

Chapter 4

Clubland 1962 - 1972

From 1957 into the early 1960s, Johnny O'Keefe, Col Joye, Johnny Devlin, Johnny Rebb, Alan Dale and Lonnie Lee had provided proudly masculine templates of local success. O'Keefe and Joye also revealed considerable entrepreneurial skills in establishing managerial empires based upon their live circuit, radio and television popularity. Upon establishing responsive local environments, both managed many of the second wave of performers. This chapter examines the growth in Sydney's licensed clubs, and their concurrent interest in rock and roll as a lucrative form of entertainment. As identified in the development of the hotel and club circuits, this required a refinement of the 'unruly' rock and roll aesthetic evident in the previous chapter. The belief in more 'melodic' recording arrangements, and performers' incorporation into older notions of club entertainment signified a break with the more hysterical constructions of the music in the 50s. However, an examination of the Sydney surf club circuit in the mid-60s reveals a brief resurrection of earlier rock and roll beliefs. The surf club battles between 'surfies' and 'rockers' present an interesting precedent to the mods-rockers clashes in Britain. Moreover, echoes of earlier town hall/ballroom battles are evidenced in concerns founded upon generational differences regarding civic duty, and teens' contributions in constructions of community. While rock and roll displayed an increasing professionalism by promoters and performers, portrayals of 'wild' youth persisted as powerful discursive devices of social control.

An important context of 1960s leisure is provided in the transfer of State government from Labor to the Liberal Party in 1965. The tenure of the Askin State Government, and the consolidation of (Liberal Party founder) Robert Menzies' dominance over Labor at the Federal level, produced a dual structure of conservative rule within NSW.¹ The regulation of discotheques (discos) is

¹ (Sir) Robert Askin was Premier of NSW from 1965 to 1975. Menzies had governed as Prime Minister of the United Australia Party Government from 1939 to 1941. After forming the Liberal

examined in this period for the emergence of a similar binary structure of competing government values. This entailed deregulation of trade structures in keeping with Liberal beliefs in the sanctity of the market. Music venues benefited from further liberalisation of liquor laws in regard to trading hours. However, this was accompanied by the need for periodic crackdowns on 'anti-social' behaviours, where rock and roll was at the forefront of a growing list of activities perceived as counter-cultural activities. The impact of the influx of U.S. servicemen on leave from their Vietnam duties is examined as an example of the moral/economic complexities confronting the State Government. In similar ways to Second World War experiences, the overseas visitors changed local leisure habits, and increased desires for previously marginalised practices. The licensed club embodies the encouraged notions of private citizenship and the construction of local community values. As venues within the jurisdiction of the Registered Clubs Act, clubs were (are) technically obliged to operate as non-profit community leisure centres.² Yet, as this chapter demonstrates, the entrenched levels of corruption within licensed clubs revealed their operations to be at a considerable distance from their formative principles.

By 1962 much of the town hall circuit had disappeared, with performers relying more heavily on interstate tours for a reliable income. There is no evidence to suggest that legislative discouragement from local councils (increasing bans of local dances and hall hire) led to the demise of the original public hall circuit. Many in the industry believed that the town hall circuit ended with the Beatles/merseybeat boom of the mid-1960s. However, this ignores the emergence of the new hotel and club circuit by 1963. Lonnie Lee believes that the credit squeeze experienced in Australia in late 1960 led to a shortage of funds among the major promoters, and restricted the amount which audiences devoted to entertainment, which led to a shortage of venues.³ A more likely explanation for the lack of town hall work can be found in audience preferences for more diverse performances in the 'popular' tradition, revealing a partial longing for earlier

Party in 1944, Menzies regained government in 1949, and retired in 1963, after an unprecedented fourteen years as Prime Minister.

² A variety of licensed clubs exist in NSW, most affiliated with sporting bodies. The largest clubs remain those established by the Returned Services League (RSLs) and rugby league teams (the ubiquitous Leagues Clubs).

³ In November 1960 the Federal Government restricted credit and increased bank overdraft rates in order to reduce overall bank debts and as an anti-inflationary measure.

vaudeville/variety practices. The town halls' demise also accompanied the desire to be entertained in more comfortable environments. It was gradually acknowledged by fans and performers that "dances eventually didn't have anything to offer — the venues were awful, the sound was awful, there were a lot of fights".⁴ The uncomplicated nature of the early rock and roll arrangements — the coarse vocals of O'Keefe with steady drum and guitar/sax backing — became briefly redundant in the search for complex, layered arrangements. The American emphasis on 'softer' pop recordings was slavishly adopted by Australian DJs. Performer Johnny Rebb succinctly described the shift to a young fan:

The wild type of rock and roll is not as strong now as it was ... the trend is towards more subdued and melodic tunes. The arrangements will continue to have a definite beat, but the guitars will be without that over-accentuated sound.⁵

Television programming also encouraged more sophisticated forms. If rock and roll was to be a continued success on the new medium, then it had to pursue the refined tastes of its advertisers, as Brian Henderson, the host of Channel Nine's *Bandstand* admitted:

Rock and roll, [Henderson] admits, gave the show a bad name some eighteen months back. Viewers wrote in complaining of the 'low tone'. Brian and the sponsors agreed with them. 'Now we see to it that nothing in the show smacks of juvenile delinquency and that goes for the music we play, too. We even give prizes for the neatest and best dressed couple'.⁶

The manager of Col Joye's office in the 1960s, his sister Carol Jacobsen, also believes that the collapse of the dance hall circuit coincided with changing leisure preferences and music styles:

Everyone talks about the 60s rock and roll, but to me, rock and roll had ended by the late 50s. We all rocked in that late 50s period — 1958-59 ... after that period with O'Keefe and Colin, the audiences all became older. For instance, with me [at that time] I was in my courting years, but by the early 60s I was in a steady relationship and moved on to different things.⁷

The cultural and generational shifts within the original rock and roll audience do seem significant factors in the public hall circuit. As early as 1957, jazz saxophonist Bob Gibson noted the inadequacies of the dance hall circuit, and

⁴ Leon Isackson, interview.

⁵ Rebb cited in *Teen Topics*, no. 2, June, 1960, p.32.

⁶ 'When Bandstand Goes On Air', *Everybody's*, 29th November, 1961, p.9. Henderson's bona fides as moral guardian were sufficient for his eventual career as a popular newsreader for Channel Nine's Sydney network.

⁷ Carol Jacobsen, interview.

predicted the later popularity of more refined dance entertainment, particularly in comparison to enlightened overseas practices, where “[London’s] halls are larger and generally better suited to such presentations than anything similar here. There are many more amenities too, such as liquor bars, good restaurants and the like, incorporated into the actual halls themselves”.⁸ By the early 1960s the youth leisure industry provided a variety of choices — television, drive-ins and an increasing number of films catering to the teen market. While the history of Australian rock and roll reveals a constant theme of basic venues and facilities in accordance with the nature of the music itself, audiences in the 1960s revealed a desire for venues incorporating music within other leisure facilities. In part such changes derived from the local desire for modernisation in keeping with their European and American counterparts, as discussed in the previous chapter. A number of favourable legislative amendments enabled the club industry to provide alternative entertainment environments. Also, gradual amendments to the 1908 Theatres and Public Halls Act provided a semblance of the music/leisure climate Gibson alluded to.

I. The Hotel Circuit 1962-1964

After investing heavily in entertainment, lounge bars and PA systems since the introduction of ten o’clock closing in 1955, hotels were in a sound position to benefit from audience desires for more refined entertainment settings. This was reinforced by the Liquor (Amendment) Act of 1963 abolishing the ‘tea break’ legislation prohibiting the serving of alcohol between 6.30 and 7.30 pm. With a successful tradition of striptease, comedy and vaudeville, the hotels revealed their business conservatism by forcing many rock and roll performers in the early 1960s to engage in their policies of variety entertainment. By the late 1950s, there were 2028 hotels in NSW. The Tooth and Co. brewery owned or leased 1003, while Tooheys owned 215.⁹ The most successful of the tied house chains in regard to entertainment was the Millers circuit of pubs. To ensure increased sales of Millers beer, company chairman Rod Miller appointed Johnny Wade as the chain’s

⁸ ‘Bob Gibson At Surreyville’, *Australian Music Maker*, December, 1957, p.51.

⁹ Lewis, 1992, p.38. Along with Reschs, the major breweries had begun establishing their tied house systems since 1912.

entertainment director in 1959. Wade was a popular Hawaiian performer with a background in Tivoli performances, and in the 1930s was known as 'Australia's Bing Crosby' for his sweet vocal style.¹⁰ In this sense Wade was a suitable choice to provide the chain with entertainment in the (modified) Tivoli tradition. Many of the earlier performers, unwilling or unable to modify their acts, opted for employment elsewhere within the industry.¹¹ The Miller circuit instituted the practice of floor shows. Bands could no longer simply play rock and roll, but were expected to work with dancers, comedians and MCs in providing a more versatile entertainment package. Performers who originally weathered the anti-rock feelings of jazz musicians in the late 1950s experienced the same agenda with Hawaiian and variety performers on the Millers circuit, as manager Bill Watson recalls:

Dig [Richards] rang to ask me if I would be interested in managing him ... he wanted to try a nightclub cabaret act to a more mature audience. Dig arranged a night at the Millers' Oceanic Hotel at his own expense and asked me if I would come and see his act. I had only ever seen Dig once before at the Stadium. He was dressed in a 'lightning flash' jumper, singing rock and roll to a teenage audience. As Dig started to perform at the Oceanic Hotel, it became obvious that the resident band, led by Johnny Wade, were snidely working against him and attempting to upset his performance ... After the show, I went backstage to tell Dig how much I enjoyed his show and complained about the disgusting behaviour of the band. The sax player, who was one of the main offenders, made some disparaging remark like 'He's only a non-talent rock 'n' roller anyway!', so I gave the arsehole a backhander in the face and Dig and I marched out of the place.¹²

For original rock and roll performers still dependent upon live work for the majority of their income, artistic compromises had to be made. Digger Revell and the Denvermen completed dancing lessons at the Tivoli in order to include 'soft shoe shuffle' dancing routines for each of their songs.¹³

A small group of mainly suburban rock hotels did exist in the early to mid-1960s. The Civic and Bognor Hotels within the Central Business District, the Chatswood Charles, the Bondi Royal, the Petersham Inn, the Enfield Boulevard,

¹⁰ Coyle and Coyle, 1995, p.47.

¹¹ Johnny Devlin became a booking agent for clubs, a writer and A&R representative for RCA. Lonnie Lee established Starlight Records; Jay Justin turned to song writing; Alan Dale became an agent for hotels. Col Joye and Johnny O'Keefe supplemented interstate touring with television appearances and diversification into management and consolidation of their individual empires.

¹² Bill Watson cited in Hayton and Isackson, 1990, p.106.

¹³ 'Band has stepped up its act', *Everybody's*, 12th December, 1962, p.23.

and the Three Swallows Hotel at Bankstown provided a haven for rock bands.¹⁴ These hotels, the Civic and Bognor in particular, became associated with nightly violent clashes between navy and army personnel, and as a favoured venue for the solicitation of prostitution.¹⁵ Increasing car ownership in Australia afforded patrons greater mobility and a corresponding expansion of leisure choices, which the suburban hotels were able to exploit.¹⁶ Suburban pubs also continued to benefit from the restrictive Sunday entertainment laws. The NSW Chief Secretary considered amending the Sunday Observance Act to allow film screenings after church hours on Sundays.¹⁷ The temperance movement's continuing moral influence on Cabinet however, meant that the 'traveller' regulations concerning Sunday drinking (where patrons had to prove that they had travelled thirty miles to qualify for alcohol purchases) could not be relaxed. The need to drive out of the city to enjoy a drink on the Sabbath had other implications for young rockers:

With the drinking laws, on Sunday we might go to Wiseman's Ferry, which wasn't much fun on a motor bike. With the vagrancy laws, the cops would hassle you quite frequently if you were drunk and a long way from home, especially if you were a duck tailed, tattooed, pegged pants hoon. If you just owned a motor cycle over five hundred cc, it was enough for a copper to pull you over — if for nothing else, to have a look at your bike.¹⁸

One of the few hotels in the Miller chain with a rock policy, the Manly Pacific, was able to break from Wade's influence and offer bands regular work without the need to indulge in cabaret. This was welcome to bands sick of compromised performances:

[Manly Pacific manager] Mike Devery sat quietly and without saying a word, listened to almost our entire repertoire until we played our first jazz tune. "You don't have to play that shit. Just play the music you like. I've had a jazz band in here for the last two months and I'm getting nine people in the lounge on a Saturday night! Can you guys start on Thursday night?" ... we said yes right away! I couldn't believe my ears. After virtually a year of playing barn dances, jazz waltzes, *Pride of Erin's*, gypsy taps, polkas, Latin American and assorted 'dago'

¹⁴ For a brief time the Boulevard's resident band was the Ramrods, managed by a young Paul Keating, Labor Prime Minister from December 1993 to March 1995.

¹⁵ Ray Devitt, interview.

¹⁶ In 1950, 270 000 cars were registered within NSW; by 1960, 623 000 existed in the State, with 2.1 million in the nation overall (Wotherspoon, 1991, p.147).

¹⁷ 'Kelly may move to ease law on Sunday shows', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 26th January, 1960, p.12. Victoria legalised Sunday film screenings in 1965, and introduced a Sunday Entertainment Bill to allow Sunday sport on the 1st of March 1968 (Keith Dunstan, *Wowzers*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1974, p.32).

¹⁸ Ray Devitt, interview. The 1902 Vagrancy Act gave police powers to arrest those found on the street without money.

music, Maori songs and general commercial crap, this man was telling us to play ROCK 'N' ROLL! (capitals in original text)¹⁹

The popularity of cabaret performances, particularly Hawaiian acts, was evidenced in the large budgets invested in a diversity of entertainments within the one night. The Millers entertainment program created the Tivoli atmosphere to such an extent that audiences preferred the imitation. Theatres could not compete with the economies of scale the hotels enjoyed, as observed by the Tivoli's general manager, David Martin:

... one of the brewery's hotels decided on a Hawaiian month. They employed a top class decorator to give the tropic island effect, hired a six piece band for £260 a week, three hula girls at £35 a week, plus three guest stars at an average of £8 a night for an entire month. And all that this cost the customer was 1/6 for a glass of beer.²⁰

II. Licensed Clubs

The decline in rock and roll venues mirrored the growing number of licensed clubs desiring floor show entertainment. The nightclub entrepreneurs of the 1940s and 1950s consolidated their dubious reputations. Andre's, Spellson's, the Celebrity Club, the Latin Quarter and Chequers nightclubs all proceeded to operate profitably for much of the 1960s, despite the findings of the 1954 Maxwell Royal Commission. These venues provided an income for rock musicians willing to learn the cabaret codes of practice. They also provided a lucrative site for overseas performers (Shirley Bassey, Nelson Eddy, Sammy Davis Jr et al) who could demand exorbitant fees in exchange for supplying a nightclub with the necessary international cachet, while satisfying the local cultural cringe. They were also aesthetically and financially incompatible with working class entertainment: "they were pretty unhip, they would cost you a week's wages. You'd go on somebody's birthday or wedding, and not too bloody often ... the people who did go there were lurk merchants".²¹ For venue owners, even pop vocal groups like the Delltones, who did not equate with the brash demeanour of O'Keefe or Devlin,

¹⁹ The R'Jays audition at the Pacific in 1962 cited in Hayton and Isackson, 1990, p.112.

²⁰ Frank Margan, 'Who runs Australia's show business?', *Everybody's*, 13th September, 1961, pp.17-21.

²¹ Ray Devitt, interview. The 'lurk merchants' associated with such clubs were gangsters, gambling and racecourse identities.

represented unacceptable performance styles:

[The nightclub owners] were so out of touch with us guys. For example, the Delltones auditioned at Chequers and [owner] Dennis Wong said no, he didn't want four of them, he would only take two of them. That's a well known story. They had no idea of who we were, or the drawing power we had.²²

With the abolition of six o'clock closing, the 1954 Maxwell Royal Commission also recommended that the Liquor Act be amended to provide for additional registered club licenses. The ULVA fought the growth of club licenses, arguing that many clubs operated (illegal) poker machines. The clubs proposed two major arguments in support of the legalisation of poker machines that continue to be used within contemporary industry debates. Firstly, clubs emphasised their contribution to the State's employment (two thousand workers in 1956).²³ Secondly, club directors argued that poker machine revenue enabled clubs to provide a more communal atmosphere for members in more comfortable environments than existed in hotels.²⁴ The support of the NSW Labor Council and eighteen Labor MPs ensured the success of the club defence. On the 31st of July 1956, the Cahill Government legalised the use of poker machines in non-proprietary clubs; poker machine tax revenue was to be diverted to the State's hospital budget.²⁵

The implications for the club and hotel industries were considerable. With some club poker machine percentages reportedly fixed as high as eighty per cent,²⁶ even small clubs amassed substantial annual profits. The legalisation of poker machines produced a comparable effect on the club industry to the introduction of ten o'clock closing in the hotel industry, in terms of higher investment in club facilities, refurbishment of bars and the construction of auditoriums. Corresponding increases in entertainment budgets meant greater employment opportunities for musicians. As with the Millers hotel circuit, the greatest opportunities came to those musicians willing to perform cabaret. Those able to sight-read established suitable careers in backing bands. Having begun

²² Lonnie Lee, interview.

²³ AHA, 1988, p.31.

²⁴ *ibid.*

²⁵ *ibid.*

²⁶ John Godwin, 'Gambling - Australia's £600 million annual spree', *Everybody's*, 27th September, 1961, p.15. Godwin states that one rural ex-servicemen's club "boasts 1100 members and ten machines. The club's yearly bar profits are £10,500. The poker machine profits come to £35,000".

with Alan Dale and the Houserockers in 1957, John Charter managed the transition into the lucrative club circuit, being a classically trained pianist and having worked for Johnny Rebb as musical director. Charter states the blatant ways in which musicians were reminded of the clubs' primary source of entertainment and revenue:

At the Motor Club we'd start at 8.30 p.m, and the first floor show was from 10.30 to 11.30, and the place was packed every night of the week. The manager would tell us to have a break as soon as the floor show finished, and some nights we were off for an hour and a half. He didn't want us in that room playing music while the poker machines were in another room. It wasn't that the audience didn't want to listen to the music — the band was taken away, we had to go to another floor until we were told to go back on.²⁷

This represents the continuing paradox for performers in regard to gaming devices. While poker machine revenue enabled a further source of employment to musicians still lamenting the loss of the profitable dance hall circuits, the battle for musicians in being preferred to slot machines was fought from their introduction in 1956. The importance of gaming revenue to the early rockers still remains as they continue to perform in RSL and Leagues clubs. Johnny Devlin still ensures that his stage volume is not "too over-powering for the people playing the poker machines; my wages are in the poker machines".²⁸

As had occurred in the transformation of hotels to floor shows, the original rockers reluctantly and gradually entered the club scene. While Johnny O'Keefe and Col Joye remained sufficiently popular to conduct their own interstate tours, hiring the venue and receiving all the door profits, others were forced to comply with lower fees and changed audience expectations:

The rest of them didn't want to do it, and in essence we also didn't want to do it. I was earning quite good money — my fees for dances, although the scale was very wide, at times I could command £250 a night. That was a lot of money when the average man was earning £18 a week. I remember [agent] Sid Ross when I told him I wanted £250, and he laughed. He mentioned £50 and that's pretty much what the opening prices were for performers like me to do the clubs. I thought I was selling myself out.²⁹

The importance of television programming established a spiralling loss of influence for those unable to attain television stardom. Constant appearances on

²⁷ John Charter, interview.

²⁸ Johnny Devlin, interview.

²⁹ Lonnie Lee, interview.

Bandstand or *Six O'Clock Rock* ensured national promotion, larger record sales and the ability to conduct extensive interstate tours. Irregular appearances on television meant little chance of promotion outside a performer's home State, and corresponding difficulty in establishing a national fan base for touring. This was compounded by the specific preferences of radio DJs, and the increasing suspicion that stations only played songs by performers in their own States.³⁰ Television celebrity status played an influential role in enticing the club circuit to invest in well known performers. The ATA (Australian Talent Associates) agency established by the Jacobsen clan (Colin, Kevin and Carol) realised the significance of national media coverage:

Because we had Judy Stone, and [Little] Pattie, the De Kroo Bros, Bryan Davies and Sandy Scott, they were the established *Bandstand* people ... because of that, we then approached the clubs [1965-66] and said we wanted a minimum of fifteen guineas. Everyone said we'd never get it. But we had these people who were on television each week, and we all made a pact that they wouldn't work the clubs until they paid it. The clubs finally came to us, because of the pressure of their members, saying 'how come you can't get them?' Fifteen guineas back then was big money, and when it went to twenty one guineas it was really big money for a club. Sandy Scott for instance, would do a month at St George Leagues Club, from Tuesday to Sunday and you'd have them standing around the walls.³¹

In many respects the '*Bandstand* family' of performers fitted neatly into club directors' visions of suitable entertainment. Carol Jacobsen, who booked the performers for *Bandstand* on behalf of the show's producer, highlights an interesting reciprocity between the program and club employment:

There were a lot of entertainers that were very bitter that they never got on *Bandstand*. The problem is, they weren't suitable. They didn't have the personality for it, and the show didn't want them. The director and producer of the show had the last word as to what they wanted, but we were blamed because we were the bookers. So I used to hear 'she only puts on who *she* wants to put on' which was all garbage. I only put on who they wanted. And it was the same for the club industry — people like Johnny Devlin, he's popular again now because his audience are now in their fifties and want that nostalgia. Back then in the 60s, the club scene was very English; it was a different type of market altogether. Even when [Little] Pattie played, she didn't get up and do *Stompie Wompie*, she'd do Judy Garland songs, MOR stuff. People say that we locked people out, but they didn't want the rock and roll stuff in the clubs.³²

Jacobsen's remarks suggest the extent to which the club industry and television

³⁰ As early as 1962 accusations of interstate parochialism were made against the radio industry by Johnny Chester; 'The Singer With Rocks In His Socks', *Everybody's*, 29th August, 1962, p.19.

³¹ Carol Jacobsen, interview. Little Pattie (Patricia Amphlett) had a hit in 1963 with 'He's My Blonde Headed, Stompie Wompie Real Gone Surfer Boy', written by John Halford and Jay Justin.

³² *ibid.*

music programming complemented each other in excluding the more brash rock and roll acts.

The club industry's growth was ensured through increased investment in leisure facilities, skilful promotion of the 'communal' advantages of such venues to their localities, and a monopoly on Sunday trading. Greater emphasis on quality dining and drinking services (subsidised by poker machine revenue) provided cheaper and quieter commercial leisure space for women than most pubs still dominated by the male public bar. Doubts regarding the social benefits of clubs were swayed by the substantial contributions of club poker machine taxes to State revenue. In 1957 clubs collectively paid \$1 526 000 in poker machine licence fees; in 1967 the fees amounted to \$19 649 634.³³ It was estimated in 1967 that the club industry was contributing a further \$4.5 million in income tax.³⁴

In assessing the advantages of clubs as large scale "leisure co-operatives", Geoff Caldwell views the registered club movement as an important alternative to the staid conservatism of Australian hotels.³⁵ However, Caldwell's utopian club vision ignores much of the contrasting evidence within his own thesis. While women were increasingly attracted to clubs in preference to the masculine hotel bar, club policies presented only minor developments in female considerations. Stringent dress codes for women reinforcing the appropriate "tone" of clubs do not support Caldwell's belief that "nobody cares how a group behaves or what it talks about, as long as there is no infringement on others' freedom".³⁶ It seems more the case that the unstated patterns of behaviour in the hotels were replaced with defined chauvinistic codes of club conduct. This is revealed in the hypocrisy of the club tradition of "prawn mornings", where male members are entertained over a Sunday (prawn and beer) breakfast by a comedian and 'exotic' dancer. In the case of Queanbeyan Leagues Club, directors of the Club were outraged when a hired dancer "went too far ... beyond the limits set down by the Club".³⁷

³³ Helen Frizell, 'Jackpot! But only for the Government', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6th December, 1967, p.6.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Geoff Caldwell, *Leisure Co-Operatives: The Institutionalisation of Gambling and the Growth of Large Leisure Organizations in New South Wales*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, Australian National University, 1972.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p.338.

³⁷ *ibid.*, p.318.

Subsequent Club newsletters chastised the dancer for ignoring Club rules regarding appropriate entertainment, while the Chief Secretary threatened to cancel the Club's licence.³⁸ Despite the protestations of directors, such incidents reveal the double standards applied to behaviour and entertainment. Caldwell also overstates registered clubs' democratic, collective nature, where it is implied that all members can contribute to clubs' management. Increasing systemic abuses and fraud by club directors highlighted the limited extent to which members could contribute, and police, management structures.³⁹ In an attempt to minimise fraudulent practices, the Askin Government incorporated the top three hundred clubs within the Companies Act in 1969. Similarly, Caldwell's contention that poker machine revenue represents a "voluntary form of taxation" contrasts with his description of South Sydney Junior Leagues Club, where entertainment was stopped until all machines within the Club were being played.⁴⁰ It is doubtful that members play poker machines in order to provide a benevolent fund for their club.

Responding to Labor Party allegations, the Askin Government established a Royal Commission into organised crime in registered clubs in 1973, headed by Justice Athol Moffitt. Although hampered by limited terms of reference precluding an examination of wider networks of criminal organisation, Moffitt revealed Mafia connections within the club movement. The Bally organisation, a U.S. based poker machine manufacturer with gangster associations, attempted to establish a poker machine monopoly in NSW. Links were also later established between Jack Rooklyn, Bally's Australian chief executive, and Police Deputy Commissioner Bill Allen.⁴¹ Moffitt's final report revealing the extent of club connections with overseas criminal organisations was received by the Premier, but never tabled in parliament, constituting "a complete about face, and the greatest

³⁸ *ibid.*, pp.318-319. It is also important to note Caldwell's surprise that the club's barmaids are "not particularly attractive" and implies that the hiring of good looking staff is an important way to increase bar sales. 'Prawn nights' are still an important male ritual within many clubs.

³⁹ In 1969 St George Leagues Club expelled two members who questioned travelling and entertainment expenses in the club's annual report. The club's rules did not provide any right to the members to oppose their expulsion (Caldwell, 1972, p.131). For a more contemporary example of differences between management and members, Penrith Leagues Club ignored the majority of their members' wishes in joining News Limited's Super (Rugby) League competition.

⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p.189.

⁴¹ Mike Steketee and Milton Cockburn, *Wran: An Unauthorised Biography*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1986, p.282. It was revealed that the costs of Allen and his family's trip to the U.S. in 1981 were paid by casino operators and the Bally Corporation.

'whitewash' that could be imagined".⁴² In response to Moffitt's recommendation to improve operations between State and Federal police forces, a Crime Intelligence Unit was established. The recommendations regarding registered club structures were ignored. This is hardly surprising given the extent of illegal gaming activity that flourished during the Askin term of government. Illegal baccarat and SP betting clubs remained open, while government premises were leased for gambling and sex businesses.⁴³ The labyrinth of criminal connections within the gambling, hotel and club industries also implicated a number of the elite bureaucracy of the police force, and Liberal and Labor members of parliament. Upon his death Askin left an estate worth \$1 957 995, with a substantial amount explained as race winnings, which did not satisfy the Taxation Department.⁴⁴

The extent of illegal gaming activities tolerated by (and in some instances colluding with) the government reflected the differences between policy and public perception. The rest of this chapter assesses the means by which youth music practices were politicised. 1960s leisure governance produced two contrasting discourses. Illegal gaming ventures were tolerated due to their foundations in earlier mythologies concerning Australians' fondness for a 'punt' and a drink. Lax gaming regulation also proved a sound policy in countering Labor's traditional affiliations with the gaming, club and hotel industries (Askin's known preference for the racecourse was symbolic here). The 'real' concern with public order was to be found in youths' continued willingness to contest public leisure spaces. The beach surf club, city disco and open air festival became interesting sites contesting the innate conservatism of the period. The different legislative responses to the problems of 'long-hair' youth, and corrupt gaming/club scenes highlight the inherent moral hypocrisy of the Liberal Government.

⁴² Athol Moffitt (1985) *A Quarter To Midnight*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, p.72.

⁴³ David Hickie, *The Prince and the Premier*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney and London, 1985. Hickie documents Askin's close friendships with bookmakers, punters and nightclub owners, and alleges that Askin was paid \$5000 weekly by SP betting 'entrepreneur' Perce Galea (p.60). The owner of the Pink Pussy Cat and Pink Panther nightclubs, and an (illegal) number of hotels, Abe Saffron, had documented connections with Deputy Commissioner Bill Allen (pp.14, 113).

⁴⁴ Steketee and Cockburn, 1986, p.265.

III. Surf City 1962-1964

If the early rock and roll style was losing its appeal to more subtle pop arrangements, then its final indulgence was embodied in the surf club scene. In its usual fashion, the Australian industry appropriated North American styles, reconfiguring them for local consumption. The surf sound originated with the tremolo guitar instrumentals of Californian Dick Dale, who began surf dances at the Rendezvous ballroom in Balboa, California in 1961.⁴⁵ For Dale, the music was a logical extension of the surfing subculture, a musical expression of vernacular leisure:

My music is more native than intricate or technical. It's a sexual, sensual drive ... that low, rumbling sound. When I started surfing, you'd hear this neat rumbling sound when you take off and go for the drop and when the wave is lipping over the top of you it makes this hissing sound ... and that's the intermittent squeals on the top that I do with my guitar. The music is a collective togetherness between the ocean's power, the animal power, and the human power that we have inside our abdomen.⁴⁶

Lacking the unique guitar style of Dale, the Beach Boys further commodified the surf sound with *Surfin' Safari* in 1962, and re-worked Chuck Berry's *Sweet Little Sixteen* into *Surfin' USA*.⁴⁷ Broader variants of the style were produced by Jan and Dean, Duane Eddy, Frankie Avalon and the numerous 'beach party' films of the early to mid-1960s.

With an abundance of beaches and an entrenched lifesaving culture, surf music proved an appropriate style of local expression, particularly in NSW and Queensland. The local scene also appropriated the Californian surf dance, the stomp, which did not require dancing lessons to master; "the basic step was a double stomp on alternate feet, and a partner was optional".⁴⁸ Sydney surf dances began at Manly Surf Club in December 1962, organised by the manager of Paul Storm and the Statesmen, Paul Graham.⁴⁹ The surf circuit eventually consisted of Bronte, Maroubra, Avalon, North Steyne and other surf clubs. Many of the original rockers attempted to write or perform in the surf style. Johnny Devlin

⁴⁵ Jim Pewter, liner notes on *Dick Dale and the Delltones Greatest Hits* (CD) 1961-76, Crescendo Records.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁴⁷ Later parodied by the Australian folk/rock group Redgum as *Servin' USA*.

⁴⁸ Sturma, 1991, p.66.

wrote and produced the Denvermen's *Surfside*, and his own *Stomp The Tumbaramba* in 1963. Jay Justin and (Joye Boys' guitarist) Dave Bridge composed surf rockers for other performers. The only act which emanated from the surfing culture and which could lay authentic claims to its practices, the Delltones, adapted their harmonies accordingly to produce *Hangin' Five*. Perhaps the only local performers to produce the equivalent of the rumbling Dale sound was the instrumental group The Atlantics, who were willing to develop the technical limits of guitar and drum experimentation. Their instrumental *Bombora* was an international hit in September 1963.⁵⁰ The teen queen of the surf dances, however, was a fourteen year old Sydney High schoolgirl, Patricia Amphlett (Little Pattie):

I reluctantly entered a so-called talent quest, and won. We did Bronte Surf club for the grand total of three weeks; I was fourteen. So then the man running the dances — Paul Graham, the famous bodybuilder — he then approached Maroubra Surf Club, and that became our home for many months. We'd have dances on Saturday afternoon, Saturday night, and one on Sunday, with the house band — the Statesmen. We'd do four sets, I think.⁵¹

The surf music scene did not just represent the final links to a previous rock and roll culture. To the Sydney surf clubs it also signalled a clear choice in regard to the proper uses of the beach and surf club facilities. A three-way battle was established in contesting the use of the beach and shopping centres, and the appropriate apprenticeships youth must endure in order for their right to surf. The rockers of the early 60s were often the offspring of 1950s bodgies or widgies, who had (mostly) proceeded into graceful parenthood. The briefly intense popularity of surf music provided a rival subculture, the surfies. Despite the apparent similarities in appropriating American culture in order to aggravate traditional suburbia, both groups clashed briefly along the Sydney coastline. Craig McGregor has argued that the hostility largely derived from class jealousies and derision.⁵² The surfers and rockers clashes prefigured later hostility based on geographical snobbery (the 'westies' versus inner city youth). While rockers persisted in their style of long greasy hair, black jeans, t-shirts and leather jackets, the surfie style consisted of short bleached hair, tight black trousers, pointed shoes and black sweaters.

⁴⁹ 'Stomp - You're driving me crazy', *Everybody's*, 2nd October, 1963, p.17.

⁵⁰ Ten surf songs existed in the 2UE top forty charts for September 1963, with five in the top ten: Stephen McParland in McLean, 1991, p.145.

⁵¹ Patricia (Amphlett) Thompson, interview.

Initial concern with surfies derived from the alternative they provided to the lifesaving club tradition operating in Sydney since 1907.⁵³ Surf club membership had decreased to the extent that a 1962 public relations campaign in the media appealed for more funding and members, warning that beaches would be left unpatrolled.⁵⁴ The lack of club members signalled a shift in attitudes towards traditional leisure patterns expected of the young, particularly those residing within the beach suburbs. Enjoyment of the surf was to be conducted within the best notions of 'rational recreation', that is, orderly, productive leisure of benefit to the immediate locale, and the provision of service to the wider community. Voluntary service and training in protecting bathers, the core elements of the surf club ethos, had become too disciplined a practice for surfies, who associated surf clubs with the antiquated principles of their RSL and Leagues club counterparts:

Board riding is an intensely individualistic sport, whereas club surfing is a team effort. The board rider is flexible, untrammelled, moving from beach to beach in search of waves; the surf lifesaver joins a single club, gives allegiance to a single beach and stays there while on duty ... The surf clubs are the last citadels of unrepentant Australian masculinity. The one is cool, modern, uncommitted, the other is traditional, hidebound, loyalist. One is self-involved, even selfish, one is aimed at service; one is free wheeling, one is disciplined, one is with it, one is square.⁵⁵

In refusing to 'pay their dues' by way of adequate leisure time conducted in the team duties of the traditional lifesaver, surfies had established an unashamed use of the beaches free of geographical community ties. Their greater mobility and affluence, shown in the increasing numbers of youth car ownership, afforded them the choice to be selective as to the best waves, or the best dances. The belief that youth had in some fashion not earned their new methods of leisure clearly upset the 'clubbies':

Youth can afford surfboards, motor cars and take their boards wherever they desire to ride and enjoy themselves ... The catch is that the keen surfing youth of the past always joined surf clubs and performed continuous voluntary service to the community of the beaches for a period of ten years, spending their leisure

⁵² Craig McGregor, 'Growing up (uncool): pop music and youth culture in the '50s and '60s' in Hayward (ed.) 1992, p.98.

⁵³ The NSW Surf Bathing Association was formed in 1907. In 1915 the first club championships were held at Bondi (W.G. Marshall, 'The Cronulla Story', *Cronulla Surf Scene*, vol. 1, no. 1, October, 1967, n.p.).

⁵⁴ 'Crisis in Sydney's surf clubs', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16th September, 1962, p.42. The Federal Government had responded with an increase in subsidies to surf clubs.

⁵⁵ Craig McGregor, *Profile of Australia*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968, p.298. For a further binary definition of club surfers and surfies, see Kent Pearson, *Surfing Subcultures: Australia and New Zealand*, University of Queensland Press, 1979, pp.111-120.

training and protecting bathers ... The new generation contribute nothing to the community, receive no training and are under no discipline.⁵⁶

With the grounds of disapproval established, surfies encountered opposition to their weekend activities on three fronts. Greater protection for (local) swimmers resulted in stricter laws for (transient) board riders governing where they could ride. Councils imposed heavy fines and confiscated boards from riders found to be infringing upon swimming areas.⁵⁷ In the case of surf dances, clubs confronted an ideological dilemma similar to 1950s local council governance. The obvious financial benefits of surf dances to the clubs had to be weighed against prevailing club ethics. The presence of such “juvenile ratbagery”⁵⁸ was not endured for long by some clubs:

Bronte [surf club dances] didn't last long, because there were grave concerns that with all the stomping, it was hard on the floorboards, or so the management of the club were saying. That probably wasn't the reason, but we were asked to vacate the premises. It may have been the structure, but I've got an idea it was the conservative element of the surf club at the time, with us 'wild' kids having a good time.⁵⁹

The stomp continued the tradition established by 1950s rock and roll dancing in offending adults' views of teenage propriety. As with the jitterbug and the jive, stomping was seen to purposefully ignore the graceful routines of past ballroom practices. Worse, the dance represented a primitive regression: “... [the stomp] reminds one forcibly of a herd of baboons learning to walk”.⁶⁰ The less than romantic nature of the dance was summarised in the advice of trying not “to kid stompers that people danced in each other's arms. Arms are for waving squares goodbye”.⁶¹ After a vigorous campaign of opposition, *Bandstand's* Brian Henderson grudgingly accepted the dance on the program, while hoping for the re-emergence of the Canadian Three-Step.⁶²

⁵⁶ A surf club member cited in ‘Surf clubs decide to fight for life’, *Southern News*, 19th December, 1963, pp.1, 9.

⁵⁷ ‘Council gets praise for impoundings’, *Daily Telegraph*, 7th February, 1964, p.7. In Queensland on the same day Gold Coast City council prosecuted a youth for riding in a bathing area.

⁵⁸ Norm Steele of the NSW Lifesaving Association, cited in ‘New Beach Cult: the Surfies’, *Everybody's*, 21st November, 1962, pp.14-15.

⁵⁹ Patricia Thompson, interview. By 1966 Little Pattie had confessed that she “was not sorry” to see the end of surf music, stating that she was never a surfer and didn't “even swim very well” (‘Me’, *Everybody's*, 23rd March, 1966, p.21).

⁶⁰ Letter to the Editor, *Everybody's*, 18th December, 1963, p.2.

⁶¹ Jim Oram, ‘The next dance could be anything’, *Everybody's*, 1st April, 1964, p.5.

⁶² Bill Sheridan, ‘Stompers Swamp TV Show’, *TV Times*, 9th October, 1963, pp.4-5.

The surfies encountered their greatest hostility from the rockers, in an ideological battle characterised by a brief series of territorial conflicts. The antagonism was distinctly class based:

[As rockers] we were dressed wrong for a start, and you were asking for a certain amount of trouble [if you invaded surfie territory]. The local girls were highly unlikely to be interested, and we would have stuck out — the same as they would have if they had come to [the south-western suburb of] Bankstown. We went over a few times to North Steyne. Sydney was a smaller place then, and it really mattered where you came from. This was a source of much amusement to us, the much hated North Shore, which we thought was full of stuffed shirt twits".⁶³

In late February 1963, rockers appeared on various Sydney beaches in successive weekends in a direct territorial challenge. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported further clashes on Sunday the 3rd of March, and Monday the 4th of March at North Steyne, Manly and Cronulla. On the Sunday, it was reported that one hundred rockers were met at Manly beach by police, North Steyne and Manly club members, where they were escorted on to city ferries and into their cars. The process was repeated at Cronulla and Bondi beaches on the Monday.⁶⁴ Such standoffs were little more than symbolic in nature. The clashes consisted of scuffles, taunts, the erection of 'Stamp Out Surfies' signs, and the use of abusive language to rivals or passing locals. The highly organised response of surf club members and police perhaps prevented more serious confrontations. Occurring a year before the mods and rockers clashes on British beaches, it is possible to reconstruct the Sydney clashes within the moral panic media framework so masterfully produced by Cohen in his account of the Margate and Brighton clashes. Certainly the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the tabloid media (the *Daily Telegraph* and *Daily Mirror*) faithfully played their role in the amplification of perceived deviance.⁶⁵ The *Herald* managed to keep the narrative alive, with or without clashes, for a week from the 3rd of March. The daily articles — 'Special Police Force Ready For Hooligans'; 'Hooligans: Premier Confident'; 'Beach Gangs Watched: We're ready - police' — were a collective incitement to youth to fulfil the prophecy of media anticipation.

⁶³ Ray Devitt, interview.

⁶⁴ 'Larrikin cults clash: surfies v rockers at Manly', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3rd March, 1963, p.9; 'Police break up Manly cult clash', *ibid.*, 4th March, 1963, p.10; 'Youths in more beach brawls', *ibid.*, 5th March, 1963, p.4.

The mechanical, if not entirely predictable, process of Stanley Cohen's framework of panics and subsequent moral entrepreneurship can be found within the Sydney rockers and surfies encounters. The circular rationale that youth styles signified deviancy, as with the mods/rockers in Brighton, had its local equivalent, with the NSW Premier stating that "when youths dressed in tight jeans and leather jackets, their parents must know that they were likely to be associated with gangs".⁶⁶ Both moral panics were heightened by their location. Manly, Bondi and Cronulla beaches were important tourist destinations and leisure capitals in the same manner as the seaside resorts of Brighton and Margate. The effects of the panic also resulted in unrelated behaviour attributed to the deviant groups, with a heightened awareness of other 'suspect' activities ("sensitisation"⁶⁷): surf club dances were more closely monitored, as was general beach behaviour. For example, the previous practice of sleeping on beaches was no longer tolerated. The creation of special police squads and confiscation of surf boards is akin to Cohen's "innovation" phase, with novel regulatory solutions adopted.⁶⁸ Cohen also revealed the extent to which commercial interests benefited from the individual consumer styles of the mod and rocker groups (the phase of "commercial exploitation"⁶⁹). This was also evident in Sydney. The media and promoters created new methods of exploiting the mutation of dance styles; surf dancing contests provided suitable sources of revenue for musicians, promoters and sponsors.⁷⁰ The sense of exploitation was apparent to musicians and promoters from the late 1950s who detected that despite the differences in dance styles, surf dance sites like the Bronte Surf Club were "just another rock venue".⁷¹

It is important to consider that local authorities, and the groups themselves, in certain instances recognised the stringent labelling devices at work upon the skirmishes, and the media's role in perpetuating one dimensional portrayals of

⁶⁵ Cohen's description of media influence in which the mods and rockers clashes fitted the "sequence of initial deviance, societal reaction, increase in deviance, increase in reaction etc" (1972/1980, p.142).

⁶⁶ 'Hooligans: Premier Confident', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6th March, 1963, p.14.

⁶⁷ Cohen, 1972, p.78.

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, p.87. After the initial skirmishes, eight police radio cars with Vice Squad and members of the 21 Division were dispatched among fifteen Sydney beaches ('Special Patrols For Beaches', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7th March, 1963, p.8).

⁶⁹ Cohen, 1972, pp.139-140.

⁷⁰ Sydney's first national stomp championship was held at Lane Cove National Park in February 1964, sponsored by radio station 2UW (*Everybody's*, 26th February, 1964, p.11).

any conflict. On the rare occasions when the press attempted an analysis of the youth gangs, those interviewed revealed a practical understanding of societal perceptions. When asked about the rocker dress code of leather jackets and jeans, youths pointed out that the fashion represented a combination of pragmatic style and common sense; many rockers still rode motorcycles. They also possessed an understanding of the cyclical nature of subcultural style: “the rockers couldn’t see anything unhealthy about their cult and justified its existence by claiming “‘There have always been kids like us — only they called them bodgies a few years ago. Why, my old man was a rocker, under another name’ said one”.⁷² The NSW Labor Premier, Bob Heffron, was also aware of the role played by the local media in perpetuating the moral panic:

I am amazed today to know that a certain kind of press publicity has been given to impudent and irresponsible young larrikins, members of these lawless gangs which are causing citizens and police some concern at the present time. This can only militate against the activities of the Government, the police and the law abiding general public to stamp this particular type of lawlessness out of existence.⁷³

As stated previously, the local clashes did partially derive from class differences. The surfie subculture, based within the beach suburbs and the lower North Shore, highlighted local tensions between youth and ‘appropriate’ family leisure pursuits. Much of the debates were recycled rhetorical flourishes from the 1950s. The concern of North Shore housewives in the transformation of their teenage children into surfies — the suggestion of an unspoken inculcated effect at work — was duly encouraged by the media. At the core of the panic was the apparent loss of ambition and ‘young adult’ perspective which teens were expected to adopt. This can be summarised by a letter of mourning from a North Shore housewife (‘I lost my son to the surfies’) in the *Sun-Herald*, who laments that surfies “think of nothing else but parties ... arriving at the beach, they discuss the various parties that are going to be held”.⁷⁴ The hypocrisy of the North Shore outrage, where many housewives might be seen to provide role models of idle leisure, was poignantly revealed in a subsequent surfie reply to the *Sun-Herald*, ‘I lost my mother to the socialites’:

⁷¹ Carol Jacobsen, interview.

⁷² Bob Johnson, ‘We do it for kicks says a rocker’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10th March, 1963, p.74.

⁷³ ‘Police Commissioner Warns Gangs Against Violent Acts’, *ibid.*, 8th March, 1963, p.4.

⁷⁴ ‘I lost my son to the surfies’, *Sun-Herald*, 21st October, 1962, pp.48-49.

The oldies, as I have observed them, are quite decent people But their attitude is disconcerting. They seem to think of nothing else but parties, luncheons and balls, and they will often talk on the telephone for hours, just discussing where the latest function ('turn') is to be held and wondering if they will receive an invitation and what Mrs Van de Jones is going to wear.⁷⁵

The panic did produce a reflexive array of enforced policing of rock dances, public gatherings and of youth in general. It also produced a review of youth leisure policies by local and State governments. At the epicentre of subcultural tensions, the Manly district employed a number of strategies designed to redirect local youth leisure priorities. In a policy similar to that of encouraging the use of Police Boys Clubs in the 1950s, Manly Council abolished rates taxation on land used by youth organisations.⁷⁶ It also developed financial support for the establishment of a local Police Boys Club, while the introduction of a beach dress code was widely debated. The majority of councillors abandoned the dress code notion, claiming that the minimum standard of dress was a subjective matter, and infringed upon youth's basic rights.⁷⁷ It is interesting that in the wake of the recent clashes, youth's rights to freedom of assembly were not discussed. Where councillors were anxious to reject dictating beach fashions and acceptable clothing, the notion of unlawful assembly, often invoked by the Police Commissioner during the clashes, was not disputed. Attempts were also made to repair the reputation of the 'proper' surfing community. The Australian Surfing Association was formed, a collective of parents, youth and well known surfing locals designed to distinguish the real surfers from the "Ho-Dads".⁷⁸

The clashes also focused attention on the recommendations of the State Government's Youth Policy Advisory Committee report tabled in October 1962, particularly as the Committee's chairman was also the President of the NSW Lifesaving Association (and Chair of the National Fitness Council), Adrian Curlewis. The Curlewis report's main advice was the establishment of a youth advisory body to co-ordinate government and voluntary youth organisations in

⁷⁵ 'Indignant surfer writes: I lost my mother to the socialites', *ibid.*, 28th October, 1962, p.74.

⁷⁶ 'Council to define policy on Manly youth organisations', *Manly Daily*, 9th August, 1963, p.1. The Council offered no firm financial assistance to local youth groups as their annual budget was "£20 000 in the red".

⁷⁷ 'Councils agree on measures against hooliganism', *ibid.*, 2nd May, 1963, pp.1-2.

⁷⁸ 'Australian Surfing Association', *ibid.*, 10th July, 1963. 'Ho-Dad' is a derogatory term for sham surfers, "characters who try to surf without knowing how, or observing the unwritten rules; nuisances" (Kerry Yates, 'What is a surfer?', *Women's Weekly*, 27th March, 1963, p.9).

producing a unified State policy. Curlewis's response to the beach clashes attempted to shift the debate to more fundamental issues of policy and the limited electoral appeal of youth issues, in stating that "NSW was spending less a head on its youth than almost any advanced country in the world".⁷⁹ The report was ignored by the Heffron Government. A Youth Policy Advisory Committee was established by the Askin Government in 1965, yet possessed little authority due to the voluntary nature of its membership.⁸⁰ The opportunity for a co-ordinated youth leisure strategy was lost in the reluctance to allocate adequate funding, and much of the policy work remained with local councils.

In her study of 1960s-70s Australian gang subcultures, Judith Bessant argues that the preoccupation with territorial possession, a fiercely contested geographical identity, cannot be attributed solely to youth cultures.⁸¹ It is easier to reconstruct the surfer-rocker panic within a youth-dominated perspective of rival subcultures contesting territorial rights. This is obvious to a certain extent — invasion of rival space equated with a certain daring, and provided the ultimate insult to rival gangs. An equally credible explanation can be provided in emphasising the ways in which the established beach leisure culture attempted to defend *their* space. The notion of proprietorial rights existed within the surf club culture, with equally strong attachments to beach and suburb. Rites of passage to the beach lifestyle could be gained only through the respectful observance of entrenched codes invoking the lifesaver tradition of service and mateship. In similar manner to the town hall circuits, youth had appropriated public and private sites never designed or imagined for youth leisure, displacing established traditions. The responses of governments were also the same: greater policing of youth combined with the call for youth leisure sites (scout halls, police boys clubs) to ensure moral guidance and training. This continued the policy of ignoring the real needs of youth, who persisted in desiring commercial, unchaperoned leisure pursuits. The fixed nature of much of what established leisure patterns had to offer was also unsuitable to the transient and highly mobile leisure patterns in

⁷⁹ 'Police to curb hooliganism: Special Patrols for Beaches', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7th March, 1963, p.8.

⁸⁰ Terry Irving, David Maunders and Geoff Sherington, *Youth In Australia: Policy, Administration and Politics*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1995, p.102.

⁸¹ Judith Bessant, 'Hanging Around the Street: Australian Rockers, Sharpies and Skinheads of the 1960s and early 1970s', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 45, June, 1995, p.23.

which the majority of youth spent their weekends.

IV. Disco 1964-1972

The air of youth rebellion and the pursuit of untamed leisure practices evident in the surfie-rocker panics was accentuated by changes within the local music industry from 1963. While Bill McColl, John Harrigan and other promoters continued their operations well into the 1970s, the death of erratic 'Big Show' entrepreneur Lee Gordon in November 1963 was a symbolic event of imminent change. The lack of entrepreneurs willing to bankroll larger scale rock and roll entertainment was partially filled by an assortment of promoters, none of which could be described as imbued with the rock and roll spirit. Harry M. Miller's Pan Pacific Promotions, Kenn Brodziak's Aztec Services, along with Harry Miller's (no relation) Stadiums Ltd, produced ambitious entertainment packages in the Gordon style. The establishment of "mega-show cartels"⁸² was based on a tradition of variety and theatre entertainment. However, entertainment was merely one of several business interests, including real estate, personal management and media ownership. Harry M. Miller's company was formed with Denis and Keith Wong (owners of Chequers) in 1963. By 1965 Miller had bought the Wongs out and invested heavily in local theatre, small record companies and personal celebrity management.⁸³ Brodziak had been importing overseas acts since 1954 in the traditional cabaret pattern: Gene Krupa, Marlene Dietrich, the Black and White Minstrels et al. Both entrepreneurs catered to "a higher paying, somewhat social audience which likes the panache of the international high camp style".⁸⁴ The creation of a new group of local promoters specifically interested in rock did not occur until the late 1960s.

New dynasties not based on the 'old' capital could be forged on less grand scales. In keeping with the general desire for more sophisticated venues discussed earlier, local audiences deserted the surf dances for youth clubs which effectively

⁸² Lawrence Zion, *The Pop Music Scene in Australia in the 1960s*, unpublished Ph.D thesis, Monash University, Melbourne, 1989, p.220.

⁸³ 'Long Haired Promotion: How Harry M. Miller leads his horses to water', *Nation*, no. 280, 1st November, 1969, pp.13-14. Miller made his initial fortune with a New Zealand record company.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*, p.14.

abandoned the basic 'meat and potatoes' ethic of live rock consumption in favour of the discotheque. The transition to a more supposedly sophisticated youth nightlife was influenced by the end of the American West Coast scene and the switch to British cultural allegiances. The merseybeat scene in England transformed the Australian charts; by March 1964 the Beatles had four singles in the national top five. The Beatles' tour later in 1964 was the final reminder to the local 50s rockers of the size of cultural shift. Organisation of the Beatles tour reflected the ways in which new cultural sensibilities overlapped the old. Financed by Kenn Brodziak, the support tour entourage consisted of a performance package in the variety tradition: an English comic/compere, female vocalist, two local rockers (Johnny Chester and Johnny Devlin), and instrumental backing band (the Phantoms).⁸⁵ The changing of the guard was evidenced in the sight of Johnny O'Keefe reduced to the role of local television reporter for the Beatles' arrival in Sydney.⁸⁶ The Beatles' success produced a flood of local derivatives: the Cicadas, the Flies, the Twilights. It also revealed to local bands the possibilities of the group aesthetic and group harmonies. The lead singer was no longer privileged in terms of stage presentation, promotion or income. This was an important change to bands lacking the marketing advantages of a charismatic vocalist. The most successful of the new groups, the Easybeats, rejected the format of the O'Keefe era:

There was a big debate that went on for about two or three months about whether or not Stevie Wright should be shoved up front and even possibly get his name in 'Stevie Wright and the Easybeats'. But it all got knocked on the head for the purpose of creating a united front and being different — different from anybody else. So yeah, we were conscious of it. We didn't want that to happen.⁸⁷

Successful solo careers were developed (or contrived) for Normie Rowe, Johnny Farnham, Russell Morris and others. To the blues based groups, the pop creations and older singers were simply ignored or despised.

The Beat obsession produced nightclubs fashioned after the 'swinging' ambience of London clubs.⁸⁸ The disco scene represented a shift to the further accessorised stylisation of rock. Simply presenting bands to faithful audiences

⁸⁵ Glenn A. Baker, *The Beatles Down Under*, Wild and Woolley, Sydney, 1982, p.11. Choice of support acts was designed to cater to different regional fan bases - Devlin in New Zealand, Chester in Melbourne etc.

⁸⁶ Sturma, 1991, p.78.

⁸⁷ Easybeats guitarist George Young cited in Zion, 1989, p.124.

wasn't enough. An assembly of dancing girls, high profile DJs and separate lounge and dining areas were soon considered venue standards for the desired atmosphere. There was an accompanying shift in the segregation of live music audiences. Venue owners made distinctions between (higher income) 'young adult' and teen audiences. Wongs, the Teen Canteen (Barrack Street), the Latin Quarter Discotheque, the Gas Lash (Elizabeth Street), the Bowl (Pitt Street) and a number of Caverns, in due homage to the Liverpool venue, were among the first to attempt more refined live music settings. These establishments co-existed with more basic sites unwilling to upgrade their premises accordingly. Some venue owners believed that simply changing the name of a venue would imbue it with the necessary character. Surf City, situated on the city's Elizabeth Street, was one such venue, established by former bookmaker John Harrigan in 1963. Despite its obvious connections with the surf era, the venue became the benchmark of popular nightclubs, and proved that refurbishment was not mandatory for an increased clientele. As a dilapidated Kings Cross cinema, the site had previous incarnations as (Lee Gordon's) Sound Lounge and the Birdcage. Conditions inside were reminiscent of the basic town hall days:

[Surf City] was great. It had an upstairs part which was off limits. All the seats downstairs were taken out. If you can imagine an old movie theatre that's all black, with a big movie screen stage, and then another small stage off to the right, where the bands worked from, and a big dance floor. You had all the colourful people that came from [Kings] Cross — beatniks, prostitutes, strippers; it went until 2 a.m. They had their own dressing rooms under the stage.⁸⁹

Surf City introduced many newer acts to Sydney audiences. Ray Brown and the Whispers, Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs and Max Merrit and the Meteors were most closely associated with the venue's initial popularity. Harrigan used profits from Surf City to establish The Beach House in a car showroom below his Elizabeth Street offices.⁹⁰ Brown's and Thorpe's bands established long residencies at both venues, often on the same night according to Brown:

We had a repertoire of three hundred and fifty songs. Our week would start on a Wednesday. We'd work from 7 until midnight at Surf City on Wednesday and Thursday nights, with an hour on and ten minutes off. On Friday we'd work at Surf City until midnight and then go down to the Beach House until 2 a.m., then get up and do a matinee from 1 to 6 p.m., with half an hour for tea. We'd then

⁸⁸ See Melly, 1970/1989, pp.102-112 for the development of London discotheques within the same period.

⁸⁹ Singer Ray Brown, interview.

⁹⁰ Billy Thorpe, 'Me', *Everybody's*, 23rd March, 1966, p.25. Thorpe recalls "up to 1700 crowding into the Beach House, far too many for comfort".

work 7 to midnight at Surf City, then go to the Beach House until 2 a.m. Then Sunday we would get up and do a matinee from midday until six o'clock, have our tea and then work till midnight, and then have two days off ... [the Whispers and the Aztecs] used to rotate between the two, switching over at midnight.⁹¹

The venue characterised overlapping musical styles and subcultures within the 1963-66 period. Surfies, rockers and the initial wave of sharpies and mods all stomped in a revamped cinema in which the venue's shortcomings were obvious.⁹² As unlicensed venues, owners also experienced similar troubles with smuggled alcohol and drunken patrons to the initial town hall circuits.

The legislative landscape changed in 1966 with a mixture of liberal and repressive measures introduced by the new Liberal Askin Government. Amendments to the Liquor Act widened the scope of the Chief Secretary to prohibit 'undesirable entertainments' in licensed premises.⁹³ While Askin argued the need for legislative control on club practices such as boxing and wrestling, the new powers were devised to curb the growth of striptease performances in nightclubs and revues. Such was the demand for revue-style entertainment that the NSW Bowling Association banned striptease acts from its clubs in October 1966.⁹⁴ Empowered by the Liquor Act amendment, licensing police attempted to sanitise nightclub entertainment. Sydney radio DJ and discotheque owner Ward Austin, in a hearing to appeal the closure of Madame's Dancing Fountain Cabaret Restaurant in Kings Cross, believed topless go-go dancing at the club could not be labelled obscene.⁹⁵ Go-Go dancing was considered the appropriate form to ensure an element of cosmopolitan style, while topless waitresses were popular in licensed clubs. Such measures continued the tradition of Chief Secretary intervention, and contributed to the wider moral debates concerning definitions of obscenity predominant in the late 1960s. While student newspapers and other radical collective publications challenged contemporary literary definitions of

⁹¹ Ray Brown, interview.

⁹² Ron Smith remembers the wooden plank floor collapsing after a particularly vigorous stomping session (interview).

⁹³ 'Power over club entertainment', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6th July, 1966, p.9. The Chief Secretary already had such powers within theatres and public halls.

⁹⁴ 'Bowls Clubs Ban Strippers', *The Sun*, 6th October, 1966, p.3.

⁹⁵ 'Topless Go-Go Not Offensive', *ibid.*, 11th August, 1966, p.11. A plan was submitted in November 1967 to abolish nightclubs within a large section of Kings Cross in attempts to re-establish the area as predominantly residential. The plan was later dropped (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23rd November, 1967, p.8).

obscurity,⁹⁶ stage performances were also reminded not to offend middle class sensibilities.⁹⁷ Billy Thorpe was arrested at Chequers after swearing on stage, and again three months later, with the added charge of advising the Mosman Hotel's audience to "rip the place up".⁹⁸ Singer Doug Parkinson was also fined in 1971 for swearing on stage.⁹⁹ Police intervention remained minimal in comparison with the increasing reports of prejudicial treatment of rock bands in Queensland (discussed briefly in the following chapter).

The introduction of longer trading hours for nightclubs, hotels, theatres and public halls reflected the State Government's acknowledgement of the changed entertainment and drinking climate, and the uneven legislation that disadvantaged hotels. A cabaret licence was introduced for nightclubs, now permitted to operate until 3 a.m. with the provision of meals and entertainment. 3 a.m. licences were also given to public halls and theatres. Liquor was also now permitted in halls for the purpose of functions, which precluded public dances. If supplying meals, hotels were also allowed to trade to 3 a.m. with 'desirable entertainment', which enabled them to be credible social alternatives to registered clubs. A cocktail licence was also available for the serving of liquor in reception and other areas removed from dining and entertainment sections of a bar or restaurant.¹⁰⁰ The variations of licensing authorisation represented the final break from the restrictive licensing procedures of the 1950s, continuing the Maxwell Royal Commission belief that longer trading hours did not necessarily result in greater alcohol consumption. Most of the discos catering to teen audiences remained unlicensed, while those attempting to lure slightly older clientele operated under cocktail licences. The Here disco in North Sydney, owned by August Maranesi, sought the more sophisticated 'adult teenager' and was a

⁹⁶ The first of the Oz trials (in NSW) began in 1964. The Tharunka (UNSW student paper) trials in 1971 concerned Wendy Bacon's publication of the bawdy ballad *Eskimo Nell*. In 1967 trial by jury (not a single magistrate) for obscenity cases was legislated by the Askin Government (Peter Coleman, *Obscenity, Blasphemy, Sedition*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1974, pp.45, 62-64).

⁹⁷ In 1968 the play *American Hurrah* was prohibited by Chief Secretary Willis due to the fact that 'fuck' was spray painted on the stage wall at the end of each performance (Robin Gerster and Jan Bassett, *Seizures of Youth: 'The Sixties' and Australia*, Hyland House, Melbourne, 1991, p.58).

⁹⁸ 'Thorpe's Dirty Word Bust', *Go-Set*, 9th October, 1971, p.2; 'Billy Thorpe Arrested Again', *Go-Set*, 22nd January, 1971, p.2. Contemporary performers of Thorpe's suspect that such occasions were contrived publicity campaigns.

⁹⁹ 'Pop Star's Apology On Language', *The Sun*, 4th November, 1971, p.11. Parkinson was fined \$50 and \$11 court costs.

¹⁰⁰ 'Power over club entertainment', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6th July, 1966, p.9.

favoured residency venue for blues groups Jeff St John and Max Merritt and the Meteors. Venues were required to operate within vague definitions of varying functions:

I call it a disco nightclub because it is a disco, not a discotheque. As a licensed premises it also runs to 3 a.m. If you go according to the law a discotheque cannot have a licence, hence the legally acceptable term 'disco'. After obtaining the 3 a.m. cocktail licence I thought of going for a full nightclub [licence] but I would have had to change the atmosphere, the people, the music, everything.¹⁰¹

The new laws removed the absurd need for patrons to order liquor in advance, on the condition that nightclubs purchase their liquor from licensed premises. The resultant mixture of 'pop restaurants', cabaret bars, discos, and 'disco nightclubs' were well positioned to exploit increasingly diverse tastes. From 1967 discos dominated the Central Business District: Vibes (George Street), the Whisky A-Go-Go (Williams Street), Beethoven's (Cunningham Street), Ward Austin's Jungle (York Street), Caesar's Place (King Street), Uptight (George Street), Lucifers (King Street), Jonathon's (Broadway) and Adam's Apple (Oxford Street). Earlier venues experienced management and name changes as tastes shifted; the Bowl on Pitt Street became the Op-Pop, boasting a strictly top forty format. Wine bars also provided a source of local employment for those performers not conducive to the mainstream circuit: Huie's, the Trolley Car Bar (City Road), Mrs McWhitty's (corner of Oxford and Crown Streets). The Bondi Wine Bar (Bondi Road) and French's Tavern (Oxford Street) became established blues/jazz venues.¹⁰²

The legislation was also unintentionally symbolic of the new "cultural constituency"¹⁰³ of teenage and student radicalism evident within Australia from the early 1960s. In May 1962 the Menzies Government committed army instructors to South Vietnam. In 1964 the conscription of twenty one year old men for military service was reintroduced as Menzies escalated involvement in the conflict. The 'birthday ballot' conscription represented a novel discrimination against the young (in terms of sharing the burden of the war effort), and served to unite youth in a range of cultural and political movements, with anti-war protests the central focus. In this respect the anti-war marches and demonstrations were also de facto

¹⁰¹ August Maranesi cited in 'The Sound of Now', *Australian Music Maker*, January, 1969, p.4.

¹⁰² Wine licences permitted the sale of cider or wine, but prohibited the provision of beer or spirits.

¹⁰³ Stephen Alomes, 'Cultural Radicalism in the Sixties', *Arena*, no. 62, Arena Printing Group, Sydney, 1983, p.31.

protests against authoritarianism and generational conflicts regarding assumed 'rights'. Much of the literature assessing the period make tempting connections between student radicalism, emergent nationalism and local cultural production. This is certainly evident within the cultural productions questioning government policy and domestic lifestyle: the Aboriginal rights 'freedom' rides, stage plays such as Alan Seymour's *One Day of The Year*, and novels like Frank Moorhouse's *The Americans, Baby* and Robin Boyd's *Australian Ugliness*, were indicative of the re-examination of cultural conformity taking place.¹⁰⁴

Elsewhere, links between counter-cultural movements and cultural production were evident in the more psychedelic moments of Jimi Hendrix, the Rolling Stones, the Beatles, Pink Floyd et al, where the new "meaning in music was not simply tied to the lyrics, but spilled over into the sound itself".¹⁰⁵ Overseas performers also sought to redefine the established practices of one-hour sets consisting of three minute songs. San Francisco's Longshoremen's Hall in 1966, and the Free School Sound/Light Workshops in London provided venues fusing dance with extended improvisatory rock and light performances.¹⁰⁶ Leaving aside indulgent reassessments of the period, Australian musicians did not make explicit connections with political activist movements of the time, nor confront local issues in the content of their work. The Ronnie Burns single *Smiley* mentioned the "Asian war", while Normie Rowe's *Going Home*, assumed to be about Vietnam, was really about a return to Australia from Britain.¹⁰⁷ The lack of local references to the war in the 1960s is remarkable, given the increasing popularity of the anti-war movement. A discernible attempt to connect with the drug based scenes overseas could be found in the band Fraternity. In deference to the Band's Woodstock community ethos, Fraternity established their own co-operative in the Adelaide hills — Henning's Farm, owned and replenished by the band's benefactor, Hamish Henry. The band's determination to reverse local priorities (fewer performances in favour of extended 'creative' sessions) was a bold experiment, if

¹⁰⁴ Boyd's 1960 work renames the nation Austerica, in recognition of the extent of (architectural, cultural, political) influence of America. Seymour's play in regard to Anzac Day dissects the generational differences concerning the sense of national duty, pride and militarism. Moorhouse's work also examines American influences on local issues, particularly the Vietnam War.

¹⁰⁵ Sheila Whiteley, *The Space Between The Notes*, Routledge, London, 1992, p.2.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, p.119. Pink Floyd owned the light and sound company, and also began similar performances at the Marquee and the Roundhouse.

ultimately harming the group's long term prospects.¹⁰⁸

If political activism was never explicit in recordings, live performance provided counter-cultural activities fashioned after international methods. Tully, Taman Shud, Khavas Jute, Spectrum and other groups were prepared to redefine the pop idiom and embrace the cultural props evident overseas: long songs, cerebral audience participation (limited clapping and shouting) and extensive use of lighting and stage settings. With the student movement often the focus of cultural and political activism, the universities proved a fertile circuit in which to engage in alternative rock/pop performances. A series of 'Underground Happenings' coalesced around the film and lighting presentations of the Ubu production group of independent experimentalists.¹⁰⁹ The Roundhouse and Wentworth buildings, at the University of NSW and Sydney University, and Paddington Town Hall became established venues in the latter 60s Sydney circuit. When the concerts became too large for their original purposes, they were replaced with the 'Underground Fogg' lighting shows, orchestrated by Ellis D. Fogg (Roger Foley). Both productions became an essential part of local attempts to create the necessary counter-cultural ambience, and encouraged the exchange of ideas between rock performers, independent film producers and jazz musicians. Bands performed in front of a projection screen revealing coloured patterns or provocative images, aided by the use of strobes and smoke (fog) machines. Performances became 'events' of theatrical proportions, attempting to "extract what is essentially rhythmic, tactile, ritualistic and spiritual and to abandon the dry husk of form and content that encase Australian ceremonial life".¹¹⁰ The Fogg shows were an important link between the standardised rock formula and alternative theatre presentations (Foley often worked with both). The novel extent of such devices was apparent in the banning of Fogg's strobes from the Rave disco in the northern beach suburb of Collaroy. Police believed the strobes were

¹⁰⁷ Louise Douglas and Richard Geeves, 'Music, counter-culture and the Vietnam era' in Hayward (ed.) 1992, p.103.

¹⁰⁸ Clinton Walker, *Highway To Hell: The Life & Times of AC/DC Legend Bon Scott*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 1994, pp.91-94. Fraternity in different periods contained an influential list of members: Sam See, Bon Scott, (Uncle) John Ayers.

¹⁰⁹ See Clare, 1995, pp.122-124 regarding the creative processes of Ubu.

¹¹⁰ 'Ellis D. Fogg presents the Human Body', *Honi Soit*, 4th March, 1969, p.16. This represented a distinct change from most discos, which used a white spotlight augmented by coloured cellophane discs. A device connecting the drummer's bass drum to the lights was devised, ensuring automatic change of lighting with the beat, was advertised in 1967 (*Drift*, 2nd June, 1967, p.2).

immoral.¹¹¹

Structural changes (more exotic lighting, separation of dancing and dining/talking areas) heightened authorities' suspicion that discotheques were meeting houses for anti-social activity. From 1966 to 1967, the police did have reason for complaint. The surfer-rocker clashes of 1962-63 were briefly replaced by mods and rockers conflicts at discos.¹¹² A number of venues closed, citing youth violence as the predominant cause. The Jazz Club dance at the Ironworkers' Hall on George Street, and the Diamond Horseshoe Club in Paddington were notable closures.¹¹³ In examining the political climate of the late 1960s in Sydney, Peter Grabowsky states that the police and the Askin Government viewed a range of behaviours with the blanket brand of 'deviance'.¹¹⁴ Consider the comments by a Liberal member in the Legislative Assembly in 1969:

... on the one hand we have such reprehensible conduct as vandalism, robbery, assault, mass rape and drug addiction, while on the other the organisation of sit-ins, demonstrations and even riots. Honesty, virtue, dignity and the rule of law are in the discard.¹¹⁵

The Government's determination to deem political activism and a range of alternative behaviours as criminal conduct was reflected in other legislative directions. A police Indecency Squad was formed in 1967 to curb "male toilet behaviour", ostensibly targeted at homosexuals.¹¹⁶ The Summary Offences Act 1970 modernised offences concerning vagrancy, and included provisions for dealing with sit-in protests.¹¹⁷ The imprecise nature of the Summary Offences Act meant that police action rested on the arbitrary notions of the officer. In the case of local discotheques, policing seemed to reinforce State Government motives, evidenced in a *Go-Set* interview with a police spokesman on venue violence, where "it was admitted that there was discrimination against 'long hairs' by

¹¹¹ 'Fogging Out At The Push of a Button', *Go-Set*, 1st January, 1969, p.6.

¹¹² A person was stabbed to death near Rhubarbs disco on Pitt Street in February 1967 (*Go-Set*, 8th February, 1967, p.1). At approximately the same time, Melbourne venues experienced mods/sharpie fights.

¹¹³ Wal McCall, 'Sydney Jazz Club Dance Closes', *Go-Set*, 19th April, 1967, p.4; 'Demonstration at the Horseshoe', *ibid.*, 8th March, 1967, p.7.

¹¹⁴ Peter N. Grabowsky, *Sydney in ferment*, Australian National University, Canberra, 1977, p.153.

¹¹⁵ E.D. Darby, MLA, cited in *ibid.*, 22nd April.

¹¹⁶ NSW Parliamentary Debates, Questions Without Notice to the Treasurer, 23rd October, 1969, pp.1815-1816.

¹¹⁷ Grabowsky, 1977, p.156. Offences concerning vagrancy related to persons "having no visible means of support".

police, for the usual reasons — ‘it looks effeminate’, ‘the hair would be dirty’; these were called ‘natural prejudices’¹¹⁸. Police also could not come to terms with the environments desired by discos. TEN Cunningham Street, a venue offering psychedelic films and blues bands, was closed, with Sydney County Council citing the lighting system as “too complex” (unsafe?).¹¹⁹ Police expressed concern at the “dim lighting” within the discos, displaying a novel cultural naivety in complaining that “it is not easy to see what goes on in them”.¹²⁰ This reveals the behavioural changes within dance venues. The bright-but-basic culture of the town hall dances, relatively easier to police, were replaced by venues attempting to outdo each other in terms of psychedelic atmosphere. One development, however, adopted solutions from the 1950s. In attempts to remove violence, the public hall scene was revived. From 1968, many of the original halls (Capitol, Buffalo, Trocadero, Rockdale Paradance) were resurrected, along with many Police Boys’ Clubs. Using a pass-out system, the presence of police ensured the dances remained unlicensed and free of fights. Many hall promoters attempted to invoke a club atmosphere within the halls: Scene 32 (Sylvania), Cecil’s and Cleo’s (Cronulla ballroom), the Ashfield Tempest, and Tempest City (Sydney Police Boys’ Club). Shrublands at Marrickville instituted a novel door scheme to discourage troublemakers; those predisposed to violence were forced to pay a \$2 bond.¹²¹

Leisure choices were further defined by the demarcation between ‘underground’ and ‘straight’ bands. The local music press enjoyed operating upon the classificatory themes of ‘soul’ performers (Jeff St John, Wendy Saddington, Chain) or ‘bubblegum’ (Valentines, Autumn, Zoot, Sherbert) bands. The pure pop/bubblegum bands were well suited to the new high school circuit developing for lunchtime concerts. It is also important to note the emergence of a novel performance site during a band’s unproductive daylight hours: the shopping centre. The opening in October 1965 of Roselands signified the development of new multi-layered retail complexes, new urban spaces where shopping was sold

¹¹⁸ ‘Sydney Police Talk’, *Go-Set*, 22nd February, 1967, p.7. See the *Drift* editorial, 22nd March, 1967, p.2 for instances of prejudicial abuses of policing at discos.

¹¹⁹ ‘An Address To Remember’, *Go-Set*, 17th April, 1968, p.17.

¹²⁰ ‘Sydney Teen Violence’, *Go-Set*, 8th February, 1967, p.1.

¹²¹ ‘Violence on the Sydney Disco Scene’, *Go-Set*, 15th January, 1969, p.6.

as part of a wider leisure experience.¹²² As alternative performance sites of housewives and their children, 'bubblegum' bands could be assured of directly reaching favourable audiences. For most musicians, however, playing shopping centres was equivalent to the club scene, a desperate last resort. From 1969, the Millers hotel chain also began booking rock bands, ending the floor show tendencies of the Millers circuit with the resignation of Johnny Wade as entertainment director in May.

The influx of several hundred thousand American soldiers on 'R and R' leave from Vietnam ensured an accompanying boom in the inner city's leisure infrastructure.¹²³ Local marijuana use increased, with the introduction of heroin supplies in sufficient quantities to establish profitable local distribution points. While marijuana was known and often ignored or undetected by police, U.S. servicemen introduced a variety of new experiences in the hotels and nightclubs:

Pubs like Monty's and the United States were places where you could get dope in the early 60s. I remember going to the Bognor Hotel and smoking some dope with some sex workers, for want of a better euphemism, and feeling that [FBI chief] J. Edgar Hoover was wrong — in those days at the cinema they used to run American footage warning you of the dangers of marijuana. There was always a lot of it growing along the Georges River, very low strength. Once the Vietnam War started, you started seeing people using heroin, the Americans arriving, people using opiates after picking up a morphine habit in hospital. The tolerance went, and there was a lot of paranoia about drugs. All the amphetamines, the trash drugs, became illegal and it changed quite a lot.¹²⁴

As an eighteen year old working for a variety of r&b bands, Rob Souter remembers the change:

For a time there, it was unreal ... all sorts of drugs would be coming into the country. When I was growing up, you couldn't buy a joint. When I started working at Mrs McWhitty's wine bar you could buy for \$3 as much acid as you wanted. There wasn't a lot of speed, mainly coke and a little bit of methredine. Before, you couldn't buy heroin ... when I got back from London, there was more

¹²² Roselands boasted a 'Rendezvous Room', where women could relax, phone or read in a "club room atmosphere" (*Bankstown Torch*, 21st December, 1965, p.18). The complex also contained business suites, a mini golf course, town hall and theatre.

¹²³ Alfred McCoy, *Drug Traffic: Narcotics and Organised Crime in Australia*, Harper and Row, Sydney, 1980, pp.260-261. In conjunction with Pan American World Airways, the 'R and R' scheme operated from 1966 to 1972. Kings Cross nightclubs were the main beneficiaries of the U.S. combat tourist dollar.

¹²⁴ Ray Devitt, interview.

heroin on the streets than I'd ever heard of. [Kings] Cross had changed, it wasn't full of hippies anymore.¹²⁵

A group of venues became known to be catering almost exclusively to Vietnam service personnel: Whisky's, the Chevron, Chequers, Abe Saffron's Pink Pussy Cat, Bernie Houghton's Texas Tavern and Harpoon Harry's were popular servicemen's haunts. The bands did not represent the sole source of entertainment (or income):

We played at Chequers, when the American soldiers and sailors used it. With those sort of places, you had girls employed by the club to impose themselves on sailors; they'd sit on bar stools and get served alcohol-free versions of what the guys were getting served. They would order these really expensive drinks, except they probably only cost twenty cents extra for the bartenders to make up. That's how they used to get the bar sales ticking over".¹²⁶

The discovery of an alternative youth-music scene in early 1967 presented further problems for the conservative Askin Government. City tabloids warned of a "strange new religious cult" known as "hippies". When the cult were not using L.S.D., they indulged in psychedelic music — "wild, formless rhythms to induce dream-like states of mind".¹²⁷ The State's Health Minister announced two weeks later that the Poisons Act (1966) would be amended to establish the illegality of L.S.D., other amphetamines and barbiturates, and increased penalties for all drug offences.¹²⁸ Police were previously empowered to act upon sales of such drugs; possession was legal. Continued heavy use of marijuana, and to a lesser extent, speed and cocaine among performers and audiences suggests that the amendments performed a largely symbolic function, particularly given the well documented criminal and gambling offences which were purposefully being ignored in the same period. As Grabowsky suggests, such legislation may even serve as a de facto licensing of such behaviour.¹²⁹ The conservative, and more significantly, generational difference in attitudes to the recreational possibilities of drug use was confirmed by the Premier's wife, Mollie Askin's belief that the importation of drugs into Australia was part of a global communist plot.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Rob Souter, interview. Souter worked with many successful bands of the period, including Gus and the Nomads, Gulliver Smith's Travels and Company Caine.

¹²⁶ Garth Porter, interview. Porter later became keyboard player/songwriter with Sherbet.

¹²⁷ Max Suich, 'Cleric Warns On New Cult In City', *Sun-Herald*, 2nd April, 1967, pp.1-2.

¹²⁸ *ibid.*, 'Crackdown On Sydney Drugs', 16th April, 1967, pp.1-2.

¹²⁹ Grabowsky, 1977, p.164.

¹³⁰ Mollie Askin cited in Hickie, 1985, p.50.

V. The Cafe des Artistes

The prejudicial forms of youth behaviour governance and perceived radical bohemianism are exemplified in the legislative force brought to bear upon 'alternative' sites and activities. A brief case study of the (south coast) Sutherland district in 1967 reveals the links made within this period between juvenile delinquency, 'hippie' behaviour and perceived threats to the State. The district at this time was experiencing its own forms of debate regarding literary censorship. The State Liberal member Tom Mead denounced the literature "peddled around pub bars by beatnik dead beats", and believed that Sydney University students' newspaper *Honi Soit* contained nothing but communist propaganda and "pornographic" material.¹³¹ Local residents engaged in their own forms of censorship. 'Undesirable' passages were being ripped out of books within Sutherland Shire Library.¹³² Local newspapers within the same period also warned of escalating youth gang warfare, seemingly centred on attacks upon migrants, which sharpened the debate concerning local youth behaviour and facilities.

The Cafe des Artistes, a coffee shop in the Royal Surf Arcade at Cronulla, was a site devoted to jazz and blues performances, music tuition and the sale of paintings by local artists.¹³³ The shop was established by Vic Sylvester and a former musician, Max Henderson. With the Egg and Eye venue at Rockdale, the coffee shop was initially perceived by the local press as a valuable recreational site for local youth.¹³⁴ Yet one month later the *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader* created a minor panic of sorts, warning that youths had turned the shopping centre into a "juvenile jungle".¹³⁵ Residents and shopkeepers delivered a petition to Sutherland Council stating that the venue was attracting an "undesirable element" to the district. The Council responded by closing the Cafe:

¹³¹ Tom Mead, 'How Low Can We Really Get?', *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 19th January, 1967, p.6. Mead was the State Member for Hurstville.

¹³² 'Vandalism', *ibid.*, 11th January, 1967, p.7.

¹³³ A number of high profile jazz musicians performed there: Bobby Gebert, John Sangster, Norm Day and Alan Lee. Music lessons could be obtained for \$2.50 (*Drift*, 8th February, 1967, p.2).

¹³⁴ Kelvene Shipman, 'Two retreats fulfil a need of our modern teenagers', *St George and Sutherland Shire Leader*, 11th January, 1967, p.2. The Egg and Eye employed a five-piece band and two 'go-go' dancers.

¹³⁵ 'Police declare war on shire hoodlums', *ibid.*, 22nd February, 1967, p.3.

'The complaints did not concern the coffee shop itself', the Chief Health Inspector (Mr L.K. Falls) said. 'But the conduct of the youths in the arcade and the street outside caused grave concern' ... One shop proprietor said 'Customers simply would not come down Surf Road while these young louts were on parade. Their hair was filthy, their clothing was filthy and their habits were filthy'.¹³⁶

Here the links between moral authority and the maintenance of local commerce become apparent. In the few weeks open to business, Henderson experienced continual accusations of drug and black market liquor sales at the venue, and persistent police surveillance, despite local police admitting that no evidence of such activities had occurred.¹³⁷ Unable to apply drug or licensing breaches, or be seen to indulge in the prejudicial labelling practices of shopkeepers, the Council cited 'zoning grounds' as the reasons for closure. Henderson revealed little doubt about the Council's real concerns:

I am told that legally the council has no right to discriminate against my shop in this way ... But I do not intend to contest the ruling ... It is true that a large part of this crowd of young people consisted of what some people call the 'long haired element' ... Some of them might not have been as clean as could be wished. But they represent the more artistic type of Australian youth. I provided music and the means for this type of youth to express himself.¹³⁸

Parallels can be made with the 1958 bodgies panic in Parramatta discussed in the previous chapter. Juvenile delinquency concerns were tightly connected to underlying anxieties regarding the continuing health of local businesses. In both cases, it was made clear to musicians and those seeking 'alternative' venues the types of business practices deemed acceptable. Despite the small scale entrepreneurship shown (employment of local painters, musicians, staff), the Cafe des Artistes's bohemianism could not be tolerated. Again, local government resorted to the employment of technical bureaucracy to alleviate moral concerns. In one sense the coffee shop symbolised a range of 'undesirable' youth practices, and bore the brunt of a series of unconnected behaviours. This is reinforced by the fact that the Council at no stage contemplated more vigorous policing of the areas outside the shop; no complaints had been made concerning behaviour within the premises.

The determination to brand the Cafe as the local site of 'long-haired' deviance was apparent in subsequent events within the district. Residents in the nearby

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, 'Site a jungle residents say', p.7.

suburb of Kogarah complained of the noise levels of The Clown coffee lounge, where a jukebox played until 3 a.m. . Residents' petitions to Council cited lack of sleep, and the fact that the coffee shop was located near an aged care home.¹³⁹ Three inspections by Health officers led the Council to believe there was nothing wrong with the premises. In regard to the noise complaints, however, different practices were employed to the Royal Surf Arcade problem. The Chief Health Inspector found "that most complaints stem from behaviour taking place outside the shop and this is a police matter".¹⁴⁰ It seems that the referral of youth behaviour outside coffee shops to police was not Council policy a month previously. Similarly, zoning policies applied to a coffee shop within a commercial area were not applied to a coffee shop "seven doors down" from an aged care home in a residential area. The conviction of the treasurer of Engadine RSL club for poker machine revenue theft in the same month reinforced the double standards of governance applied, and placed in perspective community concerns regarding youth activities.¹⁴¹

Local festivals also provided an obvious symbol of difference, with youth eager to imitate the U.S. Woodstock and Monterey experiences. The East Coast Rock Festival, held in early January 1970, faced local council opposition, where a large security bond was needed to satisfy local authorities while bands played to a crowd of 3000.¹⁴² The coverage of the 1970 Ourimbah festival on Australia Day provided media opportunities to reinforce stereotypical parameters. With few arrests and no violent confrontations, the media focused on nudity ("Topless Pop!"¹⁴³) and swearing on stage. The reports also noted the new strategies adopted by police in enduring the festival:

... The result could be a model for future handling of hippies, protesters and other dissident youth Superintendent Griffin said, "It might not be my idea of music, or

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

¹³⁹ 'Complaints of noisy lounge', *ibid.*, 29th March, 1967, p.27.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ 'Poker Machine key laxity amazes S.M.', *ibid.*, 1st March, 1967, p.9.

¹⁴² 'How do you feel Mr Strange? Do you think it's time for a change?', *Go-Set*, 10th January, 1970, p.9.

¹⁴³ Front page headline *The Sun*, 24th January, 1970, p.1. The report focused on girls dancing topless and swimming naked in a nearby dam.

yours. But if young people desire this kind of entertainment, then the police must adjust their thinking and provide their usual service".¹⁴⁴

Tabloid attempts in constructing images designed to offend their city readers, in the absence of violence or police action, were unsuccessful. A *Go-Set* reporter revealed that *Sunday Mirror* photographers offered people \$20 to be photographed naked in the dam.¹⁴⁵ Later country events, the Odyssey (Wallacia) and Fairlight (Mittagong) festivals, were smaller gatherings of limited financial return. Ourimbah, however, provided sufficient incentive for the construction of the larger Sunbury festivals of 1972 and 1974 in Victoria.

The Melbourne disco circuit — Bertie's, the Thumpin' Tum, Sebastian's, the Catcher, the Biting Eye — encountered similar media and administrative treatment. Opinion was divided on whether the liquor-free Melbourne venues were better than their licensed Sydney counterparts. The absence of liquor guaranteed audiences devoted to the music, while discouraging more adult clientele. Attempts to gain liquor licences revealed the extent of suspicion of live music venues. The Chair of Melbourne Council's Building and Town Planning Committee asserted that the venues' locations were bad, "always in a dark dirty street, and [at] the murky end of the city".¹⁴⁶ This seems a wilful denial of the circular outcomes of cultural planning. Unlicensed premises became an increasingly unattractive venture; liquor revenue is crucial in accommodating rental or freehold costs of central business district locations. Given the extent of media and police disapproval it is hardly surprising to find venue owners forced away from the city centre, although one cannot entirely discount the motives of exploitative promoters.¹⁴⁷ The city's unwillingness to incorporate venues within urban planning provided a self-fulfilling prophecy of bohemianism in "murky" fringe locations.

¹⁴⁴ Keith Willey, 'Guns and 'Cuffs But the Fuzz Kept Their Cool', *ibid.*, 27th January, 1970, p.4.

¹⁴⁵ *Go-Set*, 4th February, 1970, p.10.

¹⁴⁶ Zion, 1989, p.270.

¹⁴⁷ See *ibid.*, pp.265-271 regarding the difficulties encountered by Melbourne venue owners.

VI. "More Bread Or You'll All Be Dead"¹⁴⁸

Those working in the industry were aware of the prejudicial forces opposing further attempts of professionalism. The stipulation of large security bonds and extra security staff repeated the tactics of discouragement experienced in the 1950s. In his dealings with councils, promoter Michael Chugg noted the difficulties in being taken seriously: "if I smoked a cigar and wore a suit, collar and tie they would respect me. But, because I wear jeans, fucking bad jeans at that, loud shirts, pink shoes and whatever — they just put me down".¹⁴⁹

Several agencies were established in attempts to provide coherent interstate touring networks. From the mid-1960s Ivan Dayman revealed the benefits in controlling both the bands and venues. Dayman's promotion of pop/rock singer Normie Rowe entailed interstate tours of large city rooms, regional centres and discos (for example Brisbane's Cloudlands Ballroom, Sydney's Op-Pop disco), with organised media events heralding Rowe's arrival in each new district. Formalisation of management structures was attempted in 1966 with the Australian Artists' Managers Association established to protect acts from promoter rip-offs.¹⁵⁰ The Association later dissolved and the main participants formed the Australian Management and Booking Organisation (AMBO) in 1967 in Melbourne. AMBO placed a number of acts in the dance circuit of one its directors, Bill Joseph. The other major Melbourne agency of consequence was the Australian Entertainment Exchange (AEE) formed in April 1967.¹⁵¹ Established by *Go-Set*'s editor Peter Raphael, the cross-promotional advantages of agency-media ownership were utilised. Promoters were threatened with the withdrawal of bands if they failed to advertise in *Go-Set*.¹⁵² With the collapse of AMBO in 1970, Bill Joseph, Michael Gudinski and Michael Browning (Billy Thorpe's manager) established the Consolidated Rock agency, which also employed Michael Chugg. The major Sydney bookers consisted of Dal Myles Enterprises, Harry Widmer's Cordon Bleu agency and John and Eileen Harrigan. Bands had the choice of

¹⁴⁸ Placard slogan of musicians' street protest in Albert Park, Melbourne ('Protest Hits The Pop Scene', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17th July, 1968, p.1).

¹⁴⁹ Chugg cited in Trevor Graham, 'The kids are only interested in big names', *Australian Music Maker*, August, 1972, p.25.

¹⁵⁰ Zion, 1989, p.334.

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.339.

residencies within the larger hotels and discotheques, or 'spot' work consisting of half-hour performances at up to five different locations. While short performances at a multiple number of venues had promotional and financial advantages, the residencies provided working environments more in keeping with the experimental nature of the period. Residency bands were still expected to work hard:

I remember in the early 1970s the agency would get you a week at Whisky [A-Go-Go], a week at Chequers and a week at Hawaiian Eye [all Harrigan venues]. For that week you'd get paid a hundred bucks and work from 9 [p.m.] to 3 in the morning, with twenty minutes on, twenty minutes off. They had disco dancers in between. \$100 was big money in those days.¹⁵³

Even bands later associated with the pure pop scene recognised the residencies as important apprenticeships:

I remember at Jonathon's [in Ultimo] I was getting \$50 a week, that would have been 1970. We used to indulge in twenty minute songs, and long solos ... the bands we used to listen to in the early days were bands like Yes, looking at strange time signatures and all that. Even though we were doing really long hours, those long nights of residencies were good in terms of learning to play. Bands now don't get that chance. You now get that individual proficiency, but you don't get that interconnectedness between bands.¹⁵⁴

The creation of large agencies orchestrating national circuits posed distinct conflicts of interest. Musicians who were simultaneously managed and booked by agencies certainly had to pay for the privilege of such in-house services. A 1935 amendment of the NSW Industrial Arbitration Act (1912) limited agents to a 10% commission on clients' income. Many agents persisted in commissioning up to 25% of their artists' fees.¹⁵⁵ In cases where the musicians' venue booker was also their manager, a 10% management fee (often greater) was coupled with a 10% booking fee.¹⁵⁶ The new agency structure did provide musicians with resources in alleviating disputes with promoters. To overseas acts looking for local work, the extent of dubious management practices was a revelation, witnessed in the experiences of the touring Hungarian band, Syrius:

All you have got is a bunch of gangsters and crooks running around trying to make a fast buck ... There has not been one promoter in Australia who has paid us without hassling, threatening, lying, cheating. We have been in your country over

¹⁵² Raphael cited in *ibid.*

¹⁵³ Rob Souter, interview.

¹⁵⁴ Garth Porter, interview.

¹⁵⁵ Actors and Announcers' Equity Association of Australia, *Spotlight*, September, 1966.

¹⁵⁶ Zion, 1989, p.336.

four months, have averaged five nights a week playing, for a grand total of \$250 in our current bank account.¹⁵⁷

Syrius's experiences exposed the economic rationale of Australian venues. Despite the apparent shift to more diverse performance surroundings, venue profits still relied on bar sales (as opposed to admission charges). The band's desire for more introspective performances confronted venue manager beliefs that "if customers did not dance, they would not get hot and therefore would not buy enough beer, and thus [they] could not re-book our group".¹⁵⁸ A number of promoter disputes¹⁵⁹ resulted in a street protest against dance promoters in Melbourne in July 1968, organised by AMBO. The protest, concerning the grievances of the Ram Jam Big Band with the Opus discotheque, concentrated media coverage on the extent of dubious promoter practices.¹⁶⁰ The Masters Apprentices created their own Drum Agency in 1970 as an alternative to the larger organisations.¹⁶¹

The flaws apparent in agencies operating as de facto litigators for musicians reinforced the marginal relevance of the Musicians' Union and Actors' Equity. The same complaints made in the late 1950s regarding union advocacy remained relevant a decade later. While the unions were successful in maintaining employment for local musicians on television,¹⁶² many musicians advocated the formation of a Pop Union to deal solely with the needs of pop/rock musicians. The music press, particularly *Go-Set*, supported performers in attempting alternative industrial arrangements, and *Australian Music Maker* was scathing when the Musicians' Union belatedly recognised the need to accommodate their concerns. The attempt revealed the Union's limited comprehension of the contemporary scene:

I mean, how were rock musos to know about that meeting? Were street posters used? No! One 3x3 advert in *Go-Set* publicised the location, date ... you forgot to

¹⁵⁷ 'Syrius interview', *Australian Music Maker*, May, 1971, p.8. One of the band's guitarists, Jackie Orszaczky, is still a respected contemporary performer with his own funk bands.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ For example, in May 1967 a Melbourne band, the Vibrants, were paid \$90 for two nights' work in Sydney; their normal fee was \$150. After transport, PA hire and accommodation costs were met, the group claimed the trip had cost them \$50 (*Go-Set*, 3rd May, 1967, p.7).

¹⁶⁰ Ian 'Molly' Meldrum, 'Melbourne Pop Scene Turmoil', *Go-Set*, 24th July, 1968, p.1. Promoters were accused of docking musicians' wages if late, unfair cancellation of acts and attempted standardisation of wages.

¹⁶¹ Zion, 1989, p.342.

¹⁶² Actors' Equity succeeded in enforcing the performances of local talent, who were previously made to mime to overseas records (Zion, 1989, p.292). The Musicians' Union was also vigilant in enforcing the use of 'live' session musicians over taped backing performances.

mention [the time] fellas!! It was wait for it! 11 a.m. on a Sunday morning! Most of the musos you are trying to reach — the ones who are being ripped off — work til 3 a.m. Sunday morning ... So let's stop having the application of your rules bent for the older semi-professional traddies working in pubs for bread and beer — yet seeing these same rules against younger pop and rock musicians. The time has come to stop hiding behind rules and sub clauses, and place yourselves at the service of non-member musos without requiring formal servitude for the rest of their natural life.¹⁶³

Union allegiances represented a threat to the individualistic nature of the industry, which remained very different from the collective approach of the 1930s-40s dance band era. Yet the solutions offered in attempting to avoid exploitation were at odds with the bohemian, rebellious individualism the industry is fond of adopting. Ray Brown (in 1967), Vince Lovegrove of the Valentines (1969) and Billy Thorpe (1972) all advocated a classification scheme of standardised payment based on a band's "experience and popularity".¹⁶⁴ While such classifications may have guaranteed minimum rates for lesser bands, the scheme was unrealistic due to managers' propensity to charge venues whatever the market could bear. This was evident in Thorpe's own actions in allegedly beginning to demand half the venue's door charge as the Aztec's fee, and Daddy Cool trebling its fee upon returning from the U.S.¹⁶⁵ The performers' solutions highlighted the continuing tensions in desiring standardised collective action and an awards wages system within an industry driven by the most basic forms of laissez-faire capitalism.

In his examination of the 1960s music scene in Britain, Iain Chambers states that:

The counter culture proposed to abolish the taken-for-granted division between leisure and work time, between pleasure and daily routine. In its place it offered the programme, iconography and sounds of a 'total experience', a radical reintegration of 'culture' and 'society'. Rock and the counterculture extended the scope and vision of pop music and its surrounding youth cultures.¹⁶⁶

This hopeful analysis does not translate to 1960s Sydney experiences. Popular music did assume an important function in questioning the moral standards expressed throughout the Menzies/Askin era. The blurring of leisure/work

¹⁶³ Trevor Graham, 'Open Letter to the Executive of Musicians' Union', *Australian Music Maker*, July-August, 1972, p.37.

¹⁶⁴ Lovegrove cited in Zion, 1989, p.296. Brown cited in David Aldeer, 'The Business Needs Organising', *Go-Set*, 12th April, 1967, p.8. Thorpe's plan was outlined in Ed Nimmervoll, 'Billy Thorpe Attacks Volume critics and 'Gutless' Bands', *Go-Set*, 29th January, 1972, p.5.

¹⁶⁵ *Go-Set*, 12th April, 1967, p.8; Mike Channell, 'Pop People', *The Sun*, 16th March, 1972, p.48 and 9th September, 1971, p.32.

priorities cannot be seen as a singularly 60s theme. As emphasised in the previous chapter, earlier rockers' attempts to convert 'idle' hobbies into professional careers formed a moral template for later conservative governance. Extended trading hours for hotels, registered clubs and nightclubs provided opportunities to establish durable performance environments. The liberalisation of liquor laws may seem at odds with the Askin Government's family-and-Empire values and renewed concerns with youth bohemia. The concessions to venues should be understood within the wider climate of illegal nightclub economies tolerated at the time. Later trading hours were also a response to media arguments that government revenue was being lost through the reluctance to recognise the popularity of SP betting, and illegal suburban casinos. The growth of the poker machine industry as an irreplaceable revenue source presented a powerful argument for other activities to be legalised. This represented the important difference between 'bohemian' music subcultures and other evening leisure forms: while illegal gaming could be placed within the longer Australian traditions of 'harmless' gaming, local rock/pop's desire to replicate international forms presented spaces of consumption which did not conform to older notions of citizenship. The case studies in this chapter share concerns in the *visibility* of youth in contrasting generational difference, in more explicit ways than the subterranean gaming activities of their parents.¹⁶⁷ It should be noted that the growth in discos derived more principally from commercial considerations; venue owners continued trading until 3 a.m. as a matter of sound business practice.

Lawrence Zion has stated that implicit within the 1960s Australian scene was a new sense of self-definition, characterised by the success and determination of the Easybeats in rejecting past practices. A migrant's sense of displacement heightened the individualistic nature of their performances. The Easybeats' "leaving their hair long, therefore, had less to do with wanting to become popular than with fulfilling a need for self-definition that was linked to their experiences as recently arrived immigrants ... the extent to which living in a migrant hostel could

¹⁶⁶ Iain Chambers, *Urban Rhythms*, Macmillan, London, 1985, p.97.

¹⁶⁷ See Bill Peach *This Day Tonight: How Australian Current Affairs Came of Age*, ABC Books, Sydney, 1992, pp.181-182, 188-196, for the novel means by which Premier Askin ignored the extent of illegal club activity in the State.

intensify — rather than dispel — feelings of displacement”.¹⁶⁸ Length of hair was an important statement, as evidenced earlier in police views on disco audiences, and the Sutherland district study.¹⁶⁹ While the bleak experiences of migrant hostels fostered a sense of Otherness which could be reflected musically, it is hard to attribute such displacement as a 1960s phenomenon. Zion’s emphasis on the contributions made by immigrants in constructing a different agenda is problematic to the extent that such definitions or signs of difference can be found within any era. The Easybeats’ agenda can be placed within a more general history of rock self-expression which transcends the immigrant experience. Zion’s thesis also ignores the number of 1950s immigrants who cannot be identified with the cutting edge of 1960s experimentation: Johnny Farnham, Johnny Young, Glenn Shorrock, the Twilights, and Billy Thorpe. Such reasoning could also be extended to the multicultural backgrounds of groups such as the Atlantics, who displayed innovative playing methods and recording abilities. The influence of immigrant performers was inevitable with increasingly relaxed immigration policies, and the tendency for youth to redefine travel opportunities (symbolised by *Go-Set*’s Ian ‘Molly’ Meldrum’s perpetual trips of deification to London).

However much the local live scene attempted to emulate the ‘adult’ experimentation of overseas circuits, by the early 1970s the rock and roll scene was remarkably similar to the O’Keefe era, consisting of town halls, supervised Police Boys’ Clubs and an increasingly viable hotel circuit. The limited radio success of the more experimental bands, the end of the U.S. servicemen’s ‘R and R’ program, and cyclical bouts of violence renewed the desire for supervised environments. This was accompanied by a return to the fundamentals of 1950s rock and roll performance: loud guitars, drums and vocal delivery.

¹⁶⁸ Zion, 1989, p.128. The Easybeats met each other while living in a hostel in the south-western Sydney suburb of Villawood.

¹⁶⁹ Television programs in Sydney insisted on short hair for performers (Zion, ‘The impact of the Beatles on pop music in Australia: 1963-66’, *Popular Music*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1987, p.306).

Chapter 5

Suburban Sounds (Know Your Place)

This chapter examines the commercial growth of Australian rock and roll within a number of sites and media. Despite histories to the contrary, Australian rock and roll had been a suburban experience from its origins in 1957. The suburban rock pub of the 1970s crystallised a complex relationship between audiences, performers and venues. On first appearance, the popularity of 'Oz Rock' signified the extent to which musicians and audiences became comfortable with their own sounds and venues. The suburban pub rock experience provided the practical and discursive means by which pride in Oz Rock fed into, and simultaneously benefited from nationalist discourses generated by a brief period of Federal Labor governance intent upon funding local arts.¹ The resurgence in the basic blues format of loud guitar, drums and bass provided 1970s performers with opportunities to refashion 1950-60s iconographies of difference in ways more attuned to local sensibilities. The brash, suggestive front-man persona of O'Keefe found contemporary meaning in the local mythologies constructed around vocalists like Billy Thorpe, Jimmy Barnes and Doc Neeson (all immigrants). As observed later in the chapter, technical capacities (greater PA sound levels, increasingly sophisticated microphone techniques for drums, for instance) were finally capable of matching performers' on-stage intentions.

However, the expansion of the industry from the mid-1970s provided a number of paradoxical ideologies. An increased managerial professionalism and marketing of bands concealed the cruder strategies adopted within an unregulated industry. The chapter examines the acceptance of women into a rigid masculine subculture, while noting that their presence remained conditional upon the maintenance of patriarchal sites and pleasures. Indeed, it is argued that the end of

¹ The long tenure of the Liberal Party Government ended with the election of Gough Whitlam as Labor Prime Minister in 1972. Beset by financial and personal crises, the Government's commission was withdrawn by the Governor-General, Sir John Kerr, in 1975. The Liberal Party were returned to power in the ensuing election.

public bar discrimination for women did not eventuate from publicans' desires for gender equality; rather, it simply made sound commercial sense to broaden the nature of audiences with the increased demand for pub rock. The greater presence of women on the dance floor and on the stage presented problems for the evolution of Oz Rock as a unifying nationalist discourse. The struggles endured by female performers through the 1970s highlighted pub rock's monopoly on accepted stage practices, which threatened the diversity of local approaches. In ways reminiscent of the 1950s renovations, hotels adjusted to new youth pub audiences, fracturing older drinkers and traditions. In this respect, Foucault's notion of "heterotopias" is invoked as a useful trope to enable analysis of the changes experienced by hotels throughout the second stage of the pub rock era.

I. Mixed Audiences and Prejudices

A prerequisite to the growth of the national hotel circuit from the mid-1970s was the gradual inclusion of women into the male pub culture. Vivien Johnson states that the acceptance of women in hotels was the result of an extensive campaign by the Australian Women's Liberation Movement from the mid-1960s.² An important exception to hotel discrimination can be found in the Push's 'takeover' of the Royal George Hotel on the city corner of Sussex and King Streets in 1957. A collection of bohemians, anarchists and university students devoted to intellectual conversation and sexual liberation, the Push demanded (and received) acknowledgement from publicans that their female 'members' be allowed to drink in the public bar. The group's large number of forty to fifty committed drinkers provided the Royal George's owner with the financial incentive to ignore conventional practice.³ The abandonment of gender divisions was repeated in other city hotels favoured at times by the group, which preferred (formerly) working class, dockyard venues.

The original hotel circuit endured mixed audiences in lounge bars for the purpose of teen dances, and the lucrative cabaret performances. This earlier,

² Johnson, 1992, p.130.

³ See Anne Coombs, *Sex and Anarchy: The Life and Death of the Sydney Push*, Viking/Penguin, Ringwood, 1996, pp.109-111.

partial acceptance of mixed audiences remained conditional on the broader understanding that female audience members return to the saloon bars (where drinks were more expensive), beer gardens or carpark when entertainment was not proffered. The determination of predominantly male publicans and their regular patrons to ensure the continuation of the all-male public bar was achieved through adherence to unspoken rules, vague applications of licensing law and blatant intimidation of potential female drinkers. Until a Liquor Act amendment in 1946, single women were precluded from obtaining a publican's licence.⁴

The initial attempts to challenge the public bar discrimination were conducted in 1965 by Merle Thornton and Rosalie Bognor, wives of university lecturers in Queensland. Refused service at the Regatta hotel in the Brisbane suburb of Toowong, the women chained themselves to the front bar and were removed by Licensing Squad police after bringing in bottles of beer to mix with the lemonade they were permitted to purchase over the counter.⁵ In place of more unambiguous legislation, the position in NSW was summarised by the Minister of Justice in 1968, in that the matter of women in public bars was "one solely for the determination of the licensee".⁶ This ensured the maintenance of segregationist policies, given the preferences of male customers and publicans, and removed the Government from the debate. When questioned by the Labor Opposition as to why hotels were not compelled to provide ladies' toilets in public bars, the Minister revealed the perverse logic employed in avoiding the issue:

As few women frequent public bars, the occasion for the court to consider the provision of women's toilet facilities adjacent to public bars seldom arises. Where it is shown that women are in the habit of regularly patronizing a particular bar, the court would, if necessary, require the provision of adequate female toilet accommodation ...⁷

The Minister may or may not have known that the main reason employed by publicans in refusing service was the lack of female toilets. Yet the remote likelihood of women being permitted in "regularly patronizing a particular bar" without facilities ensured that the male culture was not challenged.

⁴ AHA, 1988, p.25.

⁵ Australian Broadcasting Commission, *Four Corners* program, April, 1965. The attitudes of female bar staff were significant by virtue of their agreement with the majority of their customers, who advocated refusal of women.

⁶ NSW Parliamentary Debates, Legislative Assembly, Questions without Notice, 4th December, 1968, p.3330.

The local hotel and club remained an important place of conflict regarding discrimination, given that “the right to drink has a place in Australian history analogous to the right to carry a gun in America as one of our national symbols of full social maturity and acceptance”.⁸ As the central sites of leisure within the community, such battles assume greater significance. Developments elsewhere encouraged the women’s movement in the early 1970s. The Federal Labor Whitlam Government had legislated a range of favourable laws between 1973-74: intervention in the Equal Pay Case, abolition of sales tax on the pill, increased childcare and pre-school funding, the establishment of public service maternity leave and the appointment of a women’s adviser to Cabinet.⁹ The rights of women in obtaining employment in occupations traditionally reserved for men were also being asserted. On the 10th of January 1973, Debbie Boxwell attracted media attention for gaining employment as a builder labourer’s assistant, the first “girl nipper” to work on a building site in Manly-Warringah.¹⁰ Such gains were still marked by a sense of benevolent paternalism and subtle reassurances that traditional women’s roles were not misplaced. The *Manly Daily* article emphasised the enthusiastic response of Boxwell’s fellow workers who claimed she was “just great — better than a guy to look at”; the accompanying photograph assured readers that Debbie could still “wield a mean broom”.¹¹

Ten days later, seventeen women from the Sydney Women’s Centre confronted pubs within the Manly district on the 20th of January 1973.¹² Requesting drinks at the Hotel Steyne front bar, service was politely refused. Further chanting resulted in the bar manager allowing the women one round of beers before being evicted by local police. At the Manly Hotel service was again refused and the group staged a sit-in amidst verbal and physical abuse from the licensee and regular drinkers. Forcefully removed by police, four of the women were charged with various offences: using unseemly words, resisting arrest and offensive

⁷ *ibid.*

⁸ Johnson, 1992, p.132.

⁹ Chris Ronalds, ‘To right a few wrongs: Legislation against sex discrimination’ in Judy Mackinolty and Heather Radi (eds) *In Pursuit of Justice: Australian Women and the Law 1788-1979*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1979.

¹⁰ Olga Masters, ‘Better to look at’ Debbie first girl nipper’, *Manly Daily*, 10th January, 1973, p.3.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Ponch Hawkes, ‘The Manly Action: ‘We don’t have facilities for women — I don’t want a piss I want a beer’, *The Digger*, 27th January, 1973, p.4.

The invasion of previously undisputed male terrain through the use of carefully planned, and in the case of the Regatta Hotel campaign, media-aware protests, marked an important shift in the long term uses of hotels. Where the registered club movement had acknowledged the rights of women, despite continuing skirmishes regarding dress codes, restricted membership rights and traditional men's entertainments, the local pub remained the guardian of discriminatory practices. The ferocity with which male territory was defended reflected what was at stake. In examining the various reasons established for the maintenance of the status quo, the public bar embodied a traditional usage of public space reserved for essentially closely guarded private male pleasures. This represented the argument often put forward — that men needed their own space and time to be with other men: “you want to sometimes be with women, well, it's like that with men”.¹⁴ Other arguments put forward, however, reflected deeper concerns and prejudices regarding the proper places and roles for women. Notions of the ‘gentler sex’ were evident at the Regatta and Steyne protests in claiming that women could not tolerate the rougher male behaviour within the public bar. The concerns of barmaids’ sensitivities seemed another matter, as they were often “too busy working to listen to their conversations”.¹⁵ Conversely, women deemed strange enough to wish to enter such sanctuaries of masculinity were inevitably questioned about their sexual preferences, evidenced during the campaign in the Manly district:

... The jeerers began to hitch up their shorts and move in on the women, trapping us against the bar. The door wasn't very far away but the sound of glasses breaking against the tiled floor was very ugly. The women were threatening male turf: they couldn't be real women could *they*?

‘Ah, you're all lesbians’.

Jo shouted back: ‘Well, we don't fuck pigs anyway.’ Almost despite itself, the crowd cheered that put down.

A man yelled back: ‘Well, if you act and dress like sluts, you can be expected to be treated like them’.

¹³ *ibid.*

¹⁴ A police officer's argument to the Manly Hotel protestors, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Regatta Hotel barmaid comment, *Four Corners* program, April, 1965.

Mimi was wearing a gay-lib singlet and a bloke said, 'You're not a poofter are you? You know, we beat shit out of men poofters if they come in here.'¹⁶

Later protests were staged within a more concerted strategy by women's groups. Ruth Coleman, a Federal Labor Senator, was refused service at the Canberra Rex hotel in November 1974 and organised a protest at the hotel with the Women's Electoral Lobby.¹⁷ In 1976 the NSW Labor Minister for Justice stated that the issue of full membership rights for women in clubs would be investigated by the Clubs' Advisory Council.¹⁸

The gradual acceptance of women into the often grim ambience of the public bars was also aided by the growing number of women willing to move past the stereotypical roles of 'chick singer'/admirer and establish more diverse employment within the music industry. The Women's Refuge established their own dances at Balmain Town Hall, providing an important site for female bands.¹⁹ Many female performers were unwilling or unable to transcend the vigorous male culture behind and on the stage. The pub rock growth from the mid-1970s largely confined itself to the guitar-based rock which bludgeoned audiences into acceptance. For female performers attempting more subtle performances, the pub circuits did not allow such variety. An important Melbourne band, Stiletto, felt the brunt of local pub expectations:

Someone yelled out 'suck more piss' to which singer Jane Clifton replied 'No, we're not *that* sort of band' ... their agency doesn't seem willing to get them work in the beer barns where the bulk of the rock and roll dollars are, and without these venues the growth of the band is limited.²⁰

The career of a band like Stiletto²¹ highlighted the inherently masculine context of the pub scene from the 1970s, and the circular economic rationale of the industry. Agencies and publicans encouraged those (male) bands with the correct

¹⁶ Hawkes, 1973, p.4.

¹⁷ 'Woman senator refused a drink in men-only bar', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27th November, 1974, p.3. The hotel's reasons were not novel, citing men who "played darts and swore", and the lack of female toilets.

¹⁸ 'Move for full rights in women clubs', *ibid.*, 8th October, 1976, p.9.

¹⁹ 'The Sydney Scene', *RAM*, 14th June, 1975, p.4. The dances were notable for the performances of a female acoustic band, Clitoris.

²⁰ 'Stiletto — still dancing on a razor's edge', *RAM*, 22nd April, 1977, p.7.

²¹ The band's contract with EMI was terminated in 1978, with Clifton citing the limitations of the pub circuit a prime reason for the group's end. Author Helen Garner, and Sports guitarist and screen composer Martin Armiger were also songwriters for the band.

stage formula for increasing bar revenue at the expense of other genres. Varying strategies were applied to discourage female performers and managers. Several venue managers refused to pay band wages to a female manager.²² As drummer for the Go-Betweens, Lindy Morrison recalls Mushroom Records owner Michael Gudinski stating that “women in the band are trouble, you’ll break up after a year” during contract negotiations.²³

The development of a limiting pub rock style and accompanying male ethos make it difficult to form positive connections between the public bar liberation actions and a lasting concurrent change in audience and stage behaviour. The essential difference was, as Johnson states, that women were demanding more vigorously “their share of the space by the sheer energy of their motion across the dance floor under the combined influence of the music and alcohol”.²⁴ In 1977 the new Wran Labor State Government, under the Anti-Discrimination Act, made it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of sex or marital status. This included the provision of goods and services, with a special section regarding liquor. It was unlawful for a person with a liquor licence “to discriminate against a woman by refusing to serve her, or to discriminate in the terms on which that person does serve her, or allow her to have access to the establishment”.²⁵ Exceptions were made for private clubs. The legislation was statutory confirmation of what had already occurred through protest and commerce. By 1977 females attended pubs in numbers to provide publicans and male audiences with sufficient cause to provide and attend live rock performances. The manner in which the threatening public bar behaviour of masculine culture often formed the basis of pub rock stage rituals — AC/DC performances that included a mock raping²⁶ for example — reminded women that occupations of public and private spaces within the industry were a constant matter of negotiation.

²² A woman manager cited the manager of Teasers nightclub in Sydney who “refused to pay me, insisting on handing the money to the lead guitarist instead”. The band ended shortly after due to the drummer and songwriter’s resentment at being advised by a woman (Sally Simpson, ‘Hopes and Dreams and RIP’, *Loose Licks*, May, 1975, p.21).

²³ Lindy Morrison, interview.

²⁴ Johnson, 1992, p.134.

²⁵ Ronalds in Mackinolty and Radi (eds) 1979, p.196.

²⁶ AC/DC Moomba concert review in *RAM*, 26th March, 1976, p.36.

II. The Oz Rock Tradition: Part I

The re-emergence of town hall circuits, reinforced by the later provision of liquor licenses to town halls in 1977, were accompanied in the early 1970s by a steady growth in the number of hotels willing to book local rock bands. This was particularly the case for suburban hotels benefiting from increasing car use and ownership that redefined leisure options and entertainment choices.²⁷ The strong growth in housing development in Sydney's west, coupled with an increase in the youth population²⁸ provided publicans and promoters with a sufficient core audience in constructing an established suburban rock circuit. The major acts derived from the Melbourne blues scene, with a return to rock basics: lengthy guitar solos, solid (and loud) bass/drum foundations, and a minimalist approach to stage theatrics: Lobby Loyde, Blackfeather, Fraternity, Chain and Carson. Billy Thorpe, the most successful resident performer at Sydney's Surf City, had relocated to Melbourne and managed the transition to 'serious' blues guitarist with a revamped Aztecs. Within the Australian rock tradition, the attitudes, and equally, the sound of Thorpe and others established the heavily mythologised links between venue, performer and audience. Attempts have been made to define a local rock sound or characteristics. Technically, bands such as the Aztecs redefined the limits of amplification and the size of sound systems:

[Aztecs drummer] Gil Mathews was very good at building amps and sound systems. He would go to [sound production company] Strauss in Melbourne and they would build specially designed amps and speakers for us. I think it all changed after Woodstock, when it was shown that the capabilities for outdoor sound had improved immensely. We started taking outdoor PAs indoors. Billy would often have half a PA just for his guitar. We were the first to start hiring large trucks to carry the PA around.²⁹

For Thorpe, performances had to reflect the physicality of the music in a sonic experience that had to be felt as well as heard. The high decibel level of the Aztecs not only "involved an audience completely" in the band's work, but according to Thorpe, ensured that competing bands sounded "thin and lifeless".³⁰ Where the

²⁷ Car ownership had increased in NSW from two in ten in 1954 to six in ten in 1961 (Hal Kendig, *New Life For Old Suburbs*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1979, p.109).

²⁸ In 1960 15-19 year olds comprised 7.5% of Australia's population; by 1975 they comprised 8.9% (Irving, Maunders and Sherington (eds) 1995, p.119).

²⁹ Aztecs keyboard player Warren Morgan, interview.

³⁰ Ed Nimmervoll, 'Billy Thorpe Attacks Volume Critics and Gutless Bands', *Go-Set*, 29th January, 1972, p.5.

amplification of previously acoustic instruments enabled 1950s performers to challenge the orthodoxies of the town hall jazz and dance bands, 1970s bands seized on opportunities to make sheer volume an integral part of the performance.³¹ It is unsurprising that such bands experienced direct forms of noise control within the town hall circuits: the use of colour-coded noise meters designed to suitably warn offending musicians of the acceptable boundaries of performance.³² Circumventing such monitoring instruments became a routine part of stage preparation for the Aztecs:

We had a lot of trouble with noise meters installed in halls, which is interesting because even an unmiked snare will drive a meter into the red in an empty hall. They don't allow for louder volume in a hall packed with people. The first thing we used to do was unclip the meter wires. Residents might have been complaining about constant bass or drum sounds, but it'll be a high frequency guitar solo that will set the meters off.³³

Such practices directly opposed the spirit of the new noise legislation. However, the gap between the establishment of the Noise Control Act and residents' awareness of their rights within the Act created opportunities for performers willing to test the capabilities of improved amplification systems. The pragmatic strategies adopted by bands — the removal of monitoring systems, challenging resident or police action — were often successful due to a lingering unawareness of formal complaint procedures.

The town hall and hotel circuits continued as preferred sites of performance to registered clubs, which continued their difficulties in accommodating youth. Eighteen year olds were prohibited from entering registered clubs before 1969; those aged between eighteen and twenty one years were denied access to poker machines or club membership until the Liquor Act was amended in 1976. Reported collusion between club booking agents with criminal connections perpetuated the variety/cabaret policies of the 1960s, and ensured resistance to

³¹ Thorpe's strategy has not changed. In December 1996 the Mt Pritchard Community Club in western Sydney instigated legal action against Thorpe for playing at allegedly one hundred and sixteen decibels. The PA automatically cut off at ninety two decibels which disrupted the band's performance several times. The club refunded the entry fee to the audience after Thorpe left the stage mid-performance ('Billy Thorpe goes crazy over sounds of silence', *Daily Telegraph*, 17th December, 1996, p.3).

³² The meters were/are usually affixed to a wall near the stage with a tricolour system of blue, yellow and red/orange lights. Blue flashes denote acceptable decibel levels; yellow flashes signify unacceptable increases; red flashes are clear breaches and often result in the instant cutting of the PA's power supply once a predetermined level is reached.

³³ Warren Morgan, interview.

newer forms of entertainment.³⁴ The delays in the formal recognition of youth rights within clubs was also embodied within the continuance of outdated dress codes which deterred rock audiences and promoters in viewing the clubs as an alternative circuit. The clubs' policy of banning long hair (the Eastern Suburbs Leagues Club at Bondi had refused entry to Australian cricket captain Ian Chappell for hair over collar length³⁵) continued to offend musicians and fans.

The more successful Australian bands of the early 1970s, in the tradition of O'Keefe et al, recycled popular overseas movements. The Aztecs effectively recast the English blues tradition, while parochial Australian audiences neglected to see the irony within Daddy Cool's successful reworkings of American doo-wop styles from the 1950s. From the mid-1970s, Australian rock diverged into two influential streams. Highly successful pop-rock groups such as Sherbert, Skyhooks, Jo-Jo Zep and the Falcons, the Sports and others co-existed with a local punk scene (the Saints, Radio Birdman) which arguably prefigured their English counterparts. Mainstream and marginal musics benefited from localised and nation-wide changes to media structures. Concomitant with an emergent national identity within the arts and a desire to replenish regional infrastructures, the Labor Whitlam Government established twelve public radio licenses in 1975 as alternatives to the more formulaic commercial stations. 4ZZZ in Brisbane, 2XX in Canberra, 5MMM in Adelaide, 2JJ in Sydney and 3RRR in Melbourne constructed an ethos of localised parochialism combined with a desire to air alternative local musics.³⁶ The stations provided a much needed outlet for those musics insufficiently sanitised for commercial consumption: 2JJ's first song when it went to air in 1975 was the commercially banned Skyhooks' *You Just Like Me 'Cos I'm Good In Bed*. The nationalistic ethos of public radio assisted in the formation of

³⁴ Among charges of monopolising NSW club entertainment, agents and managers were also found to be charging their entertainers up to 30% commission, contrary to the Industrial Relations Act, which provided for a 10% commission for theatrical agents. Performers Digger Revell and Dinah Lee both successfully sued for excessive and illegal payments made to their agents. See 'Unfair ruling on contract', *Daily Telegraph*, 1st January, 1972; and 'Singer tells of her manager's 25pc fee', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23rd February, 1972. McCoy (1980, pp.204-231) details the connections between poker machine and entertainment cartels within registered clubs.

³⁵ Donald Horne, *Time of Hope: Australia 1966-72*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney and London, 1980, p.35.

³⁶ See: Potts, 1992, pp.63-67. Graeme Turner, 'Who killed the radio star? The death of teen radio in Australia' in Tony Bennet, Simon Frith, Lawrence Grossberg, John Shepherd and Graeme Turner (eds) *Rock and Popular Music: politics, policies, institutions*, Routledge, London, 1993. Marius Webb, 'Radio On: Music in the Air' in Peter Beilby and Michael Roberts (eds) *Australian Music Directory*, AMD Pty Ltd, Melbourne, 1981, pp.168-172.

newer youth audiences prepared to buy local recordings and see local performers. The new faith in Australian music was also shared by commercial stations such as 2SM in Sydney. Live-to-air concerts designed to showcase new bands and venues were strategies employed by 2SM and 2JJ, particularly in the late 1970s. Promoters of the time stress their importance: “we did the first 2JJ live-to-air at the Manly Vale Hotel ... we’d do a whole week in one venue, and that broke a lot of bands which were struggling for audiences”.³⁷

Where public and commercial radio enabled bands and agents to construct localised campaigns for live audiences, the establishment of a popular (and unashamedly populist) national music program by the Australian Broadcasting Commission constituted new possibilities. *Countdown* began in November 1974 as Australian audiences welcomed the introduction of colour television. Turner has argued that its host, former *Go-Set* reporter Ian (‘Molly’) Meldrum, acted as “gatekeeper in the industry, championing the cause of local product while also helping to determine which local products got their chance in the first place”.³⁸ In keeping with the conservative programming of predecessors like *Bandstand*, the programme emphasised suitable local performers (the programme was classified as childrens’ programming³⁹) interspersed with video clips of overseas bands. The show became crucial to the development of a viable national live circuit. Two bands who constructed specific band images for maximum visual impact were Sherbert and Skyhooks:

Really the most significant thing about *Countdown* was that being on the ABC it meant that for the first time in Australia you could tour all over Australia. You could go to outback obscure towns ... we hadn’t really been heard of outside Melbourne ... it was the beginning of *Juke* and *RAM* magazines too, and the nationalism that Whitlam had encouraged where we could suddenly be proud of ourselves.⁴⁰

The power of the program undoubtedly benefited those performers more suited to the program’s divisive policy of acceptable musics: predominantly white, male

³⁷ Promoter Harry Della (Rock Circuit Promotions), interview.

³⁸ Graeme Turner, ‘Rock music, national culture and cultural policy’ in Tony Bennett (ed) *Rock Music: Politics and Policy*, ICPS, Griffith University, 1989, p.3.

³⁹ Stockbridge, 1992, p.73. The tradition of television as moral standard bearers remained. Heavy rock band Rose Tattoo were forced to cut their hair for a *Countdown* appearance (Angry Anderson interview, *Spurt!* magazine, no. 4, 1978).

⁴⁰ Skyhooks guitarist Red Symons cited in Peter Wilmoth, *Glad All Over: The Countdown Years 1974-1987*, McPhee Gribble, Ringwood, 1993, p.126

guitar-based bands, or female balladeers. The power of the show and particularly Meldrum, articulated a new discourse of authenticity in regard to a performer's long term viability; "you [weren't] real till you appeared on *Countdown*".⁴¹

III. 'This isn't music'

The limited spectrum of performers deemed appropriate for *Countdown* created a select group of bands able to benefit from the possibilities of national touring. Those bands loosely grouped within the punk idiom either ignored, or were excluded from mainstream media opportunities. Inspired by the American underground scene evident in the late 1960s (the Velvet Underground, Iggy Pop, Television, Patti Smith and the New York Dolls), Sydney and Brisbane produced localised scenes. Radio Birdman's first performance (as the Rats) in 1973 outside Paddington Women's Hospital reflected a rare tolerance of public decibel levels soon to be abandoned.⁴² The distinctions between mainstream and punk were clearly defined in a succession of banned Birdman performances at established rock venues (Chequers, French's).⁴³ The ignorance or outright hostility displayed by venue owners was partly anticipated and often secretly desired:

Yeah, well — we weren't one of these fawning bands that comes along to a place, sets up, plays what everyone wants to hear and sucks up to the audience to get some kind of approval. We didn't want to be like that and that's probably what people expected. It just causes a lot of shit. They know they can't control you and it bothers them. But gigs in those days were fun. Really, a lot of negativity from the promoters and stuff like that made it quite exciting. It felt like there was a real cause 'cos we had to defend ourselves in all sorts of ways.⁴⁴

Predictably abysmal performances on the fading suburban Millers circuit (with subsequent bans) and attempts in supporting Sherbert and 1950s revivalists Ol' 55 evoke comparison with the ideological collision between Sydney's original rockers and the later 1960s cabaret circuit. The Oxford Tavern (the 'Funhouse') in Darlinghurst provided a resident venue that didn't require audiences or large beer sales, and enabled the band to establish a loyal following.

⁴¹ Skyhooks' bass player and songwriter Greg Macainsh, *RAM*, 29th June, 1979, p.27.

⁴² Johnson, 1990, p.23.

⁴³ *ibid.*, pp.24, 35,42.

⁴⁴ Singer Rob Younger, *ibid.*, p.39.

In Brisbane the Saints began as a group of teenagers playing school concerts in 1972 with, according to band members' recollections, only a vague appreciation of the overseas underground scene.⁴⁵ Their now mythologised recording of *Stranded* in September 1976, initially ignored domestically, was acclaimed within London, establishing the band's bona fides. The Saints' early performances can arguably be seen as a response to the sterile authoritarianism of successive National Party State governments intent upon establishing the quiet and good order of the streets. The Bjelke-Peterson Government's own inquiry into youth policies revealed the extent to which Queensland youth felt isolated and overly policed. The Demack Report found youths' central complaints to be police harassment, lack of employment opportunities and resentment over adults' organisation of youth clubs and activities.⁴⁶ It echoed the findings of a national survey commissioned by the Whitlam Federal Government — the Youth Say Project in 1975 — which found youths lacking the appropriate number and type of venues for their own activities. Coffee shops as meeting places, music centres and regular dances were the major demands of those interviewed.⁴⁷ The need for appropriate spaces was greater in Brisbane, where the 'rational leisure' agendas of the 1950s were preferred to more imaginative youth policies. The provision of "nuisance" clauses within the Vagrancy, Gaming and Other Offences Act equipped police with sufficient authority to close offending parties, nightclubs and live venues. The rationale behind the installation of noise meters and continual monitoring of decibel levels in dealing with resident complaints, was questioned by venue managers and bands, who witnessed State and local council authorities measuring decibel levels within 20 metres of PA systems *inside* the venue, rendering any judgement on disturbance in surrounding residential areas to be unrealistic.⁴⁸ To local musicians, sound levels were not the implicit concern of local policing practices. Before joining the Go-Betweens, Lindy Morrison experienced the difficulties of local performance:

⁴⁵ Guitarist Ed Kuepper observes that "the Saints were already going when the [New York] Dolls' first album came out. Obviously we were operating pretty much in isolation ... but why the Saints did what they did, I don't know" (Clinton Walker, *Stranded: the secret history of Australian independent music 1977-1991*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 1997, p.13).

⁴⁶ The Commission of Inquiry into Youth, tabled in Queensland Parliamentary Papers 1975-76, cited in Irving, Maunders and Sherington (eds) 1995, pp.197-198.

⁴⁷ Youth Say Project, *The Recreational Priorities of Australian Young People*, AGPS, Canberra, 1975, pp.28-37.

⁴⁸ Andrew McMillan, 'Noise pollution', *RAM*, 21st May, 1976, p.13.

It was a lot harder to play in Brisbane than it was in Sydney, because in Brisbane we were under a political threat all the time, living under the Bjelke-Peterson regime, and punk was a lot more political there than it was in Sydney. They were closing down venues all the time in Brisbane. Sydney seemed to have more venues and it was a lot easier. There also seemed to be a lot more D-I-Y [Do It Yourself] places, where people hired halls or played in backyards. In Brisbane, the police would close down venues and arrest people. That happened regularly. We're talking 1977-79; that was the period that street demonstrations were banned. I just wanted to get out of Brisbane because it was such a politically conservative town. It was impossible to develop there, even with the advent of (radio station) 4ZZZ. I was in an all girl punk band (Xero), and it was impossible to get a gig.⁴⁹

The Saints' lead singer Chris Bailey identified the increasingly technical provisions of policing venues with a broader strategy of youth containment:

In Queensland the government has given the police power to walk into any premises and confiscate any equipment that is too loud ... They're trying to control society and control fun. Just because you have a wild party with wild music and loud noise doesn't mean that you're going out into the street and beat up old women. They're using us as a scapegoat 'cos if they can write up in the Sunday papers that the Saints had another wild party, beer bottles were broken and everyone was havin' fun they could kinda say 'the youth of today is wild, we have to bring in more restrictions, get the army, bring in conscription ...'⁵⁰

While Sydney media adopted a familiar misunderstanding of the punk ethic,⁵¹ a small circuit did develop within city hotels. The Grand Hotel (opposite Central Station), the Southern Cross Hotel, Stranded (Strand Arcade), the Paris Theatre, the Royal Hotel in Bondi, the White Horse Hotel (opposite Sydney University), the Heritage Hotel (Kings Cross), the Sussex Hotel (Sussex Street), the Albury Hotel (Oxford Street) and French's wine bar provided important opportunities. The demarcation between punk and rock circuits was sometimes relaxed; mainstream rock venues such as the Bondi Lifesaver, the Civic Hotel and Chequers offered occasional support spots to unknown bands. Johnny Dole and the Scabs, Wasted Daze, X, the Psychosurgeons, and the Thought Criminals⁵² were the more prominent bands enjoying hotel residencies, employing a mixture of U.S. and U.K. influences. Where the Funhouse attracted biker crowds, a Scabs' resident audience often contained a mixture of surfers, sharpies, and English punk imitators.

⁴⁹ Interview.

⁵⁰ Bailey cited in Andrew McMillan, 'Dirty Denims 'n' Haloes Don't Mix, Do They?', *RAM*, 11th March, 1977, p.21.

⁵¹ The current affairs programme Willesee in 1977 entitled their report on the local punk scene 'Punk rock — a rather nasty case of noise'. A *Sydney Morning Herald* article in 1978 (Jenny Tabakoff, 'Punk rock — sounds somewhat seedy', 10th February, p.7) continued the emphasis on simplistic links of appearance with a vaguely stated deviance.

⁵² The Thought Criminals' bass player, Roger Grierson also established their own recording label in 1978, Doublethink, an important forum for underground recordings in the late 1970s.

In examining the prohibition of punk performances in Britain in the late 1970s, Martin Cloonan believes that “censorship was never centred on the music as such — it was directed at the behaviour of fans and bands alike”.⁵³ As earlier prohibitions on 1950s performers revealed, singular aesthetic judgements *are* made, independent of accompanying styles and behaviour. Certainly within Sydney, brief excursions by punk bands into commercial environments were met with firm opinions as to ‘acceptable’ musics. A Wasted Daze performance at the Nelson Hotel in Bondi was halted after two songs, the publican paying the band \$6 in door money; a Go-Betweens’ support performance at the Narabeen Hotel ended mid-set with the publican decreeing that “this isn’t music; you can’t play here”.⁵⁴ Given the hostility from the established circuits, the importance of sympathetic publicans has been underestimated in accounts of the 1970s underground scene:

[The venue owners] were really admired because they didn’t let the fact that they didn’t like the music stop them, they liked everybody’s enthusiasm. They were prepared to let people like me and my friends come in and have fun. It sounds really folksy now, but you’d go a gig and you’d know everybody there ... The Sussex had a few different incarnations; they had their Voigt era with art/punk bands, those Crime and the City Solution kind of bands. Then it became a kind of mod pub [c. 1981] with bands like the Allnighters. Stella, the woman who ran it, must have been in her 80s then. The bands that played there were experimental, and she would have had no idea what was going on, but she was all for giving the kids a break, she was an excellent person.⁵⁵

The Sussex Hotel provided an example of the contradictory nature of those pubs willing to foster alternative bands. As a daily drinking site for waterfront workers and unionists, the pub’s slow nightly trade meant little financial capital was expended on allowing young bands to play for door earnings. In this context, experimental musics could be found in those sites willing to experiment to gain viable weekend and night audiences. The rougher milieu of working class pubs complemented and accommodated the wilder excesses of punk performances and dress codes. This was also evident in the development of the Excelsior Hotel as an initial venue for Radio Birdman in Surry Hills. Here, the band found a publican willing to shift the venue’s pool tables twice a week for their theatrically subversive performances. A small section of the pub’s day clientele, however,

⁵³ Martin Cloonan, *Banned! Censorship of Popular Music in Britain 1967-1992*, Arena Ashgate, Aldershot, 1996, p.179.

⁵⁴ Wasted Daze experience cited in *RAM*, 29th July, 1977, p.4. Go-Betweens’ experience from Lindy Morrison, interview.

ended the possibility of a long term residency. As a favoured drinking site of Surry Hills detectives, pressure was exerted upon the publican to end performances.⁵⁶

The D-I-Y ethos was not confined to the punk scene. The established rock circuit also discouraged or ignored the thriving mixture of blues, rock and rockabilly bands emerging within Sydney's town halls from the mid-1970s. The Tin Sheds (Sydney University), Balmain Town Hall, Paddington Town Hall, the Heffron Hall, the Mount Pritchard community centre and Glebe Town Hall fostered a group of entrepreneurs willing to cater to knowledgeable audiences in search of more 'pure' interpretations:

We used to hire the town halls more or less for own private parties, for a small amount, and a couple of hundred people would come along. All that long Oz Rock stuff was just starting up, and the later psychedelia. You had the r&b bands that people could dance to — the people who were going to see Thorpie and the La de Das weren't going to see the [Foreday] Riders, the Mentals [Mental As Anything] and the Housewreckers, the Goldtops. Those audiences were more inner city, a bit more in the know who bought imported records, into 'roots' music, re-issues of blues, country or reggae. And that merged into that Melbourne scene of [Captain] Matchbox, Peter Lillee and Topper, even Ross Wilson. Joe Camilleri would have been the equivalent of one of those Sydney r&b bands, except in Melbourne they managed to get a mass audience which Sydney never really had, or that commitment.⁵⁷

The revived town hall scene was complemented by the Petersham Inn, the Forest Lodge Hotel, the Three Weeds Hotel (the Rose, Shamrock and Thistle) and the Leichardt Hotel, predominantly inner west pubs removed from the heavier rock scene. One of the few bands to later construct a pop/rock mainstream following, Mental As Anything, established a residency at the Unicorn Hotel in Paddington after similar D-I-Y performances within suburban halls:

The atmosphere was always good, with good big stages and plenty of room for people to dance. [And you knew] the audiences weren't there like the suburban barns, just to drink beer and pick up a girl. We used to play with bands like Johnny Dole and the Scabs, and X a couple of times. Funnily enough, we were probably considered part of the punk scene at the time. But around 1977-78, that whole scene was punk inspired, even if the bands weren't strictly punk music. You couldn't do anything else really, it just seemed a good thing to do to get a gig. We didn't have an agent or a manager, we did it all ourselves. By the end of the Civic [Hotel residency] we were each taking home \$200 a night, which was incredible money back then, not paying cuts to anyone. I remember when we put our first

⁵⁵ Roger Grierson, interview.

⁵⁶ According to guitarist Deniz Tek, "the manager knew [the police] would be around a lot longer than we would ... it guaranteed clientele for him if he played their game" (Johnson, 1990, p.35).

⁵⁷ Recollections of slide guitar player Peter Doyle, interview.

record out and got a manager, we took a huge cut in wages. All of the bands organising their own gigs were lumped in as part of the punk scene, though there were a lot of r&b bands like us, along with the bands like Johnny Dole and the Scabs playing a full on thrashy Sex Pistols-type music. Bands were hard rock and roll mixed up with a bit of punk. And then there was the Mangrove Boogie Kings who I first saw at French's; it was like a mixture of pop and punk-influenced bands. But we were also considered a new wave band for years and years. I prefer the description of garage pop band.⁵⁸

As had occurred with the initial rock and roll circuit of the late 1950s, the D-I-Y ethic of the late 1970s encompassed a range of influences and degrees of rebellion. The punk ethic can be broadened to include the smaller blues audiences and bands determined to avoid the disco-pub circuit and subsequent formulaic performance standards.⁵⁹

IV. The Oz Rock Tradition: Part II

By 1978 the mainstream live rock industry began to benefit from a combination of increasingly favourable media policies. Popular music programs (*Countdown*, *Sounds Unlimited*) on television, initially at least, favoured local performers. Changes within the Broadcasting Act ensured local bands would be heard on public radio networks and commercial stations. In 1973 the local content quota enforced by the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal was 10%; after intense industry lobbying, local content was increased to 20% in 1976.⁶⁰ This legislation (compared to the 5% content laws in 1956) synchronised with an increasingly nationalistic scene in which local audiences were prepared to consume local product. From 1968 to 1978 local record manufacturers experienced a 626% increase in sales revenue.⁶¹ This extraordinary growth was partly a result of an increasingly local content *within* Australian performances. Australian musicians — Skyhooks, Cold Chisel, Australian Crawl, the Angels, Midnight Oil, the Sports, Richard Clapton, Paul Kelly, Dave Warner — documented Australian experiences within their

⁵⁸ Mental As Anything guitarist Reg Mombassa (Chris O'Doherty), interview.

⁵⁹ Both punk and blues influenced performers I have interviewed from the period stressed the importance of a more inclusive ethic, where long guitar solos, complex sound production systems and rigid band structures were much discouraged.

⁶⁰ Greg Young, 'Communicating Australian Pop Music', *Media International Australia*, no. 79, February, 1996, p.105. The local content quota did not, however legislate that Australian material be played within peak listening periods. Many stations persisted in fulfilling their quota during midnight to dawn sessions.

songs, and found their audiences within the expanded suburban hotel circuit.

As had occurred in the late 1950s, the hotel industry was feeling the effects of a competitive registered club scene. A 1978 hotel industry survey reported that 73% of hotel drinkers under thirty years of age requested more hotel entertainment; 78% specifically requested live bands.⁶² The report's recommendations were similar to the Asher Joel report delivered in 1958: the provision of an improved entertainment, service and eating environment was needed to maintain industry growth. Improvements in the interior decor of hotels remained limited.

The growth in the NSW live circuit produced an exceptional black market industry of booking agencies, managers, road crews and venue managers; a cash economy based upon the willingness of local youth to witness live performances of local stars. Having established Mushroom Records in 1972 with local successes Skyhooks, Madder Lake and Chain, Michael Gudinski's Harbour and Premier booking agencies established a rigid financial hold upon the larger venues and performers. After the collapse of the Evans/Gudinski international touring company in 1978, Gudinski later formed the Frontier Touring Company. In the late 1970s, Harbour (Sydney) and Premier (Melbourne) "controlled between fifty and two hundred local bands" performing live.⁶³ The ideological brick wall between suburban and inner city performances was enhanced by the Harbour/Premier duopoly, which also encouraged bands to be managed by their booking agency. The consequences of attempting alternative circuits became obvious:

I moved to Melbourne in 1976 and stuck it out for a year down there. The Sydney - Melbourne rivalry existed, I took a whole Sydney band down there and [Premier] tried to starve us to death, run us out of town. I had a six piece band and one roadie. The drummer used to go down to the markets in the morning and bludge vegetables, and come back and fry them up. That's all we lived on for about a year, and lots of alcohol. We actually started the Kingston Hotel off because the agency wasn't going to let us work at all. The first night at the Kingston was hilarious, because it held about four hundred people. We were thinking this is great, let's shove it up the arses of those pricks at Premier. I went to the [girl taking money at the] door, and she had about \$10 ... They lured me into the office one day and even

⁶¹ Breen, 1992a, p.46. A range of local recording labels (for example Deluxe, Regular, Mushroom) contributed to such growth.

⁶² *The Hotel Industry in NSW: Past, Present and Future*, August, 1978, NSW Branch report by Coopers and Lybrand Services, Australian Hotel Association Files, Z223. Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU, Canberra.

⁶³ Creswell, 1993, p.83.

at that stage — I've made a lot of bad career errors, but going with these guys was not going to be one of them. When it dawned on me what they were trying to do, I said forget it. And I got the literal you'll-never-work-in-this-town-again rave. And it literally happened; we didn't. That's when we went to the Kingston.⁶⁴

Within the Sydney circuit, Midnight Oil was one of the few bands to contest the economic and artistic constrictions of the Gudinski monopoly. The band established a limited northern beaches circuit, with the Royal Antler Hotel at Narabeen central to their early financial survival. Confrontations with publicans and agencies stemmed from initial experiences: double payments and sub-contracts to multiple agencies; payment of commissions to agencies even when the band had arranged its own work; and the well-worn refusal by publicans to pay agreed fees. Midnight Oil initially shared the disorientation experienced by punks' occasional forays into the suburbs. The band's political tactics involved a more conventional policy of change from within. While bands such as the Go-Betweens relocated to Europe in search of more appreciative audiences and promoters, Midnight Oil attempted to change local practices:

Wherever we'd decided to play — and we only had a couple of places where we could play — they'd go and put one of their major bands down the road from us. To compete, to teach us a lesson. They very nearly starved us out and drove us out ... We went into debt as a matter of principle ... but we weren't going to let a bunch of thugs shut us down.⁶⁵

The band's stance regarding venues also extended to attempts in softening bouncer behaviour, upgrading audience comfort, and encouraging other performers to instigate fee limits to prevent band and audience rip-offs. This often represented an inversion of punk strategies that involved performances designed to offend publicans; Midnight Oil's emerging popularity was used by the band in threats of *not* performing. Such strategies were a realistic acknowledgement of the band's suburban audience base and musical forms.

The suburban circuit's growth depended upon an unequivocal economic relationship between alcohol sales, chronic overcrowding and basic rock performances. This formed the basis of the Oz Rock tradition, a sub-genre of

⁶⁴ Interview with musician who prefers to remain anonymous. It should be noted that the Solo agency (Chris Murphy) and the Nucleus booking agency operated in competition with Harbour/Premier from 1976. At the time Gudinski welcomed Nucleus, stating that "the previous situation where Premier Artists had a near monopoly on bands and work around Melbourne and interstate was ultimately not the healthiest thing for the industry" (*RAM*, 5th November, 1976, p.3).

⁶⁵ Peter Garret cited in Milsom and Thomas, 1986, p.28.

mythological status equal (and similar in practice) to that of the 'six o'clock swill' within the hotel industry. It became clear to inner city musicians like Roger Grierson that "a brick wall ran all the way along Cleveland Street [Redfern] back to the city — Gladesville was the suburbs".⁶⁶ The divide between inner city experimentalism and suburban homogeneity is an assumption that fits neatly within broader cultural divisions constructed elsewhere. Criticism of the Oz Rock form can be seen as an extension of the view of the suburbs as creative wastelands within Australian literary and architectural debates from the 1920s. Suburb/city meant essentialised differences which leisure practices were seen to reinforce: dependable routinisation/excitement; materialism/rebellion. The comfortable options of playing the pokies at the RSL, tending the garden or watching television have been satirised within the diversity of Barry Humphries' characterisations: 'Dame' Edna Everage, Sandy Stone, Les Patterson.⁶⁷ Humphries' distaste for suburbia is shared elsewhere in Robin Boyd's architectural criticisms, and urban theorists who argue that the unrelenting desire for the quarter acre block has dampened the desire and limits of creative spatial and cultural lifestyles. The traditional view within the literary scene perhaps best reflects the cultural divisions at work in the simultaneous fear and loathing of the suburbs. For artist and writer-philosopher Norman Lindsay:

What most worried him was the fact that suburban Philistines and wowzers got in the way of what he called Creative Effort, the private intellectual struggle which produced the objects of high art, and he went on to evolve a Bohemian aesthetic philosophy that relegated the suburbs and all they stood for into sub-human nonentity.⁶⁸

The disjuncture between the bohemian nobility of Lindsay's Creative Effort, and what poet Henry Lawson termed 'beerhemia' can be effectively transplanted upon music (sub)cultural divisions which have been evident since the surfies-rockers clashes. In the early 1980s, the discourse of suburban Other continued with an updated construction of high/low, city/suburbs assumptions and prejudices. The 'westie' as a derogatory cultural label came to signify the worst of suburban

⁶⁶ Interview.

⁶⁷ All three characters represent, in different forms, savagely smug satire of the suburban ideal. It was no accident that Les Patterson's early characterisations portrayed him as the archetypal Leagues Club Secretary of good humoured vulgarity. Humphries admits that the character was partial revenge for earlier humiliating experiences in front of disenchanted suburban club audiences unable to comprehend his earlier Dada-influenced sketches. See Humphries, *More Please*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1992, pp.165-166, 307-309.

ideals. As Diane Powell has revealed, use of the 'westie' label invests the western suburbs population of Sydney with a set of negative attributes: "stupid ... too poor or lacking in taste to own anything of value ... [they] may lower the tone of the rituals of high culture ... they have innate criminal tendencies [and] are seen as a threat to inner city trendies".⁶⁹ Within the hierarchy of Australian rock and roll, Oz Rock came to represent the unthinking, hedonistic lower rung of structured suburbia, the bland conformism of its "sprawling, repetitive metropolis"⁷⁰ embodied in musical form. As a rigid set of Anglo-American musical practices, it was, and continues to be defined by its ethnic and technological exclusions — dance musics, reggae, rap, jazz, ambient and associated 'performance' or 'event' musics.⁷¹ The defining of these musics as Other betrayed a masculine, homogenous, white Oz rock centre:

Disco music is bland and slick ... just as the Budget limits and orders our lives, the disco limits and orders our experience. On cold, rainy dark nights of the soul, I like to think that discos are a Third World Plot: that not only is the music black but that discos are all controlled by mysterious ethnic types who want to overthrow Western Civilization As We Know It.⁷²

At last Australia is coming up with good recording artists. People like Midnight Oil, David Warner, The Angels, Cold Chisel etc. Not like this fuckin' disco shit which is fit for sheilas and pooftas. Rock n' roll bands to a certain extent are finding gigs hard to come by because of these stupid ridiculous holes. The main reason guys go to discos is to act fucken cool and try to pull in the women who are obviously more interested in dancing than John Poof Travolta. Wake up you pricks there is Aussie Rock n' roll playing in the pubs these days.⁷³

In its adherence to dependable compositional structures and stage techniques, constituting local inflections of a broader rhythm and blues tradition, Oz Rock has historically provided an easy target for criticism.⁷⁴ Academic studies have perpetuated the notion of a set of music forms and cultural practices unworthy of

⁶⁸ Peter Kirkpatrick, *The Sea Coast of Bohemia: Literary Life in Sydney's Roaring Twenties*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1992, p.52.

⁶⁹ Diane Powell, *Out West: Perceptions of Sydney's Western Suburbs*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1993, pp.2-4.

⁷⁰ M.T. Daly, *Sydney Boom Sydney Bust*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1982, p.196.

⁷¹ See Brophy, 'Avant-Garde Rock: history in the making?' in Breen (ed.) 1987, pp.134-138.

⁷² Andrew Quaver, 'Just Exploitation', *RAM*, 6th October, 1978, p.29.

⁷³ Letter to Editor, *RAM*, December, 1978, cited in Riley, 1992, p.121.

⁷⁴ See: Brophy, 1987. Tony Mitchell, *Popular Music and Local Identity: Rock, Pop and Rap in Europe and Oceania*, Chapter 5, University of Leicester Press, London and New York, 1996. Lynden Barber, 'Oz rock: a corporate creation', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29th August, 1987, p.51.

analysis, partly due to its existence at the centre of everyday practices.⁷⁵ Simon Frith's notion of musical authenticity as a suburban ideal⁷⁶ remains perfectly suited to Oz Rock assumptions and practices. The tradition espouses conspicuous effort and unpretentious performances intended to transcend the 'artificial' barriers between audience and band. Where punk attempted to abandon history, Oz Rock practitioners acknowledged and made minor adjustments to the blues/boogie minimalist aesthetic of Thorpe, Lloyd et al. This was reinforced by an emphasis on individual and collective skills. Respect could only be earned by the constant honing of skills through live performance, undertaking the 'pub apprenticeship'. The skills of the guitarists and drummers were presented in sharp contrast to the use of keyboards and other programmable technological intrusions, regarded as "unnatural instruments in performance ... simply because playing them takes little obvious effort".⁷⁷ Frith has noted the historic distrust of bohemians as cultural radicals who "don't work [and] outrage moralists by making money out of play".⁷⁸ The musical forms of Oz Rock also invoke a moral authenticity — the performers accepted within its boundaries had to be seen to earn their right to derive their incomes 'out of play': "... if people are paying out money they've sweated for, they expect you to sweat in return. Even if they're drunk they know they're being ripped off".⁷⁹ To return to Lindsay's suburban/cosmopolitan dichotomy, the Creative Effort could be sacrificed to the more noble ethic of Discernible Effort. Exponents of 'westie rock' have also in the main thought to perpetuate the uncritical, deadening conformism of suburbia. Oz Rock's raw guitar-based forms often belied politicised content: the lyrics of Greg Macainsh (Skyhooks), Don Walker (Cold Chisel), Stephen Cummings (the Sports), Dave Warner, Richard Clapton, Mark Seymour (Hunters and Collectors) and Midnight Oil offered knowing commentaries of work experiences and the suburban 'fallen'. Midnight Oil's self-reflexive lyrics and driven stage performances posed the disjunction between pub performances and the hazy suburban ideal. The band's *Lucky Country*, comparable to Donald Horne's cultural

⁷⁵ Given cultural studies' pursuit and celebration of the marginalised, perhaps this explains the lack of detailed studies examining the nature of those performers and performance spaces deemed unashamedly 'mainstream'.

⁷⁶ Simon Frith (ed.) *Music For Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop*, Polity, London, 1988, p.4.

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 'Art versus technology: the strange case of popular music', *Media, Culture and Society*, vol. 8, July, 1986, p.268.

⁷⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹ Moving Pictures' singer Alex Smith cited in Fiske, Hodge and Turner, 1987, p.23.

critique of the same title, arguably employs similar mixes of irony, celebration and despair of the suburban condition: "Terracotta homes backyard BBQ and eucalyptus smell it's fine on the clothes line there's fast food the slow life the red roof my silence".⁸⁰ The cultural barriers between western suburbs and inner city audiences were further compounded by urban problems of infrastructure. The large numbers of suburban residents commuting to city workplaces made the suburban pub/club an easier weeknight leisure choice. Weekend trips to the city similarly meant grappling with limited public transport options after midnight, or long car journeys home.

It is also important to note the ways in which perceptions of urban chic and suburban 'bleak' shared common ideological and territorial space. As shown in the following chapter, the more successful city venues equally relied upon the 'beer barn' conditions of suburban Oz Rock in order to survive. Vikki Riley⁸¹ has revealed the points of convergence evident in aesthetic positions, if not musical forms. The fatalistic lyrics of AC/DC or the Angels were not that far removed from the nihilism of The Birthday Party. The evolution of the Angels from their country rock and jug band roots reveals the ways in which the punk demeanour could be acknowledged within the broader local rock scene, if the bass player's account of their conversion to rock is believed:

When we went bankrupt for the second time, staying in this shocking little motel in Melbourne, we got a call from Hertz, wanting their truck back. We had to hide the truck, so we were moving from motel to motel so they couldn't find us. When we got back to Sydney, our manager John Woodruff said 'look, there's this new thing in England where you don't have to be pretty any more, you don't have to be nice. He was talking about the Sex Pistols, and they were just basically shoving the finger up. Anarchy — that was about the stage we were at, so we decided to adopt that attitude. We went into this rehearsal room in Balmain, it was in the middle of summer ... playing in our underwear day after day for six weeks, getting very aggro and very upset, saying we had no money and this is the end of it, why are we doing it ... That's when somebody started playing that full on sound, and Doc [Neeson] added some vocals, and we thought we might be on to something. I told [drummer] Buzz [Bidstrup] to play just four-on-the-floor, and I started thumping just one note — forget the nice bass lines I was playing in country

⁸⁰ *Lucky Country*, from their album *Place Without A Postcard*, CBS Records, 1981. See Steggels in Philip Hayward (ed.) 1992 for other examples of the band's critique of, and engagement with, their audiences. *Lucky Country* can be viewed as a later accompaniment to The Saints' 1977 criticism of suburbia, *Orstralia* (*Eternally Yours* album).

⁸¹ Riley in Hayward (ed.) 1992, p.116.

music, and turned [the amplifier] up to ten. We got rid of the long hair and the nice shirts, and did what we wanted.⁸²

Chris Bailey's (possibly revisionist) account of the Angels' development produces an alternative reading of Oz Rock's mythologised development. The nature of the band's conversion to a neo-punk stance suggests a more contrived approach to the 'natural' synergy of pub audiences and pub rock sounds. The vernacular nationalism of Oz Rock is such that international influences are discreetly minimised within the mythic formations of bands and corresponding audiences. The acknowledgement of an appropriation, however superficial, of international subcultural styles, has been buried within wider nationalist discourses. This is further evident in the Angels' manager John Woodruff's recollection that "you had to make a decision whether you were going to be a hair-farmer band which tended to be pop-rock, or a hard edged, short haired rock and roll band. And at that time the only place you could find them was in [New Musical Express], so we went to NME; [The Angels] weren't a straight rock band anyway, I mean, [lead singer] Doc [Neeson] had some very violent lyrics".⁸³ This recollection is significant in betraying the instances when the evolutionary bonding of fans, pub and band were consciously constructed. It also underlines one of the fundamental Oz Rock tenets: styles could be 'borrowed', but only if discernibly filtered and constructed within a specific, closed local rock lineage. Audience and performer influences could be diverse, if not always acknowledged:

It was not uncommon to wear the 'Disco Sucks' T-shirt to the Funhouse and then walk down Oxford Street to Patches [disco] and dance to *Saturday Night Fever*. There was a certain irony to be on the flashing dance floor wearing a 'Disco Sucks' T-shirt ... The other thing people don't remember was that [Radio] Birdman did a cover of [Kraftwerk's] *Radioactivity*. There was crossover there.⁸⁴

The ideological differences between an urban cosmopolitanism and the 'honest' suburban gig were emphasised in the campaigns against the growing popularity of dance musics. From the mid-1970s the disco circuit responded to the large number of American disco performers on the local charts: the African Queen (Chatswood), Centrefold, Le Metro (George Street), Ida's (Kings Cross), Trinkets, and Soul 33 (Kings Cross). The hatred reserved for discos by rock bands and

⁸² The Angels' bass player Chris Bailey, interview.

⁸³ Interview.

⁸⁴ Ray Medhurst cited in Toby Creswell, 'Salvation Army', *Juice*, Issue 34, December, 1995, p.86. Radio Birdman's early song lists indicate influences at odds with a heavily mythologised punk aesthetic: Jan and Dean, Bo Diddley, the Doors, the Ventures, Ted Nugent (Johnson, 1990, p.203).

audiences reflected the threat to performers and their suburban constituencies. The imported basics of rock and roll had been adapted and appropriated to constitute a recognisably local form. The 1970s mainstream rock culture could point to a definitive Australian lineage — O’Keefe, Thorpe, AC/DC; disco was initially transplanted upon a subculture emphasising live skills and hard work. The fan letters above reveal the underlying fears concerning a feminisation of rock venues. Discos represented a double transgression *of* the masculine vernacular nationalism of the live circuit, constituting an international trend seen to derive from U.S. gay subculture. For women, commercial and pub dance venues represented an alternative site of suburban fantasy to the earthy realism of the rock pubs, which, despite desegregation, remained implacably masculine in practice.⁸⁵ The threat to the overtly jingoistic sensibilities of Oz Rock belied more immediate concerns to local performers: the loss of jobs. The late 1970s pub disco was often a mixture of international dance recordings supplemented by the (relatively) short performance of local bands, a critical difference to the pop discos of a decade earlier in which Australian recordings were given a greater airing. The improved quality of sound production meant bands had to struggle to compete; “you’d have a disco five times louder than you were, so people would only get up and dance at the breaks, dancing to Queen or something”.⁸⁶

The very real threat to work opportunities was confronted with two strategies. The dance threat for a short period unified the local circuit, embodied in ‘Death to Disco’ concerts aimed at reinforcing the ritual of live performance. Midnight Oil headlined one such performance in September 1979 in the north-western suburb of Castle Hill; the admission price of \$5 was reduced to \$4 if patrons brought a disco record for Peter Garrett to burn onstage.⁸⁷ The performers were supported by a determined campaign by the Musicians’ Union to limit the growth of recorded music in a range of venues. In July 1977 the Union blacklisted the Hilton Hotel for converting its live music room into a supper club (Juliana’s) utilising a

⁸⁵ According to a *RAM* article, a band called Hot Cock existed for a short period on the Sydney circuit (‘Pub Rock Report’, 7th May, 1976, p.23).

⁸⁶ Peter Doyle, interview.

⁸⁷ *RAM*, 19th October, 1979. In later recordings the band had to reconcile an increasing use of technology with the pub rock aesthetic of ‘organic’ production. The use of drum machines on their 1983 *10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1* album for drummer Rob Hirst, “stunk of disco and faking it ... for me to even contemplate using a rhythm machine was anathema” (cited in John O’Donnell, ‘Midnight Oil’, *Rolling Stone*, July, 1991, p.55).

disco jukebox. The ban resulted in the cancellation of overseas cabaret performers booked to play the Hotel with local backing musicians.⁸⁸ The Union also sought the backing of the NSW Labor Council in the formation of an alliance of affiliated unions in blacklisting offending hotels and clubs. A united front of sympathetic unions was only partly achieved, due to the conflicting loyalties of affiliate memberships, evidenced within Actors' Equity:

Regarding Musicians Union request for action against Disc Jockeys ... there seemed to be some apathy in committee on the matter, primarily because the Disc Jockeys may be our members (in fact the one at St George is) ... no resolution was forthcoming.⁸⁹

The Union's concerns in declining employment opportunities produced a policy that decreed equal time be given to live musicians and recorded musics in discotheques. The underlying concern remained, however, with the seeding of a disco culture perceived as distinctly foreign to the live performance ethic. This is evidenced in the Union's statements regarding the Hilton case. The hotel had not only adopted a recorded music policy, but introduced "an *imported* American discotheque machine ... in total disregard of the effects on Australian culture and identity"⁹⁰ (my emphasis). The symbolism of imperialistic threat is apparent: the importation of foreign technology embodying entertainment practices far removed from the local live tradition. The Union's policy was also a natural extension of blacklisting venues that hired overseas performers without regularly employing local bands.

The benefits to venue managers of an aggressive musical form (in increased bar revenue) produced few spaces for even male bands attempting more reflective musics. Little River Band and Air Supply, exponents of the American West Coast sound, soon abandoned the suburban pub circuit in search of international audiences.⁹¹ After an initial career of folk/acoustic performances, Richard Clapton experienced an initiation in which the coded ritualisations of pub rock could not

⁸⁸ 'Singers' tour hit by union ban on hotel', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19th July, 1977, p.3.

⁸⁹ Letter from Actors' Equity organiser Col Voight to the Labor Council regarding a meeting with the Registered Clubs Association, 22nd August, 1978. Actors' Equity File N122/510, Noel Butlin Archives Centre, ANU, Canberra.

⁹⁰ NSW Musicians' Union Secretary Alan Nash cited in 'Musicians ban Hilton over disco machine', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16th July, 1977, p.3.

⁹¹ Air Supply's vocalist Russell Hitchcock stated that it was a shame for the band to appear "in front of rock and roll punch drunks" (Anthony O'Grady, 'Air Supply Seeks New Horizons', *RAM*, 21st April, 1978, p.15). The band relocated to North America shortly after.

be ignored:

When Michael Chugg first started managing me I was still a bit precious, into 'cred', aspiring to the intellectual side. I went on stage at the [Bondi] Lifesaver, and I'd always had this not polite, but civilised repartee and rapport with audiences, telling little anecdotes about my songs and their background. I had a packed house and Chuggie's standing there as my new manager in the wings, saying 'tell 'em to get fucked'. By about halfway through the set, Chuggie got me really quite pissed, and somebody heckled me from the audience, and I shouted a drunken 'fuck you!' and the whole audience just roared. I thought, this is great. You had your pissheads in the audience yelling 'play some rock n' roll', and this was the turning point in my career actually, this one night. The more I dished it back to them, the crowd would just go off. And that was probably the best gig of my career ...⁹²

The power of the major agencies in delivering popular bands (Skyhooks, Hush, Sherbert, the Angels, Cold Chisel) to venues produced discrepancies within an unregulated industry. The managers of three of the most popular bands in 1978, John Woodruff (the Angels), Ray Hearn (Icehouse), and Rod Willis (Cold Chisel) formed an alternative booking and management agency, Dirty Pool, in direct competition with Harbour/Premier:

There were rip-offs going on where if the band suddenly got big, there were no contracts at all, it was all verbal phone agreements. This happened to me in Adelaide when Skyhooks got big, the fee doubled overnight, or 'they're not coming'. Or having a band over a weekend, and a band refusing to play on the second night unless they got more money. The Angels did Maroubra Seals [Club in Sydney] four nights in a row, the door price was \$5 or \$6, and we sold out every single night and got \$2000 for the week. We spoke to the Club, and they said 'yeah, we made a lot of money out of the booze, but nothing out of the door' and I thought, well, there's somebody getting more than 10% here. [In establishing Dirty Pool] we had to go around the country and assure the venue owners that having contracts was actually going to be better for them; they knew the deal going in. We wouldn't make them risk \$20 000, we would make them risk \$5000 against \$8 out of \$10 [on the door]. The bands were getting screwed, and as managers we had to deal with that. There was one year where the Angels did about two hundred and fifty dates, and [Cold] Chisel two hundred and sixty. That's serious money ... ten grand guaranteed, and you'd often walk out with \$30 000. We had three bands that never didn't sell out.⁹³

Dirty Pool introduced a more thoughtful approach to the national circuit, abandoning ad-hoc tours and limiting band appearances within cities for maximum effect. The 'door deal' (band incomes determined by a percentage of admission fees rather than a negotiated flat fee) had been the preference of some club performers and country acts (Johnny O'Keefe, Slim Dusty) for several years.

⁹² Interview. Clapton also stated that his composition of *I Am An Island* (1982) derived from his desire to have a "rock anthem" conducive to pub performances.

⁹³ John Woodruff, interview. Competition between Premier and Dirty Pool produced various underhand tactics: both agencies pitting their best bands against each other on the same night in various locations, mysterious cancellations, physical threats etc.

The abolition of guaranteed fees prevented the loss of several venues that had previously suffered from low attendances and large guarantees. It also firmly entrenched the Oz Rock aesthetic: those bands with a proven stage performance designed to complement drinking audiences. The marginal economic viability of early punk venues contrasted with the more routinised Australian rock tradition that allowed a more orderly and profitable consumption of rebellion.

If, as Paul Q. Hirst states, '... buildings and planned environments become statements'⁹⁴ then the rock pub is a contradictory one, hindered by underlying concerns of legitimacy. While several venues expanded to increase their evening clientele, many hotels continued to adapt existing public bars and lounges. Tensions arise in the conversion from day to evening use. Rob Shields⁹⁵ notes that architecture influences norms of conduct. In the case of Oz Rock, performances involved a wilful trial of architectural constraints:

Our philosophy was that people were there to see [Cold Chisel]. If they wanted to see the band, then they should be given an opportunity to see the band. So if a place was licensed for [an audience capacity of] twelve hundred, we'd fit in two thousand. I had a good reputation for being able to do that. If they had a clicker [on the door], we'd get a girl to start talking to the guy doing the clicking; then you'd never know how many people were being let in. Or we'd create a fight at the door. There was a place at Newcastle where they said we could put sixteen hundred in there; you could get five thousand in! So we created a fracas at the door; we'd put in about two thousand and there were another two thousand waiting to get in. The manager, a woman, said 'you've got to stop the door'. I was saying no, we're not going to stop the door. So eventually I said 'okay, stop the door for about twenty minutes, we'll count up how much money is there. If your clickers can't get it together, we'll work out how much money is there; let's go into the office'. While we were walking to the office, we'd be sticking the money down our pants. We get into the office, and she says 'oh, there's only eight hundred people in there'. We'd say, 'we told you; now open the doors up!' The following day, the place was closed down. The owner just about had a nervous breakdown; it was front page of the papers up there. Jimmy [Barnes] would often go berserk at the end of a gig, and smash the lights.⁹⁶

Illegal venue/management practices served two purposes. Chronic overcrowding provided obvious financial opportunities for the agency, performer and venue. More importantly, in terms of perpetuating mythologised traditions, the sense of confinement produced an inverse sense of release for both band and

⁹⁴ Paul Q. Hirst, *Foucault and Architecture*, Local Consumption Occasional Paper, no. 4, 1984, p.5.

⁹⁵ Rob Shields, 'Spaces for the Subject of Consumption' in Shields (ed.) *Lifestyle Shopping: The Subject of Consumption*, Routledge, London and New York, 1992, p.3.

⁹⁶ Chris Bastic, interview. Bastic was a tour manager for Cold Chisel within the Dirty Pool management agency.

audience. The often clumsy spatial reconfiguration of existing architecture was crucial to its oppositional stance. Philip Brophy rightly states that the rock pub's dominance as a site-specific music genre was such that "alternative locales that are used [could not] be effectively maintained as sites of regular productivity".⁹⁷ Alternative sites co-existed with the Sydney pub and club circuits with varying success: the Shepparton Union scene in Darlinghurst; the Art Unit in Alexandria; Paddington Town Hall; the Cell Block, the Paris Theatre. All attempted to negate the ritualisation of pub rock in favour of the multi-media performance-as-event. Prior to regular pub performances, Do-Re-Mi supported the collective aims of sites like the Art Unit:

The Art Unit was in [the inner east industrial suburb of] Alexandria in Pemberton Road. I think the building's still there. The people who rented it just knocked a few walls out, put in a stage, and lived upstairs. The events included a band of some sort, slide shows, light shows in their own right rather than just for bands. It was almost like your own home. I think the people who ran it were involved with Pel Mel or one of those arty bands, and we just heard about it through the grapevine. At the time we'd had airplay so they were quite keen to have us; in those days if two hundred people turned up it wasn't too bad.⁹⁸

Within the mainstream circuit, more theatrical performers could be found: Captain Matchbox, Jimmy and the Boys, Split Enz, Jeff Duff, Mother Goose. Yet Brophy ignores the tense dialectic between the commercial and the festive, the ways in which (lack of) space has a discursive impact upon cultural practices. The stand-and-deliver aesthetic of Oz Rock matched the desire of working class suburban audiences, reinforced by a combination of economic and spatial practices designed to exclude more imaginative use of hotel sites. As early as 1976, Captain Matchbox's vocalist Mick Conway realised the economic rift between existing and possible uses of the rock pub: "we can't do the usual pub circuit simply because the troupe is so large we take up half the floor space in pubs, and no pub owner wants to see his crowd cut in half".⁹⁹

Past examinations of Australian live rock performance have circled around the possibilities of the homologous nature of venue, audience and performer.¹⁰⁰ In

⁹⁷ Brophy, 1987, p.142.

⁹⁸ Do-Re-Mi bass player, Helen Carter, interview.

⁹⁹ Mick Conway cited in 'Mick Conway Busted', *RAM*, 3rd December, 1976, p.3. During this period Conway also toured with Soapbox, a larger 'theatrical ensemble' encompassing older theatre and vaudeville traditions.

¹⁰⁰ See Turner, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Fiske, Hodge and Turner, 1987.

examining the relationships between the bar, the stage and audience I have adopted Richard Middleton's qualified belief in structures that are "more easily articulated to the interests of one group than are some others".¹⁰¹ While exceptions could be found of more diffuse performance practices, the predominant production/consumption ethic was predisposed to musics that articulated the conjunction of new representations of leisure. The connection between economic, musical and architectural forms is evident in the license fees ranking of hotels. By 1983, the top three hotels in terms of alcohol revenue within the Sydney metropolitan area were rock venues placed firmly within the suburbs: the Caringbah Inn, the Dee Why Hotel and the Comb and Cutter Hotel (in the western suburb of Blacktown).¹⁰² For Australian rock and roll of the late 1970s and early 1980s, alcohol consumption was central to suburban rock's musical and social meanings.

A means to understanding the ideological and lived differences embodied within the suburban rock pub, the gaps between intended and actual use, may be found in Foucault's notion of heterotopias, spaces which embody the lived contradictions of everyday sites. Heterotopias, Foucault argued, are

Formed in the very founding of society ... something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted.¹⁰³

Foucault's definition has been applied to socio-spatial analysis of a range of 'other' spaces and their contradictory functions. Within the earlier histories of Australian rock and roll, the town hall and the ballroom became contested sites of alternate use and ideology, between the rituals of lived respectability (debutante balls, mayoral ceremony, Rotary club functions) and the brash rock subculture of youth dances. The binary uses of space were clearly marked, although gradually subsumed within youth policing strategies. The hotel and registered club have historically functioned as sites reflecting the wider social relationships between gender, leisure and the workplace. The historic concern with drinking patterns and regulation has coincided with the idealisation of hotels and registered clubs as

¹⁰¹ Richard Middleton, *Studying Popular Music*, St Edmundsbury Press, Bury St Edmunds, 1990, p.10.

¹⁰² Liquor Administration Board, *Annual Report*, 1983, p.19. The list is ranked according to license fees payments calculated as a percentage of alcohol sales.

the centre of masculine leisure practices. The pub and club have served as one of the few unfettered 'real' sites of patriarchal leisure, the utopian Other of home and the workplace. In accord with its 'retreat' function, women were either partitioned (in the saloon bars) or tolerated in service behind the bars. The extent to which hotels formed the centre of male leisure, and as the Other of ordered domesticity, is evidenced in the 'tea break' legislation which operated in NSW until 1963. Prohibiting the service of alcohol between 6.30 and 7.30 p.m. was thought to encourage the traditional family meal, and reinforce male obligations to wife and children. This liquor law, as with the previous 6 p.m. closing legislation, acknowledged male leisure practices to be simultaneously a deviant and acceptable tenet of Australian culture.

The Australian rock pub of the late 1970s constituted new ways of seeing and using the centrality of male drinking practices as a microcosm of wider social relations. Changed spatial, regulatory and gender relations produced not the clear distinctions of past practices, but a messy convergence of conflicting ideals and representations. The increasing numbers of women attending rock performances changed the masculine pub genealogy, and encouraged the gradual transition of women onto the stage. Rock constituted an important bridge between older prejudices and newer commercial realities:

When punk came along, that was women coming out really. Sydney seemed to be really relaxed about that sort of thing; it became easier for me to pick up a bass guitar and become a musician, it was easy for me to go to venues. I don't think it was easy for women to go into the front bar of a pub, but if you [went] there as a musical event, women seemed to be more capable of going there.¹⁰⁴

Yet spatial and managerial venue practices were hardly incompatible with former male leisure traditions. Oz Rock was founded upon reconstituted opportunities to perpetuate the mythology of Australian drinking culture. Chronic overcrowding and the loud, unrelenting aggression of its musical forms produced a youthful adaptation of the six o'clock swill. The spaces opened to women, the real fight for their share of the dance floor and stage, represented the gradual erosion of male domains elsewhere. The rock pub presented both an opening and closing to territorial struggle, the nature of mixed audiences betraying a more concrete underlying structure of privileged male spaces, functioning, as Foucault

¹⁰³ Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, Spring, 1986, p.24.

states, “to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the sites inside of which human life is partitioned as still more illusory”.¹⁰⁵ They operated in the heterotopological sense of both ‘crisis’ and ‘deviance’: the initial ideological incompatibility of women audiences also helped to break down former distinctions of public and private consumption. It simultaneously exists within and outside the utopia of structured suburban domesticity. As such, the tensions within pub/club structures reflect a collapse of past conjunctions of spatial ideologies, while at the same time reinforcing them. Benjamin Genocchio¹⁰⁶ has revealed the lack of specificity in Foucault’s differentiation of ‘other’ sites of contested meaning. The list of spaces operating as sites of both “repugnance and fascination”, as Genocchio argues, has produced an increasingly broad list of ‘innocent’ spaces of worthy of discursive analysis: the brothel, the church, the amusement park, the shopping centre, city markets. Australian hotels, like other heterotopic sites, become interesting as sites of contested meaning when their uses extend or distort their original spatial design and functions. Their institutionalisation from the late 1970s as the primary site of male and female youth leisure unleashed practices which highlighted tensions between the pub as older conformist spaces of suburbia and newer realities. The contradictory practices in conversion to formalised music sites never intended ideologically or structurally for mixed rock audiences provides such tensions.

The dystopian potential of the rock pub within the utopian suburban ideal is reflected in the legislative responses to Oz Rock throughout the 1980s, examined in the next chapter. The following case study of one particular hotel examines the ways in which the rock pub functioned simultaneously as a source of subcultural unity and disruption, as a social centre of public commercial space engendering private communities. The demise of the Star Hotel also provides a contextual link between broader socio-economic structures and specifically local music practices.

¹⁰⁴ Helen Carter, interview.

¹⁰⁵ Foucault, 1986, p.27.

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin Genocchio, ‘Discourse, Discontinuity, Difference: The Question of ‘Other’ Spaces’ in Sophie Watson and Katherine Gibson (eds) *Postmodern Cities and Spaces*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1995, p.39.

V. The Star Hotel

Here lies a local culture
Most nights were good, some were bad
Between school and a shifting future
It was the most of all we had.¹⁰⁷

The mainstream rock circuit of the late 1970s existed within an environment connecting the concerns of youth leisure, lifestyles and work. The northern port city of Newcastle played an important role in the growth of a dependable east coast circuit, providing local, interstate and overseas bands with a number of venues: the Castle Tavern, the Mawson Hotel, the Star Hotel, the Belmont Sixteen Foot Sailing Club, Stewarts and Lloyds (now known as the Phoenix Club), the Cambridge Tavern and South Newcastle Leagues Club. As with Wollongong on the south coast, employment opportunities for Newcastle youth mainly existed in the city's manufacturing sector, particularly the steel industry. The predominance of trades-based employment reflected a working class population with strong Labor Party affiliations.

The construction of a localised moral panic linking youth leisure to music practices and lawlessness was established with the Civic Park rock concert staged on the 8th of September 1979. Organised by local radio station 2NX, the concert formed part of the annual Mattara festival. A crowd of 10 000 indulged, according to the *Newcastle Sun* headlines, in an "orgy" of "drink, drugs and nudity".¹⁰⁸ Serious offences were committed directly after the concert, with two twelve year olds and a fourteen year old girl raped, and a fifteen year old girl assaulted. Subsequent local media and police concern emphasised the extent of under age drinking and drug use. The linkage of Oz Rock with behavioural patterns was also a cause of concern, with a *Sun* editorial arguing that the "the frenzy of the music itself probably did not help".¹⁰⁹ Pressured by the local council and police, the annual concert was cancelled. This ignored the underlying need — evidenced by the large numbers of fifteen and sixteen year olds at Civic Park — for appropriate

¹⁰⁷ *Star Hotel*, Cold Chisel. *Swingshift* album, 1980, WEA Records.

¹⁰⁸ Matt Hayes and Chris Maddock, 'Mattara Orgy: Girl, 15, Attacked', *Newcastle Sun*, 10th September, 1979, p.1.

¹⁰⁹ 'Our young heading for (s)kid row', *ibid.*, 11th September, 1979, p.1.

all-age entertainment within Newcastle. Successive Federal and State government youth surveys had identified the need for music venues and meeting places. While a new upmarket disco opened in the city to provide adult alternatives,¹¹⁰ one of the few opportunities for under-eighteens to experience Oz Rock performances was abandoned.

Within the same week, it was reported that one of the most popular venues within Newcastle would close. In many respects the Star Hotel embodied the Oz Rock pub, where the architectural constraints of the Hotel inadequately equipped for rock performance contributed to its popularity. In the early 1970s the Hotel was known for its jazz bands in the public bar, and female impersonators in the saloon bar. In need of renovations, licensee Lloyd Moffatt was “shrewd enough to realise that if the atmosphere goes, so will his clientele”.¹¹¹ Moffatt was aware that structural improvements and shifting entertainment priorities within the Star would result in a possible loss of the pub’s unique mixture of student, seamen, unemployed and homosexual communities. Requests were, however, placed with the Star’s owner, Tooths brewery, for sufficient funds for renovations to provide improved eating facilities. Frustrated by a lack of support from Tooths, Moffatt resigned and the license was given to Don and Lesley Graham in December 1973.¹¹² By 1979 the Hotel’s bars supported a diverse clientele: the front bar, sailors and dock workers; the middle bar, gays and transvestites; and the back bar provided variants of the Oz rock tradition. With the service counter separating stage and audience, the back bar provided bands six nights a week in a space that uncomfortably held up to two hundred people.

With Licensing Court and City Council orders for the premises to comply with fire regulations and general upgrading of its structure, Tooths opted to close the ninety four year old building. The Hotel’s final trading night on the 19th of

¹¹⁰ The Executive Disco began operating on the 14th of September. Its owner stated that it wanted to provide a “decent place where people can come and enjoy themselves without being pushed around” (‘Top new nightspot opening in town’, *ibid.*, 13th September, 1979, p.11).

¹¹¹ Phil Jarrett, ‘Laughter and Lager on Saturday Arvo’, *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner’s Advocate*, 17th March, 1973, n.p.

¹¹² Upon resignation of the lease in 1973, Moffatt told Tooths that the present condition of the hotel was a disgrace to the company, in which his hopes of “having a first class eating establishment in my hotel with a good class of people have been somewhat dimmed by your companies [sic] attitude” (Letter to City Manager, 25th April, Tooths City Manager File Z223, Noel Butlin Archives Centre, Australian National University).

September showcased three local bands who had enjoyed residencies at the Star, with “the biggest wake the city has seen”.¹¹³ This resulted in a clash between police, performers and audience which has found a mythical place within Oz Rock history, with fourteen police injured, thirty one arrests and two police vehicles upturned and set alight. After the recent Mattara ‘orgy’, the Star ‘riot’ confirmed media suspicions of the negative links between rock music, youth and working class hotels. The closure produced an angry last night crowd of four thousand drinkers outside the premises. Police believed the clash to have been a premeditated attack.¹¹⁴ According to those who performed on the last night, policing procedures played an important role:

Our understanding of the situation prior to that night, was, and I don’t know whether you can believe him or not, was that [Don Graham] was having a running battle with police, because they wanted some payment off him and he wasn’t wearing it. So they were right on his case about everything. And on the night that it closed, I kid you not, [the police] were there at one second past ten o’clock, telling us to stop playing. We were about a minute and a half away from the end of our last song, and they came in and demanded that we stop playing. So you’ve got a bar full with two hundred people at most, and four thousand others out on the street going ‘we don’t want to stop right now, so if you wouldn’t mind, you cops can fuck off’. The bands had started at three o’clock, so you can imagine by ten o’clock, with four thousand people milling about drinking ... they were just pissed. The police — it was really pedantic of them, they knew it was the last night, and there was a kind of emotional attachment to the Hotel by the patrons, and they still insisted that the band stop at one minute past ten o’clock. How much common sense would it take to say ‘we’ll let these lads finish the song and then politely tell them to cool it’. People would have moved on once the show was over, but when the police are there telling everyone they *must* move on — it was just really silly on their part. A policeman came into the staff area behind the bar and shook the microphone stand on stage, as if to say ‘you must stop now’. If you shake somebody’s microphone stand while they’re singing, it actually hits their mouth, and it hurts! He did that to me, and later on our singer was charged with inciting a riot. It was later reduced to something about causing serious alarm. He was found guilty, and fined something like \$200.¹¹⁵

Those arrested faced riotous behavior, assault, offensive behaviour or malicious injury charges. The symbolic nature of the Star’s closure was not understood by police and an unsympathetic local council: “we had this riot over alcohol — there was no ideal involved. The rioters were not freedom fighters taking action for a civil liberty. Can you imagine what will happen if we are confronted with a

¹¹³ Matt Hayes, ‘Tears, not cheers as Star falls’, *Newcastle Sun*, 12th September, 1979, p.1.

¹¹⁴ ‘Star wake riot rocks city’, *ibid.*, 20th September, 1979, p.1.

¹¹⁵ Mark Tinson, interview. Tinson was a guitarist with local band Heroes, the last band to perform at the Star.

serious issue?"¹¹⁶

The decision to close one of its more decaying sites represented sound commercial sense to the brewery. To the regular drinkers within the stratified structure of the hotel, however, the riot portrayed the social centrality of the Star within the youth leisure practices of Newcastle; the loss of a site which fulfilled a number of social functions and needs *was* a serious issue. The sense of betrayal was buried within the more immediate concerns of under age drinking and anti-social behaviour. In attempting to grasp the connection between rituals and community, Roger Abrahams observes:

How may we even go about defining community for ourselves when there are so many conflicting claims on our loyalties? Given the direction of society today, I suppose we must say that communities will define themselves as they organise into communities, and that the deepest part of this organization will be the establishment of rituals.¹¹⁷

The centrality of rituals to any sense of the construction of communities can be applied to the Star Hotel and its aftermath. The Hotel represented the loose affiliations identified by Ruth Finnegan¹¹⁸ between performers and audience; as merely one of a number of venues within the larger east coast circuit, the Star's relationship to larger bands was often incidental. The venue served as an important site for those local performers who avoided the larger circuit, content to play before friends, family and regular drinkers. Long term residencies by local bands fostered a sense of community within the pub difficult to measure. The Hotel also functioned as an important meeting place for the city's rising unemployed, as one of the few venues in the area that did not charge admission. To adapt Abrahams' definition of community, the fixed rituals of rock performance in the creation — however brief — of a communal bond was clearly not understood in the determined efforts of police to end the Hotel's last performance mid-song. The importance of bands observing Oz Rock rituals is part of the construction of belonging. Curtailed performances, or the refusal of an encore is enough to upset the fragile contract between performer, audience and governing authorities (venue owner, police). To halt was what effectively the

¹¹⁶ Alderman Alan Morris cited in 'Star riot: the aftermath', *Newcastle Sun*, 20th September, 1979, p.3.

¹¹⁷ Roger Abrahams cited in Finnegan, 1989, p.322.

¹¹⁸ Finnegan, 1989, p.301.

Hotel's mourning process ignored deeply hidden loyalties:

It was free to get in, and so a lot of unemployed people went there, but you also had a good mixture of tradesmen, professionals and others as well. I guess the indication of the emotional attachment was, that I think the Health Department said that to survive, the pub needed a certain amount of renovations or it had to close. The brewery decided it was better to close it, and a number of tradesmen who regularly patronised the hotel actually offered to do the repairs for free, and the brewery could pay for the building materials. They still decided to close it, so there were enough people around who showed that they really liked the place.¹¹⁹

By the end of September, a youth unemployment community Task Force was established to investigate the extent of unemployed in the region, and the suitability of existing training and counselling programs.¹²⁰ The Hotel closure, within a broader climate of rising unemployment, provided further reflection upon harsh commercial realities beyond youths' control. It also revealed the ways in which local loyalties could be shattered by the nature of the tied-house hotel system, where capital is shifted in accord with brewery priorities. Offers of free labour to renovate, the licensees' willingness to buy the Hotel's freehold from Tooths and local petitions were rejected in favour of the brewery's decision to invest further in other pubs within the region. The Star's demise provided an indication of the socio-economic issues facing NSW rock venues into the 1980s. As observed in the following chapter, the underlying administrative tensions connected to the Star Hotel 'riot' prefigured broader changes in relations between the state and venue owners. Local council insistence upon substantial structural changes, and breweries' reluctance to redevelop their older sites, provided a significant obstacle to prevailing pub rock opportunities. The Star case study also symbolised later emphases upon building and public assembly codes in regard to rock pub governance, complementing reliance upon traditional policing methods. This created a different set of constraints on the laissez-faire ethic of venue owners and musicians.

¹¹⁹ Mark Tinson, interview.

¹²⁰ 'New task force on jobless', *Newcastle Sun*, 27th September, 1979, p.6.