia and consumer behavior, people tend to favor the music that was popular when they were young adults, and they continue to find pleasure in this music for the rest of their lives.¹³⁶ Like Holbrook and Schindler, William Havlena and Susan Holak argue nostalgia for adolescence and early adulthood appears to be the strongest, and furthermore, they claim that people are most highly prone to nostalgia during transitional periods in the life cycle, especially the middle age and retirement years.¹³⁷ This is to say, Clinton’s own cohort (baby boomers) whom he targeted with his campaign tactics and self-presentation, was perceived as highly susceptible to nostalgia-laden messages.

In selecting music from the 1960s and 1970s, Clinton almost guaranteed his target audience would respond positively to his playlist: Havlena and Holak argue that first-order nostalgia tends to filter information and leave the consumer with the impression that things in the past were better than they actually were.¹³⁸ In other words, the social turmoil of the 1960s could now be recast as the halcyon days of

¹³⁵ Morris B. Holbrook and Robert M. Schindler, “Echoes of the Dear Departed Past: Some Work in Progress on Nostalgia,” in *Advances in Consumer Research* 18, ed. Rebecca H. Holman and Michael R. Solomon (Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1991), 330–33, accessed April 4, 2012, <http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/display.asp?id=7181&print=1>.

¹³⁶ Morris B. Holbrook and Robert M. Schindler, “Some Exploratory Findings on the Development of Musical Tastes,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 16 (June 1989): 119–24. In another article, Holbrook posits a “Nostalgia Index” as a means of measuring a subject’s proclivity for nostalgic impulses. See “Nostalgic Consumption: On the Reliability and Validity of a New Nostalgia Index” (working paper, Columbia University, Graduate School of Business, New York, NY, 1990).

¹³⁷ Havlena and Holak, “Good Old Days,” 323–29.

¹³⁸ Ibid. Fred Davis describes First Order, or Simple Nostalgia as “that subjective state which harbors the largely unexamined belief that things were better (more beautiful) (healthier) (happier) (more civilized) (more exciting) *then than now*.” See *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 17–18.

youth. Although it is difficult to pinpoint whether the nostalgia trend in advertising was in response to, or the initiating factor in, the nostalgia craze, there is no question that the increasing use of music to sell products has depleted rock of its political and subcultural connotations to a certain extent. As Ken McLeod's work shows, rock music became the standard soundtrack of sporting events during the 1990s. Similarly, Fabian Holt claims rock music became a discourse appropriated for the articulation of public memory at events such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and various professional sporting events, such as the Soccer World Cup.¹³⁹ Although one can argue the reproduction (or to use Grossberg's word, cooptation) of rock music in these various commercial contexts has diminished its countercultural capital and depleted its aura, this trajectory has only increased its symbolic capital for candidates such as Bill Clinton. As music that evokes the safety and security of an idealized past, signifies the satisfaction of consuming familiar objects, and recalls events that define American pride and patriotism in the collective social memory, a retro playlist can be a winning playlist.

Although Davis uses the word "objects," in the case of music, Botstein's metaphor of the transaction is perhaps more fitting when considering retro music in the context of campaigning. As the electorate actively engages with Clinton's music (*their* music) at live events, they renew their belonging to a certain group, and they reaffirm their collective identity by way of their shared nostalgic experience.¹⁴⁰ Perhaps the feel-good music also masks the underlying politics, capitalist initiatives, and corporate greed that underpin both campaigns and the events cited by Holt. Or, one can argue that the ubiquitous presence of music as a marketing tool in these realms "naturalizes" the power relations that enable their existence.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ McLeod notes how mainstream sports organizations use music to connect with an audience, or to diversify their fan base (e.g., the NBA/hip-hop connection). Fabian Holt, *Genre in Popular Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1. See also Don Cusic, "NASCAR and Country Music," *Studies in Popular Culture* 21, no. 1 (1998), 31–40; and Liz Clarke, "Fast-Track Politicking: Candidates Gear Their Messages toward NASCAR Dads," *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, April 11, 2003, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 101.

¹⁴¹ This is not to say the practice of using pre-existing music (be it a year old or twenty-years old) hasn't had its detractors. In 1990 Tolga Kashif lamented: "Nothing is sacred. Marvin Gaye has been reduced to stripping in laundrettes and Bizet to selling upmarket cars while Carl Orff scores

Staying Afloat *Without* Taft

According to Jacques Attali, “All music, any organization of sounds is then a tool for the creation or consolidation of a community, of a totality. It is what links a power center to its subjects, and thus, more generally, it is an attribute of power in all its forms.”¹⁴² When candidates select campaign songs, playlists, or artists to represent them, they are choosing a particular interpretation of a song or repertoire just as individual listeners do. Candidates (and their strategists) decide *how* they will use music—not only what they play, but how much they play, when they play it, and how they frame it with other words and images. George McGovern used music and activist-artists to establish his connection to the anti-war movement and youth interests and to highlight his image as a unifier, a man who could bring people together. Ronald Reagan also relied on music’s community- and identity-building potential, but he emphasized traditional values and positioned country music artists as both purveyors and preservers of these American ideals. Like Reagan and McGovern, Bill Clinton targeted his music to a specific community, and for that community his music conjured up associations of an idealized past. Ultimately the candidate channeled these positive affective responses towards building solidarity and creating a sense of imagined community and shared values between baby boomers who shared the same collective memory. Although politicians attempt to shape *how* the citizenry will interpret popular songs as they are recontextualized during the campaign season, the electorate often responds to music in ways that cannot be predetermined. In the following chapters I present case studies that expand on the ways pre-existing music can participate in candidate identity formation, value construction, and community building, while also taking into consideration the ways voters engage with music and the implications such engagement has for the development of campaign music strategies in the twenty-first century.

the louts double with aftershave and lager.” See Ronnie Paris and Tolga Kashif, “Head to Head: Ronnie Paris Speaks Out in Favour of Using Existing Music in Ads While Tolga Kashif Believes That This Approach Limits Creativity,” *Campaign*, July 13, 1990. George H.W. Bush labeled Clinton “the karaoke kid” who will sing any tune that will get him elected. See Freedland, “Hum Along with Bush,” B1.

¹⁴² Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 6.

CHAPTER 3

“GRITS AND FRITZ” AND A FEW GOOD OL’ BOYS: AN UNTOLD HISTORY OF SOUTHERN ROCK AND THE 1976 JIMMY CARTER PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

In politics, music, is the best quick way to raise money. – Tom Beard¹

Grits: The Impossible Candidate

Writing about the year 1974, Ray Townley, a contributor to *Down Beat* magazine, claimed, “[I]t ha[d] become chic to be a . . . rock band out of the South.”² Indeed, individuals who identified with countercultural values (and supported George McGovern in 1972) and young white, working-class southerners comprised southern rock’s core audiences. However, due to a flurry of performances by southern rock bands on the festival circuit (such as Black Oak Arkansas at Cal Jam in Ontario, California in 1974 and the Allman Brothers Band at the Summer Jam at Watkins Glen, New York in 1973), the southern rock “sound” became increasingly popular outside the region.³ And, seeing as the move towards southernization in American politics began in the late-1960s and the cowboy-western social trend I discussed in relation to Reagan gained traction in the mid-70s, the South, or to be more specific, the multivalent South, as constituted by both the media and those who consumed its music and mythology, continued to function as a site for admiration, derision, and appropriation.

Furthermore, the emergence of country-rock (a label often applied to Charlie Daniels’s music) and the release of several successful country crossover songs contributed to changing attitudes in the mainstream towards country music’s fans (many of which claimed southern identity). In looking at films from the same period, David Brackett notes the rise of compiled film scores with country music. The positioning of country music in the films Brackett considers suggests the genre’s

¹ Quoted in Maureen Orth, “Battle of the Bands,” *Newsweek*, May 31, 1976, 44.

² Ray Townley, “Makin’ It in Macon,” *Down Beat*, September 12, 1974, 16–17. Chic perhaps, but not much of a novelty: as Robert Palmer notes in his article “The Confederacy Rocks Again,” several decades earlier the most visible rock and roll personality, Elvis Presley, was born in Tupelo, raised in Memphis, and initially recorded for Sun Records in Memphis. See Robert Palmer, “The Confederacy Rocks Again,” *New York Times*, June 25, 1976.

³ For more on rock festivals, see Marley Brant, *Join Together: Forty Years of the Rock Music Festival* (New York: Backbeat, 2008).

associations with “authenticity” or “truth-to-self” persisted during this period, and the same can be said for southern rock, which promulgated a complementary system of values.⁴

To investigate *why* the South—its sounds, lifestyles, virtues, and values—appealed to Americans across the ideological spectrum in 1976, we might consider the prevailing social and political climate and its impact on the nation’s morale. As I stated in chapter two, increasing fragmentation (by demographic traits, ideology, and culture) meant many individuals no longer felt connected to their families and communities. In addition to the weakening of these bonds, increasing industrialization (which took place in the South during this period), suburban domestication, and the broader homogenization of culture, as well as an overriding skepticism towards modernity provoked palpable anxiety.⁵ As a coping strategy, many Americans envisioned the South as a safe haven that offered a sense of community, tight-knit family units, and traditional values; a pristine, rural utopia unmarred by modernism, suburbanization, and materialism. As Stephen Smith’s study demonstrates, these cultural myths, as perpetuated through the media, shaped the public’s perception of the South. It is this comforting mythology, as well as the region’s Romanticism and identification with the past that contributed to its appeal among those grappling with feelings of loss and disillusionment in the wake of Vietnam, Watergate, and a lengthy period of social unrest.⁶

But representations of the South were not universally positive. As Tara McPherson, James Cobb, and other historians of the period have noted, representations of a vilified and reviled South plagued by a legacy of slavery and violence coexisted with the more romanticized South I described above.⁷ But the

⁴ David Brackett, “Banjos, Biopics, and Compilation Scores: The Movies Go Country,” *American Music* 19, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 249; 254.

⁵ Claude S. Fischer and Greggor Mattson, “Is America Fragmenting?” *Annual Review of Sociology* 35 (August 2009): 435–55.

⁶ For more on the perpetuation of Southern mythology, see Stephen A. Smith, *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1986), 6.

⁷ Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); and James C. Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture: Mind and Identity in the Modern South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999).

unchanging South indeed did change, and these social transformations, according to Smith, brought about a new mythology for a modern South; its new mythic themes in the post-World War II period included equality, distinctiveness, and a sense of place and community.⁸ And this is the new South that governors such as Terry Sanford (North Carolina) and Albert Brewer (Alabama) attempted to establish through progressive educational reforms, economic growth, and racial integration, and that Martin Luther King Jr. and the L. Q. C. Lamar Society fought for through their activism. In short, the South, with its conflicting attitudes and ideologies, and its complex and contested history offered up a veritable buffet of signifiers both for those with nostalgia for its imagined pre-modern rural paradise and those who felt an affinity with its position as a site of rebellion.

The same year Townley commented on southern rock's chicness factor, Jimmy Carter, a former peanut farmer and nuclear physicist who was a relatively unknown governor from the state of Georgia, had already begun preparations for the grassroots campaign that would eventually lead him to the White House in 1977. Despite the Sun Belt's assimilation into the political and economic mainstream during the period, the Georgian's campaign was one of impossible odds: he was unknown on the national political scene, lacked blue-blooded roots, and was born and raised in the South, a region which had only sent two candidates to the highest office since 1849. In a direct mailing campaign brochure titled *Carter News*, Carter even playfully acknowledged that "heretofore a southerner who aspired to the presidency was regarded as a joke."⁹ But due to the South's position in the cultural imagination at the time, not to mention the prevailing climate of the 70s, Tom Wolfe's "me generation," with its hostility towards everything Washington in the wake of Nixon, Watergate, and a long, unpopular war, Carter's perceived weakness, actually became his strength.

Engaging with what Smith identifies as the myths defining the new South, speeches, slogans, advertisements, and style constructed the image of "Jimmy Who"

⁸ Smith, *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind*, 60–61.

⁹ Newsletter, Carl Rowan, "Carter: An Honorable Candidate," *Carter News*, vol. 1, no. 3 February 1975, p. 1 [Reprinted from *Chicago Daily News*]. Gerald M. Rafshoon Collection, 1976 Campaign–Subject Files, Ad/Proof Sheets through Contribution Report by State, "Brochures and Samples–Misc. File 1," Box 7, Jimmy Carter Library.

as that of a southern farmer with small town values and, as I will demonstrate, this representation also extended to his campaign soundtrack. In 1975–76 Carter’s friend Phil Walden, the manager of Capricorn Records, organized five benefit concerts on behalf of his campaign. The performances, which featured the Allman Brothers Band, the Charlie Daniels Band, the Marshall Tucker Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, Wet Willie, and other lesser-known rock bands from the South, revitalized the Georgian’s campaign with much needed cash. Several historians and even a campaign insider have told the story of how “Jimmy Who” went “from peanuts to president,” but they omit from their narrative the role that southern rock and its performers, producers, and audiences played in Carter’s ascendancy. The case study presented here will remedy these lacunae in Carter’s campaign history while adding some critical insight into the genre of southern rock and its engagement with the southern mythologies that circulated through various media in the 1970s.¹⁰

Despite its immense popularity during its heyday, southern rock as a genre has not received much attention in musicological circles. Chris Reali’s dissertation on the Allman Brothers is the only music-analytical study on the genre to date. However, several scholars, including Mike Butler, Ted Ownby, Paul Wells, and Zachary Lechner attempt to shed light on the cultural practices of southern whites as they struggled to find their place in the aftermath of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement, and they examine how these practices not only engaged with established southern traditions but also reinvented them. Mike Butler positions southern rock music as a manifestation of the changing conception of southern white male identity

¹⁰ John Street, Seth Hague, and Heather Savigny, “Playing to the Crowd: The Role of Music and Musicians in Political Participation,” *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 10, no. 2 (2008): 269–85. I loosely base my methodology on John Street’s tripartite approach to the politics-music nexus: the organization of the link, its legitimation, and its cultural performance (269). In order for musicians to participate in political action, Street argues, certain conditions must be met. First, forms of organization enabling musicians and non-governmental organizations to communicate with each other must be in place. Second, musicians must be established as legitimate representatives of their cause. And third, a public forum (a concert or large-scale event) must be established so the music itself can “not only convey the message or sentiment of the movement or cause, but also motivate it” (275). Although Street applies this framework to the analysis of large-scale, awareness-raising events aimed at overhauling public policy, I believe his framework can be applicable to campaign-related performances, as they require the same conditions described above and constitute a similar form of political participation.

following the Civil Rights Movement.¹¹ Like fans and insiders who have written on the genre, Butler includes defending the artists against charges of racism as part of his agenda.¹² At the same time, he eloquently argues for a more nuanced reading of the bands' music and their visual signifiers of southern identity. As Butler explains in detail, the bands selectively embraced certain elements of their southern heritage while rejecting its racist tendencies. Like Butler, Ted Ownby examines changing conceptions of southern manhood; through the analysis of song lyrics and performance strategy, he explores the bands' complex relationships with Southern traditions. To Ownby, the music rejects former cultural traditions, specifically, home, the father figure, and the racist tendencies that defined southern identity in earlier times. In their place, he finds the celebration of a new southern identity that embraces personal independence and male friendship.¹³

Focusing on lyrics, Paul Wells interrogates the genre's meaning(s) by analyzing the themes of representative songs and exploring the roots of their subjects. In addition to examining the emergence of "nostalgic communities" in the years after the genre's zenith, Wells sheds light on the codes and conventions that define southern identity and the ways they are manifested in the lyrical content of the music. He argues the songs' presentations of southern life only seldom engage with

¹¹ Mike Butler, "'Luther King Was a Good Ole Boy': The Southern Rock Movement and White Male Identity in the Post-Civil Rights South," *Popular Music and Society* 23, no. 2 (1999): 41–62.

¹² Two insiders and a journalist have penned books on Southern rock: Producer and artistic development executive Marley Brant, whose book uses artist interviews to construct a history of the genre, provides an intriguing fan's perspective. A childhood friend of Ronnie Van Zant who later served as Lynyrd Skynyrd's security manager, Gene Odom, gives his unique insider's perspective on the band's rise to fame. Journalist Scott Freeman offers a colorful and well-researched band biography of the Allman Brothers Band. See Marley Brant, *Southern Rockers: The Roots and Legacy of Southern Rock* (New York: Billboard, 1999); Gene Odom, *Lynyrd Skynyrd: Remembering the Freebirds of Southern Rock* (New York: Three Rivers, 2003); Scott Freeman, *Midnight Riders: The Story of the Allman Brothers Band* (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1996). Chris Reali, "Blues-Rock, Progressive: A Style Analysis of the Allman Brothers Band" (master's thesis, Hunter College–CUNY, 2008).

¹³ Ted Ownby, "Freedom, Manhood, and White Male Tradition in 1970s Southern Rock Music," in *Haunted Bodies: Gender and Southern Texts*, ed. Anne Goodwyn Jones and Susan V. Donaldson, 369–88 (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997).

issues regarding racism.¹⁴ Taking popular imaginings of the South between 1960 and 1980 as his subject, Zachary Lechner's dissertation chapter on the Allman Brothers Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd relies on ethnographic work and on the analysis of music criticism in order to shed light on the groups' engagement with their southern heritage and its cultural baggage.¹⁵ Each of these analytical forays into the reception, images, lyrics, and sounds of southern rock collectively make the case that one cannot argue for a single definitive interpretation of what it means to be a southerner *or* a southern rocker.

Focusing specifically on the structure and particular challenges of Carter's grassroots campaign, I begin by examining the economic conditions, cultural actors, and institutional structures that enabled the link between Carter's campaign and southern rock to be forged. I continue by examining how these factors that shaped the political climate and cultural landscape in the 1970s ultimately allowed a posse of southern rockers to gain representative legitimacy. Taking into consideration journalistic discourses surrounding the bands and Carter's campaign rhetoric as well as the self-fashioning strategies of each, I shift my focus to two tropes related to southern identity (rebel persona/outsider and rural authenticity) and show how these aspects of southern distinctiveness shaped both Carter's presidentiality and the bands' star texts. To conclude, I address how the value system associated with southern identity complicated both the bands' and Carter's relationships to tradition as well as to each other, but at the same time imbued Carter's campaign with symbolic capital that ultimately improved his position in the political field.

¹⁴ Paul Wells, "The Last Rebel: Southern Rock and Nostalgic Communities," in *Dixie Debates: Perspectives on Southern Culture*, ed. Richard H. King and Helen Taylor, 115–29 (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

¹⁵ Zachary J. Lechner, "A Tale of Two Souths: The Allman Brothers Band's Countercultural Southernness and Lynyrd Skynyrd's Rebel Macho," chap. 4 in "The South of the Mind: American Imaginings of Rural White Southernness, 1960–1980" (PhD diss., Temple University, 2012). Chapter five of Lechner's dissertation, "'I Respect a Good Southern White Man': Jimmy Carter's Healing Southernness and the 1976 Presidential Campaign," examines the role of Southern identity in Carter's campaign, but the author does *not* address Carter's connections with southern rock artists. Lechner does arrive at conclusions similar to mine with regards to Carter's projection of southern identity; however, for the most part, the documents he analyzes are different than mine. I will also add here that I read Lechner's work *after* I had already written a draft of this chapter.

Selling Tickets/Selling Carter

Before delving into how the genre's aesthetic values engaged with Carter's political orientation, I would like to consider the economic limitations of Carter's campaign that led him to seek out the support of artists like Charlie Daniels and Gregg Allman. Campaign finance reform laws instituted in the years leading up to Carter's presidential bid imposed limits on corporate donations and therefore curtailed the direct influence of big business on campaigns. At the same time, such reforms required campaign strategists to devise new fundraising strategies. In the post-Watergate era, the newly instituted Federal Election Commission (FEC) closely monitored contributions and expenditures related to campaigning. Additionally, the amendments to the Federal Election Campaign Act, passed by Congress and instituted in 1974, limited contributions from individuals to \$1000, required contributions over \$100 to be reported by the candidate, and strictly prohibited corporate gifts or money. A statement released in *Carter News* read, "once a candidate has raised \$5,000 in twenty different states [only the first \$250 of any individual's contribution applies toward the \$5,000 qualifying total] the Federal Treasury will match the contribution dollar for dollar up to five million from the dollar check-off fund."¹⁶ Eligibility for matching funds was, to a certain extent, indispensable for the viability of all Democratic hopefuls because the Democratic National Convention provided little assistance early in the campaign, and the new laws restricted corporate donations.¹⁷ For an unknown candidate such as Carter, with few resources and political connections, these funds were especially critical.¹⁸

¹⁶ Newsletter, *Carter News*, vol. 1, no. 3, p. 3, February 1975, Gerald M. Rafshoon Collection, 1976 Campaign-Subject Files, Ad/Proof Sheets through Contribution Report by State, "Brochures and Samples-Misc. File 1," Box 7, Jimmy Carter Library.

¹⁷ According to Hamilton Jordan, "the DNC is playing a waiting game, and it is trying to get away with giving the presidential candidates as little as possible until it sees how the convention will go." See Memorandum, DNC Strategy, n.d., pg. 3, Presidential Campaign Director's Office-Hamilton Jordan Correspondence/Subject File Democratic Convention Field Staff Correspondence through Memorandums-Paul Hermann, May-October 1976, "Jimmy Carter Papers-Pre-Presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director's Office-Hamilton Jordan Democratic National Committee, May 1975-October 1976," Box 199, Jimmy Carter Library.

¹⁸ George McGovern's campaign pre-dated the 1974 amendment; therefore, he could accept large corporate donations (if he disclosed them), but since his campaign, like Carter's, began at the

Documents from the early days of Carter's campaign frequently cite the obstacles to acquiring sufficient funds from individual voters and outline potential strategies for securing much-needed revenue. In one memo on campaign strategy, Carter's campaign manager Hamilton Jordan noted the importance of organizing events of relatively low cost that may not generate more capital than would be invested by the campaign, but that would bring in matching federal funds: "What would be desirable" according to Jordan, "is several large, cheap-admission entertaining fund-raising events that aim at breaking even while taking advantage of the matching funds. A concert, a boat ride party around the island, and a large event at Roseland (only a block away from us) are all possible."¹⁹ According to Tom Beard, who Carter once referred to as his "rock coordinator," Carter ran the campaign on a shoestring budget, with most people—including several of his friends and family members—serving as volunteers.²⁰ Carter friend and historian Jay Beck even claimed (in all seriousness) that the campaign team resorted to "shaking envelopes to keep the lights on."²¹

Although change in envelopes may not have had much impact, celebrities could. The 1971 Federal Election Act allowed individuals (celebrities included) to volunteer their time or professional services; these did not have to be reported to the Federal Election Commission, and no law limited the amount of time a person could donate.²² Monies raised through celebrity events such as the Concerts for Carter met the mandatory eligibility requirements for matching federal funds.²³ Treasurer Robert

grassroots level, he similarly had to rely on celebrity participation and funds generated by large-scale events.

¹⁹ Memorandum, DNC Strategy, 2.

²⁰ Tom Beard, interview by the author, Atlanta, GA, August 17, 2010.

²¹ Jay Beck, interview by the author, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, Atlanta, GA, August 19, 2010.

²² *Carter News* explains the new campaign donation policy as follows: "An individual may volunteer his or her time and professional services—this does not have to be reported and there is no limit." Newsletter, *Carter News*, vol. 1, no. 3, February 1975, p. 3, Gerald M. Rafshoon Collection, 1976 Campaign—Subject Files, Ad/Proof Sheets through Contribution Report by State, "Brochures and Samples—Misc. File 1," Box 7, Jimmy Carter Library.

²³ It is unclear exactly when the idea for the concerts came up in discussion. According to Scott Freeman, Carter solicited the help of Gregg Allman on January 22, 1974; however, he also states

Lipschutz claimed it “was very hard to raise \$1000 in a day, yet the concerts made this possible.”²⁴ To give an example, the five concerts organized by Phil Walden netted \$151,000 in profits and federal matching funds.²⁵ Table 3-1 provides a breakdown of the profits:

Date	Artists	Venue	City	Audience	Gross	Net	Matching Funds
October 31, 1975	Marshall Tucker	Fox Theatre	Atlanta, GA	4,000	\$25,609	\$10,420	\$8,500
November 25, 1975	Allman Brothers	Civic Center	Providence, RI	18,000-20,000	\$64,031	\$6,257	\$31,300
January 14, 1976	Charlie Daniels	Fox Theatre	Atlanta, GA	4,000	\$11,859	-\$230	\$4,800
May 17, 1976	Charlie Daniels		Nashville, TN	11,000	\$36,487	\$5,750	\$15,150
July 10, 1976	Charlie Daniels, Marshall Tucker, Wet Willie, (Lynyrd Skynyrd) also others	Gator Bowl	Jacksonville, FL	30,000	\$147,193	-\$13,073	\$85,000

Table 3-1 Concerts for Carter Revenue²⁶

In addition to introducing the candidate to a pool of potential constituents (Carter spoke at four of the five concerts) and raising funds, the concerts allowed

that Carter and Walden conceived of the idea together, but does not state whether this took place before or after Carter approached Allman. (See Freeman, *Midnight Riders*, 209–11.) The interviews I conducted did not lead to a concrete answer to this question.

²⁴ Newspaper clipping, “Rock Concerts Benefit Carter,” *Pawtucket (Rhode Island) Times*, September 30, 1976, Jimmy Carter Papers—Pre-Presidential, 1976 Presidential Campaign, Margaret McKenna, Field Office Northeast Region Subject Files, Party Affairs Office through Warm Springs, GA, “Rhode Island: Campaign,” Box 421, Jimmy Carter Library.

²⁵ Charlie Daniels performed at least one additional concert that is *not* included here. Daniels and Lynyrd Skynyrd were *not* signed under Capricorn Records. Daniels’s music is often classified as country or country rock, but as Brant argues, southern rockers considered him to be “one of their own.” See Brant, *Southern Rockers*, 117.

²⁶ This chart is based on numbers provided to the *Pawtucket Times*. Newspaper clipping, “Rock Concerts Benefit Carter.” Although members of Lynyrd Skynyrd did jam with the other bands, the group did not perform together because Ronnie Van Zant fell ill. (Tom Beard Interview). The Allman Brothers, the Marshall Tucker Band, and Wet Willie also performed for Carter’s Valentine’s Day telethon.

Carter to recruit party volunteers and garner additional financial support. For matching federal funds eligibility, the name and home address of each ticket holder had to be collected upon admission to the concerts. Several weeks after the events, the campaign sent out pamphlets and solicited additional funds from the concert attendees. In the early 1970s, the lowered voting age (established in 1971 with the Twenty-Sixth Amendment) and new campaign finance legislation precipitated an alliance between candidates and the music industry. Although the fields of politics and entertainment converged in earlier elections, the particular sociopolitical climate of the mid-1970s made such alliances even more vital for an unknown candidate such as Carter (Fig. 3-1).

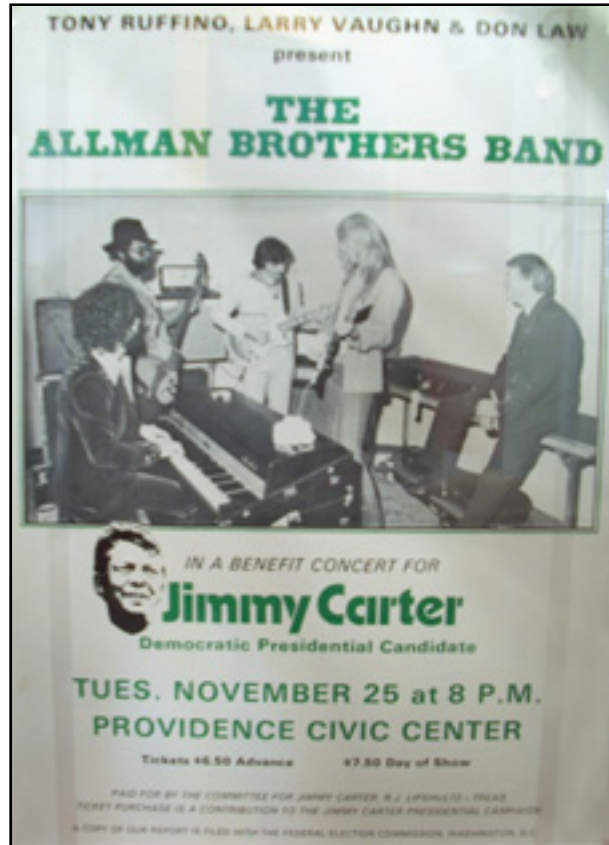


Figure 3-1 Concerts for Carter Poster²⁷

And Carter's status as an unknown concerned the Party faithful. In a letter offering her support, civil rights activist and Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Delores Tucker identified the candidate's unknown status as a potential detriment to the campaign, claiming people "do not know the man."²⁸ Although generating funds remained the primary impetus for the concerts, promoting the candidate and increasing his visibility stood as a close second. According to

²⁷ Note Carter's position in relation to the artists in this photo. Although clearly engaged with their music making, Carter remains separate from the group as he looks upon them with a patriarchal gaze. When asked about his relationship with the musicians, Carter referred to the musicians as "young people" and "strange kids" with whom he felt a close kinship. Considering Van Zant's history of rebel-rousing and the Allman's drug use, Carter may have deliberately chosen to be visually separate in the photo and to emphasize the age disparity; in doing so he positioned himself in a "fatherly" as opposed to "friendly" role. For Carter's statement on southern rock, see Brant, *Southern Rockers*, 13.

²⁸ Letter, C. Delores Tucker, Secretary of the Commonwealth to Hamilton Jordan, September 17, 1976, 1976 Presidential Campaign Director's Office-Hamilton Jordan Correspondence/Subject File, "Jimmy Carter Papers-Pre-Presidential, 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director's Office-Hamilton Jordan October 1976, T-V," Box 198, Jimmy Carter Library.


campaign finance director Morris Dees, “[p]art of the strategy was to devise events that brought in a huge amount of money in a single day but also would receive a lot of news coverage, i.e. fundraising dinners with entertainers, where people would pay \$100 a head to attend the event, but then others could watch through a closed circuit broadcast for \$10 (same as they might pay for a prize fight).”²⁹ The *Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter* Telethon, which aired on Valentine’s Day of 1976, served the same purpose (Fig. 3-2).

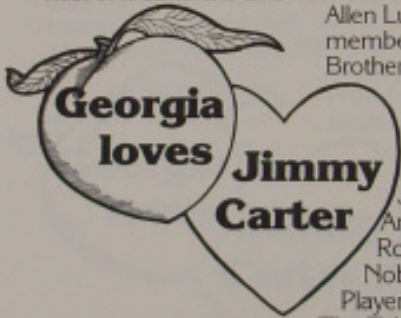
²⁹ Memorandum, Morris Dees to Jimmy Carter, April 22, 1976, Presidential Campaign Director’s Office-Hamilton Jordan Correspondence/Subject File Democratic Convention-Field-Staff Correspondence through Memorandums–Paul Hemman, May–October 1976, “Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential, 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director’s Office-Hamilton Jordan Memorandums-Morris Dees, April–June 1976,” Box 199, folder 14, Jimmy Carter Library.

Spend Valentine's Day with Jimmy Carter (and some of his very famous friends).

It's the "Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter" Telethon Saturday night. Saluting the former Governor of Georgia, who, with our help, can be our next President.

A variety of nationally-known celebrities will be in Atlanta to help raise money for the campaign, as well as a host of local talent. Like Pat Paulsen,





Allen Ludden, Peggy Cass; members of the Allman Brothers, Marshall Tucker and Wet Willie bands; Jimmy Buffett and Dobie Grey. From the local scene, people like John Wade, Congressman Andrew Young, Pepper Rodgers, Phil Niekro, Tommy Nobis and The Wits End Players will be there.

The Telethon will be broadcast live from Atlanta, beginning at 9 p.m. Saturday night.
You won't want to miss it.

Saturday 9p.m. WAGA/5, WALB/10, WCTV/6, WMAZ/13, WRBL/3, WRDW/12, WTOG/11

Paid for by the Jimmy Carter Presidential Campaign Committee, R.J. Lipshutz, Treasurer, P.O. Box 1976, Atlanta, Georgia 30301. A copy of our report is filed with the Federal Election Commission and is available for purchase from the Federal Election Commission, Washington, D.C.

JC-M-14 pg (4 1/2 x 6 - 7/8") B&W, TV Guide 2/14/76
Gerald Rafshoon Advertising #2843

Figure 3-2 *Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter* Telethon Advertisement³⁰

Whereas the campaign targeted older (and wealthier) audiences with the dinners and telethon event that featured celebrities alongside Jimmy Carter, they drew in younger audiences with the Concerts for Carter. Political journalist Richard Reeves argued that since political campaign finance reform laws outlawed contributions of over

³⁰ Advertisement for *Georgia Loves Jimmy Carter Telethon*, February 14, 1976, Gerald M. Rafshoon Collection, 1976 Campaign—Subject Files, Ad/Proof Sheets through Contribution Report by State, "Brochures and Samples—Misc. File 5," Box 7, Jimmy Carter Library.

\$1000, rock concerts “could push national politics to the young and to the left.”³¹ Strategists also noted this trend during McGovern’s campaign. As a result, Carter, like McGovern before him, needed to galvanize the support of this new voting bloc. With its young fan base, countercultural appeal, and well-established networks of distribution, rock music became a point of access for candidates who wished to transform fan communities into constituencies.

According to Peter Conlon, the promoter who mobilized musicians to support Carter during his 1980 campaign, the appearance of highly visible artists alongside a virtually unknown candidate fostered the idea that Carter was someone you already knew.³² Through press releases, Carter’s team even attempted to convince the public that the “close relationship” between Carter and the Allman Brothers was already a well-known fact. One release claimed, “Since the Allman Brothers Band was formed in 1969, their close relationship with Jimmy Carter has often been in the news.”³³ During the Carter presidency, the press also noted the impact such alliances had on the southerner’s successful campaign: “When President Carter was still Jimmy Who in the mid-’70s, a burly country-rocking nomad [Charlie Daniels] helped keep his political fantasies alive with three fundraising gigs.”³⁴ The bands may indeed have supported Carter’s politics, but their motives may not have been solely altruistic: Chris Charlesworth noted Carter’s alliance with the rock industry and argued the relationship benefitted all parties involved. As governor, Carter supported anti-piracy legislation. Indeed, musicians and producers believed they would benefit from a Carter presidency.³⁵

When I interviewed Conlon, I asked him why Carter’s team chose to use

³¹ Newspaper clipping, “Rock Concerts Benefit Carter.”

³² Peter Conlon, interview by the author, Atlanta, GA, August 17, 2010.

³³ Press Release, Allman Bros. Benefit Concert in Providence, October 18, 1975, p. 1, Carter Family Papers 1976 Campaign Files, New Releases, October–December 1975 through News Summaries, September 6, 1975–March 13, 1976, “News Releases–October 1975–December 1975,” Box 42, Jimmy Carter Library. Carter did not meet Gregg Allman until January 1974.

³⁴ Newspaper Clipping, “The Devil Went Down to Georgia, and Charlie Daniels Went to No. 1 in Country-Rock” [Unknown source, the photocopy includes a note from Carter to Daniels: “I’m glad my friend is number one.” Jimmy Carter], p. 45, Carter Presidential Papers–WHCF Name File, “Daniels, Charlie,” Jimmy Carter Library.

³⁵ Chris Charlesworth, “Elected! Rock and US Politics,” *Melody Maker*, November 13, 1976.

southern rock bands for the fundraising concerts. I expected he would say something about cultural and geographic ties between the musicians and the candidate. He claimed, however, and the two concert organizers present at the interview (Tom Beard and Alexander Cooley) agreed, that they chose the music because “it was what people were listening to, and it was what was popular at the time.”³⁶ However, it is quite possible that the candidate’s choice of southern rock may also have been part of a broader attempt to combat the Republican Party’s Southern Strategy. (This term refers to Republican candidates’ efforts to win the votes of conservative-leaning Southern Democrats by lacing their rhetoric with references to states’ rights and by playing to southerners’ fears surrounding desegregation.) In place since Richard Nixon’s first campaign in late 1968, the Southern Strategy precipitated the political realignment of the southern states. The strategy resulted in success: in 1972 Nixon became the first Republican candidate to carry every southern state. In his 1970 campaign for the Georgia governorship, Carter assumed a similar stance. So inhospitable was Carter’s stance towards blacks that the community put forth its own candidate for the governorship. However, although Carter adopted rhetoric that would appeal to Segregationists during election season, in his inaugural address he declared that “the time for racial discrimination is over;” while in the governor’s office, Carter initiated legislation that favored desegregation and ultimately won the loyalty of many black voters.

Carter’s attention to issues that primarily affected black communities during his tenure as governor indeed increased his credibility in the 1976 campaign where he received the overwhelming support of black voters.³⁷ A vocal minority did, however, call Carter’s pro-civil rights, desegregationist stance into question. The NAACP, black leaders, and the black press attacked Carter for comments he made regarding the preservation of “ethnic purity” in neighborhoods at an Atlanta chapter meeting of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and some called his record as

³⁶ Peter Conlon Interview.

³⁷ For example, see C.E. Price, “Explaining Blacks Affinity for Carter,” *Atlanta Daily World*, September 24, 1976, 4, accessed June 4, 2011, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/491468771?accountid=12339>; “Carter Launches Campaign with Speech and Tour,” *Atlanta Daily World*, September 9, 1976, 1, accessed April 7, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/491467622?accountid=12339>.

governor into question.³⁸ Carter later apologized and clarified his controversial remarks. Despite some opposition, Carter enjoyed the support of many black leaders, including Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. and Congressman Andrew Young. Carter's connection to southern rock most likely did not win over any black voters, but he did feature some black musicians in his campaign: accordionist Graham W. Jackson Sr. played at Carter's official Labor Day campaign kickoff, and country artist Dobie Grey performed for Carter's telethon. The absence of criticism directed towards Carter's alliance with southern rock in the black press suggests the black community maintained their focus on more pertinent aspects of his candidacy and how they might impact black communities should he win the presidency.

As Ownby and Butler have shown, southern rockers' music rarely engages directly with politics; however, audiences have attempted to map a political orientation onto some southern rock bands, especially Lynyrd Skynyrd, because of their appropriation of Confederate symbols. (The boys often opened concerts with a rendition of "Dixie" and the raising of the Confederate flag. During the band's 1974 tour Ronnie Van Zant wore a Confederate hat and coat to complete his rebel persona.)³⁹ Although the authors attempt to downplay the racist associations of some imagery used in southern rock, the visual signifiers brandished by Lynyrd Skynyrd in concerts (and other musical signifiers associated with the genre) may have appealed to the same Southern Democrats that embraced Richard Nixon's coded racist rhetoric in 1968. And, they may have read the use of these symbols as the group's (and by extension, Carter's) way of showing their support of states' rights and the anti-civil rights stance that often accompanies this political position.

Historian Paul Wells argues the Confederate flag by this time had become "the symbol of rebellion within the rock idiom," and therefore, "essentially depoliticized in the historical sense and commodified in relation to southern music."⁴⁰ In addition to signifying rebellion, Lechner's ethnographic work suggests

³⁸ Yvonne Shinhoster, "Carter's Appearance Here Draws Pickets," *Atlanta Daily World*, April 15, 1976, 1, accessed April 7, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/491463365?accountid=12339>.

³⁹ For more on the bands and Confederate imagery, see Will Kaufman, *The Civil War in American Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 81.

fan communities viewed Lynyrd Skynyrd's use of the Confederate flag as a signifier of cultural identity—"rowdy southern boy identity" and "manly robustness"—rather than as an antiquated signifier of anti-black attitudes.⁴¹ Wells' and Lechner's assertions may indeed hold true for *white* audiences, but for blacks the flag surely maintained its association with racial oppression, and, racist attitudes are inevitably bound up with the southern white male identity Lechner describes and attempts to distance from these attitudes. In short, slavery remains a central aspect of southern heritage. Critics and white audiences may have understood the flag as a generic signifier of rebellion rather than as an indicator of a particular political orientation or racist worldview as Wells suggests, but the symbol's history and multivalence remind us of the continued relevance of other viewpoints.

Carter also allied himself with the Allman Brothers Band, and, as I stated earlier, this is the group he wished to closely align himself with through the press. Although Lynyrd Skynyrd (and on occasion, and with more subtlety) Charlie Daniels employed the controversial imagery, the Allman Brothers Band, as Lechner shows, offered a more progressive vision of the South: while Lynyrd Skynyrd offered a "Rebel Macho" image that appeared to embrace white southern male defiance, the Allmans instead emphasized the connection between countercultural and rural southern values and imagined the rural South as a haven from modernity where blacks and whites could coexist peacefully.⁴² Carter's rural, southern values figured significantly into his candidate image, and this theme plays a central role in the music of all of the Concerts for Carter groups. As Table 3-1 shows, the Lynyrd Skynyrd, Charlie Daniels, and Marshall Tucker performances took place in Atlanta, Nashville, and Jacksonville, southern cities where white audiences may have found the imagery less objectionable, whereas the more progressive Allman Brothers Band held their Carter performance in New England's Providence.

⁴⁰ Wells, "Last Rebel," 80.

⁴¹ Lechner, "South of the Mind," 159–60.

⁴² Ibid., chap. 4; esp. 165–66. According to Lechner, a 1977 article in *Melody Maker* assigned this label to Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Ultimately, the Allman Brothers Band's progressive vision, which resonated with the former participants of the counterculture movement that supported McGovern in 1972, and Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Rebel Macho" stance (and controversial imagery), which appealed to more conservative southerners, may have actually worked in Carter's favor. Through these alliances Carter could not only address potential voters with opposing ideological views, but also highlight the commonalities between them. On the one hand, he could reach out to southern youth and others on the cultural periphery and channel their desire for rebellion in a politically meaningful way. On the other hand, the music's emphasis on community equally resonated with more conservative voters, those that thrived on nostalgia for the romanticized South as described by Smith. The undeniable undercurrent of rebellion that runs through the groups' music, personae, and in the case of Daniels and Lynyrd Skynyrd, Confederate imagery, may have resonated with white voters on *both* sides of the ideological spectrum as well as projected the image of Carter as a "rebel" capable of shaking things up. Rebellion at this time meant different things to different constituencies, but southern rock offered it up in a way that allowed diverse white communities to participate in it.⁴³

During our conversation, Conlon also mentioned another thread that connected southern rock fans: like many older Americans at the time, they felt disillusioned with the American political machine. If Conlon is correct—and a great deal of evidence suggests he is—we can assume the concerts put Carter in a position where he could reach those most likely to be responsive to his platform. Although visibility and finances were the primary motivation for Tom Beard and Alexander Cooley, the choice of southern rock would have had an "unintended effect," in that, as the soundtrack for the campaign, it contributed to the identity formation of Carter the candidate.

The South's Gonna Do It Again

How did Carter frame his identity as a southern presidential candidate in positive terms in 1976, and how did southern rock participate in this agenda? To

⁴³ These scholars' (and fans') assessments of the bands' relationships to controversial signifiers of Southern identity should be taken with a grain of salt. In several cases the authors' respective tones suggest they are desperately trying to recuperate the image of an understudied sub-genre of rock that has been much maligned.

answer these questions, I examine rock criticism during the period and interviews with band members as well as archival documents from the Carter presidency to show how discourses on Carter and the bands overlapped in 1975–76 and to elucidate the ways in which such narratives shaped Carter’s identity as a candidate. Just as journalists and the bands themselves (each in their own unique ways) drew upon well-known tropes and stereotypes associated with southern identity and southern life to frame their musical style and biography, Carter’s campaign team adopted the same strategies to articulate his identity as a candidate. These affinities would not have gone unnoticed by the fans of southern rock that supported Carter. The tropes of the outsider and rural authenticity (factors that Smith would argue give the region its cultural distinctiveness) stand out as the most relevant for this discussion as they play a central role in the identity of each group. I conclude this section by showing how these shared tropes played a key role in the process that ultimately granted the musicians representative legitimacy.

Writers evoked outsider status for the musicians in both subtle and overt ways, frequently relying on the idea of separate geographic spaces and notions of musical “difference” to reinforce their marginalized, but privileged, positions.⁴⁴ This often included the elevation of Macon, Georgia as a refuge where creativity could flourish in the midst of the South’s growing industrialization. (Duane Allman once stated that he remained in Macon “cause its not near as full of perverted people.”)⁴⁵ In the case of the Allman Brothers Band, for example, Chris Charlesworth claims “[Gregg Allman] picked notes as crisp and clear as the Georgia countryside surrounding his small estate.”⁴⁶ Like Charlesworth, Wet Willie vocalist Jimmy Hall focuses on the connection between space and performance style. Commenting on

⁴⁴ In this section of the chapter I draw on articles from the mainstream American press, but also rock criticism from music presses in both the US and the UK. I should note that the more highly romanticized depictions of the South are found in British newspapers such as *Melody Maker*.

⁴⁵ Duane Allman, “Duane Allman Radio Hour,” interview by Ed Shane, January 2, 1970, WPLO-FM, Atlanta, GA, accessed November 20, 2012, <http://www.duaneallman.info/duaneinterviews.htm>. Quoted in Bartow J. Elmore, “Growing Roots in Rocky Soil: An Environmental History of Southern Rock,” *Southern Cultures* 16 (Fall 2012): 112–13.

⁴⁶ Chris Charlesworth, “Gregg Allman,” *Melody Maker*, January 26, 1974, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10027>.

the Marshall Tucker Band, Hall reminisces, “First time I heard them, I thought this could only come out of the South, *organically grown*.” Bud Scoppa notes a similar quality in Hall’s vocal delivery, claiming “[Jimmy Hall] has a voice strut and an air of *raucous elegance*... His *slurred inflection is natural*, not studied.”⁴⁷ And last, noting a similar down-home naturalness in Gregg Allman’s vocality, Lorraine O’Grady states, “I know that Gregg is from the Deep South, that the intonations aren’t being forced, that they are coming naturally.”⁴⁸

Like Charlesworth does in his reflection on Gregg Allman’s guitar picking, Scoppa links the authentic quality of Hall’s “natural” voice with his southern roots; he also positions this special quality as the product of the artist’s actual exposure to *live* blues singing (as opposed to pre-recorded music on radio or record). Also evoking the significance of place, Harry Doherty lauds Lynyrd Skynyrd for remaining true to their roots:

Not many bands around play with such an *earthy passion*. The music is from the *roots* and gives the band a distinctive *deep South sound*, a sound that has, for the first time been captured effectively on record on this, their fourth album [*Gimme Back My Bullets* (1976)].⁴⁹

When reviewing Lynyrd Skynyrd’s album *Nuthin’ Fancy* (1975), Scoppa again places emphasis on liveness, but this time in reference to the band’s recording aesthetic:

On record, Skynyrd, with the aid of producer Al Kooper, approximates its hot live sound by limiting overdubbed extras (with three guitars and a keyboard, overdubbed parts are hardly necessary) and—partly through extensive room miking—by enclosing the band in a *natural ambience*.⁵⁰

The Allman Brothers Band attempted to achieve a similar aesthetic with their albums; in response to one radio interviewer’s inquiry in 1970, Duane Allman cited

⁴⁷ Bud Scoppa, review of *Wet Willie*, by Wet Willie, *Rolling Stone*, October 14, 1971, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=7360> (emphasis mine).

⁴⁸ Lorraine O’Grady, “First There Is a Mountain, Then There Is No Mountain, Then . . .?” *Village Voice*, August 2, 1973, 42; cited in Lechner, “South of the Mind,” 141.

⁴⁹ Harry Doherty, “Lynyrd Skynyrd: *Gimme Back My Bullets* (MCA 2744),” *Melody Maker*, January 31, 1976, accessed May 10, 2012, <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10613> (emphasis mine).

⁵⁰ Bud Scoppa, review of *Nuthin’ Fancy*, by Lynyrd Skynyrd, *Rolling Stone*, June 19, 1975, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.rocksbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=4540> (emphasis mine).

the desire to achieve an authentic live sound as the group's primary goal with their second album, *Idlenwild South*.⁵¹

To critics, location did not just translate to a more "authentic," "natural" and "organic" sound; it also connoted a sense of loyalty. Critic Wayne King praised musicians like the Allman Brothers, who stayed in Macon and "made their recordings down South as well rather than heading to New York or the coast."⁵² Chris Charlesworth extends this idea further and sets up an opposition between the natural flow of the sounds of the South and those of "frustration" emanating from American cities:

[Southern rock and roll is] a brand that's originated from mixing black soul music with the country sounds from Nashville, but playing it easy and letting the music flow forth instead of rasp its way forth like it does in the cities of America. . . . If rock emerged as the frustrated sound of the city, then southern rock and roll has left the frustrations behind.⁵³

Many southern rockers continued to live in the South, and many recorded there as well. In the minds of critics such as Wayne King, this physical connection with their birthplace, the source of their music and their inspiration, equally contributed to their "realness." At the same time, Charlesworth's comments here are somewhat problematic; he acknowledges the genre's connection to black music, yet implies it could only reach its natural expressive potential when released from its urban (black) space.

It is also important to note here that the critics were not the only ones to emphasize the connections between the bands' performance styles and the South as the physical space that gave birth to them. The bands emphasized the centrality of their connection with these spaces, and, as Bartow Elmore has demonstrated, the environmental changes that transformed the South inspired the artists to imbue their

⁵¹ "Duane Allman Radio Hour," January 2, 1970.

⁵² Wayne King, "Rock Goes South Back to Where it All Began," *New York Times*, June 20, 1976, sec. 2, p. 1, col. 2.

⁵³ Chris Charlesworth, "Southern Rock: Under the Sign of Capricorn," *Melody Maker*, February 2, 1974, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.rockbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10498> (emphasis mine).

song lyrics with the imagery of the rural southern landscapes that began to vanish in the wake of the post-war urbanization and commercialization of the region.⁵⁴

The above representative sample of reviews and interviews related to southern rock shows the consistent usage of a core set of descriptors—“naturalness,” “slurred delivery,” “earthiness,” “flow,” “taking it easy”—all stereotypical words and phrases used in various contexts to signify aspects of southern identity. Commentators, critics, and musicians consistently projected these traits onto the bands’ respective performance styles, and the songs’ imagery solidified this connection. Even in the present day, writers often cannot discuss the bands and their music without defaulting to this frame. Marley Brant writes,

As independent as the Confederate states they come from, these bands quickly forged an alliance to rock the music world off its feet with soulful, *primal* rhythm anthems to hard living and problematic romance. The bands possess[ed] a Dixie lock on the market for good time, no holds barred celebrations of both stoic independence and bar hopping camaraderie. Over the years their music has infiltrated our souls with *beautiful melodies of gentle southern landscapes* . . . exalt[ed] the glories of America . . . [and sung] of the hard times of their daddies and the importance of love and family.⁵⁵

Were southern rock bands any more (or less) prone to this kind of delivery than other bands performing at the same time? Not necessarily, yet critics and fans perpetuated this view of musicians from the South in the 1970s: they were somehow different, and this difference was a product of their southern identity. These tautological discourses planted the bands firmly in the geographic or stylistic south, thereby conferring upon them an aura of difference that positioned them outside of the music mainstream. Despite the fact that the south began to move towards the mainstream in the post-World War II period, as Lechner argues, many continued to perceive the South as a culturally distinct “safe area of contemplation in which Americans could address their conflicted thinking about a variety of national trends, from changing gender roles to evolving family structures to consumer culture, without ever having to resolve any incongruities.”⁵⁶ Southern rock was no exception.

⁵⁴ Elmore, “Growing Roots in Rocky Soil,” 105–106.

⁵⁵ Brant, *Southern Rockers*, 21 (emphasis mine).

⁵⁶ Lechner, *South of the Mind*, iv, xvii.

Although authors such as John Egerton and C. Vann Woodward bemoaned the decline of southern distinctiveness, Carter still managed to make this identity and its surrounding cultural and ideological connotations work to his advantage.⁵⁷ Ultimately, the Georgian's outsider status played a significant role in the discourses that shaped the public's perception of his identity as a presidential candidate. Papers documenting the early days of Carter's campaign illuminate this strategy. For example, Hamilton Jordan's notes recommended language that framed Carter as a "new face" and "outsider." Jordan also advised Carter to spend time at home with his friends, rather than fraternizing with political types, to cement his outsider image. In reference to the 1976 Democratic National Convention, Jordan encouraged the candidate to get the nomination but not "appear like you have been 'captured' by the professional politicians and the political establishment."⁵⁸ In his speeches, Carter drew attention to his humble roots:

I understand the Republicans have just decided they don't like the idea of peanut farmers leaving their crops to look for new jobs in Washington. They've even agreed to stop the embargoes for a while to make farming more attractive so I'll stay in Plains. But I prefer to go on from my farm to the White House and stop the embargoes once and for all!⁵⁹

In this speech delivered at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Carter referred to his erstwhile work as a peanut farmer, an occupation (and background) that distanced him from Washington's inner circle both ideologically and geographically, and he framed his choice to leave the South as necessary for the larger goal of championing farmers' rights at the national level—something he could effectuate if elected.⁶⁰

Like the reportage on southern rock bands, Carter's speeches, campaign literature, and advertisements frequently focused on the candidate's rootedness in the southern community as well as his adherence to a broader system of values

⁵⁷ C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, 2nd ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968); and John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America* (New York: Harper's Magazine Press, 1974).

⁵⁸ Jordan, "Your Image with the American People," 3.

⁵⁹ Speech, Jimmy Carter at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, August 25, 1976, p. 1, Jimmy Carter Papers—Pre-Presidential, 1976 Presidential Campaign Directors Office—Rural Desk—Syd Butler's Subject Files, Speakers through Thomas, Joel—Correspondence, Box 282, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁶⁰ Carter left Georgia, first to attend the United States Naval Academy, and then later for his naval service, but he eventually returned to his roots in the same small Georgia town.

associated with agrarian life in the South and, by extension, other rural areas. This language often took the form of organic metaphors that positioned his rootedness as not only a sensibility, but also a physical reality.

I've been *raising* votes, and I've been successful in that. I *planted my first crop* in Iowa last winter, and I have already *gathered the first harvest* in Madison Square Garden. Now I'm looking forward to the *next harvest* on November 2nd.⁶¹

Carter deployed similar rhetoric as he described the nation's past and his vision for its future in a widely publicized radio advertisement that also included his campaign song "Why Not the Best?"

Narrator: The strength of a person can be measured by the path he takes to travel there. For Jimmy Carter that road was one of hard work and determination. It's the same road that has been traveled for more than 200 years in this country by people who could see in hardships, freedom and in obstacles, opportunity. Those men and women literally built this nation from the land, the *seasons have turned into centuries* now, but *the traditions they planted will continue to grow*. We can all see a greater nation.

Jimmy Carter: I have a vision of America. *A vision that has grown and ripened* as I've traveled and talked and listened and learned and gotten to know the people of this country.⁶² [. . .]

Carter advisor Bill Keel encouraged the candidate to position small town, rural America as "the storehouse and the preserver of the basic values and traditions that form the bedrock of the American moral and work ethic."⁶³ In his Iowa speech, Carter situated the family farm as the conservation site of these basic values and argued that the same moral integrity needed to be reclaimed by the nation-at-large:

⁶¹ Speech by Jimmy Carter at Iowa State Fairgrounds, August 25, 1976 (emphasis mine).

⁶² Radio Ad, "Why Not the Best," Carter Audio Visual Files, Jimmy Carter Library (emphasis mine). Part of the same text is used in the television commercial "Bio." See Museum of the Moving Image, The Living Room Candidate: Presidential Campaign Commercials 1952–2008, accessed May 27, 2012, www.livingroomcandidate.org/commercials/1976/bio.

⁶³ Memorandum, Bill Keel to Governor Carter, Patrick Anderson, Stu Eisenstat, Oliver Miller, September 9, 1976, p. 2, [gives recommendations for Carter's planned speech at Farmfest] Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential, 1976 Presidential Campaign Directors Office–Rural Desk–Syd Butler's Subject Files, Speakers through Thomas, Joel–Correspondence, "Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Directors Office, Rural Desk Syd Butler," Box 282, Jimmy Carter Library.

Our people respect the American farmer. The family farm has preserved the values—honesty, dependability, hard work and faith—which we need to discover as a nation.⁶⁴

References to personal ties with the land, the value system that governed rural life, and metaphors of growth and renewal peppered Carter's speeches much in the same way they did the criticism surrounding the bands. (The Charlesworth and Hall writings best exemplify how this language inflected journalistic discourses, and Elmore's work touches on the rural imagery in the bands' lyrics.) Carter also identified the connection between his biography and this worldview, stating,

The farm has left its mark on me. I believe in my country, and I know you do too. I have deep feelings of patriotism. I know they are mirrored here in Iowa, and everywhere else where independent farmers work the land.⁶⁵

The conceit of a personal connection with the land and to nature functions as a trope in mythologies that define southern life in the cultural imagination. For example, James McBride Dabbs, a church leader and author of texts on southern history, argued that "the southern experience at its best had nurtured an awareness of nature. Southern blacks and whites had been farmers, attuned to nature's ways."⁶⁶ Reflecting this agrarian vision, Dabbs believed that "Southern farmers, black and white, despite deprivation, had led a deeply integrated life, where spiritual and material values were intertwined, where the meaning of family and work were tied intimately together."⁶⁷ It is important to note that the rhetoric of renewal, often associated with Carter and the other governors that precipitated the New South, predated Carter's presidential campaign.⁶⁸ In his 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech,

⁶⁴ Speech by Jimmy Carter at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, August 25, 1976, 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁶⁶ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Judgment & Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 78.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁶⁸ Although this term has often been used to define the post-bellum South more broadly, I use the term "New South" to refer specifically to the 1960-70s. Although Butler and Ownby do not address Carter, they are referring to the same period under consideration here. For a discussion of the New South and Jimmy Carter, see Russell Duncan, "A Native Son Led the Way: Jimmy Carter and the Modern New South," in *The Southern State of Mind*, ed. Jan Nordby Gretlund, 147–60 (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999). For more on the general concept of the "New South," see Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking*

Martin Luther King Jr. imagined a redemptive South that would be the birthplace for national salvation. Reflecting a traditional southern concern for place, he argued that the nation's transformation would not be in some disembodied location but in a specific locale, the South.⁶⁹ The L. Q. C Lamar Society echoed this sentiment in their 1972 collection of essays. In the introduction, Willie Morris envisioned a South where the coming together of blacks and whites might solve "[the region's] old egregious faults and its more contemporary ones, while both preserving the best in its own unique heritage and offering more than a few crucial lessons to other Americans."⁷⁰

In order to reach networks of potential voters, Carter needed not just celebrities, but visible celebrities that the public did not perceive as owned or corrupted by either the star system or politics—he needed cultural outsiders to reinforce his own status as a political outsider. As I have shown above, journalistic discourses constructed southern rock as culturally distinct—in terms of its performance style (which one journalist described as heavily reliant on “abrasive braggadocio”), sounds, and the geographic spaces from which it emerged and circulated.⁷¹ The Carter campaign relied on the same tropes pertaining to southern identity, so in embracing southern rock, Carter aligned himself with a genre that offered up complementary discourses that both enhanced and reinforced his own.

The concert performances, which created a public sphere or imagined community of potential Carter supporters, also held symbolic value. Indeed, the visual representation of community on stage at the Gator Bowl concert would have strongly resonated with the politically disenfranchised voters that Carter hoped to court. Journalists writing about southern rock frequently mentioned the relationships

(Montgomery: New South Books, 2002); C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South, 1877–1913* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); George Brown Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South, 1913–1945* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967); and John B. Boles and Bethany L. Johnson, eds., *Origins of the New South Fifty Years Later* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003).

⁶⁹ Wilson, *Judgment & Grace in Dixie*, 33.

⁷⁰ Willie Morris, introduction to *You Can't Eat Magnolias*, ed. H. Brandt Ayers and Thomas H. Naylor (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), ix–x.

⁷¹ Paul Johnson, “Dig Southern Rock? Capricorn Has It in ‘South’s Greatest Hits,’” *Arkansas Gazette*, September 22, 1977, 7D. Cited in Smith, *Myth, Media, and the Southern Mind*, 105.

among the various groups, and the producers themselves seemed to have a vested interest in evoking images of family and community. In an article on Capricorn Records, Charlesworth stated, “[L]ike the Allman Brothers, Capricorn too is a slowly expanding family, a sort of ideal situation for a record company who just happens to also own the best studio for miles around, rivaling the facilities offered in New York and Los Angeles.”⁷² Gregg Allman shared this sentiment, claiming, “Capricorn is a tightly knit family.”⁷³ Bands with members from the same family attracted Phil Walden, who in reference to Capricorn, claimed “Everybody just sort of fit into our little family.”⁷⁴ Charlie Daniels echoed this same attitude when speaking of the “close camaraderie” between the bands (the Allman Brothers Band, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and the Marshall Tucker Band), but he claimed the “cohesiveness” was due to the fact that “most of the people involved came from the same type of background.”⁷⁵ In a similar vein, Ronnie Van Zant once announced on a concert stage, “If you’re no friend of the Allman Brothers then you’re no friend of our’s [sic]. (In which case we’ll just have to be acquaintances.)”⁷⁶ These words were not empty flattery: southern rock bands often shared the concert stage with each other on the festival circuit: “Georgia Jam” (1974) at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium featured performances by Lynyrd Skynyrd, the Marshall Tucker Band, and the Allman Brothers Band, and “August Jam” (1974) at the Charlotte Motor Speedway in North Carolina featured the Allman Brothers Band and the Marshall Tucker Band as well as Black Oak Arkansas, the Ozark Mountain Daredevils, and Grinderswitch. The

⁷² Charlesworth, “Southern Rock: Under the Sign of Capricorn.”

⁷³ Chris Charlesworth, “Gregg Allman,” *Melody Maker*, January 26, 1974, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.rockbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10027>.

⁷⁴ Brant, *Southern Rockers*, 89.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁷⁶ Chris Salewicz, “Lynyrd Skynyrd/Wally: Rainbow Theatre, London,” *New Musical Express*, December 21, 1974, accessed May 11, 2011, <http://www.rockbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=9435>. Also see Charlesworth, “Gregg Allman.”

groups frequently performed free outdoor concerts, and Duane Allman even cited such performances as his favorite events.⁷⁷

Fans of the genre found that sense of community palpable. Rock journalist (and fan) Mark Kemp expresses his feelings of kinship with the musicians and the fan community as follows:

For my part, I loved the land that surrounded me but hated the history that haunted that land. And that history had a huge impact on the attitudes of the people around me. It was confusing. The Allman Brothers—and followers like Lynyrd Skynyrd, ZZ Top, Charlie Daniels, Wet Willie and the Marshall Tucker Band—created a safe space within that confusion. Suddenly, we white southerners who were born between 1955 and 1965, and who questioned the status quo, didn't have to feel so alone during this traumatic transitional period of American history. While we fantasized about glamorous bands such as the Rolling Stones, the Who, and Led Zeppelin, we could directly relate to the Allman Brothers. They talked like us, they looked like us, they sang about issues and landscapes that we could feel and see, and they performed often enough in cities close to us that we could drive to their shows. For me and many kids like me, the Allman Brothers and the Southern Rock movement that they spawned in the early 1970s changed our lives and gave us a sense of community and purpose. We had Southern rock, and therefore we had each other. We may have felt like freaks, but now we knew we weren't the only freaks.⁷⁸

For Kemp, southern rock acted as a vehicle through which fans could rebuild communities and express a sense of pride as southerners. Interestingly enough, the South Kemp describes is in perfect alignment with what Smith identifies as the new Southern mythology with its emphasis on equality, southern distinctiveness, and a sense of community and place.

And Carter wished to reclaim the same with his campaign. In rural America, connection to one's neighborhood and community offered individuals a sense of belonging and a feeling of security. According to Carter's team, those who settled in urban areas lacked these connections. Carter's strategists identified the "decline of the family" and "lack of community" as two issues that represented an "underlying dissatisfaction" among American voters. According to one strategist,

In the past it has been this *closely knit neighborhood community* life where one knew his neighbor across the street, where the schools and *local community* life was small enough for each person to be accountable to one another and where

⁷⁷ "Duane Allman Radio Hour," January 2, 1970.

⁷⁸ Mark Kemp, *Dixie Lullaby: A Story of Music, Race, and New Beginnings in a New South* (New York: Free Press, 2004), xiii.

his actions were judged by his peers which was a restraining force upon the individual and gave him a sense of stability.⁷⁹

Similarly, in his memorandum with suggestions to Carter for a September 1976 Farmfest speech, Bill Keel claimed,

*Small Town and Rural America is the storehouse and the preserver of the basic values and traditions that form the bedrock of the American moral and work ethic. . . . A sense of belonging, of being needed, of being part of the community compared to the 'lonely crowd' of the big cities. The experts now say the salvation of the cities is in the community or neighborhood unit. Many Americans have lost faith in the caretaker government in Washington and its lack of leadership . . . and we want to restore faith in our government in Washington.*⁸⁰

In his speech at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, Carter directly stated his interest in bringing these same values to Washington:

I believe that the best government is the one closest to the people. And I believe in a *close-knit family*. These things have got to be preserved. They are *the values that have lived on the farm and which our government needs to rediscover*. They are the values I will carry with me into the White House, if I am elected.⁸¹

Aware of the stabilizing effects offered by family and community, Carter's campaign positioned these values as a part of southern life and his interest in them as the natural product of his roots in a small southern town with its agrarian-influenced ideas of community. John Shelton Reed, who posed a counter argument to those who claimed the South began to lose its distinctiveness during this period, maintained that southerners displayed a unique degree of "localism," which included "stronger ties than others to their region, states, and towns."⁸² Therefore, young

⁷⁹ No author, Bulletin titled "The Family and the Community (the two sleeping issues of the '76 campaign)," p. 2 [date written on the document in pen is September 1976], Presidential Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Correspondence/Subject File Memorandums–Rick Hutcheson, March 1976–August 1976 through Telegrams, Outgoing–Jimmy Carter, "Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Newsletters, Press Clippings, Bulletins," Box 200, Jimmy Carter Library (emphasis mine).

⁸⁰ Memorandum, Bill Keel to Governor Carter, Patrick Anderson, Stu Eisenstat, Oliver Miller, September 9, 1976, 2.

⁸¹ Speech, Iowa State Fairgrounds, August 25, 1976, 4.

⁸² John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 35.

southern rock fans, such as Kemp, may have responded positively to Carter's emphasis on community.

Although Carter invoked this idea directly in his speeches, his broader campaign strategy shows that he had a vested interest in creating microcosmic representations of community for his potential voters in less direct ways as well. Early in his campaign Carter's team inaugurated the Peanut Brigade, a crew of volunteers and Carter family members who traveled around the country canvassing door to door to drum up support for the candidate.⁸³ In one issue of *Carter News*, Peanut Brigade "Brigadier General" Dot Padgett claimed,

The "Hi Neighbor" type of campaigning is a great help, because we know what Jimmy did as governor, and the Minnesotans have known Fritz [Walter Mondale] for sixteen years. Together we can tell people about their records on a one-to-one basis.⁸⁴

With a legion of "smiling Georgian doorbell-ringers" the Carter campaign not only personalized the candidate and sold his image, but also sold a particular idyllic vision of community. Such communities, in the opinion of many southerners, collapsed due to the emergence of industrialization and were equally absent in campaigns increasingly filtered through mediated technologies.⁸⁵ Favoring direct communication with the voter, Carter traveled the country himself to speak with the public, and thus, temporarily became a part of the communities he wished to sustain.⁸⁶ To give his campaign an "old time" feel, in mid-September of 1976, Carter, Mondale, and some of their family members embarked on a whistle-stop train tour of the country, during

⁸³ For more on the Peanut Brigade, see Genelle Jennings, *Into the Jaws of Politics: The Charge of the Peanut Brigade* (Huntsville, AL: Strode, 1979).

⁸⁴ "Describing the role of the Peanut Brigade" [undated article intended for page three of the Jimmy Carter–Walter Mondale Newsletter], n.d., p. 1, Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential, 1976 Presidential Campaign, Special Projects Becky Hendrix/Carey Smith Subject File, Campaign Staff through Staff Party–WSB-TV, "Carter/Mondale Newsletters [1]," Box 238, Jimmy Carter Presidential Library.

⁸⁵ John A. Conway, "Charge of the Peanut Brigade," *Newsweek*, October 11, 1976, 25. Even though some states targeted by the Peanut Brigade did not possess many electoral votes, Carter's strategists felt they "shouldn't be overlooked and [could] use the extra *down-home* effort."

⁸⁶ Carter's datebook shows he spent 250 days on the road in 1975, and 125 days on the road as of July 1976. See Campaign Schedule, Carter Family Papers 1976 Campaign Files, Campaign Schedule–Detailed Itinerary November–December 1975 through Committee for a Constitutional Presidency, November 29, 1974, "Campaign Schedule–Detailed Itinerary, April–July 1976," Box 32, Jimmy Carter Library.

which Carter traveled eight-hundred miles and visited sixteen cities.⁸⁷ Carter's campaign, especially in its earliest days, focused on people talking one-on-one, rather than relying on "specialists" and Washington types. Strategists believed this would bolster the public's faith in Carter's integrity as a public figure.

In addition to the door-to-door activities of the Peanut Brigade, Carter's campaign team encouraged his supporters to hold informal meetings with their neighbors in order to spread the word about his campaign.⁸⁸ In one memo, Marjorie Benton suggested to Hamilton Jordan the small "wine reception" format as a way to answer questions about Carter's position on the issues. She also stressed the fact that the citizens organizing these events should be "experts" on the issues.⁸⁹ In reference to such an event, she explains, "Jim Wall started the meeting with an excellent statement about Jimmy as a southerner and all that meant in terms of style, the religious issues and his term as Governor." This invitation to the Benton's Carter Party emphasizes the candidate's heritage ("A southerner?"), peanut farmer background ("Can a peanut farmer from a small town find...?"), and unknown status ("Jimmy Who?") [Fig. 3-3].

⁸⁷ *Jimmy Carter-Walter Mondale* [Newsletter] vol. 1, no. 1, September 1976, [NOT to be confused with the earlier *Carter News*], Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Special Projects Becky Hendrix/Carey Smith Subject File, Campaign Staff through Staff Party–WSB-TV, "Carter/Mondale Newsletters [1]," Box 238, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁸⁸ Although many of Carter's communication strategies—the neighborhood meeting structure, door-to-door canvassing, local "experts"—evolved out of necessity since his campaign had limited resources, the archival documents suggest that these choices were not solely driven by financial limitations, but rather were conceived out of the strategists' desire to establish the candidate as an "outsider," uncorrupted by economic power or Washington politics.

⁸⁹ Memorandum, Marjorie Benton to Mr. Dees, Jordan, and Hanely, June 9, 1976, Presidential Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan, Correspondence/Subject File, Democratic Convention Field Staff Correspondence through Memorandums–Paul Hemmann, May 1976–October 1976, "Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Memorandums–Morris Dees, April–June 1976, Box 199, Jimmy Carter Library.

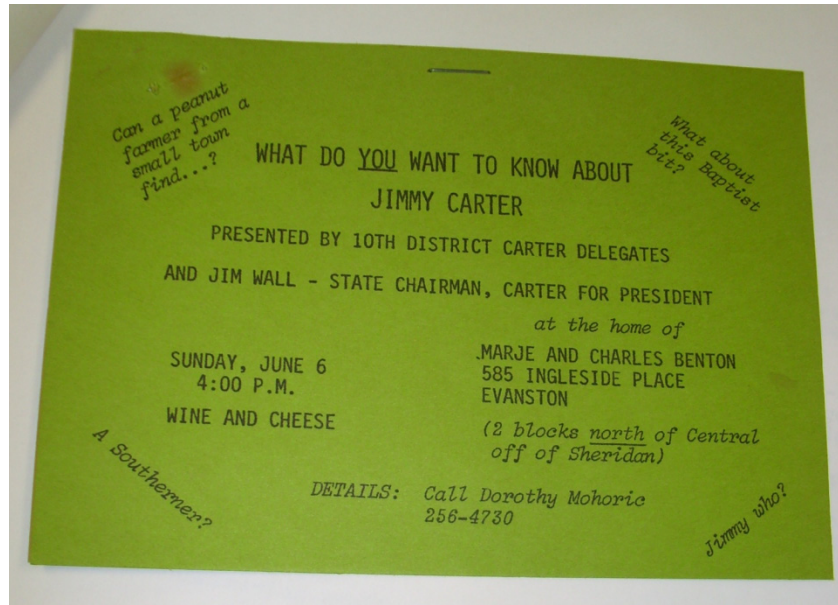


Figure 3-3 Jimmy Carter Party Invitation⁹⁰

By staffing his campaign with friends and family who shared his southern roots, and by communicating with his constituents directly, Carter provided the voter with a living representation of the communities he wished to create. At the same time, he also employed unconventional tactics in order to build local communities: One letter discusses Carter's campaign offering up "plans for a complete Jimmy Carter party including recipes for an authentic Georgia dinner from soup to peanuts."⁹¹ Or perhaps an authentic southern breakfast of which Carter would approve:

Grits AM Good!! See what makes that Georgian smile! Sample grits (serves 4) plus 3 yummy Southern recipes. \$200 Money-back guarantee. Dolly Domestic 939C Calvert Lane N.E. Atlanta, Georgia 30319.⁹²

⁹⁰ Invitation, "What Do You Want to Know about Jimmy Carter" Party, June 6, 197[?], Presidential Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Correspondence/Subject File Democratic Convention Field Staff Correspondence through Memorandums–Paul Hemmann, May–October 1976, "Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Memorandums–Morris Dees, April–June 1976, Box 199, folder 14, Jimmy Carter Library.

⁹¹ Letter, Philip Brownrigg to Hamilton Jordan, September 6, 1976, Presidential Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Correspondence/Subject File, October 1976, T–V through Delegate Selection, March–June 1976, "Jimmy Carter Papers–Pre-Presidential 1976 Presidential Campaign, Campaign Director's Office–Hamilton Jordan Advertising," Box 198, Jimmy Carter Library.

Towards the end of the campaign Carter adopted the “Grits and Fritz” slogan, further substantiating his connection with southern life. These efforts—the Peanut Brigade, the advertisements, the small receptions—allowed Carter to rally his group of supporters, while also serving an important secondary function: they established communities, both actual and imagined, around the mythology of the South. It is this broader mythology, strongly rooted in localism and agrarian ideals, which inflected the performance, musical style, and lyrical content of southern rock as well. And through the Concerts for Carter, southern rock played an integral role in building these communities.

In addition to their community-building potential, the bands, especially Lynyrd Skynyrd, exhibited in their performances both a sense of realness and intelligence, according to critics. In referencing southern rock, Lynyrd Skynyrd band member Billy Powell once stated, “It just seems to me like there’s *more truth* in the lyrics of southern music. . . . To me the lyrics are more *down to earth*, and they’re more *genuine* than a lot of stuff.”⁹³ Fans may have also perceived the band as being more “real” because critics often highlighted the continuities between the individual band members’ pre-fame personas and the stars they eventually became. According to band security manager Gene Odom, “to understand Lynyrd Skynyrd, you have to understand Ronnie Van Zant, who, at the peak of his success, was still the same person he was when he started out.”⁹⁴ Ronnie’s brother, Donnie Van Zant of .38 Special fame, claimed “[Ronnie] just said it the way the working man would say it. It was a blue-collar town here, and *he just offered truth* there. He was *real*.”⁹⁵ Critical writings show the influence of the same trope: Bud Scoppa praised Lynyrd Skynyrd’s

⁹² Letter, Philip Brownrigg to Hamilton Jordan, September 6, 1976.

⁹³ Quoted in Brant, *Southern Rockers*, 11 (emphasis mine).

⁹⁴ Odom, *Lynyrd Skynyrd: Remembering the Freebirds*, 123.

⁹⁵ Brant, *Southern Rockers*, 17 (emphasis mine).

“resolute directness,”⁹⁶ and Chas de Whalley claimed, “[H]owever suspect their beliefs, at least Lynyrd Skynyrd are real.”⁹⁷

Although comments such as “the same person,” “blue collar,” “real,” and “down to earth” seem to emphasize the band’s ordinariness, the critics simultaneously lauded their genius, and hence, their extraordinariness. As I stated earlier, critics made a point of dwelling on the naturalness and ease of the band’s vocal delivery and performance style and attempted to root it in their southern heritage; at the same time, they located the band’s intelligence and virtuosity in their instrumental prowess. This “studied” aspect of their performance affirmed the band’s professional status. Discussions of Lynyrd Skynyrd’s virtuosity often focused on the band’s unusual instrumentation, which included three guitarists. As Chris Charlesworth wrote, “the group are [sic] basically a bunch of boogie rockers but what sets them above the norm is their three guitarists whose lines intertwine in ever increasing circles of notes that frequently dazzle the listener.”⁹⁸ Critics—even those who were less than enthusiastic—praised the group’s intelligence, while simultaneously lauding their populism: Scoppa writes, “My reservations about *Nuthin’ Fancy* aside, Lynyrd Skynyrd is an important group, whose populist character, *no-frills intelligence* and resolute directness place it closer to Creedence [Clearwater Revival] than to the superficially more similar Allman Brothers Band.”⁹⁹ John Tobler agreed: “I think they’re the best band in the world, I really do. They’re so incredible live, so unusual—they don’t do any tricks or anything, no glitter, no dancing, they just get up there and play better than anybody plays.”¹⁰⁰ Reminiscing over her engagement with southern rock as a youth, Kandia Crazy Horse describes the Allman Brothers’ approach in a similar manner, arguing that their music takes on an

⁹⁶ Scoppa, review of *Nuthin’ Fancy*.

⁹⁷ Chas de Whalley, “Lynyrd Skynyrd: Hammersmith Odeon, London,” *New Musical Express*, February 21, 1976, accessed May 14, 2011, <http://www.rocksofbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10224>.

⁹⁸ Chris Charlesworth, “Lynyrd Skynyrd: Rainbow Theatre, London,” *Melody Maker*, December 14, 1974, accessed May 14, 2011, <http://www.rocksofbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10173>.

⁹⁹ Scoppa, review of *Nuthin’ Fancy*.

¹⁰⁰ John Tobler, “Al Kooper Sweetheart of the South,” *Melody Maker*, March 2, 1974, accessed May 10, 2011, <http://www.rocksofbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=10830>.

Apollonian-Dionysian dimension that “[displays] simultaneous virtuosity and soul.”¹⁰¹ With their emphasis on the group’s populism, and “no frills” and “no glitter” presentation, the critics positioned the genre as separate from other sub-genres of rock, such as glam rock, which emerged around same time.

Like the outsider trope I discussed earlier, the above-noted contradiction (ordinariness/extraordinariness) in the bands’ star texts may have resonated with fans of Carter and southern rock. Table 3-2 indicates some of the descriptors often applied to Lynyrd Skynyrd (and southern rock as a whole earlier in this chapter):

Ordinary (Traits specifically associated with southern identity)	Extraordinary (Other traits used to describe the bands)
naturalness earthy passion soul	virtuosity
plain speaking (regional dialect)	well-applied intelligence no frills intelligence
organically grown letting the music flow	professional

Table 3-2 Descriptions of Southern Rock Bands in the Music Press

In performance, Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers Band simultaneously embraced these apparent contradictions. By combining instrumental virtuosity with a vocality and performance style that asserted their southern cultural identity, they combated stereotypes and rearticulated what it meant to be a southerner and a musician. Lead singers Ronnie Van Zant and Gregg Allman sang with untrained voices in a regional dialect and lamented the tribulations of the working-class man in their songs, but the bands also featured skilled virtuosic guitar playing and prided themselves on having a keen sense of musical intellect. I concur with Mike Butler and Ted Ownby that both the music and image of the bands can be strongly identified with the sensibilities of the New South. However, when one evaluates the bands’ reception history, performance, and production values, in addition to their music and lyrics (which is where Butler and Ownby place their focus), a more complex picture emerges. I argue the bands (mainly Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman

¹⁰¹ Kandia Crazy Horse, “Song o the South: How the Allman Brothers Made a Redneck Negress Out of Me,” *Rock’s Backpages*, June 2002, accessed November 30, 2012, <http://www.rockbackpages.com/article.html?ArticleID=2989>.

Brothers Band, but also Charlie Daniels and the Marshall Tucker Band to a certain extent) selectively embraced certain facets of both pre-civil rights era southern identity—localism, agrarianism, rebellion—and the newly-emerging form of southern identity associated with the New South—racial progressivism, independence, introspection—yet did not attempt to relieve the inherent tension between them.

The Allman Brothers’ racially-integrated band and Lynyrd Skynyrd’s (as well as other bands’) acknowledgement of their black music progenitors in interviews, as well as in songs such as “The Ballad of Curtis Loew,” distanced the groups from the racist-tinged rhetoric associated with earlier southern values and may have aligned them with racial progressivism in the minds of some white audiences. Although southerners were associated with plain speaking in the public’s mind, the Allman Brothers Band and Lynyrd Skynyrd paired this mode of address with virtuosic guitar playing and “well applied intelligence.” The bands’ performances simultaneously highlighted their “special status” as musical virtuosi as well as their “everyman” status as expressed through their vocal delivery with its regional dialect.

This same contradiction defined Carter’s identity as a candidate. As I discussed earlier, Carter made a point of aligning himself with small-town values, farmers’ rights, family, and community building, and he positioned these values as natural byproducts of his own southern upbringing. The very structure of the campaign, which relied on grassroots community building with its neighbor-to-neighbor, door-to-door approach, deliberately tapped into modern-day, nostalgic perceptions of pre-industrial life. Carter’s speeches and other campaign material drew on metaphors and imagery of rootedness, and, though not critical of industrialization in the broader sense, the campaign did criticize the negative impact of industrialization on communities. This stance can be tied into a long history of southern thought that links industrialization (and its accompanying depersonalization and alienation) to problems in both the South and the nation at large.¹⁰² Carter’s plainspoken speech style, his use of organic metaphors to convey the agrarian-inspired values that were meaningful to southerners, and his unmistakable regional dialect substantiated his cultural background and ideological orientation in the minds

¹⁰² Wilson, *Judgement and Grace*, 33.

of voters and affirmed his status as a Washington outsider. This outsider position, with all of its corresponding connotations regarding values, ideology, and lifestyle, allowed the public to view both Carter and the bands as more authentic or more trustworthy.¹⁰³ Although the press and campaign literature focused on Carter's peanut farmer/populist side, there was no mistaking the fact that his mild-mannered exterior and plain speaking masked the savvy intellect of a well-educated businessman. In short, southern rock musicians and Jimmy Carter were both "exceptional" yet "one of us," extraordinary, yet ordinary.

Similar to Kemp who argued the same for the genre as a whole, critic Chet Flippo claimed the Allman Brothers Band, "more than anything else, returned a sense of worth to the South."¹⁰⁴ Interestingly enough, some felt a Carter presidency would instill a similar sense of self-worth and belonging for southerners-at-large. According to a *Time* article published about a month before the election, "one of the most important causes that [Carter] identifies his candidacy with is the final, unqualified re-entry of the South into the Union."¹⁰⁵ And with Carter, to use Charlie Daniels's prescient words, "the South is gonna do it again."

From Peanuts to President

Ultimately, the contradictions inherent in southern rock—extraordinary vs. ordinary, plain speaking vs. intelligence, conservative vs. progressive—may have contributed to its appeal among counterculturalists, liberal-minded Southern Democrats, and the more traditional Southern Democrats targeted by the Republican Party with their Southern Strategy. Although these contradictions mainly relate to individuals and ideologies, and by extension, are embedded in the genre, they also resonate with the larger contradictions apparent in rock's cultural position in the mid-1970s. Fans, musicians, and critics fashion rock as counter-cultural and anti-commercial, but as Lawrence Grossberg has suggested, the genre from its inception has fluctuated between resistance and cooptation. Southern rock, although

¹⁰³ See Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Malone, *Southern Music, American Music*, 114

¹⁰⁵ "How Southern Is He?" *Time*, September 27, 1976, 47.

heavily reliant on the construction of a mythologized preindustrial past, was unabashedly commercial.

Despite its growing commercialization, rock's cultural status increased during this same time (at least for some sub-genres). In the late 1960s, as popular culture and high culture drew from each other and intersected in increasingly complex ways, rock emerged as a valid topic for sociological and musicological inquiry within the academy: experimental rock drew from composers such as Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage, and groups such as the Beatles increasingly appropriated elements of the Western classical style.¹⁰⁶ In short, the boundaries between high art and mass art, culture and counterculture, authentic and commercial became increasingly blurred by the time Jimmy Carter embraced rock music and musicians for his campaign. Perhaps by 1975, rock had depleted just enough of its subcultural capital to be acceptable to a moderate Southern Democrat, but it never lost its connotations of rebellion, personal freedom, and liberation.¹⁰⁷ With rock's ambiguous reputation, Carter could offer up rebellion, but a market-controlled, "safe" form of it that appealed to various white constituencies.

Why was southern rock necessary for Carter's campaign and what factors allowed the Carter/southern rock alliance to be so successful? First, Carter needed a medium through which he could disseminate his campaign message to a larger audience, yet his funds were limited. As southern rock already had an established audience and a system of networks through which it was being marketed, Carter, by appropriating the genre, could gain access to an already extant public sphere and its networks. In other words, the social capital, or "connections," afforded by southern rock improved the candidate's standing in the political field. It also allowed him to make a double play: his requisite cultural knowledge (or competence), acquired through his southern upbringing and substantiated through his alliance with the musicians, fortified his standing in the cultural field.

¹⁰⁶ For more on pop music and the avant-garde, see Bernard Gendron, "Gaining Respect," in *Between Montmartre and the Mudd Club: Popular Music and the Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 161–88.

¹⁰⁷ Lawrence Grossberg problematizes the insider/outsider and cooptation/resistance binaries. For more on the cooptation of rock and roll and the political right, see *We Gotta Get out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Second, the Concerts for Carter provided a theater where southern rock could tangibly act as a unifying agent between the candidate and fan communities separated ideologically and geographically but united through shared music-aesthetic values. And ultimately the broader music-aesthetic values of southern rock that these fans admired—most importantly authenticity, rootedness, and community—could be rearticulated as political values when framed by the rhetoric of the Carter campaign. Although the concerts themselves only reached a limited number of people, their cultural resonance should not be underestimated. With each concert and each instance of press coverage, the highly visible artists and sounds of southern rock and the platform of Jimmy Who from Plains became increasingly linked. The communities established through this alliance existed in reality but also in the imagination of those who participated in the discourses surrounding them.

CHAPTER 4

“WE ALL KNOW WHO THE REAL BOSS IS, RIGHT?” JOHN KERRY, HIS FRIEND BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, AND THE POLITICS OF POLITICAL REDEMPTION POST-9/11

Celebrities and Other Politicians

Although it is impossible to substantiate a direct correlation between artist-activism and voter turnout, the level and intensity of artists' engagement in the political process definitely reached fever pitch during the 2004 election cycle. For example, hip-hop scion Russell Simmons used his advocacy organization, the Hip Hop Summit Action Network, to promote youth voter registration, and Rock the Vote, as it had in years past, toured the country to provide free entertainment and register voters. Madonna, Justin Timberlake, Ricky Martin and many others created public service announcements on the group's behalf. In 2004 additional organizations geared towards specific audiences emerged. Sean Combs's Citizen Change "Vote or Die" campaign targeted youth voters, especially minorities. Slam Bush contests around the country offered up a \$500 prize to the slam poet with the best anti-Bush verses. "Rock Against Bush," a coalition of punk artists, organized concerts in swing states and voter registration drives, as well as produced two CDs, *Rock Against Bush* vols. 1&2. Indie rocker Ani DiFranco organized the Vote Dammit! Tour and performed in several swing states in September and October of 2004.¹ Grassroots efforts such as the Concerts for Kerry, which featured local musicians at small venues around the country, generated revenue for John Kerry's campaign.

The above list suggests that progressive-leaning musicians initiated the majority of these ventures; however, the conservative side wasn't entirely silent. Several prominent artists and groups, including country singers Darryl Worley and

¹ Many musicians held voter registration drives at their concerts: For example, before offering encores, the Grateful Dead implored concert goers to register to vote during their summer 2004 tour performances. See, for example, "The Dead Live at Columbia Meadows on 2004-07-02," Track 23 "Donor Rap/Headcount Rap" [starting at 1:16], accessed July 1, 2012, <http://archive.org/details/dead2004-07-02.25292.akg483.vegasbobby.flac16>. The organization Redeem the Vote offered voter registration drives at Christian music concerts, Your Country Your Vote did the same for country music, and PunkVoter worked the tables at punk events. See Scott Evans, "How PunkVoter.Com Became Just Another Tool of the Democrats," *Counterpunch*, June 10, 2004, accessed September 1, 2012, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2004/06/10/how-punkvoter-com-became-just-another-tool-of-the-democrats/>; *Your Country Your Vote* website, accessed September 1, 2012, <http://yourcountryyourvote.org>; and *Redeem the Vote* website, accessed September 1, 2012, <http://www.redeemthevote.com>.

Sara Evans, and the Texas alternative rock group Dexter Freebish did turn out in support of George W. Bush and performed on his behalf at the Republican National Convention. Although the Bush campaign did not manage to secure any musicians with as much star power as Bruce Springsteen, they did book a lineup of the most popular acts in the Christian music world, including industry veteran Michael W. Smith, rock band Third Day, and crossover artist Jaci Velasquez. Of the convention's thirteen musical numbers, seven of the artists began their careers in the Christian music industry (see Appendix B).² To orchestrate the convention, Bush's team hired Frank Breeden, a former president of the Gospel Music Association and one time producer of the Dove Awards, as Director of Entertainment. And the convention was not the first time audiences witnessed Christian music stars engaging in politics in 2004. Christian activist Randy Brinson inaugurated the "Redeem the Vote" campaign in order to mobilize evangelical voters; one writer referred to this initiative as "the evangelicals' answer to Bruce Springsteen."³ As its title suggests, this organization mirrors the model established in the early 1990s by "Rock the Vote."⁴

The unprecedented Christian presence in the entertainment segment of the convention is not surprising considering both Bush's openness about his adherence to evangelical Christianity and its role in his governance, as well as the increasingly vocal support of the president by evangelicals and other Christian traditionalists. Citing the narrow victory margin in the previous election, Karl Rove, Bush's chief political advisor, felt galvanizing the support of the four million evangelicals who did *not* vote in 2000 would improve his candidate's chance for a second term.⁵ Therefore,

² Of the remaining acts, five can be categorized as country, and the last, a group of singers, performed medleys of Broadway songs, some associated with New York. The above number does not include the singers who sang the National Anthem each morning.

³ Hanna Rosin, "Redeem the Vote Spreads the Election-Year Gospel," *Washington Post*, October 29, 2004, accessed August 24, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A7482-2004Oct28.html>.

⁴ Members of the recording industry formed Rock the Vote in 1990 in order to engage Gen-Xers in politics. Although the media proclaimed the organization's efforts a success, according to Scott H. Huffmon, Bobbi Gentry, and Christopher N. Lawrence, despite an increase in youth turnout in 1992, voting for the eighteen to twenty-four cohort continued to decline until 2003. See "Rock & Roll Will Never Die? A Discussion of the Seeming Failure of Rock the Vote" (paper, Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, August 28–31, 2003).

the Bush re-election campaign developed numerous strategies to target this community. The convention afforded the Party an opportunity to wed biblical rhetoric and Christian values with a distinctly Republican patriotic vision.⁶ Although the Democratic Party did not waste its time and resources in trying to court Christian fundamentalists, they did desperately try to emphasize the Party's own progressive spiritual vision in order to reach moderate Christians.

In the 2004 election, both incumbent Republican candidate George W. Bush and his opponent Democratic Senator John Kerry received more votes than any other presidential candidates in history. Furthermore, voter turnout for the eighteen to twenty-nine cohort increased from 40% in 2000 to 49% in 2004; this was the sharpest increase within a cohort during the period.⁷ Campaign strategists and political historians attribute the increase in voter turnout to several factors: these include voter outrage over the "hanging chad" fiasco and Bush's failure to win the popular vote in the 2000 election, the public's more profound engagement in national politics precipitated by post-9/11 societal and economic upheaval, and the nation's desire to insure national security in the wake of two unpopular wars in Iraq

⁵ See John C. Green, Kimberly H. Conger, and James L. Guth, "Agents of Value: Christian Right Activists in 2004," in *The Values Campaign? The Christian Right and the 2004 Elections*, ed. John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2006), 22–55. This article gives an excellent overview of the role of Christian activism in 2004.

⁶ A handful of studies have addressed the 2004 conventions. Using a frame-based analysis of the 2004 RNC speeches, Dawn Haddon concludes that the convention incorporates four dominant frames, each of which include the message of faith and values. Rachel Holloway compares the 2004 RNC and DNC, and, focusing mainly on speeches, analyzes how the conventions construct the character of their respective candidates: she argues the DNC focused on John Kerry's strength, whereas the RNC attempted to convey Bush's compassionate side to counteract the public's perception of his arrogance and stubbornness. Additionally, the Republicans focused on party unity whereas the Democrats focused on Bush's actions post-9/11 and the need for leadership change. Janis Edwards takes campaign films as her subject and offers an intertextual reading that examines the films within the context of other forms of communication. See Dawn Ann-Marie Hatton, "A Content Analysis of Religious and Value-Oriented Frames in the 2004 Republican National Convention" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 2005); Rachel L. Holloway, "Political Conventions of 2004: A Study in Character and Contrast," in *The 2004 Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, ed. Robert E. Denton Jr. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 29–71, esp. 69–70; and Janis L. Edwards, "Presidential Campaign Films in a Televisual Convention Environment," in *2004 Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, 75–92.

⁷ See the following report for detailed information on youth voting patterns: The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, "Young Voter Registration and Turnout Trends," accessed July 10, 2011, http://www.civicyouth.org/PopUps/CIRCLE_RtV_Young_Voter_Trends.pdf.

and Afghanistan.

At the same time, media scholars argue that the increased turnout could be attributed to the profound change in the way potential voters received information about candidates. In addition to network news, television advertisements, and newspapers, voters increasingly gleaned political information from political “talk” shows such as those hosted by Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert.⁸ These shows feature both actual politicians and high-profile celebrities. While artists have become increasingly visible in political circles, politicians have, since the 1990s, become increasingly visible in non-political forums. In attempts to provide a reason for these double plays, John Street argues that politicians, “acutely aware of their loss of credibility and trust, resort to new forms of political communication.”⁹

The presence of politicians on the aforementioned programs as well as other mainstream daytime, entertainment-oriented talk shows such as *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* and *The View*, and comedy shows such as *Late Night with Conan O’Brien* and the *Late Show with David Letterman*, further illustrates how politicians’ engagement with popular culture has contributed to the effacement of the boundary between politics and entertainment. The rapid circulation of video footage and photographs, as well as other reporting of these events whether on the Internet or on 24-hour news channels, makes these crossovers impossible to ignore.¹⁰ While Bill Clinton’s appearances on *The Arsenio Hall* and *Tonight Shows* were somewhat of a novelty in 1992, such events are now commonplace.

In the Carter campaign, Charlie Daniels and Gregg Allman were merely “average citizens” (albeit also skilled musicians) who performed to further the political goals of a fellow southerner, but by the 21st century, musicians—such as

⁸ See Jeffery Jones, “‘Fake’ News versus ‘Real’ News as Sources of Political Information: *The Daily Show* and Postmodern Political Reality,” in *Politicotainment: Television’s Take on the Real*, ed. Kristina Riegert (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 129–49, accessed February 16, 2012, <http://www.odu.edu/al/jpjones/Fake%20News.pdf>.

⁹ Street, “Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 6, no. 4 (November 2004): 436.

¹⁰ For more on celebrity, pop culture, and politics, see Jeffery Jones, “Pop Goes the Campaign: The Repopularization of Politics in Election 2008,” in *The 2008 Presidential Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, ed. Robert E. Denton Jr. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2009), 170–90; and Darrell M. West and John M. Orman, *Celebrity Politics* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003).

Bruce Springsteen (and Bono, who will be addressed in chapter five)—are, in the eyes of many, legitimate political actors with significant clout in the realm of national and world politics. Therefore, when artists like these, who are as politically vocal as they are musically prolific, become politically engaged, the line between the official campaign and the shadow campaign begins to dissolve.¹¹

Within this slippage, pre-existing popular songs situated within the context of campaigning can acquire new meanings as politically active artists rearticulate them in campaign-related performances. As I mentioned in my discussion regarding George McGovern and Peter, Paul and Mary in chapter two, candidates sometimes embrace music that carries an association with earlier, specific political movements, or highly politicized events. This became par-for-the-course in the first election post-9/11. As an example of this phenomenon, I take Springsteen's performance of "Mary's Place," a song originally released on *The Rising* (2002), Springsteen's socially conscious post-9/11 album, and show how its meaning evolves when considered within the context of discourses surrounding John Kerry's 2004 campaign. Whereas in my analysis of the Carter campaign and southern rock I focused mainly on how various media represented the artists and their music, here I consider both the content of the music and the song's performance history alongside the discursive functionality of Bruce Springsteen's stardom. I conclude by analyzing the representative relationship between Springsteen and Kerry, and consider the factors that make such alliances vital to twenty-first-century campaigns.

The Vote for Change Tour

In an August 2004 *New York Times* op-ed piece, the politically and socially conscious, yet previously non-partisan, rocker Bruce Springsteen expressed his disappointment in the Bush administration and announced the Vote for Change Tour, a series of concerts conceived by artist-managers Jon Landau, Kelly Curtis, Simon Renshaw, Robert Coran Capshaw, and Bertis Downs and organized by the advocacy group MoveOn.org.¹² Dedicated to advancing the political campaign of

¹¹ Jeffery Jones, "The Shadow Campaign in Popular Culture," in *The 2004 Campaign: A Communication Perspective*, ed. Robert E. Denton Jr. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), 195–216.

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, participating musicians performed 37 concerts in 11 swing states and the District of Columbia between October 1st and October 11th. The Sundance Channel aired the Washington D.C. Finale concert, and the event and documentary *National Anthem: Inside the Vote for Change Concert Tour* also received airplay via a webcast on RealNetworks and through XM Satellite Radio, Music Choice, Sirius Satellite Radio, and other stations nationwide.¹³ In an interview with Ted Koppel, Springsteen described the intent of the tour as follows:

So, the tour has a very basic intent. Its intent is to change the direction of the government, to change the administration in November, to mobilize progressive voters, and uh, get them to the polls come election time. So it's a very practical purpose.¹⁴

Clearly the organizers had financial as well as ideological goals in mind here: the tour raised fifteen million dollars for America Coming Together, a progressive-oriented 527 organization.¹⁵ The same day Springsteen's op-ed piece appeared in the *New*

¹² See R. Waddell, "Springing into Action," *Billboard* 116, no. 33, August 14, 2004, 3; 75, accessed February 26, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/227222111?accountid=12339>; John Petrick, "The Boss Strikes a Chord for Change; Springsteen Wraps Up Political Tour at Home," *Record*, October 14, 2004, A12, accessed February 26, 2012, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/425928063?accountid=12339>; and "Vote for Change Tour Wraps in DC," *Billboard*, October 12, 2004, accessed June 30, 2012, <http://m.billboard.com/news/vote-for-change-tour-wraps-in-d-c-1000664062.story#/news/vote-for-change-tour-wraps-in-d-c-1000664062.story>.

¹³ For the press release, see "Historic Vote for Change Grand Finale Concert in Washington, D.C. on October 11th Will Be Broadcast Live on Television, Radio and the Internet," October 6, 2004, accessed July 27, 2012, [¹⁴ "Culture Wars" \[Bruce Springsteen, interview by Ted Koppel\], *Nightline*, ABC, August 4, 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed July 14, 2011, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=761425>.](http://www.google.ca/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=9&ved=0CGAQFjAI&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpol.moveon.org%2Fcontent%2Fpdfs%2FVFC_MNR_release.pdf&ei=wrsWUICWEsS2rQGZyYDYDw&usq=AFQjCNFCO7HsJeYZEvIfCPN3wauqYWIH-A; Move On Website, accessed September 12, 2012, http://pol.moveon.org/vfc/.</p>
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¹⁵ Ibid. In the same televised interview, Ted Koppel mentioned the fact that the concerts would possibly raise tens of millions of dollars at a key point in the election. Springsteen responded as follows: "I see this as leveling the playing field with the Republicans with their corporate donations. We are trying to infuse the campaign with a certain amount of, of cash at that time. It's gonna enable foot soldiers to go out and go door to door and, and activate voters and get people to the polls. There's a very specific goal that we feel is worth accomplishing, you know and uh, so, uh, that's really the bottom line as far as I'm concerned." I cannot locate the exact figures that indicate the total amount of money raised from the concerts. By one account it was \$15 million. Another newspaper estimated the tour would earn between \$44 and \$120 million gross. See M. McCarthy, "Pro-Kerry Tour Could Reap \$44M," *USA Today*, August 6, 2004, B1. A 527 group is a tax-exempt organization that attempts to influence the election of a candidate.

York Times, several major US news networks carried the announcement, referring to the concerts alternatively as an “unusual blend of music and politics,” an attempt to “vote the president out of office,” and “a collection of rock and roll royalty concertizing on behalf of the presidential hopeful.”¹⁶

The Vote for Change Tour featured numerous seasoned performers, such as James Taylor, John Mellencamp, R.E.M, Dave Matthews, Pearl Jam, the Dixie Chicks, Bonnie Raitt, and Jackson Browne, to name a few, but none were more pivotal figures in the world of popular music than Bruce Springsteen. (See Appendix C for a full list of performers, dates, and venues.) In order to bring Springsteen’s biography and the reception of his music into focus, I begin here with a list of descriptors I have extracted from various music and mainstream publications, from the mid-1970s to the present (Table 4-1).

¹⁶ See “Decision 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Concert Tour” [Tom Brokaw and Chip Reid], *Evening News*, NBC, August 5th 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed August 11, 2011, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=761591>; “You Decide 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Iowa/Campaign Cuts [Shepard Smith],” *Evening News*, Fox, August 4, 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed August 11, 2011, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=793478>; and “Campaign 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Davenport, Iowa/Campaigning [Elizabeth Vargas and Jake Tapper],” *Evening News*, ABC, August 4, 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archives, accessed August 11, 2011, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=761483>.

Position in rock	Identity	Values	Narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “He is one of a very small number of rock performers who uses rock to express an ongoing epic vision of this country, individual social roots and the possibility of heroic self-creation.”¹⁷ • the new Dylan¹⁸ • savior of rock¹⁹ • future of rock and roll²⁰ • “Bruce Springsteen is the mythos of rock ‘n’ roll sprung to life.”²¹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blue-collar troubadour²² • working class hero • American icon • sex symbol • visionary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • endurance²³ • social consciousness • hard work • community • authenticity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • triumph over adversity²⁴ • American dream • failure of the American dream • blue-collar life

Table 4-1 Bruce Springsteen in Print²⁵

The above descriptors may reveal why Springsteen and his music resonate with Americans on opposing sides of the ideological spectrum—much of his oeuvre and

¹⁷ Stephen Holden, “Springsteen Scans the American Dream,” *New York Times*, May 27, 1984, Sec. 2, p. 19.

¹⁸ Columbia Records attempted to market Springsteen as the New Dylan in the mid-1970s. See Dave Marsh, *Born to Run: The Bruce Springsteen Story* (New York: Dell, 1981), 84–88.

¹⁹ This idea began circulating around 1975 with the release of *Born to Run* and Springsteen’s appearance on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* in the same week (October 1975).

²⁰ Jon Landau wrote, “I saw rock and roll’s future and its name is Bruce Springsteen. And on a night when I needed to feel young, he made me feel like I was hearing music for the very first time.” Review in *The Real Paper* [Boston alternative newspaper] May 22, 1974.

²¹ Eric Alterman, *It Ain’t No Sin to Be Glad You’re Alive: The Promise of Bruce Springsteen* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1999), 9.

²² Quoted in George Will, “Bruce Springsteen’s U.S.A.,” *Washington Post*, September 13, 1984, A19.

²³ The theme of endurance comes up in discussions of Springsteen’s career and performance style; Springsteen’s concerts tend to be extremely long (around four hours). George Will refers to Springsteen as “an athlete draining himself for every audience.” (Will, “Bruce Springsteen’s U.S.A.,” A19). Catherine Foster and Nancy Stappen claim “Springsteen is renowned for both his endurance . . . and communication with the audience.” See “Nam June Paik; ‘Soldier’s Play’; Springsteen Workin’ in Worcester; The New Jersey Rocker,” *Christian Science Monitor*, September 13, 1984, B4.

²⁴ Several reviewers point to this narrative in Springsteen’s work as well as his own biography: “This album is a crisp, wide angle portrait of a generation of working-class America still quivering from the shock of Vietnam and the disappointments of a fickle economy. At the same time it is a proud, vibrant country-infused rock album with music that understates the strong emotions of the lyrics.” David Cheezem, “Bruce Springsteen’s Lyrics Resound with Memories of Vietnam, Recession,” *Christian Science Monitor*, June 12, 1984, 30.

²⁵ The descriptors that are not cited are general terms critics, journalists, and fans have used to describe Springsteen over the years.

activism engage with what George Lakoff might call the “uncontested core” of American values.²⁶ In short, Springsteen and his music, for the most part, project a system of values and a type of American identity that appeals to the majority of Americans. While Springsteen does load much of his music with trenchant social critique that betrays his liberal worldview, the staunchly pro-Americana, everyman persona that defines his image tempers these aspects of his music. Also, as Simon Frith argues “song words are not about ideas (‘content’) but about their expression.”²⁷ That is to say, the mass appeal of Springsteen’s expression, his rhetorical and performative strategies (who says it and how), may trump some audiences’ disapproval of his progressive political leanings. Frith cites “Born in the U.S.A.” as an example, claiming that although the ironic lyrics speak to post-Vietnam War disillusionment, listeners read the song as patriotic due to its musical expression of pride and assertiveness.²⁸ Elizabeth Bird, drawing from Jean Baudrillard’s theories on sign economy, positions Springsteen’s mass appeal as an inevitable product of the postmodern age where the proliferation of images that endlessly reflect back on each other has enabled the possibility for signs to acquire an infinite number of meanings. *How* one sees culture (or determines its meaning) becomes contingent upon where he/she is positioned among the images.²⁹

Because of the multivalence of these images, politicians and others have invoked Springsteen’s persona and music in various political contexts since the mid-1980s; however, the artist did not outwardly embrace partisan rhetoric, or attempt to

²⁶ George Lakoff, Chap. 6 in *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 82–101. Lakoff, drawing on the work of W. B. Gallie, argues concepts such as “freedom” are contested; that is to say, the concept may mean different things to different people. At the same time, there is class of examples within this category on which there is no argument. This is the concept’s “uncontested core” (pp. 83–84).

²⁷ Simon Frith, *Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 164.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 165–66.

²⁹ Elizabeth Bird, “‘Is that me, Baby?’ Image, Authenticity, and the Career of Bruce Springsteen,” *American Studies* 35, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 47. Jean Baudrillard refers to this process as “absorption;” a commodity, in this case, Springsteen, acquires various meanings that increase his marketability. (See Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* [St. Louis: Telos, 1981]).

assume a position on the political field, until the 2004 election.³⁰ In one interview Springsteen claimed he “couldn’t have written the music he’s written and failed to take part in this particular election.”³¹ And political scientists agreed on its far-reaching implications: in reference to 2004, William Crotty claimed, “two opposing visions of the United States and its future were presented to the American public; one would prevail and set the country’s course domestically and in relation to the international community for years, if not decades and generations to come.”³²

Rising from 9/11 to Rising from the Bush Administration

Rolling Stone reviewer Kurt Loder described Bruce Springsteen’s 2002 post-9/11 album *The Rising* as “a requiem for those who perished in that sudden inferno, and those who died trying to save them.”³³ Overall, reviewers and fans praised the album for its touching portrayals of anguish and grief, as well as its emphasis on the themes of renewal, redemption, and healing. Focusing on the socio-cultural relevance of the album, Christine Lee Gengaro examines the role *The Rising* (and the Beastie Boys’ *To the Five Boroughs*) played in listeners’ mourning and empowerment. Along similar lines, Bradford Yates examines the album and the media hype surrounding it to assess its capacity to aid national healing. Delving into individual

³⁰ The mainstream press and rock critics have documented both the appropriation of Springsteen’s music and image for political purposes, as well as his own political activism. Several scholars have examined this topic in greater detail: Jim Cullen, “Bruce Springsteen’s Ambiguous Musical Politics in the Reagan Era,” *Popular Music and Society* 16, no. 2 (1992): 1–22, and Susan Mackey-Kallis and Ian McDermot, “Bruce Springsteen, Ronald Reagan and the American Dream,” *Popular Music and Society* 16, no. 4 (1993): 1–9, examine the Right’s appropriation of Springsteen and his appeal across ideological and political lines during the Reagan era, respectively. During the period, several critics noted the irony in Reagan’s appropriation of what he called Springsteen’s “message of hope.” For example, Jim Miller argues Reagan “[S]hrewdly sized up his audience and its enormous hunger for flag-waving. Never has the contradiction been more glaring between rock conceived as a grainy social critique and executed as a sentimental ritual.” See Jim Miller, “Pop and Jazz,” *Newsweek*, December 17, 1984, 93. Springsteen commented on his nonpartisan stance in 1984 stating, “I just want to try and just work more directly with people; try to find some way that my band can tie into the communities we come into. I guess that’s a political action, a way to bypass that whole electoral thing. Human politics. I think that people on their own can do a lot.” See Kurt Loder, “The Rolling Stone Interview: Bruce Springsteen,” *Rolling Stone*, December 6, 1984.

³¹ “You Decide 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Iowa/Campaign Cuts [Shepard Smith],” Fox, August 4, 2004.

³² William J. Crotty, *A Defining Moment: The Presidential Election of 2004* (Armonk, NY: Sharpe, 2005), 3.

³³ Kurt Loder, review of *The Rising*, by Bruce Springsteen, *Rolling Stone*, July 30, 2002.

songs, Bryan Garman discusses the album's spiritual orientation and diverse musical influences, and Lisa Renee Foster, situating the work within the context of other musical responses to 9/11, argues that the album works "ideologically to reinforce rather than challenge a dominant public sphere." In other words, Foster argues that Springsteen's album embraces what she calls a "populist" as opposed to a "counterpublic" vernacular, and this orientation ultimately limits its potential to foster deliberative exchange. Indeed Springsteen, like many other artists, practiced a sort of "self-censorship" in his post-9/11 musical offering.³⁴ However, as the 2004 election approached, dissenting voices no longer hid in the margins, they came to the forefront, and many prominent musicians, the most visible being the Dixie Chicks (whom I will address in chapter five), became truth bearers for a growing number of people disillusioned with the Bush administration and skeptical about continuing war efforts in the Middle East.

In his work on semiological approaches to popular music, Philip Tagg argues duration, mode, articulation, instrumentation, and other factors in a performance may alter the affect of a song and subsequently expand its capacity for signification.³⁵ Each of these parameters comes into play with Springsteen's Vote for Change "Mary's Place." In addition to the emergence of a new political climate and surrounding cultural logic, four main musical factors contribute to the connotative meaning of this particular performance: first, the manner in which Springsteen's spoken introduction frames the song; second, the artist's vocal style and articulation of the text, as well as the song's accompanying instrumentation; third, the changes applied to the structural form of the song itself; and fourth, the audience's

³⁴ For more on self-censorship post-9/11, see Martin Scherzinger, "Double Voices of Musical Censorship after 9/11," in *Music in the Post 9/11 World*, edited by Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry, 91–122 (New York: Routledge, 2007). And for Springsteen's *The Rising*, see Christine Lee Gengaro, "Requiems for a City: Popular Music's Response to 9/11," *Popular Music and Society* 32, no. 1 (2009): 25–36; Bradford L. Yates, "Healing a Nation: An Analysis of Bruce Springsteen's *The Rising*," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22, no. 1 (2010): 32–49; Brian Garman, "Models of Charity and Spirit," 71–89. Garman has also published an excellent book on white male working-class identity and performers such as Springsteen. See *A Race of Singers: Whitman's Working-Class Hero from Guthrie to Springsteen* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Lisa Renee Foster, "Music, Publics, and Protest: The Cultivation of Democratic Nationalism in Post-9/11 America" (PhD diss., University of Texas-Austin, 2006), 90.

³⁵ Philip Tagg, "Musicology and the Semiotics of Popular Music," *Semiotica* 66 (1987): 259–78; Also available on *Philip Tagg's Homepage*, accessed August 10, 2012, <http://www.tagg.org/articles/xpdfs/semiota.pdf>.

participation in the song's performance. Taking into consideration shifting public opinion towards the Bush presidency and the war effort, how might Springsteen's performance of music from the album *The Rising*, specifically "Mary's Place," signify a new political reality in 2004?³⁶

As Garman, Foster, and critics attest, "Mary's Place" poignantly captures the zeitgeist of the post-9/11 nation with its exploration of the sentiments of mourning, suffering, and ultimately a renewed sense of hope. Including references to Buddhist, Christian, and Muslim symbolism, the first verse of the album version infers that the song's protagonist (the first of two, the male) emerges from a place of darkness upon hearing his lover's voice. The second verse (likewise in the voice of the male protagonist) implies a funeral or wake is taking place, but after a repetitive pre-chorus, the song quickly transitions into a celebration of the deceased's memory with the arrival of the chorus. In the Vote for Change performance, Springsteen eliminates the lyrics of the first and second verses as well as these verses' following pre-choruses and choruses.³⁷ Instead, he offers a lengthy "sermon."³⁸ Figure 4-1 includes the texts of the album version (2002) and the Vote for Change version (2004):

³⁶ Clip used for analysis: "Bruce Springsteen - Vote for Change Tour," uploaded by Peter Smith, July 26, 2006, accessed July 20, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_cC1Jvtn4o. The performance I use for this analysis was recorded October 11, 2004 at the MCI Center in Washington, D.C. Unfortunately the clip does not include the entire song and the Sundance Channel did not release the concert on DVD.

³⁷ In most live performances of "Mary's Place" on *The Rising* tour, the verse structure of the album version remains intact. I have found one that omits these opening passages. See "Mary's Place part 2 Wembley Arena 2002," uploaded by mrchappelow3, February 21, 2007, accessed May 3, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TUY7cZbXPR4&feature=related>.

³⁸ Although Springsteen does not commonly omit these verses in live performances of the song, he does often give some kind of speech to the audience during the song's introduction, the length of which may vary.

“Mary’s Place” (Vote for Change Tour)

I say the war is on democracy. But now tonight, tonight, I’m not speaking just to the folks in the auditorium, but I’m speaking to all you folks tuned in at home through the miracle of television. And what I know, I heard all this all this fuss, all this fuss about a swing voting, all I want to know is till October 11, what the hell are you waiting for? What? You mislead the nation to war, the man loses his job, it ain’t rocket science. (cheers) Come on! Well, right now I want to say to all you folks at home, that if you’re swinging, if you’re swaying, if you’re swooping, if you’re swishing, if you’re sweeping, if you’re swaying if you just can’t decide, you can be saved right now. (cheers) If you wanna even temporarily be released from the burdens of republicanism. Hey what’s that comin? I want all you folks at home, I want you to get up off your couch now, come on. I want you up off your couch. And I want you to take that remote control. And I want you to turn that television volume all the way up until the walls are rattling. And I want cha to come closer to the TV. And I want cha, I want cha to take off all your clothes. (cheers) And I want you to put one hand on the television set and I want you to say everybody, Halliburton three times real fast, (Halliburton X3 - audience) Let me hear it again? Now go to your window, throw that window open and tell all yo’ neighbors that a change is coming and all I want know is...

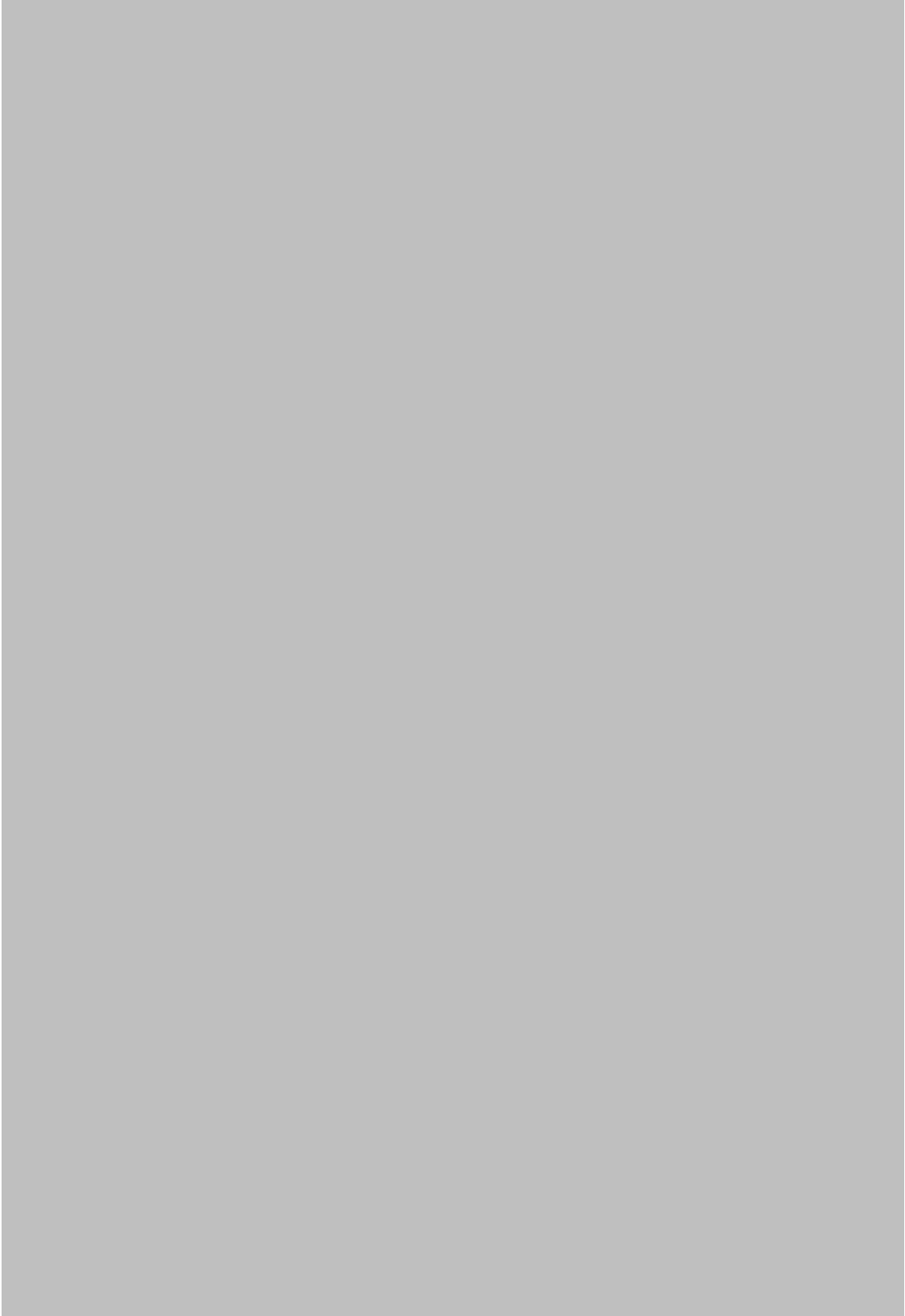


Figure 4-1 “Mary’s Place” Lyrics, *The Rising* (2002) and *Vote for Change* (2004)

In *Vote for Change*, the omission of the verses, combined with the addition of the sermon, in essence alters the established semantic codes by rearticulating the theme of the song as a sort of political/societal redemption rather than a spiritual/personal one as is suggested in the album version. With repetitive plagal motion from F to Bb functioning as an underscore, Springsteen launches into a spirited impersonation of a televangelist. Rather than the folkish sounding fiddle countermelody and rollicking texture of the album version, the synthesizer's vibrant organ timbre provides a quasi-religious tone for Springsteen's political sermon.³⁹ In a breathless, impassioned tone accompanied by the stereotypical gestures of a revivalist preacher, Springsteen works the crowd into a frenzied state. Blending spiritual and political rhetoric, Preacher Bruce shouts, "If you're swinging, if you're swaying, if you're swooping, if you're swishing, if you're sweeping, if you're swaying if you just can't decide, you can be saved right now." Here salvation becomes the product of choosing to vote rather than accepting a personal savior, and "swinging and swaying" represents indecision rather than the body being overcome by the Holy Spirit. The preacher also attempts to align the current administration, namely Dick Cheney, with Satan himself by asking the viewers to put their "hands on the television set and shout Halliburton three times," to cast him out. For this political concert, the "miracle" is not a miraculous healing, but rather the "television" which enables the viewers to receive Springsteen's message.

With his over-the-top, quasi-evangelical parodic act, Springsteen takes a jab at religious fundamentalism, but the specific discursive functions it takes on in this context redeem it to a certain extent. Although campaign music generally does not employ parody in this manner, the general tenor of Springsteen's sermon is in alignment with a significant portion of the printed material that circulates during campaigns, most notably in political cartoons. Scholar of political humor Charles Schutz aptly describes the function of humor in political contexts as follows:

Humor pleurably camouflages the sharpest political criticism, and the parody becomes educational as a kind of analogical reasoning. Politics and its characteristics are removed from their accustomed setting and placed in a fully

³⁹ In the live versions I analyzed, an accompaniment similar to that in the album version was used in three versions, and a piano was used in the fourth.

apparent foreign context, but one with credible similarities to the original setting.⁴⁰

And the context evoked here—the revivalist happening, with its unique rhetorical style—indeed shares affinities with Springsteen’s stage shows. In at least one performance of “Mary’s Place” on *The Rising* Tour in 2002, Springsteen affectionately referred to his fellow band mates as “brother” and “sister” and lauded their formidable music skills that show “no mercy” before launching into the song.⁴¹ In addition to adopting spiritual rhetoric during his on-stage banter, the artist’s frequent embrace of Christian imagery, the exaggerated physicality of his performances, and their epic length all invoke the fundamentalist spiritual orientation this performance more overtly engages with in the name of “political” education. With his pseudo-sermon that links two discrete semiotic systems—the sacred and the civic—Springsteen simultaneously draws attention to the absurdity of the conventions of televangelism, while he appropriates the effectiveness of its rhetorical frame and infuses it with a serious political message.⁴²

In the Vote for Change concert Springsteen ends his revivalist rant as he calls out “are you ready” and initiates a call and response with his “converts.” This musical dialogue between preacher and subjects eventually transitions into Springsteen’s performance of “Mary’s Place,” which includes some of the same spiritual rhetoric that he previously wove into his introductory speech. But the parody ends here. The second protagonist of the song, whose voice we hear in the third verse (in this version, the first verse), is the woman Mary who mourns her lost

⁴⁰ Charles E. Schutz, *Political Humor: from Aristophanes to Sam Ervin* (Rutherford [N.J.]: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1977), 243.

⁴¹ See “Mary’s Place part 2” (note 36).

⁴² Springsteen has a long history of appropriating Christian imagery and symbols in his music and he frequently delves into issues regarding spirituality. David Masciotra has an excellent article on faith and Christian spirituality in Springsteen’s music. (He also addresses *The Rising*.) See “Ain’t Nobody Drawin’ Wine from This Blood: The Politics of Religion and Humanism,” in *Working on a Dream: The Progressive Political Vision of Bruce Springsteen*, 125–53 (New York: Continuum, 2010). Jon Pareles, in a review of *Devils & Dust*, discusses Springsteen and the place of Christian faith in his music, see “Bruce Almighty,” *New York Times*, April 24, 2005, Sec. 2, p. 1. Randall Auxier positions Springsteen as a prophet-like figure, and, drawing from contemporary literature on prophets and biblical texts, examines how Springsteen’s image and artistic output buttress such an interpretation. See “Prophets and Profits: Poets, Preachers, and Pragmatists,” in *Bruce Springsteen and Philosophy: Darkness on the Edge of Truth*, ed. Randall E. Auxier and Doug Anderson, 3–15 (Peru, IL: Carus, 2008).

beloved. In the absence of the first two verses of the song, the overriding theme becomes her renewed sense of joy in hearing her lover's favorite song ("drop the needle and pray"), and his metaphysical presence in the chorus ("Meet me at Mary's Place"). Within the context of Springsteen's politicized frame created by the opening sermon, "drop the needle and pray" draws a parallel between the redemptive power of music and the redemptive power of voting, while still firmly situated in a quasi-spiritual context.

With the close of the sermon, a more serious, intimate tone begins to emerge. Springsteen's articulation of the lyrics in this verse establishes a sense of intimacy yet moves the song's content away from individual mourning and redemption (as in the album) to a broader, more inclusive, and collective one. Although on *The Rising* album (and in many of his performances on *The Rising* Tour), Springsteen adopts a sung vocal quality and clearly articulates the text, here he sings very close to the microphone with an almost speech-like tone. He whispers some of the words at such a low decibel they are inaudible, and he quite deliberately distorts the vowels.⁴³ Once the more personal text of this verse (sung by Mary) gives way to the chorus—which the deceased, first protagonist narrates—Springsteen adopts a more sung vocal quality, and the articulation of the text becomes more focused. His articulation not only highlights the change in the tone of the text but also the psychological state of the second protagonist (Mary) as verse leads into the pre-chorus and chorus. When *she* dwells on her memory of him, she lacks the capacity for song (and the ability to express herself through clearly articulated words). As the narrative voice changes to *his* in the chorus and the focus turns to the living celebrants (those attending the party at Mary's place), the vocals come into focus and are paired with clearly articulated text.

The inclusion of two distinct dialects in the lyrics of the original album version of the song further substantiates the presence of two distinct characters (Fig. 4-2):

⁴³ The vowels are somewhat distorted on the album version and in various live performances. (I examined *The Rising* tour performances in Barcelona, Stockholm, London, and Hamburg for the sake of comparison.)

Verse One (protagonist one/male)	Verse Two (protagonist one/male)	Verse Three (protagonist two/Mary)
I got seven pictures of Buddha The prophet's on my tongue Eleven angels of mercy Sighin' over that black hole in the sun My heart's dark but it's risin' I'm pullin' all the faith I can see From that black hole on the horizon I hear your voice calling me	Familiar faces around me Laughter fills the air Your loving grace surrounds me Everybody's here Furniture's out on the front porch Music's up loud I dream of you in my arms [and] I lose myself in the crowd	I got a picture of you in my locket I keep it close to my heart A light shining in my breast Leading me through the dark Seven days, seven candles In my window lighting your way Your fav'rite record's on the turntable I drop the needle and pray (turn it up)

Figure 4-2 “Mary’s Place” Lyrics, Verses One–Three (Album Version)

Verses one and two (narrated by the male protagonist in the album version) use verbs with dropped final syllables: *sighin'*, *risin'*, *pullin'*. In both, contractions are frequently used: *prophet's*, *everybody's*, *furniture's*, *music's*. Narrated by Mary, the third verse has neither of these features (except for on the word “record’s”). The topical content and perspective further distance the two voices. The first and second verses refer to intangible entities—“Buddha,” “prophets,” “angels,” “black hole”—and intangible emotions or ideas—“laughter,” “grace,” “dreams.” However, when Mary speaks in the third verse, the lyrics emphasize materiality: “locket,” “heart,” “candles,” “window,” “record,” “turntable.” As the multi-voice choir joins Springsteen’s in the choruses, the physical and temporal distance that seems to separate the two worlds—the abstract spiritual and the material earthly—shrinks as they commune together in a celebration of his redemption, or his *rising*.

Even with the omission of the first two verses, the Vote for Change version still maintains its dialogic character. Although the lyrics speak of redemption, the song’s overarching structure and expressive mode—the call-and-response texture, and the short bursts of textual and musical repetition and variation—as well as its accompanying musical code, including the melodic structure of the chorus, the plagal harmonic motion, and the organ timbre, provide the song with a semantic richness that establishes a spiritual aura even if the lyrics and sermon are disregarded. That is to say, the song’s intensional values, *and* its emotive, style, and rhetorical connotations all point towards Christian spirituality; presumably even listeners with

common competence would identify this quality.

For those who either know the song, or can make out Springsteen's words, the text links the redemptive power of music with spiritual redemption. Additionally, Springsteen's vocal articulation (in the Vote for Change version) mirrors the song's trajectory—mourning to rising. Or, as A. O. Scott brilliantly points out in his review of the album, “the dialectic of despair and triumph is built into the musical structure and aural texture of the songs themselves, which enact, and induce in their listeners, the very emotions their words describe.”⁴⁴ In the live performances of this song, the audience's active participation heightens the potential for emotional engagement even more. As the side-by-side text comparison in Figure 4-1 shows, Springsteen's restructuring of the song results in longer periods of audience participation, as the pre-chorus portions with call-and-response chanting (much like the “are you ready” segue) make up a large portion of the song (see the lyrics indicated in brackets). As Robert Putnam writes, even though “[s]inging together does not require shared ideology or shared social or ethnic provenance it can be a way of forging community.”⁴⁵

Even in the absence of a shared ideology, the audience's role in the song's (re)creation also reinforces a sense of unity and fosters the development of a collective identity within the group. According to Middleton, “repetition is often associated with the phenomenon of being ‘sent’, particularly in relation to ‘hypnotic’ rhythmic repetitions and audience trance: a collective loss of the self.”⁴⁶ Springsteen empowers the audience of “converts” by encouraging them to use their voices to create the soundscape, and, as a unified group, they *embody* the message that the song communicates. But the music also directs the audience's physical engagement—voices and bodies move in sync as the music structures the environment and dictates

⁴⁴ A. O. Scott, “The Poet Laureate of 9/11,” *Slate*, August 6, 2002, accessed August 8, 2011, <http://www.slate.com/id/2069047/>. Quoted in Foster, “Music, Publics, and Protest,” 100.

⁴⁵ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000), 411; quoted in Paul Friedlander, *Rock and Roll: A Social History* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), 14.

⁴⁶ Richard Middleton, “In the Groove or Blowing Your Mind?: The Pleasures of Musical Repetition,” in *The Popular Music Studies Reader*, ed. Andy Bennett, Barry Shank, and Jason Toynbee (London: Routledge, 2006), 19.

how the participants conduct themselves. As Tia DeNora argues, music “is a powerful medium of social order.”⁴⁷ In this performance, the division between production (by the artist) and consumption (by the audience) dissolves through these participatory acts, which subsequently redefine the signifiers of the song.

Redemption need not be limited to the spiritual realm; it can also be social or political in this forum. In this regard, Springsteen’s mixture of rhetorical signifiers truly taps into what historian Wilfred McClay identifies as a revitalization of “the American civil religion, that strain of American piety that bestows many of the elements of religious sentiment and faith upon the fundamental political and social institutions of the United States.”⁴⁸

The Symbolic Capital of Vote for Change

In the election of 2004, swing voters held the potential to drive the election in one direction or another.⁴⁹ As a historically non-partisan figure whose fan base included voters across the ideological spectrum, Springsteen, perhaps more than any other artist, had great potential for influence, and this potential was only magnified by the co-presence of many other artists who represented different genres, age groups, and ethnic backgrounds, uniting under the same banner. In his landmark text *Distinction*, Pierre Bourdieu argues taste is rooted in socioeconomic identity, and thus “taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier.”⁵⁰ In other words, just as specific cultural practices and institutions shape the coding of a musical work, genre itself carries the implications of a certain audience. Table 4-2 lists some of the artists who participated in the Vote for Change Tour Finale Concert:

⁴⁷Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 163.

⁴⁸ Wilfred M. McClay, “The Soul of a Nation,” *National Affairs* 155 (Spring 2004): 6, accessed November 1, 2012, http://www.nationalaffairs.com/public_interest/detail/the-soul-of-a-nation.

⁴⁹ Several news broadcasts in the days leading up to the elections mentioned this fact. See “Campaign 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Davenport, Iowa/Campaigning,” ABC, August 4, 2004.

⁵⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 6–7.

Artist	Era	Genre	Geographic Region	Star Text/History
Bruce Springsteen	Late 1970s–	heartland rock	New Jersey/east coast	plight of the blue collar working man, white urban culture
Eddie Vedder (Pearl Jam)	1990s–	alternative rock/grunge	Seattle, WA	grunge movement, mainstreaming of ideals and practices associated with punk rock, Ticketmaster boycott, refusal to make videos after first album
John (Cougar) Mellencamp	1980s–	rock/folk rock	Midwest	small-town values from American heartland, cultural nostalgia
Michael Stipe (R.E.M.)	1980s–	alternative rock		anti-establishment stance, playtime on college radio
John Fogerty	Late 1960s–	swamp rock/southern rock	South	“southern” identity (although constructed since he is from California), anti-war/pacifism, 1960s idealism
Dave Matthews	1990s–	jam band rock	any college town	South African immigrant, popularity with college scene, pacifism, improvisation in live performance
Keb’ Mo’	1990s–	contemporary blues		blues with heavy pop/rock influence, racial diversity
Dixie Chicks	Late 1990s–	country/bluegrass	middle America	anti-Bush polemics, Texas pride, pacifism, “new country” /anti-Nashville sound, infusion of bluegrass style

Table 4-2 Vote for Change Finale Concert Performers

The organizers may have intended to offer a diverse group of artists in order to reflect the diversity of the Democratic Party, and thus, open up the possibility for the majority of voters to identify with the musicians onstage. This diversity did not go unnoticed by *Rolling Stone*; David Fricke writes, “the entire troupe is a lot like the electorate it wants to reach: a motley collection of cultural backgrounds, social values and previous political experiences.”⁵¹ However, this lineup lacks diversity with regards to race. (The tour did include Ben Harper, Jurassic 5, and Kenny “Babyface”

⁵¹ David Fricke, “Taking It to the Streets,” *Rolling Stone* 956, September 2, 2004, 37–38, 42, 44, 48.

Edmonds, but white artists outnumbered black artists and artists of mixed racial backgrounds.) With the exception of Keb' Mo', white audiences represent the fan base of the artists and genres included. The reason for this may simply be that the concert organizers did not feel the need to address black voters, a bloc that in presidential elections between 1988 and 2004 overwhelmingly voted for Democratic candidates.⁵² According to a Democratic Leadership Council study, white men and women who have earned a high school diploma or who have graduated high school and attended college without completing a four-year degree were critical swing voters in 2004. The Vote for Change lineup reflects this political reality. (Appendix C includes a full list of the artists who participated in the finale concert of the Vote for Change Tour and a set list.)

The symbolic unity forged in these concerts has an historical precedent: Vote for Change may tap into the listener's memory of other concerts with immense cultural impact, such as Woodstock (affirming the presence of 1960s counterculture), the recurring but now defunct Lollapalooza (1990s Gen X/1990s counterculture), and Lilith Fair (celebration of women musicians) as well as Live Aid (global community efforts to reduce famine), and it may incite the same spirit of optimism and solidarity among people of various communities. Although only a relatively small number of Americans actually attended these events, they are relived, if only in the imagination, when individuals purchase related artifacts, consume the music performed at the events, or even read or hear about them through various media. The social movements associated with an event such as Woodstock have concluded, but they remain in the collective memory of the nation, and therefore, the Vote for Change concerts may infuse contemporary listeners with the same progressive spirit that initiated the earlier activist movements as they hear the same music (re)politicized. Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison describe this social process as the "mobilization of tradition" and argue that "in social movements, musical and other kinds of cultural traditions are made and remade, and after the movements fade away as political forces, the music remains as a memory and as a potential way to inspire

⁵² Al From and Victoria Lynch, "Who Are the Swing Voters? Key Groups that Decide National Elections," The Democratic Leadership Council, September 2008, accessed July 27, 2012, <http://www.dlc.org/documents/DLC-political-study.pdf>.

new waves of mobilization.”⁵³ Tia DeNora also notes the role of music in identity formation, and claims “music can be used as a device for the reflexive process of remembering/constructing who one is, a technology for spinning the apparently continuous tale of who one is.”⁵⁴ The Vote for Change Tour, another event in this unfolding history, created a new forum through which audiences could remember/construct their identity as progressives.

Who's the Boss?

Springsteen, perhaps more so than any other artist I have studied for this project, acts as a powerful symbol for 21st-century progressive values. I have already discussed the politicized framing rhetoric he used in the Vote for Change performance of “Mary’s Place,” but what aspects of Springsteen’s own trajectory and strategy on the cultural field, not to mention his broader oeuvre, legitimize his participation in the political process? Here I return to the song “Mary’s Place,” then broaden my perspective to consider the thematic content of his works, biography, and lastly, his position within the history of the genre of rock.

In “Mary’s Place,” Springsteen’s sermon and revivalist-preacher rhetoric allow him to embody the persona of a quasi-religious figure. Throughout his long career, critics have lauded Springsteen for his understanding of the viewpoints of Americans of all ages, occupations, ethnicities, and political stripes, and he regularly assumes the “I” position when narrating their stories—“Mary’s Place is very much in line with this tradition.”⁵⁵ Springsteen speaks as Mary, her partner, and in the surrounding frame, a preacher. And this fact did not go unnoticed by Kerry’s campaign team. According to one aide, “Bruce Springsteen sings about the people

⁵³ Ron Eyerman and Andrew Jamison, *Music and Social Movements: Mobilizing Traditions in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1–2.

⁵⁴ DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life*, 63.

⁵⁵ Randall Auxier claims “[Springsteen] writes in the first person, boldly, constantly, and describes conditions and burdens that simply never were his own—a homeless worker, an ex-con trying to go straight, a Reno hooker, a gay man dying of AIDS.” See “Prophets and Profits,” 4. Jeffery Melnick refers to the long history of “Mary” in Springsteen songs, but focuses attention on three here. See “Rising,” chap. 4 in *9/11 Culture: America under Construction* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009): 78–93, esp. 83–84. In their edited collection of essays, Randall Auxier and Douglas Anderson identify nine songs that reference Mary. See *Bruce Springsteen and Philosophy: Darkness on the Edge of Truth* (Chicago: Open Court, 2008), 282. Garman addresses it briefly in “Models of Charity and Spirit,” 82–83.

the Senator talks about.”

The families of 9/11’s victims were no exception: in a television interview shortly after the release of *The Rising*, Springsteen, who apparently had phone conversations with several 9/11 widows, credited the family members of victims as the inspiration behind the album’s words and music. Although it is unclear to what extent these conversations influenced the album’s actual content, the surrounding discourses did strongly imply a connection existed between them.⁵⁶ In other words, *The Rising* made a claim to be not only a representation or a hypothetical reenactment of the voices of the people, but to be their actual voices. And with music from *The Rising*, Kerry’s campaign attempted to tap into these voices and a post-9/11 vision that was quite different from the one promulgated by the Bush campaign.

Although *The Rising* emerged out of the aftermath of a specific tragedy, the themes explored in the album are surely applicable to other tragedies or circumstances, a fact that Springsteen noted in interviews he did to promote the work.⁵⁷ Not surprisingly, *The Rising* explores the same themes manifested in

⁵⁶ Melnick writes, “Virtually every feature article and review covered the same ground: Bruce we need you; Bruce finding inspiration in the *New York Times* ‘Portraits of Grief’; the calls he placed to 9/11 widows to hear more about their husbands (most of whom were Springsteen fans); the fact that Springsteen’s home county lost more people in the towers than any other in New Jersey; and finally, the rediscovery of his ‘rock’ voice in this moment of crisis after years of not having a clear sense of mission.” “Rising,” 82. Also see Josh Tyrangiel, “Bruce Rising,” *Time*, August 5, 2002, 52. These are not the first times authors have situated Springsteen’s inspiration with personal interactions. In his 1987 biography, Dave Marsh claims Springsteen’s interactions with workers were “integrated into the bedrock of his performances.” (See *Glory Days: A Biography of Bruce Springsteen* [London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1987], 271). After September 11th, the *New York Times* changed its policy on obituaries. Each day it published about a dozen obituaries of high-profile New Yorkers and average citizens who died in the towers, or rescue workers who died during their efforts to save victims. The newspaper allotted the same amount of space to each person.

⁵⁷ Bruce Springsteen discusses the creative process behind *The Rising*: “And I just went about my way writing other things, you know, and what I found out was you’re writing in a new world, you’re living in a new world, world was very different, and what you were thinking and the way you were writing was contextualized by new experience and by the experience that everyone had on that day. And so songs just emotionally came out, and a few, and if you go through everything on the record, the songs could be about a myriad of many, of different things, you know, even, even the ones that appear to be most direct about that day, could be about you know, just a loss, just uh someone dreading the mortality, you know, unsure future, but in the context of what we lived and then the songs began to fall in place and, and take that as part of their story.” This passage is excerpted from a rebroadcast of the interview Ted Koppel did with Springsteen to promote *The Rising*. Chris Burey was reporting. See “Bruce Springsteen” [interview by Ted Koppel (rebroadcast)], *Nightline*, ABC, September 1, 2003. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed July 15, 2012, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=737318>.

Springsteen's earlier work, such as narratives of overcoming, resilience, nostalgia, but also powerfully articulates the ideal of individuals and communities coming together. And in the case of *The Rising*, unity is equally forged on the sonic level. In "Worlds Apart" a Qawwali singer, Asif Ali Khan, joins Springsteen in the vocals, and the backup singers sing a chant with a distinctly Eastern quality, all to the backdrop of standard rock instrumentation. A similar stylistic fusion can be heard in "Into the Fire." In an interview, Springsteen noted the country-blues style of the verse with its mandolin and fiddles, as well as the gospel element that infiltrates the chorus.⁵⁸ Publicity surrounding the album emphasized the trope of unity as well; on *The Rising*, Springsteen collaborated with the E Street Band for the first time since the 1980s. As Mark Binelli noted in his *Rolling Stone* interview with Springsteen, *The Rising* "is not Bruce Springsteen as lone troubadour, but Springsteen reunited, finally and completely, with the E Street Band."⁵⁹

Clearly there is an apparent continuity between the onstage Springsteen and the offstage Springsteen, as Simon Frith has noted.⁶⁰ Many of the narratives that permeate Springsteen's songs equally resonate with his own biography. Because of this close connection, I argue Springsteen's position in the history of rock writ large also holds the potential to add another layer of meaning to his presence, and by extension his music, in the Kerry campaign. In his analysis of the relationship between hype and rock criticism, Devon Powers argues, "Rock critics' desires to see rock music rescued . . . became interwoven into any commentary about Springsteen."⁶¹ In other words, rock criticism in the 1970s positioned Springsteen as the "savior of rock," or, in Jon Landau's words, the future of rock and roll. So when Springsteen adopted the fundamentalist preacher guise, an act that had precedence in

⁵⁸ Mark Binelli, "Bruce Springsteen's American Gospel," *Rolling Stone* 903, August 22, 2002, 62. Also see Garman, "Models of Charity and Spirit," 77.

⁵⁹ Binelli, "Bruce Springsteen's American Gospel," 62.

⁶⁰ Simon Frith, "The Real Thing—Bruce Springsteen," in *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (New York: Routledge, 1988): 94–101; also reprinted in David Brackett, ed. *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*, 2nd ed., 413–18 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁶¹ Devon Powers, "Bruce Springsteen, Rock Criticism, and the Music Business: Towards a Theory and History of Hype," *Popular Music and Society* 34, no. 2 (May 2011), 211.

his earlier performances, this quasi-spiritual/savior persona resonated with Springsteen's image as it was constructed by critics and subsequently understood by audiences. When framed with a political introduction, the spiritual redemption of "Mary's Place" became aligned with political redemption as the artist advised his audiences on how they might be "temporarily relieved from the burdens of Republicanism." In "Mary's Place," Springsteen is not just singing *about* the redemptive power of rock, he *is* the personification of that figure in the minds of his audiences, and this ultimately is a key component of Springsteen's legitimation. According to Street, in order to legitimately act within the realm of politics, an artist must be taken seriously in their own career as a performer: Springsteen's perceived onstage/offstage authenticity, connection to the communities he sings about, history of performances in support of various causes, and his position in the history of rock facilitated his legitimation in the world of politics.⁶² Springsteen's well-known anti-Bush stance by 2004 also added to his value for Kerry.⁶³

In *U.S. News & World Report*, Roger Simon writes, "Americans have demonstrated that they don't dislike electing rich people to the presidency as long as the rich people appear nice, concerned, and in touch with non-rich people."⁶⁴ This presented a problem for Kerry. Because of his privileged background, many voters felt Kerry lacked the ability to relate to the majority of Americans and their values. Furthermore, the candidate's congressional testimony post-Vietnam and controversy surrounding his military service and bestowal of combat medals led many to question his integrity and ability to be a decisive leader. Swift Vets and POWs for Truth, a 527 organization formed to oppose Kerry's candidacy, spearheaded a smear campaign

⁶² John Street talks about the importance of artists being taken seriously in their careers before they can act in politics. See "The Pop Star as Politician: From Belafonte to Bono, from Creativity to Conscience," in *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest*, ed. Ian Peddie (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006). Jason Toynbee discusses the link between creativity and political expression. See *Making Popular Music: Musicians, Creativity and Institutions* (London: Arnold, 2000).

⁶³ "Whatever Springsteen does during those shows, his main political value will have come not from his performances, but from wide public knowledge that the Boss doesn't like Bush." Robert Everett-Green, "The Songs Are A-changin,'" *Globe and Mail*, August 21, 2004.

⁶⁴ Roger Simon, "Eyes on the Prize," *U.S. News & World Report*, March 9, 2003, accessed June 25, 2012, http://www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/030317/17politics_3.htm.

against the candidate.⁶⁵ Despite the fact that the organization's allegations were met with much skepticism, their tactics did indeed hurt Kerry's campaign. And because of his elite upbringing, and the suspicions raised with regards to his service, one might argue that Kerry did not embody the broader hero narratives voters wished to project onto their presidential candidate. Cue Springsteen. What might The Boss's presence in Vote for Change and on the campaign trail bring to the candidate and in what contexts is representation evoked? Although Kerry's music strategy differs from what I described in the Carter campaign, the end result was quite similar. Like what I described with southern rock performers, media representations of Bruce Springsteen highlighted his star quality but equally articulated his status as "one of us."⁶⁶ Video footage from the concerts, Springsteen's appearances at Kerry rallies, and the ways in which newscasters reported the alliance between the two, show how the campaign worked to highlight these qualities in Springsteen as well as project the same attributes onto the candidate Kerry.

Shortly before Election Day, CNN *Evening News* featured video footage from Springsteen's appearances with Kerry in Wisconsin and Ohio in a segment called "Music is the Message." Reporter Aaron Brown noted how Kerry appropriated Springsteen's "regular guy" status, and in doing so, gained access to his fan base:

[It] is safe to say that Senator Kerry for all of his other qualities probably loses out to the president [George W. Bush] in terms of that *regular guy* quality that politicians love. But not having it doesn't mean you can't get it. You just have to *import a regular guy* to campaign with you. Today Senator Kerry did just that. *A regular guy with a few hundred million fans.*⁶⁷

⁶⁵ For more on the organization's allegations against Kerry, see their website, Swift Vets and POWs for Truth, accessed October 1, 2012, www.swiftvets.com; or John E. O'Neill and Jerome R. Corsi, *Unfit for Command: Swift Boat Veterans Speak Out against John Kerry* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2004). These allegations have been met with suspicion; cf. Douglas Brinkley, *Tour of Duty: John Kerry and the Vietnam War* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004).

⁶⁶ Lawrence Grossberg, "Putting the Pop Back into Postmodernism," in *Universal Abandon?: The Politics of Postmodernism*, ed. Andrew Ross (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 186. "[His] image is that of an ordinary person, exactly like us."

⁶⁷ "Decision 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Kerry Interview," *Evening News* [Candy Crowley], CNN, October 28, 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed July 15, 2012, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=769579> (emphasis mine). Crowley reports from Columbus, but the footage here, at least most of it, is from the Wisconsin appearance.

At these appearances, Springsteen introduced Kerry as well as played acoustic versions (accompanied by guitar and harmonica) of some of his classic songs, including “The Promised Land” and “No Surrender.” Like “Mary’s Place,” “No Surrender” (John Kerry’s favorite song) positions music as a pathway to redemption. More importantly, Springsteen narrates the song from the perspective of an aging veteran, who, along with his “blood brothers,” made a “vow to defend” and swore there would be “no surrender.” Like “Born in the U.S.A.” (also appropriated for political purposes) the verses of “No Surrender,” which feature the protagonist struggling with his life back home, act as a thoughtful counterpoint to the pro-fighting, machismo ideological position of the chorus. And this duality resonates with a point Bill Clinton made as he declared his support for John Kerry: “Strength and wisdom are not opposing values.”⁶⁸

“No Surrender” ties into a particular aspect of Kerry’s biography that he attempted to foreground throughout the course of his campaign—his military service—which in turn was used to assure the public of his decision-making competency as a future “war-time president” and to challenge those who criticized his indecisiveness and lack of leadership skills. Much of the publicity generated by the Kerry campaign (especially television commercials) focused on portraying the senator as a war hero, greatly respected by his fellow crewmembers. Several of Kerry’s advertisements and interviews featured him alongside the swift boat crew he served with in Vietnam. One newscast discussed the presence of these men at Kerry’s events and the role such appearances played in his campaign strategy:

Kerry’s former Vietnam crewmates who helped rescue his campaign early on were at his side today as he crossed Boston harbour, including Jim Rassmann the former army green beret who Kerry rescued from an almost certain death on the Mahad river forty years ago. Kerry has used this “band of brothers” as a metaphor for America, the sons of poverty and privilege side by side, one boat, Kerry at the helm.

[The footage here shows Kerry flanked by the soldiers, on a boat heading into his hometown’s harbor.]⁶⁹

⁶⁸ “Their opponents will tell you we should be afraid of John Kerry and John Edwards because they won’t stand up to the terrorists. Don’t you believe it. Strength and wisdom are not opposing values. They move hand in hand.” Cited in Holloway, “Political Conventions in 2004,” 36–37.

These powerful visuals attested to Kerry's ability to work with people of varying backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses, and they made palpable the respect bestowed upon him by the men who valiantly fought alongside him.

As the campaign reached its final days, the Kerry camp continued to capitalize on the alliance forged between the politician and Springsteen. Media reports acknowledged Bruce Springsteen as "standing for" Kerry and suggested the candidate, through his alliance with Springsteen, had acquired both star quality and "one of us" status. Reporter Candy Crowley even positioned Kerry as a quasi-rock star stating, "All Kerry was missing Thursday was the guitar and a tune."⁷⁰ Bruce Springsteen himself hinted to as much when he quipped, "It looks like Senator Kerry draws a pretty good crowd."⁷¹ And lastly, an NBC News report picked up on the same idea: Tom Brokaw, reporting on the Madison, Wisconsin rally, referred to the event as having one of the largest crowds of the election, but then went on to say,

This man may have had something to do with the turnout—the Boss, Bruce Springsteen. Springsteen has been raising money for Kerry at concerts, and now in the final days, he's bringing him on like a rock star.⁷²

[The clip shows Springsteen introducing Kerry at the event.]

And thus, the candidate-celebrity dyad reinforces the image of the former as both a "regular guy" and a celebrity who you already knew.⁷³

Rock Out

The Carter and Kerry case studies demonstrate the various ways music can function in campaigns, and, more importantly, the impact celebrities can have on a

⁶⁹ "Campaign 04/Democratic Convention/Kerry," *Evening News* [Dan Rather/Byron Pitts], CBS, July 28, 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed July 16, 2012, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=760989>.

⁷⁰ "Decision 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Kerry Interview," CNN.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² "Decision 2004/Bush vs. Kerry/Kerry Interview," *Evening News* [Tom Brokaw], NBC, October 28, 2004. Vanderbilt Television News Archive, accessed July 16, 2012, <http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/program.pl?ID=769639>.

⁷³ Lawrence Grossberg made a similar observation about Springsteen in 1988; however, I only became aware of his argument after I completed the draft of this chapter. See "Rockin' with Reagan, or the Mainstreaming of Postmodernity," *Cultural Critique* 10 (Autumn 1988): 133. "And this is the site of Springsteen's popularity: to celebrate simultaneously one's ordinariness and to assert one's fantastic (and even fantasmatic) difference—the ordinary becomes extraordinary."

particular candidate's identity formation. But what aspects of modern American life have allowed such alliances to thrive on the political stage? In the wake of modernization, with its attendant increase in social complexity, the candidate-celebrity relationship has become increasingly important. As Niklas Luhmann in his work on systems theory has argued, the power depletion of traditional structures of socialization has increasingly fragmented individual identities. In their place, microstructures catering to specific groups have emerged, yet these subsystems, unlike their predecessors, are less hierarchical and more decentralized, and therefore they are reliant on new information technologies as a way to articulate their autonomy, as well as to forge connections and alliances in a world where individual systems overlap and compete with each other.⁷⁴

This fragmentation brought about by increasing social complexity has also influenced the political process. David Swanson and Paolo Mancini argue "social differentiation also implies a change in the form of political parties, as more specialized groups of various kinds (e.g., economic, social, cultural, and issue-centered groups) coexist and act within the same party organization."⁷⁵ This fragmentation weakens the political party's role as intermediary between politician and constituent; thus success in a campaign becomes contingent on the candidate's ability to establish "a relationship of personal trust" between himself and the citizen.⁷⁶ In order to establish this bond, politicians have increasingly relied on new forms of political communication, and, according to Jeffery Jones, "popular culture has become one of the most important places and open and free flowing ones for

⁷⁴ Luhmann quoted in David L. Swanson and Paolo Mancini, introduction to *Politics, Media, and Modern Democracy: An International Study of Innovations in Electoral Campaigning and Their Consequences* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 7–9.

⁷⁵ Swanson and Mancini, Introduction, 9.

⁷⁶ In general, scholars locate concern with the personalization of the candidate with the rise of television culture in the 1960s. See Janis L. Edwards, "Presidential Campaign Films in a Televisual Convention Environment: The Example of 2004," in *The 2004 Presidential Campaign*, 75–92. The demise of the Party system was noted in the 1950s. For an overview of the US party system, see David McKay, "The Changing Role of Political Parties," chap. 5 in *American Politics and Society*, 7th ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009). John Street also ties the "personalization" of politics with the rise of the celebrity politician. See, Street, "Celebrity Politicians," 441.

communication about politics, the presidential election included.”⁷⁷ It is within this context that the celebrity-politician emerges.

Following Luhmann’s postulation, which states social complexity can be articulated in a symbolic dimension, Mancini and Swanson argue microsystems “create their own symbolic realities; their own symbolic templates of heroes and villains, honored values and aspirations, histories, mythologies, and self-definition.”⁷⁸ In order to function within a climate defined by social differentiation, election campaigns are obliged to create a symbolic template. Springsteen and groups such as Lynyrd Skynyrd and the Allman Brothers Band fulfill this need. By appointing artists to represent them, candidates can engender the creation of a new, politically oriented symbolic reality that not only reinscribes the values and ideology espoused by the campaign, but also taps into the histories and mythologies of other microsystems (southern traditionalists, counterculturalists, swing voters) with similar underlying values. As truth bearers, musicians, through their songs and shared history with a specific group of voters, can highlight the commonalities that exist across microsystems and use them as a rallying cry to unite voters under the banner of a particular candidate.

Through the Concerts for Carter, southern rock musicians created an arena for reinforcing the shared belief system already existent among microsystems of disenfranchised voters and channeled their desires towards a political goal. The performances and the surrounding discourses (both music and campaign-related) rearticulated select values of southern identity shared between the bands, Carter, and the audiences. Ultimately the bands provided the bridge between Carter and particular communities (or microsystems) that shared his values, and the combined efforts of his campaign team turned disenfranchised fan communities into a single voting community.

⁷⁷ Jones, “Pop Goes the Campaign,” 172.

⁷⁸ Luhmann, cited in Swanson and Mancini, Introduction, 8–9.



Figure 4-3 Vote for Change Tour Poster⁷⁹

As a figure whose music and persona resonated with a cross section of American microsystems, Springsteen could, as he symbolically represented Kerry, function as a “hero” in the Luhmannian sense. The publicity poster even conveys this idea—the body of the red, white, and blue guitar takes on the appearance of Captain America’s shield (Fig. 4-3). Through his performances, Springsteen articulated the shared values and ideologies that existed between subsystems within the Democratic Party and various microsystems comprised of swing voters. As an artist revered by many microsystems, despite divergence among them with regards to economic, cultural, and ethnic difference, Springsteen held substantial unifying potential that was equally buttressed by his pivotal position in the history of rock and the fact that he possessed a long history of speaking on behalf of numerous causes significant to these groups. More recently, through his highly praised album *The Rising*, Springsteen articulated for his audience ways of thinking about and responding to grief in the post-9/11 world. Kerry’s campaign song “No Surrender” takes as its theme a retrospective on Vietnam with the metaphor of the “band of brothers” at its center, a core theme in Kerry’s campaign. Ultimately, artists hold the potential not only to engage a community but also to bring a candidate to that community, and through their music and advocacy transform political communication.

⁷⁹ See Press Release, “Historic Vote for Change Grand Finale Concert.”

CHAPTER 5

“BEAUTIFUL GIRL” OR “BIG STRONG TOWER?” HILLARY CLINTON’S SONIC IDENTITY AND *FEMINIST* DESTINY

*When a contest is not a battle of ideas, the choice of candidate seems to have nothing left to it but personality.*¹

Campaign Songs...*serious* business

In a *New York Times* opinion piece, Hillary Clinton’s strategist Howard Wolfson described the painstaking efforts that went into selecting music for her senatorial and presidential campaigns:

[W]e instituted strict controls to ensure that every song at a Clinton event had been vetted, both lyrically and rhythmically. Fail-safe devices were put in place. Committees of jurisdiction and oversight formed. It got so that it would have been easier to start a nuclear war than to play an offensive song at a Hillary Clinton rally. The selection of a presidential campaign song was deemed especially critical. A group was chosen, some for our musical tastes, others to act as censors. Brainstorming sessions ensued. The Iowa caucuses could wait—this was serious business.²

In the same piece, Wolfson referred to the accidental use of Billy Joel’s 1971 song “Captain Jack” (which mentions masturbation and drug use) during Clinton’s February 6, 2000 Senate campaign kickoff announcement, and the subsequent fallout from this gaffe. (The campaign intended to use Joel’s more appropriate “New York State of Mind.”) In a speech the following morning, Republican competitor Rudy Giuliani insinuated “Captain Jack” may have been intentional and even carried things a step further by claiming, “It means that people of that ilk and that ideology are around you.”³

Although the Iowa comment may be Wolfson’s flirtation with hyperbole, it is safe to conclude that the part-time music critic-*cum*-political advisor, as well as the

¹ Sean Collins, “Desperately Seeking the Authentic President,” *Spiked*, February 14, 2008, accessed August 8, 2009, <http://www.spiked-online.com/index.php/site/printable/4505/>.

² Howard Wolfson, “Campaign Playlists,” *New York Times*, November 3, 2008, accessed November 12, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/04/opinion/04wolfson.html> [A print version appeared November 4, 2008 on page A35 of the New York edition].

³ Rob Polner, “When Rudy Met Hillary,” *Salon*, November 27, 2007, accessed November 10, 2011, http://www.salon.com/2007/11/27/rudy_hillary/. Also see Brian Hiatt, “Billy Joel Did Start the Fire in NY Senate Campaign,” *VH1*, February 8, 2000, accessed November 10, 2011, <http://www.mtv.com/news/articles/621078/senate-candidates-debate-billy-joel-song.jhtml>.

rest of Clinton's team, considered music a significant component of their overall campaign strategy. Wolfson's statement positions the vetting of potentially offensive music as the committee's primary imperative, but the obsessive attention to every detail (not just lyrics, but also the music and performer biographies), the sheer number of individuals consulted (each of whom possessed different skills, e.g., censors and those with "taste"), and the large volume of songs evaluated, suggest Wolfson and the team indeed considered campaign song selection a "serious business." Although the "Captain Jack" flub may have resulted in the group's considerably more meticulous approach to song selection, the particular challenges posed by Clinton's gender and history may have also made music selection a high-stakes endeavor. Despite their diligent focus, Clinton's team could *not* agree on a single campaign song. In the end, they devised a list of nine pre-selected songs and relinquished control to voters by inaugurating a "Choose Our Campaign Song" contest to be launched on YouTube. After all of the ballots were cast and counted, Wolfson went so far as to claim that the selection of Celine Dion's song "You and I" as the contest winner doomed the Clinton campaign.

The presidential election of 2008 was remarkable in at least three respects: First, the U.S. witnessed the unprecedented ascendancy of Barack Obama as the first black presidential candidate to be nominated by a major party and Hillary Clinton as the first woman presidential candidate to enter the race with front-runner status.⁴ Second, on the Democratic side, the two most viable candidates engaged in an unusually long seventeen-month standoff before Clinton suspended her campaign and endorsed Obama as the Party's candidate on June 7, 2008. And third, the accessibility and increasing popularity of Web 2.0 technologies profoundly shaped how campaign organizers formulated their strategy and the forums through which voters received political information and engaged with candidates and campaigns. At the same time, social media and user-generated content sites have also transformed *how* people both produce and consume music. Each of these factors greatly

⁴ See Jo Freeman, *We Will Be Heard: Women's Struggles for Political Power in the United States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). "Between 1964 and 2004 over fifty women were on at least one ballot as candidates for president, both as minor party candidates and as candidates in primaries for the nomination of the Republican or Democratic parties."

influenced the candidates' respective campaign strategies as a whole, as well as their music strategies.

Using the concept of the double bind as a critical lens, this chapter examines Clinton's playlist and the discursive space afforded by YouTube and considers how music, Clinton's engagement with it, and its surrounding discourses (both verbal and audio-visual) participated in the formation of her identity as a candidate.⁵ I begin with a close reading of three songs included on Clinton's "Choose Our Campaign Song" contest ballot. Examining the songs within the broader context of Clinton's platform, I show how the playlist afforded her a space where she could safely challenge traditional notions of femininity, address her apparently contradictory image, and establish a new paradigm for female leadership. Then, I examine the contents of Clinton's three "Choose Our Campaign Song" contest videos and analyze the rhetorical strategies she adopted in them as well the online dialogue they precipitated. Drawing on previous studies on gender and political communication, I show how Clinton, by appropriating celebrity rhetoric, established a new, more inclusive and resolutely "social" and conversational dynamic between herself and her constituents.⁶ To conclude, I examine the implications the contest format and its implementation through YouTube had for Clinton's control over her image. Ultimately my analysis shows how Clinton's campaign music and her means of bringing it to the voting public allowed her to negotiate the femininity/competence double bind that perennially impeded her path to power by calling into question culturally inscribed notions of female identity, space, and place as well as facilitating her rhetorical transition from president's wife to presidential candidate.⁷

⁵ Although some of the public's responses to Clinton's contest are still available on her campaign homepage, the main YouTube site, and Clinton's YouTube channel, her Spotlight '08 contents have since been removed from the internet.

⁶ See Janis L. Edwards, "Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double Bind: Feminine Display in the Senate Campaign Films of Hillary Clinton and Elizabeth Dole," *Gender and Political Communication in America: Rhetoric, Representation, and Display*, ed. Janis L. Edwards (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 165–86. Edwards discusses the role of the campaign film in the candidate's rhetorical transition from wife to senator.

⁷ In my analyses in chapters five and six, I claim Clinton and Obama's playlists embrace feminist sensibilities or feminine sensibilities. I am not in any way arguing in favor of essentialized notions of what it means to be male or female. I use the terms masculine and feminine to refer to the socially and culturally constructed "norms" that historically have informed our perception of what

Campaigns 2.0

Since 2005, user-generated media has altered consumption patterns as well as transformed the relationships between producers, distributors, and consumers. Unlike traditional media, user-generated content sites, such as the video-sharing hub YouTube, provide a forum where the online community can not only consume content, but also participate by interacting with the content (ranking videos, posting comments) or with other viewers (through posting comments and sharing videos). Additionally, viewers can create and publish their own content—text, images, audio, and video. As Guosong Shao demonstrates, “[P]eople consume the content for information and entertainment, participate for social interaction and community development, and produce their own content for self-expression and self-actualization,” with all of these activities being interdependent.⁸

Increasingly, user-generated content sites have lured viewers away from broadcast network sites. According to internet research company Hitwise, “the market share of US visits to YouTube in December 2006 was five times greater than the share of visits going to the four broadcast network sites combined [NBC, ABC, CBS, and FOX].”⁹ Although people generally assume such sites mainly attract youth, studies conducted in 2006 showed that thirty-five to sixty-four years olds represented

it means to be male or female, but fully acknowledge that these norms are historically and geographically contingent. When I speak of gender norms, I am specifically referring to the status of women and gender relations at the time of the 2008 campaign. Therefore, when I refer to songs as gendered feminine, I am taking into consideration how certain songs, artists, and genres have historically been represented in critical, journalistic, and scholarly discourses, as well as evaluating how the musical and lyrical composition of the playlists under inquiry compare to other music used in campaigning. At several points in my discussion I project gendered traits onto political orientations. Again, some of these perceptions are the product of cultural construction, but political research shows that gender does greatly influence how people relate to parties and candidates and how they ultimately vote.

⁸ Guosong Shao, “Understanding the Appeal of User-Generated Media: A Uses and Gratification Perspective,” *Internet Research*, 19, no. 1 (2009): 9. The term user-generated media “refers to the new media whose content is made publicly available over the Internet, reflects a certain amount of creative effort, and is created outside of professional routines and practices.” (Shao, 8; after Sacha Wunsch-Vincent and Graham Vickery, “Participated Web: User-Created Content,” Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2006, accessed July 28, 2012, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/14/38393115.pdf).

⁹ LeeAnn Prescott, “How User-Generated Media Got Big,” *iMedia Connection*, January 18, 2007, accessed May 4, 2012, www.imediaconnection.com/content/13271.asp.

between 48 and 65 percent of users.¹⁰ In other words, a large segment of voters used the site. As a free forum with multi-generational appeal and growing popularity, YouTube presents political candidates with new possibilities, but also formidable challenges.

For one, YouTube offers politicians unlimited, low-cost access to voters, and therefore, it gives those who aspire to attain office but lack money a forum where they can introduce themselves to the public, mobilize support, and solicit funds. Whereas candidates usually limit themselves to thirty-second television advertisements because they can be cost prohibitive, YouTube allows candidates to use extended videos as a marketing tool. In addition to official campaign-generated advertisements, candidates offer the public direct access to their formal appearances and “informal” quotidian activities on the campaign trail through their YouTube channels. If voters subscribe to a candidate’s channel, they can observe him/her more closely and experience the campaign as it unfolds rather than relying primarily on sound bites and media reporting. Finally, candidates can use YouTube videos as a way of herding casual web browsers to their campaign websites.¹¹

Beginning with the first elections that embraced Web 2.0 technologies in 2006, music could be reused and recontextualized in various ways by anyone involved at any level in a campaign, and voters could assume the roles of consumer *and* creator of the political message.¹² Although a similar treatment of popular songs for partisan political goals has a long-standing history (consider the hundreds of songs dilettantes offered to Jimmy Carter in 1976, or even the Slam Bush contests in 2004 and the much earlier *New York Journal* contest in 1900), YouTube offers a democratized platform and free access to a virtual audience. Therefore, what was once a form of artistic expression consumed by only a few now boasts a worldwide

¹⁰ Vassia Gueorguieva, “Voters, MySpace, and YouTube: The Impact of Alternative Communication Channels on the 2006 Election Cycle and Beyond,” *Social Science Computer Review* 26 (2008): 291.

¹¹ Costas Panagopoulos, “Technology and the Modern Campaign,” in *Politicking Online: The Transformation of Election Campaign Communication*, ed. Costas Panagopoulos (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2009), 5.

¹² Web 2.0 technologies emerged earlier, but the 2006 election was the first time politicians used it to their advantage. See *Ibid.*

audience. No longer limited to live events, in 2008, voters could upload videos of music performed at campaign rallies or fundraising concerts and allow others to comment on them, experience musical moments from events they did not attend, create their own list of “favorites” and share links with others, or generate their own video montages with pre-existing or newly composed music.

The expansion of spaces, both virtual and actual, where campaign music can be played or performed may have also impacted the size and scope of candidate playlists. In the age of the 24-hour-news cycle, social networks, and video-sharing, footage from even the most minor campaign appearance of an unlikely candidate may end up televised or uploaded to the web. These clips sometimes show a brief snippet of the candidate’s stage entrance accompanied by music. After viewing them, bloggers, YouTube users, and print journalists often debate the appropriateness of songs. This of course has an added benefit for the candidate: the campaign team can gauge the public’s response to certain selections and modify the list as the campaign moves forward.¹³

Although a candidate can maintain continuity by using a single campaign song for the majority of his or her exits or entrances, a longer, more varied playlist offers the candidate the flexibility to tailor music to a specific audience, locale, or event. Additionally, the list offers the candidate the opportunity to choose music that fits with the current climate of the campaign.¹⁴ Since there are more platforms where voters can be exposed to a candidate’s music, a longer, more diverse playlist lessens the chance for songs to be overplayed to the point of inducing public exhaustion. At the same time, the widespread circulation of songs through various media and the surrounding discourses precipitated by media saturation can translate to a tighter

¹³ Sometimes the music heard in the background of news footage was actually played during the event, and at other times, the news station or user added in a song associated with the candidate after the fact.

¹⁴ For example, after journalists commented on the “inappropriateness” of Obama using “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” to introduce his speech the evening after he lost the New Hampshire primary to Clinton, he offered Bill Withers’s “Lovely Day” the following evening. In this instance, the lyrics “[w]hen the day that lies ahead of me seems impossible to face/And someone else instead of me always seems to know the way” seemed infinitely more appropriate than Wonder’s spirited lover singing “oh you got the future in your hand.” See Ed Pilkington, “Signed, Sealed, Delivered, I’m Yours...Not Quite,” *Guardian* (London), January 11, 2008, 23; and “Barack Obama Ditches Stevie Wonder in White House Battle,” *New Musical Express*, January 14, 2008, accessed July 2, 2012, <http://www.nme.com/news/stevie-wonder/33624>.

connection between a candidate and a certain genre, artist, or individual song as well. Finally, the playlist also allows the candidate the opportunity to choose a group of songs that coalesce around a certain issue, theme, or idea.

In 2008 both candidates' playlists, albeit through different musical means, embraced multiculturalism, gender equality, and a more gentle form of patriotism—a conscious reflection of the prevailing zeitgeist and their unique subject positions within the political field, not to mention a response to the intensified sense of surveillance that comes with campaigns now taking place on the global stage. Pundits often noted that the Illinois and New York senators shared a similar ideological stance on major political issues such as economy, education, welfare, and foreign policy; therefore, as the epigraph which begins this chapter states, the candidates' success depended not only on their ability to frame the uniqueness of their own particular vision for the Democratic Party, but, to a certain extent, on their personality and likeability as well.¹⁵ Reporting on the Democratic Primary results as of February 2008, Andrew Kohut, pollster for the Pew Research Center claimed, "There is no correlation in the exit polls so far between the issues people think are important and the candidates they vote for. It's about the qualities of the person."¹⁶

Clinton and the Double Bind

Before delving into Clinton's playlist and campaign song contest, I would like to briefly address the particular challenges of her candidacy. Clinton's embodiment of two seemingly contradictory roles—one as wife of a politician, and the other as presidential candidate/potential world leader—provoked much social anxiety and raised questions with regards to the gendered nature of political work. Accordingly, the construction of Clinton's image as presidential candidate presented significant challenges for her campaign strategists.¹⁷ Political scientists and sociologists who

¹⁵ Gerald F. Seib, "Issues Recede in '08 Contest As Voters Focus on Character," *Wall Street Journal*, February 5, 2008, accessed May 1, 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120217335171342871.html>.

¹⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.*

¹⁷ See Melody Rose and Regina G. Lawrence, *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House: Gender Politics & the Media on the Campaign Trail* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010), 3–12. These challenges included managing her complex and tumultuous relationship with the press, the constant questions regarding her competency, her marital and political partnership with Bill Clinton, sexist attitudes and media biases, and, in general, the wide range of critiques that women

theorize gender and politics argue that women's participation is circumscribed by *double binds*:

Double bind: (1) A psychological impasse created when contradictory demands are made of an individual . . . so that no matter which directive is followed, the response will be construed as incorrect. (2) A situation in which a person must choose between equally unsatisfactory alternatives; a punishing and inescapable dilemma.¹⁸

As they did for other female leaders, these “contradictory demands”—in Clinton's case, independence/dependence,¹⁹ experience/change, political candidate/political wife²⁰—shaped the public's response to her presidential candidacy. On account of her gender, but perhaps due more importantly to her former role as First Lady, a role which Karrin Vasby Anderson refers to as a “[site] for the symbolic negotiation of female identity,” Clinton inevitably fell into the femininity/competence double bind.²¹ Catalyst, an organization that studies women's experiences in the workplace and the barriers to their advancement, argues as follows:

When women leaders act in ways that are consistent with gender stereotypes (i.e., focus on work relationships and express concern for other people's perspectives), women are viewed as less competent leaders, as *too soft*. When women act in ways that are inconsistent with such stereotypes, however (i.e., act assertively, focus on work task, display ambition), their behavior is judged as *too tough*, even unfeminine.²²

face when stepping into political leadership roles. In this book, the authors look at Clinton's bid for president in order to develop a theory of women, the media, and strategy in presidential politics.

¹⁸ *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2000). Cited in Catalyst, “The Double-Bind Dilemma for Women in Leadership: Damned if You Do, Doomed if You Don't” [2007 Report], accessed July 9, 2012, <http://www.catalyst.org/file/45/the%20double-bind%20dilemma%20for%20women%20in%20leadership%20damned%20if%20you%20do,%20doomed%20if%20you%20don't.pdf>.

¹⁹ Rose and Lawrence, *Hillary Clinton's Race for the White House*, 9.

²⁰ Edwards, “Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double Bind,” 165–86.

²¹ Karrin Vasby Anderson, “The First Lady: A Site of ‘American Womanhood,’” in *Inventing a Voice: The Rhetoric of American First Ladies of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Molly Meijer Wertheimer (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 21.

²² Alice H. Eagly and Mary C. Johannesen-Schmidt, “The Leadership Styles of Women and Men,” *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 781–97; cited in “Double-Bind Dilemma,” 11.

Scholars in the area of gender and rhetoric have concurred that displaying competent leadership skills (such as assertiveness, logic, toughness), while simultaneously appearing feminine, presents a challenge for the female politician.²³

The images in Figure 5-1 illustrate how this double bind has shaped the public's perception of Hillary Clinton. With the caption "Obliterate Iran," one cartoonist mocks Clinton for toughening up her stance on foreign policy (5-1a).²⁴ The image shows Clinton donning ammunition belts with a machine gun clutched between her bulging biceps, a clear reference to the iconic Rambo figure. Figure 5-1b shows a piece of campaign memorabilia called the "Hillary Clinton Nutcracker," a novelty item that "cracks the toughest nuts" with its "stainless steel thighs." Finally, in Figure 5-1c Clinton's eyes well up with tears at a New Hampshire pre-voting event where the press later criticized her for revealing her feminine side.²⁵

²³ Edwards, "Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double Bind, 165–68. For more on the representation of Clinton and Dole, see Karrin Vasby Anderson, "From Spouses to Candidates: Hillary Rodham Clinton, Elizabeth Dole, and the Gendered Office of U.S. President," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 5, no. 1 (2002): 105–32.

²⁴ On ABC's *Good Morning America*, April 22, 2008, Clinton stated that as president she would "obliterate" Iran if the country deployed nuclear weapons against Israel. Obama (and several pundits) later criticized her comments as unnecessarily combative, and dangerously close to George W. Bush's rhetorical style.

²⁵ This incident instigated debate over a woman's capacity to serve as president. Clinton's remarks were as follows: "I just don't want to see us fall backward as a nation, I mean, this is very personal for me. Not just political. I see what's happening. We have to reverse it." Quoted in Karen Breslau, "Hillary Tears Up," *Newsweek*, January 7, 2008, accessed September 1, 2012, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2008/01/06/hillary-tears-up.html>.



Figure 5-1a–c Hillary Clinton and the Femininity/Competence Double Bind²⁶

As these images aptly illustrate, acting as a leader, yet simultaneously appearing feminine, presents difficulties for the female politician. Therefore, female presidential hopefuls must have a *gender strategy* to combat deeply ingrained cultural attitudes, as

²⁶ 5-1b: *Hillary Clinton Nutcracker*, photograph, The Official Home of America's Fun Couple, accessed August 2, 2012, <http://hillarynutcracker.com/completelynuts.html>; 5-1c: Elise Amendola, *Hillary Clinton in New Hampshire*, Associated Press, January 6, 2008, photograph.

“gender stereotypes and masculinized images of the presidency shape women’s paths to power.”²⁷

The creation of a gender strategy for Clinton posed a challenge for her campaign, as her advisors, Mark Penn and Mandy Grunwald, disputed over how she should be represented—should the emphasis be on her strength and experience or on her more human side and likeable demeanor?²⁸ As Kathleen Hall Jamieson, who has studied the effect of double binds on women’s leadership has argued, “as women have conquered the no-win situations confronting them, they have marshaled resources and refined aptitudes that have made them more and more capable of facing the next challenge, the next opportunity. At the same time, they have systematically exposed the fallacious constructs traditionally used against them, and changed and enlarged the frame through which women are viewed.”²⁹ Can music offer the candidate a way to address these “fallacious constructs?”

Will the Real Hillary Clinton Please Stand Up?

Clinton used an established playlist for her stumping events, but as her strategist Howard Wolfson lamented above, her one “official” campaign song was chosen as a result of an internet-based “Choose Our Campaign Song” Contest. Launched in March 2007, YouTube’s “YouChoose ’08” platform offered each of the seventeen presidential candidates a week in the “Spotlight” section where they could pose a question to the online community (Fig. 5-2).³⁰ Clinton used this forum to launch her contest. In a press release, she stated, “I hope people from across the country will go to my website and vote for the song they feel best represents our

²⁷ Lawrence and Rose, *Hillary Clinton’s Race for the White House*, 8.

²⁸ For more on Clinton’s gender strategy, see *Ibid.*, chap. 5.

²⁹ Kathleen Hall Jamieson, *Beyond the Double Bind: Women and Leadership* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 7.

³⁰ See Maryanne Murray Buechner, “50 Best Websites 2007,” *Time*, July 8, 2007, accessed September 26, 2011, http://www.time.com/time/specials/2007/article/0,28804,1633488_1633507_1633520,00.html; also see Minic Rivera, “YouTube Launches YouChoose ’08,” *Blog Herald*, March 1, 2007, accessed September 26, 2011, <http://www.blogherald.com/2007/03/01/youtube-launches-you-choose-08/>.

message of change and their hopes for a better America.”³¹ In addition to sending out press releases, Clinton posted three videos on her website and on YouTube to publicize her contest. In the first, a contest announcement video, Clinton asks viewers to cast a ballot for one of her nine pre-selected songs or suggest their own song with a write-in option on her campaign website (Fig. 5-3).



Figure 5-2 YouChoose '08 Candidate Channels

³¹ Hillary Clinton, "Press Release - In YouTube Video, Clinton Asks Supporters to Vote for Official Campaign Theme Song," May 16, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed August 20, 2011, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=92690#axzz1ZH58QOyk>.

Hillary for President EN ESPAÑOL

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Choose Our Campaign Song

Listen to the following nine songs and choose your favorite. Or if you have your own suggestion, write in a song and artist in the space provided.

Click the PLAY button to listen to any of the songs.

- 1** **PLAY** "City of Blinding Lights" - U2
- 2** **PLAY** "Suddenly I See" - KT Tunstall
- 3** **PLAY** "I'm a Believer" - Smash Mouth
- 4** **PLAY** "Get Ready" - The Temptations
- 5** **PLAY** "Ready to Run" - Dixie Chicks
- 6** **PLAY** "Rock This Country!" - Shania Twain
- 7** **PLAY** "Beautiful Day" - U2
- 8** **PLAY** "Right Here, Right Now" - Jesus Jones
- 9** **PLAY** "I'll Take You There" - The Staple Singers

Make Your Choice

- 1 "City of Blinding Lights" - U2
- 2 "Suddenly I See" - KT Tunstall
- 3 "I'm a Believer" - Smash Mouth
- 4 "Get Ready" - The Temptations
- 5 "Ready to Run" - Dixie Chicks
- 6 "Rock This Country!" - Shania Twain
- 7 "Beautiful Day" - U2
- 8 "Right Here, Right Now" - Jesus Jones
- 9 "I'll Take You There" - The Staple Singers

Or, enter another song title in this space.

SUBMIT YOUR VOTE

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Figure 5-3 Choose Our Campaign Song Ballot³²

The public used the Spotlight '08 forum to debate the appropriateness of individual songs and post their own video responses—these included montages dedicated to Clinton, user-generated, newly composed campaign songs, spoofs, parodies, and overdubs of Clinton's own videos. How might Clinton's campaign song contest and its pre-selected list of songs have enhanced her gender strategy? More specifically, how did her list engage with the femininity/competence double bind?

Clinton's Playlist

In considering the contents of Clinton's playlist, the Dixie Chicks are a good place to start; like Clinton, the trio's occasional disregard for convention and outspokenness has left them vulnerable to gender-based attacks. One cannot mention the Dixie Chicks without referring to lead singer Natalie Maines's March

³² *Hillary for President* website, "Campaign Song Poll," May 16, 2007, accessed September 2, 2011, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070516205941/http://www.hillaryclinton.com/action/spotlight/?sc=8>.

2003 anti-Bush rant on a London stage, which journalist Betty Clarke described as “practically punk rock.”³³ At the group’s Shepherd’s Bush Empire nightclub appearance on the eve of the Iraq War, Maines famously remarked, “[W]e don’t want this war, this violence, and we’re ashamed that the President of the United States is from Texas.” Her statement led to intense criticism and boycotts of the trio’s music by some fans and radio stations, as well as enthusiastic applause from other fans.³⁴ The Chicks demonstrated a high level of awareness with regards to the role gender (specifically preconceived ideas about what women can say and how they should speak and act) played in the vitriolic attacks that questioned their patriotism and loyalty. Rather than appearing contrite, they unapologetically responded by ironically branding themselves with the very labels that were used against them on the cover of *Entertainment Weekly* and stood their ground in subsequent television interviews (Fig. 5-4).³⁵ Later in 2006 they addressed the controversy surrounding Maines’s statement in the documentary *Shut Up and Sing*.

³³ Betty Clarke, “The Dixie Chicks, Shepherd’s Bush Empire, London,” *Guardian*, March 12, 2003, accessed September 1, 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2003/mar/12/artsfeatures.popandrock>; also see “Pop Politics Marketing the New Dixie Chicks after They Left Country,” *New York Press*, November 8, 2006, accessed October 1, 2009, <http://www.nypress.com/article-14865-pop-politics.html>.

³⁴ Gabriel Rossman, “Elites, Masses, and Media Blacklists: The Dixie Chicks Controversy,” *Social Forces* 83, no. 1 (September 2004): 61–79. Rossman’s analysis of the Dixie Chicks’ airtime before and after Maines’ remarks shows the radio stations reduced airplay in acquiescence to their audiences’ demands, and that such action did not represent a form of corporate-initiated “punishment.”

³⁵ Dixie Chicks, interview by Diane Sawyer, *Primetime*, ABC, April 24, 2003. Maines did eventually offer a formal apology to George Bush, which she later retracted.



Figure 5-4 *Entertainment Weekly*, Cover featuring the Dixie Chicks³⁶

Charles Taylor argues the backlash the Chicks faced in the wake of Maines's anti-Bush remarks cannot be solely attributed to their gender or political views, but rather to their breach of the unspoken rules that govern how country musicians should act.³⁷ (Betty Clarke did, after all, describe Maines's remarks as “practically punk rock.”) But this was not unprecedented behavior for the Texas gals. Although the Bush government's pro-war stance became the target of their ire in 2006, the

³⁶ *Entertainment Weekly*, May 2, 2003, cover, accessed July 2, 2012, <http://www.ioffer.com/i/THE-DIXIE-CHICKS-MAY-2003-AND-NOFX-APRIL-2004-MAGAZINES-2097848>.

³⁷ See Charles Taylor, “Chicks against the Machine,” *Salon*, April 2003, reprinted in David Brackett, *The Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader: Histories and Debates*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 568–76, esp. 570.

Chicks already had a history of ruffling feathers. In the song “Long Time Gone,” the Chicks turned a critical lens towards their own industry as they bemoaned what they considered the demise of contemporary country radio.³⁸ Despite their participation in a genre widely associated with a politically conservative fan base, the Dixie Chicks have shown an affinity for the less conservative strand of strong women artists such as Patsy Cline and Loretta Lynn. Although the Chicks are country artists, they stand on the liberal end of this tradition.

In addition to behaving in a manner that seems to contradict the country artist “rules,” the Chicks tend to go against the grain in their musical style as well. On several of their albums, most famously *Wide Open Spaces* (1998), *Fly* (1999), and *Home* (2002), they embrace bluegrass rather than the commercialized Nashville sound.³⁹ According to reviewer Alanna Nash, “On *Home*, which they co-produced in Austin with Lloyd Maines, the father of lead singer Natalie Maines, they strip off the star-making gloss of Nashville and get down to the meat of the matter, turning out an acoustic record that gives a big Texas howdy to bluegrass.”⁴⁰ Reviews of the Chicks’ music seldom neglect to mention the group’s rebellious nature (both politically and musically). In his review of *Fly*, Rob Sheffield notes the rarity of country bands (especially female ones) who both play and write their own material, and he commends the Chicks for “wisely doing things their own way.”⁴¹ Also speaking of *Fly*, Alanna Nash lauds the Chicks for transforming the image of country music with

³⁸ David Brackett discusses these aspects of the Chicks’ biography and music. See *Pop, Rock, and Soul Reader*, 570.

³⁹ *Wide Open Spaces* was the first album the group released under the name Dixie Chicks and recorded with Natalie Maines. Fabian Holt describes the Nashville sound as follows: “[t]he Nashville Sound style is known not only for the absence of certain traditional instruments, but also for its smooth character, created by strings; a subdued rhythmic feeling; influences from pop jazz in harmony and arrangement; and finally the overall impression of professional craft and high-quality studio sound.” See *Genre in Popular Music* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 72–73. For more on the Nashville Sound, see Joli Jensen, *The Nashville Sound: Authenticity, Commercialization, and Country Music* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1998); Diane Pecknold, *The Selling Sound: The Rise of the Country Music Industry* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), esp. chap. 5; and Richard A. Peterson, *Creating Country Music: Fabricating Authenticity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ Alanna Nash, review of *Home*, by the Dixie Chicks, Amazon, n.d., accessed July 26, 2007, <http://www.amazon.com/Home-Dixie-Chicks/dp/B00006BIMO>.

⁴¹ Rob Sheffield, review of *Fly*, by the Dixie Chicks, *Rolling Stone* 821, September 16, 1999, 115.

their eclectic mix of bluegrass, progressive country, and rock and also remarks that although themes of female empowerment are par for the course in country music, “never [have they] been conveyed by such a body of well-turned music or in-your-face conviction.”⁴²

Although the Chicks embrace an unabashedly non-conformist musical style and progressive political stance, they still maintain a politically conservative fan base.⁴³ Additionally, visual images, interviews, and biography position the Chicks as respectable, family oriented, southern girls—a star text which conforms to the conventions and ideological expectations of the genre. For example, in interviews Maines often credits her producer-father for the group’s success and describes their creative process as a collaborative, family oriented one:

My dad and I — music bonded us; we always had that in common. I got a lot of what I hear and arrange from him, and he’s a better communicator of what I hear than I am, because he can put it in technical terms. He knows the three of us have a strong sense of who we are, and that’s why it’s great when the four of us work together. It felt like family.⁴⁴

I want to check the record books and see how many fathers and daughters have won Grammys together.⁴⁵

In addition to focusing on collaboration, Maines shows deference to her father and cites his pivotal role in the trio’s creative process and ultimate success. She also suggests that male authority governs her offstage life as well. In one interview Maines remarks on her traditional view of marriage:

But now all three of us have finally found our soul mates. And I’m old-fashioned in that I believe men should be the breadwinners. I see it as a natural

⁴² Alanna Nash, review of *Fly*, by the Dixie Chicks, *Entertainment Weekly*, September 10, 1999, accessed September 16, 2009, <http://www.ew.com/ew/article/0,,270628,00.html>.

⁴³ For discussions of the Chicks’ musical style, see Elianne Halbersburg, “The Dixie Chicks Come Home to Bluegrass,” *mixonline.com*, November 1, 2002, accessed September 28, 2009, http://mixonline.com/recording/projects/audio_dixie_chicks_home/; and Nash, review of *Fly*.

⁴⁴ Halbersburg, “The Dixie Chicks Come Home.”

⁴⁵ Nekesa Mumbi Moody, “Newcomer Jones Sweeps Major Grammys,” *Daily Press*, February 24, 2003, accessed September 15, 2009, <http://www.dailypress.com/news/national/bal-grammys0223,0,3200881.story>.

instinct for a man to want to feel like he's making the way for his family. So it's all a balancing act.⁴⁶

It would seem that the Chicks' performance of southern grace and respectability and their adherence to traditional, patriarchal values in much of their offstage family life abates the rebellious image which defines them onstage, or in their public life.

Or, one might argue that the Chicks occupy a middle space that enables them to appeal to audiences across a broad ideological spectrum. The contradictory nature of their star text gives them license to negotiate multiple identities, both that of the anti-conservative rebel and the family values defender, a composite that enables them to strategically position themselves accordingly, depending on the context. As both Richard Dyer and Robert C. Allen argue, the industry constructs the star to a certain extent, but the star can also "embody in their [image] certain paradoxes or contradictions inherent in the larger social formation."⁴⁷ "Ready to Run," the song selected for Clinton's contest, embodies many of these same contradictions.

"Ready to Run" tells the story of a young woman who has reached the right age for marriage (her mother suggests she "looks good in white"). In the first verse of the song, the would-be-bride appears to be commenting on her own readiness. However, when the chorus arrives, it becomes clear that she is *not* "ready to run" *to* the aisle, but rather *from* it. Ultimately, she "buys her ticket to anywhere" and leaves the safety of parents, along with the presumed comforts and security that married life would bring, for the promise of the open road where she is free to run (Fig. 5-5).

⁴⁶ Dixie Chicks, "Dixie Chicks: They Started Out on a Street Corner and Took Country Music to the Four Corners of the Earth," by Bonnie Raitt, *Interview*, August 2002, 88, accessed September 18, 2009, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1285/is_7_32/ai_89388746/.

⁴⁷ Robert C. Allen, "The Role of the Star in Film History (Joan Crawford)," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, 5th ed., ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 560.

When the train rolls by <i>I'm gonna be ready this time</i> When the boy gets that look in his eye <i>I'm gonna be ready this time</i> When my momma says I look good in white <i>I'm gonna be ready this time</i> Oh yeah <i>Ready ready ready ready...ready to run</i> All I'm ready to do is have some fun What's all this talk about love I feel the wind blow through my hair <i>I'm gonna be ready this time</i> I'll buy a ticket to anywhere <i>I'm gonna be ready this time</i> You see it feels like I'm startin' again <i>And I'm gonna be ready this time</i>	Oh yeah <i>Ready ready ready ready...ready to run</i> All I'm ready to do is have some fun What's all this talk about love <i>I'm ready to run...I'm ready to run.</i> Oh <i>Ready ready ready ready...ready to run</i> All I'm ready to do is have some fun What's all this talk about love <i>I'm ready to run (3X)</i> <i>I'm ready to run...ready to run...oh ready to run...yeah I'm ready to run.</i> <i>I'm ready ...</i> <i>Whoa I'm ready to run...</i> <i>Ready to run...oh I'm ready run</i>
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Figure 5-5 “Ready to Run” Lyrics⁴⁸**Ready to Run**

Words and Music by Marcus Hummon and Martie Seidel

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The song's popular video draws upon dramatic shifts in visual imagery to reinforce the narrative twist, which unfolds within the song's lyrics. The video begins with an abundance of traditional marriage clichés as the gowned Dixie Chicks collectively process towards the makeshift altar assembled for their backyard triple wedding ceremony (Fig. 5-6a). Wedding guests oblige the girls with approving nods and tears; a stodgy minister and three smirking grooms await them at the end of the aisle. The *mise-en-scène* offers a picture-perfect representation of white middle-American values. However, the trio quickly sheds these signifiers of middle class values, female domesticity, and confinement as they lift their gowns to reveal running shoes. The women turn their backs on the grooms, preacher, and guests as they run back down the aisle. Instead of crossing the threshold as husbands and wives, the girls themselves rip past it and hit the open road. The renegade brides hitch a ride

⁴⁸ Marcus Hummon and Martie Seidel, “Ready to Run,” from *Fly*, Dixie Chicks, Sony B00000K29H, 1999, compact disc.

through the neighborhood courtesy of an obliging dump truck before pilfering dirt bikes from some unsuspecting boys (Fig. 5-6b & c). In each case, their vehicles of choice and bold risk-taking stunts reveal a willingness to transgress both gender roles and class boundaries.

As the trio crosses the boundary between the domestic space of the home and masculine-gendered space of the street, an American flag waves prominently in the background, perhaps to suggest female independence and self-determination may in fact be wholly patriotic and American. Moving from yard to house (ripping through a screen door), they are met with the disapproving stares of young boys and men as the grooms and wedding party trail them in hot pursuit. The chase ends with the trio jumping a fence on their bikes and landing in a neighbor's pool where they break up another couple's wedding ceremony taking place in the yard (Fig. 5-6d). Faced with the towering presence of their disapproving grooms, the Chicks assert their independence by initiating a food fight complete with a tiered wedding cake. Then, the narrative offers one final twist: tension dissipates as the Chicks, grooms, and wedding guests initiate a circle dance. This dance—a visual signifier of unity—suggests a community restored and accepting of the girls' rejection of marriage. The final frame, showing the Chicks by themselves in a circle dance and then lying in the grass, panting in complete exhaustion, suggests another celebration—that of female solidarity. The video provides narrative closure, but not through marriage.

a)



b)



c)



d)

Figure 5-6a–d “Ready to Run” Video⁴⁹

Like the song’s lyrics and accompanying video images, the music also hints towards non-conventional closure. In at least one instance, an emphatic avoidance of harmonic closure frames key words in the text. On the phrase, “what’s all this talk about love,” which marks the conclusion of the chorus, the ascending motion shared between the bass and lead vocal, combined with an accelerated harmonic rhythm, all strongly imply the imminent arrival of a tonic G chord (Ex. 5-1). While this tonic chord *does* arrive at the climax of the phrase, its sense of closure is attenuated by the vocal entries: Robison and Maguire join Maines’s vocals, adding a playful embellishment on the word “love” with an unresolved 4-(3) suspension, in effect replacing the secure closure on G offered by the harmonic progression with an unresolved dissonance. This may also have a semantic dimension, considering that the lyrics of the song reject marriage or “love” as a logical form of “closure” for a woman’s pre-domestic youth.

⁴⁹ Dixie Chicks, “Ready to Run,” dir. Evan Bernard, prod. Paul Albanese, released June 1999, music video.

21

C/E F D/F# G Gsus⁴ D

What's all this talk a-bout love? I feel the wind blow through my hair

G:IV⁶ bVII⁶ V⁶ I I⁷³ V

DbVII⁶ bIII I⁶ IV IV⁷³ I

Example 5-1 “Ready to Run” Chorus, mm. 21–24 (reduction)

Although such music-text relationships may only carry meaning for audiences at a high level of competence (those with a familiarity towards the norms of the genre), the song’s key idea of a protagonist, perhaps Clinton herself, being “ready to run” would easily be understood by those at the level of common competence. The song’s overarching structure, which relies heavily on textual repetition, reinforces the salience of the song’s central lyrical themes and especially its title. The phrases “I’m gonna be ready this time,” (on lines 2, 4, and 6 of the verses), “ready, ready, ready, ready...ready to run” (at the beginning of each chorus), and “I’m ready to run”/“I’m ready” (with some textual variance through the outro) are repeated multiple times at structurally significant points in the song, acting as a refrain of sorts (see the italicized passages in Figure 5.5 above). The arrangement of the voices in these passages gives them even greater emphasis. For example, on the phrase “ready, ready, ready, ready...ready to run,” which opens the song’s chorus, all three women sing parallel triads in tight vocal harmony with a distinct nasal timbre (Ex. 5-2). The women’s hyper-precise articulation of the melody’s brisk, almost motoric rhythm further emphasizes this text; this style of delivery strongly contrasts with the casual, relaxed style Maines adopts during the solo passages that contain the majority of the song’s narrative.



Example 5-2 “Ready to Run” Chorus, mm. 17–20

Although the first verse implies the rejection of marriage, the positional implication of the song’s key text (and its meaning) suggests the song’s focus remains on the act of “running” *to* something rather than away *from* marriage. Specific combinations of important lyrics marked by vocal harmonies substantiate this idea. The words “fun” and “anywhere” are highlighted by vocal harmony this way, perhaps situating the action of running as a desire for freedom and self-determination. Although the song’s lyrics, surface gestures, and harmonic underpinnings point towards the rejection of conventional “closure,” perhaps one of marriage, they do imply another sort of closure: in the video, images of a unified community and female solidarity replace the marriage ceremony.

Like the circle dance that concludes the video, the stylistic connotations of the song further reinforce the idea of unity. In addition to the song’s modal inflections (it is in G major, but at times feels like D mixolydian⁵⁰), lead vocalist Natalie Maines’s distinctly bluegrass-styled vocals give the song an overall folkish quality. The song also features bluegrass-styled fiddle playing, and a pennywhistle adds a Celtic-sounding countermelody (Ex. 5-3).



Example 5-3 “Ready to Run” Pennywhistle Countermelody, mm. 76–82

⁵⁰ Although the song appears to be in the key of G, G at times does not seem to function as a tonic. Rather than a D or D7 chord, C chords (IV in the key of G or bVII in D mixolydian) precede the G chords. The song’s tonal orientation sounds like D mixolydian due to frequent D – C – G harmonic motion in the accompaniment and the absence of a single functional dominant-seventh chord (A7 [V/D major] or D7 [V/G major]).

Richard Peterson suggests country artists used instruments such as the dobro, fiddle, and banjo to connect their works to earlier country music traditions.⁵¹ This trifecta of acoustic strings contributes to the song's bluegrass feel, and one might position the song's timbre as a signifier of authenticity since scholars such as Robert Cantwell have argued bluegrass to be the only truly "authentic" form of country music.⁵² More importantly, the overarching folkish quality of the song may also connote early 20th century, agrarian pre-industrial life—a period in American history historically represented as less materialistic, more rooted, and more authentic. And with this populist aesthetic, the song also taps into mythologized constructs of rural life with its unified communities. In addition to the generic connotations that point to unity on a more general level, the Chicks' performance style—Maines's assertive vocal quality and the song's tight harmonies—connotes a specifically female solidarity.

I argue that the broader themes of this song, the gender ideologies that inflect discussions of the Chicks' music and their legitimacy as well as and the inherent contradictions in their star text, resonated with some of the discourses that emerged during Clinton's campaign. Table 5-1 outlines these aspects of the group's biography, the song's traits, and their connotative potential:

⁵¹ Peterson, *Creating Country Music*, 228.

⁵² Robert Cantwell, *Bluegrass Breakdown: The Making of the Old Southern Sound* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 205.

Secondary Signification	Song traits	Connotation
Intensional values	folkish timbre (pennywhistle, banjo, modal harmony, bluegrass influence) verse-chorus-verse-chorus-chorus-outro	sincerity, rural authenticity, populism, nostalgia
Positional implications	intro and outro feature folkish counter melodies unresolved suspensions on “love” at the culmination of the choruses insistent repetition of lyrical phrases related to readiness	reinforces song’s bluegrass influence rejection of love/marriage as “closure” or a logical “ending” focus is on readiness to run; the fact that the running is from marriage is only stated in the first verse
Ideological choices	self-determination, personal freedom, defiance, breaking boundaries, forging one’s own path	gender transgression?
Emotive connotations	three women singing together, self-assured, assertive vocal delivery	female empowerment, female solidarity
Style connotations	mixing of generic signifiers, “new country,” folkish elements	evokes myths surrounding pre-industrial communities
Axiological connotations		the Dixie Chicks are a “political” group breaking of conventions

Lyrics	desire for personal freedom, self-determination, rejection of bourgeois values
Star Text	desire to move away from the commercialized Nashville sound, breaking the rules, making their own rules, outspokenness, family values, southern charm, anti-Bush
Song History	extremely popular video, banning of the group’s music on radio stations after they expressed anti-Bush sentiments, film <i>Runaway Bride</i> (1999)

Table 5-1 “Ready to Run” Secondary Signification, Star Text, Connotation

To begin with the most apparent connection to Clinton, the song protagonist’s embrace of female self-determination and her unwillingness to be confined by marriage clearly resonate with Clinton’s own history of personal struggles as she transitioned from a First Lady marred by marital scandals to a presidential candidate in her own right. Within the context of Clinton’s campaign,

the definitions of freedom and self-determination can be understood in several ways. For one, the phrase “ready to run” can indicate Clinton’s readiness to, as she put it, break through “the highest, hardest glass ceiling.”⁵³ (In interviews during the early part of her campaign, Clinton reiterated the fact that she would be “ready on day one,” so the song’s lyrics do resonate with her campaign rhetoric in a direct way.) Two, it can equally apply to Clinton’s attempts to free herself from the legacy of Bill Clinton and define herself as independently capable. In 2008 Chris Matthews took a jab at Clinton, stating, “[t]he reason she’s a US senator, the reason she’s a candidate for president, the reason she may be a front-runner is her husband messed around.”⁵⁴ Such controversy has swirled around Clinton from the very beginning. Throughout her political career, in response to her detractors, she stressed the fact that she was a legitimate public figure before her marriage, who continued to succeed on the national stage due to her own abilities. She once famously quipped, “I suppose I could have stayed home and baked cookies and had teas, but what I decided to do was to fulfill my profession which I entered before my husband was in public life.”⁵⁵ As a potential campaign anthem, this song can be understood as Clinton’s attempt to ask the public to refrain from scrutinizing her marriage, accept her as a candidate in her own right rather than dismiss her as a puppet of the patriarchy, and believe in her ability to break with tradition and “run.”

⁵³ John Nichols, “Clinton Plays the Gender Card for a Win,” *Nation*, November 16, 2007, accessed August 5, 2012, <http://www.thenation.com/blog/clinton-plays-gender-card-win#>. This article refers to Clinton’s performance in a November 15, 2007 debate in Las Vegas, Nevada.

⁵⁴ On the January 9, 2008 edition of MSNBC’s *Morning Joe*, Chris Matthews stated: “I think the Hillary appeal has always been somewhat about her mix of toughness and sympathy for her. Let’s not forget -- and I’ll be brutal -- the reason she’s a U.S. senator, the reason she’s a candidate for president, the reason she may be a front-runner is her husband messed around. That’s how she got to be senator from New York. We keep forgetting it. She didn’t win there on her merit. She won because everybody felt, ‘My God, this woman stood up under humiliation,’ right? That’s what happened. That’s how it happened. In 1998 she went to New York and campaigned for Chuck Schumer as almost like the grieving widow of absurdity, and she did it so well and courageously, but it was about the humiliation of Bill Clinton.” See Ryan Chiachiere and Julie Millican, “Matthews Suggested His Clinton Comment Was an Aberration, but He’s Been Making Similar Remarks for Years,” *Media Matters for America*, January 18, 2008, accessed July 4, 2012, <http://mediamatters.org/research/2008/01/18/matthews-suggested-his-clinton-comment-was-an-a/142229>.

⁵⁵ Hillary Clinton made these remarks during Bill Clinton’s 1992 campaign. Some interpreted her comments as an attack on homemakers. See “Making Hillary Clinton an Issue” [interview by Ted Koppel], *Nightline*, ABC, March 26, 1992, accessed July 4, 2012, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/clinton/etc/03261992.html>.

As I mentioned earlier, the video puts forward the idea of female solidarity on a visual level; the same can be said for the song's stylistic connotations, particularly where the Dixie Chicks interweave their voices in close harmonies. In 2008, the message of female solidarity came to be an important one for Clinton as women were divided on their opinion of her candidacy. According to a March 28 Harris poll, 52 percent of married women said they would *not* vote for her. In choosing a "girl group" known for their folksy, bluegrass style, rather than classic rock, perhaps Clinton intended to represent patriotism in a more gentle way and American identity in a more gender-inclusive manner. As Katherine Adam and Charles Derber have argued, voters invested in *feminized values* (support for a strong welfare state, social justice, education, and environmental protection, to name a few) became the majority by September 2007; therefore, candidates developed strategies to connect with voters (women and *men*) who adhered to these values.⁵⁶

Although at the beginning "Ready to Run" seems to be dismissive of marriage, other aspects of the song appear to temper this message. For one, the Chicks' delivery suggests a more tongue-in-cheek interpretation of the lyrics. Secondly, the warmth and playfulness established through the familiar, home grown, American sound of bluegrass make the disavowal seem socially acceptable. The generic signifiers of this populist idiom give Clinton's campaign grassroots appeal. The video, in addition to reinforcing these traits both visually and musically, ends in a celebratory manner that reinforces the acceptability of the women's choice. Images of a unified community and female solidarity replace the marital union. The song's history in other media also points to a playful, rather than militant renunciation of matrimony. Many audiences became familiar with the song through the film soundtrack to the romantic comedy *Runaway Bride*. None other than Julia Roberts, popularly considered to be "America's sweetheart," portrayed the lovable protagonist in the film.⁵⁷ Here, the Chicks' star text, specifically their off-stage life, equally

⁵⁶ Katherine Adam and Charles Derber, *The New Feminized Majority: How Democrats Can Change America with Women's Values* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2008), 6–7; 62.

⁵⁷ On Clinton's website, some supporters spent time enumerating the potential drawbacks of each selection. In regards to "Ready to Run," one wrote, "Although I really like the (new, post-country, poked dubb-yuh in the eye) Dixie Chicks, with "Keep Running" [sic] the GOP attack machine could be misuse it [sic] in so many ways: 'Keep running from the hard choices,' 'Keep running

inflects the meaning of the song—all three are happily married and have families.⁵⁸ Could the song's playful rebellion bring some levity to similar charges directed at Clinton?

Critics of Clinton and the Chicks appeared to be focused on questions of credibility, but gender-based biases inflected their conversations. With graceful humor, Clinton frequently dismissed sexist and misogynistic barbs leveled at her. In debates she often deflected the gender issue entirely. For example, in the November 15, 2007 debate in Las Vegas she claimed,

I'm not playing, as some people say, the gender card here in Las Vegas, I'm just trying to play the winning card. I understand very well that people are not attacking me because I'm a woman. They're attacking me because I'm ahead.⁵⁹

During her campaign, Clinton needed to somehow acknowledge the role gender biases played in her adversaries' attacks, but she was in a precarious position because she did not wish to be stereotyped. As Amanda Fortini argued, a Clinton speech on gender, much like Obama's nuanced "race speech" would "only serve to reinforce the sort of stereotypes she would hope to counter: the nag, the crusading feminist, the ballbuster, the know-it-all with reams of statistics at the ready."⁶⁰ In some ways, the inclusion of this song, with its playful dismissal of convention, provided the answer she could not verbalize.

Dyer conceives the star text as a "structured polysemy," where conflicting and contradictory meanings may converge and subsequently create tension, which

from responsible government,' etc. etc." This supporter and several others saw the selection of the Chicks as a jab towards Bush. Lux, May 16, 2007 (9:44 p.m.), comment on Crystal Patterson, "Cast Your Vote for Hillary's Campaign Song," *Hillary for President* website, May 16, 2007, accessed August 10, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070530183743/http://www.hillaryclinton.com/blog/view/?id=5830>

⁵⁸ Emily Robison divorced in August 2008.

⁵⁹ Patrick Healy and Jeff Zeleny, "Clinton's in Thick of Barbed Democratic Debate," *New York Times*, November 16, 2007, accessed September 29, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/16/us/politics/16debate.html?pagewanted=all>.

⁶⁰ Amanda Fortini, "The Feminist Reawakening: Hillary Clinton and the Fourth Wave," *New York Magazine*, April 13, 2008, accessed September 15, 2009, <http://nymag.com/news/features/46011/index4.html>. Obama's speech, entitled "A More Perfect Union," aired on March 18, 2008. It received 1.2 million hits on YouTube within twenty-four hours of its airing. For the complete text, see "Obama Race Speech," [formally known as, "A More Perfect Union"] *Huffington Post*, November 17, 2008, accessed August 1, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/03/18/obama-race-speech-read-th_n_92077.html.

can be highlighted or suppressed within the star's film performances.⁶¹ The Chicks' star text embodies such contradictions: the group fluidly moves between the identities of musical progressive and musical conservative, radical feminist and family girl, southern belle and southern rebel. Although the Chicks consider their music a family business and in interviews as well as in some songs foreground their identity as "family girls" (in one song Maguire and Robison even lament the pains of infertility⁶²), they equally at times challenge stereotypical notions of femininity and female appropriateness.

Ultimately, "Ready to Run," as a campaign song, showcased the tensions inherent in the identities of the Chicks *and* Clinton and responded to them by breaking down some of the gender stereotypes that defamers leveled at both. This undoubtedly had some bearing on the selection of "Ready to Run" for Clinton's contest. According to Wolfson, lyrics were not the only factor taken under consideration in her campaign team's deliberations. In the article I cited earlier, he stated,

Everyone had favorites, and every favorite had its detractors. *We studied lyrics and performer biographies.* We downloaded possibilities and listened. Some of us danced, while others sat and frowned. "Get Ready" by the Temptations? Too sexual. "Rhythm Nation" by Janet Jackson? *What about that unfortunate wardrobe malfunction.*⁶³

Clearly the artist's biography could be grounds for eliminating a song from consideration.

Instead of the more controversial Jackson song, Clinton chose another country (or country-pop-rock) song—"Rock This Country" from Shania Twain's immensely successful *Come On Over* (1997), an album that established the Canadian artist as a successful crossover act.⁶⁴ Like "Ready to Run," Twain's song features stylistic hybridization. Fiddles add hints of folk when thrown into the mix with pop-

⁶¹ Richard Dyer, *Stars* (London: British Film Institute, 1979); and *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁶² *Conceive* magazine also addressed this topic: Beth Weinhouse, "Taking the Long Way...To Motherhood," *Conceive* (Fall 2007): 58–61, 88, accessed September 13, 2009, <http://chickoholic.tripod.com/DixieChicks/id256.html>.

⁶³ Wolfson, "Campaign Playlists" (emphasis mine).

⁶⁴ Al Gore used "Rock This Country" for his 2000 campaign.

styled vocals and rock-styled guitar and drumming. The spirited exchange between the electric guitar and fiddles in the chorus of the song (each playing in the idiomatic style of their respective genres, rock and folk) suggests a musical dialogue between disparate music elements that maintain their individual character yet come together in accord. Twain's lyrics also directly explore the idea of bringing people across the country together: "Every brown-eyed boy, every blue-eyed girl"/"From Utah to Texas, Minnesota, Mississippi too. Or Nevada, no matter where you live—this buzz is for you."⁶⁵

Like some of the Chicks' songs, Twain's, according to Beverly Keel, feature "a feisty feminist attitude and a demand for equality."⁶⁶ (Her songs frequently present strong female protagonists with no-nonsense, take-charge attitudes.) Although Twain displays a feminist stance, she "lack[s] their anger and cloak[s] her themes of equality in a physical package most men [find] extremely pleasing."⁶⁷ With *Come on Over*, Twain created the best-selling album of all time for a female recording artist. Like the Dixie Chicks with "Ready to Run," several elements of Twain's "Rock this Country" and her identity as an artist resonated with some of the overarching themes of Clinton's campaign. For example, in her book *It Takes a Village*, Clinton made a point of reframing "women's issues" or feminized values as everyone's values as she garnered support in her fight for gender equality. Twain successfully carved out a place, in a historically conservative genre, for female country singers who are not only feminine or womanly, but also strong, independent minded, and successful. As Twain's biographer Dallas Williams writes, "[with Twain] a more forthright musical persona was born—Shania Twain as butt-kicking 'macho' female."⁶⁸ By adding "Rock This Country" to her campaign playlist, Clinton could tap into Twain's ability to show that a feminist sensibility need not alienate men.

⁶⁵ Shania Twain and Robert John "Mutt" Lange, "Rock This Country!" (Santa Monica: Universal Music Publishing Group, 1997).

⁶⁶ Beverly Keel, "Between Riot Grrrl and Quiet Girl: The New Women's Movement in Country Music," in *A Boy Named Sue: Gender and Country Music*, ed. Kristine M. McCusker and Diane Pecknold (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), 156.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁶⁸ Dallas Williams, *Shania Twain: On My Way* (Toronto: ECW, 1997); quoted in Keel, "Between Riot Grrrl and Quiet Girl," 166.

Like Twain, KT Tunstall has attracted diverse audiences—she also boasts a significant following in the gay community. Owing to the Scottish-born indie artist-*cum*-singer-songwriter's popular appeal, various films, television shows, and sporting events, not to mention the 2008 Obama campaign, have featured her hit song “Suddenly I See.” Audiences often compare Tunstall to artists like Bonnie Raitt, Melissa Etheridge, and Fiona Apple, and they frequently praise her quirky and idiosyncratic fusion of various musical styles and sensitive vocal delivery, as well as the psychological depth of her lyrics.

While the Dixie Chicks provided Clinton with a strategy of negotiating boundaries that relied on the play of generic conventions and the presentation of a strong female protagonist, KT Tunstall's song offered a means of challenging the socially constructed dichotomy that positions beauty as feminine and power as masculine. With rich vocals supported by an energetic guitar accompaniment, Tunstall apotheosizes the female muse who empowers her. Tunstall's resonant chest voice and her casual, confident delivery convey the nature of the serene subject she describes as “a beautiful girl” whose “face is a map of the world.” In addition to being beautiful, the subject has the ability to project beauty onto the landscape with “a silver pool of light.” While the lyrics do focus on the subject's “to-be-looked-at-ness,” to use Laura Mulvey's term, they also praise her strength and ability to empower.⁶⁹ The powerful muse, who, in the bridge Tunstall describes as a tall woman who “makes me feel like I could be a tower,” is also “calm,” “warm,” and “holds you captivated in her palm” (Fig. 5-7).

⁶⁹ Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6–18.

<p>VERSE</p> <p>Her face is a map of the world Is a map of the world You can see she's a beautiful girl She's a beautiful girl And everything around her is a silver pool of light The people who surround her feel the benefit of it It makes you calm She holds you captivated in her palm</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>Suddenly I see (Suddenly I see) This is what I wanna be Suddenly I see (Suddenly I see) Why the hell it means so much to me</p> <p>VERSE</p> <p>I feel like walking the world Like walking the world You can hear she's a beautiful girl She's a beautiful girl She fills up every corner like she's born in black and white Makes you feel warmer when you're trying to remember What you heard She likes to leave you hanging on her Word</p>	<p>CHORUS</p> <p>Suddenly I see (Suddenly I see) This is what I wanna be Suddenly I see (Suddenly I see) Why the hell it means so much to me</p> <p>BRIDGE</p> <p>And she's taller than most And she's looking at me I can see her eyes looking from a page in a magazine Oh she makes me feel like I could be a tower A big strong tower She got the power to be The power to give The power to see</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>Suddenly I see (Suddenly I see) This is what I wanna be Suddenly I see (Suddenly I see) Why the hell it means so much to me</p>
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Figure 5-7 “Suddenly I See” Lyrics⁷⁰**Suddenly I See**

Words and Music by Katie Tunstall

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In the chorus, Tunstall pairs the brief utterance “suddenly I see” with an emphatic, ascending motive that outlines a tonic D-major chord before its final arrival at the B above middle C. As she completes the last word of this utterance on the downbeat of the following measure (“see”), the backup singers repeat the same

⁷⁰ KT Tunstall, “Suddenly I See,” from *Eye to the Telescope*, Virgin Records B000DN5VJY, 2006, compact disc.

text (Ex. 5-4). Their subdued response, with its lyrical, stepwise melody in a lower range, grounds Tunstall's exuberant exclamation. However, the prominence of her utterance, afforded by both its range and punctuating high note, and the rhythmic incisiveness of the supporting instrumentals, gives the chorus an infectious energy. The speech-like range of the vocals in the chorus and its call-and-response structure make the section feel like a "musical conversation" of sorts. Incidentally, Tunstall describes her music as taking on the feel of an intimate conversation between two people: She remarks, "my songs examine and explore little specific emotions or situations or stories. . . . They're kitchen table songs, like a conversation between me and one other person. It's almost like an alien has been sent to get emotional samples from human beings and put it all together on a record."⁷¹

Lead Voc. Sud den ly I see! This is what I wan_ na be

Backup Voc. Sud den ly I see____

Lead Voc. — Sud den ly I see! Why the hell_

Backup Voc. Sud den ly I see____

Lead Voc. — it means so much to me

Backup Voc.

Example 5-4 "Suddenly I See" Chorus (vocals only), mm. 34–42

What aspects of "Suddenly I See" would have appealed to Clinton's target audience? Listeners at the level of common competence might have latched on to the catchy, singable rising triadic figure of the song's title phrase. The words

⁷¹ "KT Tunstall on NBC's Today Show Tomorrow Morning," StarPulse.com, January 19, 2006, accessed June 16, 2012, http://www.starpulse.com/news/index.php/2006/01/19/kt_tunstall_on_nbc_s_today_show_tomorrow.

“suddenly I see” might have even reminded the listeners of a Eureka moment or epiphany experienced in their own lives. Although this would have been divorced from the broader narrative context of the song and unrelated to Clinton’s campaign, it still could have worked to her benefit. As Tia DeNora has claimed, “music provides a potential map for making sense of the thing(s) to which it is attached.”⁷² In other words, exuberance, energy and optimism as conveyed by the music’s structures could extend to Clinton when the song accompanies her entrances onto the stage and ultimately prepare the audience to view her through this lens.

Listeners with popular competence who were familiar with Tunstall’s style of music and the song’s use in other media might have allowed their previous experience with the song and genre to inform their interpretation of its meaning in the present context. In these other media, “Suddenly I See” accompanies situations featuring strong women—the film *The Devil Wears Prada* showcases the talents of celebrated actresses Meryl Streep and Anne Hathaway; the reality television show *So You Think You Can Dance* associates the song with its gifted female dancers. But the song carries associations of masculine-gendered spaces as well—sports fans frequently hear the song played at arenas. Listeners might also ponder the song’s subject—an esteemed “beautiful girl,” who is caring, warm, and nurturing—and recognize the mellow timbral effects that reinforce the song’s depiction of quiet confidence.

Finally, listeners at the level of high competence might hear Tunstall’s confidently projected vocals praising a female subject and think of the song’s popular video which features the artist’s casual but commanding strut through a colorful and crazy animated cityscape that appears dwarfed by her towering presence (Fig. 5-8). They might also draw a connection between the song’s lyrics and musical signifiers and hear the song as the candidate’s attempt to forge a new paradigm for female power, one that is defined by quiet strength and compassion rather than overt force. (I will return to the narrative of care giving in Clinton’s campaign when I address the next song, “Beautiful Day.”) For Tunstall’s “beautiful girl” who in this case may represent Hillary Clinton, feminine beauty and power, or femininity and competence, are not mutually exclusive. The song’s destabilization of the “beauty is

⁷² Tia DeNora, *Music in Everyday Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 26.

feminine/power is masculine” binary provides Clinton with the opportunity to confront her own double bind within the realm of political leadership.



Figure 5-8 “Suddenly I See” Video⁷³

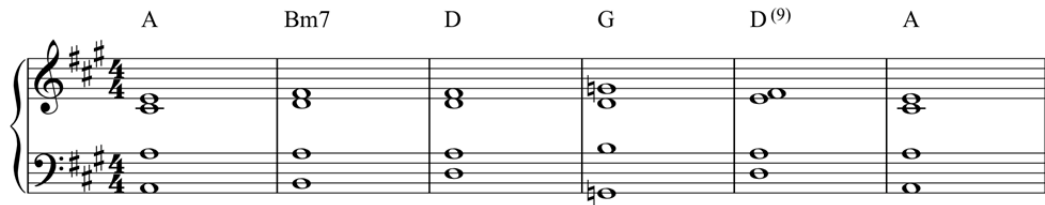
Like “Suddenly I See,” U2’s hit “Beautiful Day” frequently serves as the soundtrack for uplifting moments in various contexts. Fans often hear “Beautiful Day” and other popular songs from the U2 songbook at sporting events, and presidential candidates frequently include their music at rallies: some recent popular choices include “Beautiful Day” (John Kerry), “Pride (In the Name of Love)” John Edwards, and “City of Blinding Lights” (Barack Obama). And fans often get to hear “Beautiful Day” live: U2 has performed the song at all of their concerts since the 2001 Elevation Tour.

“Beautiful Day” features a quick, repeated six-chord harmonic progression played by string instruments and a pulsating eighth-note bass drum, which mimics the rhythm of a mildly energized heartbeat.⁷⁴ The bass guitar plays a rapid string of

⁷³ KT Tunstall, “Suddenly I See,” dir. Honey, prod. Billy Parks and Jeff Pantaleo, aired October 2006, music video. The artist created three videos for this song.

⁷⁴ Films, television shows, sporting events, and other presidential candidates have made use of this song, as well as the other U2 song on Clinton’s playlist, “City of Blinding Lights.” In 2001, “Beautiful Day” earned U2 three Grammy Awards: Song of the Year, Record of the Year, and

eighth notes as layers of synthesized sounds and short bursts of highly reverberant sustained vocal passages fade in and out of the mix. These effects combine to create a lightly upbeat yet hypnotic feel throughout the song's verses. A similar "wash of sound" effect permeates the choruses, although a higher vocal tessitura, increased percussion, more persistent backup vocals, and a "classic" rock style of guitar playing give these sections a more energetic feel.



Example 5-5 "Beautiful Day" progression (reduction)

The dynamism of the music complements the song's thematic content, which, in essence, is about gaining perspective and remaining optimistic in the face of adversity (Fig. 5-9). The lyrics present the idea of renewal by drawing on two signifiers: "a bloom" and the presence of a "bird with a leaf in her mouth" (in reference to the renewal of life after the biblical flood). In addition to citing these organic or "natural" entities, the lyrics also make reference to elements associated with technology, such as oil fields and fire—though fire can, of course, be associated with renewal as well. These groups can similarly be divided into elements of the natural versus manmade worlds. With the exception of the reference to oil fields, the lyrics seem divorced from materiality, an idea that the music supports with its static harmony and ostinato, which create a circular effect suggesting timelessness. However, the insertion of *musique concrète*—sounds of jet engines and the whirring of an alarm—calls this musical "timelessness" into question. The synthesized sounds and other aspects of the song's production, such as the reverberation effect added to the vocals, reveal the imprint of music technologies, just as the reference to "oil fields" calls into question the non-materiality of the lyrics.

The song's empathic narrator acknowledges the personal hardship of the addressee, but at the same time, encourages him/her to take a step back and recognize beauty in an imperfect world. In the verses, a subdued volume, close miking of the voice, and the direct second-person address of the lyrics establish a sense of intimacy and proximity between the narrator and the addressee. However, this intimacy dissipates in the chorus where a higher vocal tessitura, the addition of backing vocals, and heavy reverberation suggest that the narrator directs his pronouncements to a collective.

<p>VERSE</p> <p>The heart is a bloom, shoots up through stony ground But there's no room, no space to rent in this town You're out of luck and the reason that you had to care The traffic is stuck and you're not movin' anywhere You thought you'd found a friend to take you out of this place Someone you could lend a hand in return for grace</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>It's a beautiful day, The sky falls and you feel like It's a beautiful day, Don't let it get away</p> <p>Verse</p> <p>You're on the road but you've got no destination You're in the mud, in the maze of her imagination You love this town even if that doesn't ring true You've been all over and it's been all over you</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>It's a beautiful day, Don't let it get away It's a beautiful day,</p> <p>INTERJECTION ONE</p> <p><i>Touch me, take me to that other place</i> <i>Teach me love, I know I'm not a hopeless case</i></p>	<p>BRIDGE</p> <p>See the world in green and blue See China right in front of you See the canyons broken by cloud See the tuna fleets clearing the sea out See the Bedouin fires at night See the oil fields at first light See the bird with a leaf in her mouth After the flood all the colours came out</p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p>It was a beautiful day Don't let it get away A beautiful day</p> <p>INTERJECTION TWO</p> <p><i>Touch me, take me to that other place</i> <i>Reach me, I know I'm not a hopeless case</i></p> <p>OUTRO</p> <p>What you don't have you don't need it now What you don't know you can feel it somehow What you don't have you don't need it now Don't need it now It was a beautiful day</p>
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Figure 5-9 “Beautiful Day” Lyrics⁷⁵**Beautiful Day**

Words by Bono

Music by U2

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⁷⁵ U2, “Beautiful Day,” from *All That You Can't Leave Behind*, Interscope, B00004Z0LW, 2000, compact disc.

The song's form slightly deviates from that of a typical rock song (verse-chorus-bridge). For one, the outro features new melodic material, but more importantly, two interjections appear to “disrupt” the conventional form (Fig. 5-9, italicized passages). Beginning with the text “Touch me, take me...,” the first occurs immediately before the bridge; the second occurs between the final statement of the chorus and the outro. During these interjections the addressee “speaks;” he/she calls on the distant and divine narrator for guidance and intercession. A thickening of the instrumental texture, a chord substitution in the ostinato (an F#m chord replaces the expected Bm7), and a marked change in vocal timbre (which features Bono singing with extremely pressed phonation and then a thin falsetto at the top end of his vocal range) reinforce this shift in narrative voice (Ex. 5-6). The passages of the song where Bono unleashes his more powerful vocals are, ironically, the passages where he assumes the narrative stance of the disempowered. Perhaps this shift implies the disempowered can be transformed into powerful speaking subjects when an intercessor intervenes on their behalf.

Teach me. take me to that oth-er place.

Teach me yeah. I know I'm not a hope-less case.

Example 5-6 “Beautiful Day” Interjection One, mm. 65–72

The song's video explores some of these same themes. Set in a cavernous airport with ultramodern architecture, the environment depicted in the video dwarfs the travelers that mill in and out; they seem insignificant (Fig. 5-10a & b). The opening shows Bono down on his luck—he misses his car and his plane and then circles aimlessly in slow motion behind the glass of a revolving door; he is caught in an endless cycle. The song's ostinato described above reinforces this idea, which the opening lyrics also suggest. But then, a series of human interactions serve as a strong juxtaposition to the scene's sterile backdrop and the singer's string of misfortunes experienced within it. Bono bonds with members of the band over coffee, he shares an apple with a fellow traveler, and he witnesses the passionate kiss of an attractive

young couple (Fig. 5-10c & d). The music plays on this same juxtaposition: On the one hand, we have the imprint of technology—reverberant synthesized sounds evoking the aura of an impersonal, grandiose space, and *musique concrète*, which reminds the listless traveler of the ubiquitous presence of technology and its potential alienating effects (Fig. 5-10e). On the other hand, we have Bono’s sensual, perhaps even erotic voice and intimate delivery of a text that focuses on human connection, empathy, and renewed hope.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ For more on Bono’s vocal style and expression in U2’s music, see Susan Fast, “Music, Contexts, and Meaning in U2,” in *Expression in Pop-Rock Music: A Collection of Critical and Analytical Essays*, ed. Walter Everett, 2nd ed., 175–97 (New York: Routledge, 2008).

a)



b)



c)



d)



e)



Figure 5-10a-e “Beautiful Day” Video⁷⁷

This song also addresses an apparent dichotomy—nature versus technology—and suggests both can coexist harmoniously. As Sherry Ortner’s work suggests, there have long been associations between nature and the feminine, and between technology (or culture) and the masculine, so it is likely that the song implies not only a reconciliation between nature and technology, but also the gendered traits historically projected onto them.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ U2, “Beautiful Day,” dir. Jonas Akerlund, prod. Philippe Dupuis-Mendel, aired September 8, 2000, music video.

⁷⁸ Cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner was the first to theorize this dichotomy. In her view,

Whereas “Ready to Run” provides a specifically female narrative of reinvention and the narrator of “Suddenly I See” contemplates the beauty of a female muse (women praising women), “Beautiful Day” maintains gender neutrality. How might the particular sonic qualities and thematic ideas explored in “Beautiful Day” engage with Clinton’s other efforts to shape her image as presidential candidate? Table 5-2 summarizes the features of “Beautiful Day” that are most relevant to Clinton’s campaign strategy.

Secondary Signification	Song Traits	Connotation
Intensional values	static harmony, ostinato, drum machine, <i>musique concrète</i> , synthesizers alternates between establishing closeness and distance between the narrator and addressee by use of close miking and reverberation	timelessness, conspicuous use of technology cultural tension between nature and technology
Positional implications	“interjections” of the implied listener in an otherwise standard pop song form	dialogic
Emotive connotations	static harmony, ostinato, continuously pulsating rhythm	serene, contemplative, hypnotic
Style connotations	rock with strong pop influence	
Axiological connotations		social activism, progressivism, care ethics

Lyrics	spiritual renewal, natural beauty, human compassion
Star Text	Irish roots, narrative of reinvention, progressivism, political activism, global popularity
Song History	frequent use in campaigns and at sporting events, including the Olympics, associations with competition, perseverance, triumph, and global community

Table 5-2 “Beautiful Day” Secondary Signification, Star Text, Connotation

culture is equated with the products of human consciousness; these include systems of thought and technology. In order for culture to assert itself, it must render itself distinct from nature. Although women may participate in the processes of culture, which are symbolically associated with men, they are viewed as being rooted in nature. Therefore, in order for culture to be sustained, nature (woman) must be controlled. See Sherry B. Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?” *Feminist Studies* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1972): 5–31.

To begin, the timbral and textural effects described above create an aura of calmness and steadiness, essentially the kind of leadership traits Clinton wished to project. But more importantly, due to its frequent use in stadiums, “Beautiful Day” brings with it a web of associations related to national and international sporting events. These spectacles bring large, disparate communities together into a single space where they demonstrate their allegiance to athlete, team, or country; such actions carry with them a sense of pride and positive energy. With their young athletes, cheering fans, and pageantry, these events exude vitality, optimism, renewed hope, and the potential for triumph over adversity. Critics have frequently located these sentiments with U2’s music in general: for example, Elysa Gardner argues U2’s music stresses “communion over segregation, compassion over blame, hope over despair.”⁷⁹ As one fan commenting on “Beautiful Day” as a campaign song for Clinton eloquently observed, “‘The heart is a bloom/shoots up through the stony ground’ is the perfect lyric for a battered world superpower, starting a new era, with the person who would be the most powerful woman in the history of the planet leading the way. You need a huge song for an idea that huge.”⁸⁰ Ultimately, “Beautiful Day” gives Clinton a greater chance of reassuring the public that “she is not too hardened to inspire, or too wary to truly lead.”⁸¹

Although the style connotations I consider above may only be pertinent to listeners with high competence, two aspects of the band’s star text—their history of engagement with humanitarian causes and “care ethics,” and the presence of “reinvention” narratives in discourses surrounding their creative output—may hold relevance for those with popular competence. First, humanitarian themes pervade the band’s music and a humanitarian ethos guides the band’s offstage life as well. Bono has led fundraising and awareness raising campaigns for issues such as poverty

⁷⁹ Cited in Fast, “Music, Contexts, and Meaning,” 191.

⁸⁰ Posted by LyricalDrug, May 24, 2007 (11:00 p.m.), comment on “Hillary Clinton’s Campaign Song,” u2interference.com [U2 Fanzine], May 24, 2007, accessed September 10, 2011, <http://u2.interference.com/f288/merged-hillarys-clintons-campaign-song-176602.html>.

⁸¹ Mark Leibovich, “Clinton Proudly Talks of Scars While Keeping Her Guard Up,” *New York Times*, December 9, 2007, accessed September 10, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/09/us/politics/09clinton.html?pagewanted=all>.

and debt relief for over two decades.⁸² During the campaign, Clinton wished to highlight this aspect of her own biography. In several campaign films, strategists downplayed Clinton's role as First Lady and instead emphasized her lifelong engagement in human rights advocacy, education for women, and national healthcare. Campaign strategists foregrounded Clinton's capacity for nurturing, or, her feminine side, in order to counter the public's perception of her as a power-hungry, cold, out-of touch, Washington elitist. And, since the act of nurturing transcends partisanship, drawing attention to Clinton's capacity for this truly human instinct was unlikely to compromise the public's perception of her competency.

Jennifer McClinton-Temple and Abigail Myers go so far as to argue that the band philosophically is feminist and that their music shows evidence of this in its articulation of "care ethics," an ideological orientation where the adherent makes moral decisions based on the particulars of a relationship, rather than "rules, laws, and universal principles of justice."⁸³ Although positing a feminist reading of the band's oeuvre may be a bit of a stretch, care ethics do pervade much of the band's music and their offstage activism. In a speech at Harvard University, Clinton proffered a similar worldview:

When I am talking about *It Takes a Village*, I'm obviously not talking just about or even primarily about geographical villages any longer, but about the network of *relationships* and *values* that do connect us and bind us together."⁸⁴

Here Clinton urges her supports to consider the "network of relationships and values" at hand before deciding whether or not to take action. Clinton's book *It Takes a Village* (the title taken from an African proverb) "offers a powerful feminized message not just for raising children but also for remaking America."⁸⁵ In it, she argues feminized values are for everyone: "What's best for children . . . is for parents

⁸² For more on U2's care ethics, see Jennifer McClinton-Temple and Abigail Myers, "U2, Feminism, and Ethics of Care," in *U2 and Philosophy: How to Decipher an Atomic Band*, Popular Culture and Philosophy, vol. 21, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (Chicago: Open Court, 2006), 109–22.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸⁴ Hillary Clinton (speech, Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA, October 4, 1996). See Hillary Rodham Clinton, *It Takes a Village: And Other Lessons Children Teach Us* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996)

⁸⁵ Adam and Derber, *New Feminized Majority*, 160.

to be open-minded and transcend traditional gender roles to create a more humane, caring, and egalitarian society.”⁸⁶ U2’s political ideologies and humanitarianism, with their undertones of Christian theology, are often revealed in the band’s lyric content, which shows the imprint of the same kind of care ethics that inform Clinton’s campaign platform (again, what Adam and Derber refer to as “feminized values”⁸⁷).

This brings us to a second aspect of U2’s star text: the idea that the band constantly reinvents its musical and performance style, a narrative that consistently runs through journalistic and critical discourse. In reference to the album *No Line on the Horizon* (2009), Josh Hurst describes U2 as “a band closely associated with the idea of reinvention ever since their landmark makeover *Achtung Baby* [1991].”⁸⁸ Similarly, in reference to *All That You Can’t Leave Behind* (2000), Brian Hiatt writes, “Energized by a restless need for reinvention, creative tensions and a mind-opening journey to Morocco, the world’s biggest band returns with its most adventurous album since *Achtung Baby*.”⁸⁹ The narrative of reinvention also functions as a larger trope in the creative history of the artist Bono, who “thoughtfully explores . . . the nature of his identity, the substance of his art, and the social responsibility of a politically engaged rock star.”⁹⁰ The narrative of renewal or reinvention in “Beautiful Day” and its importance in U2’s career resonates with Clinton’s own personal narrative or “political” reinvention from president’s wife to presidential candidate.

And, one could argue Clinton begins by reinventing the campaign playlist. Whereas the majority of former presidential candidates primarily relied on the music of American artists, Clinton featured artists of various nationalities—U2 are Irish, KT Tunstall is Scottish, Jesus Jones are British, Shania Twain is Canadian and so is

⁸⁶ Hillary Clinton, *It Takes a Village* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 203. Quoted in Adam and Derber, *New Feminized Majority*, 160.

⁸⁷ Adam and Derber, *New Feminized Majority*, 4–12.

⁸⁸ Josh Hurst, “U2: ‘No Line on the Horizon,’” *Hurst Review*, March 3, 2009, accessed July 13, 2010, <http://thehurstreview.wordpress.com/2009/03/03/u2-no-line-on-the-horizon/>.

⁸⁹ Brian Hiatt, “The Gospel of U2,” *Rolling Stone*, 2009, 50.

⁹⁰ Kerry Soper, “The Importance of Being Bono: The Philosophy and Politics of Identity in the Lyrics and Personae of U2’s Frontman,” in *U2 and Philosophy: How to Decipher an Atomic Band*, *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, vol. 21, ed. Mark A. Wrathall (Chicago: Open Court, 2006), 55.

Celine Dion, the artist whose song the public selected as winner. (Clinton *did* receive some flak for not having an “American enough” playlist.) Additionally, her ballot included two solo female artists (Shania Twain and KT Tunstall) and one group that included some women singers (The Staple Singers). With the Dixie Chicks, Clinton (from what I can tell) was the first serious contender to feature the music of an all-girl group in a presidential campaign. She also selected the music of two black groups, The Temptations and the above-mentioned Staple Singers. Diverse in its composition, the list showcases the genres pop-country, pop, rock, R&B, singer-songwriter, and gospel, and many of the artists can be identified with more than one genre. Although she draws from the canon of well-established pop classics with songs such as “I’m a Believer,” she does not neglect to include contemporary hits such as “Suddenly I See.” While Clinton’s playlist embraces female empowerment, self-determination, and strength, it concurrently thematizes humanitarianism, an appreciation for nature, hope, social harmony, caregiving, and female solidarity. And with these selections, Clinton responds to the public’s desire for a departure from what one journalist called “the bullying and bellicosity of the Bush administration [which had] left many Americans exhausted and yearning for a more nurturing and inclusive style.”⁹¹ At the same time, Clinton’s list explores reinvention, renewal, quiet strength, and vitality, all narratives or traits she wished to project onto her candidacy. On the whole, Clinton’s list offers voters a glimpse into what they might expect from the Clinton administration, but also models for the voter ways of being and modes of thinking that are compatible with her own political and ideological orientation.

Choose Our Campaign Song

Voters heard some of the above selections and many others at Clinton’s campaign rallies and appearances, but she also used YouTube as a platform to engage voters with her music, and by extension, her campaign. In April 2007,

⁹¹ For more on gender and leadership styles, see Maureen Dowd, “¿Quién Es Less Macho?” *New York Times*, February 4, 2008, accessed October 3, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/02/24/opinion/24dowd.html?_r=3&scp=36&sq=maureen+dowd&st=nyt&oref=slogin&oref=slogin. For more on Obama’s feminized leadership style, see Marie Wilson, “Leading Like a Girl: For Men Only,” *Huffington Post*, April 15, 2008, accessed October 3, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/marie-wilson/leading-like-a-girl-for-m_b_96753.html; and on Obama and Clinton’s leadership styles, see Michael Scherer, “Hillary is from Mars, Obama is from Venus,” *Salon*, July 12, 2007, accessed May 20, 2011, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/07/12/obama_hillary/.

YouTube launched Spotlight as the second phase of their YouChoose '08 platform. Spotlight offered each candidate a week in the featured section of the site's News & Politics page. Through this page candidates could pose a question to the YouTube community via video, monitor video replies, and then post a second video to comment on the community's responses.⁹² Clinton's week in the Spotlight began on May 16, 2007, and rather than embracing the opportunity to pose a question related to social issues or policy, Clinton sought an answer to the problem that plagued her campaign team: What should our campaign song be? In a press release on that same day, Clinton made the following statement:

I hope people from across the country will go to my website and vote for the song they feel best represents our message of change and their hopes for a better America.⁹³

The contest format, indeed a strategic move, accomplished two important tasks: one, her video announcements foregrounded the more personable demeanor she cultivated during the primaries; two, it utilized YouTube, and therefore precipitated an online social exchange between Clinton and a broader audience. Giving credence to YouTube Insights project manager Tracy Chan's claim that "YouTube is becoming the world's biggest focus group," Clinton used the site to establish a new way of bringing "her music" (and the values encoded in it) to large numbers of people and to cement the connection between her image and playlist.⁹⁴

⁹² "Introducing the YouTube '08 Spotlight," uploaded by citizentube, April 11, 2007, accessed July 16, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oBYdDZX5aoU>.

⁹³ Hillary Clinton, "Press Release - In YouTube Video, Clinton Asks Supporters to Vote for Official Campaign Theme Song," May 16, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed August 20, 2011, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=92690#axzz1ZH58QOyk>.

"Insights" is a statistical feature that allows any user to access information about the demographics of the users that have accessed their video on YouTube. The ability to gauge not only the number of viewers, but also information about age, gender, and geographic region allows advertisers or individuals (or campaign strategists) to develop successful marketing strategies.

⁹⁴ Michelle Quinn, "YouTube Applies Science to the Art of Viral Marketing," *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 2008, accessed September 10, 2009, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/technology/2008/06/youtube-puts-de.html>.

Ultimately the voters, through their choice of song, could decide “which Hillary” would be their candidate.⁹⁵

In granting the public the power to choose *how* her sonic identity was constructed, Clinton established a bond between herself and the voter. Bonds like this one, established through mediated dialogues (the contest format demands a response), are integral to successful campaigns in the postmodern world. Furthermore, strategists used the contest and its accompanying videos to fashion a more hip, personable candidate who forged a pact of intimacy with the voter through her willingness to delegate to them the responsibility to answer “one of the most important questions of [the] campaign. What should *our* campaign song be?” Clinton’s performance in her contest announcement video shows the same relational manner of speaking she demonstrated in the YouTube video where she announced the formation of an exploratory committee for her presidential bid. In that video she stated, “I’m not just starting a campaign, though, I’m beginning a conversation—with you, with America. Because we all need to be part of the discussion if we’re all going to be part of the solution. And all of us have to be part of the solution.”⁹⁶

In both videos, Clinton makes use of terms such as “our,” “us,” and “we,” thus establishing commonality of purpose between herself and the voter. The mediated proximity established by the contest video’s close-up footage of Clinton enhances the feeling of intimacy between the candidate and the viewer participating in the “conversation.”⁹⁷ As Paul Messaris has argued, such shots can “[render] the

⁹⁵ Clinton posted these songs and a ballot on her website. Voters were also allowed “write in” choices. See Chuck Todd, “Voter’s Pick Hillary Clinton’s Campaign Song,” *MSN*, May 16, 2007, accessed July 23, 2009, <http://firstread.msnbc.msn.com/archive/2007/05/16/193575.aspx>.

⁹⁶ Video Transcript, [Hillary Clinton] Presidential Exploratory Committee Announcement, 4president.org, January 20, 2007, accessed July 9, 2010, <http://www.4president.org/speeches/hillary2008announcement.htm>. For Clinton’s three “Let the Conversation Begin” videos, see *Hillary for President* website, Hillary TV, January 22–24, 2007, accessed August 4, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070516191527/http://www.hillaryclinton.com/video/>.

⁹⁷ Clinton’s press releases also emphasized the candidate’s desire to participate in a conversation with voters: “‘By utilizing the Web in unique ways, we can continue our conversation with voters and reach thousands of Americans every day,’ said Clinton Campaign Internet Director Peter Daou. . . . As she kicked off her campaign, Hillary vowed to hold a conversation with voters online, announcing her candidacy in a web video and holding live web chats with voters across the country. Since then, she’s continued the conversation, posting regular HillCast web videos on her policy proposals and participating in an online town hall with MoveOn.org.” See Hillary Clinton,

mediation virtually invisible.”⁹⁸ By May 21, Clinton’s “I Need Your Advice” contest video received over 550,000 views, and over 100,000 potential voters cast a ballot for a song on her campaign website.⁹⁹ Peter Daou proclaimed the contest a success, stating, “[o]ur song competition has generated an incredible amount of energy and excitement online.”¹⁰⁰

Clinton released a second Spotlight video on May 24 in order to update the public on the contest’s progress. In a press release, she expresses her delight in the voting community’s enthusiastic response to her request, stating,

I turned to the American people for help in picking my campaign song, and they haven’t disappointed. . . . From the off-beat to the brilliant, I’m excited that so many people have chosen to offer their suggestions and engage with our campaign online.¹⁰¹

“Press Release - Over 550,000 View Clinton Campaign Song Competition Video; Over 100,000 Cast Votes,” May 21, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed November 11, 2011, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=92078>.

Clinton’s campaign team emphasized this angle in the publicity surrounding several of her other campaign initiatives as well. For Women’s History Month in March 2007 she launched the “I Can Be President” online campaign, which encouraged women to “share their stories of why Hillary’s campaign is so important to each of them.” (See Hillary Clinton, “Press Release - Women for Hillary: ‘Let’s Make History!’” March 6, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed November 17, 2011, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=96354>).

⁹⁸ Paul Messaris, *Visual “Literacy”: Image, Mind, and Reality* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1994), 32–33. Quoted in Shawn J. Parry-Giles, “Mediating Hillary Rodham Clinton: Television News Practices and Image-Making in the Postmodern Age,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 17, no. 2 (2000): 216.

⁹⁹ Hillary Clinton, “Press Release – “Over 550,000 View Clinton Campaign Song Competition Video; Over 100,000 Cast Votes,” May 21, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed November 17, 2011, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=92078#ixzz1eCu8zAwy>. Also see the earlier release: “Press Release - Clinton Campaign Song Competition Draws Huge Online Response,” May 18, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed November 17, 2011, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=92320&st=campaign+song&stl=#ixzz1eD2mDTV8>. The two releases essentially have the same content, but the number of votes and views increases with the May 21st release.

¹⁰⁰ Clinton, “Press Release - Over 550,000 View Clinton,” May 21, 2007.

¹⁰¹ Hillary Clinton, “Press Release - NEW YouTube Video: Clinton Asks Supporters to Vote in Final Round of Campaign Song Contest,” May 24, 2007. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project, accessed November 17, 2011,

Now with a bit of Lenny Kravitz and Tina Turner thrown in, the release reveals the top write-in suggestions and first-round winners, and it encourages voters to go to Clinton's website a second time to cast their votes for the final selection (Fig. 5-11).

Hillary for President EN ESPAÑOL

SIGN UP email zip GO

HOME HILLARY ISSUES TAKE ACTION NEWSROOM BLOG VIDEO STATES CONTRIBUTE

Choose Our Campaign Song: Round 2

We've narrowed down the field based on your votes and added some of your great suggestions. Make your choice in our final round and sign up to be the first to know our official campaign song!

Click the PLAY button to listen to any of the songs.

Round One Winners

- 1 **PLAY** "Suddenly I See" - KT Tunstall
- 2 **PLAY** "Rock This Country!" - Shania Twain
- 3 **PLAY** "Beautiful Day" - U2
- 4 **PLAY** "Get Ready" - The Temptations
- 5 **PLAY** "I'm a Believer" - Smash Mouth

Top Write-Ins

- 6 **PLAY** "Are You Gonna Go My Way" - Lenny Kravitz
- 7 **PLAY** "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" - McFadden & Whitehead
- 8 **PLAY** "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic" - The Police
- 9 **PLAY** "You and I" - Celine Dion
- 10 **PLAY** "The Best" - Tina Turner

Make Your Choice

- 1 "Suddenly I See" - KT Tunstall
- 2 "Rock This Country!" - Shania Twain
- 3 "Beautiful Day" - U2
- 4 "Get Ready" - The Temptations
- 5 "I'm a Believer" - Smash Mouth
- 6 "Are You Gonna Go My Way" - Lenny Kravitz
- 7 "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" - McFadden & Whitehead
- 8 "Every Little Thing She Does Is Magic" - The Police
- 9 "You and I" - Celine Dion
- 10 "The Best" - Tina Turner

E-mail Address

Zip Code

SUBMIT YOUR VOTE

[Click here to watch the video](#)

Paid for by Hillary Clinton for President Exploratory Committee Terms of Service Privacy Policy Contact Us

Figure 5-11 Choose Our Campaign Song: Round 2 Ballot¹⁰²

But what can be said about Clinton's *performance* in the videos? As noted by Janis Edwards with regards to campaign films,¹⁰³ Clinton humanizes herself by

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=93017&st=campaign+song&stl=#axzz1YtzVZbT4>.

¹⁰² Hillary for President website, "Song Contest: Final Round," [May 24, 2012], accessed August 10, 2012,

<http://web.archive.org/web/20070530183843/http://www.hillaryclinton.com/action/spotlight/?sc=8>.

adopting a “social style,” which Karrin Vasby Anderson describes as “the constraint of conforming to the norms of femininity while, at the same time, developing a tacit ability to employ femininity in order to achieve political agency.”¹⁰⁴ The warm and personal demeanor she displays in her contest videos (and in her musical choices) sharply contrasts with the assertive tone and fact-driven content of her speeches. The contest videos demonstrate Clinton’s “social style” of leadership, and the playfulness of her delivery and her self-deprecating remarks mask the political content behind it.

The YouTube forum affords Clinton a space where she can safely reveal her warmer, perhaps even playful, feminine side, as well as her vulnerability. Towards the end, the contest announcement video includes footage of Clinton singing the National Anthem extremely out of tune at an Iowa event.¹⁰⁵ (Those doyens of undiscovered American Idol talent, Paula Abdul and Randy Jackson would probably describe her performance as “pitchy.”) Clinton’s tongue-in-cheek delivery of the announcement and the footage of her lackluster singing performance, a self-conscious appropriation of reality television rhetoric, portray her as both hip and media savvy. While at least in my view, the video’s engagement with popular culture comes across as contrived, it also humanizes Clinton—she demonstrates an awareness of the criticisms leveled against her, and she reveals her vulnerability with the embarrassing confession that she cannot sing. She also invites her fans (and detractors) to go ahead and share a laugh with her (or at her expense).

Supporters active on Clinton’s campaign website applauded her confession as a “brilliant move” and agreed that humor would work in her favor.¹⁰⁶ One fan wrote: “GREAT VIDEO! That self-deprecating humor is what will bring down your

¹⁰³ Edwards, “Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double Bind,” 167–68.

¹⁰⁴ Karrin Vasby Anderson and Kristina Horn Sheeler, *Governing Codes: Gender, Metaphor, and Political Identity*, Lexington Studies in Political Communication (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 25.

¹⁰⁵ For footage of this event, see “Hillary Clinton sings National Anthem,” uploaded by gohillary08org, April 24, 2007, accessed August 10, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQYIHQvhIk0>.

¹⁰⁶ f4881, May 16, 2007 (8:02 p.m.), comment on Crystal Patterson, “Cast Your Vote for Hillary’s Campaign Song,” *Hillary for President* website, May 16, 2007, accessed August 4, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070530183743/http://www.hillaryclinton.com/blog/view/?id=5830>

negatives and bring up your favorable [sic]¹⁰⁷ Another saw Clinton's video as the candidate's way of criticizing those who insisted on making news out of the trivial, a candidate's singing voice: "Your 'clip' [of Clinton singing the National Anthem] is exactly what you have to do to turn the tables on all the silly stuff that passes for what is important in a presidential race."¹⁰⁸ Clinton's confession allows her to establish what Shawn Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry Giles call a "pact of intimacy" with the voter, a necessary component of campaigns in the postmodern world where "voters [are] accustomed to a televisual diet of intimacy and personal display."¹⁰⁹ However, the vulnerability she displays in this forum poses no threat to the public's perception of her competency in the political realm. At the same time, Clinton's performance relies on three rhetorical strategies that Campbell aligns with a feminine style of rhetoric: personal experience (footage of her own singing), personal tone (making eye contact with the camera, she calls on the viewer directly to help her with a personal problem), and audience participation (she creates a reality show-like context where the audience is compelled to respond).¹¹⁰ In doing so, Clinton taps into the contemporary fascination with reality television pop music contests, which Ken McLeod argues "reinforce the need to dominate and eliminate one's competition in much the same manner as in competitive sports."¹¹¹

In her update video, Clinton intersperses video footage of nominated songs posted by the online community with her own commentary. Some of the footage includes Bikini Kill's video for "Rebel Girl," three middle-aged women singing "Hillary Clinton is Our Candidate" to the tune of "Sixteen Going on Seventeen"

¹⁰⁷ ryanjones, May 16, 2007 (5:52 p.m.). Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ marj, May 16, 2007 (6:06 p.m.). Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Shawn J. Parry-Giles and Trevor Parry-Giles, *Constructing Clinton: Hyperreality & Presidential Image-Making in Postmodern Politics* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002), 28; quoted in Edwards, "Traversing the Wife-Candidate Double Bind, 171; n.b. the Parry-Giles' book addresses Bill Clinton's candidacy, *not* Hillary's.

¹¹⁰ Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak For Her* (New York: Greenwood, 1989), 13. For an application of Campbell's approach to the case study of a female politician, see Bonnie J. Dow and Mari Boor Tonn, "'Feminine Style' and Political Judgment in the Rhetoric of Ann Richards," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79 (1993): 286–302.

¹¹¹ Ken McLeod, *We Are the Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music* (Farnham, Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 115.

from *The Sound of Music*, a man lip-syncing to the music of Tiny Tim, and a man hip-hop dancing to “Super Freak,” among others.¹¹² Here Clinton appears relaxed, warm, and funny. After she thanks her supporters for casting their ballots, the video shows footage of people mocking her efforts to solicit their opinions, before she alludes to them with coy indifference:

Clinton: Oh, anyway, I am so gratified that all of you thought this was such a wonderful idea.

Responses: #1:...This is ridiculous
#2....insulting
#3....stupid
#4....disappointing
#5....are you freaking kidding me.

Clinton: Thank you for all your help, well, most of you.¹¹³

Once again Clinton encourages her supporters to laugh along with the absurdity.

And laugh they did. One supporter writes,

This latest video of Hillary discussing the songs that were choosen [sic] (no not those) and made it to the second round was absolutely ingenious!! I was laughing so hard while watching this video. It is really great how they incorporated YouTube videos and people insulting this little contest. It really shows her down to earth and lighthearted side. WAY TO GO HILLARY...this video is a winner!!!!¹¹⁴

This supporter, like many others, applauds Clinton’s engagement with popular culture and cites it as a factor that “shows her down-to-earth and lighthearted side.”

Clinton’s third offering, the contest closure video which sets up the announcement for the winning song, follows the narrative arc (and even appropriates some of the actual dialogue) of the last few minutes of *The Sopranos* series finale (Fig 5-12a & b).¹¹⁵ Like Tony Soprano, Clinton comes into a diner, takes a seat, and

¹¹² “Pick My Campaign Song: Round Two – Uncensored,” uploaded by SpkTruth2Power, August 21, 2007, accessed July 15, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X38pqySnINk&feature=related>.

¹¹³ Journalists and bloggers also took advantage of the opportunity to suggest a sonic profile for Clinton. Some suggestions included: Elton John’s “The Bitch is Back,” Foreigner’s “Cold As Ice,” and The Rolling Stones’ “Sympathy for the Devil.”

¹¹⁴ Tiffany4Hillary, May 24, 2007 (10:37 a.m.), comment on Crystal Patterson, “Cast Your Vote for Hillary’s Campaign Song,” *Hillary for President* website, May 16, 2007, accessed August 4, 2012, <http://web.archive.org/web/20070530183743/http://www.hillaryclinton.com/blog/view/?id=5830>.

¹¹⁵ “Hillary Clinton Sopranos Parody,” uploaded by tpmtv, June 19, 2007, accessed July 16, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9BEPcJlz2wE>.

peruses the selections on the table-top jukebox, which in this version includes some of the preselected contest songs. Bill Clinton arrives shortly after and sits across from his wife. Shots of other people in the restaurant eating and talking, and of a portly Italian-looking gentleman staring at Clinton, are interspersed with shots of the Clintons' conversation. Journey's "Don't Stop Believin'" plays in the background. (This is the song Tony Soprano selects from his jukebox in *The Sopranos* finale.)

Bill Clinton: Anything look good?
 Hillary Clinton: We have some great choices. [pause] I ordered for the table.
 [Cut to basket of carrot sticks on the table]
 Bill Clinton: No onion rings?
 Hillary Clinton: I'm lookin' out for ya. [pause] Where's Chelsea?
 [Footage of car riding up on a curb, hard braking sounds]
 Bill Clinton: Parallel parking.
 Hillary Clinton: Oh.
 Bill Clinton: How's the campaign goin'?
 Hillary Clinton: Well, like ya always say, focus on the good times.
 Bill Clinton: So what's the winning song?
 Hillary Clinton: You'll see.
 Bill Clinton: My money's on Smash Mouth. Everybody in America wants to know how it's gonna end.
 Hillary Clinton: Ready?

[Cut to blackout as Hillary Clinton puts money in the jukebox]

[3 seconds later a message flashes on the screen]

"Find out the winning song at www.hillaryclinton.com/song"

a)



b)



Figure 5-12a & b Images from Clinton's *Sopranos* Parody

Clinton's contest closure video, with its intertextual references, solicited a variety of responses from the general YouTube community.¹¹⁶ Some found it entertaining:

Great video! I love seeing people in high stress jobs that are able to let their guard down for a little fun. Wish I had seen this sooner! :)¹¹⁷

Others commended the "appropriateness" of drawing an analogy between mobsters and politicians:

¹¹⁶ These comments were posted on the main YouTube page, *not* Clinton's channel,

¹¹⁷ jaredbrunk, comment on "Hillary Clinton Sopranos Parody," June 19, 2007.

Such a bad idea. Now this makes me realize that politicians act in the same manner as mobsters. They try and display a positive image to the public while dealing with shady matters behind the public[’s eye]. This basically just admits it.¹¹⁸

Still others focused on the commonalities between politicians and actors:

Must be fairly depressing when politicians try to act like a sort of film star. Can’t imagine Churchill, Kennedy, or Wilson looking like that.¹¹⁹ Jesus. More proof that these people are more interested in ACTING than LEADING. Appealing to “the base.” All image and pretense, very little substance. No issues here... just trying to be likeable.¹²⁰

While many YouTube users responded to the video itself or just made generally disparaging comments about Hillary or Bill, others used the video and the YouTube comment platform as a springboard for political debating. Although many viewers gave blatantly incorrect information and statistics, this particular video did precipitate a meaningful political dialogue that addressed not only general issues regarding the campaign, but also more specific issues of character, integrity, and trust.

Embracing *Feminist* Destiny

Commentators, competitors, and politicians have projected various female stereotypes onto Clinton throughout her career—“feminist,” “boss’s wife from hell,” “power monger,” “helpmate,” and “good mother.” Taking the media representation of Hillary Clinton in the late 1990s as her subject, Shawn Parry-Giles shows how various mediated visual representations of Clinton have attempted to naturalize and legitimize these stereotypes.¹²¹ In perpetuating such stereotypes, the media positions powerful women as a threat and, while doing so, manages to reinforce the double binds that threaten women’s success in the political sphere.

Undoubtedly Clinton used the contest videos to display her feminine side. At the same time, the *form* of the contest embodied its *function*—the candidate’s relinquishing of her own image construction to the voter. Clinton’s image, her

¹¹⁸ TheBlackN1gga, comment on “Hillary Clinton Sopranos Parody,” June 19, 2007.

¹¹⁹ MrKiwionline, comment on “New HILLARY Clinton Sopranos Campaign Spoof,” uploaded by MajorMush, June 19, 2007, accessed July 16, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gK0G5pbT7RQ&feature=related>.

¹²⁰ 3dw0rd, comment on “New HILLARY Clinton Sopranos Campaign Spoof,” June 19, 2007.

¹²¹ Parry-Giles, “Mediating Hillary Rodham Clinton.”

presidentiality, arises out of the confluence of a larger cultural and political dialogue that the official campaign precipitated through 2.0 technologies. Considering that a conversation with the American public was Clinton's earliest campaign promise, her campaign song contest played a role by simply instigating that dialogue. The complementarity of control that she established through the YouTube platform and the contest format also pervaded her playlist, especially in songs such as "Suddenly I See" and "Beautiful Day." Thus, participation in this conversation with one's own response videos and posts became constitutive of political action itself. Through the act of voting for a song, supporters could perform a hypothetical negotiation of the femininity/competence double bind for Clinton on their own terms. Voters are a true part of the conversation—they ultimately choose which "identities" (or "femininities") suit her—at least in the sonic realm.

As the "Obliterate Iran" political cartoon and Hillary Clinton nutcracker kitsch in Figure 5-1 illustrate, criticism of Clinton often targeted her appearance and self-presentation. Her voice, especially her laugh, can be added to this list. Bill Clinton adviser Dick Morris once referred to Hillary Clinton's laugh as "[L]oud, inappropriate, and mirthless. . . . A scary sound that was somewhere between a cackle and a screech." Journalist/blogger Ben Smith referred to the laugh as Clinton's "signature cackle."¹²² (A search on Google under this pejorative epithet produces 185,000 hits.) Political commentator Glenn Beck went so far as to juxtapose footage of a laughing Clinton with a clip from the witch in the film *The Wizard of Oz* and offered up a "Hillary Clinton Laugh Montage."¹²³ Talk show host Jimmy Kimmel featured an advertisement for a mock Clinton campaign DVD compilation titled "Hillary Clinton's A Thousand Uncomfortable Laughs."¹²⁴ The

¹²² Joan Vennochi, "That Clinton Cackle," *Boston Globe*, September 30, 2007, accessed June 10, 2012, http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2007/09/30/that_clinton_cackle/.

¹²³ "Glenn Beck 'Hillary Clinton Laugh Montage' (10/2/07)," uploaded by aircoleman on October 2, 2007, accessed June 10, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIF12X1dCeo>.

¹²⁴ "Hillary Clinton cackle and laugh comedy video," uploaded by yell0wratbastrd on April 16, 2008, accessed June 20, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44zwRfXxi5s>.

YouTube community had their say as well: several Clinton Cackle songs and remixes are available online.¹²⁵

As I stated earlier, the media, often relying on gendered stereotypes, consistently portrayed Clinton in a negative light. And in the postmodern world, her televisuality (the media's assemblage of images with their multitude of referents and constructed narratives) becomes her reality.¹²⁶ However, the YouTube Channel offered Clinton and her supporters a forum where they could reject the dominant discourses that stereotyped her and establish a counter-narrative that fully acknowledged and embraced both her non-traditional femininity *and* competence. And in doing so, they challenged the "fallacious constructs" that worked against her. As I have shown, music, with its accrued connotations, performance history and critical discourses, can work in a similar manner. Both through YouTube's interactive platform and through music with narratives that engaged with her own proposed negotiation of the femininity/competence double bind, Clinton "disrupted" the textual, visual, and sonic narratives that historically defined her identity. In doing so, Clinton offered her supporters (and detractors) the opportunity to see her in a more positive light, but more importantly, she put forth a way for them to *hear* her differently as well.

¹²⁵ For example, see "Hillary Clinton Cackle Song Remix," uploaded by frostedminipete on April 12, 2008, accessed June 12, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMheCl6TUUQ>.

¹²⁶ Parry-Giles, "Mediating Hillary Rodham Clinton," 222.

CHAPTER 6

KEEPIN' IT REAL (RESPECTABLE) IN 2008: BARACK OBAMA'S IPOD AS PROOF OF CULTURAL BLACKNESS

I like hip hop and I cannot lie...

Politicians often reveal their music tastes in interviews and through their selection of campaign playlists: Bill Clinton openly professed his love of Elvis, Jimmy Carter tuned in to Bob Dylan, and George W. Bush's iPod contains country music and classic rock with a "little bit of hard core and honky tonk," a playlist *Rolling Stone* journalist Joe Levy calls safe, reliable, and loving.¹ Setting aside a few recent copyright infringement cases and Bob Dole's infamous strut to Sam and Dave's "Soul Man" in 1996, under most circumstances politicians' personal music tastes would not be a source of much controversy or even much serious inquiry. (As I discussed in chapter one, "inappropriate" lyrics remain the primary target of critics.) However, due to Barack Obama's status as the first black presidential candidate to be nominated by a major party, his divulgence of musical taste created a potential political minefield—the personal (represented here by music preference) was definitely political. Obama's iPod contents were not just a public interest story, but also a litmus test to determine his cultural blackness as well as his acceptability as a candidate.

During the general election campaign in 1992, then-candidate Bill Clinton criticized rap artist Sister Souljah for expressing what he perceived to be black extremist viewpoints to the *Washington Post*. Drawing attention to her status as a respected, black social activist as well as rap artist, she fired back at Clinton (and the *Post*) for taking her comments out of context and called his genuineness and morality into question.² Despite Sister Souljah's acerbic criticism, Clinton's misreading and

¹ "Bush's iPod Reveals Music Tastes," *BBC*, April 13, 2005, accessed March 7, 2012, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/4435639.stm>.

² Sister Souljah's statement: "I mean, if black people kill black people every day, why not have a week and kill white people? You understand what I'm saying? In other words, white people, this government and that mayor were well aware of the fact that black people were dying every day in Los Angeles under gang violence. So if you're a gang member and you would normally be killing somebody, why not kill a white person? Do you think that somebody thinks that white people are better, or above dying, when they would kill their own kind?" See David Mills, "Sister Souljah's Call to Arms; The Rapper Says the Riots Were Payback. Are You Paying Attention?" *Washington*

condemnation of the artist's remarks did not compromise his status among black Americans.

Although in the 1990s candidates could safely denounce hip hop without fear of political fallout, by the twenty-first century, hip hop had transcended racial and economic boundaries and emerged as a global, multi-billion dollar industry with artists and producers who possessed serious political clout. Hip-hop scions such as Russell Simmons and Sean Combs used their influence to establish voter registration initiatives, The Hip Hop Summit Action Network (2001) and Citizen Change (2004) respectively, with the intent of galvanizing black youth, but their efforts failed to make a significant impact.³ The industry's engagement with electoral politics reached fever pitch in 2008. Although Simmons on occasion questioned Obama's ability to effectively address black issues, he and Combs, as well as other hip-hop artists, endorsed the candidate, performed at free rallies and concerts on his behalf, or name-dropped the candidate in their songs.⁴ Highly visible celebrities organized

Post, May 13, 1992, B01. Clinton's remarks at a June 13th speech to the Rainbow Coalition (in response to Sister Souljah's statement): "Her comments before and after Los Angeles were filled with a kind of hatred that you do not honor today and tonight. . . . If you took the words white and black and reversed them, you might think David Duke was giving that speech." For Sister Souljah's statement in response to Clinton, see "Sister Souljah Statement," *Rock Out Censorship* website, accessed June 27, 2012, <http://www.theroc.org/roc-mag/textarch/roc-09/roc09-07.htm>; For a video of Sister Souljah's press conference, see "Rap Artist's Response to Clinton Remarks," C-SPAN Video Library, June 16, 1992, accessed June 27, 2012, <http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/26613-1>.

³ S. Craig Watkins notes that although the Hip Hop Summit Action Network succeeded in registering voters, it lacked the local networks needed to actually get voters to the polls. Whether or not the organization's rallies promote a clear plan of action and ultimately motivate and sustain political mobilization has been called into question. For more on 21st century hip-hop's engagement with electoral politics, see *Hip Hop Matters: Politics, Pop Culture, and the Struggle for the Soul of a Movement* (Boston: Beacon, 2005), 154–56.

⁴ Several scholars have addressed hip hop and the Obama candidacy: See Travis L. Gosa, "Not Another Remix: How Obama Became the First Hip-Hop President," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22, no. 4 (2010): 389–415, DOI: 10.1111/j.1533-1598.2010.01252.x; and "'The Audacity of Dope': Rap Music, Race, and the Obama Presidency," in *The Iconic Obama, 2007–2009: Essays on Media Representations of the Candidate and New President*, ed. Nicholas A. Yanes and Derrais Carter (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012), also available at <http://vivo.cornell.edu/display/n505090>, accessed November 1, 2012; Murray Forman, "Conscious Hip-Hop, Change, and the Obama Era," *American Studies Journal* 54 (2010), accessed August 10, 2012, <http://asjournal.zusas.uni-halle.de/179.html>; Lester K. Spence, "Obama and the Future of Hip-Hop Politics," in *Stare in the Darkness: The Limits of Hip-Hop and Black Politics*, 157–76 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011). See also "Obama Hip Hop: From Mixtapes to Mainstream" [Interview with Mark Anthony Neal], *Weekend Edition Sunday*, National Public Radio, November 9, 2008, accessed July 23, 2012,

some of these events, but just as many were the fruits of grassroots, community initiatives. As Travis Gosa's work on Obama-themed mixtapes shows, both well-known hip-hop artists and relative unknowns created music in support of Obama's candidacy and circulated their offerings on peer-to-peer sharing sites and YouTube. The hip-hop community(-ies) clearly embraced Obama, but how did Obama feel about hip hop?⁵

As Murray Forman argues, "Rap and hip-hop are . . . inextricably entwined with race, cultural politics, ideology, and communication in contemporary America and in various moments since their inception they have, in fact, been at the center of heated debates in the nation's notorious 'culture wars.'"⁶ Not surprisingly, the question of hip-hop's cultural value emerged in several Obama interviews during the 2008 election cycle. The candidate was in a position where he had to reach out to the hip-hop community but was faced with the predicament of embracing artists and a genre that, in the eyes of many (both black and white), historically has glorified drug culture, urban violence, consumer fetishism, and misogyny. But the conflict and controversy swirled *within* the hip-hop community as well: Who does hip hop represent? Is it politically relevant? What is its relationship to the past and future?

In an electoral landscape where the fields of politics and popular culture are closely intertwined, and every aspect of the candidate's public and private life is subjected to intense scrutiny, nontraditional and non-discursive texts play a significant role in candidate image construction. In this chapter I would like to

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=96748462>. Michael Jefferies has written on Obama's status as a hip-hop icon. See "Obama as Hip-Hop Icon," epilogue in *Thug Life: Race, Gender, and the Meaning of Hip-Hop*, 199–206 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Simmons has been engaged with politics and social activism since the late 1990s: He organized a fundraiser for NY senate candidate Hillary Clinton in 1999; in 2001 he launched the Hip Hop Summit Action Network, an organization including industry professionals, educators, civil rights leaders, and activists that works to harness the power of hip hop to initiate social change. Governor George Pataki solicited his help in instigating the reform of New York's draconian drug laws in 2003. In 2007 he criticized Obama for his attacks on song lyrics, claiming, "[w]hat we need to reform is the conditions that create these lyrics. Obama needs to reform the conditions of poverty." For the Simmons interview, see Deborah Solomon, "Hip-Hop Guru," *New York Times*, April 29, 2007, accessed June 23, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/29/magazine/29wwlnQ4.t.html>.

⁵ Gosa refers to Obama-themed rap as "Obama-Hop."

⁶ Forman, "Conscious Hip-Hop."

interrogate how music and its surrounding discourses functioned in Barack Obama's 2008 primary campaign and ultimately participated in the construction of his presidentiality. I begin by analyzing the rhetorical strategies the candidate adopted in response to questions regarding the institution of hip hop and show how the selective appropriation of certain signifiers of the genre and rejection of others allowed him to negotiate a stance on hip hop that affirmed his cultural blackness, while assuring the broader public of his adherence to "mainstream" values. Then, I examine how the candidate's supporters and detractors utilized YouTube to respond to his stance on hip hop and his image as a "hip" candidate with pop cultural capital. I continue by showing how Obama's campaign playlist with its motivational *mélange* of 1960s and 1970s love songs and classics allowed the candidate to appeal to both older black voters (the cohort that frequently leveled the "is he black enough" charge against him) and women voters, the two constituencies political scholars argued he needed to win over in order to defeat his primary rival Hillary Clinton. To conclude, I show how Obama's position on hip hop, the construction of his playlist, and his professed musical tastes combined with the discourses they precipitated on social media sites allowed him to project a black identity that was both "real" and "respectable."

The Hip-Hop Dalai Lama?

In several different interviews on television and in print, the candidate stated his position on hip hop as a genre and the artists, audiences, and lifestyles associated with it. In September 2008, MTV News interviewer Sway Calloway asked the candidate about the role hip-hop culture has played in his life. In his response, Obama distanced himself from the generation associated with the genre stating, "I'm a little older than hip-hop culture. I was there at the beginning, but I was already getting older."⁷ In an earlier interview with New York City radio station Hot 97, the candidate expanded on his musical tastes a bit more, claiming "I'm old school, so generally, generally, I'm more of a jazz guy, a Miles Davis, a John Coltrane guy, more

⁷ Sway Calloway and Robert Mancini, "Barack Obama Gives a Shout-Out to Hip-Hop," *MTV*, September 28, 2008, accessed July 30, 2012, <http://m.mtv.com/news/article.rbml?id=1595820>.

of a Marvin Gaye, Stevie Wonder kind of guy . . . but having said that, I'm current enough that on my iPod I've got a little bit of Jay-Z. I've got a little Beyoncé."⁸

With these statements, Obama positions the generational gap between his own teenage years and those of hip-hop's infancy as the reason the genre only assumes limited space on his iPod. At the same time, he cites his admiration for earlier, canonized black performers—performers whose star texts and generic associations conjure up a cluster of beneficial associations: Marvin Gaye and Stevie Wonder were affiliated with Motown, a label whose music and artists have come to signify both the breakdown of stringently inscribed cultural and social boundaries and the promotion of “interracial understanding.”⁹ Wonder supported efforts to establish a national holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr. and composed the song “Happy Birthday” (1980) to raise awareness of this worthy campaign. Closely associated with innovation in jazz, Miles Davis and John Coltrane reached the height of their success and recognition during the 1960s, the era when jazz accumulated significant cultural capital.

After reaffirming his love for the classics, in a BET interview the candidate attempted to draw a division between hip-hop's *art* and its *message* stating,

Honestly, I love the art of hip-hop, I don't always love the message of hip-hop. There are times where even with the artists I named, the artists I love, there is a message that is not only sometimes degrading to women, not only uses the N word a little too frequently but also something I'm really concerned about is always talking about material things. It's always talking about how I can get something. . . . I think [there is] the potential for them [artists] to deliver a message of extraordinary power that gets people thinking. The thing about hip-

⁸ Barack Obama interview, Hot 97, New York City, NY, June 27, 2007. This statement from the interview is cited in Peter Hamby, “Barack Obama Gets Name-Dropped in Hip-Hop,” *CNN*, August 17, 2007, accessed March 12, 2012, <http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/08/17/obama.hip.hop/index.html>. The candidate made similar comments to *Vibe*: “You know I haven't been buying new music lately. Because I don't have time. Look, I'm impacted by my generation. Most of my iPod probably is either jazz classics—Coltrane, Miles Davis—or it's got the songs of my youth, right? So you know Stevie Wonder, Earth, Wind & Fire, Aretha Franklin.” See Jeff Chang, “Barack Obama: The Vibe Interview,” *Vibe*, August 2007, accessed November 1, 2012, http://www.thelavinagency.com/content/speakers/58/1212688601_chang-vibe.pdf.

⁹ Suzanne E. Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 138. For another perspective on the cultural politics of Motown, see Nelson George, *Where Did Our Love Go? The Rise and Fall of the Motown Sound* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985); and for an insider's perspective see, Berry Gordy, *To Be Loved: The Music, the Magic, the Memories of Motown: An Autobiography* (New York: Warner Books, 1994).

hop today is, it's smart, it's insightful, and the way that they can communicate a complex message in a very short space, is remarkable. And a lot of these kids are not going to be reading the New York Times, that's not how they're getting their information. So the question then is, what's the content? What's the message? I understand folks want to be rooted in their community. They want to be down, but what I always say is, you know, hip-hop is not just a mirror of what is. It should also be a reflection of what can be.¹⁰

By privileging form over content, Obama not only shields himself from the morality police, but also acknowledges the larger systemic failures that gave rise to the conditions many hip-hop artists lament in their music. The candidate also makes a plea for art's moral obligation to envision a brighter future rather than merely fixate on the here and now. Furthermore, with this statement he refrains from criticizing the hip-hop artists themselves, and instead attempts to position the artists and the broader hip-hop community as holding the potential to initiate the changes he envisions.

In March 2008, Obama made similar comments in an interview with *Rolling Stone*, stating

I am troubled sometimes by the misogyny and materialism of a lot of rap lyrics, but I think the genius of the art form has shifted the culture and helped to desegregate music. [...] It would be nice if I could have my daughters listen to their music without me worrying they were getting bad images of themselves.¹¹

Again, the candidate acknowledges the objectionable lyrical content, but he also uses the word “art” to describe the genre and ascribes its “genius” to its ability to promote desegregation. However, the candidate also plays the role of “concerned father,” once again praising the art's potential, while still implying it has a way to go with regards to its promotion of a poor self-image for women.

Despite the distancing strategies, the candidate at times subtly hinted that he was indeed “in the know” (although not too much) with regards to the genre. In one interview, he claimed he likes Jay-Z's music because “as Jay would say, ‘he got

¹⁰ Barack Obama, interview by Jeff Johnson, *What's in It For Us?* BET, January 8, 2007. See “USA President Barack Obama Opinion on Hip-Hop & Rap 2008,” uploaded by Starrground, February 3, 2008, accessed April 12, 2012, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pFSVG7jRp_g. Also see *Hip Hop for Obama* MySpace website [quotes, video footage, artists' statements], accessed April 12, 2012, <http://www.myspace.com/hiphopforobama>.

¹¹ Jann S. Wenner, “A Conversation with Barack Obama,” *Rolling Stone* 1056/1057, July 10–24, 2008, 71–74; 76.

flow.”¹² And, while on several occasions the candidate admitted being bothered by the rampant materialism promoted by the artists, in the *Rolling Stone* interview he praises the entrepreneurship of hip-hop producers: “I know Jay-Z. I know Ludacris. I know Russell Simmons. I know a bunch of these guys. They are great talents and great businessmen, which is something that doesn’t get emphasized enough.”¹³

The candidate did not limit his attempts to frame himself as in-the-know to interviews where hip hop momentarily became the topic of focus either. In a speech the day after the ABC News debate where opponent Hillary Clinton attempted to play what Obama called the “textbook Washington game,” the younger senator responded to her attacks by physically brushing the metaphorical dirt off his shoulders, stating in African-American vernacular dialect “you gotta expect it, uh and, you just gotta kinda let it, you know, that’s what ya gotta do.” With this gesture, which blogger Spencer Ackerman cited as “perhaps the coolest subliminal cultural reference in the history of American politics,” Obama references “Dirt off Your Shoulder,” a 2003 Jay-Z hit.¹⁴

With this single gesture, the candidate safely pays homage to a hip-hop classic and its artist, and he forms an alliance with the genre and its artists by appropriating a message in the song he *could* agree with—that is, the choice to confront hostility in a non-aggressive manner. And as the candidate wittily demonstrates, the decision to take the higher ground can be made in the realm of politics, just as it can on the street. As Murray Forman states, “The streets [in hip-hop parlance] are idealized as an authentic cultural locus, a zone of *real* human activity where aspects of love and communal affiliation collide with other more heinous factors including boredom, threat, violence, and murder.”¹⁵ By appropriating this symbolic gesture, Obama embraces the positive side of street culture while he

¹² “USA President Barack Obama Opinion on Hip-Hop & Rap 2008.”

¹³ Wenner, “Conversation with Barack Obama,” 71–74, 76.

¹⁴ For a report on the speech and the gesture, see Ari Melber, “Obama Meets Jay-Z in YouTube Mashup Slamming Clinton & Debate,” *Huffington Post*, April 17, 2008, accessed November 23, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ari-melber/obama-meets-jay-z-in-yout_b_97342.html. For the speech, see “Obama Gets That Dirt off His Shoulder,” uploaded by trainwreckpolitics, April 17, 2008, accessed November 23, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kzXcNgCr0nk>.

¹⁵ Forman, “Conscious Hip-Hop.”

simultaneously remains removed from the actual language of the song—and rejects the more nefarious aspects of street culture: threat and violence.¹⁶

Shortly after Obama brushed off the dirt in his April 17 speech, his campaign placed the video clip on YouTube, and the mash-ups quickly followed.¹⁷ In one popular mash-up, Jay-Z's song serves as the back track as footage from Obama's "brush the dirt" speech is interspersed with video clips of various detractors criticizing the candidate.¹⁸ (One clip includes Hillary Clinton commenting on Obama's relationship with controversial pastor Jeremiah Wright, and in another she dismisses some of her opponent's remarks as "elitist and out of touch.") As Obama reaches the point in his speech with the "dirt off your shoulder" gesture, the music swells as he brushes off superimposed images of Hillary Clinton, Bill Clinton, George Stephanopoulos, and of course, the kitchen sink (Fig. 6-1).

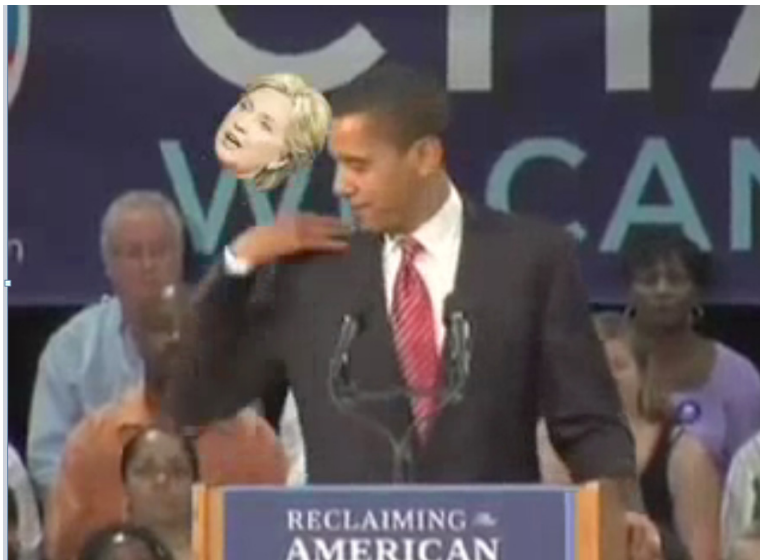


Figure 6-1 "Obama Gets That Dirt off His Shoulders"

Another more offensive remix based on the same Obama speech alternates footage of the candidate's gesture with his enviable dance moves displayed on *The Ellen*

¹⁶ The lyrics in the chorus of Jay-Z's song are "you gotta get, that, dirt off your shoulder." Obama states "you gotta," and then completes the phrase with the gesture.

¹⁷ Melber, "Obama Meets Jay-Z."

¹⁸ "Obama Gets That Dirt off His Shoulders," uploaded by Bill3948, April 17, 2007, accessed November 23, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yel8IjOAdSc>.

DeGeneres Show (Fig. 6-2a). After flashing a photo of Obama proudly standing in front of a towering Superman statue, “Dirt off Your Shoulder” fades out and Jay-Z’s “99 Problems” begins. As the phrase “I got ninety-nine problems but a bitch ain’t one” blares out, the user/creator juxtaposes close-up, still images of a choleric-appearing Clinton with more footage of dancing Obama.¹⁹ The still images of Clinton’s contorted, unnatural facial expressions almost make her a caricature of the stereotypical militant feminist/man-hater detractors wished to portray her as, while Obama becomes more human as the viewer watches his casual, fluid grooves captured in the video footage. The video also draws a comparison between the supporters of Obama and those of Republican candidate John McCain: the cool, hip, and sexy support Obama (Fig. 6-2b); overweight, gun-toting rednecks support McCain (Fig 6-2c). With these images, the creator unabashedly embraces race and gender (and even class) stereotypes: black men have rhythm, feminists are angry, poor whites cling to their guns.

¹⁹ “Obama Dirt off Your Shoulder Remix,” uploaded by jarts, April 18, 2007, accessed November 24, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j2g2axmnY8&feature=related>.

a)



b)



c)



Figure 6-2a–c “Dirt off Your Shoulder Remix”

These two videos' connections to hip hop exceed the visual impact of the candidate's street-wise gesture and Jay-Z's hip-hop back track. The content of the second video, "Dirt off Your Shoulder Remix," includes the same images that pervade hip-hop videos. The user/creator juxtaposes the images of "heroic" gangstas with images of objectified women and positions the viewer/voter as both a witness to the unfolding spectacle and as a potential arbiter of taste: flat-chested women support Clinton, and voluptuous women endorse Obama (in this case, Natalie Portman and Scarlett Johansson, respectively). The production aspects of the video rely on signifyin(g), or more specifically, a hip-hop-influenced filmic aesthetic: images are appropriated, recontextualized, and collaged to create a counter-narrative within campaign discourses—in this counter-narrative, Obama becomes the quintessential hip-hop icon. He has the smooth moves, the superhuman status, the decorative females, and no one can stand in his way.

Although such music-based attacks on an opposing candidate hardly represent a novel phenomenon, YouTube has provided a forum where uncensored and unsanctioned forms of artistic production receive broad exposure alongside official campaign advertisements and videos. And, more significantly, the forum allows for the rapid transformation and repurposing of the original clip in a way that may not be aligned with the values and viewpoints of the official campaign, but may nevertheless have a favorable impact on it. In the various transformations of the original clip, Obama's playful dismissal of Clinton's ad hominem verbal assault turns into a vitriolic attack on Clinton, McCain, and their respective supporters. The anonymity that the site provides assures that the content of the videos will not damage the campaign that they support. This form of artistic production, with its reliance on images as well as music, moves campaign music into the realm of what Jean Baudrillard calls the hyperreal. As each new parody song offers images (and music) that perpetually reflect back on those posted in videos created by other subscribers, their signs acquire an infinite number of meanings.

Although newly composed campaign song "I've Got a Crush on Obama" and speech parody campaign song "Yes We Can" remain the most popular music video offerings of the 2008 Obama campaign, countless others circulated. (Including, of course, the two parody campaign songs discussed above.) One blogger even

referred to 2008 as the “year of the campaign song.”²⁰ Not surprisingly, candidate-generated videos rose to an unprecedented level of prominence at this time.²¹ Obama’s team included fifty videographers who posted clips daily on the MyBO website and YouTube, and social media outlets facilitated circulation.²² According to the *New York Times*, viewers spent 14.5 million hours viewing the campaign’s official videos created for YouTube.²³ In an environment saturated with reality television culture, such videos offered candidates the opportunity to reveal their “authentic,” uncensored, behind-the-scenes selves to the voting public. At the same time, with access to YouTube and web cameras, voters could respond to the campaign’s official videos in what Virginia Heffernan deems the only authentic form of response available: another video.²⁴ Essentially, YouTube offered a platform where candidates and voters could converse through video. The videos I analyze here are just two examples of how the participatory, video-based culture engendered by YouTube established the possibility for a dialogically constituted campaign soundscape. (I will return to this point in my concluding chapter.)

An “Old School Guy” Playlist

Although the accessibility of social media and user-generated content sites democratized the soundscape, candidates continued to control their sonic image through their divulgence of musical taste (as I discussed earlier) and through the selection of a campaign playlist. For the post-debate speech I discussed above,

²⁰ Gregory Phillips, “The Campaign Song Comeback,” *From Fay To Z* (blog), *Fayetteville Observer*, October 29, 2008, accessed June 4, 2012, <http://blogs.fayobserver.com/faytoz>.

²¹ See “Best of Obama Girl: Crush on Obama,” uploaded by barelypolitical, June 13, 2007, accessed July 20, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wKsoXHYICqU>; “YES WE CAN - New Approaches - Entertainment - EMMY WINNER,” uploaded by emmys, June 3, 2008, accessed July 28, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SsV2O4fCgjk>. Will.i.am released the video February 2, 2008 on YouTube. The song received an Emmy Award for Outstanding New Approaches - Entertainment at the 35th Annual Daytime Creative Arts and Entertainment Emmy Awards Ceremony on June 13, 2008.

²² Claire Cain Miller, “How Obama’s Internet Campaign Changed Politics,” *New York Times*, November 7, 2008, accessed June 29, 2012, <http://bits.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/how-obamas-internet-campaign-changed-politics/>.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Virginia Heffernan, “The Many Tribes of YouTube,” *New York Times*, May 27, 2007, accessed June 27, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/27/arts/television/27heff.html?pagewanted=all>.

Obama appropriated the rhetoric of celebrity—a celebrated rapper’s physical gesture with its potent symbolic potential and cultural connotations for a specific community. The candidate’s playlist also indulged in the rhetoric of celebrity, albeit in a different manner and with intentions toward a broader audience. Several of Obama’s musical offerings position the candidate as a potential object of the female gaze. Whereas earlier campaign songs primarily tapped into the concept of the “mythic presidency” with its leader/subject dynamic, the Obama campaign humanized the candidate by focusing on idealized intimate relationships.²⁵

Although R&B frequently serves as suture music during “down-time” on the floor of political conventions and rouses crowds at rallies, before 2008, major party presidential candidates did not typically use it to accompany their entrances and exits at events or as their campaign songs with much frequency. My primary focus here will be on four of the R&B songs Obama frequently used at his campaign rallies during both the primary and general elections. My investigation will revolve mainly around Stevie Wonder’s “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours,” the song most closely connected with Obama’s campaign, but I will also address “(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher” by Jackie Wilson, as well as “Think” and “Respect” by Aretha Franklin. After a discussion of these songs and some commentary on the candidate’s broader playlist, I consider how pre-existing music engaged with the “women loving Obama” phenomenon as well as Obama’s cultural background, ideology, and campaign rhetoric.

Twenty-year-old music prodigy Stevie Wonder released the song “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” in 1970. In addition to the campaign trail where rallies featured live performances by Wonder as well as the recorded version, the artist performed the song on the last night of the DNC, before Obama’s victory speech at Grant Park, and at the Inaugural Ball. An article in the *New York Times* revealed that Obama campaign chief strategist David Axelrod even used the song as an exclusive

²⁵ Joanne Morreale, *A New Beginning: A Textual Frame Analysis of the Political Campaign Film*, SUNY Series in Speech Communication (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 67. Also see Patricia S. Misciagno, “Rethinking the Mythic Presidency,” *Political Communication* 13, no. 3 (1996): 329–44.

ringtone for incoming calls from the candidate.²⁶ Obama, himself a lifelong Stevie Wonder fan, in his 2008 *Rolling Stone* interview stated:

When I was just at that point when you start getting involved with music, Stevie had that run with *Music of My Mind*, *Talking Book*, *Fulfillingness' First Finale*, and *Innervisions*, and then *Songs in the Key of Life*. Those are as brilliant a set of five albums as we've ever seen.²⁷

The interview leaves no question in the mind of the reader as to whether or not Obama truly loves Stevie Wonder's music, as here he demonstrates his keen knowledge of the artist's history and catalogue.

Wonder's song, spoken in the first person, features a man singing of his love for a woman who is "[his] only desire." With the affirming phrase "signed, sealed, delivered I'm yours" (the invention of which ironically Wonder credits to his mother), he declares his position as the woman's lover. The song's verses, with phrases such as "seen a lot of things in this old world/when I touched them they did nothing for me" and "that's why I know you're my one and only desire," establish the relationship between the speaker and addressee as a monogamous one. Wonder and the backup singers punctuate these verses by singing the phrase "oo, baby, here I am, signed, sealed, delivered I'm yours" together in a homorhythmic fashion with dense chordal harmonies. The homorhythmic verses give way to a call-and-response texture with overlapping entries in the choruses and outro. As the backup singers chant "signed, sealed, delivered" here, Wonder quips "oh you've got the future in your hands" above them, creating a sort of layered effect, but with each line equally emphasized, perhaps suggesting equal footing between the two. At the second interlude, which occurs before the outro, one of the backup singers interrupts Wonder's line, "but here I am with your future," by offering a wailing high note before he can sing the word "am," and thus, for a fleeting moment, a woman takes up the vocal lead. In the outro, the backup singers at times join Wonder on the statement "here I am baby," in the same manner that they did at the middle and end of each verse on "oo baby here I am...", and therefore, the call-and-response texture

²⁶ Jeff Zeleny, "Long By Obama's Side, an Adviser Fills a Role That Exceeds His Title," *New York Times*, October 26, 2008, A19, accessed June 15, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/27/us/politics/27axelrod.html?_r=1.

²⁷ Wenner, "Conversation with Barack Obama," 71–74; 76. *Innervisions* (1973) actually predated *Fulfillingness' First Finale* (1974).

affirms their mutual celebration of shared affection. Figure 6-3 shows the distribution of voices: Wonder singing alone is indicated by plain text, the backup singers singing alone are indicated by italics, and both together are indicated with underscoring and italics.

<p>INTRO</p> <p>VERSE 1</p> <p>Like a fool I went and stayed too long Now I'm wondering if your love's still strong <u><i>Oo, baby, here I am, signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours!</i></u> Then that time I went and said goodbye Now I'm back and not ashamed to cry <u><i>Oo, baby, here I am, signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours!</i></u></p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p><u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i> (You got my future in your hands) <u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i> (You got my future in your hands)</p> <p>INTERLUDE (music is similar to intro) I've done a lot of foolish things That I really didn't mean, didn't I?</p>	<p>VERSE 2</p> <p>Seen a lot of things in this old world (<i>ooo</i>) When I touch them, they mean nothing, girl <u><i>Oo, baby, here I am baby signed, sealed, delivered I'm yours!</i></u> Oowee baby, you set my soul on fire (<i>ooo</i>) That's why I know you're my heart's only desire <u><i>Oo, baby here I am baby, signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i></u></p> <p>CHORUS</p> <p><u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i> (You got my future in your hands) <u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i> (You got my future in your hands)</p> <p>INTERLUDE (music is similar to intro) I've done a lot of foolish things That I really didn't mean, didn't I? I could be a broken man but here I am (<i>abb</i>) (with your future, got your future babe)</p> <p>OUTRO</p> <p><u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i></p> <p>Here I am baby <i>Signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i></p> <p><u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>signed, sealed, delivered, I'm yours</i></p> <p><u><i>Here I am baby</i></u> <i>signed, sealed delivered, I'm yours</i></p>
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Figure 6-3 “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” Lyrics

Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours

Words and Music by Stevie Wonder, Syreeta Wright, Lee Garrett and Lula Mae Hardaway
 (c) 1970 (Renewed 1998) JOBETE MUSIC CO., INC., BLACK BULL MUSIC and SAWANDI
 MUSIC c/o EMI APRIL MUSIC INC. and EMI BLACKWOOD MUSIC INC.

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One could argue that the catch-line of this song, “signed, sealed, delivered I’m yours,” comes across as the words of a haughty and boastful lover, or in the case of the Obama campaign, a haughty and boastful politician who thinks he has cinched his Party’s nomination. However, if we consider *all* of the song’s parameters in tandem (text, melody, timbre, delivery) as well as its relationship to other songs on Obama’s campaign playlist, against the backdrop of the candidate’s campaign platform and his own particular “performance” style, a more nuanced interpretation emerges. The interaction between Wonder and the backup singers, the surrounding text, and Wonder’s own vocal stylings *lessen* the presumed arrogance of this catch-line, which simply states that the speaker (Wonder) “belongs” to the addressee. The speaker’s statement, “I’m yours” (rather than *you’re mine*), puts the addressee in the dominant position, *not* the speaker. The musical features of the song, most significantly the fact that the female backup singers sing the catch-line along with Wonder in harmonious accord, suggest the offer is indeed accepted. The desire is mutual.

In the verses, the speaker does not come across as arrogant in the slightest—he is actually the complete opposite—appearing meek and self-deprecating at times. He states, “Like a fool I went and stayed too long” and “I’ve done a lot of foolish things,” thus admitting his own wrongdoings. He also implies that without the love of the addressee, “[he] could be a broken man”—thus, he is powerless without the love only she can provide. Although it remains unclear what happened before, the phrase “now that I am back” could be an indication that some process of growth, newly attained self-awareness, or transformation has taken place in the man’s life. Arguably the admission of culpability for some unstated transgression, the confession of brokenness, and an outward display of emotion—crying—of which the man is not ashamed weakens (or one might argue, feminizes) the speaker. Wonder’s vocal style in the song, rooted in gospel, reinforces this characterization. His brief whoops and sighs and use of falsetto reflect the overwrought emotionalism

of the text. Additionally, the speaker frames his happiness and restoration of wholeness as contingent upon *her* willingness to accept him. The addressee (the woman) holds the power to accept or refuse what is “signed, sealed and delivered” to her. The speaker, in other words, can only be empowered through her, as “[she’s] got the future in her hands.”

The other three songs I consider here establish a similar tone and relationship dynamic (see Appendix A for the full lyrics). In “(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher,” Jackie Wilson (whose singing also evokes gospel) explores his falsetto range—at times an extremely high falsetto which matches the soprano range of the backup singers who chime in during the choruses with detached articulations of the response “keeps lifting me” in chordal fashion. Like Wonder’s apologetic lover, Wilson’s gains strength (or, one can argue, power) from the love of the addressee, and he professes his desire for monogamy by stating, “I’ll be at your side forever more.” The strength he gains from this connection enables him to “stand up and face the world”—and the backup singers join in during the chorus to voice their agreement.

The first Aretha Franklin tune, “Respect,” also affirms female empowerment and embraces monogamy; however, it differs in that the song’s narration comes from a woman’s point of view. Although the Wilson and Wonder tunes demonstrate a certain amount of musical assertiveness, this song matches musical assertiveness with assertive lyrics, revealing an inner strength and poise on the part of the speaker. The same can be said for Franklin’s “Think,” but this song’s meaning is somewhat more open-ended. The speaker warns the addressee to “think” about what he is going to do. She offers no threats nor lists any consequences, but in the end reminds him that he needs her. The action the addressee ponders could indeed be infidelity, yet this is never explicitly stated. Franklin’s delivery adds a playful, suggestive quality, so the song might lend itself to a sexual reading as well.

“Think” also offers a spirited refrain where Franklin and her backup singers (or the audience) bandy the word “freedom” back and forth. (This at least partly explains its appeal as a campaign song.) Whether the rest of the lyrics are considered or set aside, the song can refer to any kind of freedom. Considering the performer’s iconic status as a black artist, and the song’s strong connection with both the Civil

Rights and women's equality movements of the 1960s and 1970s, its connotations related to racial equality, black self-determination, and female empowerment may be more significant than the addressee's actions as explored in the lyrics. The song's funky style, blaring horn section, and kinetic drive that incrementally increases in both texture and dynamic level, as well as Franklin's raw vocal style, epitomize the "say it out loud, I'm black and I'm proud" ethos of southern soul artists in the 1960s and 1970s who refused to bend to more polished, pop-oriented methods of production.

In the Franklin songs, women voters can identify with the speaker and her desire to assume an active voice and have it be heard. The songs on Obama's playlist that possess an assertive musical and lyrical tone are *both* by Franklin. Thus, by channeling his message through a female artist, and by mapping a demand for votes onto the struggle for both women's rights and civil rights (as associated with this performer²⁸), he can freely adopt a more assertive tone since these rights (or freedoms), George Lakoff would argue, are uncontested in the minds of Obama supporters.²⁹ Table 6-1 summarizes the thematic content, style, and connotations of these four songs.

²⁸ John Street makes a compelling argument for placing analytical focus on the biographical aspects of the performer, rather than general patterns of cultural and social change. John Street, "The Pop Star as Politician: From Belafonte to Bono, from Creativity to Conscience," in *The Resisting Muse: Popular Music and Social Protest*, ed. Ian Peddie, 49–64 (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006).

²⁹ George Lakoff, *Thinking Points: Communicating Our American Values and Vision: A Progressive's Handbook* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006), 87–90.

Song	Lyrical Content	Style	Song Connotations
Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours	monogamy, admission of personal failings, willingness to subjugate oneself to a woman's will	Motown sound, synthesized sitar, gospel- style singing (influence of female gospel singers on Wonder's vocal technique), non-progressive harmonies, female back-up singers	racial uplift, accountability, Civil Rights Movement, narrative of overcoming obstacles
(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher	empowerment through the love of a woman	Motown/also Chicago "soft" soul, high vocal register, use of falsetto, strong gospel influence on song structure, female back-up singers	narrative of overcoming obstacles
Respect	demand for respect, a desire for monogamy	southern soul, raw, assertive vocal style, assertive brass accompaniment, female back-up singers	Civil Rights Movement/second- wave feminism, female empowerment and self- determination, racial uplift, black pride
Think	a firm warning to one who might stray, with love there is nothing we can't accomplish, willingness to overcome obstacles	southern soul, raw, assertive vocal style, call- and-response texture, insistent repetition of the words "think" and "freedom"	Civil Rights Movement/second- wave feminism, racial uplift, freedom, black pride

Table 6-1 Four R&B Campaign Songs

Although Obama varied his playlist overall—he used perennial candidate favorites U2 and Bruce Springsteen, and Ben Harper, among others—the sounds of Motown and soul dominated campaign events.³⁰ It is convenient to simply claim Obama's strategists chose R&B because of their candidate's racial identity, but reducing these choices to a correlation between the genre and its perceived audience glosses over not only the specific issues that these particular songs address, but also how they work together to comment on various facets of Obama's progressive politics. As the candidate offers this group of songs over the course of his campaign,

³⁰ Some additional 1970s/80s era R&B songs that the campaign used in heavy rotation were as follows: "Move on Up" (1971) Curtis Mayfield, "Give the People What they Want" (1975) O'Jays, "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now" (1979) McFadden & Whitehead, "Celebration" (1980) Kool and the Gang, "Shining Star" (1975) Earth, Wind & Fire.

a more complex picture emerges. I would argue a campaign playlist can be understood as a larger integrative text, what Anahid Kassabian calls a “compiled score.”³¹ As such, these songs, although they retain the political resonance they had in the 1960s and 1970s, they also take on contemporary political significance when considered alongside the candidate’s campaign rhetoric and its accompanying media narratives.

“Tell Ya Mama Vote 4 Obama”

Obama’s success in the primaries was to some extent contingent on his ability to draw in both black voters (many of whom questioned his willingness to address issues affecting black communities) and women voters, two constituencies that had a long history of alliance with the Clintons. In the case of Obama’s campaign, the four R&B songs I considered above functioned as a commentary on his own identity—specifically “political blackness,” but also his relationship to two constituencies—women and black voters.

Before addressing *how* Obama used music to connect with women voters, it might be fruitful to explore how these songs construct gender. First, we should consider the omissions from Obama’s list. How come male southern soul singers such as James Brown or Wilson Pickett are not included on his playlist? Why not Brown’s “Get Up, Get into It and Get Involved”? Perhaps Obama’s strategists (like others before them) considered the overtly political or more aggressively sexual songs off limits, not only to remain palatable to a mainstream audience, but also to avoid presenting music by artists whose image might perpetuate stereotypes about black male sexuality. Or, more likely, Obama’s campaign strategists, like Hillary Clinton’s, used music with softer themes and sounds to respond to the public’s desire for a hiatus from the Bush administration’s militant rhetoric.³² So, in terms of music, gentle themes of love and unity replace macho, fist-pumping patriotism, thus reflecting the tone of the campaign and the candidate’s feminized leadership style.

The Obama campaign did use the music of classic rock artist Bruce Springsteen, but rather than relying primarily on his testosterone-driven, rousing ’80s

³¹ Anahid Kassabian, *Hearing Film: Tracking Identifications in Contemporary Hollywood Film Music* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 2–5.

³² See chapter five, note 91.

anthems, it often selected music from his post-9/11 album *The Rising*, which, as I discussed in chapter four, offered themes of redemption and healing alongside an eclectic hybridization of musical styles.³³ Rather than the more overt masculinist vibe that pervades classic rock, the Obama playlist offered a somewhat softer representation of male sexuality. The songs recorded by Stevie Wonder, Jackie Wilson, and Curtis Mayfield may have a touch of funk, but all in all the vocals are smooth and sentimental and the general tenor is the power of love as opposed to power chords; the recordings also have a slick, polished sound. Whereas playlists of earlier decades predominantly gravitated towards solo male performers or groups featuring male performers, the Obama camp chose music by female performers as well, and in most cases, female voices were also featured as backup—perhaps suggesting a harmony between the genders, rather than “one man triumphs over adversity” narratives. In one coffee shop appearance (where the candidate brought along his younger daughter) the Indigo Girls’ feminist anthem “Hammer and a Nail” preceded his speech.³⁴

Although my interpretive strategy privileges the semantic content of a song’s sonic qualities as opposed to lyrical content when arguing for a political reading, I feel the examination of the lyrics of these four R&B songs can shed light on how they function as part of the campaign’s broader discourses. One such discourse, the women-loving-Obama phenomenon, became the subject of blogs, ladies magazines, satirical media, and even some highbrow publications.³⁵ Unlike earlier campaign

³³ For more on Springsteen’s post-9/11 work see, Brian Garman, “Models of Charity and Spirit: Bruce Springsteen, 9/11, and the War on Terror,” in *Music in the Post-9/11 World*, ed. Jonathan Ritter and J. Martin Daughtry, 71–89 (New York: Routledge, 2007).

³⁴ Michael Scherer, “Hillary is from Mars, Obama is from Venus,” *Salon*, July 12, 2007, accessed May 20, 2011, http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/07/12/obama_hillary/.

³⁵ See Kyle-Anne Shiver, “Women Voters and the Obama Crush,” *American Thinker*, March 11, 2008, accessed June 17, 2010, http://www.americanthinker.com/2008/03/women_voters_and_the_obama_cru.html; Judith Warner, “Sometimes a President Is Just a President,” *Opinionator* (blog), *New York Times*, February 5, 2009, accessed June 17, 2010, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/02/05/sometimes-a-president-is-just-a-president/>; and Don Frederick, “‘Hot Chicks Dig Obama,’ A New John McCain Ad Proclaims,” *Top of the Ticket* (blog), *Los Angeles Times*, August 12, 2008, accessed June 17, 2010, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/washington/2008/08/hot-chick-dig-o.html>. Caroline A. Streeter briefly addresses *MADtv* and *Saturday Night Live* sketch comedies that engage with the Obama crush, see “Obama Jungle Fever: Interracial Desire on the Campaign Trail,” in *The Iconic Obama*,

songs, which often address a collective, the lyrics of these songs are directed to a specific addressee *and* explore romantic relationships. An article titled “Women ‘falling for Obama,’” which discusses the phenomenon, begins with the following:

You can see it in their flushed-face smiles and hear it in their screams. They say the phenomenon is difficult to describe, but once they experience it they tell their friends, sisters, mothers and daughters, and they come back for more if they can.³⁶

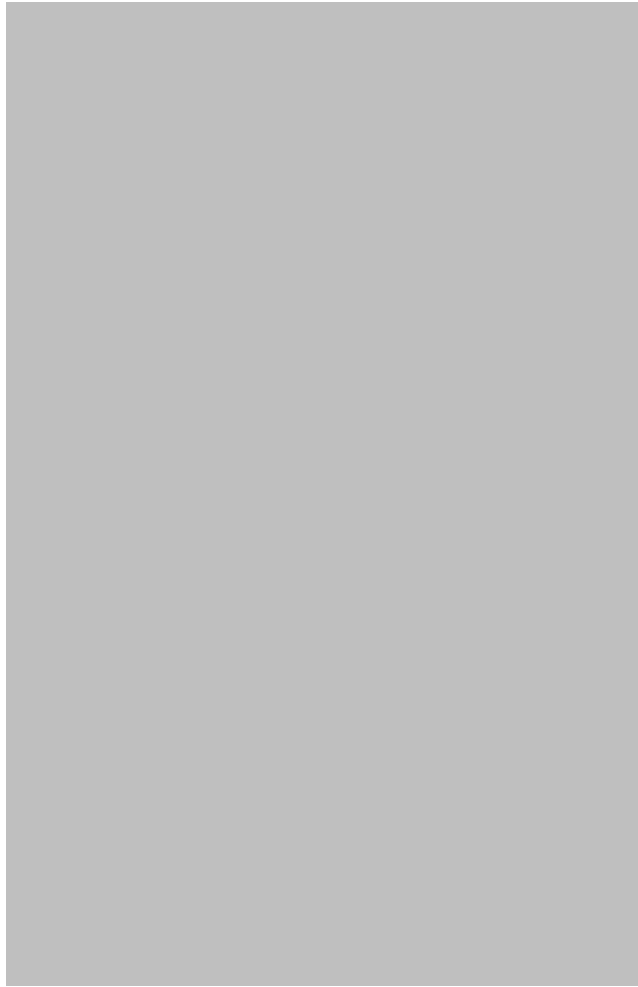
Further in the article, the author describes the candidate’s response to his admirers: “He did not flinch when women screamed as he was in mid-sentence, and even broke off once to answer a female’s cry of ‘I love you Obama!’ with a reassuring: ‘I love you back.’”³⁷ Images circulating during the election season engaged with this fascination, often relying on the establishment of a parallel between romantic attachment and devotion to progressive politics: the image in Figure 6-4a finds its inspiration in an anti-Vietnam War poster that featured Joan Baez and two other girls making a similar pledge to boys who protested the draft. With her change up of the retro statement, the poster’s artist offers a witty mapping of the political onto the personal.

2007–2009: *Essays on Media Representations of the Candidate and New President*, edited by Nicholas A. Yanes and Derrais Carter, 167–83 (Jefferson: McFarland, 2012).

³⁶ “Women ‘Falling for Obama,’” *News24.com*, February 12, 2008, accessed July 17, 2010, <http://www.news24.com/World/News/Women-falling-for-Obama-20080212>.

³⁷ “Women ‘Falling for Obama’”

a)



b)



Figure 6-4a & b Women Loving Obama Images³⁸

Boldly positioning the candidate as an object of both political *and* sexual desire, Figure 6-4b shows Amber Ettinger, the model made famous by her appearance in the YouTube video “I’ve Got a Crush on Obama.” The candidate himself did not respond too fondly to the scantily-clad Obama Girl’s singing, but the public did: the video received 3.1 million hits on YouTube between June and August 2007.³⁹

While some voters embraced Obama’s status as a pop culture icon, other responses to “Obama Mania” were less positive. One conservative commentator, who berates those affected by the “Obama Crush,” claims the phenomenon only served to prove the mindless ignorance of liberal women.

Everywhere Obama goes, before he even opens his mouth, Democrat women fall all over themselves in awe. They chant. They swoon. They get so all fired up and excited that they don’t even seem to consider what utter fools they are making of themselves. [...] I’ve actually heard women say they love him, though they know nothing about him except that he is running for president.⁴⁰

³⁸ Fig. 6-4a: The original poster stated: “GIRLS SAY YES to boys who say NO. Proceeds from the sale of this poster go to The Draft Resistance.” For this poster, see Robin of Berkeley, “Stanley Ann Dunham and the Left’s Exploitation of Women,” *American Thinker*, January 27, 2011, accessed August 6, 2012, http://www.americanthinker.com/2011/01/stanley_ann_dunham_and_the_lef.html. Fig. 6-4b: Obama Girl [Amber Lee Ettinger], “I’ve Got a Crush on Obama,” accessed September 1, 2012, http://i15.photobucket.com/albums/a395/NewObject23/obama_girl.jpg.

³⁹ Michael Falcone, “Obama on ‘Obama Girl,’” *The Caucus* (blog), *New York Times*, August 20, 2007, accessed August 10, 2012, <http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2007/08/20/obama-on-obama-girl/>. For Obama Girl’s videos, see *The Obama Girl* website, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://obamagirl.com/videos/viewcategory/12/obama-girl.html>.

Shortly after Clinton conceded the nomination to Obama, Republican opponent John McCain responded to the phenomenon and Barack Obama's popularity in an advertisement that positions such hysteria as the byproduct of a celebrity-obsessed culture. McCain's ad, which he released on his YouTube channel, drives this point home by juxtaposing footage of a large Obama rally with footage of singer Brittany Spears and celebutante/singer/actress Paris Hilton. As the rhythm of flashing cameras mimics the crowd's "O-ba-ma" chant, an offstage voice states, "he's the biggest celebrity in the world...but is he ready to lead?"⁴¹

Like the newly composed "I've Got a Crush on Obama," the pre-existing songs I consider here explore the dimensions of the romantic relationship—in each, some sort of lack or need is expressed in the lyrics, and then, a means of satisfying or fulfilling it is introduced; the musical features of the songs, such as the call-and-response textures and Wonder's vocal pyrotechnics, as well as the extra-musical elements, such as Franklin's assertive performance style, sonically reinforce this narrative. This group of songs does not establish just any variety of male-female relationship; they celebrate specifically *monogamous* relationships as a source of empowerment. Although the women seem to have the upper hand in the relationships represented, and the men show hints of vulnerability, both music and lyrics affirm that "it takes two," and thus, with these songs, the candidate reaffirms the bourgeois values of family, but with a more progressive edge. Within this context of "women loving Obama" discourses, the lover (speaker)—beloved (addressee)

⁴⁰ Shiver, "Women Voters and the Obama Crush."

⁴¹ This advertisement received over two million hits on John McCain's YouTube Channel. See "Celeb," uploaded by JohnMcCain.com, July 30, 2008, accessed December 7, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHXYsw_ZDXg&feature=player_embedded#. Paris Hilton later posted a response video where she proposed her own energy policy and considered Rihanna as a potential running mate: "Paris Hilton Responds to McCain Ad," uploaded by Paris Hilton, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/64ad536a6d/paris-hilton-responds-to-mccain-ad-from-paris-hilton-adam-ghost-panther-mckay-and-chris-henchy>. Also see the "sequel," "Paris Hilton Gets Presidential with Martin Sheen," uploaded by Paris Hilton, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://www.funnyordie.com/videos/06ae3d8563/paris-hilton-gets-presidential-with-martin-sheen-from-paris-hilton?rel=player&playlist=210399>. For a spoof of Hilton's advertisement, see "Paris Hilton John McCain Ad: Britney Spears Response," uploaded by NatLamp, August 7, 2008, accessed December 7, 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FmtL7-wY8rU>. John McCain actually responded to Hilton's video response, stating "Paris Hilton might not be as big a celebrity as Barack Obama but she certainly has a better energy plan."

relationship can symbolize the desired, ideal candidate–voter relationship, and a desire for monogamy becomes analogous with civic mindedness and political loyalty.

Like the female addressees in the Wonder and Wilson songs who are in a position to empower the speakers through their love, the women constituents are in a position to empower the candidate—which they do through their votes (the ultimate civic responsibility). Man (the candidate) is “made” (president [empowered]) through Woman (the female voter). Thus, this symbolic exchange establishes a system of reciprocity: women empower the candidate with votes and in turn the candidate empowers women through his program of social change.

In discussing the content of pop songs and their potential to evoke emotional responses, Simon Frith claims, “[p]op love songs do not ‘reflect’ emotions, then, but give people the romantic terms in which to articulate and so experience their emotions.”⁴² Interviews I conducted with women who attended 2008 Obama rallies suggest songs that employ what Frith calls “romantic terms” can indeed be used by voters to articulate their relationships to a politician. Consider one 50-year-old woman’s response to the question, “what does the phrase ‘Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours’ mean to you?”:

As a love song (originally) of course it means I give myself to the other totally, completely. In the context of the election I feel it meant to convey loyalty, truth and hope. Upon reflection, I believe it to mean that the action is reciprocal. In taking the gift of my complete commitment to the other, I am also offering trust, which I hope to receive in return. Signed and sealed - a relationship that I would hope to be getting back in the same spirit in which I, my “self,” is offered.⁴³

The interviewees were *not* specifically asked to comment on how their understanding of the song’s romantic relationship might be understood as political allegiance or affiliation. However, several responded to the question by drawing an analogy between the two. In her response, this interviewee zones in on loyalty, truth, and reciprocity—three themes touched upon in the song. She also suggests the song implies hope even though the lyrics do not make a direct or even oblique reference to this sentiment. Indeed, she may be recalling typical themes explored in Wonder’s

⁴² Simon Frith, *Music for pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 123.

⁴³ This interviewee attended the Harrisonburg, Virginia rally at James Madison University on October 28, 2008.

oeuvre or its connection with the civil rights period; however, more likely than not, the idea of hope came to mind because it served as a central tenet of Obama's campaign platform. As Peter Wicke has argued,

The 'content' of rock songs cannot be reduced to what is directly played or even what appears to be expressed in the lyrics. For its listeners these aspects only form the medium of which they themselves make *active* use. They integrate them into their lives and use them as symbols to make public their own experiences, just as, seen from another angle, these aspects give the experience of social reality a cultural form conveyed by the senses and thereby influence that reality.⁴⁴

In other words, just as she projects the foundation for a strong romantic relationship onto a possible political one with Obama, Obama's campaign message simultaneously inflects her reading of the song. (As I stated in chapter one, we see a similar process of complementary transference with Roosevelt's campaign song, "Happy Days Are Here Again.") Figure 6-5 illustrates how the personal might be mapped onto the political in "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours":

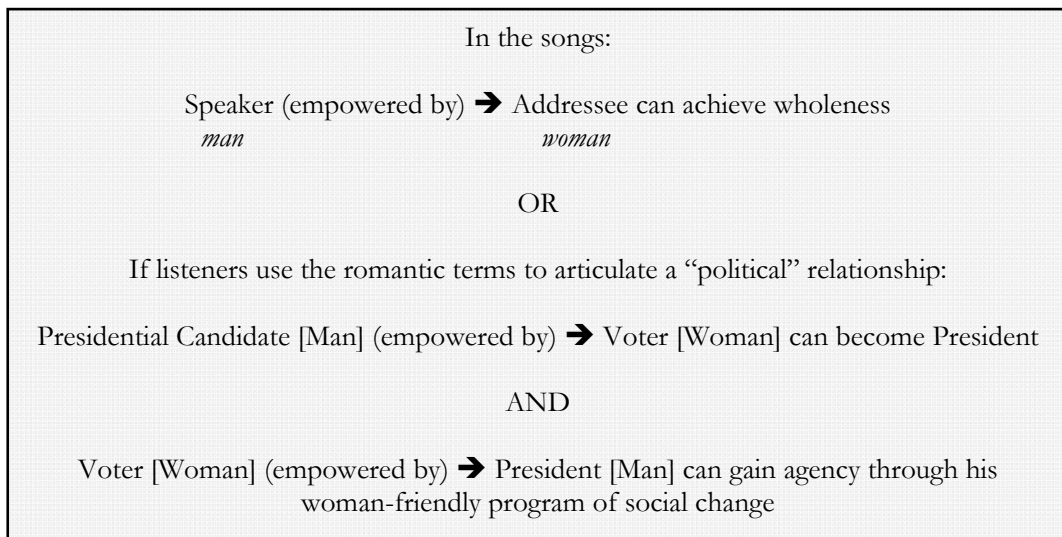


Figure 6-5 Obama and His Female Voters: The Personal Becomes Political

The participatory engagement motivated by the song's prominent texture—call and response—works to facilitate this exchange on a sonic level. Richard Middleton suggests call-and-response texture signifies conversation and mutuality, and I would argue this texture, which pervades Obama's R&B playlist, establishes a

⁴⁴ Peter Wicke, *Rock Music: Culture, Aesthetics, and Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), ix.

spirited dialectic between the songs' narrators and backup singers, who may stand in for Obama and his female voters.⁴⁵

Of course, not all voters engaged with the music in this way. One 22-year-old rally attendee provided the following response to the same question:

[“Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” has] got a good beat, and is fun to listen to, but I don’t really think about anything while listening.⁴⁶

However, even if the female listeners *do not* engage with the song’s lyrics and themes in the manner I have outlined in Figure 6-5, the act of participating in and of itself reinforces the idea of mutuality for those at any level of musical competence. My second interviewee affirms this viewpoint: in her observations of the rally attendees’ responses to the song, she claims, “most people clapped or sang along. It was a very charged atmosphere.” Music, in this sense, engenders entrainment, what Satinder Gill refers to as “the coordinating of the timing of our behaviors and the synchronizing of our attentional resources.”⁴⁷ In the videos I observed of Obama rallies, supporters chose to sing either the call or the response portions of songs; such involvement requires them to listen, wait, and respond at the right time. Although they might not see the song as an affirmation of loyalty to the candidate, the physical act of singing and the active engagement call and response solicits forges an interpersonal connection between the voters present at the event.

In reference to candidate speeches during the 1840 election cycle, Horace Greeley claimed, “After a song or two they [the voters] are more ready to listen to the orators.”⁴⁸ What might Greeley have meant by “more ready to listen?” Perhaps music, as Frith suggests, acted then as it does now—as the vehicle through which voters can experience their emotions. And, if we follow George Lakoff’s logic,

⁴⁵ Richard Middleton, “‘From Me to You’: Popular Music as Message,” in *Studying Popular Music* (Milton Keynes [UK]: Open University Press, 1990), 232.

⁴⁶ Question: Because he used “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” for his campaign, we now often associate this song with Barack Obama, but the song has been around a long time. What else does this song make you think about? This interviewee attended the Harrisonburg, Virginia rally at James Madison University on October 28, 2008.

⁴⁷ Satinder Gill, “Entrainment and Musicality in the Human System Interface,” *Artificial Intelligence & Society* 21 (2007): 568.

⁴⁸ Robert Gray Gunderson, *The Log Cabin Campaign* (Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1957), 125. See Miles, *Odes, Songs, Glee*s, xxvi-xxvii.

voters' emotional engagement enables them to embrace reason and therefore come to a position where they are more receptive to the orator. The role music played in Obama's successful campaign cannot be definitively determined, but clearly the candidate did appeal to female voters: women represented 42.2% of his campaign donors, whereas only 28% of John McCain's came from this group.⁴⁹

The Joshua Generation

The candidacy of Barack Obama precipitated much conjecture over the state of race relations in the United States—pundits, politicians, and average citizens alike all debated the issue over the course of the Democratic primary, and these conversations, much like the women-loving-Obama phenomenon, may have shaped voters' perceptions of Obama's playlist. As I hinted earlier, the historical significance of the genre and the artists most closely associated with it may add another layer of meaning. As Philip Tagg argues, “music at that time [late 1960s soul] was often associated with a more hopeful and assertive image among African Americans in the USA.”⁵⁰ When considering Obama's playlist within the frame of both the music's historical position and the universalizing rhetoric of his campaign, Party change—a new dynamic between candidate and constituent, a new health care program, a “new” Washington—or more specifically, Obama's own candidacy, functions as a symbolic step forward in the march towards greater equality for all Americans.

Obama's playlist featured music by black artists who enjoyed mainstream success in the 1960s and 1970s. Founder Barry Gordy envisioned Motown, with its slick, polished production style, as a genre that would fuse pop and R&B, and thus appeal to a broader market while simultaneously bringing professional recognition to black artists as well as affording them artistic self-determination. Although one can argue that institutionalized racism and exploitation still continued alongside practices that precipitated the integration and assimilation of black artists, retrospectively, Motown, its music, and its artists have come to signify the breakdown of stringently inscribed cultural boundaries as well as the promotion of “interracial

⁴⁹ The Center for Responsive Politics tracks federal campaign contributions and lobbying activity. See “Donor Demographics By Gender,” *Center for Responsive Politics* website, accessed March 5, 2012, http://www.opensecrets.org/pres08/donordemCID_compare.php?cycle=2008.

⁵⁰ Philip Tagg, “The Yes We Can Chords,” *Philip Tagg's Homepage*, January–March 2009, accessed July 31, 2012, <http://www.tagg.org/xpdfs/YesWeCanChords.pdf>.

understanding”⁵¹—the central initiatives of the Civil Rights Movement. As I discussed in chapter two, nostalgia tends to filter information and leave the listener with the perception of a more idealized past.⁵²

In his live appearances for Obama, Stevie Wonder affirmed this connection by making references to Martin Luther King Jr., the legacy of the Civil Rights Movement, and Obama’s place in that lineage. At a University of California-Los Angeles rally on August 3, 2008, Wonder punctuated his short speech by initiating an improvised call-and-response tune using the candidate’s name. Not surprisingly, Wonder’s performance inspired a remix that combined the Wonder “Obama scale” with auto-tuned Obama speeches.⁵³

The desire to tap into the energy and legacy of the Civil Rights Movement was not merely on the musical agenda of the Obama campaign but was a larger historical project through which the candidate attempted to align his candidacy. During his March 4, 2007 speech at the Selma Voting Rights March Commemoration at Brown Chapel in Selma, shortly after announcing his candidacy, Obama discussed how the lives of his father (who was able to study in the US because of Kennedy’s policies) and his mother (who was permitted to marry his father) as well as his own aspirations for an education and political office were made possible by those who fought for civil rights in the 1960s.⁵⁴ In his speech, he draws a

⁵¹ Smith, *Dancing in the Street*, 138.

⁵² William J. Havlena and Susan L. Holak, “‘The Good Old Days:’ Observations on Nostalgia and its Role in Consumer Behavior,” in *Advances in Consumer Research* 18, edited by Rebecca H. Holman and Michael R. Solomon (Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, 1991), 323–29, accessed June 15, 2012, <http://www.acrwebsite.org/search/view-conference-proceedings.aspx?Id=7180>.

⁵³ “Stevie Wonder Sings Obama Song,” uploaded by dbutter13, December 23, 2008, accessed March 12, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZN3caKwHIK4&feature=related>. For the remix, see “Doktor Love ft. Stevie Wonder – Barack Obama Song,” uploaded by drloveunlimited, August 3, 2008, accessed March 12, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guCcgvUeZk>.

⁵⁴ Many right-leaning bloggers questioned the accuracy of the biographical sketch Obama provided in this speech and criticized his judicious rewriting of history: Obama’s parents’ marriage and his father’s studies *predated* the march in Selma. See RC, “Barack Obama Lies about His Father’s Story in His Selma Speech,” *Red State* (blog), 2008, accessed November 14, 2010, http://archive.redstate.com/blogs/rc/2007/mar/05/barack_obama_lies_about_his_fathers_story_in_his_selma_speech; John Stephenson, “More Obama Lies the Media Will Ignore,” *NewsBusters* (blog), March 30, 2008, accessed November 14, 2010, <http://newsbusters.org/blogs/john->

parallel between the biblical heroics of Moses and the accomplishments of civil rights leaders (past and present) who “challenged Pharaoh, the princes, powers who said that some are atop and others are at the bottom, and that’s how it’s always going to be.” Then he continues by describing himself and his audience as “The Joshua Generation,” those who possess the moral imperative to continue the battle, “not just on behalf of African Americans but on behalf of all of America.”⁵⁵ Although Obama begins with the battles pertaining to civil rights, he positions this historically specific struggle within larger struggles to ensure and protect American freedoms (“the battle for America’s soul”).

The Obama campaign commonly reframed black issues as universal issues. In this speech, Obama ties his own biography to a historical moment as well as its architects. And the candidate needed to affirm this connection, as the fact that his campaign did not emerge out of the black community (as Al Sharpton’s and Jesse Jackson’s did) resulted in initial mistrust on their part. By creating a biographical (and symbolic) connection to Selma, and demonstrating his willingness to continue the fight for freedom, Obama establishes a connection with black communities and reassures black voters of what Ron Walters calls his “political blackness,” while still maintaining the relevance of the fight for (in a generalized sense) the public at large.⁵⁶ Some position Obama’s successful candidacy as a harbinger of the United States’ shift towards a post-racial society, but much conjecture surrounds this supposition.⁵⁷

stephenson/2008/03/30/more-obama-lies-media-will-ignore. The Obama campaign later admitted the candidate wrongly credited the Kennedy family for his father’s scholarship, and that when referring to Selma, Obama was actually referring to the Civil Rights Movement in general as opposed to the Selma March.

⁵⁵ Lynn Sweet, “Obama’s Selma Speech.” *Chicago Sun Times*, March 5, 2007, accessed June 24, 2010, http://blogs.suntimes.com/sweet/2007/03/obamas_selma_speech_text_as_de.html.

⁵⁶ Ron Walters, “Barack Obama and the Politics of Blackness,” *Journal of Black Studies* 38 (2007): 7–29.

⁵⁷ For more on race and the Obama candidacy, see the *Du Bois Review* 6, no. 1 (Spring 2009); Enid Lynette Logan, *“At This Defining Moment”: Barack Obama’s Presidential Candidacy and the New Politics of Race* (New York: New York University Press), 2011; Johnny Bernard Hill, *The First Black President: Barack Obama, Race, Politics, and the American Dream* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Fredrick C. Harris, *The Price of the Ticket: Barack Obama and the Rise and Decline of Black Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). For discussions in the mainstream press, see Matt Bai, “Is Obama the End of Black Politics?” *New York Times Magazine*, August 10, 2008, MM34; and Charles Johnson, “The End of the Black

As Gosa has stated, “Obama himself never used the post-racial phrase, but his performance of post-raciality included the proposition that “hope” and “hard work” could help all Americans, regardless of race, to reclaim the American Dream.⁵⁸

Obama, on at least one occasion, noted the precariousness of adopting a universalist stance: in an interview with Steve Inskeep of *National Public Radio* he claimed, “There has always been some tension between speaking in universal terms and speaking in very race-specific terms about the plight of the African-American community.”⁵⁹ The form of rhetoric Obama embraced with his playlist allowed him to situate himself between the universal and race-specific, as well as promote uncontested representations of American values. Ultimately, this stance allowed the candidate to acknowledge his own black heritage and connect with the black community as well as the broader public. The relationship between a man and a woman stands as the center narrative of the four songs I address here. Although they offer a truly universal narrative—love—the sonic qualities of the songs that tell the story not only signify blackness, but more specifically, present a style of black music associated with racial uplift, mainstream tastes, and middle-class respectability. Just as Obama used biography to forge an alliance between himself and Selma, and thus the legacy of early civil rights activists, his music culturally aligned him with the soundtrack of this struggle.

As I argued earlier, the pair of lovers (in the songs) who come together can be understood as symbolic representations of Obama and his female voters, but the duo could also act as placeholders for any two entities coming together—men and women (as suggested lyrically in the singular), black and white (as implied by the songs’ historical position and Motown’s assimilationist stance) or larger, socially diverse communities separated by race, class, religion, geographic boundaries, political affiliation, etc. (as suggested when the songs are considered within the

American Narrative,” *American Scholar* 77, no. 3 (2008): 32–42. See chapter one note 82 for additional sources on this topic.

⁵⁸ Gosa, “Not Another Remix,” 396.

⁵⁹ Walters, “Barack Obama and the Politics of Blackness,” 14.

context of Obama's campaign).⁶⁰ Although the struggles explored in these songs are framed as romantic ones, the overarching narrative of overcoming adversity, which one can argue also underlies the biography of artists like Brown and Wonder, speaks to the black experience of the 1960s, as well as to contemporary, national struggles that the candidate framed as "battles" to be fought by the Joshua generation.⁶¹

The core values encoded in the music—community, human rights, equality—resonate with the "core feminized values [that Katherine Adam and Charles Derber argue are] rooted in the Declaration of Independence."⁶² In his 2004 "Audacity of Hope" Speech, Obama downplayed the more material, masculinist signifiers of military and economic power in favor of these feminized values:

We gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy. Our pride is based on a very simple premise, summed up in a declaration made over 200 years ago, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."⁶³

Ultimately, these four songs on Obama's playlist not only contributed to the identity formation of the candidate, they also reinscribed a set of values for his constituency—not only community, human rights, and equality, as suggested above, but also, family, fidelity, and civic mindedness.

"My President is Black"

Responding to the media hype that followed his keynote speech at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, Obama claimed, "I'm rooted in the African American community but not limited to it."⁶⁴ Arguably this same logic dictated his

⁶⁰ In his work on musicals and dual focus narrative, Rick Altman argues individuals can "serve primarily as placeholders, defined by the group, rather than as characters whose development constitutes an independent subject of interest." Rick Altman, *A Theory of Narrative* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 55.

⁶¹ "Obama's Selma Speech."

⁶² Katherine Adam and Charles Derber, *The New Feminized Majority: How Democrats Can Change America with Women's Values* (Boulder: Paradigm, 2008), 145.

⁶³ Barack Obama, "Transcript: Illinois Senate Candidate Barack Obama," *Washington Post*, July 27, 2004, accessed June 4, 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A19751-2004Jul27.html>.

campaign strategy in 2008. Despite embracing a deracialized platform overall, Obama's professed musical tastes, selective appropriation of hip-hop, and campaign playlist affirmed his black identity in a way that did not compromise his universalist-inflected stance on social and political issues. When choosing a soundtrack, Obama kept it real; his list included the same classics represented on his own iPod and several of the songs indicated as his top ten favorites to *Blender* magazine.⁶⁵ His campaign playlist, or "public" music matched his "private" tastes. Although on occasion he offered some standard classic rock fare (and even Brooks & Dunn and Kanye) at his rallies, much of the time he offered R&B classics as he entered and exited the stage, reaffirming his "old school guy" status as well as his racial identity. His statements in interviews affirmed this continuity.

Although Gosa argues "the racialization of Obama as the black (male), hip-hop president was at odds with the image of Obama as the post-racial candidate for all Americans," the candidate nuanced this perception in the minds of the general public by deploying various distancing strategies.⁶⁶ The candidate offered effusive praise for the genre's genius and creativity while criticizing the social conditions that gave rise to its poetic content. However, rather than leveling criticism at the genre, he positioned the hip-hop community as potential initiators of change and called on art to pave the way to a better future. In other words, the candidate positioned hip-hop as the solution rather than the problem, and by doing so, he tacitly informed impoverished black communities that he comprehended the complexity of their social situation, while simultaneously affirming his alliance with mainstream values.

In a 2012 interview on the *Today Show* with Kathie Lee Gifford and Hoda Kotb, rapper-turned-actor Ice-T argued,

⁶⁴ Mark Leibovich, "The Other Man of the Hour: Barack Obama Is the Party's New Phenom," *Washington Post*, July 27, 2004, C01.

⁶⁵ Obama's list of favorites includes "I'm On Fire" (Springsteen), "Think" (Aretha Franklin), "City of Blinding Lights" (U2), and "Yes We Can" (will.i.am), four songs heard on the campaign trail. The candidate also includes Kanye West's "Touch the Sky," which uses a sample from Curtis Mayfield's "Move On Up," another song on his campaign playlist. See "White House DJ Battle," *Blender*, August 12, 2008. Several magazines, news outlets, and blogs, including *Seventeen* and NPR, discussed the contents of the candidates' lists.

⁶⁶ Gosa, "Not Another Remix," 398.

[rap] put Barack Obama in the presidency. If it wasn't for rap, white people wouldn't have been so open to vote for somebody like Barack Obama. . . . That had to happen after their eyes were opened up, and hip hop was what brought us together. Hip hop's what took down a lot of those boundaries. Music did that.⁶⁷

Although the artist makes a bold overstatement here, he correctly asserts hip-hop's role in precipitating a cultural exchange between youth of various backgrounds and racial identities, both nationally and transnationally. Multicultural and multiracial from its inception, hip hop draws from various musical, aesthetic, and political traditions, and therefore its identity and ability to "speak for" (or to) certain communities remains perpetually in flux. Although I primarily concern myself with how the candidate positioned himself between the hip-hop community and its outsiders (and in some cases, detractors), the conflicts within hip-hop's own community, or, *communities* bears at least passing mention here, as their response to Obama's candidacy was by no means uniform.

During the campaign Obama held high-profile meetings with artists and producers such as Ludacris, Jay-Z, Kanye West, and Russell Simmons. The candidate treads on dangerous terrain here; not everyone responded positively to the industry moguls' engagements with politics. In an article titled "Compa\$\$ionate Capitali\$m," *Village Voice* writer Ta-Nehisi Coates criticized Simmons's flirtation with political activism during the 2004 election cycle, arguing such efforts are merely a way for him to market his own products and bolster his own image. He states, "for Simmons, business is politics and politics is business, so it's essential that while he hawks voter registration he also hawks his latest product. He's been barnstorming the country with a unique, if mixed message—register to vote, and buy DefCon 3 [Simmons's energy drink] while you're at it."⁶⁸ Such critiques came from within the industry as well. In a 2001 article titled "Russell Simmons You Are Not Hip Hop," hip-hop activist Rosa Clemente challenged Simmons's self-proclaimed status as hip-hop's political leader and argued his preoccupation with hob-knobbing alongside celebrities

⁶⁷ Sadie Gennis, "Ice-T Says Rap Music Got Obama Elected President," *MyFOXAustin.com*, June 12, 2012, accessed July 1, 2012, <http://www.myfoxaustin.com/story/18782695/ice-t-says-rap-music-got-obama-elected-president#ixzz1zOPqaAbx>.

⁶⁸ Ta-Nehisi Coates, "Compa\$\$ionate Capitali\$m," *Village Voice*, January 13, 2004, 28.

and politicians had rendered him out of touch with grassroots efforts within the hip-hop movement.⁶⁹

Coates's and Clemente's remarks point to a larger struggle that plays out among those culturally invested in the genre. That is, the struggle between authentic artistic expression and commercial endeavor/corporate interests that has defined hip hop from its inception. And, one can argue, this limits its political economy. Conversely, one might argue hip-hop's internal struggle, along with the conflicts pertaining to the genre's identity, may allow it to forge an even closer relationship to Obama's own complex background and multiracial identity as well as the campaign strategy he used to make it work to his benefit. And, in a broader sense, Obama's personal narrative and hip-hop's internal conflicts, as well as its position within a larger constellation of music genres, are an embodiment of the broader political and social struggles that have defined racial politics in the post-Civil Rights era. Responding to a question about Obama in a CNN interview, the artist Common claimed "[H]e represents progress. He represents what hip hop is about. Hip hop is about progress, the struggle."⁷⁰ The struggle Common speaks of often plays out in the poetic content of rap. Obama-Hop, like the R&B classics on Obama's playlist, explores such struggles—in Obama-Hop they are cultural, social and political; in the R&B classics they are personal but have come to connote the political as well for some audiences

In conveying universal values through 1960s-70s music that embraces black cultural practices, the candidate establishes a metaphorical bridge to the contemporary African-American community and engenders a trans-historical alliance to the era of the Civil Rights Movement. The songs' sonic qualities signify blackness, but more specifically, a style of black music associated with racial uplift, black artists' move into the mainstream, and middle-class respectability. By embracing classics closely associated with the Civil Rights period, the candidate broached the significance of his racial and cultural identity to his candidacy and positioned himself

⁶⁹ Rosa Clemente, "Russell Simmons You Are Not Hip Hop," *Davey D's Hip Hop Corner* website [open letter in response to Peter Noel's article, "The Minster vs. the Mogul" (*Village Voice*, April 24, 2001)], May 2, 2001, accessed June 4, 2012, <http://www.daveyd.com/youarenohiphop.html>. For more on the Hip Hop Summit Action Network, see Wright, *Hip Hop Matters*, 143–62.

⁷⁰ Hamby, "Barack Obama Gets Name-Dropped in Hip-Hop."

as a legitimate heir to its leaders' efforts, while maintaining his universal appeal. Whereas earlier presidential candidates favored masculine-oriented classic rock to accompany their campaigns, Obama chose love songs, thus positioning the candidate-constituent relationship as analogous to the lover-beloved relationship. The songs celebrate monogamy and feature loyal, empowered women who channel their energy towards supporting their partners. With such themes, the songs affirm the candidate's adherence to traditional values. It is also worth mentioning that the hip-hop artists Obama positions as agents of change frequently sample from the hits of their black music progenitors: Wonder, Mayfield, and Gaye. Therefore, one can argue hip-hop artists, through their musical appropriation, share in the same legacy and lineage as Obama, who appropriates the political tropes and rhetoric of his black political forefathers to carve out his own legitimacy and respectability.

In 2008, YouTube offered a space where voters could engage with these struggles as they played out in the virtual sphere. Although the campaign created the official playlist and voters created and produced Obama-Hop (or other Obama-related newly composed and parody campaign songs), many of these offerings served a similar function when they intersected with other streams of campaign communication: they positioned Obama as a potential reconciler of political struggles. With the boundary between the political field and pop cultural field effaced, a candidate's cultural competence can be understood as a form of political competence, and his music-aesthetic disposition can provide a window into his political values. And in such an environment, "realness" and "respectability" as established through the candidate's music tastes, consumption practices, and campaign playlist can only reinforce the public's perception of these noble traits in the candidate and ultimately act as a positive force in the formation of his presidential image.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: BARACK OBAMA AND THE INFINITE PLAYLIST

Political scientist Dewey Clayton claimed Barack Obama “attracted many more artists to create unsolicited music and music videos than any other candidate in American political history.”¹ In 2008 the Obama campaign showed an awareness of this phenomenon and even used some of these newly composed campaign songs in an official capacity: The candidate offered a sound bite of Asian-American rapper Jin’s “Open Letter 2 Obama” as a ringtone on his website and even used the song at a campaign rally.² John Legend and will.i.am performed “Yes We Can” at the Democratic National Convention in August 2008. And, shortly before Election Day, the campaign released *Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots Movement*, a compilation CD featuring songs (both originals and covers) interwoven with snippets of Martin Luther King Jr. and Obama speeches (Fig. 7-1).



Figure 7-1 *Yes We Can: Voices of a Grassroots Movement* CD, cover

In the realm of campaigns, we have already arrived at what Jacques Attali refers to as the utopic “composition” stage of music—the final stage of musical development where the division between consumer and producer is erased, as the technologies of

¹ Dewey M. Clayton, *The Presidential Campaign of Barack Obama: A Critical Analysis of a Racially Transcendent Strategy* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 144.

² J. Freedom du Lac, “Rappers’ Shout-Outs Make Obama Skip a Beat,” *Washington Post*, August 1, 2008, C01, accessed November 1, 2012, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/08/01/AR2008080100017.html>.

late capitalism have allowed everyone to act as both.³ Attali's theory and Clayton's observation raise the following question: where does this leave pre-existing popular songs, the music that candidates began to use regularly in the 1970s and have continued to use as the soundtrack for their campaigns to the present day, whether it be for image-making, community building, or simply generating excitement among voters?

As I have shown, up until 2008, voters primarily engaged with candidates' music in live contexts—rallies, concerts, conventions—or through home music consumption. However, the advent of the iPod/MP3 player has transformed *how* and *where* people consume music—by 2005 Apple had sold over 42 million iPods.⁴ In the age of “mobile privatization” as Raymond Williams calls it, listening can be a solitary act, and since a person can carry their entire music library with them on the go, they can use music as a means of structuring their sonic environment at will.⁵ iPod users create their own playlists as a means of establishing an aural space appropriate to a particular activity or to establish/reflect a certain mood.⁶ The expansion of the campaign playlist and its diversity reflects the increasing shift towards individualization in music preferences; however, the way candidates use their playlists could also be a reflection of a larger social trend towards the use of lists.

Liam Young argues, “Recent years have seen a mass of countdowns, rankings, and ‘best of the all-time’ collections of cultural information steadily expand, as myriad cultural access points have co-opted and become increasingly reliant on presenting information via lists.”⁷ In 2008, Hillary Clinton offered a list of choices on

³ Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 32.

⁴ Steven Levy, *The Perfect Thing: How the iPod Shuffles Commerce, Culture, and Coolness* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006), 3.

⁵ Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975). Cited in Michael Bull, “No Dead Air! The iPod and the Culture of Mobile Listening,” *Leisure Studies* 24, no. 4 (2005): 345.

⁶ Bull, “No Dead Air,” 343–44.

⁷ Liam Young, “The List and/as Critical Environment: Un-‘Black Boxing’ Bob Mersereau’s Top 100 Canadian Singles” (paper, International Association for the Study of Popular Music Conference, Montreal, QC 2011), accessed June 25, 2012, http://iaspm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/2011_liamyoung_list_mersereau.pdf.

her “Choose Our Campaign Song” ballot, *Blender* and *Rolling Stone* published lists of the candidates’ favorite songs, and several newspapers printed lists of songs the candidates played on the campaign trail and provided commentary, critique, or suggestions. In these contexts, the list can establish cultural competence on the part of the candidate, affirm the music’s value or social relevance, or serve as a springboard for discussions regarding a candidate’s own values. As Young indicates, lists can serve as a “marketing device” or as a “communicative field between producers and consumers,” and I would argue the *playlist* can serve similar functions in a campaign as well.

Although the creation of a playlist can be described as a private act, the exchange of playlists has become an increasingly significant form of online engagement. In addition to transforming *how* candidates present themselves to their constituents, Web 2.0 technologies with their “architecture of participation” have carved out a virtual space where the digital citizen can more fully engage with the candidate and their music. (We saw such transformations in the 2008 campaigns of Obama and Clinton.) The same technologies that have facilitated the dissemination of newly composed campaign songs have expanded the opportunities for candidates and constituents to engage with pre-existing music as well. Here I would like to consider the 2012 candidates’ presence on the music streaming website Spotify and interrogate the playlisting phenomenon’s potential to reconfigure the composition, sound, and function of campaign soundscapes in the future.

In February, Barack Obama announced his 2012 official campaign playlist on the micro-blogging/social networking site Tumblr, and promoted it on both his Facebook page and Twitter account (Fig. 7-2).⁸ (Note that the altered Obama campaign logo located in the upper left-hand side of the page takes the form of a pair of headphones.)

⁸ Established in 2007, Tumblr is a microblogging platform that allows its users to share videos, images, music, and short messages. See <http://www.tumblr.com/about> (accessed November 26, 2012).



Figure 7-2 Barack Obama Spotify Playlist Announcement on Tumblr⁹

The Tumblr site allows users to “like” or comment on the contents of users’ pages and reblog their content. Obama also extended an invitation to the Tumblr community to add to his playlist (Fig. 7-2). A few weeks later, the Obama campaign acknowledged the community’s request for “more Motown” and “universal calls for more Springsteen” (Fig. 7-3).

⁹ “Behold: The 2012 Campaign Playlist on Spotify,” *Barack Obama Tumblr Page*, February 2012, accessed July 17, 2012, <http://barackobama.tumblr.com/post/17319836576/behold-the-2012-campaign-playlist-on-spotify>.

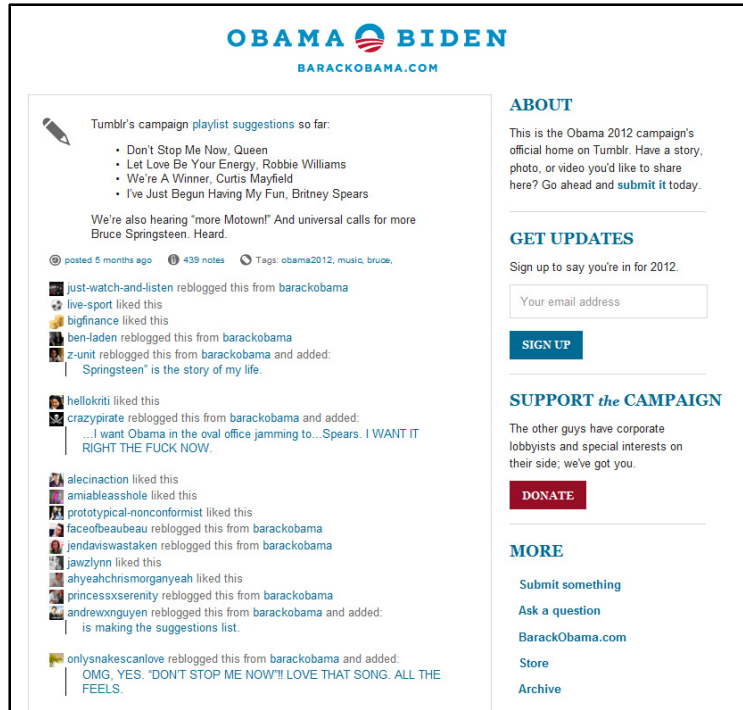


Figure 7-3 Tumblr Community Responses to Obama's Playlist¹⁰

As I addressed earlier in my analyses of the 2008 Clinton and Obama campaigns, candidates' presences on social networking and user-generated content sites, in this case Tumblr, suggest the boundary between the official campaign and shadow campaign in the realm of popular culture has imploded. Obama's Tumblr page includes content posted by the candidate alongside photos, videos, and stories submitted by his followers, and the serious and silly go hand in hand. In Figure 7-4 we see a snapshot of the posts from Obama's Tumblr page in June 2012: A report of the Pay Equity Act (with a chart showing the gender gap in the Senate vote) appears alongside Obama's name created in Legos and an adorable pooch tricked out in an Obama-Biden tee-shirt.

¹⁰ "Tumblr's Campaign Playlist Suggestions So Far," *Barack Obama Tumblr Page*, February 2012, accessed July 17, 2012, <http://barackobama.tumblr.com/post/17329917914/tumblrs-campaign-playlist-suggestions-so-far>.

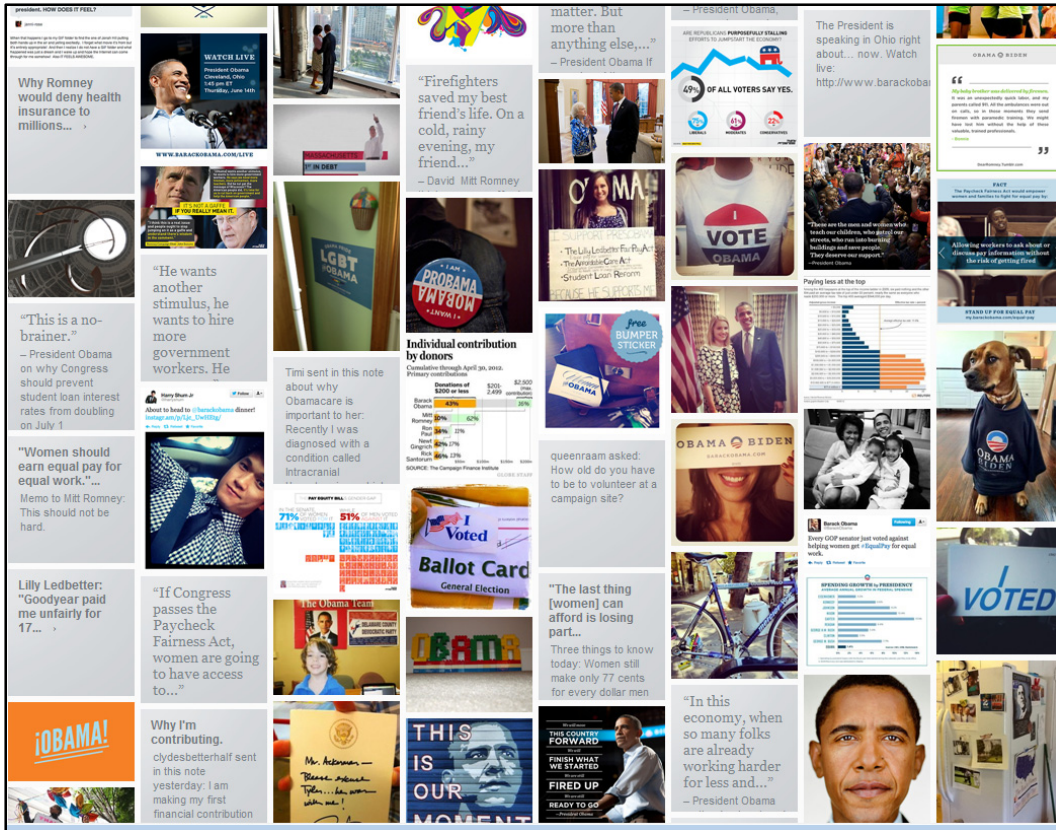


Figure 7-4 Barack Obama Tumblr Archive, June 2012¹¹

Obama released his playlist on the cloud-based, music-streaming site Spotify, which proudly claims to be the “all the music, all the time” digital music service. Not to be outdone, Republican challenger Mitt Romney announced his own Spotify playlist on Twitter in March 2012.¹² Through their computers, phones, or mobile devices, Spotify members can stream millions of songs from any location. The site offers mobile iPhone and Android apps that allow users to sync playlists to multiple devices, and users can also purchase their playlists in mp3 format and sync them to their iPods. Integration with Facebook and Twitter allows Spotify users to share their playlists with other users as well. If a Spotify user listens to a song, the song information and a link appears on their Facebook news-feed; then, their friends can see what they are listening to and access the music themselves through Spotify’s

¹¹ Archive, *Barack Obama Tumblr Page*, June 2012, accessed July 17, 2012, <http://barackobama.tumblr.com/archive>.

¹² Ariel Edwards-Levy, “Mitt Romney’s Spotify Playlist,” *Huffington Post*, March 9, 2012, accessed July 18, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/09/mitt-romneys-spotify-play_n_1335839.html.

cloud-based player.¹³ Users can also share tracks on their friends' social networks.¹⁴ Figures 7-5 and 7-6 show Obama's 2012 Campaign Playlist and his Supporter Picks list, which includes some of the songs suggested by his Tumblr and Twitter subscribers.

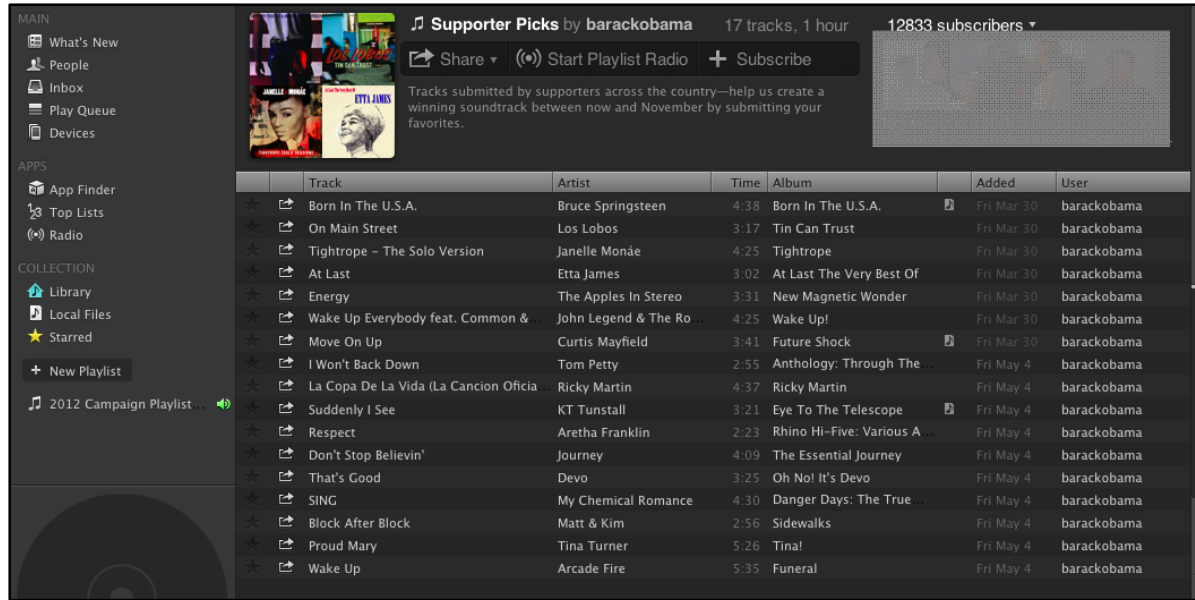
Track	Artist	Time	Album	Added	User
Keep Marchin'	Raphael Saadiq	2:38	The Way I See It	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Tonight's The Kind Of Night	Noah And The Whale	3:10	Last Night On Earth	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
We Take Care Of Our Own	Bruce Springsteen	3:54	We Take Care Of Our Own	5 days ago	barackobama
Keep Me In Mind	Zac Brown Band	3:34	You Get What You Give	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
The Weight	Aretha Franklin	2:54	Aretha Franklin	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Even Better Than The Real Thing	U2	3:41	Achtung Baby	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Home	Dierks Bentley	3:58	Home	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Different People	No Doubt	4:35	Tragic Kingdom	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Got To Get You Into My Life - (Live)	Earth Wind & Fire Experi...	4:07	Earth Wind & Fire Experi...	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Green Onions - Single/LP Version	Booker T. & The MG's	2:54	Green Onions	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
I Got You	Wilco	3:57	Being There	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Keep On Pushing - Single Version	The Impressions	2:34	20th Century Masters: The...	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Love You I Do	Performed by Jennifer H...	2:49	Dreamgirls (Soundtrack)	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
No Nostalgia	AgesandAges	3:22	Alright You Restless	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Raise Up	Ledisi	4:04	Pieces Of Me	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Stand Up	Sugarland	3:41	The Incredible Machine	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
This	Darius Rucker	3:39	Charleston, SC 1966	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
We Used to Wait	Arcade Fire	5:01	The Suburbs Deluxe	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
You've Got The Love	Florence + The Machine	2:49	Lungs	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Your Smiling Face	James Taylor	2:54	James Taylor Live	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Roll With The Changes	REO Speedwagon	5:37	The Hits	Wed Jan 25	barackobama
Everyday America	Sugarland	3:52	Enjoy The Ride	5 days ago	barackobama
Learn To Live	Darius Rucker	3:48	Learn To Live	5 days ago	barackobama
Let's Stay Together	Al Green	3:19	We Are Marshall Soundtrack	5 days ago	barackobama
Mr. Blue Sky	Electric Light Orchestra	5:03	Out of the Blue	5 days ago	barackobama
My Town	Montgomery Gentry	4:46	Something To Be Proud Of...	5 days ago	barackobama
The Best Thing About Me Is You Feat. Jos...	Ricky Martin	3:36	Más Música + Alma + Sexo	5 days ago	barackobama
You Are The Best Thing	Ray LaMontagne	3:51	You Are The Best Thing	5 days ago	barackobama

Figure 7-5 2012 Campaign Playlist–Barack Obama (Spotify)¹⁵

¹³ Trevor Essmeier, "Spotify: Pioneers in Cloud Technology," *Fresh Consulting*, n.d., accessed July 19, 2012, <http://freshconsulting.com/spotify-pioneers-in-cloud-technology/>.

¹⁴ See Spotify, accessed July 17, 2012, <http://www.spotify.com/int/about/what/>.

¹⁵ User information has been shaded in Figures 7-5 and 7-6.



Supporter Picks by barackobama 17 tracks, 1 hour 12833 subscribers

Share Start Playlist Radio + Subscribe

Tracks submitted by supporters across the country—help us create a winning soundtrack between now and November by submitting your favorites.

	Track	Artist	Time	Album	Added	User
★	Born In The U.S.A.	Bruce Springsteen	4:38	Born In The U.S.A.	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	On Main Street	Los Lobos	3:17	Tin Can Trust	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	Tightrope - The Solo Version	Janelle Monáe	4:25	Tightrope	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	At Last	Etta James	3:02	At Last The Very Best Of	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	Energy	The Apples In Stereo	3:31	New Magnetic Wonder	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	Wake Up Everybody feat. Common & ...	John Legend & The Ro	4:25	Wake Up!	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	Move On Up	Curtis Mayfield	3:41	Future Shock	Fri Mar 30	barackobama
★	I Won't Back Down	Tom Petty	2:55	Anthology: Through The	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	La Copa De La Vida (La Cancion Oficial)	Ricky Martin	4:37	Ricky Martin	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	Suddenly I See	KT Tunstall	3:21	Eye To The Telescope	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	Respect	Aretha Franklin	2:23	Rhino Hi-Five: Various A	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	Don't Stop Believin'	Journey	4:09	The Essential Journey	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	That's Good	Devo	3:25	Oh No! It's Devo	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	SING	My Chemical Romance	4:30	Danger Days: The True	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	Block After Block	Matt & Kim	2:56	Sidewalks	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	Proud Mary	Tina Turner	5:26	Tina!	Fri May 4	barackobama
★	Wake Up	Arcade Fire	5:35	Funeral	Fri May 4	barackobama

Figure 7-6 2012 Supporter Picks–Barack Obama (Spotify)

With his 2012 playlist, Obama stays true to his “old school kinda guy” self by including Earth, Wind & Fire, Aretha Franklin, Booker T. & the M.G.’s, and Al Green. He also includes Springsteen and U2, as he did in 2008. However, overall the composition of his list differs from the one he used in his previous election campaign. Here Obama rounds out his playlist with a handful of indie groups—AgesandAges, Noah and the Whale, Florence + the Machine, and Arcade Fire. AgesandAges got their start in Portland, but Noah and Florence come from the UK, and Arcade Fire, the 2011 Album of the Year Grammy-award winner, hails from Montreal. That is to say, Obama’s 2012 playlist can be described as more “international” than his 2008 list. Clinton indulged in a bit of playlist “tourism” in 2008 and received a lot of flak for it. Perhaps Obama has received less criticism because he chose to go the indie route, whereas Clinton went with either popular mainstream artists or songs that already had appeared in commercial contexts: Air Canada featured Celine Dion’s “You and I” in a television commercial, KT Tunstall’s song “Suddenly I See” appeared in several primetime shows, and U2s “Beautiful Day” made the rounds at sporting events. Country also plays a more prominent role in 2012; Obama’s playlist includes Montgomery Gentry, the Zac Brown Band, Dierks Bentley, and Darius Rucker. To sum up, in 2012, the candidate projects a different kind of hipness than he did in 2008. The list here may indeed be

less targeted towards women and black voters and instead appeal to independent white male voters, a group both candidates recognize as crucial in 2012.

Although individuals create playlists primarily to shape their own sonic environment, the increase of sites that allow users to share, collectively create, and rate them has allowed this act to be both solitary and social; personal and public.¹⁶ Ultimately this exchange transforms how voters engage with campaign music and the contexts through which they are exposed to it. The playlist, a form of “disclosure” one might argue, can be a way of performing one’s identity in the public sphere. As I discussed with Hillary Clinton’s song contest videos, intimacy between a candidate and constituent can be forged through disclosures (e.g., Clinton’s confession that she cannot sing). With Spotify, the candidate allows their playlist to become a part of (or even structure) the listener’s private sonic world.¹⁷ But at the same time, the listener/voter can play a part in creating the composition of Obama’s public soundscape by offering up his/her own suggestions for the Supporter Picks playlist, the content of which the candidate claims he will include at campaign events. Therefore, the dialogically constituted playlist actually heard “on the ground” reflects a segment of the public’s professed tastes at a given moment.

In 2012, the voter-suggestion model for playlists is the ideal one as candidates develop a digital strategy for their campaigns that includes micro targeting.¹⁸ Through tracking internet browsing histories and collecting online user data, campaigns can create digital profiles for voters and then channel campaign resources towards the development of specially tailored display ads or even pre-roll

¹⁶ Michael Bull addresses how this technology allows people to structure their private sonic “bubble” while inhabiting a public space. I would argue cloud technology has taken this a step further, as individuals can access even larger music libraries (more than what can be stored on an iPod or MP3 player) from multiple computing and mobile devices.

¹⁷ There is, of course, precedence for this. Apple’s iTunes media program offers users the opportunity to purchase celebrities’ playlists. See “Popular Celebrity Playlists,” accessed July 17, 2012, <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewCelebritiesSeeAll?s=143441>.

¹⁸ Demographic data has been around for some time, but this only allows candidates to target larger subsets of the population, *not* individuals. With campaigns, microtargeting didn’t really pick up momentum until 2004. See Wynton C. Hall, “The Invention of ‘Quantifiably Safe Rhetoric’: Richard Wirthlin and Ronald Reagan’s Instrumental Use of Public Opinion Research in Presidential Discourse,” *Western Journal of Communication* 66, no. 3 (2002): 324, accessed May 30, 2012, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10570310209374740>.

ads on YouTube that target those most likely to vote for them.¹⁹ (These advertisements are economical for the campaign, as they are only charged a fee if the user clicks to view them.) Similarly, the campaign team can monitor the responses to Obama's playlist as they appear on social media sites and then alter their music selections to cater to specific tastes.

While offering possibilities for candidates, Spotify also presents challenges. A search under "Barack Obama" on Spotify brings up Obama's official campaign playlist and recordings of many of his most famous speeches, as well as newly composed Obama songs.²⁰ Users can potentially combine any of the above and create and share their own Barack Obama playlists if they wish—essentially, they can construct the candidate (at least sonically) in their own way. Although not music composition per se, the creation of a playlist can be viewed as a "composerly" act. Whereas in the past candidates limited the size and diversity of their playlists to create continuity between appearances and reinforce certain traits and values, it would seem the expansiveness, diversity, and fluctuating content of the 2012 playlist established by Obama would limit his ability to accomplish these same goals through music. This brings us back to the question that I posited in the opening chapter: what can campaign songs do? Or, more specifically, what can campaign songs do in 2012?

Although it is a bit early in the election cycle to draw any definitive conclusions, I would argue that in the current landscape, music's value lies *less* in its ability to construct the candidate and more in its potential value as an object of symbolic exchange between candidates and voters. Such exchanges are a central aspect of digital citizenship. Music assumes a ubiquitous presence in an environment bombarded by multimedia contexts where exchanges are increasingly tied to screens

¹⁹ Beth Fouhy, "2012 Election: Campaigns Mine Online Data to Target Voters," *Huffington Post* [Pollster], May 28, 2012, accessed July 17, 2012, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/28/2012-election-internet-data_n_1550720.html.

²⁰ Spotify (and iTunes) offer many Obama selections; some were created in response to his candidacy whereas others were conceived as tributes after he assumed office. For musical offerings inspired by the re-election campaign, see on Spotify "I'm Gonna Win – (Barack Obama Campaign Rap)" by Alphacat; "Politics as Usual (Vote for Obama 2012) [feat. President Barack Obama]" by Doctor J, The Jinni & Magic Man Mel; and "The Official 'Obama 2012' Rap Song" by C.A.S.I.N.O. See also the official 2009 inauguration album, *Change is Now: Renewing America's Promise*.

(whether it be a laptop, iPad, smartphone, or television). Therefore, the traditional campaign playlist used for live events, which usually included ten to twenty regularly played songs, could potentially overwhelm voters in a hyper-mediated environment.

Obama's creation of an expansive and dynamic 2012 playlist may also be a response to the increasing diversification of listener preferences. Over the past three years, I have surveyed over 400 students in my popular music history classes and have found that the UK-US popular music axis no longer dominates their listening preferences. Relying on music sharing, social networking, and user-generated content sites, young people have increasingly gravitated towards global pop, niche genres, and the music of local artists. Students report creating playlists for their mobile devices based on their presumed activity (walking to class, working out, pre-drinking) with no consideration of how songs might fit together according to genre, period, or theme. Mahler's Fourth Symphony can appear alongside Weezer, and music from an unknown Korean pop star might be paired with Britney Spears on a "Girls Night" playlist. Young consumers desire novelty, eclecticism, and fetishize the obscure. Many identify with highly divergent styles and engage in interactions with fan communities across the globe (see Appendix F for this survey).

Although the content of Obama's playlist may not "work" in live contexts, it surely shows an awareness of how individuals and groups interact with music in online communities and the symbolic value this holds for consumers who fashion online identities through their demonstration of cultural competence in music. And, awareness of this practice affirms the candidate's cultural competence as well. While the content of Obama's playlist may indeed reinforce his image as the people's candidate, the use of sites such as Spotify, Twitter, and Tumblr brings a certain level of cultural cachet to the candidate and reinforces his standing as the "first internet president." VH1 reporter Kat George claims the embrace of these technologies gives him a "modern edge" over the other candidates and makes him "unspeakably cool," and his Tumblr followers concur.²¹

²¹ Kat George, "President Obama Releases His 28 Song Campaign Playlist on Spotify," *VH1*, February 9, 2012, accessed July 17, 2012, <http://www.vh1.com/music/tuner/2012-02-09/president-obama-releases-a-28-song-strong-campaign-playlist-on-spotify>.

In his analysis of the function of lists in art and literature, Umberto Eco argues lists offer what he calls a “topos of ineffability.” If an author deals with a subject that is immense or possesses a depth of content that can never fully be known, he may propose a list “as a specimen, example, or indication, leaving the reader to imagine the rest.”²² In other words, the list inevitably draws attention to its incompleteness. The Spotify format, combined with Obama’s open call for suggestions, draws attention to the playlist’s identity as an open work of sorts, as something incomplete and in need of completion. (Eco refers to this as the “etcetera” of the list.) The layout of a Spotify account takes on the appearance of a shop window; many albums or songs are listed, but at the same time, with its arrows and scrollbars, it hints towards the additional content that is “inside” (Fig. 7-7).²³

²² Umberto Eco, *The Infinity of Lists: From Homer to Joyce* (London: MacLehose, 2009), 49.

²³ Ibid., 353–60. For more on consumer culture and the appearance of abundance, see Jean Baudrillard, “Consumer Society,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. Mark Poster (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 32–59.

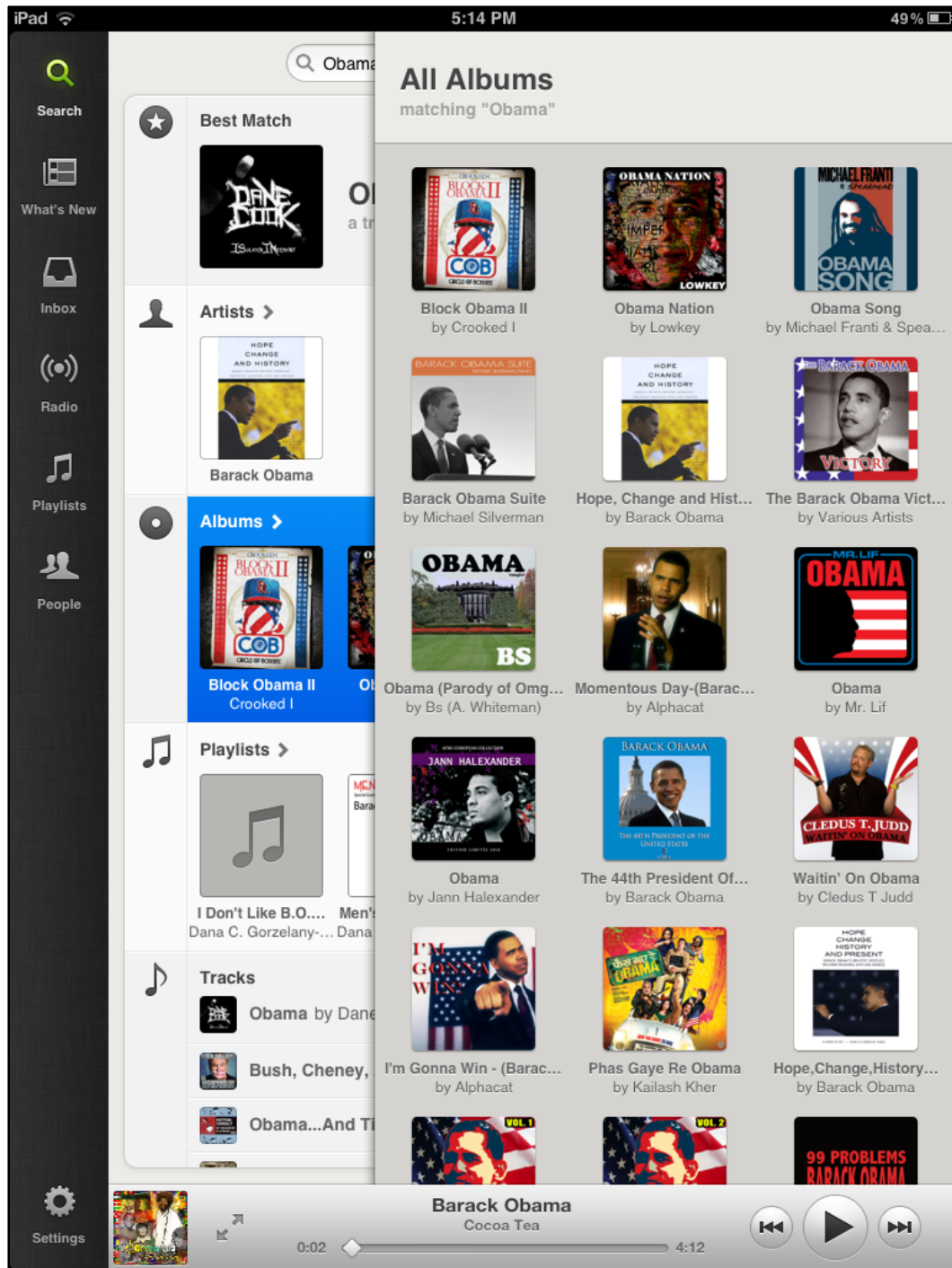


Figure 7-7 “Obama” Search on Spotify, Author’s Account

And with its tag, “all music, all the time,” Spotify points towards the ostensible infinity of its own content.

This apparently infinite quality places Obama’s 2012 playlist in the realm of Eco’s “poetic list”: poetic in the sense that its content cannot be quantified and

“eludes our capacity for control and denomination.”²⁴ The soundscapes of campaigns, more broadly, take on this same quality. By choosing incomplete lists Obama can accomplish his micro-targeting goals, show hipness, and forge intimacy as he calls on the community to add to his playlist. At the same time, in addition to redefining what campaign songs can do, his choices redefine the very limits of the genre. In the 19th century campaign songs sometimes quoted material from candidates’ speeches or slogans. Similarly, in 2008, unknown artists and amateurs used digital samples from Obama speeches as the basis for new musical compositions inspired by his candidacy. Excerpts from Obama’s autobiographical books *The Audacity of Hope* and *Dreams of My Father* have figured prominently in new compositions. (Travis Gosa notes the mixtape *The Audacity of Hope*, which layers a remix of the audiobook over original songs that explore the book’s themes.²⁵) Although newly composed campaign music offered by the electorate has circulated for some time, forums such as YouTube have afforded potential voters a platform to disseminate their creative efforts as well as engage with reflective commentary; and musical response, after response, after response often follows (Eco’s etcetera). For example, the video “I’ve Got a Crush on Obama” precipitated the creation of “Hott 4 Hill,” and “Yes We Can” inspired the composition of “John He Is.” The result: an infinite playlist of potential campaign songs.

In 2008, the Obama campaign made use of at least two of these songs in an official capacity. More recently, in 2012, Obama himself gave an impromptu performance of a pre-existing song before officially making it a campaign song. At an Apollo Theatre fundraiser on January 19 he crooned a verse from Al Green’s “Let’s Stay Together;” it went viral, and then its digital download sales jumped 490%. Green claimed the candidate “nailed” the performance, and the *Huffington Post* quipped, “[w]ho knew the President would be a one-man stimulus package for the music industry?”²⁶ As speeches become songs, and songs become a part of speeches,

²⁴ Eco, *Infinity of Lists*, 117–18.

²⁵ Travis L. Gosa, “Not Another Remix: How Obama Became the First Hip Hop President,” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 22, no. 4 (2010): 399, DOI: 10.1111/j.1533-1598.2010.01252.x.

²⁶ “President Obama Sings Al Green’s ‘Let’s Stay Together,’ Sales Jump 490%,” *Huffington Post*, January 27, 2012, accessed July 23, 2012, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/01/27/president->

the campaign soundscape becomes a multi-dimensional space where candidates, musicians, and voters may speak with a voice and with words that are not their own.

Online music exchanges, like the playlist's content, are infinite as well. Voters can suggest a song for Obama through his Tumblr blog, share Romney's Spotify playlist with their Facebook contacts, comment on the appropriateness of "Born Free" as a campaign song after viewing Kid Rock's Romney rally performance on YouTube, and then post a tweet about the whole experience to their Twitterista followers on Twitter . . . and the exchanges continue. Considering these new developments, we might consider the campaign playlist as a palimpsest of sorts, where boundaries, content, and signifier/signified remain in a perpetual state of flux, and can be constantly created and recreated by anyone who chooses—candidate or constituent. In the 21st century, campaign songs are *not* just "a little musical priming," to return to Irving Berlin's words, they are the stuff that forges a space for deliberative discourse (or exchanges, musical and otherwise) and ultimately facilitates the construction of voting subjects.

obama-sings-al-green-lets-stay-together-sales-jump_n_1236428.html. For Obama's performance, see "Raw Video: Obama Sings Al Green," Uploaded by AssociatedPress, January 20, 2012, accessed July 23, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6uHR90Sq6k>.

APPENDIX A

“Why Not the Best”

(Jimmy Carter Campaign Song, 1976)

I heard a young man speaking out just the other day;
I stopped just to listen to what he had to say;
He spoke straight and simple—by that I was impressed.
He said, “Once and for all, why not the best?”

He said his name was Jimmy Carter and he was running for President,
And he laid out a plan of action—made a lot of sense!
He talked about the government and how it used to be, for you and me;
That’s the way it ought to be, right now:
Once and for all, why not the best?

He spoke plain and simple and I began to understand
I was listening to quite a man, talking to me.
I began to see...
We need Jimmy Carter! Why settle for less?
America—
Once and for all, why not the best?

We need Jimmy Carter! We can’t afford to settle for less,
America—
Once and for all, why not the best?
Why not the best?
Why not the best?

Radio Ad, “Why Not the Best?” Carter Audio-Visual Files, Jimmy Carter Library.

“(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher”

recorded by Jackie Wilson (1967)

Billy Davis and Raynard Miner/Gary Jackson and Carl Smith



“Think”

(recorded by Aretha Franklin in 1968)
Aretha Franklin and Ted White





“Respect”

(recorded by Aretha Franklin in 1967)

Otis Redding (1965)

(oo) What you want	[instrumental break]
(oo) Baby, I got	
(oo) What you need	Ooo, your kisses (oo)
(oo) Do you know I got it?	Sweeter than honey (oo)
(oo) All I’m askin’	And guess what? (oo)
(oo) Is for a little respect when you come home (just a little bit)	So is my money (oo)
Hey baby (just a little bit) when you get home	All I want you to do (oo) for me
(just a little bit) mister (just a little bit)	Is give it to me when you get home (re, re, re ,re)
I ain’t gonna do you wrong while you’re gone	Yeah baby (re, re, re ,re)
Ain’t gonna do you wrong (oo) ‘cause I don’t wanna (oo)	Whip it to me (respect, just a little bit)
All I’m askin’ (oo)	When you get home, now (just a little bit)
Is for a little respect when you come home (just a little bit)	R-E-S-P-E-C-T
Baby (just a little bit) when you get home (just a little bit)	Find out what it means to me
Yeah (just a little bit)	R-E-S-P-E-C-T
I’m about to give you all of my money	Take care, TCB
And all I’m askin’ in return, honey	
Is to give me my profits	Oh (sock it to me, sock it to me, sock it to me, sock it to me)
When you get home (just a, just a, just a, just a)	A little respect (sock it to me, sock it to me, sock it to me, sock it to me)
Yeah baby (just a, just a, just a, just a)	Whoa, babe (just a little bit)
When you get home (just a little bit)	A little respect (just a little bit)
Yeah (just a little bit)	I get tired (just a little bit)
I’m about to give you all of my money	Keep on tryin’ (just a little bit)
And all I’m askin’ in return, honey	You’re runnin’ out of foolin’ (just a little bit)
Is to give me my profits	And I ain’t lyin’ (just a little bit)
When you get home (just a, just a, just a, just a)	(re, re, re, re) ‘spect
Yeah baby (just a, just a, just a, just a)	When you come home (re, re, re ,re)
When you get home (just a little bit)	Or you might walk in (respect, just a little bit)
Yeah (just a little bit)	And find out I’m gone (just a little bit)
	I got to have (just a little bit)
	A little respect (just a little bit)

Respect

Words and Music by Otis Redding

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APPENDIX B

2004 Republican National Convention Live Performances

Madison Square Garden in New York City, NY

(August 30 - September 2, 2004)

Day One (morning) “A Nation of Courage”	
Broadway Melodies for Bush “Medley” (includes Sidewalks of New York,” “How About You?,” “NYC,” “New York State of Mind,” “Give My Regards to Broadway,” Lullaby of Broadway”)	musical theatre/pop
Day One (evening)	
“Medley” (includes “Tonight,” “America,” “People Will Say Were in Love,” “On the Street Where You Live,” “All That Jazz,” “Fugue for Tinhorns,” “76 Trombones” “There’s No Business Like Show Business”)	musical theatre
Dexter Freebish “Leaving Town”	country
Christ Tabernacle Choir “Medley” (includes “Halls of Montezuma,” “Caisson Song,” “Anchor’s Away” “Semper Paratus,” “The Air Force Song”)	gospel/inspirational
Darryl Worley	country
Daniel Rodriguez “Amazing Grace”	gospel/inspirational
Day Two (evening) “People of Compassion”	
Dana Glover	pop/gospel
Jaci Velasquez “Con Tu Amor”	Christian/Latin
Daize Shayne	Rock
Harlem Boys Choir	
Day Three (evening) “A Land of Opportunity”	
Third Day “I Got a Feeling”	Christian rock
Sara Evans	country
Brooks and Dunn	country
Day Four (evening) “A Safer World, A More Hopeful America”	
Donnie McClurkin	gospel/Christian
Michael W. Smith	Christian pop

* The above list does not include the singers who sang the national anthem each morning, or the selections the floor band played as suture and to accompany the entrance of speakers.

APPENDIX C

Vote for Change Tour: Participating Artists and Venues

September 27, 2004 (Washington)

McCaw Hall	Seattle, WA	Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne
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September 29, 2004 (Arizona)

Cricket Pavilion	Phoenix, AZ	Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne (with special guests Jack Johnson and Crosby, Stills, & Nash)
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October 1, 2004 (Pennsylvania)

Sovereign Center	Reading, PA	Gob Roberts, Death Cab for Cutie, Pearl Jam
Wachovia Center	Philadelphia, PA	Bright Eyes, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band (with special guest John Fogerty)
Bryce Jordan Center	State College, PA	My Morning Jacket, Jurassic 5, Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals, Dave Matthews Band
Heinz Hall	Pittsburgh, PA	James Taylor, Dixie Chicks
F.M. Kirby Center	Wilkes-Barre, PA	Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, John Mellencamp

October 2, 2004 (Ohio)

Taft Theatre	Cincinnati, OH	Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne
Sports Arena	Toledo, OH	Gob Roberts, Death Cab for Cutie, Pearl Jam (with special guests Peter Dinklage, Pegi Young, and Neil Young)
Gund Arena	Cleveland, OH	Bright Eyes, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band (with special guest John Fogerty)
Ervin J. Nutter Center	Dayton, OH	My Morning Jacket, Jurassic 5, Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals, Dave Matthews Band
State Theater	Cleveland, OH	James Taylor, Dixie Chicks
Promo West Pavilion	Columbus, OH	Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, John Mellencamp

October 3, 2004 (Michigan)

Wharton Center	East Lansing, MI	Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne
DeltaPlex Arena,	Grand Rapids, MI	Gob Roberts, Death Cab for Cutie, Pearl Jam
Cobo Arena	Detroit, MI	Bright Eyes, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band (with special guest John Fogerty), and visit by Dixie Chicks
The Palace of Auburn Hills	Auburn Hills, MI	My Morning Jacket, Jurassic 5, Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals, Dave Matthews Band (with unannounced guest Neil Young)
Fox Theatre	Detroit, MI	James Taylor, Dixie Chicks
Wings Stadium	Kalamazoo, MI	Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, John Mellencamp

October 5, 2004 (Midwest)

Midland Theatre	Kansas City, MO	Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt, Jackson Browne
Fox Theatre	St. Louis, MO	Gob Roberts, Death Cab for Cutie, Pearl Jam
Xcel Energy Center	Saint Paul, MN	Bright Eyes, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band (with special guest John Fogerty and unannounced guest Neil Young)
Kohl Center	Madison, WI	My Morning Jacket, Jurassic 5, Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals, Dave Matthews Band
Hancher Auditorium	Iowa City, IA	James Taylor, Dixie Chicks
Riverside Theater	Milwaukee, WI	Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, John Mellencamp

October 6, 2004 (Midwest)

Civic Center	Des Moines, IA	John Prine, Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt
Civic Center	Asheville, NC	Gob Roberts, Death Cab for Cutie, Pearl Jam
Hilton Coliseum	Ames, IA	My Morning Jacket, Jurassic 5, Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals, Dave Matthews Band (with unannounced guest Neil Young)
Fox Theatre	St. Louis, MO	James Taylor, Dixie Chicks

October 8, 2004 (Florida)

Moran Theater	Jacksonville, FL	Sheryl Crow, Keb' Mo', Bonnie Raitt
Silver Spurs Arena	Kissimmee, FL	Gob Roberts, Death Cab for Cutie, Pearl Jam (with special guests Peter Frampton and Neil Young)
TD Waterhouse Center	Orlando, FL	Tracy Chapman, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band (with special guest John Fogerty)
O'Connell Center	Gainesville, FL	Jurassic 5, Ben Harper and the Innocent Criminals, Dave Matthews Band
Ruth Eckerd Hall	Clearwater, FL	James Taylor, Dixie Chicks
Jackie Gleason Theater	Miami, FL	Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, John Mellencamp

October 11, 2004 (Washington, D.C.)

MCI Center	Washington, DC	Dixie Chicks, Bonnie Raitt, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band, Dave Matthews Band, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, John Fogerty, John Mellencamp, Jurassic 5, Keb' Mo', Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, Pearl Jam, and R.E.M.
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October 13, 2004 (New Jersey)

Continental Airlines Arena	East Rutherford, NJ	Patti Scialfa, Jackson Browne, Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band (with special guest John Fogerty and unannounced guest Eddie Vedder)
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* See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vote_For_Change, accessed July 28, 2012.

Washington D.C. Vote for Change Finale Concert Set list
October 11, 2004

Artist	Song	Artist's Genre	Guest Artists
John Mellencamp	Walk Tall Paper in Fire The Authority Song Pink Houses	rock/heartland rock	
Bonnie Raitt and Keb' Mo'	I am a Patriot (by Little Steven)	blues/country contemporary blues	
Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds	Change the World (by Tony Sims/Gordon Kennedy/Wayne Kirkpatrick; originally recorded by Eric Clapton and Edmonds)	R&B	
Jackson Browne, Bonnie Raitt and Keb' Mo'	For What it's Worth (by Steven Stills of Buffalo Springfield)	rock blues/country contemporary blues	
Jurassic Five	Freedom	hip-hop	
R.E.M.	The One I Love Losing My Religion Man on the Moon Begin the Begin	alternative rock	Bruce Springsteen Eddie Vedder
Eddie Vedder	Masters of War (by Bob Dylan)	alternative rock/grunge	
Pearl Jam	Grievance	alternative rock/grunge	Tim Robbins
James Taylor	Never Die Young Sweet Baby James Shower the People	folk rock	Dixie Chicks Dixie Chicks
Dixie Chicks	Mississippi (by Bob Dylan)	country/ bluegrass	
Bruce Springsteen	National Anthem (by F.S. Key) on guitar Born in the U.S.A. Badlands No Surrender	heartland rock	E Street Band
John Fogerty	Déjà vu (all over again) Fortunate Son	swamp rock/southern rock	Bruce Springsteen Bruce Springsteen
Bruce Springsteen	Because the Night (by Springsteen and Patti Smith) Mary's Place Born to Run		Michael Stipe REM
All	(What's So Funny 'Bout) Peace, Love and Understanding? (by Nick Lowe) People Have the Power (by Patti Smith)		All artists

Songs are composed by the artist(s) listed unless otherwise indicated

APPENDIX D

Music at Obama Rallies (2008)

Hello! Thank you for agreeing to complete my survey. My name is Dana Gorzelany-Mostak and I am an American PhD student currently attending McGill University in Canada. I am in the process of writing an article on music and the 2008 Barack Obama campaign.

I am asking people to complete this survey so I can learn more about how voters engaged with the candidate's music at rallies. I am especially interested in hearing from people who witnessed Stevie Wonder perform live, or who heard a pre-recorded version of his song "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours" at a campaign rally. If this song was not included in the rally you attended, you can leave these questions blank.

If you have any questions you can contact me at danagorzelany@hotmail.com. Thank You!

Name: _____ Age: _____ Sex: _____
Email: _____ City of Residence _____

1. In what city did you attend an Obama rally? What was the date? (If you remember)
2. What songs were played from a pre-recorded CD *or* performed live by a music artist/group at the rally? [If you don't remember the names of the songs, you can just give some of the lyrics, or the artists' names, if you remember them.] *Please indicate whether each song you heard was pre-recorded or performed live by the artist/group.
3. How did you respond when you heard music at the rally? (Did you dance, clap your hands, sing along, etc.?) How did the people around you respond?
4. In your opinion, what does music add to a campaign rally?

If you heard "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours" please also complete the questions below:

5. How did you respond when you heard "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours"?
6. Did "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours" occur before or after Barack Obama gave his speech?
7. How did you *feel* when you heard "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours" at the Obama rally?
8. What does the phrase "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours" mean to you?

9. Because he used “Signed, Sealed, Delivered I’m Yours” for his campaign, we now often associate this song with Barack Obama, but the song has been around a long time. What else does this song make you think about?

If I have further questions, may I contact you via email?

Popular Music after 1945 “24 Hours of Music”

OBJECTIVE: To encourage students to become more aware of music in their own lives, when/where/how they experience it, and what kind of music is in their environment.

Chart your own musical day by choosing a 24-hour period and keeping track of the music that is in your life for that day. The “time” column is self-explanatory. In the “where/how” column, please indicate where you were when you heard the music (in the mall, in your bedroom, on the metro, etc.) and how you heard the music (on the radio, on your iPod, from someone’s car stereo, etc.). Finally, in the “music description” column, provide a brief description of what you heard by either citing the genre, type of radio station, artist, or song title, if you know it.

[illegible]

*This assignment was designed by Colette Simonot, Assistant Professor of Musicology, Brandon University.

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- “Jingle” (John F. Kennedy, 1960)
- “Children/Achievements” (Gerald Ford, 1976)
- “Peace” (Gerald Ford, 1976)
- “Arms Control 5” (Walter Mondale, 1984)
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*All interviews for chapter six of this dissertation were conducted in confidentiality, and the names of interviewees are withheld by mutual agreement.