



UNIVERSIDADE
CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

MUSIC IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET:
DIFFERENCES AND DISTRIBUTION. THE CASE OF
ITALY AND CHINA

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica
Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in Culture
Studies, specialisation in Management of the Arts and
Culture

By

Edoardo Crepaldi Milone

Faculty of Human Sciences

June 2022



UNIVERSIDADE
CATOLICA
PORTUGUESA

MUSIC IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET:
DIFFERENCES AND DISTRIBUTION. THE CASE OF
ITALY AND CHINA

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica
Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in Culture
Studies, specialisation in Management of the Arts and
Culture

By

Edoardo Crepaldi Milone

Faculty of Human Sciences

Under the supervision of Professor Diana Gonçalves
and Professor Ricardo Reis

June 2022

Abstract

Historically there has been limited transmission of musical ideas between Italy and China. When music travels between cultures it is subject to change and transformation and this cultural exchange is the foundation for popular music as we know it today. Within this dissertation, we will firstly analyse what makes music enjoyable for people through an analysis of genre. Then, perform a comparative analysis of their respective regional music genres and analyse similarities between them. Through this we can understand the similarities between the two markets and understand possible modes of entry for Italian musicians into the Chinese market. The motivation for this analysis is to ascertain whether there is a space for Italian musicians to find an audience in China. By understand the similarities between the countries we can find elements within Italian musicians' product that will reduce the amount of alienation within the Chinese market.

Key Words: *Foreign Music, Chinese Music, Italian Music, Genre Theory, Globalisation and the Music Industry, International Music Markets*

Abstract

Tradicionalmente, tem sido reduzida a transmissão de noções e conceitos de música entre a Itália e a China. Quando a música viaja entre culturas está sujeita a mudanças e transformações, sendo este intercâmbio cultural a base da música popular tal como a conhecemos hoje. Com esta dissertação, pretende-se, em primeiro lugar, analisar o que leva a música ter um efeito positivo nas pessoas, através de uma análise de género. De seguida, far-se-á uma análise comparativa entre os diferentes géneros musicais regionais, analisando as semelhanças entre aqueles. Com este estudo, será possível compreender as semelhanças entre os dois países, e perceber como é que a música italiana poderá entrar no contexto chinês. O objetivo desta análise é verificar se existe público na China para os músicos italianos. Ao compreender as semelhanças entre estes dois países, poder-se-á encontrar elementos no espectro musical italiano que contribua para reduzir uma elevada indiferença à música italiana no mercado chinês.

Palavras-chave: *Músicas do Mundo, Música Estrangeira, Música Chinesa, Música Italiana, Teoria do Género, Globalização e a Indústria Musical, Mercados Internacionais de Música.*

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Methodology	2
Structure.....	3
The value of this research.....	5
1. Music as a Form of Cultural Distribution	6
1.1. Sonic structure and musicality	7
1.2. Social conventions of genre	9
1.2.1. Social class.....	9
1.2.2. Race.....	11
1.2.3. Gender and sexual preference.....	13
1.2.4. Further review on the social dimensions of genre.....	15
1.2.5. Interpreting the social factors of genre within an international context	17
1.3. Musical conventions of genre.....	20
1.3.1. Tempo.....	20
1.3.2. Choice of instrument.....	23
1.3.3. Musical modality.....	25
1.3.4. Melody, vocal tone and inflections	27
1.3.5. Speech patterns and cadence	29
1.3.6. Lyrical content.....	35
1.4. Attitudinal factors for genre enjoyment	37
1.5. A conversation with Reepo from Octopuss: An Italian success story in China	41
1.6. Applying neurological theory of aesthetics to music.....	44
2. Situating China and Italy	49
2.1. Traditional music in Italy.....	50
2.2. The development of Chinese music.....	57
2.3. Similarities between Italy and China	61
2.3.1. Selling a musical product in the Chinese market; Global music and distribution.....	63
2.3.2. The specifics of the Chinese market for goods and services.....	67
2.4. Playing on stereotypes for quick recognition: using “Made in Italy”	70
3. Applying our Research to the Current Italian and Chinese Musical Landscape.....	73
3.1. Applying genre theory and research on Italy and China to find the ideal musical candidate.....	73
3.1.1. Sociological factors.....	73
3.1.2. Musical factors.....	75

3.1.3. “Italianity”	78
3.2. Situating current popular music within Italy and China	79
3.2.1. The current Italian musical landscape	82
3.2.2. The current Chinese musical landscape.....	84
3.3. Which Italian artists could find success in China?	91
3.4. The benefit of greater global music integration.....	94
Conclusion	97
Bibliography.....	99
Appendix	i
Appendix A. Interview with Reepo from Octopuss.....	i
Appendix B. Tables and statistics.....	xi

Introduction

Globalisation has an increasingly important role in international markets, however not all industries have adjusted equally to the demands of global organisation. The music industry has a long history of international exchange in ideas, through the sharing of instruments, stylings and the developing of a common musical notation, with this exchange lying at the core of the arts and the creative industry as whole. Even though in modern age music industry we have come to see an economic concentration primarily based around English-speaking countries, the last decade has witnessed a greater emergence of non-English music, with musicians and bands such as BTS and J-Balvin finding massive success overseas despite making music in a foreign language. This phenomenon could be perceived as signalling potential changes in the methods of transmission of auditory art.

Concurrently, within the modern age, we have also seen changes in power and wealth on a global scale, resulting in new hegemonies of power and a global redistribution of wealth. One of the countries which has become increasingly important in a global context is China. Due to its large population and economic specialisations, in the last 40 years China has become one of the largest economies in Asia and the world, leading to a market with great untapped potential for foreign exports. Italy, on the other hand, while internationally renowned for its abundance of historical culture, has failed to achieve great success in the current age through its artistic exports. Italy has had few major international musical successes, often decades apart potentially due to its relatively small population and unique language. Seeing as China is a large and still growing market, even with a small market share, by finding success in China, Italian musicians could gain a comparatively large fanbase in a market that is yet untapped by the largest players in the global music industry.

From September 2020 to February 2021 I did an internship with the manager of the Italian band Lo Stato Sociale. One of our projects within this internship involved paving a way for Lo Stato Sociale and other artists under our management to find success in the international market. As an Italian, I am particularly interested in working with local

artists in the music industry and especially Italian artists who are targeting an international market. My particular experience growing-up in Australia and coming from an Italian heritage further exposed me to the duality of experiences in the music sector. Having this more holistic experience has led me to believe that there is an unexplored potential for Italian musicians in the world market. I believe that coupling this interest with one of the fastest growing economies and current economic powerhouse, China, has potential as a jumping off point for future research on this topic.

The objective of this dissertation is to reconcile the differences between successful music originating from these countries and to attempt to find a way for Italian musicians to be successful within the Chinese market. The analysis required to speculate on this topic calls for research on domestic music genres in Italy and China, as well as an examination of what genres from other countries garner the most success within these countries. The reasoning behind the choice of Italy and China is my personal attachment to my country of origin (Italy) and the scale of the Chinese market, where even a relatively niche product with a small market share could be hugely successful for artists from a smaller country. While this dissertation has a specific focus on these two countries the dissimilarities between them could mean that the potential scope of this research could be applied more vastly as an example of how to find recognition for musicians within countries with little to no cultural similarities and vastly different size differentials. Despite this, ultimately, the scope of this dissertation is to reconcile the Chinese and Italian music industries in order to prove that there is a potential market for Italian musicians in China.

Methodology

To undertake this research, we must reconcile various elements of the disparate cultures. Firstly, by understanding what factors can comprise a genre and how they form within different regions we can understand how historic preferences translate into current regional preferences. To understand this, we first performed a literature review to gather information on what makes a song “enjoyable” from a musical standpoint, with emphasis on sonic characteristics as well as the environment in which it was produced. Then to better understand the historical tastes of both markets we analysed music that originated

from both Italy and China to see how from a technical standpoint music from these regions is different and how it conforms to the different tastes and cultural values of the regions. This was also further substantiated with an interview with “Reepo” from “Octopuss”, an Italian band with first-hand experience in entering the Chinese market. Then, by cross referencing this with current trends in both Italy and China, we can find communalities between both countries that could potentially be exploited for easier access within the foreign market. By analysing the two musical ecosystems side by side and grouping popular songs by characteristics such as genre and BPM we will be able to generalise and formulate a plan of entry for Italian music in China.

Structure

This dissertation is divided into three main chapters. Firstly, we will start with a music theory-based approach to find common links between songs, both thematically and musically, and to reflect on music as a form of cultural distribution. We will then look into the social factors that go into defining genre – social class, race, sexuality and gender – in order to see if these demographic factors contribute to the most popular types of music in each country. Equally important are more concretely definable musical factors such as tempo, choice of instrumentation, mode, melody and vocal inflections. Since defining music in an objective sense is already such a difficult and subjective topic, we will also see if an experimental approach of attempting to adapt Ramachandran and Hirstein’s 1999 paper “The Science of Art: A Neurological Theory of Aesthetic Experience” on objectively pleasing visual art can lead us to insights on types of music that might more easily translate across a general public. The objective of this section is to further categorise music in order to ascertain any similarities between genres and apply these to cultural listening patterns.

In order to substantiate these more abstract theoretical ideas we will also analyse an interview conducted with the lead singer and manager of Octopuss, one of very few Italian bands that has managed to find success in China. Octopuss has toured over 10 times in China and the manager, Reepo, shared his perspective on the band’s journey, that, although specific to his case, also represent a success story and an artist’s take on the

matter. The interview was conducted online in 2021 and details Reepo's history as a young musician aiming to sell his craft overseas. Over the course of the interview, he details issues such as managers' unwillingness to represent him on an international scale and adapting his songs to the taste of a foreign market. Finally, to close out the first chapter, we will briefly try to understand how foreign language genres have found success worldwide so far, focusing particularly on Reggaeton and K-pop, the latter of which is the genre of the best-selling band of 2020.

In chapter 2 we will look at traditional Chinese and Italian music from the late 20th century until today in order to ascertain if we can infer some sort of taste or communalities within their respective areas, and potentially even between the two. In order to do this, we will see whether the primary genres of production in these countries historically have similarities to current popular music genres and try to track historical sonic exchanges between these genres. Distributing in China specifically, also offers various logistical challenges specific to the Chinese market. In this section we will speak about the difficulties of distributing music overseas. From having to find a manager who knows the country in which you are working, to the multiplicity of distribution platforms used by the market as well as difficulties arising from the censorship in China. We will also pay particular attention to the issue of censorship in China. Finally, for this chapter, we will analyse how we can use positive ingrained stereotypes in order to overcome unfamiliarity effects and more easily find footing for Italian music in China.

In chapter 3 we will look at the most played tracks of the last decade in Italy through available sources in order to attempt to find musical communalities between popular music in Italy in order to have an idea of how the Italian "taste" skews. We will similarly analyse the tracks that are most popular in China over the last few years. In order to compare this, we will analyse song genre, tempo and artist origin in order to find communalities. We will also particularly pay attention to the largest artists in China as they could be seen as what best encapsulates the most popular musical tastes in China. Having ascertained the preferences of the two countries within the current musical landscape we will cross-reference this with our "ideal international artist" based on neurological genre preferences in order to recommend a prototypical Italian artist to

recommend for the Chinese market. In order to cap off this analysis we will finish this section by briefly iterating how international artistic cross-pollination of artistic endeavours can benefit our more globalised society as a whole.

The value of this research

This research aims to speculate on the differences between China and Italy to understand how international music can bring them together through commonalities, in order to pave a space for artists from smaller countries to find success on an international scale. Ultimately, it aims to categorise popular music in China and Italy, through a historical analysis as well as a technical analysis based on preferences derived from view counts. Through this analysis and the first-hand account of a successful international artist we will attempt to see if music requires structural changes to be more internationally successful or whether success is more dependent on economic constraints brought upon by the globalised nature of the endeavour. By utilising Italy and China as examples, we hope to analyse this question specifically for these markets; however, from this experience, our aim would be to obtain more generalisable insights of relevance to aspiring musicians and managers.

1. Music as a Form of Cultural Distribution

Prior to an analysis on musicality, it is essential to contextualise the role of music within a cultural subsection by defining it and briefly explaining its modes of transmission. Defining such a broad term as music can be problematic. On the most basic level “music is a form of sound and that it is a human activity. Sometimes, music is defined by its subdivisions; sometimes, by its characteristics (pitch, rhythm, intensity, timbre)” (Herndon, Marcia, and McLeod 1981, 10). While this definition briefly ventures in to the defining the idea of genre (the subdivisions within a cultural form) when defining music, cultural factors similarly directly and indirectly influence the categorisation and subdivision in which an art piece is placed. The interactivity between music and society flow bilaterally between the two. On one hand, the limits of societal acceptability and current trends influence the end product of an artist or musician while on the other hand an artist can imbue their work with elements stemming from their personal beliefs which can gain greater exposure and eventually may find traction within a greater community. From a musical perspective, although speech can be melodic, not all tonal speech can be considered music, with Herndon, Marcia and McLeod utilising the Koran as an example of pitched speech not considered music (12). To this end, we must understand that there is a performative aspect to music: any combination sounds could potentially be considered music (although, as we will explore in further detail in this chapter, “music” often has a degree of melody and mathematical differences in frequency in order to make it sound “pleasing”) if they were created with the intentionality to be as such. Music differs from sound because it was created to be “musical”.

The distribution of music has also rapidly shifted due to cultural changes since the advent of globalisation. Musical distribution began as oral tradition, moved into the selling of written sheet music, into physical records such as vinyls and CDs and now the most common form of global transmission is through online streaming services. Musical artists can either be independent or a part of a “label” who takes care of services such as sending the artists’ music to physical stores and streaming services, marketing, organising tour dates and providing capital for the artist to assist the creative project. Oftentimes these labels work within domestic parameters and thus the international logistics of musical

distribution can have complex and unexpected flows. In order to gain an understand of these movements, we must first analyse the music itself and the reasons for its transmission as well as the specific cultural context relevant to the countries in question to this work.

1.1. Sonic structure and musicality

Within this chapter, we will perform an analysis on how to employ musical categorisation and correlate our findings on categorisation with listener enjoyment. By decomposing the elements that define musical categorisation we aim speculate on the potential virality of musical compositions within an overseas context. The most commonly accepted way of categorising music is “Genre”. The word genre encompasses sonic variation, rules of form and a global nature by definition. In his book, *Categorising Sound*, David Brackett explains that the word “Genre” comes from the French word for “type” or “kind” (2016, 3). While it commonly acknowledged that genre cannot completely encompass the multiplicity and variation allowed by music, as Brackett also theorises, music also cannot be completely “genre-less”, escaping comparison. Furthermore, genre is so broad as to also be categorised by an artist’s social class and upbringing. In older literature, ‘Foreign Music’ “[w]as categorised as its own genre [since] as early as 1880” (Brackett 2016, 1-3), however this is reductive for our analysis as it completely fails to acknowledge the influences and differences brought by these global genres.

For our particular analysis, we will not have issues reconciling location as much when we speak about genres as in most cases, we will be talking about artists who come from Italy or China and have lived a large portion of their lives there. Other non-purely sonic characteristics which influence genre include: Class, Race, Gender, Sexuality and others (Brackett 2016, 6; Fabbri 2004). For more specific musical conventions we can look to musical differentiators. These include tempo, choice of instrument, musical scale, vocal tone and inflections, as well as lyrical content. While Franco Fabbri proposed a different set of categorisations for genre subdivided into: “1) “formal and technical rules”; 2) “semiotic rules”; 3) “behavioural rules”; 4) “social and ideological rules”; 5) “economic and juridical rules””, by sub dividing simply into sociological and musical elements we

give greater importance to the musical factors of genre as well as a greater focus on the sociological elements most important to the global society at the time of writing of this paper. With this in mind, we will analyse through a dualistic view that genre, interpreted primarily through the musical factors that make up its sonic structure or by the intentionality behind its themes as our method of categorisation rather than the aforementioned structure.

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that in his 1982 essay Fabbri also emphasised the importance of the aesthetic surrounding the musical item in his analysis (Fabbri 1982, 141). Particularly he brings attention to the idea of cover art and how this works with genre, an idea which could now be abstracted to the increasingly essential music video (139-141). Despite all this, naming convention within genre also varies heavily. In different countries, cultures or subsections of the population identification of genre can change vastly due to differences in exposure and cultural heritage. This can be in terms of naming convention but also in what is considered to be part of a certain genre musically. Due to the subjectivity of genre as a concept, oftentimes within this paper categorisations will be based on a subjective understanding of musical elements. Most importantly for these categorisations the author's intent will be considered as well as the likely interpretation from the intended public. The intentionality behind the use of genre by an author, is represented primarily in the use of self-labelling or in the lyrical content an artist chooses to utilise. The musical themes or "musical tilesets" as Aucouturier and Pachet (2003) choose to define them instead are purely sonic choices utilised by the artist. By their own admission, Aucouturier and Pachet understand that "musical tileset" classification, although seemingly more objective, has its own set of problems:

a unique set of features is not optimal to classify different genres: different genres have different classification criteria. For instance, "HipHop" would use bass frequency, drum track or voice timbre, while "Classical" would use medium frequencies (violin timbre, etc.). Moreover, the criteria are nonoverlapping, since maybe "HipHop" and "Rock" are similar when looking at a certain frequency range, which is detrimental to a good classification. (Aucouturier and Pachet 2003, 89)

Hence why a mix of the two methods, intentionality and the musical tileset approach, as well as track by track interpretation is required for genre classification. To quote Franco Fabbri: "It is also well established that styles of genre exist: but the practice of stylistic

quotation has become so familiar that no one is willing to accept a style of genre as an identity document any longer” (2004, 10). This leads to the question: with such indefinability in genre in the concept of genre, why is it so intrinsic to this analysis? The most simple answer is that this is still the most popularly accepted form of musical classification, and although we will briefly touch upon another possible form of classification in this chapter, there is quantitative proof that on a macro-level, countries and subsections of the population have statistically significant genre preferences much in the way a coefficient could be utilised in a statistical regression to predict enjoyment (Schedl and Ferwerda 2017, 482). On an even more meta-analytical level, Hyland (2015) describes how personal relation to genre can lead to increased consumption of products that fall under that specific genre umbrella due to a sense of identification with it and thusly an increased probability of products within that genre finding success depending on the demographic factors of the target market.

1.2. Social conventions of genre

As previously stated, we will look at the social conventions involved in genre. The social conventions of genre are important for various reasons. They can define what groups they may most easily gain traction with due to coinciding ideologies. They can define in which contexts they are most easily distributed. Genre and social conventions are so intrinsically linked that, simply due to geographic separation, words such as rock and pop can change definition: e.g., with Chinese Rock and Chinese Pop having different conventions from their parent genre. To understand how social conventions can affect genre, we will broadly outline some of the most important social factors relevant to the creation of music and discuss various examples of how their creation has been affected by the environment in which they were born, as well as how in turn they can shape the environment around them.

1.2.1. Social class

Firstly, we will talk about the influence of social class on genre. Social class can place a body of musical work into a particular genre, or it may have no real influence on defining it within a particular genre. Certain times, as is the case in many “post-” affixed genres, it is a principal point in linking them to their original genre.

Pierre Bourdieu defines social class as “classes [that] can be characterized in a certain way as sets of agents who, by virtue of the fact that they occupy similar positions in [...] the distribution of powers [...], are subject to similar conditions of existence and conditioning factors and, as a result, are endowed with similar dispositions which prompt them to develop similar practices” (1987, 6). To rephrase this in a simpler way, social class is an idea that comprises factors such as upbringing and familial wealth, arguing that the factors influence personality and taste. Bourdieu (1984) also brings into the definition of social class the idea of “reasonable behaviour” which will be essential to linking the concept with genre specifically. Bourdieu argues that social class implies “practical knowledge of the social world that is presupposed by ‘reasonable’ behaviour within it implements classificatory schemes” (1987, 1-7). As one example, artists who come from a certain social class may be more likely to be influenced by certain genres of music due to socio-demographic factors influencing the demographic aspects of their neighbourhood and thusly the music they have access to in their formative years. Social class can also influence the lyrical themes of a musician, with experiences derived from being in a certain social class influencing a musician’s lyrical content and musical themes.

Social class as an element of genre and music consumption reflects on more than just the producer of the cultural product. Chan and Goldthorpe (2017) propose three models to explain the influence of social class on musical listening habits. The first model they propose, the homology, functions as an interpretation of the ideas brought forth by Bourdieu where consumers within a social class have similar, more homogeneous taste. The second way of interpretation they theorise is the individualisation argument, which contrasts the homology argument by speculating that, rather than truly being born into a social class, “individuals not only can but have to choose—to ‘pick-and-mix’—from the vast array of possibilities that the highly commercialized ‘consumer societies’ of today make available to them” (Chan and Goldthorpe 2007, 2). Finally, we have the omnivore

argument originally proposed by Peterson and Simkus (1992) which argues that because people from a higher social class have greater cultural education, they are more tolerant to more “middle brow” and “low brow” culture. Although in his interpretation of this idea Bryson considers that the origin of this acceptance may be ironic, or seen as a tool to a particular aim (such as the case for “African American men us[ing] rap music (at high volumes) to gain control of public spaces” (1996, 895), for the purposes of this analysis the motivation behind one’s cultural preference is not strictly relevant as nonetheless the end result is a propagation of the cultural good. The result of Chan and Goldthorpe’s analysis, finds that the omnivore theory is the most consistent with actual results, and although they note that social class is not a complete indicator of genre preference, there are correlations. In their study they find that genres such as Opera, Classical and Jazz have a higher percentage of listeners within a higher social stratum in England. Thusly not only could we speculate that due to upbringing factors, social class can have an influence on musical production, we can also ascertain that social class has an influence on listening habits.

1.2.2. Race

The link between race and genre is like that of social class in many ways, however, there exist some key differences. The influence of race on genre is easily identifiable, particularly within certain genres. Two of these particularly pronounced genres are Hip-hop and Rap, where matters of racial struggle and culture take a seat at the forefront of the themes tackled by the genres. In “Rap as literacy: A genre analysis of hip-hop ciphers” (2005), Michael Newman analyses one of the genre’s founders, DJ Cool Herc, tracing back his form of lyricism to a number of African-American oral traditions that are, according to Jon Yasin 1997, a ‘survival from Africa’ (Yasin quoted in Newman 2005, 402) and display “the classic African-American motif of using creativity to overcome seemingly overwhelming social forces” (Newman 2005, 402). This does not, nevertheless, represent an explicit requirement of form for this genre, as music and new genres are often founded on taking elements from other artists and familiarity has been repeatedly cited as a gateway to greater enjoyment (Hargreaves 1984; North and Hargreaves 1998; Peretz, Gaudreau, and Bonnel 1998; Szpunar, Schellenberg, and Pliner

2004). This was also proved to be true for music, as in Schubert's quantitative analysis, where it was found that familiarity as an "important predictor of enjoyment is consistent with past literature" (2007, 510). Thusly, music that sounds more "familiar" to the listener, through elements they have encountered previously, is more likely to give them enjoyment and thus a niche within a group of listeners. This is to say that genres created through the diaspora perfectly exemplify the role of race in genre, as they take elements of music characteristically associated with race and ethnicity and interweave them with elements of foreign culture to create characteristics of a genre.

Through the influence of immigration, music traditionally associated with or born from different cultures can overcome a lack of familiarity in a new environment and gain traction, ultimately exposing new people to different genres of music. As proposed by William Roy and Timothy Dowd, "[t]he first genre of American commercial popular music arguably was the minstrel, which was based on white men's appropriation of black culture" (2010, 27), which further supports the argument that race is an important factor in genre classification, as in this example the appropriation and interweaving of different racial preferences and musical identities formed a distinctively classifiable segment of music apart from what it was originally inspired by. This is not to imply that race is the defining factor of genre, as we see many examples of racially distinct musicians within the same genre and listening habits are also not necessarily defined by race. Furthermore, race as a classification for genre is also in many ways interlinked with social class, with social stratification often having significant correlations with race.

From the listeners' point of view, matters of race have also been shown to affect their perception of the music. In their research, Roy and Dowd found that "white listeners have sometimes devalued music by African Americans because of racial associations (Frith 1996; Lopes 2002). Conversely, in other examples, listeners have on occasion shown to imbue 'Black' with a positive value (e.g. authentic) and 'White' with a negative value (e.g. inauthentic) (Cantwell 1997, Grazian 2003)" (Roy and Dowd 2010, 26). While the nature of these preconceptions varies between situations, they can nonetheless influence the perception of a musical work.

1.2.3. Gender and sexual preference

Gender, gender roles and particularly the relation between genders is often not explicitly used to categorise genre, however, it does have underlying implications within genre as a whole. Portrayals of gender in certain ways are especially common in certain genres of music compared to others. Overall, the research conducted by Mark Flynn et al. shows that “targeting women and men for objectification, gaze, and attractiveness is normative in music lyrics” (2016, 170). Furthermore, within certain genres, as demonstrated by this work, Rap, R&B and Pop music have more objectification in their lyrics compared to country and rock music. Studies such as that of Jennifer Aubrey and Cynthia Frisby (2011) also suggest that objectification is more commonplace with women than men.

Gender also plays a role in sonic construction in music. Cecilia Björck reflects on the dynamics of navigating gender in relation to music. As an example, commenting on women in the Rock genre: “if you want to play rock, you must sooner or later learn to overcome your fears of occupying sounding space through loud volume. Otherwise, you will appear silly, girly, weak, and inauthentic” (Björck 2011, 107). Although, as with many of these ‘genre rules’, this is not all encompassing, Joseph Michael Abramo (2009) does find a correlation between masculinity and a gravitation to louder and more abrasive instruments. John Shepherd (2012) also found that the vocal stylings or ‘archetypal timbres’ differed between male and female musicians with female musicians at the time offering a softer vocal style. Despite this, we could argue that this specific point is less relevant for two main reasons. Firstly, popular music has become increasingly more androgynous. K-pop, one of the most recent internationally successful genres has built large parts of its image around androgyny (Almqvist-Ingersoll 2019), and Sheila Whiteley (2006, 249-260) also speculates that one of the primary reasons behind the rise of androgyny is the ability to more effectively reach a wider audience by appealing to both men and women. Secondly, Shepherd’s findings may have been skewed due to different societal norms at the time. Although we cannot say for certain that women historically chose to make music with a softer timbre due to their musical influences utilising this style. It stands to reason that this could be an idea perpetuated by musical influences more closely relating to male and female artists respectively. This second point does not

necessarily reflect listening habits; however, the prior idea presented by Abramo may mean that gender may result in certain sonic preferences more often than not.

Stephen Amico (2017) also comments on how femininity in voice is often associated with emotion in music as compared to a more masculine voice. Although we have touched upon this point in the sections on race and social class, the idea of normativity is particularly important in genre when referring to gender and sexual preference elements. Although acting in a manner inconsistent with social class norms or racial norms is, arguably, frowned upon socially, the creation of genres, and more importantly the success of genres such as minstrel exemplify that, although subversion of these norms does often result in the creation of a new genre with a distinct listening base, the appeal of this genre is possibly enough to ensure the potential for larger scale legitimacy and success. Musical genres with strong themes of sexual preference acceptance or elements of “gay culture”, tend, nevertheless, to have more difficulty in finding success at a larger scale in their genre of music, likely due to remnants of power dynamics ingrained into many societies. In addition, gender dynamics and matters of sexuality are issues that are less easily identified with than class struggles in many cultures due to class dynamics being perceived as a less taboo topic overall. Despite this, a lack of common mainstream success does not de-legitimise these genres and in fact genre differentiation in this manner could be useful for finding a foothold in markets where heteronormativity and societal powers that uphold a male-centric view dominate the main way of thinking.

Much like elements of race, the dynamic between sexual preference and society has also often been instrumental in the creation and definition of genres. Jodie Taylor proposes examples of current genres explicitly associated with queer culture such as “Homo-hop” and “Queer-core punk” which, in their words, “further exemplify uniquely queer modalities of stylistic resistance, subcultural identification and musicalised social action” (2013, 200) as a part of their genre identity. Sexual orientation’s link to genre is not limited in association to explicitly queer genres.

Much like our discussion about race, many genres were founded within queer subcultures and then became accepted within the greater community. Philip Brett and Elizabeth Wood

(2013, 370), as well as Hillegonda Rietveld (2019) and Richard Smith (2016), attribute genres such as house, techno, trance and acid-house to gay movements. While remnants of these associations remain, these genres do not specifically necessarily deal with these concepts in their lyrical themes, instead being primarily recognisable through their music elements, and thus are more accessible to cultures where these themes are considered “taboo”. There is also the case of songs not produced by homosexual artists that still have their ‘genre’ influenced by their willingness to tackle these issues within their music. Lady Gaga’s “Born this way” tackles political issues such as acceptance and gay rights as its main theme, although the artist herself does not necessarily identify with these communities personally. S. Mo Jang and Hoon Lee (2014) argue that songs such as “Born this way”, “YMCA”, “Raining Men” and more are examples of the aforementioned priming effect and instrumental to changing public perception through music; nonetheless, their thematic choice simultaneously bounds them to a certain genre by nature. Their willingness to make a political stance within their music results in a forced categorisation.

While this ideological stance stands to garner success within certain communities, it also limits its potential success within others such as conservative markets. These attitudes also see excursions when seen in the inverse. Songs that pertain to the ‘Christian’ subgenres must strictly conform to certain genre norms in order to be classified as such. While it would not be unthinkable for a musician to make music with Christian themes or musical/artistic influences derived from Christian themes, in order to be completely accepted into the genre, following the norms of certain beliefs on sexual orientation is required. This is not to say, however, that the forms that define a genre remain constant. As we say with genre born with norms derived from social status and race, new genres can be created over time or alternatively have their rulesets transformed. In Jodie Taylor’s essay, she offers the example of how through Madonna’s appropriation of Voguing, who, through her “rearticulation” and “reinterpretation”, unshackles the styling from its prior associations and allows it greater accessibility into a new market (2013, 198).

1.2.4. Further review on the social dimensions of genre

Although we have established the social dimensions of genre, we have seen as well that not all the notions that define these aspects are equally important to the consumer. As with Madonna's appropriation of voguing into her music, musicians, as cultural producers, have the ability to use their art to disrupt social foundations and change popular thinking and norms. In the words of William Roy and Timothy Dowd: "Commercial producers and distributors probably have the greatest impact on how the general public forms associations between musical genres and social distinctions (e.g., race)" (2010, 27). While changing norms requires a coordinated effort between cultural producers, it is often through art that public opinion on topics can be swayed. In this sense, the social factors influencing genre should be seen more as guidelines for ease of accessibility within a market than laws explicitly prohibiting certain varieties of music from finding success.

There are also other varying social aspects of music that contribute to genre of varying importance. As previously stated, Franco Fabbri also mentions ideas such as "Behavioural Rules" and "Economic and Juridical rules" (2004, 1-8). Behavioural rules often strongly tie into the performative aspects of music. Certain genres of music evoke a performative response from the listener, inviting them to, for example, dance, whereas other genres do not require a similar level of interaction from the audience (Amico 1994, 362). These behavioural rules further extend to the performer as well, where for example in the Rock and Punk genres there is a tendency to break one's instrument in order to excite the crowd whereas in genres such as classical music, the performers' instruments are treated with particular reverence, often being placed as a visual centrepiece within the performative space.

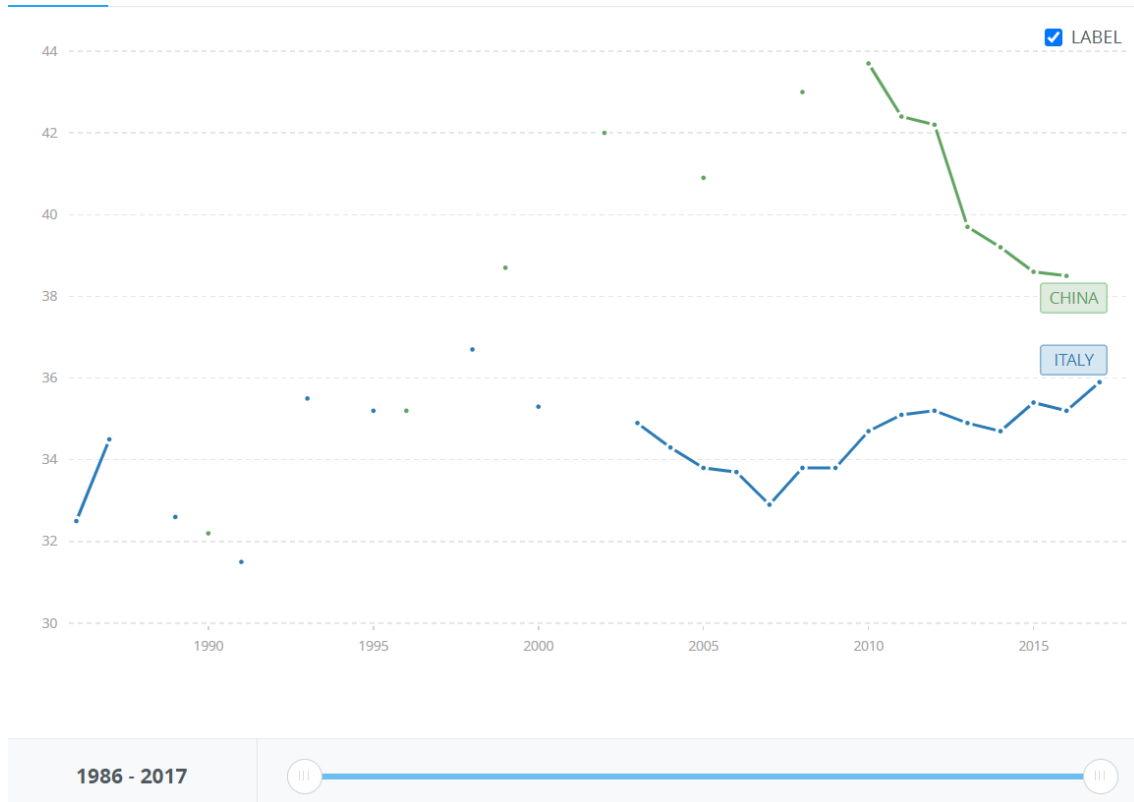
Similarly, often intertwined with the musical and performative aspects are the economic and juridical rules of genre. Due to the cultures from which they were born and the perpetuated values within these cultures, genres prevalent within these circles may often be genres that treat with reward economic ideals and interactions with power systems that reflect their own ideals. As an example of this, Hip-hop, a genre born from low social class – "a group of people who possess the same socioeconomic status" (Britannica, 2019) (communities often treats with flaunting wealth as a mark of success within music and rappers are encouraged to spend frivolously and perform acts of philanthropy within their

lyrics as well as real life in order to demonstrate their success. By the same token, due to historic racial tensions between the Black community and power structures in the U.S., one of the genre rules of Hip-hop is disdain and lack of collaboration with the police, the lack of adherence of which results in an artist being labelled a “snitch” and a limiting of possible collaborations or promotions from other artists within the genre. These factors have many overlapping features with other elements of genre such as race or social class, however, they remain nonetheless relevant.

1.2.5. Interpreting the social factors of genre within an international context

With this understanding of the notions relevant to the social dimensions of genre, we can now investigate whether certain factors might allow certain musical genres to obtain greater popularity within a foreign context. Firstly, analysing social class, we could cross-reference demographic factors with the social class the music is commonly associated with. In countries with a relatively higher standard of living, it is possible that music often produced by a lower social class would not find as much success. For this specific context, it is quite important to understand the relativity of social classes in a globalised environment, i.e., the lyrical content of a genre which appeals to one social class may not appeal to the same social class in another country due to wealth disparity between the two countries resulting in a markedly different experience between the two. For example, lyrical content describing the difficulties in paying for healthcare may not have the same effect in countries with free healthcare. Furthermore, while certain instruments may be associated with a certain social class within some societies, the same choice of instrumentation may result in a different perception within another country. Despite this, the common feeling associated with the music and general lyrical themes deriving from experiences specific to that social class should remain relatable across markets. As of 2017, from reports from the World Bank, we see growing income inequality within Italy whereas China is rapidly lowering the amount of income inequality present. This tendency likely means that in the coming years the relative proportions of the social class within these two countries will deviate, however in the current moment both countries have relatively similar sizes for their social classes.

Comparisons of Gini Coefficients¹ between Italy and China (World Bank 2019)



Musical genres with strong racial associations in particular should have difficulty in their uptake within foreign markets. Firstly, we should acknowledge that by the very nature of this work we must deal with markets with significantly different racial demographics. Some markets, due to diaspora, have more similar racial demographics than others and thusly these markets may be more receptive to music with a strong racial background to its genre. Lyrical themes commonly relevant to practices from certain cultures may have different levels of acceptability or relatability in different markets. Global markets may also have different levels of familiarity with the choice of instruments in heavily racial music: they may be more receptive to music with instruments that they have heard more often. The political standings of the countries exporting and receiving also can affect the reception of the music. Preconceived notions about a country's populace can limit a racially charged genre's accessibility in a foreign context for musical and non-musical reasons.

¹ The Gini Coefficient is used to express income inequality within a society (Left Business Observer 1993).

Gender in particular should not result as a large block to accessibility of a genre. Global populations often have similar proportions of men and women within them. The power dynamics within these communities, though, are not always equal; in countries where men have more decisive power, we may see a more male-oriented music market due to the executive powers with the capacity to distribute funding being more likely to be willing to distribute songs that conform with their views on gender. This is not to say that these markets do not have an equal demand for all types of gendered music, however, music associated with a certain genre may have more difficulty in the administrative process of its distribution. Furthermore, if we were to extend this idea beyond the binary perception of gender, we would see more difficulty for certain cultures where this perception is not commonly accepted to employ a positive reaction to themes deriving from this. Demographically, when speaking of gender, China is actually quite an outlier statistically, as the effects of the enforcement of the famous ‘One Child Policy’ enacted in 1980 can still be felt within the demographic attributes of its society. To this day, China has a statistically significantly higher proportion of men than other countries, although women still form 48.71% of the population, compared to Italy’s 51.31% (Ritchie and Roser 2019).

As mentioned in the section on sexual orientation, attitudes on sexual orientation varying from country to country can affect the potential market for music that deals with these themes. Officially the Chinese government does not have a positive attitude towards the LGBTQ community and there is also growing evidence of emerging right-wing nationalist groups within Europe. Despite this, China is home to the largest LGBTQ community in the world and there are not currently any laws in place on a governmental level that discriminate against people of different sexualities (Wang et al. 2019; Wang et al. 2020).

In this analysis, it is also important to understand another determined attribute specific to the Chinese market: its government’s control over the media available for consumption. As we will see in greater depth within this dissertation, the Chinese government’s censorship of media, that it does not see as signed with its values, presents a special case.

They can, in fact, deny distribution to any form of art that does not comply with its official ‘moral values’. This has already happened with television programmes depicting homosexual relationships (Shen and Hunt 2016) and this has also occurred before within a musical context (Kuo 2018) although various programmes and music depicting non-traditional relationships are not explicitly banned. For this reason, although exporting foreign music with non-traditional values is not impossible and is unlikely to cause problems, if the aim of the distribution is large scale success, then the possibility of an outright ban should be assessed.

1.3. Musical conventions of genre

Genre is not only composed of its social factors but also by a variety of sonic factors that define its categorisation as well as each genre’s accessibility. These sonic aspects of genre and musicality are oftentimes more clear-cut and quantifiable differentiators than the social elements of musical genre and thus more easily comparable.

1.3.1. Tempo

As defined by Steve Oakes: “The tempo of a musical passage (musical tempo) is a variable allowing precise, comparative, quantifiable measurement by using a metronome to monitor the number of beats per minute (BPM)” (2003, 685). Although tempo is not stated to be a necessary part of the form for many genres in explicit terms, oftentimes, even when this is not stated explicitly, it is implicitly required in order to conform with other sonic functions of genre without being seen as a ‘deconstructionism’. As an example, many genres have the use of an instrument such as a guitar as part of their form. If the tempo of one of the instruments in these songs were to be raised enough so that the variations in the notes played by the instrument in question were no longer distinguishable from one another (as sometimes occurs in electronic music with the presence of arpeggios), this would create a sound more similar to a synthesiser used in electronic music. Thusly, through modifications, even instruments related to one genre can be modified to be more consistent with the instrumentation of another genre through the

alteration of the tempo at which they are played. More often, instead, this formal requirement of tempo is a soft formal requirement, where alterations to this result in a variation from a genre more in terms of public perception than variation from many other genre norms. Despite this, Dirk Moelants found in his quantitative analysis performed through a study of music played on the radio, as well as a collection of CDs from the 1960s to the 1990s and certain other pieces of music from specific divergent genres such as jazz that “81 - 162” was considered the “optimum” BPM (Beats per minute) for listener enjoyment (2002, 581). There are examples of popular genres such as Punk, with Punk from the 70s staying under 200 BPM, but with some popular acts such as The Ramones opting for tempos around 180 BPM often (Pearson 2019, 3) . Initially, this may seem to contradict Moelants’s analysis. Nevertheless, the quantitative analysis carried out by Sandra Quinn and Roger Watt (2006) shows that there are certain factors that lead to time perception of music being skewed, and higher BPM tracks can feel slower, potentially in the more comfortable range (268-278). The usage of “double-time” and “half-time” (Clercq 2016) is a common technique to ensure that the perceived tempo of a song still stays within the “optimal range” wherein the rhythmic portion of the track may play at a different tempo in order to give the song a slower or faster feel. These different time metrics involve having the “backbeat snare” which is usually placed at constant intervals hit either twice as often or half as often in order to trick the listener into thinking that the music is playing at a certain tempo while in reality the rest of the instruments are playing within twice as fast or half as fast metrics. There are also exceptions to these rules, such as the “*hardcore*” genres. David Pearson’s (2019) analysis of the “*hardcore*” style finds that BPM in this genre ranges from 300-400 and sometimes even over 400. This completely eschews the notions of preferred genre and is too fast to be considered in that range even when the “break-beat” hits in half time. This however has never been considered more than a niche genre and may actually support our claims that, in order to have the most appeal, a genre should work within the confines of this optimal BPM.

Having understood tempo as a concept and having established that it is a cause for preference within a demographic base, we will now delve more into the specifics of how different tempos affect personal enjoyment. In a study on children’s enjoyment of music based on tempo, Amanda Montgomery (1996) found that children have a statistically

significant preference when it comes to fast or slow music, preferring music with a higher BPM on average for their listening habits. This experiment does not specifically track the relative preference of BPM between children and adults, still, judging by the availability and total popularity of slower music within the general international population, we could assume that with age, propensity to listen to slower music increases. This was somewhat confirmed by an analysis built upon this by LeBlanc, Colam, Sherill and Malin (1988) wherein the trend continued to rise quantitatively through to college-age students. Gabrielsson and Lindström (2001), Krumhansl (1997), Peretz (2001) and Husain, Thompson and Schellenberg (2002) all also speak about the effects of music and feelings such as arousal and mood. Husain, Thompson and Schellenberg specifically find that listening to the same melody at a faster tempo sparked more arousal in the listener – in this case arousal is defined as “the degree of physiological activation or to the intensity of an emotional response” (2002, 153). This information leads us to speculate that music with a higher tempo would be more likely to be consumed in a context that allows more expressive emotions. To offer an example, within a traditional office context, the listener may be less inclined to consume high tempo music than if they were performing a physical activity or in a situation where a greater emotional response is seen as more socially acceptable. In fact, enjoyment and tempo do have a link according to Husain, Thompson and Schellenberg; but it does come with a caveat. As stated in this article, “participants enjoyed the piece more when it was played quickly in major mode or slowly in minor mode, compared with when it was played quickly in minor mode or slowly in major mode” (Husain, Thompson, and Schellenberg 2002, 164) and thusly we can ascertain that there is a link between tempo and enjoyment overall; however, it is dependent on the modal choice of the song. Within a global context, enjoyment is still quite easy to analyse. People want to enjoy moments. Yet, arousal is not quite as straightforward. As an example, David Matsumoto and Paul Ekman write on how, in terms of social acceptability of emotional expressiveness, “Japanese more than Americans mask the expression of negative emotion in the presence of an authority figure” (1989, 155). For this reason, the emotional nature of a track can affect listener enjoyment, and due to the primary emotion displayed in a track, and its choice of tempo, songs can be more or less likely to find an audience within different cultures.

1.3.2. Choice of instrument

Another key factor in defining the genre of a musical composition is the choice of instruments and sounds employed by the composer. Potentially the most well-known formal requirement within genre, the utilisation of instruments traditionally associated with a genre can cause the listener to categorise a song even when the piece eschews various other genre conventions. The classification of instruments in relation to genre varies across time and space (Echeverri 2011, 8) depending on how the relevant culture has used that instrument in a historical context. Although these classifications can vary greatly and few genres have required the use of instruments as a formal necessity, for many listeners, choice of instrumentation is one of the first things that comes to mind when speaking about genre.

Philip Alperson argued that a composer would instinctively utilise instruments whose “characteristics [...] were the result of a felt compositional need within a genre” (2008, 41). While this view of composers intentionally creating works bound by genre rules may hold less relevance in the current day and rapidly shifting market, this view that composers insert instruments with specific tonal characteristics that best enable them to create works that hold similarities to their creative references, does hold ground. In the same paper Alperson also speculates on the reaction to subversion of genre through the use of instruments associated with a certain genre with differences in tempo and structure. He specifically cites how Bob Dylan was booed when he performed at the 1965 Newport Folk festival. His choice to perform music that in most ways could be classified within the Folk genre on an electric guitar, an instrument whose harsh sonic characteristics seemingly clashed with the soft sounds traditionally associated with Folk music, more in line with the high energy Rock genre, initially caused concern among the audience (41). As history has shown, Bob Dylan has gone on to be commercially and critically acclaimed and the once more concrete barriers between genres have begun to be seen as more malleable.

However, novel combinations may still result in an initial lack of understanding and displeasure from the audience. This association with genre is not only limited to the sonic associations with genre, though. Stephen Amico, in his analysis on electronic music,

theorises on the role of the electronic “kick-drum” and its role in a song. He specifically mentions the sound having masculine characteristics “in its potency” further amplified through it compelling a performance from the listener (dancing) engendering “a performance of the construction of masculinity through a physical response” (Amico 2001, 362). While this is based on gender norms that, in modernity, can and have been ignored, perhaps we could speculate that a certain choice of instrumentation could associate certain types of music with genre’s more traditionally enjoyed by one gender or perhaps even that songs that use these more “masculine” sounds or rhythms may be more likely to find success within a male audience.

As for specific instruments and their association with genre, although not absolute, the correlation is so strong that through machine learning, programmes have been designed in order to categorise music based on an interlinking of instrument choice and several other variables. These studies look at instruments used within a composition, coupled with other metrics such as tempo, melodies and song structure in order to automatically ascertain the genre of a song through a weighted score of these factors (Goto et al. 2003; Rosner and Kostek 2018; Essid, Richard, and David 2006). These algorithms are still not absolute and sometimes, due to the cross-pollination between genres, they fail to recognise the genre as it would be commonly classified by a group of individuals. Thus, we could conclude that although choice of instrument is a large part of genre taxonomy, the current algorithms employed to automatically classify music within such parameters are still not completely reliable. Instead, for this dissertation, it would potentially be more useful to classify instruments as pertaining to certain genres in a more informal way, much as the average listener would. Thusly, we will use commonly associated stereotypes to define the qualities of a track, for example associating the use of an electric guitar with the genres surrounding Rock, such as Hard rock or Metal, associating freeform temporal structure and song structure with Jazz or a kick that hits on every bar with electronic genres and then through our own lens interpreted more holistically in order to classify a piece as one genre.

1.3.3. Musical modality

Bowling, Gingras, Han, Sundararajan and Opitz define musical mode as “a collection of tones and tone-relationships used to construct a melody” (2013, 29). Often also referred to as the “key” of the song or the “musical scale” in which the song is performed, musical mode bounds a song to a specific set of notes. The chromatic scale eschews this by utilising every note in an octave, however, within modern music this is not a popular scale. Although there are many different scales utilised in music history, most modern music is composed in minor and major scales since “Chromaticism” stopped being the norm after the Renaissance and baroque periods (Meyer 1956, 228). Each of these modes and their note combinations inspire specific moods in the listener, nevertheless an in-depth analysis of each of the emotional resonances of these scales is far beyond the scope of this work. Despite this, we can generalise slightly and say that songs in a major scale generally inspire more positive or joyous feelings in the listener while, inversely, songs in a minor scale inspire more melancholic or negative feelings in the listener. Husain, Thompson and Schellenberg’s analysis also found, from their findings on tempo, that changes in musical “modality” or “key” created changes in the listeners’ mood instead of arousal, corroborating the idea that scale influences changes in mood (2002, 162-164). Pieces in the “major” scale had a positive effect on the listeners’ mood, while pieces in the minor scale had the opposite effect. Listeners may be less inclined to listen to music in a minor key in situations that require them to keep their composure, just as they may be less likely to listen to music in a major key at a funeral. In terms of an international analysis, areas in the world more prone to conflict and hardship may be more receptive to music in a minor scale compared to more prosperous nations who may be more receptive to music in a major scale. While this sort of example may seem non-essential, it is clear that the spectrum of emotions is felt by people in every country, and on a national scale this could prove to have a tangible effect.

The research conducted by James J. Kellaris and Robert J. Kent (1992) also witnessed a phenomenon pertaining to modality. Their analysis shows that when listeners hear music in a minor mode, they perceive time spans as shorter than when they listen to music in major modes. This phenomenon could be specifically leveraged for the case of distributing Italian music in China. As Italian music cannot rely on the fame of a specific

artist in many cases, and even more so for emerging artists, a song in a minor mode, which, within the listeners' perception develops more quickly, may have a greater chance, if only slightly, of capturing an unfamiliar listener's attention.

Interestingly, and specifically relevant to our analysis, in Chinese historical folk music, we have an element of musical modal composition that is very different from the western perception of mode. To utilise all the notes within an octave we would call this a diatonic scale. What this means is that within each octave, there are 12 possible semi-tones (notes) that can be played. Within popular global music currently most songs work on a heptatonic scale in which 7 notes are chosen within an octave and are utilised in order to minimise the amount of disharmonies in a composition. The minor and major scales fall into this category. Within Chinese folk music, however, there are various examples of the "pentatonic" scales, which have a different number of intervals, 5 per octave (Lu-Ting and Kuo-Huang 1982, 133). The less interesting observation that we can derive from this is that the Chinese populace would be more likely to easily accept music produced in different scales. This is nonetheless not strictly relevant as most western music producers compose in heptatonic scales. Specifically, the pentatonic scale is widely found within Chinese folk music as it the "only model of music of the Han people" (Lu-Ting and Kuo-Huang 1982, 135), which has gone on to become the largest ethnic group in the world (Zhao et al. 2015, 1). Its prominence within Chinese music led it to be strongly reminiscent of a "Chinese tune" within foreign contexts (LuTing and Kuo Huang 1982, 13; Van Khe 1977, 76). Another possible reason for its popularity may be due to it mirroring the 4 (plus 1 neutral) tones in the mandarin language. Making comparisons with western culture and the heptatonic scale is not as easy due to the variety of less tonally defined languages that make use of the scale. Furthermore, there is also evidence of the pentatonic scale being utilised in ancient Greek music (Brailoiu 1953, 331). While still interesting in explaining some of the differences between traditional western music and Chinese music, this is unlikely to have an effect on the reception of popular foreign music, bar the unlikely event that a popular song was composed in a pentatonic case, where we could possibly argue that China's folk music history could ensure greater likelihood of that song finding success relative to its home country, especially since popular music in China also uses the heptatonic scale in the current day.

1.3.4. Melody, vocal tone and inflections

Melodic structures can also be assigned and classified within genres. In the case of this dissertation, when referring to melody we are referring to the combination and sequence of notes and chords strung together to compose a section of music. This melody, unlike many other elements, does not depend on the tempo or on which pitch register it is performed (Cuddy 1993, 19). Certain musical genres have greater penchants for melodic variations than others. While one of the defining factors of jazz music, for example, is improvisation, then, when a track is subsequently recorded for personal playback, how can we recognise that that track falls within the jazz genre? As researched by Lippens, Martens and De Mulder (2004), and subsequently elaborated on by Iñesta, Ponce de León Amador and Heredia Agoiz (2008, 1), a majority of people can distinguish music genre based on melodic structure. In both the experiments, listeners were given short snippets of songs played through a sine wave-based melody in order for choice of instrument to not affect their judgment and results showed that, in most cases, listeners were able to accurately classify the genre of the piece in question. While Lippens, Martens and De Mulder's paper shows statistically that non-professionals may wrongly interpret the genre of difficult jazz pieces almost 30% of the time, for easier composition and genres the results were much more favourable. Working in tandem with the idea that jazz as a genre is very freeform and subject to melodic experimentation, one reasoning for the ability to classify other genres based on melodies may be the prevalence of certain melodic structures such as the famous "4 chords" in pop music.

Chords, when employed within a song, must satisfy the necessity of polyphony, in such a way that the notes when played together must be distinguishable in their sounds one from another, as well as be subject to "aesthetic norms" (Tymoczko 2006, 1). Due to the way in which most instruments have been constructed, playing indistinguishable notes is difficult if not impossible; and complying with "aesthetic norms" is a somewhat more complicated issue. As we clarified in the previous section, within an octave we have a constant number of intervals within notes that comprise a scale. Certain types of chords constructed by different intervals within these octaves are more pleasing than others. For

example, major chords have notes that all occur within equidistant intervals from each other, while other types of chords such as minor or diminished chords have different, non-equidistant intervals between notes within the chord. These different intervals imbue the chord with different emotional energy and varying degrees of “aesthetic beauty” (Wilson 2020). This degree of “aesthetic beauty” is known as “consonance” or, in the opposite case, “dissonance”. Classical western music was partially built on a maximisation of consonance (Huron 1991, 153). For instance, Bach’s works often aim to maximise this effect of being “heard as smooth”. While all chords can be utilised within all genres, the more mathematically equidistant chords are a more “pleasing” sound and thus more common within popular music which, rather than aim to give complex and experimental emotions to the listener, aims to create an easily understood and enjoyable experience.

The relation between chords in a sequence is much like the relation between notes in a chord on a larger scale in the same way. Certain sequences of chords based on mathematical distance between their root base notes result in more commonly pleasing sequences of sound (Longdon 2019). Certain sequences of chords are particularly common within western music (The Axis of Awesome 2011), even so the theory behind the choice of chord progression should not be relevant only for western music. These common chords are generally present within pop music whereas other genres that aim to have a more specific sound may utilise completely different progressions more commonly (Laukens n.d.). Dissonant chord combinations often evoke negative emotions such as tension or unease and often ask to be resolved. Frequently this works for a narrative purpose within a composition, sacrificing momentary pleasure for a future payoff. Thusly, we are not to say that music with different chordal sequencing cannot find success, but we could speculate that music that does (with many consonant chords) may be suited to a more general, and therefore international, taste.

Briefly, there is also the question of musical complexity to take into consideration. While mostly not completely rigid, ideally people like a piece with a “medium” amount of complexity, “not too simple or too complex” (McDermott 2012, 242-245). Too simple and the track lacks stimulus, causing the listener to become bored; too complex and a track can feel overwhelming and abrasive to listen to. This goes for total track structure,

melody structure as well as individual chord structure. Seemingly though, it is better to err on the side of too simple. Helen Mull (1957, 161) wrote on the effect of repetition in music and argued that more repetitive music was generally found to be more enjoyable than too complex compositions. This fact is also reflected in modern pop music eschewing the complex, multi-tempo musical odysseys of the classical music era.

1.3.5. Speech patterns and cadence

Worthy of its own mention, the human voice is likely the most commonly utilised instrument in music. Such is its importance that Steven Connor, in describing the relation between Western music and voice, said: “Western music has been formed around the dissension between music and voice” (2001, 467). Arguably this definition could be extended beyond its boundary of Western music as well. Unlike many other instruments, the voice is not necessarily bound by clear intervals within notes; however, vocalising on the same notes within a regular scale is often appreciated.

Different genres have different conventions on what type of lyrical elements are utilised on a spectrum from singing, to spoken word and everything in between. This can be confirmed through the research of Berenzweig, Ellis and Lawrence (2002, 4-5), who performed an experiment using bassline-only segments and segments of music with voice to see if adding vocal elements allowed their automatic genre recognition programme to more easily detect the correct genre of the segment. While, as with the various other times within this paper, automatic genre recognition algorithms prove to not be completely reliable, there is a statistically significant difference between the two datasets. With vocal elements, the programme was able to recognise the genre 15% more often and therefore we can say that vocal styling and all the factors such as frequency of pitch changes, tempo and more do have an effect on genre categorisation.

We can view the voice as an instrument and assume our previous findings in this section are still applicable; however, the voice specifically has particular and different connotations to emotion. Klaus R. Scherer (1995, 238) performed an experiment on the use of voice and its effect on emotion in music. To recap these effects, small amplitude

variations evoked more positive emotions while large ones evoked a sense of fear in the listener (236). By the same token, larger pitch variations expressed more joyous emotions on average than smaller pitch variations (238). Information on pitch contour (the direction in which the pitch to a word or a phrase goes) was more mixed, as was the pitch level (238). Many harmonies within the track also resulted in mostly surprised, intense or generally negative emotions from the listener. Furthermore, higher tempo tracks also elicited more energetic emotions (such as both fear and happiness) from the listener (238).

Similarly to what we said before, there is no reason to assume that listeners only listen to happy music; yet, as can be demonstrated in the landscape of pop music, a vast majority of popular music echoes a happier sentiment, as on a macro scale happier songs are more likely to find success. This sentiment is echoed in Ladinig and Schellenberg (2012, 151) who found that listeners were more likely to “like” happy music, although complete preference between happier and sadder music was split. In this experiment it was found that “[l]iking music that evoked sadness tended to be stronger among participants who scored (a) high in Introversion (or low in Extroversion), which is characterized by seeking internal stimulation and avoiding social contexts; or (b) high in Openness-to-Experience, which is characterized by curiosity, imagination, and the appreciation of a variety of experiences” (Ladinig and Schellenberg 2012, 151). Moreover, music with a more “mixed” overall feeling was more often appreciated by people with more substantial musical training (151). These findings do not directly contradict our previous findings, they work together in tandem with the idea that listeners more often appreciated simple, catchy melodies rather than more experimentally composed tracks encompassing a wider range of techniques and emotions.

The phonetics of different languages can also contribute to the popularity of a particular vocal styling. Nikolas Coupland (2011, 597) discusses how the utilisation of vernacular within a song due to genre norms evokes a sense of place associated with the culture of that type of music. This sense of place is not limited to physical place but also place in the sense of a spot in time; and while the interpretation of such may vary from person to person, combined with the chosen aesthetic through semiology, album covers, performances and so on, the artist attempts to further ground this sense of place. This is

important for our analysis as it may be relevant in terms of the musical prejudices of the receiving country. For example, we could argue that attempting to bring American country music to the various places in the Middle East would not be a particularly fruitful effort, beyond matters of musicality, due to the strong sense of place associated with the genre. In the opposite sense, when we have music as instantly recognisable with a place such as a composition by Andrea Bocelli, combined with a positive context such as a particular newfound appreciation for pasta, we would have a positively correlated effect.

Different languages also employ a variety of different speech patterns in various different ways. The first example of which is the number of phonetic sounds available within a language. Mandarin has 56 different sounds (Hassel Zein 2008) while the Italian language has “at least 32” (Idahosa 2017). Thus, we could assume that Mandarin has a larger proportion of vastly different phonetic sounds from Italian and that too many of these vastly different sounds could cause a listener to disconnect from the music due to the unfamiliarity of the combination of sounds brought upon by the syntax and phonetics of a foreign language. This, however, in our case, is more of an inevitability rather than something to be actively avoided. Proposing to only push Italian singers who utilise Mandarin-friendly vocabulary would be impossible; still, it does mean that areas with a greater exposure to foreign languages would be more likely to surpass the initial shock of new phonetics.

Languages may also employ phonetics with different frequencies, while this can vary due to regional dialects if we take a more generalised approach to language. For example, Italian and French are syllable-timed languages, whereas English and Mandarin are stress-timed languages (Nespor, Mohinish, and Mehler 2011, 1-6; Effective Language Learning n.d.; Grabe 2002, 2). The difference between these is how often a vowel is stressed. A greater frequency of vowels results in a lesser quantity of stressed sounds within a language and therefore a lesser quantity of open sounds. Very importantly, for musical purposes this interacts strongly with the idea of Isynchrony. Isynchrony, as defined by Ravnani and Madison, is “a rhythm where all intervals between events are equal, like those of a metronome” (2017, 2). In Aubanel, Davis and Kim’s (2016, 8) experiment, they investigated if speech was altered to have isochronous timing and

explained that stressed languages became more unintelligible due to the change than syllabic languages.

Ultimately, the difference between syllabic and stress-timed languages results in differences also for the music made. As one example, due to English or Mandarin having less stress sounds than Italian, the former languages would have greater lexical choice in a genre where stylistically they would have to insert a greater quantity of fast words into the lyrics, such as rap. Whereas Italian's tendency towards Isochrony would result in a greater quantity of songs with equally paced words and rhythms. Various scholars, however, disprove this, with one such scholar, Rebecca Dauer (1983, 55-59), coming to the conclusion that, although the placement of the stress between these languages is different, the duration of interstress intervals remains the same and both have a similar isochronous rhythm.

While we can see that languages may have similarly isochronous rhythms, this does not mean that the languages operate at the same speed, only that they can both fit consistently into consistent metrics. Patel and Daniele (2003, B35-B42) experimented on the tempo of music from different countries based on the "prosody" – the characteristics of speech deriving from variations in the duration, amplitude and fundamental frequency of speech-sounds, which provide the acoustic realisations of certain communicative functions (Peppé 2009, 259) – and found that instrumentals varied statistically in tempo between classical music from England and France. This difference was not due to differing time signatures used, and purely instrumental music was chosen in order to not be influenced by speech patterns of a certain language. The fact that this difference in tempo exists in instrumental music shows two major important findings: firstly, it shows that this difference in preferred tempo likely exists in lyrical music as well, in order to fit lyrics over an instrumental in a natural sounding way; secondly, it shows that people from countries with different languages have some sort of natural tempo preference based on the prosody of their preferred language. In this case, it is also helpful that classical instrumental music was chosen, as during the time periods when these were composed, while there was intermingling between languages and people, the quantity is nowhere near the current global age and therefore we have a group of more separated samples.

The comparison between English and French is also fruitful as it is a syllable-timed language, and just like Italian and English it is a stress-timed language, the same as Mandarin. Although music has no real need to reflect linguistic rhythm, it tends towards it. Daniele and Patel (2013, 15-16) also found this phenomenon when comparing Italian and German classic compositions and the resulting difference was even stronger when Italian influence in Germany began to wane, further sustaining the possibility that there is a correlation between the rhythm of a language and music. In terms of pure linguistic rhythm, we can see that in various studies (Coupé et al. 2019; Kluger 2011) that Italian in particular is much faster in syllables per second than Mandarin, or even English. Apart from Japanese, which is a margin case as often it is not even grouped in with stress-timed or syllable-timed languages, we see generally that Latin-based languages and syllable-timed languages have a much higher number of syllables per second than stress-based languages. Thus, from this we could assume that naturally Italian music would average at a higher tempo than Chinese music overall. This would also imply a tendency towards faster genres rather than slower genres such as R&B.

When referring to different languages and music, we can also analyse the aesthetically pleasing effect of the sonic properties of the sign in different languages. The different sonic characteristics and possible sounds of different languages contribute to the musicality of different languages, with these characteristics causing certain languages to be referred to as “romantic” or perhaps “guttural” to those not familiar with their linguistic properties. These criteria are highly subjective and prone to interpretation; however, the existence of these differences is indubitable. Ignoring for now the functions of language in written terms or semiological terms, purely through stringing together signs (as someone who does not understand a language would interpret this), language through the use of cadence and rhythm can be pleasing, even when taken apart from musical context (Han 2018, 49). The motivation behind these perceptions of language have been amply studied (Giles et al. 1974; Schüppert, Hilton, and Gooskens 2015, 375-376) and have been categorised into two approaches: the “inherent value” hypothesis” and the “imposed norm hypothesis”. The former argues that languages have aesthetic value based on the way sounds and syllables are strung together within the grammatical structure of a

language. The latter instead argues that aesthetic perception of language is formulated based on “non-linguistic factors such as stereotypical ideas that are adopted by someone without critical evaluation, e.g., the notion that French is a romantic language or Dutch sounds harsh” (Schüppert, Hilton, and Gooskens 2015, 376) or even individual experience.

For the scope of this dissertation, finding the most applicable of these two systems would be too great of a task, so instead we will utilise both of these in parallel when analysing language. Based on the “imposed norm hypothesis” we would need to speculate on the perception of the musician’s nation by the host nation (in this case, Italians within the Chinese ecosystem). Whether there are widespread positive or negative stereotypes, how they are portrayed by the media, and how well the value systems intertwine. Instead, for the “inherent value hypothesis”, to analyse this we can turn to perceptual sound theory. Josh McDermott (2012, 227-234) wrote on so-called “annoying sounds” and “pleasant environmental sounds”. Within the category of annoying sounds, we have “sharp sounds” (sounds from 2-4kHz) and “rough sounds” (from 20-200Hz). An example of a sharp sound could be a screech or a scream, a sound made to attract attention rather than for traditionally pleasing purposes. These sounds are particularly displeasing because sounds within this frequency range can damage the ear. Rough sounds instead, such as a car engine, do not have any practical theory as to why they are unpleasant, and as the author notes also have gained popularity within genres of music such as the sound of a distorted guitar in Rock music (McDermott 2012, 230). One theory as to why rough sounds may be regarded as unpleasant is their frequency being comparable to the most commonly regarded “worst sound” (Cox 2008, 1197), vomiting. Despite this, there is not enough available data on “rough sounds” to truly regard them as displeasing, especially with the prevalence of “bass-heavy” music within the current musical landscape. On the other side of things, we have McDermott’s analysis on “pleasant environmental sounds” (2012, 231). Sounds have greater energy at low frequencies (Voss and Clarke 1975, 317-318) as well as songs with “slow temporal modulations” (Attias and Schreiner 1997; Singh and Theunissen 2003). In the context of the instrumental element of a track, this likely means that slower arpeggio modulations and smooth note changes are more easily enjoyed. In vocal terms, this means that people are more likely to enjoy singing with smooth note

transitions and notes not too far from each other. Ultimately though, due to the vast lexicon available in all languages and the variety of possible sounds, especially when willingly imbued with melody and sung, arguably there would be no “inherent value” in foreign language music assuming the language does not often break rules of “rough” and “guttural” sounds. Italian in particular does require the use of these sounds within its speech patterns and so, for this case scenario, it is unlikely to be a large factor.

There is one large factor that applies to all foreign languages, nevertheless, that reduces all of their viabilities in an international context. Familiarity is one of the major determinants of musical enjoyment with experiments reporting much higher enjoyment values for music that the listener was already familiar with (McDermott 2012, 240-242). This may be due to memories associated with childhood and nostalgia or it may be an effect of the repetition effect within a much larger context. Although the unfamiliarity effect may represent a challenge for a foreign cultural producer, with repeated exposure, preferences can be changed and the repetition effect can come into play. According to David Stang and Edward O’Connell (1974, 224-227) and McDermott (2012, 241), after around 10 times viewing a stimulus, the discomfort and new enjoyment from a foreign stimulus begins to plateau. Genres that result familiar would likely be a good starting place for representing foreign language music in a new country rather than something too traditional. Something that plays into existing stereotypes of the musician’s nation would also work but without too great of a focus on true authenticity.

1.3.6. Lyrical content

Perhaps the most counterintuitive element here, lyrical content is absolutely a large part of genre and could still have a determining part to play on our reflection of musical viability within a foreign ecosystem. There is evidence that the quantity of rhymes as well as certain combinations of lexical terms are good indicators of genre (Mayer and Rauber 2011, 677-680; Mayer, Neumayer, and Rauber 2008). This reflects our findings on demographic aspects of genre, as it would be expected that the lyrical portion of a track would reflect the societal norms reflected within the genre’s primary demographics. Different genres also have different amounts of lyrical density, irrespective of tempo. An

electronic track and a hip-hop or heavy metal song could have a similar tempo but vary vastly in terms of actual lyrical quantity. It would go without saying that a purely instrumental track would have a similar possibility for traction overseas due to the lack of foreign and unfamiliar vocalisations.

Although it accounts for a niche, when considering songs for export, the compatibility of lyrical themes should be considered. Only a small portion of listeners will understand the lyrics of any given foreign song, however, these are likely to be the first and most important adopters of the music in question. In this sense, this works very similarly to the demographic aspects previously mentioned. The importance of having lyrics that appeal to a foreign demographic also varies from genre to genre. We could speculate that this is of greater importance in genres with greater lyrical density, such as rap, due to their greater focus placed on this aspect of the music within a song's overall mix of elements. Conversely, we would argue that this is more important for songs with a simple lyrical message, as it is more likely to be picked up on by the average listener. Perhaps lyric-heavy genres such as hip-hop actually require less attention to lyrical elements due to the sheer density of how much they have.

Another matter that comes into question is the association between lyrical theme and vocal melody. One would imagine that when delivering certain lines, for example to express love, that more often than not a sweet melody would best fit the themes being presented rather than a shrill aggressive scream. Chen and Lerch (2020) have developed an algorithm for computer-generated lyrics based on song melody, so from melody to lyrics there is some sort of association present. On the flipside of this, there is evidence to suggest that words have specific melodic and synesthetic connotations applied to them. In a 2001 experiment by Ramachandran and Hirstein (1999, 18-21), participants were asked to assign either the word 'bouba' or 'kiki' to a rounded object and an object with sharp lines. The participants overwhelmingly named the more rounded object bouba and the sharper object kiki. This demonstrates an intrinsic association between more open vocal sounds and softer figures as well as a more closed vocal sound with sharper figures. Utilising and expanding upon this idea, perhaps this could also apply to more abstract concepts rather than simply physical objects. For example, is the word "soft" primarily

comprised of open sounds in order to present this effect? Unfortunately, most real-world scenarios with words have a mix of open and sharp sounds, such as the word soft, which despite having 3 softer letters, ends in a sharp, pronounced T. Furthermore, within a study expanding on the “bouba-kiki” effect, Cuskley, Simner and Kirby revealed that this effect may not be purely phonological, instead “symbolic, culturally acquired associations between letter shape and sound form the primary driving force among literate participants in a bouba–kiki task” (2017, 127). This would create a problem for the utilisation of this as fact.

Ultimately, it may not be totally productive to speculate on the melody of words abstracted from a specific musical melody. Within any language, there is a vast possible lexicon that can be used to describe situations and emotions such that from a musical perspective, most often, there will be a combination of words that can be contorted to fit into the melodic contours of an instrumental melody. Despite all these, there is one class of easily defined exceptions to this rule: onomatopoeic words. These words attempt to encase in writing a specific sound, and as such, to most native language speakers, these succinctly describe a sound or action within a written or auditory format. When we represent an onomatopoeia sonically, often it acts as a myth for the real sound we aim to imitate, due to most sounds not operating within the bounds of language. However, in a global context, onomatopoeias are subject to change, that is, what describes a sound in one country may not describe a sound in another country. Nonetheless, through the use of tone and creative use of language, as well as word choice, motion and feeling can still be transmitted without a complete understanding of the signification in question.

1.4. Attitudinal factors for genre enjoyment

Various studies have been performed on the relation between enjoyment, based on genre, country, as well as personality factors. By gaining an understanding of these factors and how they relate to each other we are able to cross-reference some of our ideas on genre and apply real-world data to sample the viability of international dissemination of music based on genre categorisation. Firstly, we can turn to a study by Anderson et al., which aimed to link “personality traits to music streaming behaviour” through a quantitative

analysis of streaming data (2021, 561). While it would be a fruitless task to assign personality factors to an entire population, certain personality factors are enforced through socio-cultural factors and certain personality assumptions can also be made within demographic subsections such as age. As an example, within Europe, younger people generally have a more “left-leaning” attitude to many issues, the specifics of which (relating to China and Italy specifically) will be covered in chapter 2. The aforementioned project by Anderson et al. (2021) utilises demographic factors, paired with Spotify listening history by genre and listening history based on Spotify’s “mood by song” in order to make assumptions on “Big 5” personality traits of the listener. Not all of the “Big 5” traits are equally important for this particular work. Emotional Stability for example would not be particularly relevant. We could argue that more emotionally stable people could have a generally larger group of social relationships and thus would be more useful early listeners than less emotionally stable listeners. However, this difference would likely be negligible. This would likely be the same case with Conscientiousness as well. Extraversion on the other hand, would be a highly sought-after trait in early listeners, as we can associate this with a greater willingness to share thoughts, feelings and listening habits, as well as a larger social network. Perhaps the most important factor of these 5 would be Openness, which would directly translate to a willingness to share things found personally enjoyable such as listening habits and openness to new genres and sounds. Interestingly, the Agreeableness trait could be positive just as well as it could be negative. If a listener is too agreeable, they may refrain from sharing their personal listening habits, preferring to instead let others share their own listening preferences. Conversely while less agreeable people might be more likely to stand by their preferences, they may have smaller social circles. By each “Big 5” personality trait, the 5 genres that ranked the highest and lowest were:

Conscientiousness (Lowest); Emo, Punk, Neuro, Comedy, Regional Japanese Music

Conscientiousness (Highest); Old Country, Soul, Country, Funk, Blues

Openness (Lowest); Country, Pop, Black Metal, Regional music (Brazil), Alternative

Openness (Highest); Folk, Classical, Organic, Atmosphere, Chill

Agreeableness (Lowest); Punk, Emo, Death Metal, Regional Music (Japan), Gothic

Agreeableness (Highest); Jazz, Soul, Funk, R&B, Blues

Emotional Stability (Lowest); Emo, Punk, Modern Rock, Metro, Indie

Emotional Stability (Highest); Blues, Old Country, Soul, Caribbean, Funk

Extraversion (Lowest); Epic, Punk, Rock, Gothic, Emo

Extraversion (Highest); Country, R&B, Caribbean, Funk, Reggaeton

The same data with niche genres and genres not made in Italy looks like this:

Conscientiousness (Lowest); Emo, Punk, Indie, Alternative, Rock,

Conscientiousness (Highest); Soul, Country, Funk, Blues, Jazz

Openness (Lowest); Country, Pop, Black Metal, Alternative, Classic Rock

Openness (Highest); Folk, Classical, Ambient (Including Organic, Atmospheric and Chill together), Jazz, Electro

Agreeableness (Lowest); Punk, Emo, Metal (Death and regular), Alternative, Rock

Agreeableness (Highest); Jazz, Soul, Funk, R&B, Blues

Emotional Stability (Lowest); Emo, Punk, Modern Rock, Indie, Alternative

Emotional Stability (Highest); Blues, Old Country (soon after also regular Country), Soul, Funk, Jazz

Extraversion (Lowest); Punk, Rock, Emo, Death Metal (and Metal), Alternative

Extraversion (Highest); Country, R&B, Funk, Reggaeton, Soul

Both of these rankings serve a purpose for our analysis, but firstly the second ranking requires some explanation. Easiest to exclude from this ranking were various regional

music and genres such as Caribbean. While influences from foreign genres have a place in the international music system, these make up smaller parts of most countries' musical ecosystem. Despite this, I elected to leave in Reggaeton due to my personal experience encountering Reggaeton in various countries' local music scenes, particularly in Italy. Also subjective was the exclusion of certain genres that I have personally defined as niche such as Metro. Country as well specifically refers to American Country; however, I felt it was a large enough genre to include. This is completely subjective and may be disagreed with, but the aim of this revised list is not to provide a perfect ranking of genre per personality trait, rather to have a more easily comprehensible idea of how major genres relate to personality factors.

With a general analysis of these rankings we can see a few notable trends. Firstly, genres such as Alternative, Indie, Punk, and Emo consistently ranked very low in all categories. While Emo initially may seem like a niche genre, its influences have been very common in current Hip-hop and Pop (Horner 2019; Horowitz 2017). Instead, on the other side of the equation, genres such as Soul, Jazz, Blues and Funk consistently ranked quite highly overall. Country as a genre ranked highly in Extraversion, Stability and Conscientiousness but low in Openness. Ultimately, it seems like the genres that rank highest in Openness are, on average, slower tempo, non-lyrical or soft-spoken genres. The genres that rank highest in Extraversion instead are mostly genres that stem from an international culture with the exception of Country music. A particularly interesting idea we take from the first list is that certain regional genres correlated with personality factors such as regional Japanese music are connected to Conscientiousness. This is very important for this analysis as it confirms our theory that countries do have general personality factors more commonly present, due to socio-cultural factors. One limitation to keep in mind regarding this data is that the study was only performed in the U.S. and therefore may not necessarily be applicable to other countries. For example, perhaps in other countries the results found for Country could be the same results for their own regional music, and the results for other regional music could be correlated with American music. Needless to say, this data is valuable even if it may be subject to interpretation.

Similarly, Schedl and Ferwerda (2017) performed an experiment to find enjoyment of music by genre through the Last.fm website based on where users are from. This analysis has certain limitations, though. Rather than direct streaming data, this is a community database and therefore is subject to bias as you would expect from any fan site. Although we cannot say for sure, we could expect a greater representation of niche genres within this dataset and likely skewed away from Pop music. Furthermore, this dataset does not contain Chinese listeners due to Last.fm's incompatibility with Chinese streaming platforms (and does not include Italy either due to a lack of data). Despite this, the experiment provides us with valuable, if somewhat anecdotal evidence, based on cross-genre preference as well as preference based on country. In the country-by-country analysis we can see that there is a substantial difference in average enjoyment of genres by country. Finland for example had a markedly higher enjoyment of Metal than most other countries (Schedl and Ferwerda 2017, 482). Within this particular dataset, Rock, Punk and Metal had a particularly large and consistent proportion of fans across all countries (482). Furthermore, R&B, Rap, Punk, Alternative, Pop and Metal all primarily had younger fanbases, while Electronic, Rock and Blues had on average older listeners and Folk maintained a similar level of relevance across all age groups (482).

Moreover, this study also does a covariate analysis in order to understand correlations between genre preference. This data can be divided into subgroups containing a few genres each in order to find smaller ecosystems of preference. Rock, Metal, Punk and Alternative all have many common listeners (despite Metal and Alternative listeners having a negative correlation between each other directly) (Schedl and Ferwerda 2017, 482). R&B, Rap, Pop and Electronic would make up another subgroup (Electronic has a negative relation to all genres but Rap) (482). Finally, in the last subgroup, we would categorise Blues, Jazz and Folk (Jazz also has a fairly strong positive correlation with R&B and Rap) as similar genres. We will refer back to these correlations in our analysis of popular Italian and Chinese songs in chapter 3 when recommending songs based on popular genres within China.

1.5. A conversation with Reepo from Octopuss: An Italian success story in China

In my research for this topic, I had the opportunity to be in contact with Reepo from the band Octopuss, who, as part of his band, is currently the Italian artist who has performed the most tours in China of any Italian artist (see Appendix A). I contacted Reepo from Octopuss directly and the interview took place over the course of 3 hours online over zoom in May 2021. The interview was largely informal as he explained how the band had found their start in Italy, how they decided to tour China and why this was an attractive prospect for them.

Octopuss is an Italian band that performs in English, and they describe their sound as primarily Rock with some funky elements. Initially the band started out based in Italy but quickly gained an international mindset, rapidly deciding that they would not limit their appeal to just Italy. This is one of their reasons for choosing to sing in English, as a “Lingua Franca of sorts”. Their decision to seek an international audience required more forethought than just the thought of language. One of the primary issues that Octopuss encountered was finding managers who were available to deal with distributional logistics within an international environment. Reepo was very clear in the fact that international success required much more than appealing music. The first idea that he stressed was that most managers lacked experience dealing with an international market. In most cases they lacked international contacts and venue knowledge. Reepo mentioned Michele Torpedine, the manager of Italian artists such as Zucchero as an exception to this rule, citing his ability to make international contacts and citing his management as one of the reasons for Zucchero’s international success, even leading to him being brought out at the Freddie Mercury tribute. Despite this, in his own experience, Reepo did not have a manager who would support his international aspirations and he ended up having to leverage his own contacts and diligence in order to be able to tour overseas. This problem is symptomatic of a logistical issue that prevents managers from attempting the international market. Reepo explained this primarily through an analogy. When asked about what percentage of tours they did in China, he answered as follows:

At the start we had Italian Management. So he only worked in Italy. If you’re an Italian manager, you only take care of the Italian territory. They have no interest in outside Italy and they don’t believe you’ll make money outside of Italy. So they say “you can go to America, but when you come back from America the payment you’ll get from my show is double that”, so the manager is happier too if you come back.

[...] It's a lot like a fire. The more you put in, the more you receive. We could also play in Italy, or in Portugal, but if the same day they tell me that I can do a show in China where they'll pay the hotel, insurance, flights, all of it and you'll open for The Scorpions and you play in front of 80,000 people, where am I going to go? In China there's so much demand, you can play every day all year. So we go often. How can you say no to this? I wouldn't go for a festival, you go for a festival and you put down other dates, so you end up staying away for a month. And when you start doing this you care less about doing small shows around Europe. Why should I do 800km by car to get 200 euros each? So we do more shows in China. (Appendix A, ii-vii)

Ultimately, most managers will consider an opportunity cost in the shorter term, perhaps due to a lack of any coherent reference framework for international artists or perhaps they simply believe that international success is not feasible on a more general level. One of the main unchangeable issues brought up by Reepo was the cost of starting up an international endeavour as a musician. Reepo lamented the lack of centralised Italian government-funded mobility schemes for musicians, particularly noting in an anecdotal experience that: "we laid down a few dates and they were saying that for most European bands the government paid for their flights. So, for the French, you went to the government, and they would pay for your flight. The flight's expensive, you know. But not in Italy. So, we had to pay for the flights ourselves, we paid for the hotel ourselves" (Appendix A, iv).

Reepo also brought into the fold an artist's perspective on the idea of international success. Thus far this work has focused primarily on theory as to why certain artists, genres and musical styles may be more suited to international success; however, there is something to be said on the more practical elements of human experience and artistry. Reepo particularly cited senses of longing, having to leave family and loved ones for months at a time, as one of the reasons why artists do not attempt to find international success so often. Perhaps with greater financial support some of this could be resolved and there would be more willingness for artists to attempt to push their music on an international scale.

When asked about the technical aspects of his music in relation to the dynamics of the public, Reepo stressed how for the most part they changed very little. They did not make songs specifically for the Chinese market in terms of tempo, key, lyrics or anything. As for the lyrics, he particularly stressed that, since they were aiming for mass market appeal,

they understood that the majority of their listeners did not know what their lyrics meant. He especially stressed the importance of making music that the artist is confident in. Despite this, Reepo did note that when they would regularly insert one or two covers of famous Chinese songs into their sets, it gained roaring approval from the crowd. This does not devalue this research as we are more focused on picking which candidates from a country are best suited to international success, however, it does demonstrate that with logistical competence and effort there is a place for Italian (or any) artists in a foreign context. Although notably Reepo sings in English, which for Octopuss's endeavours in America was useful, for the purposes of the Chinese audience specifically there is little difference between English and Italian as in his own words; "most people don't really speak that much English" (Appendix A, xi). Moreover, in chapter 2 we will analyse the success of another Italian band that has toured in China, 7grani, who nonetheless managed to find success with Italian language songs. One of the primary ways through which Reepo succeeded in growing his audience was through collaborative efforts and word of mouth marketing. They do not pay particular attention to their social media presence, but, through organic collaborations, Octopuss managed to grow to the point where touring in China is more profitable for them than touring domestically (Appendix A, viii-ix). Furthermore, simply due to the enormous scale of the Chinese market, Octopuss, once inserted into the market, found a large enough public to support a nice lifestyle.

Cultural differences were nonetheless present and had to be taken into account. Reepo specifically accented what is required of a star in China in terms of image and action. He emphasised how their clean image was a large factor in the support they received from the Chinese government as foreign artists. Reepo also explained that one of their collaborators who had a criminal record was unable to enter the country due to his past. Undoubtedly this requires greater and more in-depth exploration due to the specifics of the Chinese market as we will see within the next chapter.

1.6. Applying neurological theory of aesthetics to music

While an analysis by genre in order to determine compatibility between music and trends within a foreign country is useful, we could stand to gain further insights into a more

general understanding of enjoyment through an alternative methodology. Ramachandran and Hirstein (1999, 16-33) provide research which aims to find objective enjoyment of visual art through a neurological lens. By re-interpreting this research, we could attempt to apply this to the audio medium in order to understand general human preference. Their first theory involves the “Peak Shift Principle”:

If a rat is taught to discriminate a square from a rectangle (of say, 3:2 aspect ratio) and rewarded for the rectangle, it will soon learn to respond more frequently to the rectangle. Paradoxically, however, the rat’s response to a rectangle that is even longer and skinnier (say, of aspect ratio 4:1) is even greater than it was to the original prototype on which it was trained. (Ramachandran and Hirstein 1999, 18)

Ramachandran and Hirstein actually consider this theory’s applicability to music within their original paper claiming that: “music may involve generating peak shifts in certain primitive, passionate primate vocalizations such as a separation cry; the emotional response to such sounds may be partially hard-wired in our brains” (1999, 43). Therefore, we have an example of how this can be utilised in order to elicit a stronger emotional response within a listener. While this specific example does illustrate how we can use a form of universal language in order to bypass linguistic boundaries and form familiarity, the applicability of this idea for our research could be much greater. The peak shift principle implies that with greater exposure to an idea, the emotional reaction elicited becomes stronger, and thus a key element in choosing which music would be applicable on an international scale could be based on communalities within the chosen songs. If an element of regional music has a strong appeal within a community, by utilising songs with that same element, and potentially pronouncing that element further, the positive reaction to the music could be multiplied. By placing particular emphasis on textural elements, for example, amplifying the regional elements in international music, the effect associated with the perception of that region within the listeners’ mind could be amplified.

Another one of Ramachandran and Hirstein’s principles is perceptual grouping. By “discovering correlations and [...] ‘binding’ correlated features” (Ramachandran and Hirstein 1999, 45) our brain experiences a positive feeling similar to that of completing a puzzle. Within music this could be experienced on a general level through an album with a common theme running throughout the tracks, or more generally by noticing genre

norms within a new genre. It could be argued that by paying particular attention to including these common themes, a composition could be rendered more enjoyable. Conversely, contrast extraction is also a prized element within art. Visually this can be represented as a contrast between luminance, between colours or even between styles. While this may initially seem counterintuitive, having just mentioned how grouping is rewarding, the difference between these is that grouping can occur across space and time, across multiple songs, artists and more while contrast can create an exciting moment visually in a close proximity or auditorily within close timing proximity. This idea in an auditory sense relates closely to the idea of complexity previously explored. If within track audio elements are too closely grouped and lacking in distinct identity, the complexity of a track suffers and can become boring; by employing contrasting moments a listener can remain more engaged with a track for a longer period of time.

Isolating and attracting attention to elements of a composition also impacts our enjoyment of an art piece. By removing parts of an image that do not contribute explicitly to the identity of that composition we can have an image that, although less detailed and realistic, represents the key ideas of what is being represented better. For example, oftentimes products with very distinct form factors are represented in their marketing through silhouettes, eschewing excess detail in order to isolate and concentrate attention on their differentiating factors. Musically this is frequently applied by isolating elements throughout a composition. By taking out excess elements of a composition, the remaining element(s) have more space within a mix of frequencies to show the full colour of their sound and attract attention to the emotion associated with that melody or instrument due to less sonic competition and less competition for attention. This quality is not limited to instruments either, often a vocal solo is employed in order for a singer's words to cut through more or to express feelings with more clarity, with the bonus effect of creating greater complexity and engagement over the course of a track's runtime.

Symmetry on one hand is a concept that is very easy to understand, visually however requires more interpretation when applied to the auditory medium. Ramachandran and Hirstein state that our love for symmetry stems from a primal evolutionary need to find symmetric partners (1999, 27). Asymmetry was seen as an indicator of possible genetic

defects and thus we would have a natural predisposition against it. Symmetry within music could be present in many forms. Symmetry could describe the structure of a song, with lower energy intros and outros compared to the higher energy chorus and verse portions in the middle. Symmetry could be seen in the use of the stereoscopic elements of music, rather than place elements all to one side, within professional compositions they often move “around the head” and mix in the middle to provide for an engaging but balanced listening. Ultimately, many of these symmetric elements are present within popular music, lending veracity to the idea that symmetry is considered a “pleasing” factor within an auditory medium, just as much as it is within the visual medium.

Finally, the last relevant concept introduced in Ramachandran and Hirstein’s paper is the use of metaphor and symbolic representation (1999, 30-32). The use of metaphor within an art piece stimulates the brain and evokes a feeling of satisfaction when the metaphoric interpretation is attached to meaning. In the simplest terms, this is very common within the lyrical elements of music with musicians often employing metaphor to hide feelings under a veil, to hyperbolise emotion and simply to offer lyrical differentiation. Oftentimes this hyperbolisation also acts as a sort of meta-peak-shift principle, where, through metaphor, the qualities of the emotion are amplified. Metaphor can also be found within instrumental elements in music. Instead of directly sampling sounds from an object, we can use a mix of related elements in order to express an idea without directly referencing it musically. As an example, if one wanted to represent the south of Italy musically, one could utilise prototypical instruments from the area and dialect from the area in order to represent it. Metaphor can allow us to compactly express complex ideas and emotions, however, background knowledge on the topic is often required. Within our scope of finding success for foreign musicians, metaphors should be considered in their viability due to a potential lack of understanding on the recipient’s part.

Coming to a conclusion, in this chapter we have summarised possible factors for musical international success based on categorisation by genre (both demographic and musical factors), we have looked into a firsthand experience from of the most prolific Italian musicians in China, and we have utilised neurological theory in order to ascertain any other possible remaining theoretical influences. In our analysis on genre, we found that

certain genres had strong connections and influences from ideological and demographic issues, which should be considered when ascertaining if a particular genre is suitable for a country. We also explored the musical factors that go into genre enjoyment in order to be as broadly appealing as possible. With these insights, it would be very simple to assume that we should simply focus on pushing Pop artists as the genre would seem most compatible with what we have seen to be broadly enjoyable. However, this poses a problem. Pop music as a genre is likely the most malleable to define, subject to time and space constraints. Furthermore, as a genre, Pop takes many elements from other genres depending on what era is in question and thus a greater understanding of what goes into genre is insightful. Our correspondence with Reepo of Octopuss shed light on more practical issues regarding international artists such as performativity, management issues and cultural differences which will be further explored in the next chapter. Finally, we consolidated our theory from the genre analysis with an adaptation of research by Neurologists Ramachandran and Hirstein in order to have a more general understanding of rewarding and pleasing elements in art. By translating phenomena occurring in the visual arts to the auditory medium, we found some possible phenomena to predict enjoyment of a composition regardless of genre. From here we will move on to a more specific analysis of the cases of Italy and China, and how their cultural differences can influence the success of musicians in each of their specific cases.

2. Situating China and Italy

An analysis on the theoretical factors of exporting a musical product is only a part of the analysis required to export a cultural product overseas. Cultural values and preferences vary greatly between countries as do the logistics of distribution. Within this chapter, we will first establish a brief background on Italian and Chinese popular domestic music and infer possible relevant cultural values present within their domestic environment. When mentioning the term “Traditional” music within the context of this dissertation, rather than referring to a certain time period or development in isolation, “Traditional” refers to music whose ensemble of stylistic choices has a popularity that can be traced to a geographic area at a particular point in time.

. While much of the music referenced is domestic in origin, it is not possible for music to develop in complete isolation over a long period and, as we will see, both Chinese and Italian music take pieces from contemporary stylings from other cultures. To further substantiate this analysis, we will see traditionally popular genres in both countries and their relevant cultural values in order to ascertain a better understanding of changing values and identify trends.

Secondly, we will take a look at Italian musicians who have found success in China and analyse their music and distribution strategies, leveraging and building on our interview with “Reepo” from Octopuss. This will enable us to theorise on cultural commonalities between these two specific markets. This theory will then be substantiated with an assessment of global cultural transmission and the distribution of such goods. China in particular has specific considerations due to Government-imposed censorship resulting in bans on certain cultural values. This idea, however, goes both ways with certain values being promoted more easily. This further links to the theory that foreign products connect more easily with international consumers when the themes explored by artists are closer to ideas with cultural acceptability within the target market. Ultimately, to quote Simon Frith “Music is [...] the cultural form best able both to cross borders - sounds carry across fences and walls and oceans, across classes, races and nations - and to define places; in clubs, scenes, and raves, listening on headphones, radio and in the concert hall, we are only where the music takes us” (1996, 128). We could therefore speculate that, perhaps

without concrete governmental restrictions, ideas contrary to the hegemonic perception within a country could come to be accepted, at least within the musical form.

2.1. Traditional music in Italy

Italian musical history is highly eclectic with a history that can be traced back for centuries. Untangling the multitudes of influences present in Italian music would be a task beyond the scope of this project, however, traces of its history are still identifiable within current Italian pop music. When writing on “Traditional” and “Current” music, it is important to delineate between periods. Current and Traditional for Italy and China as periods are vastly different, as the delineations between these periods are defined differently by different authors and based on changes in popular musical sound as well as the themes represented within the music. For Italian music, we will draw this distinction between “historical” and “current” around the 1960s-70s. From the 1970s onwards the Italian musical landscape became more recognisably “current” (shifting from orchestral music to instrumentation more similar to contemporary standards influenced by American and British music) with the dominance of genres like IT-pop and *Cantautorato* which remain relevant within popular Italian music to this day. China, on the other hand, developed asynchronously in relation to the Italian musical ecosystem and thusly its distinctions between “Historical” and “Current” occur within a different timeframe, later compared to how music evolved in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Focusing on Italian music first, its history and metamorphosis can be contextualised by drawing a parallel to Italian political history. Prior to *Il Risorgimento* and the unification of Italy in 1860, Italy was composed of various different kingdoms and city states (Office of the Historian 2022). While certain cultural elements would be common between these regions due to their proximity to each other, the formation of an “Italian” identity as such can only be truly drawn after this moment (Pastore and Ferruccio 2004, 35), and even today the idea of an Italian identity is still somewhat fragmented. Many dialects are spoken more frequently than “proper Italian” and it can be argued that Italy became a proper nation only after World War II, with the advent of television and a common standard language (Saladino 1990, 66). Linguistically, quintessential Italian similar to

how we know it today was considered aristocratic, primarily spoken in Florence and some parts of Rome while the rest of the peninsula spoke primarily Alemannic and Latin dialects and showcased as well Arabic language influence in the South (Fabbri and Plastino 2013, 17-19). Prior to WWII, Italian music was primarily characterised by a symbiotic yet separate relationship between the two most popular musical genres: Opera and Folk music. The first musical genre in question, Italian Opera, became considered a “national-popular genre” due to its prevalence throughout all regions of the peninsula prior to unification (Tedesco 2011, 260). Folk music, on the other hand, was instead much more diverse, fractured into regionally distinct stylings, especially linguistically due to the fact that no common language had been yet adopted. These two genres continued to influence one and other in tandem, with Opera ensembles learning techniques from regional musicians and regional musicians learning techniques from their Opera counterparts. The primary link between these genres, as Keller, Catalano and Colica would say, would be “Brass Bands” which would bring the more musically complex rhythms and melodies of Opera music in a form that could be reproduced within the countryside (2017, 625).

Despite these regional differences, Italian music had already begun to find an international identity with French papers being written on Italian music as early as the 1700s. From a musical aspect, Opera was very much structurally similar to other European classical music of the time. Amongst Folk variants, the regional music that developed the largest influence over the years was from the Naples region, largely due to the early international success of 19th century composers who, despite not being from Naples, wrote famous Neapolitan songs, such as Gaetano Donizetti (1797-1848) and Francesco Paolo Tosti (1846-1916), with a popularity that echoes to this day through the popularity of IT-pop artists like Mina, who continues to use Neapolitan Folk stylings in her music (Keller, Catalano, and Colica 2017, 626). Musically, this genre is categorised most immediately through the fact that it is sung in Neapolitan dialect, with a “soft voice, with an intimate and sentimental sound quality” (626) and also its common use of parallel major and minor keys for the verse and chorus, leading to a wide range of emotions within a song. From a musical notation standpoint, the genre utilises “simple harmonies” and commonly employs “Neapolitan sixths or diminished-seventh chords, that in 19th century

Operas evoked trite dramatic effects” (626). Further along in the early 20th century, Jazz and Latin American musicians began to tour the region leading to an even greater diversity of styles within the region until the rise of the Autocratic Fascist regime and the subsequent banning of non-Italian music in the 1930s until the fall of the regime.

Post-Fascist Italy and the political circumstances surrounding it birthed perhaps the most traditionally Italian genre that has continued relevance today: the *Canzone d'autore* or *Cantautorato*. To analyse the genre from a musical perspective, we must first subdivide between the instrumental portion and the lyrical and behavioural portion of a *Cauntautorato* track. From a purely musical standpoint, the genre could be described as similar to Pop music, where the genre adopts the instrumental stylings of popular music at the time, taking a “cosmopolitan” approach to the instrumentality of the genre (Fabbri 2004, 9). For *Cantautorato*, the tempo of the song can vary between rhythms; however, structurally the song generally does not change tempo throughout the song as a Jazz record or perhaps a Classical epic would, preferring to remain consistent throughout its runtime. From an instrumentality perspective, *Cantautorato* songs eschewed the idea of large orchestras and big band set ups in favour of what nowadays would be considered a more traditional set up of bass, keyboard, drums, electric guitar as well as the most defining instrument within a composition, the acoustic guitar, which provides the principal element to intertwine with the singer’s voice (Fabbri 2004, 10).

For the genre in particular the singer’s voice is key. In fact, many artists within the genre are autodidacts and not considered to be particularly strong singers. Instead, where the genre differentiates itself is in the semiotic qualities of the songs in question. “Identification” with the artist is essential for the genre, as even the name *Canzoni d'autore* when translated means “Songwriter songs” and as such the rules of the genre dictate that the song must be performed by the person who wrote the song (Fabbri 2004, 10). Behavioural subtextual/informal rules have also come to be established in the artistic persona of the *Cantautore*. The *Cantautore* (singer/songwriter) is often portrayed as reserved and uncomfortable with their audience, likely due to the auto-reflexive nature of their lyrics (12-13). This is because the lyrical content of the composition, what truly defines the *Cantautorato*, is an unwavering truthfulness and indulgence in feeling by the

author. The reason for this is heavily intertwined with the context from which the genre was born, in a newly politically free Italy, still devastated by a post-fascist economy, where speaking about political issues and denouncing the government was previously highly frowned upon (15). This is partly the reason for the particularly human emotion demonstrated within the genre coupled with the hushed tones reminiscent of shame and secrecy remaining from the fascist era.

The popularity of the genre as a whole is partially as we have stated, due to the appeal of the *Cantautore* as an every(wo)man and the relatability of character to the experiences of the general population at the time. However, the introduction of a new mode of cultural transmission at the time also played a large part in the dissemination of the genre (Fabbri 2004, 16). The Sanremo Music Festival, a publicly broadcast competition between Italian national musicians started in 1951 and it continues to garner international success to this day (RAI Cultura 2021). The power of this broadcast, coupled with the every(wo)man nature of the vocal in question, eventually generated one of the most internationally recognisable successes in Italian music history: “Volare” by Domenico Modugno. The song won the festival in 1959 with a vocal styling which was carefree and shouted or as it was known in Italy “Urlato” (Fabbri 2013, 31). “Volare” in particular was an immediate success both domestically and overseas debuting at no. 54 on the first edition of the billboard top 100 in America, subsequently reaching no. 2 the next week and being recognised as the most famous Italian song domestically and overseas in 2004 (Bronson 1999, 102; Rockoll.it 2004).

Over time the Italian scene as a whole would become simultaneously more insular as well as more international. On the one hand, Bitt music, heavily influenced by international artists or even Italian covers of international songs, was increasingly popular in Northern Italy, while further South saw a return to songs sung in dialect, the Neapolitan versions of which gained particular traction (Fabbri and Plastino 2013, 56-71). The music in this area also grew particularly politicised in nature; nevertheless, recent trends show a return to the importance of character in the lyrics, echoing the styles of earlier *Cantautorato* (Fabbri 2004, 20).

In conclusion, to summarise the genealogy of this genre, we have a mixture of the initial influence from Classical music in terms of instrumentation choice, which after the war becomes an adaptation of particularly British Rock instrumental stylings. Furthermore, we have influences from the Folk aspects of early Italian music in lyrical content primarily based on a local, particularly human experience, coupled with the influence from American Jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong who began touring and influencing Italian music as early as 1936 (Presutti 2008, 285) as well as “chord blocks and melodies derived from various European folk traditions as well as from American country blues” (Fabbri 2004, 10).

The *Cantautorato* movement within Italy would result to be particularly influential even in the modern age as many of the identifying factors present within the genre would come to bleed into other genres, creating uniquely Italian versions of these international ideas as well as the genre as a whole. This would create a continued evolution of the genre and cause it to remain relevant within the greater scheme of Italian music. As of 2014, of the top six best-selling artists of all time, four could be defined as *cantautori* (Mina, Adriano Celentano, Toto Cugino and Patty Pravo); the other two being Giorgio Moroder, the inventor of the synthesiser, and Opera singer Luciano Pavarotti (Statista 2014). While this does not singularly imply that these are the most popular genres in Italy within the current ecosystem, it does speak on the history and context relevant to current Italian musical artists as a whole.

Furthermore, on the influence of *Cantautorato* on other genres, Santoro and Solaroli (2007) comment that the genre’s influence is key to the current popularity of Hip-hop and Rap within Italy, due to similarities in lyrical content, opening the door for Rap artists to speak of hardships under a different instrumental moniker. As this is a cultural ecosystem, these influences work both ways, arguing that “since the early 1990s rap has modified the field of Italian music, in particular the subfield of canzone d'autore, re-outlining its boundaries and, consequently, re-shaping its identity” (Santoro and Solaroli 2007, 483). The malleability of the genre is also visible in the Italian subgenre commonly titled Indie within the domestic market with artists taking the ideologies and instrumental choices of the *Cantautorato* – often with a slower tempo – with mainstays such as *calcutta* garnering

strong national success (Barbero 2018, 5). Ultimately within a modern perspective, the genre of *Cantautorato* has heavily been blurred in terms of its sonic identity, rightfully so as it was mainly born from a form of insular yet popular music. While its exact descendants are not completely understood, its influence is undeniable on the Italian music landscape as much as we should understand that British and American popular acts have also shifted the Italian musical landscape. More recently, music stemming from Latin America has become particularly relevant to understanding the current influences on the Italian music landscape, with the integration of drum breaks from South America and the Caribbean being heavily employed in current Italian pop music. While the instrumental choices of *Cantautorato* are no longer as ubiquitous as they once were, they are still notable within the indie genre; borne from a mix of *Canzone d'autore* and Folk music (both in the sense of Italian Folk music as well as a more generalised international Folk with slower tempos and instrumental riffs) as well as the continued success of legacy artists. Perhaps the most notable remnants of these influences would be in the ability for very personal lyrical content to be used within popular music as well as an acceptance for unorthodox voices and styles of singing within a popular music context. An understanding of the condition that led to the success of the genre on an international scale is important as now we intend to analyse the intersection between Italianity and international success.

While *Cantautorato* could be seen as the heart and soul of Italian music from a domestic perspective, this does not necessarily align with how Italian music is represented internationally. We do have various instances of Italian songs being represented overseas. A noticeable example is Toto Cutugno, whose “songs have been interpreted by 36 singers from France, 17 from Germany and Austria, 11 from Finland, 8 from Spain, 9 from the Netherlands, 6 from Greece, 16 from Sweden, 6 from the UK, 8 from Brazil, 7 from the US (including Ray Charles’ memorable version of ‘Gli amori’ as ‘Good Love Gone Bad,’ during the 1990 edition of the Sanremo Festival), 6 from Japan, and 27 from the remaining countries” (Fabbri 2013, 209-210). This particularly confirms that Italy’s international presence is nonetheless more concentrated within a European sphere of influence. Notwithstanding, this does not necessarily apply to other “Italian genres” which, although having produced a less ubiquitous and “Italian” influence than *Cantautorato*, nonetheless

at one point or another have occupied a notable portion of the current market for Italian songs overseas. Martinelli firstly mentions Italo-disco, whose sound has become ubiquitous enough to merit its own genre label. Musically, Italo-disco is characterised by a repetitive 4 on the floor rhythm between the bass drum and snare, a simple repetitive bassline, catchy and recognisable melodies with the vocal element placed firmly in front of the mix, the use of modern technologies such as synthesisers and meta-lyrical elements with many references to musical elements within the composition (Fabbri 2013, 211-212). While the genre received some success with famous groups such as the German Boney M coming to be associated with the Italo-disco label, ultimately, in the current landscape, the genre has not had continued success and the most “Italian” elements found within the genre are non-musical elements (212).

There are nonetheless some notable lessons that can be learnt from a musical analysis of this genre. Firstly, referring back to the first chapter of this dissertation, this genre employed two techniques previously mentioned in order to break down international listening barriers: a use of repetition as well as melodies employing the scientific ideals of “pythagorean” distances between notes and chords in order to create pleasing “Pop” melodies. Furthermore, much of the Italianity of the genre, similarly to *Cantautorato*, comes from the relative “loudness” of the vocal elements within the mix of the song itself (Fabbri 2013, 211). Despite this, the musical aspects of Italo-disco, outside of the vocal mixing, i.e. the composition, have little to do with traditional Italianity, often expressing national identity through extra-musical elements such as cover art (212).

Conversely, we also have Italo-pop which has garnered some mild international success as well, with a much more distinct musical identity compared to Italo-disco. Still, it can nonetheless be difficult to classify with respect to *Cantautorato* and the various pop-influenced genres as a whole. Italo-pop takes various influences from genres much in the way *Cantautorato* does, and as such, in many ways could be seen as being derived from *Cantautorato* as they both stem from an amalgam of popular music influences within Italy at the time. Nevertheless, they differ in key ways such that ultimately within their principal defining elements they are easily distinguishable from one another. Similarly to *Cantautorato*, often the songs employ a mid-tempo beat with elements of currently

popular foreign music at the time (Rock, Jazz, Disco). During Italo-pop's musical peak in the late 2000s and early 2010s, we saw many influences from American and British rock music, echoing global trends of the time. The primary differences within the Italo-pop genre and the *Cantautore* genre can be seen in the vocal performances of the artists in question. While both deal with particular themes of Italianity and are always performed in Italian language for their original incarnation, Italo-pop conversely relies heavily on more traditionally pleasing vocal tones and melodies and the text in question is often not written directly by the singer (Fabbri 2013, 213-215). Furthermore, the vocal melodies often derive from the "Neapolitan song tradition" and differ from *Cantautorato*, whose artists purposely strayed away from any melodies that could be considered "too catchy" (213). By this point, tracing this genealogy of Popular music, we can see that within the Italian industry we have a diversified mix of genres and categorisations blending into one another. As one of these examples, famous *cantautrice* Mina, with her Neapolitan Folk descendant style is considered by some a *cantautrice* due to her energetic "urlato" vocal stylings and songwriting abilities, while also veering more closely into Italo-pop for some of her more melodically focused songs. Ultimately, to summarise, we could subdivide the historical roots of "Italian" music into two sides: passionate ballads ripe with Italian thematic references, as well as the more electronic, dancey Italo-disco portion, with other influences such as Giorgio Moroder, the creator of the synthesiser as well as influence from the Electronic music culture of Central and Northern Europe.

2.2. The development of Chinese music

While Western music is no stranger to unique instrumentation and scales, Chinese music developed within an insular ecosystem for a large part of its early history, for approximately 30 centuries until around the 14th century BC (Kuttner 1964, 121). During this insular period, musical instruments utilised a pentatonic system; however, evidence would show that there is evidence of a Pythagorean scale being employed contemporarily since circa 900 BC, 150 years before Pythagoras himself (Kuttner 1964, 122). China's history is nevertheless long and turbulent with various unifications and rulers, some of which, for example during the first unification during the Chun Dynasty (221-206 BC), ordered the burning of books and musical instruments in order to circumvent certain

traditions (Kuttner 1964, 123). Thus, rather than take a look at China's storied history in order to understand its musical influences, it would be more opportune to understand the direction in which Chinese musical culture was heading, leading into a globalised world. Fritz Kuttner (1964, 127) defines the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1911) with the "gradual but rather complete disintegration of China's musical tradition to an extent where the skills of instrumental performance and the great compositions of the past were virtually forgotten". During the 19th century we could see the re-integration of the Pentatonic tone composition, this time with Western duration symbols which remain often utilised to this day (Kuttner 1964, 126). However, Pythagorismic notation and Western orchestrations would come to dominate the Chinese musical landscape over time. In terms of traditional Chinese instrumentation in this period of internationalisation, we can observe a particular fondness for bowed instruments (Kuttner 1964, 126), which could potentially partially explain the ease with which Western classical music found footing within the region during that time period.

The acceptance of Western musical ideas in China did not mean acceptance for foreign popular music within the nation. From 1949 – when the CCP gained power in China – until 1978, the Chinese government maintained full control over import and foreign content entering into China, opting for a self-sufficiency strategy instead (Huan 1987, 1). Beyond the ramifications for various global content industries, this meant that the majority of music being disseminated within the region during this period, despite international musical influences, was primarily Chinese in origin, values and language. From the civil war period until the installation of the "open door policy" and the establishment of "SEZs" (special economic zones) not subject to the same regulations on capital investment as mainland China, the majority of the most widely distributed and popular songs being political songs sanctioned by the CCP which reinterpreted classic folk melodies (Sun 2019). The strategy adopted by the central Chinese government is an example where we see the utilisation of familiar musical schema in order to engender familiarity and pleasure quickly for a new song. Through this engendered familiarity we see the power of music in spreading a doctrine rather than attempting to provide a counter-narrative experience or build its own narrative. Songs are utilised to further the hegemonic narrative within a country and perpetuate majoritarian political ideas, contrary to what

was happening in Italy during the same period. The CCP's control over the means of distribution during this period were particularly instrumental in the dissemination of popular music, as during this time with CCP controlled public radio signals, one of the only means of music distribution since the 1960s (Gao 2015, 473-488) until establishment of the open door policy and the CCP being demonstrably involved in music education in Shanghai since the 1940s (Ho 2012, 187-207).

Years of “musical isolation” – as they could be categorised – undoubtedly had an effect on the taste of the Chinese people on a general level, leading to a wholly unique dynamic in post-open door policy China. C-pop and its largest sub-genre Mandopop (C-pop sung in Mandarin) as a genre developed somewhat contemporarily to the politicised Folk music of the mid-20th century in China and saw an explosion post-open door policy in the 1980s. Born from a mix of traditional Chinese Folk music as well as the introduction of American Jazz in the 1920s, Shidaiqu, the progenitor to Mandopop, is a style that ultimately gained popularity, and with this popularity morphed into a sprawling and diverse genre (Hsieh 2012, 19-21). Shidaiqu, due to regulations in place by the Chinese ruling party against music that was viewed as “lacking substance” (commonly referred to by the government as “Yellow music”) morphed and found success in Taiwan and Hong Kong, then referred to as “Gangtai” (Baranovitch 2003, 10) before once again returning to China in the late 1980s. With its return, once again the genre adapted to the mainland market, primarily within its lyrical content, with categories of acceptable and non-acceptable types of C-pop (Baranovitch 2003, 15).

Mainland China's acceptance of foreign content in this new age did not come without caveats, and while grey and black-market methods to obtain foreign content remained, through official means foreign music had to undergo an approval period which still stands to this day. This transitional period outside mainland China resulted in C-pop which was, lyrically, less ideological and instead much more personal (Gold 1993, 914; Stock 1995, 125-127; Barantovic 2003, 13-18). Lyrically, the newly emerging C-pop genre mostly expressed “individual emotion through lyrics about pain, loneliness, and lamenting about past loves” (Moskowitz 2008, 365-379), which while initially frowned upon by the governing party, would come to be the primary lyrical focus of the vast C-

pop genre in the current day. As described by Yue Zhao (2011, 33), C-pop and its subgenres moved from having a sense of vocation to focusing primarily on sensory pleasure as China embraced the musical values of the Asian continent. Furthermore, from a purely musical perspective, C-pop, compared to its Western Pop counterparts, more prominently features a calm and relaxed mood compared to the up-tempo, joyous Pop anthems of the West (Xiao and Yang 2017, 1904). Overall, the C-pop of the current day spans through Mandarin as well as the Cantonese languages, with various Western influences, morphing into an amalgam of influences similarly to any other Pop-influenced regional genres.

To iterate upon these Western influences, while C-pop is still one of the dominant genres in China currently and perhaps one of the most uniquely Chinese of these popular music genres, to imply that it is the only genre finding mainstream success would be as diminutive as implying that *Cantautorato* is the only popular genre in Italy. Another notable genre with popularity within China is “Light music” which is defined similarly but differently from the Western interpretation of “Light music”. Within the Chinese ecosystem, Light music is considered to be “original compositions with western techniques with original han melodies” (Peng 2018, 14) and comprises a large part of the less Pop-influenced Chinese music market. Traditionally, Western modern genres such as Rock have also found footing within the country; however, interestingly, their influence is not spread uniformly throughout the country. For example, Andre David Field (2019, 151-172) and Nimrod Barantovic (2003, 120) find that due to cultural heritage and a myriad of political differences, residents of Beijing have a much more varied cultural offering when talking about Rock. Whereas Shanghai tends much more strongly towards Jazz, due to the city’s cultural heritage.

For our interpretation of the possible success of Italian artists within this context, in particular cases such as physical touring potential success, China must not be taken as a singular entity. Still, when referencing overseas activities such as potential profits from online streaming, preferences within the country can be taken more holistically. This greater acceptance of Western music within recent history outlined in our analysis in chapter 2 and 3, does however come with certain caveats. Primarily, as outlined by Heidi

Netz Rupke and Grant Blank (2009, 131-165), due to Chinese cultural values stemming from Confucianism being so prevalent within Chinese society. Moreover, the current ruling political party in China, the CCP, still uses music to proliferate their ideology as a way of instilling nationalism within Chinese society since their pivot away from Maoism (Miller 2010). In musical terms, as shown by Rupke and Blank (2009, 131), this means that since respect for one's elders is an essential concept within the school of thought, younger people in China tend to listen to music considered "acceptable with the mainstream culture" and "not in direct conflict with their parents beliefs". Perhaps for this reason Rupke and Blank (2009, 143) note that amongst the American music that has found the greatest success within China, we often encounter genres with "high cultural capital, resonant themes, easy retrievability, and political suitability" such as easy listening, country and oldies. Notably, however, this paper's findings do not totally reflect recent global musical trends and thus, in chapter 3, which will address currently popular musicians in China, we will find that, although many of these elements ring true, other genres integrate sonic ideas from these genres rather than embodying these genres holistically. Regardless, current trends do indicate growth of non-regional music, both in China and Hong Kong, with domestic music occupying an ever smaller but still dominant percentage of market share (De Kloet 2010, 169), exemplifying a movement towards greater integration into the global music market.

2.3. Similarities between Italy and China

When considering music of Italian finding traction in China, we do not have many concrete examples to draw upon in order to infer whether the music that does reach the mainland Chinese audience is consistent with what we know of local tastes or whether there are consistent similarities with traditional Chinese music genres. Octopuss's success in particular demonstrates that more niche genres can still have a large share of success within the market due to its scale and that musical adaptation of a product is not necessarily required; however, given the lack of information on the subject, it would be difficult to contrast this with other Italian artists who develop their product more specifically for the Chinese market.

Andrea Bocelli, world famous Italian singer primarily known for his Opera songs, is also no stranger to the Chinese market, touring there for the first time in 2003 (*China Daily* 2003). Bocelli's collaborations with the Chinese market would continue as he sang at the opening ceremony for the Expo in Shanghai in 2010 (*People's Daily* 2010) as well as collaborating with Chinese Pop-star Na Ying for a song sung entirely by both parties in Chinese (*The Star* 2020). Globally, Bocelli is one of the most famous living Opera singers of our time and is no stranger to international collaborations; yet, the linguistic choice of this collaboration is very telling, implying that the demand for a song completely in Mandarin compared to a multilingual song was enough that it was worth teaching an established artist like Andrea Bocelli to sing in Mandarin.

Another Italian band that has found success in China is 7grani. A socially conscious Folk-rock band from Como in the north of Italy, who, despite gaining more critical than commercial success domestically, have found a strong audience overseas due to their politically charged records (7grani Official Website 2021). In an interview with the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica*, they explain that, inspired by *The Rape of Nanking* by Iris Chang, the band decided to write a song based on the tragic events entitled "Ragazza di Nanchino" (Brighenti 2015). The group then went on to explain that the themes of the song gained them the attention of a foreign Chinese news source, CNC, for an interview which eventually led to attention from the Chinese government and an invitation to have an interview with the main Chinese TV broadcaster, CCTV. While "Ragazza di Nanchino" is a song sung in Italian, in 2019 7grani would go on their first Chinese tour and notably at the end of their set they would usually perform the popular Chinese song "Mo Li Hua" in Chinese (*Spettacolo Musica Sport* 2019). Interestingly, in this case, the overseas success found by 7grani is primarily due to lyrical content and support from foreign media rather than factors that would lead to more organic engagement from the community. Unfortunately, this case is too recent to speculate on future success of the band within the Chinese ecosystem. For the most part, historically, Italian music that has found success in China is largely the same Italian music that has found success internationally, primarily famous Opera and *Cantautorato* singers whose music is traditionally associated with Italy. However, recent successes like 7grani and Octopuss

prove that, by understanding the differences in taste between cultures, there is space for foreign, and in particular Italian artists, in the Chinese musical ecosystem.

Although both cultures have considerably different histories, we can find communalities between both Italy and China in terms of social values. To begin with, culturally, both place high importance on the value of family. As previously established, within traditional as well as current Chinese culture, familial values based on Confucianism are of the utmost importance and present within all social classes and strata. And similar family values are evident in Italian culture, although drawn from Catholic tradition. While, culturally, in many senses, we often struggle to see similarities between Italy and China, from the acceptability of political discourse to the flavours of regional food to social dynamics, the importance of family is something that pervades both cultures. Perhaps primarily due to economic factors, or perhaps cultural factors, Italy has had, in recent years, the highest rate of youth-parental cohabitation in Europe (Intravaia 2018; La Repubblica 2016). Nonetheless, regardless of the initial motive behind this social dynamic, undoubtedly it has created and permeated a cultural value within Italian society and perpetuated the importance of familial dynamics. While this is a recent study, Italian youth's willingness to return to living with their parents exemplifies a strong familial bond present within Italian culture (Menniti, Mistini, and Savioli 2000, 2-8). And even though the reasoning behind this may be primarily financial, it still represents a willingness to live close together. For this reason, we could debate that, beyond specific lyrical themes specific to Chinese culture, Italian music that deals with themes of family could also find particular success within the Chinese market.

2.3.1. Selling a musical product in the Chinese market; Global music and distribution

While applicability of the musical product to the Chinese market is undoubtedly one of the primary indicators for success, equally important is an understanding of the dynamics of global musical distribution as well as how the Chinese economy specifically differentiates itself from other countries. In relation to the scope of this work, it is important to understand what practical considerations have to be considered for a

globalised cultural product. For this scenario, we will concentrate primarily on the marketing and distribution elements of the business plan, under the assumption that in our prior section we covered musical differences and alteration of the musical product for the new market.

Firstly, in order to situate our product within a generalised framework, we can turn to McCarthy's 4Ps approach to marketing (1960). The first P – Product – entails an adaptation of the musical product to the tastes of the foreign market, as we have outlined. Viewed in a more positive light, we could say that a foreign product – also due to the lack of global cultural investment into China – carries a strong sense of product differentiation by nature. More interestingly, we have much more to think about for the next P – Price. This is particularly interesting, both within the context of the advent of the streaming age as well as in the particular case of China. For most markets, with the newfound ubiquity of streaming, pricing decisions, for the most part, no longer lie in the hands of label executives and music producers. Instead, streaming platforms themselves decide a rate at which to pay cultural producers and their representatives per “stream”. We do have examples of platforms who pay more per stream (Free your music 2021), however, the ubiquity and availability of major releases across streaming platforms seems to indicate that, at the time of writing this work, it would be more profitable to make a musical product available on all platforms rather than discriminating based on payout rates. There is greater liberty in pricing for non-streaming music such as physical media and online bought albums, and in fact the industry is trending towards being dominated by streaming platforms. China, which for many years has not had the infrastructural capacity to support streaming, is now becoming part of this global streaming market and, therefore, physical media in China will likely grow to be a minor consideration in the future.

The dynamic between pricing models, and China in particular, is also related to other specific but nonetheless relevant issues. Censorship in China remains a real and present issue to consider, particularly for foreign artists. Beina Xu and Eleanor Albert explain that foreign media on the internet is filtered by keyword from “one of 3 computer centres” before being deemed acceptable for the Chinese population. Other forms of mass media such as films and music are subject to even more rigorous scrutiny before becoming

available (Xu and Albert 2014, 3-4). Among the most censored topics for China, we can find particular attention being given to pornography, censorship criticism, as well as topics with high potential for collective action (King, Pan and Roberts 2013, 333-336). Although the tough censorship barriers in China limit the monetisation potential of cultural products that do not strictly fit into the standards of acceptability proposed by the Chinese government, foreign media is able to access the mainland Chinese public through the black and grey markets. “Dakou” CDs² were pirated and, therefore, intentionally cut CDs rose in popularity in the 1990s, bringing what was at the time modern Rock music to the Chinese underground music scene (De Kloet 2005, 616-619).

As times have changed, the methods of global cultural transmission into China have changed as well. Through the use of VPNs, foreign content is still available; however, the illegality of such a use limits the scope of availability. Furthermore, Ke Nie’s study on Hip-hop in China, a genre that elsewhere is currently receiving massive social success despite being largely censored in China, shows that censorship of the genre is having sweeping effects on the genre itself in China, as well as other genres (2021, 3-4). Their paper shows not only that, in order to find success, songs within the Hip-hop genre are being forced to change their lyrical content to something more in line with governmental preferences, but also that similar genres gain more musical elements from the censored genre, such as rhythmic patterns or choices of instrumentation (in this case Rock). Other trending genres such as Pop stay away from musical influences in that style in order to avoid incurring the wrath of the censors (9-14). Ultimately, for the music industry, pricing models are of a minor importance within the marketing mix, although specific cases such as an inability to distribute due to censorship in our Chinese case are to be recognised.

In terms of Place (third P) in our marketing mix, streaming would in theory allow for distribution to the whole of China. However, as noted previously, there is still a great degree of disparity in attachment rates that vary by region. Within China, certain cities are more familiar with certain musical genres, such as Shanghai with Jazz or Beijing with Rock³. These particular cases stem from China’s history and would likely make a larger

² CDs containing illegally obtained music censored in China (De Kloet 2005, 610).

³ For further information on why this developed, see Field 2019, 151-172.

difference when considering the performative aspect of music rather than when viewed as a good. Still, there may be cases where this disparity is larger and could benefit from a shift in marketing efforts towards certain regions rather than targeting an entire country directly. Due to the limited historical interactions between Italy and China, as well as Italian genres such as *Cantautorato* having influences from both Jazz as well as Rock, arguably we would not yet have enough information to determine which regions to focus marketing on and which would require empirical tracking over a longer period of time. We could say though, that an initial distribution strategy for any country should reside in a location with the greatest cultural variety such as major cities, in order to play on familiarity effects for initial traction.

Lastly, we have Promotion strategies (fourth P). For this specific case, if approved, promotion would work similarly to Western markets when referring to physical promotions such as billboards. From an online standpoint, an understanding of Chinese platforms is required, where rather than marketing through Facebook or Instagram, promotion would occur on platforms such as Wechat, Weibo and Qzone. These platforms are the primary social media platforms in China, which have the added benefit of having music streaming and payment platforms integrated into their API. Furthermore, as it has been established with both 7grani and Octopuss, if the product is seen to be of cultural value by the Chinese government, access can be granted to promotion through state-sponsored channels such as TV shows with a larger outreach and low cost for customer conversion.

While the 4Ps model is useful for its general applicability, the music industry is also an atypical sector, and it requires specific understanding. As an analogue for a cultural export, we can turn to Ke Yang's model for forecasting growth within the sports industry overseas, which relies primarily on 4 indicators to evaluate development of a sports culture industry (2020, 4). Firstly, we have the resources of the cultural industry. In order to consider the feasibility of a cultural export, the resources implemented within both countries should be considered and compared. Italy is one of the largest musical markets in Europe and is forecast to grow (Statista 2021a), with China in a similar position. In terms of government guarantees, China's music industry is also much more favourable

than Italy's music industry for musical export funding, with a reported "\$300 million art export fund" in 2016 whereas in our interview Reepo lamented the lack of government support for musicians in Italy (*The Economist* 2016). On the other hand, for the music industry as a whole, social participation does not vary as much as between different sports. Music tends to be much more ubiquitous than interest in sporting activities. Finally, we have the question of soft power. In general terms, China has much stronger soft power potential than Italy, with its almost non-negligible soft power. However, China does not seem particularly interested in exporting its culture through soft power. On the contrary, within its domestic boundaries, their censorship exemplifies a form of hard power in favour of domestic products. This does not prohibit the import of Italian musical products, but it could cause worry for the future, as the Chinese government specifically could block Italian cultural exports whenever they decide to do so.

David Sadler approaches musical exports in the modern age as less of a cultural good and instead reinterpreting the industry as an information industry. He theorises that copyright is becoming the most important element of global transmission within the industry. Countries with strong copyright laws and low percentage of piracy compared to spend on music have greater success with musical exports (Sadler 1997, 1929-1932). Moreover, Moon, Barnett and Lim's regression analysis finds that factors such as GDP, language and communication technology availability all contributed towards greater international flow of music (2010, 394-396). They also place great value on regionality, implying that music travels more easily within its own global region: for example, Europe or Asia. However, a limitation of this study is its focus on "tangible" media rather than streaming, copyright issues or availability of instruments (394). This data may explain why thus far Italian music has not found significant global success, but it does not exclude the possibility of it finding a niche within a foreign market. It simply expresses elements that give countries a comparative advantage within the global music market, and demonstrates that, with an understanding of the target market, these natural flows of information can be circumvented.

2.3.2. The specifics of the Chinese market for goods and services

While a large part of literature depicts China as an impenetrable market, recent trends show China to be moving towards integration within the global cultural economy. In the IFPI's (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry – a non-profit organisation that represents the interests of the recording industry worldwide) 2021 report, they find that the Chinese music industry as a whole is in a strong period of growth; growing from the 10th largest music industry in 2018 to the 7th largest in 2021 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2021, 6). A report from iimedia research in 2021 (Statista 2021b) outlines the major music streaming platforms in China with KuGou and QQ Music leading the market with 250-300 million monthly active users each, then Kuwo Music Player at 130 million users. Notably all three of these streaming services are under the ownership of Chinese multimedia group Tencent. This is closely followed by Migu with 89 million monthly active users and Netease Cloud Music, which has a particular interest in distributing Western music in China, reportedly distributing over half of American Pop icon Taylor Swift's 2019 album *Lover* in China, which has 80 million monthly active users (NetEase Music 2019). Furthermore, from a copyright standpoint, Tencent has recently entered into joint ventures with all three Western major labels (Warner, Sony and Universal) (Liao 2021). These are all signals of incoming positive change within the Chinese music industry, but it also highlights an additional important decision for foreign artists attempting to penetrate the market. The concentration of users within Tencent's platforms coupled with its partnerships with Western major labels implies that major Western artists signed to these labels will likely be able to profit from music streaming in China. However, payouts are more uncertain for smaller, unsigned artists.

Netease Cloud Music may be a viable alternative for smaller to medium artists attempting to distribute their music, but the guaranteed revenue from the service comes at the price of the smaller user base. Distributing on all major streaming platforms with the goal of amassing a wide listening base in order to profit off of touring could also be a strategy for smaller artists, however, adapting a product to the Chinese market and focusing on promotion, without the guarantee of short-term profits, is a difficult consideration for smaller domestic artists. Unfortunately, this difficulty in distribution can be attributed in part to the concept of "Guanxi" which refers to the notion of "drawing on connections in

order to secure favors in personal relations” (Luo 2007, 2) and its prevalence within Chinese business practices exemplified in labels being unwilling to distribute for smaller independent artists. Ultimately, currently, we cannot doubt that China is a market more easily entered by larger, more affiliated musicians.

To place these ideas within an economically validated model, we can look at Porter’s (2008) five forces model for market entry and competitive strategy. The first force: threat of new entrants, assuming that we have already decided on China as a market, is relatively low. Due to censorship from the Chinese government, new entrants require a specifically curated product in order to enter the market, as we have previously stated (Porter 2008, 28). On the other hand, while economies of scale in the traditional sense are not commonplace within the music industry, we do find incumbency advantages and network effects in place where established members of the industry, due to business connections or musical connections, have an easier time distributing their music through public channels than unknown artists (27-28). Furthermore, the high capital requirement of adapting marketing that in many cases cannot be re-utilised in the artist’s home country presents a high capital requirement (27). When viewing this from a China-Italy standpoint, initially the market seems impenetrable for Italian entities. Notwithstanding, within a more global context, considering the world market and China instead, Italy has relative goodwill compared to many Western countries in the eyes of China for “made in Italy” effects (as outlined in the next section). And if Italian artists are able to enter the market and establish a network, these higher barriers to entry may allow them greater security overall.

Suppliers within the Chinese music industry hold more power than in most other country’s music industries. The lack of copyright laws and payout for artists means that, barring financial gains from touring, artists are at the mercy of unbalanced deals struck with distributors, especially in the case of Italy, a country without domestic major labels with strong international presence. In this sense, larger countries with major distributors such as the U.S. and the U.K. are at a relative advantage in terms of bargaining power with suppliers. On the demand and buyers’ side, however, there are few limitations for foreign firms with low switching costs (for streaming services currently, all artists are

included within the subscription) as well as a standardised pricing model that does not allow for price sensitive decisions (Porter 2008, 30-31). Moreover, we do not have particular notable rivalry among competitors within the industry (32). Our case studies have demonstrated that Chinese artists are willing to collaborate and work with Italian artists in many cases and other foreign music industries do not show signs of rivalry.

One issue with the Chinese market is that it has a relatively high threat of substitutes (Porter 2008, 31-32). China's lack of concrete copyright laws within an international scope means that songs can be stolen or re-interpreted in a different language with little fear of repercussions, opening the possibility of Italian products being copied. The analysis of these forces does not paint a positive picture for Italian music, however, much of what has been said changes once the Italian music industry manages to establish relations and rapport with the Chinese music industry and become sanctioned by the government. By taking away copyright issues and becoming an incumbent within the industry, Italian artists then have access to a large and difficult to enter market. With China moving towards being one of the largest global superpowers of our time, for Italy to establish itself within this market now could likely bode well in the long term for Italian artists, rather than wait for global music labels to enter China and then distribute under them.

2.4. Playing on stereotypes for quick recognition: using “Made in Italy”

Although Italy may not have a large population or GDP compared to many other countries, by playing on its unique strengths and public perception, Italian artists with a strong sense of “Italianity”, that is to embody stereotypical Italian values or aesthetics⁴, can utilise this to overcome familiarity barriers and take advantage of positive stereotypes for greater success. In Lyons's (2015) paper on “imagined geographies” she finds that tourists are often disillusioned when travelling to countries that have been heavily represented in media, eliciting a negative reaction from the difference between

⁴ This can range from a representation of straightforward Italian imagery such as pasta or the colosseum to a metaphorical representation such as wolves symbolising Rome or the depiction of family values which are considered of great importance within Italian culture.

representation and reality. Thus, things that may be considered traditional on a regional level may not be the same things that are perceived as traditional within an international context. Moreover, there is evidence of country of origin of goods playing a role in consumer behaviour.

Initially theorised by C. Min Han, the country of origin has a “halo effect” if consumers are not familiar with a country’s products, and instead a “summary effect” when the consumer is familiar with the country in question (1999, 222-223). The halo effect, differently from the summary effect, has the consumer interpret a country’s attribute through their belief system, resulting in what may be a skewed interpretation of a country’s qualities through their own lens of interpretation. On the contrary, the summary effect has the consumer interpret the product strictly through their knowledge of the foreign country (222-223). Both cases, however, involve an influence from country of origin on perception of the product and Han recommends comparisons to goods with “superior quality images from the same country” (228). This leads us to the particular perception of “made in Italy”, a concept that has been exploited by the Italian fashion and culinary industry in particular in recent years (Paulicelli 2014, 155-174; Caiazza and Volpe 2014, 1790-1794). The image of made in Italy is often seen as synonymous with *artigianale* quality and luxury. In a case study on the made in Italy effect and children’s clothing in China (Musso, Francioni and Pagano 2013, 154-173), the effect was shown to have a notable effect in elevating brands within the consumer’s eye. There is also reason to believe that in China the “Made in Italy” effect extends to fashion generally, wine, food and perhaps other forms of cultural exports (Palaggio 2018). In a 1982 paper, Bilkey and Nes speculated that this “made in” effect can exist not only in products that are historically associated with the country, but also due to general economic development of the country of origin (1982, 90-91). Moreover, this positive correlation with foreign products is more present amongst younger generations with less conservative values (91). Nonetheless, while this analysis does not directly apply to music, it does show that Chinese consumers do have a pre-existing positive perception of other Italian products, and by playing into this stereotype we can both induce greater familiarity with Italian music as well as positive stereotypes in order to differentiate and garner positive sentiment for Italian music. Music that embodies the “Made in Italy” effect through the associations with

stereotypical Italian culture and connections with Italian products already present in China (as an example through song names referencing such products) could more easily find footing within the Chinese market.

To sum up, we can say that, ultimately, the cultural differences between Italy and China are far from negligible. However, within these disparate cultures that have developed independently, we can still find communalities. Both countries' traditional music genres embody slower tempo ballads with a focus on emotional vulnerability, through *Cantautorato* and more recent C-pop. Research into Chinese history as well as recent trends show a country historically receptive to foreign musical culture and a growing willingness to utilise emerging global music trends. The political policies of the CCP obviously require attention, with musicians needing to conform to particular social norms in order to attempt to gain traction within the wider market. For this reason, we find that those Italian acts that have found success within the market are of what would be considered more “socially acceptable” genres, rather than those that conform to generic global market trends. Furthermore, attempting to enter the Chinese market has its own set of logistical difficulties compared to a Western market. There is a larger variety of streaming platforms that are not present in the West, as well as a lack of established copyright norms. While, undoubtedly China is one of the most difficult to penetrate global markets, the scope of the market and growing GDP renders it nonetheless an attractive opportunity for Italian artists who can leverage positive stereotypes such as the “made in Italy” branding to differentiate their music and infuse it with an image of quality.

3. Applying our Research to the Current Italian and Chinese Musical Landscape

Any discussion on music is intrinsically linked and subject to the constraints arising from the time and culture in which it was performed. While any analysis on popular culture will not be always relevant, by building on and reinterpreting the trends of the past within the current landscape, we can form a theory, which through multiple iterations and other sources could provide part of the foundation for a generally applicable model for popular music transmission. Within this chapter we will explore how to interpret our findings on the influence of genre and musicality into the current landscape, combining this with our research on cultural preferences. We shall also cross reference these findings with current data on popular music in order to ascertain the validity of our claims. Finally, we will speculate on potential artists who could pave the way for Italian music in China and the cultural benefit that this could provide.

3.1. Applying genre theory and research on Italy and China to find the ideal musical candidate

Referring back to chapters 1 and 2 of this work, we can now return to the demographic factors of genre with a greater understanding of Chinese and Italian culture in mind. Three major sets of factors may help us predict the likely success of Italian artists in China: sociological factors, musical factors and the concept of “Italianity”.

3.1.1. Sociological factors

Firstly, returning to the idea of social class, both Italy and China are countries with a sizable working-class population. While China in particular is undergoing rapid economic shifts, there is also still a noticeable degree of poverty and wealth inequality in both countries; in China, this is due to its emerging from a large poor nation (Calcea 2021), whilst in Italy the wealth inequality relates primarily to the differences between the Northern and Southern regions (Pastorelli et al. 2019). For this reason, we could argue that music with “down to earth” themes and lyrics relates to the difficulties faced by the working-class population in both countries. On the other hand, the relative popularity of

Italian Opera singers in China and the “made in Italy” branding could lead us to believe that the Chinese interpretation of Italianity has bourgeois connotations (Musso, Francioni, and Pagano 2013, 154-173). In other terms, whilst the cultural origin of certain genres might have similar roots in the local music scene, the interpretation given abroad might differ.

Another aspect typically characterising a genre in other cultures, that of race, does not play a particular importance in neither Italy nor China. Historically, China has demonstrated appreciation for many culturally different musical genres with notable American ensembles touring since the 1920s (Hsieh 2012, 18-19). Even if Chinese audiences have a preference for local and Asian content, this seems to be due to censorship or cultural familiarity issues rather than any racial connotations attached to Italian music.

Similarly, in terms of gender, the CCP has always opted for egalitarian values in their views on gender equality (as demonstrated in chapter 1, although the prevalence of the one child policy in China has resulted in a relative skew towards men in terms of gender distribution. Sexual preference on the other hand is a different story, with same-sex relationships not being formally accepted within the CCP’s policies. Songs with themes of same-sex relations or any sorts of overtly sexual influences would likely not pass censorship for the mainland Chinese market due to China’s stance on same sex relationships (Kuo 2018) and thus would not be an appropriate choice for Italian music distribution. While this is true in theory, in practice this line is somewhat blurred as songs that deal with LGBTQ issues implicitly, such as Lady Gaga’s “Born this Way”, do not struggle much attaining similar success in China as they do in the West. For these reasons, genres born from non-heterosexual communities would still likely be accepted, provided they would not contain explicit lyrics about non-heterosexual relationships. Anecdotally, we can also see this through the acceptance of racially-born music such as Jazz (associated with Black culture) in early Chinese music history as well as the global impact of Electronic music genres (often performed by homosexual artists), even within communities known for racial discrimination or that explicitly prohibit homosexuality. Moreover, Italy, while not as prohibitive as China, does not have one of the most

progressive stances on homosexuality within Europe, with only few of the largest singers tackling the topic until recently.

An obvious final limit relates to lyrics with clear political themes hostile to the Chinese regime. This is not to say all songs with a political message would not be accepted, songs retelling political turmoil that does not relate to China would not be prohibited, as well as songs retelling a political experience that do not inspire a call to collective action such as “protests in inner Mongolia” or the “arrest of Ai Weiwei” (King, Pan, and Roberts 2013, 333-336). Thusly, Italian songs which call for protest and disruption of government within the Chinese sphere of influence would not be a good fit for international distribution despite their thematic ties to China.

3.1.2. Musical factors

Sociological factors are only part of which genres are likely to have more success when exported to another country. As important are purely musical factors. Ideally, to be the most appealing to any audience, music should skew towards a faster tempo (although never above 160 BPM). Pop music within the current age does vary from year to year in average tempo. A study from BBC found that the average tempo in the last decade of American Pop music varied from slightly above 100 BPM to slightly above 120 BPM in range (Savage 2020). Most C-pop and Chinese hit songs sit at a slower BPM, most often hovering around 80 BPM, reflecting a tendency towards more relaxed and mellow rhythms, contrary to American Pop music.

For choices of instruments, both Chinese and Italian music receive heavy influence from Rock-influenced set-ups with drums and guitars as well as pianos or synthesisers often being present, rather than orchestral arrangements. Recently, within Italy, we see there has been a greater prevalence of Hip-hop music, which has brought with it a different instrumental set-up. Rather than relying primarily on real instruments like Rock music, Hip-hop music is often composed totally digitally with greater use of synthesisers and drum machines. While this digital transition is affecting musical markets worldwide, due to the prevalence of the Hip-hop genre in the current Italian musical landscape, we note

a greater use of this lyricist-producer set-up in the Italian market. This trend is not yet as prevalent in China, where a more traditional Rock-influenced instrumental four or five people set-up may be more appealing to local audiences than the more Electronic-influenced one- or two-man set-up utilised by the most popular Western artists (Lynesky 2021).

For the optimal musical modality, a song in a major scale would be most appropriate. Although, historically, traditional Chinese music utilises pentatonic scales, the chords that can be created through this scale are similar to the chords created within American Pop music, so in this sense the generally “happier/lighter” melodies typical of Italian Pop music would be a good fit for maximum general enjoyment by the Chinese public. A simple catchy melody would be ideal rather than a complex, experimental composition to most effectively capture attention. Vocally, Chinese music much more commonly employs more traditional vocal selections than the *Cantautorato* singers of Italy, and the relative success of Opera singers and classically trained musicians shows a tendency towards more traditionally “pleasing” vocal inflections. We acknowledge that there might be a trade-off in proposing to the Chinese public a piece of music that is “happier” but also melodic. What these two styles have in common though is that they are both emotional with lyrics primarily relating to interpersonal matters and feelings, which we can assume is a key trait of interest in China due to its continued prevalence within the highest grossing domestic music. We could also speculate that, as China integrates more and more with the international musical market, tastes will increasingly shift to be more in line with global popular music tastes and will come to tend more towards higher tempo, “happier” songs more than they have historically.

For the language barrier, the ideal Italian music candidates would preferably incorporate Chinese language within their music. However, the subsection of Italian musicians and lyricists with a multilingual Chinese Italian language capability is very small. For this reason, it would be ideal if, considering Reepo’s advice in committing to the foreign market, artists trained in the phonetics of the language before entering the Chinese market, in order to propose songs specifically tailored in Mandarin and demonstrate an understanding of the foreign culture. Failing this, the use of English is often considered a

“lingua franca” internationally with over 1.5 billion people who speak it as their native or second language (Statista 2022). EF described China as having a “moderate proficiency” in speaking English on average, meaning that although many people will not understand the lyrics of a song in English, a significant portion will (EF 2021).

Through the use of lyrical themes, we can range from indifference (if the song manages to pass censorship) to transcendent uses of language as was the case of 7grani’s song “Ragazza Di Nanchino”, which featured lyrical content perceived as directly relevant to the target market. The song in fact inspired strong emotions in China due to its references to Chinese history (despite the lyrics being entirely in Italian language), to the point that it was in fact co-marketed with the government. In any event, competence in Mandarin is so narrowly limited in Italy that only a handful of artists could attempt to write or translate Italian songs into the local idiom.

We can also consider that – due to the values promoted through institutional power in China – some type of lyrics would rank higher Conscientiousness, Agreeableness, Openness particularly, as well as Emotional Stability and Extraversion. Conscientiousness is important as Chinese culture particularly promotes ideas of community involvement and thus people with a high degree of Conscientiousness would garner more respect within Chinese society, with their opinions and tastes being more highly regarded. Genres that rank highly in Conscientiousness are: Soul, Country, Funk, Blues and Jazz. This would seem far from the Pop music of today, however, we can see elements from these genres within famous hits, for example within those Pop songs that use more traditional instruments, whereas the “happy”, carefree nature of Funk is represented in many aspects of popular music, particularly the increasingly relevant Reggaeton genre. The high degree of Conscientiousness of Soul music is also coherent with our findings of C-pop, whose tempo and singing stylistically echoes the Soul genre in many ways more than Western Pop music.

Genres positively correlated with Agreeableness were similar to Openness, with the inclusion of R&B, a genre in many ways descendant from Soul, with many of the same characteristics, despite a more traditionally pleasing vocal performance and greater sexual

themes. Genres that ranked highly in Openness were somewhat different: Folk, Classical, Ambient, Jazz and Electro. Popular music in Italy currently takes little from Folk; however, many of the most popular historical artists, older IT-pop artists and *Cantautori* have much in common with this genre. We also find Classical and Jazz music as staple genres associated with this personality trait, perhaps acting as an explanation for the prevalence of these genres within China historically.

3.1.3. “Italianity”

Other extra-musical elements linked to Italian music are also not to be under-valued when assessing the likely receptivity of Chinese audiences. “Italianity” (i.e. the association with Italian culture and style) has helped in the past the export of music products from Italy abroad. Genres such as Italo-disco worked well with the positive stereotypes associated with the “made in Italy” branding that has been utilised in other industries, and it helped in breaching familiarity barriers and offer an attractive differentiated product. By imbuing the musical product and the extra-musical factors of the product, the composition further gains a metaphoric interpretation which, relating to Ramachandran and Hirstein’s theories on neuroaesthetic enjoyment, provides further cognitive stimulation. As an example, a song sung in Neapolitan dialect may use the dialect as a sign, signifying that it is from a particular region, with the mythic interpretation of this sign being that this form of language represents features commonly associated with that area, such as the sea in this case. By representing this through the myth, when understood as a metaphor, the brain produces chemicals that make you happy as a reward function, as outlined in Ramachandran and Hirstein’s paper (1999, 30-32).

In summary, from a theoretical standpoint, the ideal type of Italian music likely to more easily penetrate the mainland Chinese market would be mid-tempo, from 80-120 BPM, utilising popular chord structures and more traditional Rock-inspired instrumentation. Sonically, popular music that borrows from genres such as Jazz, Blues and Soul would fit into the ideal listener profile. And while lyrical themes do not necessarily influence the reception of the music, music with themes relevant to Chinese history, personal

struggles or pertaining Italianity can elevate the appeal of the product. The effects of overall mood within a song are somewhat mixed and therefore we would not consider excluding songs that inspire unhappy feelings within the listener for the moment, as long as the evoked feeling is strong and not of disgust. Furthermore, as mentioned in the last section, since expansion into the Chinese market is particularly expensive and difficult, the ideal candidate would also be an established musician within Italy, or one supported by a well-funded production house.

3.2. Situating current popular music within Italy and China

This section aims to describe and compare the current situation and positioning of popular music in Italy and China by referring to our analysis in Appendix B (xii-xix). Firstly, we will review the Italian and Chinese markets within a global context, in order to ascertain particular influences or patterns in each country from global trends. Looking at artists' nationality, at a global level, the most popular foreign artists in any given year are American, Canadian and British (Appendix B, xii-xiii). These are all countries where English is the primary language, and they are all countries with relatively high GDP per capita. While Canada would likely not be considered a global superpower as the other two, its global proximity to the U.S. and similar values allow its music to penetrate international markets more easily. From a geographic perspective, the relative closeness of the two markets means that, from a financial standpoint, it is easier for Canadian artists to tour and develop a following from presential methods in the U.S. This prevalence of artists from Anglo-Saxon countries and North America demonstrates a hegemonic structure of musical perpetuation within the context of the global music industry. This could also be due to a higher overall GDP in these countries, resulting in greater funding for artistic industries.

We do have various exceptions to this, namely the marked success of the K-pop group BTS, who ultimately have gone on to become the most popular artist of 2020 (Appendix B, xii). BTS has opened the doors worldwide to Korean music as a whole and their two albums released within a short span of each other, coupled with a rabid online fanbase, has allowed their music to traverse spatial boundaries leading to their immense global

success. Another notable outlier within 2020's top albums is Kenshi Yonezu, a J-pop artist (Appendix B, xii). It is possible that BTS's success on a global scale signifies a reduction of barriers for artists from all of Asia, or possibly this will be the first signifier of a new sweeping global trend. In the year prior, we also had another J-pop group, Arashi with the best-selling album globally of 2019 (Appendix B, xii); however, the popularity of this album could be somewhat inflated due to it being a compilation of an artist's bestselling songs, with a length much greater than a standard album, which could contribute to increased sales figures. Regardless of these motives, these albums do show a growing popularity of non-English music of non-English descent within a globalised context. Looking back a few years to 2018 we also notably see the success of Puerto Rican artists Daddy Yankee and Luis Fonsi's "Despacito", which despite being the only Reggaeton song present within the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's top 10 lists in the last 3 years, ushered in the possibility for success for many other Reggaeton artists whose influence can still be heard within the industry to this day (Appendix B, xiii).

Pop, while difficult to define in concrete terms, remains the most popular overall genre within a global context. Pop music currently borrows in many ways from Rock, Electronic dance music and more recently from Hip-hop, with the commonality between Pop songs often being traditionally pleasing and clear vocal melodies from the singer. Pop as a genre takes from niche trends within music as a whole and interpolates them within a format designed to utilise as many elements of genre theory as possible in order to be as universally pleasing as a subjective art form can be. Thus, it is unsurprising that on a macro level Pop would result to be the most popular genre within music; still, Hip-hop acts had just as many entries on the top 10 list in 2020 (Appendix B, xii). Interestingly, we cannot find a correlation between Pop music and a major or minor scale in our data, demonstrating that rather than "happy" feelings, ultimately success of a song is more dependent on its ability to transmit emotion as a whole. For example, in 2018 and 2019, most of the top 10 songs of the year were in a major scale, whereas for 2020 the minor scale was chosen more often by the top 10 songs of the year (Appendix B, xii-xiii). Due to the recency of this change we cannot ascertain whether or not this change is the beginning of a greater trend or if it reflects the COVID pandemic and the greater quantity

of time spent alone as a result of this. Our data also shows an overall increase in BPM from 2018 to 2020 in the most popular songs of the year, however, this increase does come with a note. “Blinding Lights”, the top song of 2020, has a BPM of 171, but the track may actually be played at half time, with 171 BPM being utilised to give the composer greater freedom of composition within their DAW (digital audio workstation) (Appendix B, xii). Composers who produce on their computer may utilise a tempo in double time and then make the notes twice as long in order to have greater freedom to place notes in smaller intervals within their musical program of choice. Moreover, sometimes the drums may be in regular time in order to lend more urgency to the percussive elements of a song, while the melody and singing may be in single time. If we were to consider “Blinding Lights” to be in half time, the overall average BPM of the year would be lower than 2019 but nonetheless higher than 2018. Ultimately, our analysis lends us an average BPM of all three years combined of 113 (Appendix B, xii-xiii), firmly in the range of pleasing tempo we explored in chapter 1.

Looking at the most commonly represented artists in Appendix B, we also often find some singers who are represented multiple times within different years. Taylor Swift undoubtedly emerges as one of the most popular artists in almost every year, with her consistent release of Pop-Folk albums keeping her in the public consciousness, despite a lack of top 10 singles in any given year. Hip-hop artist Drake is also present within each of the 3 years analysed, however, he often ranks slightly lower than Taylor within these rankings. The Weeknd, BTS, Eminem, Ed Sheeran, Post Malone and Ariana Grande all also make more than one appearance within these years. With the exception of K-pop band BTS, these are all Pop/Hip-hop artists and we do not see the presence of any other genres in the top artist list more than once. Finally, it is worth noting that in 2020, for the first time, we have the presence of a C-pop artist within this list with Xiao Zhan’s “Made to Love” occupying a position in the top 10 songs of the year, signalling the incoming growth of the Chinese market on an international scale. As we will see in section 3.2.2. Xiao Zhan is the most popular Chinese singer at this moment and similarities to his style might be appreciated within the Chinese market. Global trends, however, only represent an amalgam of various countries’ tastes. While they are important and can be used to predict local trends, countries also differ in tastes and musical transmission takes time, so

songs are often popular in different local markets at different moments. For this reason, it is arguably more important for our study to analyse domestic trends in Italy and China before presenting recommendations to Italian artists aiming for the Chinese market.

3.2.1. The current Italian musical landscape

The most popular music in Italy is markedly different from what appears in the global charts. For this analysis, it is beneficial to take a further look back, starting in 2016, as in recent years the general taste of the Italian public has shifted significantly (Appendix B, xiii – xvii). In 2016 and 2017, as we can see from FIMI's data, the Italian music charts were dominated by Italian *Cantautori* in terms of top albums and by Pop music from various nationalities in terms of top singles charts. All of the top albums from both years are from Italian artists with the exception of Ed Sheeran,⁵ who headed the top albums chart in 2017, and Coldplay in 2016⁶ (Appendix B, xiii-xvii). The nationality of the top singles in both years on the other hand are much more diverse with Anglo-Saxon, Latino and European artists all receiving representation. *Cantautori* historically have been the highest selling artists in Italy with notable representation within the list of all-time bestselling Italian artists worldwide. In terms of major and minor scale, in 2016 we have an even 50/50 split between major and minor, while in 2017 instead we had more top 10 songs in a minor scale.

From 2018 onwards, we see a definite shift in the preferences of the Italian music consumer. From 2018 onwards, the majority of the top 10 bestselling albums each year in Italy are Hip-hop albums, peaking in 2020 with 7 of the top 10 albums of the year classified as Hip-hop (Appendix B, xiii-xvii). Moreover, in 2019 the most popular genre for singles in Italy was Reggaeton and then in 2020, Hip-hop. These changes in popular genre represent a market shift in consumer taste, different from what we found in global trends. Overlapping artists between Italy and the global scene were: Ed Sheeran, Imagine

⁵ Minacelentano, Ed Sheeran, Sfera Ebbasta, Ultimo and Marracash.

⁶ The other Italian artists who in the top 10 albums chart in 2016 and 2017 were (in no particular order): J-ax & Fedez, Riki, Minacelentano, Ghali, Tiziano Ferro, Jovanotti, Vasco Rossi, Fabbri Fibbra, Guè Pequeno, Ligabue, Alessandra Amoroso, Laura Pausini, Modà, Zucchero and Benji & Fedè

Dragons, Coldplay, Drake, SAINT JHN, Queen and Reggaeton artists such as J. Balvin. In 2018 and 2019, the majority of the top 10 songs of the year were in a minor scale, however, in 2020 we returned to a half-half split between major and minor scales (Appendix B, xiii-xvi). Moreover, there is no correlation between genre and chosen scale in any of these songs. For this reason, going forwards we may come to realise that the choice of major or minor mode may be of little relevance to a song's success. Moreover, year over year we find an increase in average song BPM from 2016 (98.5) to 2020 (129.9). In 2020, taking away the foreign songs in the top songs chart we find that, on average, the Italian songs have an even higher average BPM (131). While this is an analysis of the production side of Italian music, and in many ways reflects the tendency of Italian musicians, more relevant to our analysis of Italian consumer tastes is the BPM inclusive of foreign artists, as it best reflects the preference of tempo of the Italian public.

We notice more than ever that Italians are listening mostly to Italian artists (Appendix B, xiii-xvii). The first non-Italian entry in the top album charts occurs at no. 13 with *Fine Line* by Harry Styles (Pop). The most commonly found artists within the top 10 albums and singles lists in the past few years are generally Hip-hop artists. Sfera Ebbasta makes multiple high charting appearances, and so do Salmo, Marracash and Fedez. Notably, these rappers create a sort of network effect with each other, often featuring on songs with one another in order to jointly increase in popularity. The exceptions to these artists are Ultimo, who appears twice in 2019, and Tiziano Ferro, who appears both in 2019 and 2020, who are both *Cantautori* and employ slower emotional ballads instead of the bassy, fast and predominantly percussive instrumentals chosen by rappers.

When analysed on a macro scale, the Italian musical ecosystem may seem restrictive. However, upon further inspection of the top songs and albums each year, we find (compared to global trends) less Pop music and more diverse music genres, with tendencies and trends towards the particular success of Hip-hop, *Cantautorato* and Reggaeton. If we work under the assumption that Pop music works as an amalgam of popular genres, then this means that we could view the Italian consumer as “more decisive” in their music taste. It could imply that there is less cross-pollination between enjoyment of genres in Italian music consumers. Nevertheless, simultaneously it also

implies a musical landscape where all genres are capable of success. Ultimately, though, in the context of this work, our findings on Italian music are most useful when taken in conjunction with those of the Chinese listener.

3.2.2. The current Chinese musical landscape

From an analysis of popular artists within the Chinese market, we see a similar situation to what we found in our analysis of Italian trends, that is, Chinese listeners tend to listen primarily to Chinese artists (Appendix B, xvii-xix). Of the 10 most streamed artists of all time on digital platforms in China, six were of mainland Chinese origin and nine were from the Asian continent (including China) (Appendix B, xvii-xviii). The only outlier to these artists was American singer Taylor Swift, who has completely transcended cultural boundaries and taken the spot of the most streamed artist in China (at the time of writing) due to her prolific catalogue. The most popular genre since the tracking of streaming in China is undoubtedly C-pop and all 10 artists were musicians that worked within a subcategory of Pop music. Perhaps the most important name on this list is Xiao Zhan, an artist whose single was also present on the top 10 most streamed songs globally in 2020. With a single album, Xiao outperformed all other Chinese artists in order to become the second most streamed artist in China and he held the most streamed album of 2020. Undoubtedly his stylings have found great success within China and thus, through an analysis of his work, we can better understand the preferences of the Chinese market.

Instead, from a global perspective, when analysing the most popular foreign artists in China, we can notice the presence of few artists, who do correlate to global popularity figures. As mentioned above, the top of this list is occupied by Taylor Swift albums, as well as two entries by Canadian Pop icon Justin Bieber. The other foreign artists on this list are fellow Pop artist Ariana Grande, the Pop-rock group Imagine Dragons as well as, somewhat surprisingly, Hip-hop artist Eminem. Despite Hip-hop struggling to gain traction overall in China, as can also be exemplified by his popularity in other countries, Eminem somehow often evades typical criticism of the Rap genre on a global scale. It is worth noting that due to the difficulty of finding data on Chinese artists that this “all-time” data is actually just data from since streaming services started tracking streams in

China; however, for a more current analysis of musical trends in China, this might be acceptable.

Equally important to this analysis is an understanding of which artists were most successful in recent years (Appendix B, xvii-xix). In terms of full albums, in both 2019 and 2020 C-pop was the most popular genre. As previously mentioned, we do have some Western artists within the most popular albums, notably Taylor Swift, Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber. Most popular albums in both years are from Chinese artists and of the C-pop genre; still, we also see a strong representation for Korean artists and K-pop as a whole. Generally, we find that if artists are not of North American descent, then they are of Asian origin with Singaporean, Taiwanese and Korean origin. While most of these albums are primarily C-pop albums, often they take influence from different stylings, particularly among native Chinese artists who are also part of boybands abroad, like in the case of Korea based bands such as Huang Minghao, Wang Yibo and Fang Chengcheng. Chinese and Korean crossovers are seemingly common, which when coupled with the general success of K-pop as a whole, helps us understand why such a high percentage of the top C-pop artists have connections with successful and well-liked K-pop groups.

The top singles of the last two years, on the other hand, have much less diversity of country of origin than the top albums. In 2019, all the top singles were from artists who were at least part Chinese. However, in 2020, we do see greater diversity with other artists from the Asian continent within the charts and a feature from American Selena Gomez. Both years also had a prevalence of songs in major scale (Appendix B), signifying a tendency towards happier emotions within the most popular Chinese songs. Despite this, we also have a decrease in average tempo, moving from 102 BPM in 2019 to 93 BPM in 2020.

It is worth taking a more in depth look at some of these most popular artists in China to understand how their music specifically connects with the people of this region. We will analyse the music of Taylor Swift, who, despite being of American heritage, is the bestselling musician in China of the streaming age. So, we can assume that her music

connects strongly with the Chinese population. We will also analyse the styles of Xiao Zhan, Cai Xukun and Zhang Lei, who are all popular musicians of Chinese origin. Taylor Swift is an American musician born in Nashville, Tennessee. She began her career as a Country singer, before moving into more Pop-influenced stylings after her first three albums, with her two most recent albums being categorised as “alternative” (Dowd 2020). Swift often makes music at a slower tempo, treating with lyrical themes of heartbreak and personal turmoil. While her music varies in terms of tone and mood, with one of her most famous songs being “Shake it off”, an anthem dedicated to overcoming adversity, she is most known for emotive ballads with introspective negatively tinted recollections of her past loves. From a Western perspective, Swift as a character outside of her music is easily digestible. She is a heterosexual Caucasian woman from middle America, embodying one of the largest social classes within the taste making regions of Western world. Women in China are not relegated to lower social standing like in many other non-Western countries and this might relate to her success in China. Returning to her musicality, Swift often employs a soft-spoken tone with a tendency to utilise an acoustic guitar over slower tempo rhythms. Similarly, fans of the K-pop genre, the self-defined “Swifties” are a particularly avid fanbase, often calling each other to action in order to support Swift, imploring fellow fans to stream her new releases as much as possible in order to achieve a high placement in music charts and multiply her success (Van As 2018).

In terms of her physical presence in China, Swift has toured there a few times (Celebrity Wire 2014; CNTV 2014), and even went on to perform at the “Alibaba’s Singles’ Day Gala in Shanghai” in 2019 (Pang 2019). However, more recently, her touring potential has been limited due to tensions between China and the U.S. in their trade war. Due to Swift’s international status, she does not consider the Chinese market to be the focus of her attention as Octopuss did, still, she acknowledged the importance of this market, as evidenced by her decision to tour China multiple times. Swift was also able to leverage the large proportion of American nationals in China, particularly due to her sound evoking traditionally “American-sounding” music. In many ways this works similarly to the use of a “made in Italy” effect, where by using music and themes commonly associated with a country, the foreign consumer is more likely to accept the music in question. From a musical perspective, her music has similarities in lyrical content and musicality to earlier

C-pop, with its slower tempo and personal themes. Moreover, her music rarely touches themes of government subversion or illegal activities that would impede her success due to government censorship. Finally, as we previously saw in our analysis of personality and music in chapter 1, respondents who reportedly enjoyed Folk and Country music ranked positively in personality traits that promoted sociability and likeability, traits associated with dissemination of preferences. For these reasons it seems, coupled with her prolific catalogue, Taylor Swift has managed to find particular success in China, managing to outstream her fellow global competitors as well as Chinese artists.

The second largest artist in China, Xiao Zhan, does not have yet a major catalogue to support a regular increase in his streaming numbers. In fact, Zhan has only three songs available on streaming platforms on his profile (excluding music from soundtracks). Zhan received his first push in China when he appeared on the performance-based reality TV show *X-Fire* and subsequently joined Chinese boyband X Nine as one of the main vocalists. For many years Zhan primarily focused on acting, becoming a household name in China (IMDb 2022a) before releasing his debut single “Made to Love”, which instantly became the highest selling digital single of all time in China (Statista 2021). Musically, Zhan’s two currently available songs are slow, melodic, emotional ballads sung in Mandarin. Both songs feature more traditional orchestration rather than electronic instruments and synthesisers. The tempo of these songs tends to be in the slower range, under 100BPM on average, with Zhan singing with a strong melodic cadence. Zhan embodies traditional Chinese musical values despite being of a relatively young age, and much in the same way that Swift represents “Americana”, Zhan represents the idealised quintessential Chinese national due to his clean image, evidenced by his many government-backed sponsorships (Weibo 2021; Sina 2019) and lack of controversy. For the most part, Zhan has had little controversy surrounding him and chooses to stay away from contentious lyrical themes, focusing instead on relationship dynamics and emotions within his lyrics.

The primary notable aspect of Zhan’s rise to fame, though, is his use of other mediums in order to increase familiarity within the Chinese market. Zhan has far more acting credits than musical credits, resulting in an instant familiarity from the Chinese market, allowing

him to more easily penetrate a larger variety of demographics with his musical product. Perhaps, however, the most essential element to Zhan (and this could be extrapolated to the success of other “Pop idols” as well) is the fan community behind him. Similarly to the success behind many K-pop artists described in chapter 1, there is evidence of well-structured and organised groups of fans manipulating online perception of Zhan and other idols in order to potentially inflate his actual level of popularity. As described by Xueyin Wu, the Xiao Zhan Official Fan Club has a hierarchical structure with sub-departments dedicated to “comment manipulation” [...] which is to flood the comment areas with good comments or add likes to the good ones so the bad ones would be rarely seen by others; online promotion [...], planning [...], philanthropic projects [...], and so on [...] [with] numerous chat-groups on instant communication platforms like WeChat, QQ, or Weibo chat-group function, so that they can deliver tasks and provide detailed instructions in real time” (Wu 2021). While this evidence would have to be applied only anecdotally to Wang Yibo and Cai Xukun, as well as any other C-pop star, we reckon it is safe to assume that also Chinese social media plays some role in any artist’s success.

Wang Yibo, the third best-selling artist on streaming in China, also had a similar early career to Xiao Zhan, with his debut as a part of the Korean-Chinese boyband Uniq (Dong 2015). In a similar career trajectory to Zhan, Wang followed this up primarily by focusing on an acting career (IMDb 2022b) before releasing his solo debut in 2019 (Leroy Music 2019). Musically, Wang utilises higher tempo instrumentals, with more electronic elements, often shifting between genres within one song. His ability to shift between melodic singing and rapping over a variety of energetic instrumentals is highly reminiscent of the genre amalgamations present within K-pop, which is unsurprising considering his personal history and association with K-pop acts. Moreover, beyond his musical endeavour, Wang amassed a fanbase also from his other skills, including acting, dancing and professional motorcycle racing.

The fourth bestselling artist in China, Cai Xukun, once again had a similar early career to both Xiao Zhan and Wang Yibo. Xukun also made large strides in his career due to the help of television programming, with parts in various talent competitions, such as *Up Young!*, *Super Idol*, *Idol Producer* (IMDb 2022c), as well as performing as the leader of

Chinese boy group Nine Percent (Lin, 2018). Beyond this, Xukun has various acting credits like “[Xiao] Zhan” and “Wang [Yibo]”. At the time of writing, Xukun has no full album available for streaming, only a variety of singles. From a musical perspective, Xukun’s music is quite similar to international popular music, incorporating synths and sounds from EDM (electronic dance music) with sung elements of R&B, as well as the occasional “rapped” verse. Notably, Xukun has songs in both Mandarin as well as in English. The tempo of these songs is usually in the middle to upper levels with songs usually around the “optimal” 120 BPM mark. Musically, although Xukun takes from various genres and styles, ultimately his tracks most clearly fall into the Pop genre due to the well-produced musical elements (Xukun always sings in perfect key with few disharmonies) and lack of potentially abrasive experimentation.

With these artists in mind, we find some key differences in the Chinese popular musical market compared to the global market. While under a more informed analysis the musical specificities that characterise the differences between the markets seem less pronounced, it is in the extra-musical factors for success that we see the largest difference. The best-selling Chinese musical artists most often find success within other artistic forms before they find success as musicians. But it would be incorrect to say that this does never occur in other countries. For example, Ariana Grande and Miley Cyrus both found their beginnings as actors for the Disney Channel; or the recent success of Måneskin from Italy, who broke through to the mainstream after an appearance on the Italian edition of *X Factor*. Still, there is a larger percentage of musicians who have little to do with other artistic professions finding success globally. Artists such as Ed Sheeran and Justin Bieber found success through their musical abilities before they would go on to act in any capacity; and Drake, who had a minor role in a Canadian television series, distanced himself from this during his rise to fame. Moreover, Chinese stars – likely also because their acting careers – seem to be more conventionally attractive on average than artists such as Adele or Ed Sheeran, who have been mocked for their looks despite their success. The importance of extra-musical elements corroborates our evidence that this is an essential element for success within the Chinese market and one of the primary factors for Octopuss and 7grani’s success (through TV interviews).

What this means for Italian artists attempting to find success in China is that there are several factors to be considered that play into their possibility for success. While the musical elements (melodic and rhythmic) that could find success in China are in many ways the same as in the greater global industry. What is particularly relevant in China is the image of the artist in question, with multitalented, attractive artists, particularly those who represent the stereotypical perception of the foreign country (Italy) being good candidates for success. Moreover, as we previously mentioned, slower tempo artists whose lyrics talk about matters of emotion and love (perhaps because they are some of the most transversal emotions of the human experience) would be particularly successful within the Chinese market.

While previously in our analysis we have referred to musical influences present within China, through our study we can see that elements of foreign diaspora have already heavily pervaded the musical industry of the country, directly and indirectly. The direct influences as we classify them can be seen in influences taken from the amalgam brought forth by American music, particularly in the choices of electronic instrumentation mixed with perfectly tuned vocals, whereas the indirect influences can be seen primarily in the usage of song structures taken from K-pop, which in turn owes much of its musical identity to American Pop music. Perhaps the element that ultimately causes the greatest difficulty for foreign artists finding traction in China would be the lack of local social media backing from para-social groups that artists such as Xiao Zhan and Cai Xukun make use of (Yan and Yang 2020; Zixuan 2021, 416-419; Yin 2020, 1135-1139). Although this is not strictly required in order to find success, the assumption that other artists could have para-employed management and this may still occur in the lower strata of fame within musical artists presents the possibility of a decreased valuation of foreign artists in China compared to domestic artists with the same actual potential attraction to a local audience. Ultimately, this reiterates the requirement for a well organised marketing team for artists attempting to find success within the market. With these elements in mind, we will now make concrete recommendations for current Italian artists who could find success in China.

3.3. Which Italian artists could find success in China?

While recommending current artists who could find success in China could easily be seen as “dating” this dissertation, I believe that it has value beyond simply choosing artists who could be successful in China for their sake. It instead acts as a method of offering concrete examples for the ideas presented within this work. To begin with, we will for the most part eliminate Italian Hip-hop artists as possible proponents. While in our deeper analysis we have shown that Chinese listeners do enjoy Hip-hop rhythms, the greater lyrical freedom afforded to Italian Hip-hop artists makes them in many senses incompatible with the Chinese market. As with the genre in the global sphere, Hip-hop artists often contain numerous references to illicit activities that would not easily transcend the Chinese censors, if they were not globally popular or edited in order to directly appeal to the market. Moreover, the linguistic density of the genre means that it would be particularly difficult for any of these artists to adapt their music to the Chinese market. Furthermore, we have seen comparatively little evidence of Reggaeton artists finding success in China compared to the global or Italian average, so Italian artists with successful singles in the Reggaeton genre would not be in our first recommendations for the market.

Instead, genres such as *Cantautorato*, with its slower rhythms and lyrical content dealing with heartbreak, would be a good fit for the market, particularly with their similarities to the music of Xiao Zhan. The quintessential difference between Italian *Cantautorato* and by extension Italian Indie music (which embodies many of the musical conventions of *Cantautorato*, often with a higher tempo and more negative emotions within its lyrics) and Mando-pop or C-pop in its modern iteration is the choice of instrumentation. Although percussive rhythms within Italian music have changed over time, rarely do Italian musicians within these genres utilise synthesisers, instead relying primarily on traditional instrumentation, largely different to the eclectic approach utilised by Chinese musicians. For this reason, my first recommendations would be Mina and Adriano Celentano. Mina is particularly known for her extensive vocal register (CDLS 2022), multitude of musical stylings and strong voice (which earned her the label of *urlatrice*) (Haworth 2018, 3). Mina has songs in Italian, English, French among others and is often one of the artists credited with “entend[ing] the repertoire of Italian songs to

unprecedented levels” through her incorporation of genres such as Bossanova, Jazz and English Pop, as she utilised musical ideas from these genres in her work (Fabbri and Plastino 2013, 166). Adriano Celentano on the other hand has a styling that borrows more from Rock music taking place in the “First Rock ‘n’ Roll Festival in Milan” in 1957 (166). He is primarily known for tackling contemporary social issues and his “Latin Lover” persona (167). Both are legacy *cantautori* who hold the bestselling and second bestselling positions for Italian artists, respectively. Moreover, both of them have maintained relevance within Italy in the present day with popular charting albums, signifying that their output has not necessarily sharply decreased in quality within recent years. Of the two, Celentano’s more Rock-influenced sound would be consistent with what Chinese listeners who know Octopuss and 7grani might expect from an Italian artist, reducing the unfamiliarity effect within a group of listeners who, due to their prior experience with Italian music, may be more likely to give other Italian music a chance.

On the topic of *cantautori*, Italian Indie music, which, takes many elements from *Cantautorato* could also find footing in China, with Italian artists finding a place within mainstream Italian music. Italian Indie Music comprises generally simple melodies coupled with lyrical themes of everyday imagery and ideas, often without the exclusion of any sort of taboo and often with a large use of slang (Notizie Musica 2019). In an example from pioneering Indie band Zen Circus, “Andate Tutti a Fanculo”, which directly translates to “Go Fuck Yourself”, utilises slurs against gay people, implies that Italians are being lied to by the government and insults *Cantautori* among other things (Zen Circus 2021). Another song by Indie singer Calcutta, “Frosinone”, instead treats with themes of late-night drinking and eating pizza while everyone else is asleep, which while not strictly illegal does not promote the image of an artist commonly brought forth by the Chinese market (Calcutta 2015). Although from a lyrical standpoint music in the Alternative genre often covers themes such as rebellion against government and usage of illicit substances, the relative youth and liveliness of many famous Alternative singers may mean that it may nonetheless be a good fit for the Chinese market.

Another candidate for potential success in China would be Fedez. Despite making what could in many senses be categorised as Hip-hop, Fedez’s music is much more Pop-

oriented than many of his peers. However, thematically Fedez often criticises the specific power structures in place in Italy (the government, the Church) rather than hedonistic endeavours. While rebellion against government structures can result in possible censorship by the CCP, the specificity of his targets makes it less likely for censorship of his product to go into effect. Furthermore, Eminem's success in China proves that there is a potential market for Pop-Rap from an instrumental musical perspective, coupled with China's engagement with Hip-hop influenced genres such as K-pop. Perhaps the aspect that could most contribute to Fedez's success in China is his personal relationship with international fashion influencer Chiara Ferragni, as well as his connections to the Italian show business industry. As we saw earlier, many of the most famous C-pop icons gained traction through their extra-musical endeavours in films and reality TV, and thus a musician with camera training and experience would be better prepared for the extra-musical marketing elements required to achieve greater orders of success in China. Moreover, Ferragni has over eight physical locations for her fashion collection in China (Malaguti 2019), allowing Fedez to take advantage of his wife's recognition in China for greater exposure.

An example of a less famous artist who would have a greater possibility of success would be the Italian-raised, London-based musician Val Del Prete. While not a famous musician on her own, she has produced various songs for famous K-pop artists such as TWICE and ASTRO (Baroli 2021). Her connection to K-pop artists with large fan bases in the Chinese market could be something leveraged in order to instantly enter the general Chinese listener's radar, as well as indirectly taking advantage of the community structures already in place to help with marketing of Asian Pop artists.

Whilst I have chosen to focus on various artists in this section, they are by no means the only artists who can find their place within the Chinese market. Octopuss has demonstrated that, through diligence and a willingness to sacrifice short term financial gain, there is a place for foreign and particularly Italian artists within the Chinese market. Not all artists will have to utilise the same quantity of effort to achieve the same status, however. The artists presented in the paragraphs above all have particular qualities that could potentially aid their success in this foreign market relative to others. Furthermore,

the exporting of culture has effects similar to economies of scale for the whole industry where through the success of one Italian artists, by having other potential fits for the Chinese market collaborate with them, we could, over time, see the emergence of a whole “Italian music movement” within China. However, this is still far off from a reality. Nonetheless, through this reasoning we can speculate on the possibility of certain artists being a closer fit to current trends in the Chinese market.

3.4. The benefit of greater global music integration

Greater proliferation of global musical products has various global benefits beyond monetary compensation for artists from smaller countries. Firstly, as we have analysed in chapter 2, global transmission allows musical genres to evolve and take elements from one another in order to create new modes and expressions from existing global components. Global musical transmission is at the heart of global and regional musical genres, and I would speculate that as with many other artistic forms, it is at the heart of the greater variety and emergence of new genres occurring currently worldwide. The benefit of greater global integration for music is not limited to increased artistry, as it also provides numerous social benefits. To quote Egon Kraus, greater understanding of foreign musical cultures “can: (a) develop an interest in that which is foreign or unfamiliar, that is, cultivate open-mindedness and unbiased thinking, (b) abolish prejudice and national and racial resentments, as well as developing an understanding of the mentality of other peoples, and (c) lead to a better understanding of oneself” (Kraus 1967, 91). For these reasons, in an increasingly divided global landscape, it may be opportune to turn to global proliferation of music as not only a possible source of GDP growth for a domestic market, but also as a means towards greater global stability and integration. Nonetheless this is not within the scope of this work as theorising on the long term and specific effects would require knowledge not available within this research.

While we cannot necessarily confirm the cultural benefits of global musical proliferation, we can nonetheless note the other positive effects of global proliferation of other cultural goods. As we outlined earlier in our section on the “Made in Italy” effect, the global perception of Italy is positive in part due to its various cultural exports. Through food,

fashion, furniture and other goods, Italy has garnered a positive reputation due to its products which has the benefit of giving value to other products associated with the origin. This translates to more tourism and thus money flowing into Domestic Italian Industries as well as all Italian exports.

Furthermore, while the evidence is anecdotal, we could also theorise that this comprises a positive feedback loop from an economic perspective. With greater demand for a country's products, cultural or otherwise, more money can be re-invested into improving and streamlining the production process resulting in a further improved product. Within the musical sector this could be the for example the establishment of domestic bases of operations for musical labels or more concert venues which in turn allow for more opportunities for the artists in question. Part of what has made American cultural exports so dominant is this same loop which has allowed further investment into American culture, spreading it to almost all corners of the world and consolidating its power structure. Thus a proliferation of Italian culture through its cultural exports would breed further success for all Italian industries as well as improving the perceptions of Italians as a whole within the eyes of foreign citizens.

To conclude, by bringing our analysis into the perspective of the current day we can note various differences from our theorised models. China particularly seems to be rapidly growing into a new musical identity highly influenced by its affluent Asian geographic neighbours more than ever; and because of this, the stylings of Chinese music are rapidly changing. Moreover, a more in-depth analysis brings forth the idea that non-musical elements are becoming increasingly important for an artist's success within the Chinese market. While our specific analysis on Italian musicians who could find success in China was primarily focused on more famous figures whose music could likely lend itself well to the market without adaptation, this is not to say that smaller artists within a genre with little traction in China could not gain success. The probabilities of gaining traction and the quantity of time and money required to reach a similar level of success on the other hand would likely not be equal between these scenarios. As a bottom line, we have to understand that preferences within musical taste differ measurably and vastly through

time and space, however, the analysis of such trends can show us paths of potential least resistance for global artists.

Conclusion

To summarise, while we have no way of understanding exactly what kind of Italian produced music would have the best possibility of finding a niche in China, we can utilise general applications of theory combined with a comparative analysis of the markets in question to ascertain communalities in preference. In this dissertation, we have shown through research that certain genres are more suited to finding success and dissemination within different groups and cultures. This is primarily due to cultural differences influencing the content and modes of transmission of musical genres. Moreover, due to the feelings commonly accepted within different cultures, different genres which more commonly align with the feelings present are more likely to garner success. One of the most important extra-musical factors of importance to songs finding success is the familiarity effect from the foreign party. Familiarity has been proven to be one of the largest factors for musical enjoyment, and thus, by tracing the commonalities between Italian musical history and Chinese musical history, we found elements such as slower tempos and emotional lyrical themes and intonations. When analysing this information and compared it to real life case studies, we instead found that, partially due to changing taste within the community as a whole, or perhaps simply anecdotally, that Italian musicians who up until this point have found success in China, scarcely fit into the hypothesised “ideal” artist for the Chinese market. We do, however, find traces of our hypothesised “ideal” within the overall top charts for Chinese artists, and for this reason I have speculated on current Italian artists who would most easily be able to find a place within this increasingly important market. While the last section of this dissertation primarily relies on speculation, it will be particularly interesting to return to this work in the coming years in order to ascertain the validity of certain claims.

There are several fundamental limitations to this study that must be addressed when tackling ideas brought forth in this work in the future. Firstly, we must acknowledge that this work is constructed primarily to encapsulate the Italian and Chinese music markets as they stand at the time of writing. Taste can change unpredictably, and this dissertation does not aim to address preference outside of this constraint. Rather, what can be taken from this work moving forward is the methodology with which we have considered our

data. By following a similar logical procedure stemming from the psychological factors for artistic enjoyment presented in chapter 1, this idea could be applied to disparate musical cultures of any type. Moreover, another limitation of the time constraints in which this dissertation was written is the relative infancy of the Chinese music streaming market. Streaming has not yet come into ubiquity in China and therefore adoption rates differ in demographics and transparency of information compared to what we can find from Western streaming services.

Another limitation of this investigation stems from the privacy and difficulty in finding information from the Chinese music market in its current form. This is in part due to the recency of the information required, which has not yet had time to be peer-reviewed and analysed, as well as the comparative relative lack of available information on Chinese music compared to the availability of information on Western music. Furthermore, due to my status as a student, I was unable to procure any first-hand Chinese musical sources for this analysis and thus it is strongly reliant on second-hand information. Despite this, hopefully, this study can serve as a starting point for future analyses due to its generalised examination on the differences between international music communities and preferences, as well as reflections on how domestic Chinese and Italian music have evolved.

Bibliography

7grani Official Website. 2021. *7grani.com*. <https://7grani.com/blank>.

Abramo, Joseph Michael. 2009. *Popular Music and Gender in the Classroom*. Ed.D. Dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College.

Almqvist-Ingersoll, Petter. 2019. "Conceptually Androgynous: The Production and Commodification of Gender in Korean Pop Music." (2019). MA Thesis, Umeå Center for Gender Studies.

Amico, Stephen. 2017. "‘I Want Muscles’: House Music, Homosexuality and Masculine Signification." In *Electronica, Dance and Club Music*, edited by Mark J. Butler, 387-406. London and New York: Routledge.

Anderson, Ian, Santiago Gil, Clay Gibson, Scott Wolf, Will Shapiro, Oguz Semerci, and David M. Greenberg. 2021. "‘Just the Way You Are’: Linking Music Listening on Spotify and Personality." *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 12 (4): 561-572. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550620923228>

Andreani, Paola, Stefano Cristiani, Andrea Grazian, Fabio La Franca, and Pippa Goldschmidt. 2003. "The Dusty Environment of Quasars: Far-Infrared Properties of Optical Quasars." *The Astronomical Journal* 125 (2): 444.

Attias, Hagai, and Christoph E. Schreiner. 1996. "Temporal Low-Order Statistics of Natural Sounds."

Aubanel, Vincent, Chris Davis, and Jeesun Kim. 2016. "Exploring the Role of Brain Oscillations in Speech Perception in Noise: Intelligibility of Isochronously Retimed Speech." *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 10: 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2016.00430>

Aubrey, Jennifer Stevens, and Cynthia M. Frisby. 2011. "Sexual Objectification in Music Videos: A Content Analysis Comparing Gender and Genre." *Mass Communication and Society* 14 (4): 475-501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15205436.2010.513468>

Aucouturier, Jean-Julien, and François Pachet. "Representing Musical Genre: A State of the Art." *Journal of New Music Research* 32 (1): 83-93.

Baranovitch, Nimrod. 2003. *China's New Voices: Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics, 1978-1997*: 13-120. University of California Press

Barbaro, Stefano. 2018. "IL CORPO DOPO LA MENTE Uno sguardo semiotico sul marketing musicale Il caso di Calcutta e Francesco Lettieri." *Semiotica Dei Consumi*: 3-16.

Baroli, Marianna. 2021. "Meet Val Del Prete, The Italian Soul Of K-Pop". *Panorama*. <https://www.panorama.it/italian-kpop-val-dal-prete-2655249307>.

Berenzweig, Adam, Daniel P. W. Ellis, and Steve Lawrence. 2002. "Using Voice Segments to Improve Artist Classification of Music." *Audio Engineering Society Conference: 22nd International Conference on Virtual, Synthetic, and Entertainment Audio*: 1-8.

Bilkey, Warren J., and Erik Nes. 1982. "Country-of-origin effects on product evaluations." *Journal of international business studies* 13(1): 89-100. <https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8490539>

Björck, Cecilia. 2011. *Claiming Space: Discourses on Gender, Popular Music, and Social Change*. PhD Thesis, University of Gothenburg, Academy of Music and Drama.

Bornstein, Robert F. 1989. "Exposure and Affect: Overview and Meta-Analysis of Research, 1968–1987." *Psychological Bulletin* 106 (2): 265-289. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/0033-2909.106.2.265>

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1987. "What Makes a Social Class? On the Theoretical and Practical Existence of Groups." *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 32: 1-17.

Bowling, Daniel, Bruno Gingras, Shui'er Han, Janani Sundararajan, and Emma Opitz. 2013. "Tone of Voice in Emotional Expression and Its Implications for the Affective Character of Musical Mode." *Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies* 7 (1-2): 29-44. <https://doi.org/10.4407/jims.2014.06.002>

Brackett, David. 2016. *Categorizing Sound: Genre and Twentieth-Century Popular Music*. Oakland: University of California Press.

Brailoiu, Constantin, " Sur une mélodie russe in " La musique russe ", Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1953(2), p. 331-332.

Brett, Philip, and Elizabeth Wood. 2006. "Lesbian and Gay Music." In *Queering the Pitch*, edited by Sheila Whiteley and Jennifer Rycenga, 351-390. London and New York: Routledge.

Brighenti, Flavio. 2015. "7Grani, La Cina è Vicina; Cantiamo La Storia con Sincerità, ed è un Passaporto per il Mondo". *la Repubblica*. <https://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli/musica/2015/03/03/news/7grani-108625383/>.

Britannica, T. 2019. "Social Class." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/social-class>.

Bronson, Fred. 1999. "Pearl Jam 2nd only to Domenico Modugno". *Billboard Magazine*. https://books.google.it/books?id=CQ0EAAAAMBAJ&q=volare+modugno+billboard&pg=RA1-PA102&redir_esc=y#v=snippet&q=volare%20modugno%20billboard&f=false.

Bryson, Bethany. 1996. “‘Anything but Heavy Metal’: Symbolic Exclusion and Musical Dislikes.” *American Sociological Review* 61(5): 884-899.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.2307/2096459>

Caiazza, Rosa, and Tiziana Volpe. 2014. “Agro-food firms' Competitiveness: Made in Italy in the World.” *International Review of Management and Business Research* 3(3): 1790.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.678.4717&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Calcea, Nicu. 2021. “China’s Income Inequality Is Among The World’s Worst”. *New Statesman*. <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2021/08/china-s-income-inequality-among-world-s-worst>.

Calcutta. 2015. “Calcutta - Frosinone (Video Ufficiale).” Bomba Dischi. December 18, 2015. Music Video, 3:09. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOKaXSyeKaA>

Celebrity Wire. 2014. "Exclusive Interview with Taylor Swift On Red Tour In China". *Dailymotion*. <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1xrnv3>.

Chan, Tak Wing, and John H. Goldthorpe. 2017. “Social Stratification and Cultural Consumption: Music in England.” In *Music and Identity Politics*, edited by Ian Biddle, 309-327. London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

Chen, Yihao, and Alexander Lerch. 2020. “Melody-Conditioned Lyrics Generation with SeqGANs.” *2020 IEEE International Symposium on Multimedia (ISM)*: 189-196.

China Daily. 2003. “Opera Star Andrea Bocelli Comes to China”. *Chinadaily.com.cn*. http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/en/doc/2003-12/02/content_286587.htm.

Clercq, Trevor de. 2016. "Measuring a Measure: Absolute Time as a Factor for Determining Bar Lengths and Meter in Pop/Rock Music." *Music Theory Online* 22 (3): n.p. <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.22.3.3>

CNTV. 2014. "Taylor Swift Brings 'Red' Tour To China - China.Org.Cn". *China.Org.Cn*. http://www.china.org.cn/video/2014-06/02/content_32549760.htm.

Connor, Steven. 2001. "The Decomposing Voice of Postmodern Music." *New Literary History* 32 (3): 467-483.

Coupé, Christophe, Yoon Mi Oh, Dan Dediu, and François Pellegrino. 2019. "Different Languages, Similar Encoding Efficiency: Comparable Information Rates Across the Human Communicative Niche." *Science Advances* 5 (9): eaaw2594. <https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.aaw2594>

Coupland, Nikolas. 2011. "Voice, Place and Genre in Popular Song Performance." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15 (5): 573-602. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9841.2011.00514.x>

Cox, Trevor J. 2008 "Scraping Sounds and Disgusting Noises." *Applied Acoustics* 69 (12): 1195-1204. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apacoust.2007.11.004>

Cuddy, Lola L. 1993. "Melody Comprehension and Tonal Structure." In *Psychology and Music: The Understanding of Melody and Rhythm*, edited by Thomas J. Tighe and W. Jay Dowling, 19-38. New York and London: Psychology Press.

Cuskley, Christine, Julia Simner, and Simon Kirby. 2017. "Phonological and Orthographic Influences in the Bouba–Kiki Effect." *Psychological Research* 81 (1): 119-130. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-015-0709-2>

Daniele, Joseph R., and Aniruddh D. Patel. 2013. "An Empirical Study of Historical Patterns in Musical Rhythm: Analysis of German & Italian Classical Music Using the

nPVI Equation.” *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 31 (1): 10-18.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2013.31.1.10>

Dauer, Rebecca M. 1983. “Stress-Timing and Syllable-Timing Reanalyzed.” *Journal of Phonetics* 11 (1): 51-62.

De Kloet, Jeroen. 2005. “Popular Music and Youth in Urban China: The Dakou Generation.” *The China Quarterly* 183 : 609.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S030574100500038X>

Dong, Wen. 2015. "Newcomer Boy Group UNIQ Officially Unveiled The Trailer For The First Member Wang Yibo". *Music.Yule.Sohu.Com*.
<http://music.yule.sohu.com/20140915/n404324094.shtml>.

Dowd, Rachael. 2020. "Taylor Swift's 'Folklore' Is Her First Album To Be Classified As Alternative". *Alternative Press*. <https://www.altpress.com/news/taylor-swift-folklore-alternative-classification/>.

Echeverri, Carlos Gustavo Román. 2011. *Detection of Genre-Specific Musical Instruments: The Case of the Mellotron*. Master Thesis, Universitat Pompeu Fabra.

EF. 2021. “EF EPI 2021 – EF English Proficiency Index”. *Ef*.
<https://www.ef.com/wwen/epi/>.

Effective Language Learning. n.d. “Mandarin (Chinese) Language.”
<https://effectivelanguagelearning.com/language-guide/mandarin-chinese-language>.

Essid, Slim, Gaël Richard, and Bertrand David. 2006. “Instrument Recognition in Polyphonic Music Based on Automatic Taxonomies.” *IEEE Transactions on Audio, Speech, and Language Processing* 14 (1): 68-80.
<https://doi.org/10.1109/TSA.2005.860351>

Everett, Caleb, Damián E. Blasi, and Seán G. Roberts. 2015. "Climate, Vocal Folds, and Tonal Languages: Connecting the Physiological and Geographic Dots." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 112 (5): 1322-1327. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1417413112>

Fabbri, Franco, and Goffredo Plastino. 2013. *Made in Italy: Studies in Popular Music*. London and New York: Routledge

Fabbri, Franco, and Iain Chambers. 1982. "What Kind of Music?" *Popular Music* 2: 131-143.

Fabbri, Franco. 2004. "A Theory of Musical Genres: Two Applications." *Popular Music: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* 3: 7-35. https://www.hugoribeiro.com.br/biblioteca-digital/Fabbri-Musical_Genres.pdf

Fabbri, Franco. 2008. *Il Suono in Cui Viviamo: Saggi Sulla Popular Music*. Milan: Il Saggiatore.

Field, Andrew David. 2019. "Beijing Is Rock, Shanghai Is Jazz: Musical Identity Formations and Shifts in the Big City Soundscapes of China." In *Sounds and the City*, pp. 151-172. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94081-6_8

FIMI. 2022. "Archivio Classifiche". *Fimi.It*. <https://www.fimi.it/top-of-the-music/archivio-classifiche-annuali.kl#/chartsyeararchive>.

Flynn, Mark A., Clay M. Craig, Christina N. Anderson, and Kyle J. Holody. 2016. "Objectification in Popular Music Lyrics: An Examination of Gender and Genre Differences." *Sex Roles* 75: 164-176. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-016-0592-3>

Free your music. 2021. "How Much Does Spotify Pay Per Stream? Streaming Payouts Comparison [2021]." *Freeyourmusic.com*. <https://freeyourmusic.com/blog/how-much-does-spotify-pay-per-stream>.

Frith, Simon. 1996. "Music and Identity." In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, edited by Stuart Hall, Paul Du Gay, 108-128. Los Angeles: Sage Publications

Gabrielsson, Alf, and Erik Lindström. 2001. "The Influence of Musical Structure on Emotional Expression." In *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, edited by Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda, 223-248. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gao, Zhihong. 2015. "When Nationalism Goes to the Market: The Case of Chinese Patriotic Songs", *Journal of Macromarketing* 2015, Vol. 35: 473-488
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0276146715573079>

Giles, Howard, Richard Bourhis, Alan Lewis, and Peter Trudgill. 1974 "The Imposed Norm Hypothesis: A Validation." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60 (4): 405-410.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00335637409383249>

Gold, Thomas B. 1993. "Go With Your Feelings: Hong Kong and Taiwan Popular Culture in Greater China." *The China Quarterly* 136: 907-925.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741000032380>

Gordon, Reyna L., Daniele Schön, Cyrille Magne, Corine Astésano, and Mireille Besson. 2010. "Words and Melody Are Intertwined in Perception of Sung Words: EEG and Behavioral Evidence." *PloS One* 5 (3): e9889.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0009889>

Goto, Masataka, Hiroki Hashiguchi, Takuichi Nishimura, and Ryuichi Oka. 2003. "RWC Music Database: Music Genre Database and Musical Instrument Sound Database." *ISMIR 2003*: 843-844. <https://ismir2003.ismir.net/papers/Goto1.pdf>

Grabe, Esther. 2002. "Variation Adds to Prosodic Typology." *Proceedings of the International Conference on Speech Prosody 2002*.

Han, Bin. 2018 "On the Origin and Features of the Pleasing Function of Language." *Proceedings of the 2018 International Conference on Education, Economics and Social Science (ICEESS 2018)*: pp. 49-53. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2991/iceess-18.2018.12>

Han, C. Min. 1989. "Country Image: Halo or Summary Construct?" *Journal of marketing research* 26: 222-229. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224378902600208>

Hargreaves, David J. 1984. "The Effects of Repetition on Liking for Music." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 32 (1): 35-47. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2F3345279>

Harrison, Glynn, Christine Glazebrook, John Brewin, Roch Cantwell, Tim Dalkin, Richard Fox, Peter Jones, and Ian Medley. 1997. "Increased Incidence of Psychotic Disorders in Migrants from the Caribbean to the United Kingdom." *Psychological Medicine* 27 (4): 799-806. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0033291796004643>

Hassel Zein, Patrick. 2008. "Mandarin Chinese Phonetics." *Zein.se*. <http://www.zein.se/patrick/chinen8p.html>

Haworth, Rachel. 2018. "Mina as Transnational Popular Music Star in the Early 1960s." *Modern Languages Open*. <https://doi.org/10.3828/mlo.v0i0.237>

Herndon, Marcia, and Norma McLeod. 1981. *Music as culture*. Norwood. https://hugoribeiro.com.br/biblioteca-digital/Herndon_Mcleod-Music_a_culture.pdf

Ho, Wai-Chung. 2012. "Music education in Shanghai from 1895 to 1945: the cultural politics of singing", *Music Education Research*, 14:2, 187-207 <https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2012.685461>

Horner, Al. 2019. "Juice WRLD: The Unapologetic Rapper Who Helped Define A New Sound". *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2019/dec/08/juice-wrld-death-tribute-emo-rap>.

Horowitz, Steven J. 2017. "Tears Of A Dirtbag: Rapper Lil Peep Is The Future Of Emo". *Pitchfork.Com*. <https://pitchfork.com/features/rising/10001-tears-of-a-dirtbag-rapper-lil-peep-is-the-future-of-emo/>.

Hsieh, Terence. 2012. "Jazz meets east: Cultural dimensions of asynchronous jazz music development in modern China." <https://digitalcommons.oberlin.edu/honors/359>
https://www.academia.edu/42146307/IL_CORPO_DOPO_LA_MENTE

Hu, Xiao, and Yi-Hsuan Yang. 2017. "The Mood of Chinese Pop Music: Representation and Recognition." *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology* 68, no. 8: 1899-1910. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23813>

Huan, Guocang. 2019. "China's "Open Door" Policy: 1978-1984". 1987. PhD diss., Princeton University.

Huron, David. 1991. "Tonal Consonance Versus Tonal Fusion in Polyphonic Sonorities." *Music Perception* 9 (2): 135-154. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40285526>

Husain, Gabriela, William Forde Thompson, and E. Glenn Schellenberg. 2002. "Effects of Musical Tempo and Mode on Arousal, Mood, and Spatial Abilities." *Music Perception* 20 (2): 151-171. <https://doi.org/10.1525/mp.2002.20.2.151>

Hyland, Ken. 2015. "Genre, Discipline and Identity." *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 19: 32-43. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jeap.2015.02.005>

Idahosa. 2017. "Italian Pronunciation: The Ultimate Guide | Speak Like a Real Paisano." *The Mimic Method*. <https://www.mimicmethod.com/italian-pronunciation-the-ultimate-guide/>.

International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2019. "Global Music Report 2018". [online] Available at: < <https://www.fimi.it/kdocs/1922703/gmr-2018-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf> > [Accessed 11 April 2022].

International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2020. “*Global Music Report 2019*”. [online] Available at: <https://www.ifpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Global_Music_Report-the_Industry_in_2019-en.pdf> [Accessed 11 April 2022].

International Federation of the Phonographic Industry, 2021. “*Global Music Report 2020*”. [online] Available at: <https://www.ifpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GMR2021_STATE_OF_THE_INDUSTRY.pdf> [Accessed 11 April 2022].

IMDb. 2022. "Xukun Cai". *Imdb*. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm10644657/>.

IMDb. 2022. "Yibo Wang". *Imdb*. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm5886504/>.

IMDb. 2022. "Zhan Xiao". *Imdb*. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm9751810/>.

Iñesta, José M., Pedro José Ponce de León Amador, and José Luis Heredia Agoiz. 2008. “A Ground-Truth Experiment on Melody Genre Recognition in Absence of Timbre.” Hokkaido University. <http://hdl.handle.net/10045/16183>

International Federation of the Phonographic Industry. 2021. “Global Music Report 2021”. IFPI's State of The Industry. IFPI. https://www.ifpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GMR2021_STATE_OF_THE_INDUSTRY.pdf

Intravaia, Salvo. 2018. "E I Giovani Italiani Vivono Ancora Con I Genitori. La Causa: Abitudine Antica e Mancanza di Lavoro". *la Repubblica*. https://www.repubblica.it/scuola/2018/03/19/news/studenti_italiani_bamboccioni-191654967/.

Jang, S. Mo, and Hoon Lee. 2014. “When Pop Music Meets a Political Issue: Examining How ‘Born This Way’ Influences Attitudes Toward Gays and Gay Rights Policies.”

Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 58 (1): 114-130.
<https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1080/08838151.2013.875023>

Kellaris, James J., and Robert J. Kent. 1992. "The Influence of Music on Consumers' Temporal Perceptions: Does Time Fly When You're Having Fun?" *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 1(4): 365-376. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408\(08\)80060-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1057-7408(08)80060-5)

Keller, Marcello Sore, Roberto Catalano, Giuseppina Colica. 2017. *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: Europe*, edited by Timothy Rice, James Porter, Chris Goertzen: 604-630.

King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013 "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107: 326-343. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000014>

Kloet, Jeroen de. 2010. *China with a Cut: Globalisation, Urban Youth and Popular Music*. Amsterdam University Press <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt46n1gn>.

Kluger, Jeffrey. 2011. "Slow Down! Why Some Languages Sound So Fast." *TIME.com*. <http://content.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2091477,00.html>.

Kraus, Egon. 1967. "The contribution of music education to the understanding of foreign cultures, past and present." *Music Educators Journal* 53(5): 30-32. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2307/3390869>

Krumhansl, Carol Lynne. 1997. "An Exploratory Study of Musical Emotions and Psychophysiology." *Canadian Journal of Experimental Psychology* 51 (4): 336-353. <https://doi.org/10.1037/1196-1961.51.4.336>

Kuo, Lily. 2018. "Chinese Broadcaster Loses Eurovision Rights over LGBT Censorship." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/may/11/chinese-broadcaster-loses-eurovision-rights-over-lgbt-censorship>.

Kuttner, Fritz A. 1964. "The Music of China: A Short Historical Synopsis Incorporating the Results of Recent Musicological Investigations". *Ethnomusicology* 8, no. 2: 121-127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/849856>

Ladinig, Olivia, and E. Glenn Schellenberg. 2012. "Liking Unfamiliar Music: Effects of Felt Emotion and Individual Differences." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 6 (2): 146-154. [https:// org/10.1037/a0024671](https://org/10.1037/a0024671)

Laukens, Dirk. 2021. "The 10 Most Popular Jazz Chord Progressions." *Jazz Guitar Online | Free Jazz Guitar Lessons, Licks, Tips & Tricks*. <https://www.jazzguitar.be/blog/jazz-chord-progressions/>.

LeBlanc, Albert, James Colman, Jan McCrary, Carolyn Sherrill, and Sue Malin. 1988. "Tempo Preferences of Different Age Music Listeners." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 36 (3): 156-168. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3344637>

Left Business Observer. 2022. "Gini Index". *Leftbusinessobserver.Com*. https://www.leftbusinessobserver.com/Gini_supplement.html.

Leroy Music. 2019. "Wang Yibo'S First Solo Single "Fire" Goes Online And Boldly Breaks Through The Attitude Of "Playing Cool"". *Sohu.Com*. https://www.sohu.com/a/289591070_607140.

Liao, Rita. 2021. "Tencent Music Now Has Joint Labels with All 'Big Three' Record Labels". *Techcrunch.com*. <https://techcrunch.com/2021/03/22/tencent-music-joint-labels-warner/>

Lin. 2018. "Cai Xukun Profile: 'Idol Producer' Winner & Nine Percent Member". *Kpopmap - Kpop, Kdrama And Trend Stories Coverage*. <https://www.kpopmap.com/cai-xukun-kpop-profile/>.

Lippens, Stefaan, Jean-Pierre Martens, and Tom De Mulder. 2004. "A Comparison of Human and Automatic Musical Genre Classification." *2004 IEEE International Conference on Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing* 4: iv. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ICASSP.2004.1326806>

Longdon, Victoria. 2019. "These Four Chords Are at the Heart of Every Pop Song." *Classic FM*. <https://www.classicfm.com/discover-music/music-theory/four-chords-every-pop-song/>.

Lopes, Paul. 2002. *The Rise of a Jazz Art World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Lu, Shen, and Katie Hunt. 2016. "China Bans Same-Sex Romance from TV Screens." CNN, March 3. <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/03/03/asia/china-bans-same-sex-dramas/index.html>.

Luo, Yadong. 2007. *Guanxi and Business*. https://doi.org/10.1142/9789811210556_0001

Lu-Ting, Ho, and Han Kuo-Huang. 1982. "On Chinese Scales and National Modes." *Asian Music* 14 (1): 132-154. <https://doi.org/10.2307/834047>

Lyons, Siobhan. 2015. "In Search of Lost Cities. Imagined Geographies and the Allure of the Fake." *Diffractions* 5: 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.34632/diffractions.2015.506>

Lysensky, Dorian. 2021. "Why Bands Are Disappearing: 'Young People Aren't Excited by Them'". <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2021/mar/18/why-bands-are-disappearing-young-people-arent-excited-by-them>.

Malaguti, Margherita. 2019. "Chiara Ferragni: «La Mia Cina Al Tempo Dei Social» - Mffashion.Com". *Mffashion.Com*. <https://www.mffashion.com/news/livestage/chiara-ferragni-la-mia-cina-al-tempo-dei-social-201910222015378122>.

Matsumoto, David, and Paul Ekman. 1989. "American-Japanese Cultural Differences in Intensity Ratings of Facial Expressions of Emotion." *Motivation and Emotion* 13 (2): 143-157. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1007/BF00992959>

Mayer, Rudolf, and Andreas Rauber. 2011. "Musical Genre Classification by Ensembles of Audio and Lyrics Features." *ISMIR 2011*: 675-680. https://publik.tuwien.ac.at/files/PubDat_205736.pdf

Mayer, Rudolf, Robert Neumayer, and Andreas Rauber. 2008. "Rhyme and Style Features for Musical Genre Classification by Song Lyrics." *ISMIR 2008*: 337-342. https://publik.tuwien.ac.at/files/PubDat_166272.pdf

McCarthy, E. Jerome. 1960. "Basic Marketing: a Managerial Approach." *Inc. McCarthy Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach*. Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin.

McDermott, Josh H. 2012. "Auditory Preferences and Aesthetics: Music, Voices, and Everyday Sounds." *Neuroscience of Preference and Choice*: 227-256. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-381431-9.00020-6>

Menniti, Adele, Maura Misiti, Miria Savioli. 2000. "Italian "stay at home" children: Attitudes and constraints." In *MPIDR Workshop "Leaving Home: A European Focus" publication*: 2-8. https://www.demogr.mpg.de/Papers/workshops/000906_paper01.pdf

Merriam, Alan P. 1959. "Characteristics of African Music." *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 11: 13-19. <https://doi.org/10.2307/834848>

Meyer, Leonard B. 1956. *Emotions and Meaning in Music*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago press.

Miller, Nicholas JS. 2010. "Pragmatic Nationalism and Confucianism: The New Ideology of the CCP." *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse* 2 (04), <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=229>

Moelants, Dirk. 2002. "Preferred Tempo Reconsidered." *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition*: 580-583.

Montgomery, Amanda P. 1996. "Effect of Tempo on Music Preferences of Children in Elementary and Middle School." *Journal of Research in Music Education* 44 (2): 134-146. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3345666>

Moon, Shin-Il, George A. Barnett, and Yon Soo Lim. 2010. "The Structure of International Music Flows Using Network Analysis." *New Media & Society* 12: 379-399. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444809346720>

Moskowitz, Marc L. 2008. "Message in a Bottle: Lyrical Laments and Emotional Expression in Mandopop." *The China Quarterly* 194 : 365-379. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0305741008000428>

Moskowitz, Marc L. 2009. *Cries of Joy, Songs of Sorrow*. University of Hawaii Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780824837655>

Mull, Helen K. 1957. "The Effect of Repetition upon the Enjoyment of Modern Music." *The Journal of Psychology*, 43(1), 155-162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.1957.9713061>

Musso, Fabio, Barbara Francioni, Alessandro Pagano. 2013. *International marketing and the country of origin effect: the global impact of made in Italy'*. Edited by Giuseppe Bertolli, Riccardo Rescinti. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Nespor, Marina, Mohinish Shukla, and Jacques Mehler. 2011. "Stress-Timed vs. Syllable-Timed Languages." *The Blackwell Companion to Phonology*: 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444335262.wbctp0048>

NetEase Music. 2019. "NetEase Cloud Music Sells Over Half of Taylor Swift's Latest Album "Lover" in China". *Prnewswire.com*. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news->

releases/netease-cloud-music-sells-over-half-of-taylor-swifts-latest-album-lover-in-china-300928200.html.

Newman, Michael. 2005. "Rap as Literacy: A Genre Analysis of Hip-Hop Ciphers." *Text-Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Discourse* 25 (3): 425-431. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text.2005.25.3.399>

Nie, Ke. 2021. "Disperse and Preserve the Perverse: Computing how Hip-Hop Censorship Changed Popular Music Genres in China." *Poetics* <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2021.101590>

North, Adrian C., and David J. Hargreaves. 1998. "The Effect of Music on Atmosphere and Purchase Intentions in a Cafeteria." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 28 (24): 2254-2273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1998.tb01370.x>

Notizie Musica. 2019. "Che Cos'è L'indie? Alla Scoperta Del Genere Che Ha Conquistato L'Italia". *Notizie Musica*. https://notiziemusica.it/che-cos-e-l-indie/curiosita/?refresh_ce.
Oakes, Steve. 2003. "Musical Tempo and Waiting Perceptions." *Psychology & Marketing* 20 (8): 685-705. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.10092>

Office of the Historian. 2022. "Unification of Italian States - Countries - Office Of The Historian". *History.State.Gov*. <https://history.state.gov/countries/issues/italian-unification>.

Palaggio, Adriano. 2018. "In China There is a Good Perception for Made In Italy Furniture, Fashion And Enogastronomy". *Italian Food Excellence*. <https://www.italianfoodexcellence.com/in-china-there-is-a-good-perception-for-made-in-italy-furniture-fashion-and-enogastronomy/>.

Pang, Ai. 2019. "Welcome to China, Taylor Swift! - Global Times". *Globaltimes.Cn*. <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1168332.shtml>.

Pastore, Ferruccio. 2004. "A community out of balance: nationality law and migration politics in the history of post-unification Italy." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571042000179173>

Pastore, Ferruccio. 2004. "A community out of balance: nationality law and migration politics in the history of post-unification Italy." *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 9(1): 27-48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354571042000179173>

Pastorelli, Eva, Andrea Stocchiero, Misha Maslennikov, Francesco Petrelli, Mariagrazia Midulla, Maria Maranò, and Vittorio Cogliati Dezza. 2019. "Inequalities in Italy". *Sdgwatcheurope*. <https://www.sdgwatcheurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/8.1.a-factsheets-IT.pdf>.

Patel, Aniruddh D., and Joseph R. Daniele. 2003. "An Empirical Comparison of Rhythm in Language and Music." *Cognition* 87 (1): B35-B45. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0010-0277\(02\)00187-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0010-0277(02)00187-7)

Paulicelli, Eugenia. 2014. "Fashion: the Cultural Economy of Made in Italy." *Fashion Practice* 6(2): 155-174. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175693814X14035303880597>

Pearson, David M. 2019. "Extreme Hardcore Punk and the Analytical Challenges of Rhythm, Riffs, and Timbre in Punk Music." *Music Theory Online* 25 (1): n.p. <https://doi.org/10.30535/mto.25.1.5>

Peng, Lin. "Musical Borrowing from Western Art Music to C-Pop from 1999 to 2011/Peng Lin." PhD diss., University of Malaya, 2018. <http://studentsrepo.um.edu.my/id/eprint/10008>

People's Daily. 2010. "Andrea Bocelli on Stage With Chinese Girl for Shanghai Expo - People's Daily Online". *En.people.cn*. <http://en.people.cn/90001/90776/90883/6969737.html>.

Peppé, Sue JE. 2009. "Why is Prosody in Speech-Language Pathology so Difficult?" *International journal of Speech-Language Pathology* 11 (4): 258-271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17549500902906339>

Peretz, Isabelle, Danielle Gaudreau, and Anne-Marie Bonnel. 1998. "Exposure Effects on Music Preference and Recognition." *Memory & Cognition* 26 (5): 884-902. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03201171>

Peretz, Isabelle. 2001. "Listen to the Brain: A Biological Perspective on Musical Emotions." In *Music and Emotion: Theory and Research*, edited by Patrik N. Juslin and John A. Sloboda, 105-134. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peterson, Richard A., and Albert Simkus. 1992. "How Musical Tastes Mark Occupational Status Groups." In *Cultivating Differences: Symbolic Boundaries and the Making of Inequality*, edited by Michèle Lamont and Marcel Fournier, 152-186. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Police Through Train - Shanghai. 2021. "Police And Civilians Through Train - Weibo Video In Shanghai". Weibo. February 16, 2021 <https://m.weibo.cn/detail/4605166873479613>.

Porter, Michael E. 2008. "The Five Competitive Forces that Shape Strategy." *Harvard business review* 86(1): 26-33.

Presutti, Fabio. 2008. "The Saxophone and the Pastoral. Italian Jazz in the Age of Fascist Modernity." *Italica* 85, no. 2: 273-294. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40505806>

Quinn, Sandra, and Roger Watt. 2006. "The Perception of Tempo in Music." *Perception* 35 (2): 267-280. <https://doi.org/10.1068/p5353>

RAI Cultura. 2020. "Sanremo - Storia - Rai Cultura". *Rai Cultura*.
<https://www.raicultura.it/storia/foto/2020/01/Sanremo-86825077-9549-445f-b48e-e66ac0d90835.html>.

Ramachandran, Vilayanur S., and William Hirstein. 1999. "The Science of Art: A Neurological Theory of Aesthetic Experience." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6 (6-7): 15-51.

Ravignani, Andrea, and Guy Madison. 2017. "The Paradox of Isochrony in the Evolution of Human Rhythm." *Frontiers in psychology* 8: 1820.
<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01820>

Repubblica. 2016. "I Giovani Italiani Under 35 Vivono con I Genitori, Anche se Lavorano". *la Repubblica*.
https://www.repubblica.it/economia/2016/09/24/news/istat_casa_giovani-148434273/.

Rietveld, Hillegonda C. 2019. *This is Our House: House Music, Cultural Spaces and Technologies*. London and New York: Routledge.

Ritchie, Hannah, and Max Roser. 2019. "Gender Ratio." *Our World in Data*.
<https://ourworldindata.org/gender-ratio>

Rockol . 2004. "E' 'Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu' Il Brano Italiano Più Cantato". *Rockol.it*.
<https://www.rockol.it/news-63431/e-nel-blu-dipinto-di-blu-il-brano-italiano-piu-cantato>.

Rosner, Aldona, and Bozena Kostek. 2018. "Automatic Music Genre Classification Based on Musical Instrument Track Separation." *Journal of Intelligent Information Systems* 50: 363-384. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10844-017-0464-5>

Roy, William G., and Timothy J. Dowd. 2010. "What Is Sociological About Music?" *Annual Review of Sociology* 36: 183-203.
<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.012809.102618>

Rupke, Heidi Netz, and Grant Blank. 2009. ““Country Roads” to Globalization: Sociological Models for Understanding American Popular Music in China.” *Journal of Popular Culture (Boston)* 42(1): 126-146. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2009.00574.x>

Sadler, David. 1997. “The Global Music Business as an Information Industry: Reinterpreting Economies of Culture.” *Environment and Planning A* 29: 1919-1936. <https://doi.org/10.1068/a291919>

Saladino, Rosa. 1990. “Language shift in standard Italian and dialect: A case study.” *Language Variation and Change* 2(1): 57-70. DOI: 10.1017/S0954394500000260

Santoro, Marco, and Marco Solaroli. 2007. “Authors and rappers: Italian hip hop and the shifting boundaries of canzone d’autore.” *Popular Music* 26, no. 3: 463-488. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261143007001389>

Saoju, 2022. “Best Selling Albums”. [online] Saoju.net. Available at: <http://y.saoju.net/szzj/> [Accessed 3 February 2022].

Savage, Mark. 2020. “Pop music is getting faster (and happier)”. *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-53167325>.

Schedl, Markus, and Bruce Ferwerda. 2017. “Large-Scale Analysis of Group-Specific Music Genre Taste From Collaborative Tags.” *2017 IEEE International Symposium on Multimedia (ISM)*: 479-482. <https://doi.org/10.1109/ISM.2017.95>

Scherer, Klaus R. 1995. “Expression of Emotion in Voice and Music.” *Journal of Voice* 9 (3): 235-248. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0892-1997\(05\)80231-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0892-1997(05)80231-0)

Schubert, Emery 2007. "The Influence of Emotion, Locus of Emotion and Familiarity Upon Preference in Music." *Psychology of Music* 35 (3): 499-515. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305735607072657>

Schüppert, Anja, Nanna Haug Hilton, and Charlotte Gooskens. 2015. "Swedish is Beautiful, Danish is Ugly? Investigating the Link Between Language Attitudes and Spoken Word Recognition." *Linguistics* 53 (2): 375-403. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2015-0003>

Shepherd, John. 2012. "Music and Social Categories." In *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Martin Clayton, Trevor Herbert and Richard Middleton, 261-270. London and New York: Routledge.

Sina. 2019. "肖战杨紫代言2020北京台春晚大张伟郑爽等加盟". *News.Sina.Com.Cn*. <https://news.sina.com.cn/c/2019-12-28/doc-iihnzhfz8945888.shtml>.

Singh, Nandini C., and Frédéric E. Theunissen. 2003. "Modulation Spectra of Natural Sounds and Ethological Theories of Auditory Processing." *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 114 (6): 3394-3411. <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.1624067>

Smith, Richard. 2016. *Seduced and Abandoned: Essays on Gay Men and Popular Music*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Spettacolo musica sport. 2019. "Grande Successo per il Tour in Cina Della Band Comasca 7grani". *Spettacolomusicasport.com*. <https://spettacolomusicasport.com/2019/05/19/grande-successo-per-il-tour-in-cina-della-band-comasca-7grani/>.

Stang, David J., and Edward J. O'Connell. 1974. "The Computer as Experimenter in Social Psychological Research." *Behavior Research Methods & Instrumentation* 6(2): 223-231. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03200333>

Statista. 2014. "Best-selling Italian Music Artists Of All Time". *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/591391/best-selling-italian-music-artists-of-all-tim/>.

Statista. 2021. "China: All Time Online Best-Selling Music Singles 2021 | Statista". *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1112733/china-all-time-online-best-selling-music-singles-on-digital-music-platforms/>.

Statista. 2021. "China: MAU Of Leading Music Apps 2021". *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/711295/china-leading-mobile-music-platforms-by-active-user-number/>.

Statista. 2021. "Italy: Music Industry's Consumer Spending 2020-2024". *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/615110/music-industry-spending-italy-forecast/>.

Statista. 2022. "Most Spoken Languages In The World". *Statista*. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/266808/the-most-spoken-languages-worldwide/>.

Stock, Jonathan. 1995. "Reconsidering the Past: Zhou Xuan and the Rehabilitation of Early Twentieth-Century Popular Music." *Asian Music* 26, no. 2 : 119-135. <https://doi.org/10.2307/834436>

Sun, Jessica. "Propaganda Songs – Part 1: Before Opening Up - ChinaTalk". *ChinaTalk*. <https://www.chinatalk.nl/propaganda-songs-part-1-before-opening-up>.

Szpunar, Karl K., E. Glenn Schellenberg, and Patricia Pliner. 2004. "Liking and Memory for Musical Stimuli as a Function of Exposure." *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 30 (2): 370-381. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-7393.30.2.370>

Taylor, Jodie. 2013. "Claiming Queer Territory in the Study of Subcultures and Popular Music." *Sociology Compass* 7 (3): 194-207. <https://doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12021>

Taylor, Jodie. 2013. "Claiming Queer Territory in the Study of Subcultures and Popular Music." *Sociology Compass* 7(3): 194-207. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/soc4.12021>

Tedesco, Anna. 2011. "National identity, National Music and Popular Music in the Italian Music Press During the Long 19th Century." *Studia Musicologica* 52(1-4) : 259-270. <https://doi.org/10.1556/smus.52.2011.1-4.20>

The Axis of Awesome. 2011. "4 Chords | Music Videos | The Axis of Awesome." Youtube. Video, 6:19. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oOIdewpCfZQ>

The Economist. 2016. "China's Newest Export Hit is Classical Music". *The Economist*. <https://www.economist.com/books-and-arts/2016/11/19/chinas-newest-export-hit-is-classical-music>.

The Star. 2020. "Andrea Bocelli Learns to Sing in Mandarin for War Epic;The Eight Hundred". *The Star*. <https://www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/entertainment/2020/08/13/andrea-bocelli-learns-to-sing-in-mandarin-for-war-epic-the-eight-hundred>.

Tymoczko, Dmitri. 2006. "The Geometry of Musical Chords." *Science* 313 (5783): 72-74. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1126287>

Van As, Amber. 2018. "Taylor Swift and the Story of the Swifties Fandom". *Diggit Magazine*. <https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/taylor-swift-and-story-swifties-fandom>.

Van Khe, Tran. 1977. "Is the Pentatonic Universal? A Few Reflections on Pentatonism." *The World of Music* 19 (1-2): 76-84.

Voss, Richard F., and John Clarke. 1975. "'I/F NOISE' IN MUSIC and SPEECH." *Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory*. LBNL Report #: LBL-3959: 317-318. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/04t64495>

Wang, Yuanyuan, Zhishan Hu, Ke Peng, Joanne Rechdan, Yuan Yang, Lijuan Wu, Ying Xin, Jiahui Lin, Zhizhou Duan, Xuequan Zhu, Yi Feng, Shitao Chen, Jianjun Ou, Runsen Chen. 2020 “Mapping Out a Spectrum of the Chinese Public’s Discrimination Toward the LGBT Community: Results from a National Survey.” *BMC Public Health* 20: 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-020-08834-y>

Wang, Yuanyuan, Zhishan Hu, Ke Peng, Ying Xin, Yuan Yang, Jack Drescher, and Runsen Chen. 2019. “Discrimination Against LGBT Populations in China.” *The Lancet Public Health* 4(9): e440. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667\(19\)30153-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2468-2667(19)30153-7)

Whiteley, Sheila. 2006. “Popular Music and the Dynamics of Desire.” In *Queering the Popular Pitch*, edited by Sheila Whiteley and Jennifer Rycenga, 249-263 London and New York: Routledge.

Wilson, John. 2020. “Chord Music Theory 101: A Beginners Guide.” *Music Gateway Blog*. <https://www.musicgateway.com/blog/how-to/chord-music-theory>.

World Bank. 2022. “Gini Index (World Bank Estimate) - Italy, China | Data”. *Data.Worldbank.Org*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=IT-CN>.

Wu, Xueyin. 2021. “Fan Leaders' Control on Xiao Zhan's Chinese Fan Community.” *Transformative Works and Cultures*, no. 36. <https://doi.org/10.3983/twc.2021.2053>.

Xu, Beina, and Eleanor Albert. 2014. “Media Censorship in China.” *Council on Foreign Relations: 243*.

Yan, Qing, and Fan Yang. 2020. “From parasocial to parakin: Co-creating idols on social media.” *New Media & Society*: 1461444820933313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444820933313>

Yang, Ke. 2020. "The Construction of Sports Culture Industry Growth Forecast Model Based on Big Data." *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing* 24: 5-17. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00779-019-01242-z>

Yasin, Jon A. 1997. *In Yo Face! Rappin 'Beats Comin' at You: A study of How Language is Mapped onto Musical Beats in Rap Music*. Ed.D. Dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College. Zhao, Yong-Bin, Ye Zhang, Quan-Chao Zhang, Hong-Jie Li, Ying-Qiu Cui, Zhi Xu, Li Jin, Hui Zhou, and Hong Zhu. 2015. "Ancient DNA Reveals That the Genetic Structure of the Northern Han Chinese Was Shaped Prior to 3,000 Years Ago." *PLoS One* 10(5): 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0125676>

Yin, Yin. 2020. "Fan Culture and the Spread of Public Benefit During the Pandemic of COVID-19." In *2020 3rd International Conference on Humanities Education and Social Sciences (ICHESS 2020)*, pp. 1135-1139. Atlantis Press. <https://www.atlantispress.com/article/125949020.pdf>.

Zabaglio, Emanuele. 2022. "Mina, Una Stella Come La Callas". *Cdls.Sm*. https://www.cdls.sm/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&catid=32:approfondimenti&id=3478:mina-una-stella-come-la-callas.

Zen Circus. 2021. "Andate Tutti Affanculo." TheZenCircus. February 18, 2021. Music Video, 8:06 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B-07-7a0ysE>

Zhao, Yue. 2011. "The Musicality of C-pop: A Study of Chinese Popular Music from 1985-2010." PhD dissertation, University of Sheffield. <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/14987/1/538022.pdf>

Zixuan, Zhou. 2021. "Community Order and Spontaneous Economic Behavior: Fan Community, Fan Economy and Psychology of Cai Xukun." In *2nd International Conference on Language, Art and Cultural Exchange (ICLACE 2021)*, pp. 416-419. Atlantis Press. <https://www.atlantispress.com/article/125957599.pdf>

Appendix

Appendix A. Interview with Reepo from Octopuss⁷

Edoardo: How many years have you been doing music?

Reepo: I've been a musician for all my life, I grew up in a musical family, and the rest of the band has a similar experience as well.

Edoardo: So, when did you start working together as a band?

Reepo: We started off in Milan, me and the bassist went to high school together. He's also the bassist for "Le Vibbrazioni". "Le Vibbrazioni" is a famous band here in Italy, they Chart quite well. Like "Negramaro", "Piero Pelu". So since the start, we had to care about how we "came out", in terms of press, because at the start [In Italy] we had to play on this fact. We had to make sure that we wouldn't be in headlines for "stealing "Le Vibbrazioni"'s bassist, or "Le Vibbrazioni"'s bassist leaves the group. In the end he left the band and probably did around 6 years just with us, and in those 6 years we toured the world, a lot. Not yet in China but we went to the U.S, England, around Europe and more. We still did a lot of concerts in Italy, but also a lot outside Italy.

Edoardo: Would you mind expanding quickly on your role in the band Reepo?

Reepo: Of course. Keep in mind I am both the lead singer and guitarist, but also for a long time the manager of the band. In this industry, either you are very lucky right off the bat, and you have an international management, who cares for you and makes the project grow, which would be a dream. What actually happens in that when you get a manager, say in Italy, they tend to make you do more things (concerts, shows, collaborations) in Italy. Good Portuguese bands will mostly get work in Portugal, same for Spain and so on. Often with the excuse of language. For example, you sing in Italian, it doesn't make sense

⁷ Translated from a mix of Italian and English.

that you tour in Germany, or the U.S. However, if you sing in English, they don't let you get started in Italy. So it's not like you can starve in your own country, so you start singing in Italian. So when you get started you have to decide, in what language are you going to sing. One road is a bit easier, because you're close to home, but there's also a lot of other people from where you're from who want to come up too. The other road is 4x as hard [Finding International success]. When you do things right on an international scale, it's never by chance, it's a matter of putting in the hours, many many hours. This means getting informed, calling, sending mails, translating and more. When we first went to America, I had 2 or 3 friends, but i wanted to do a whole tour. A friend of yours who lives in a city, even if he's connected will probably be able to find you 1 tour date, probably in his friend's venue, in 1 city. Or not, because maybe your name and the band's name isn't enough. And beyond that what kind of venue are you going to find for my band's first show overseas? Probably a free show, so I'll have to pay for the flight, the hotel, the taxi to the hotel, to eat, to sleep. Overseas is always something to be overcome starting out, no one will give you anything unless you're already famous. We're talking about a rock band, a trio, so you start, call, send an email to 1000 spots, 80 respond to you, you confirm 25 concerts and then 4 or 5 cancel, so you do 20 concerts. So if you're my manager I give you a percentage and you do this.

Edoardo: At the start, was it just you managing or did you have managers?

Reepo: At the start we had Italian Management. So he only worked in Italy. If you're Italian management, you only take care of Italian territory. They have no interest in Outside Italy and he doesn't believe you'll make money outside of Italy. So they say you can go to America, but when you come back from America the payment you'll get from my show is double that, so the manager is happier too if you come back. Also in Italy we have an issue that no managers do overseas as well. The manager of Zucchero was quite good, but really it's 2 or 3 people who do international artist management well. He's the guy who brought Zucchero to the Freddie Mercury tribute, he's Sting's friend and all that. But the other managers don't want to and aren't able to do overseas. They don't have the contacts, you need to use online sites in a smart way, if you saw that a band in a similar area to you did a concert somewhere or their fans give them a like on social media, then

the next day they go see another band in another venue, you need to see both these venues and ask. You go see what dates bands like you are playing. Sometimes I would talk to the other members and they would say, “look on YouTube, you see that this venue has too small of a stage”. Or maybe they would say “look this venue has too big of a stage”. You always have to work on your level and research goes into this. The real ideal scenario is having someone like Brian Epstein [Manager of the Beatles] with you. Basically another member of the band, but one who doesn't put on a guitar but is just as invested in the band, believing in it and elevating the band. Brian put in money himself, took the train and did everything. And when the first Beatles single came out, he bought 1000x copies to bring them further up the charts. And this created a natural movement.

Edoardo: Do you have any particular “guerrilla tactics” that you use just like Brian? Because I wouldn't imagine that something like this works anymore.

Reepo: No honestly, we're pretty bad at Instagram, socials and all that, we still have to work on that. Our success comes from working hard.

Edoardo: I'm still shocked that your manager has helped you so little on an international scale.

Reepo: See the problem is that if your manager is connected, he would send a 2nd band in China, a 3rd band in China. We are the Italian band who has done the most shows in China, and we built it ourselves. We were very lucky to already have done the U.S, to already have done the U.K before going to China. So we knew how to be around. What does this mean? Well, the first thing is that it's a sacrifice [to tour overseas]. It means not seeing your parents, not seeing your girlfriend. This is the excuse of most Italian musicians. Because for a month you don't see anyone you know, you don't work, if you have a regular job. You can't buy a new guitar or something. If you have 2000 euros you save them up to do your first American tour. Because you know you'll make 100 euro a show, but your expenses are much higher. You're investing in yourself. So either a manager does this, if they really believe in you. We had to do it for ourselves. But honestly even on our first tour in America, we left them shocked. Because we already had all this

experience from touring in Italy. And we were hungry. We slept maybe 2 hours a night because we had to do so much, between travelling and everything. So when we arrived in China we already had all of this experience.

Edoardo: Why did you pick China?

Reepo: We had been considering China for about 2 years at that point, because I had some friends in China and they were saying that it's cool there. We knew there were a lot of people there but we didn't know anything about Chinese Rock'n'roll. So, we laid down a few dates and they were saying that for most European bands the government paid for their flights. So for the French, you went to the government and they would pay for your flight. The flight's expensive, you know. But not in Italy. So, we had to pay for the flights ourselves, we paid for the hotel ourselves. But this wasn't America where people speak English. We couldn't even read the signs. So, we brought a guy with us from Italy. I couldn't just trust anyone from the internet. So I met this guy in Milan, he was a bright guy. I had to propose to him for 25 days, every day on the road. And he was very useful. But who paid him? Us.

Edoardo: From the conception of the band until your first Chinese tour, how much time passed.

Reepo: So, I've basically always been a musician, but when music didn't go, I did everything, I taught guitar, did modelling, served tables. And most importantly I did any job I could relating to music. Our drummer (from before not the current one) worked as a production manager (he brought around foreign artists) for a big Italian concert agency. And I worked with him often, firstly I helped to bring instruments from the truck to the venue. And I was wasted so they gave me more work. Then they made me start helping the artist directly. And I worked my way up this way. The drummer was very serious about this, so he knew a lot about this. You can also do a show where you lose money but there's 3 main rules for this. 1. If you know a lot of people are going to see you, you might lose money at the start, but it might be worth it. 2. If it's something really important like an international label might see you. 3. When it's a "Bellura". So, when you go to a

beautiful place where you might eat well, sleep well, because in the end we're still human. And as a band we helped each other a lot also in deciding to not take a show. And it has to be the right moment. Maybe your son is going to be born in those moments. It's also about when the artist can. We wanted to go to America because that was where Rock was born. There's a lot that can be learnt from this and also for this reason it's important to go overseas. Because the way we grow up is different, from the food we eat to what we do, learning how the musical culture you come from came to be is important. If you're going to do Rock and Roll, either you pretend, or you really go see how it's done, like any other job, if you're going to be a chef you have to go into a kitchen and see how it's done. So, when we arrived in China, we were a bit prepared. Only halfway though. Because culturally China is completely different. The fact that we couldn't talk, read, communicate, was a problem

Edoardo: Is it important for you to receive comprehensible feedback from a concert? I imagine that being in China you receive a different form of feedback, or you receive it in a different way.

Reepo: Absolutely. At the start we were wondering how the hell we would get feedback from our concerts. Plus, we make a sort of Funk-Rock, something a bit dancier, so we were wondering if it would work. Plus, with the way that China was described to us we had some pre-conceptions going in that maybe people wouldn't dance. We didn't speak a word of Chinese back then, but the music spoke for us. It doesn't have frontiers. Of course, there were people who spoke English and they understood me but in the end the people understood the music. In the end they understood me as a person through the music. Music has no boundaries. We also ended up having 2 contacts with 2 Chinese stars, and when we were there preparing a song together [for a show] it's not like I could tell him C major or D major or time signatures. We weren't able to speak so we communicate through music. And in the end, it was like playing with an Italian or someone who speaks English.

Edoardo: Would you say that it was somewhat freeform like a Jazz musician for example?

Reepo: No, that's what I'm trying to say, it wasn't freeform at all! It was arranged, with some improvisation but also with communication, like here's a hook, here heavier, here slow down. I couldn't tell him anything with words, all we needed was a look, or to start playing in a way. It was incredible. We understood each other and the fans understood each other. And it isn't true, the fans go crazy [dancing and reacting to the performance]. More than the Europeans. Maybe in Europe we're more used to it, maybe over there they see it less often, so they go crazy. But that's not even true, if you go to see how many venues there are in China, they have 4 times as many as us in Europe. There are many, many venues. Many clubs, and big ones.

Edoardo: Do you mind if I ask you a few more technical questions? For example, was your BPM fine, did you go faster or slower? Did you use particularly different chords or keys?

Reepo: No, no we don't change anything, not even the lyrics. Every song has an identity and while you can rearrange this identity you always do this in a way that makes it "appealing". So, it's not like because you change countries you change everything about a song. It's not like you go to France and they have the "French touch" so I make it a little more Funky. In America they have Rock and Roll so I play a little harder. My song is that which it is. It has its own identity.

Edoardo: So, when you toured in America you performed songs in Italian?

Reepo: Actually, we wrote our first song directly in English. I've never made a song in Italian. I knew I wanted to do tours overseas, so I had to make sure that I learnt English. And just being [overseas] your language gets better. But I still don't know much Chinese.

Edoardo: Have you ever done a recorded collaboration with a Chinese artist? How would you describe the process?

Reepo: Yes, the process was the same as usual actually. So, when we went to China we covered a few famous songs from the Chinese scene, rearranged, where we would sing

them half in English and half in Chinese. We studied the sound of the Chinese language (obviously I didn't pronounce it perfectly) but it worked as an homage, and somewhat broke down some barriers. And they loved it. And to tell you the truth I think that helped us a lot to get some buzz early on. So basically, in any concert we'd do 20 of our songs, and then we'd add on 1 or 2 of theirs. It's more about playing well. And that's the reason that word got around. An Italian band came, and they killed it. Americans, Brits and Russians have gone there but we were the ones who went and wanted to come back and do festivals, not just a show.

Edoardo: So, for you guys it's very important to have a physical presence overseas? Would you say it's the most important part of your marketing? Being presential.

Reepo: One of our issues is that we're not very good at social media. It's not a brag. So I don't do it. We show other parts of ourselves.

Edoardo: Do you think this is because of your audience's demographics?

Reepo: No, we have a very large age demographic. Especially in China, if you have 80,000 people coming to see you, you have everyone, kids, teenagers, adults. Keep in mind that China is weird from a social media standpoint, and distribution. There's no YouTube. They have Yupoo. There's no WhatsApp they have WeChat. There's no Twitter they have Weibo. And more. It's all fragmented. If you look for numbers for a huge artist you won't see 1,000,000,000 like on YouTube, you find them all over the place and if you sum them up you find 6 billion. We did an interview for one of the main TV channels while we were there, and 50 million people saw our interview live. Plus whoever saw on later that day. When we do Sanremo [Biggest music festival in Italy] we get 18 million, 15.

Edoardo: I guess you still have something of a social media presence through your fans?

Reepo: So then, by now it's not like we don't have a manager. After these tours management figures came out and helped us and at this point we took one of these offers

from the manager of one of these stars with whom we collaborated. He signed us to his label and his management. To be honest it's so complicated that I don't really know anything over there about what's going on [now that I have management]. It starts like a small family business and then it all grows. It's also very important that you decide whether or not you want to be a musician or a manager. A musician has his own manager, he wakes up and thinks about pushing his music when he brushes his teeth. Instead, if you want to be a manager you need to put the band first, because there aren't enough of these managers who really believe in and put their all in for their bands.

Edoardo: On to another thing, what percentage of your listeners do you think come from China.

Reepo: Like you said earlier, you just can't calculate it. Over there they don't care about tracking. But it's like 6 times as big as Europe in numbers of people. And it's organised but some things are just left to chance.

Edoardo: How long have you been touring in China?

Reepo: About 4, 5 years before COVID.

Edoardo: What percentage of tours do you do in China?

Reepo: It's a lot like a fire. The more you put in the more you receive. We could also play in Italy, or in Portugal, but if the same day they tell me that I can do a show in China where they'll pay the hotel, insurance, flights, all of it and you'll open for The Scorpions and you play in front of 80,000 people, where am I going to go? In China there's so much demand, you can play every day all year. So we go often. How can you say no to this? I wouldn't go for a festival, you go for a festival, and you put down other dates, so you end up staying away for a month. And when you start doing this you care less about doing small shows around Europe. Why should I do 800km by car to get 200 euros each? So we do more shows in China. Now we're promoting the album, so our price goes up. It's also very cyclical.

Edoardo: Where does most of your promotion go mainly? In what channels?

Reepo: In Italy we have our press office, so it goes into press magazine, online. Maybe on TV. And we do promo at different times by country. It depends on the tours and the finances. Right now, we're doing promo in Italy. It depends on where we get the money from in that moment. But also keep in mind that all bands are different, what's most important for one band might not be what's most important for another band. You have to see how it goes in each specific case. For us even though we realise Instagram is really important, Instagram isn't that important. So there's no single trick to finding success overseas. In China they don't even have Instagram without a VPN you know. Who really wants to see these things can find them? Not communicating is better than communicating better.

Edoardo: And what can you tell me about performing in China?

Reepo: Well first off performing on a stage is very different from performing in your room, or in front of your friends. It's like practicing football tricks by yourself and then playing a match. It's different, they won't even let you see the ball if you don't know how to play. Performing is really important for an artist. You need to feel comfortable. This is incredibly important. The best managers help do this; they make you feel comfortable. On the stage.

Edoardo: Do you have any other things you'd like to mention about your experience?

Reepo: Really the main things to take away are the amount of work put in and making contacts. We would really work most of the day calling people and organising the first days, and we would never give up a chance to make a new contact. They come in the most unlikely places, so any opportunity could net you a new gig or someone who can help you out. And even though we don't use socials that much it doesn't mean they're not important. But performing live and really being there is just a whole different thing. It's not like just being home, comfortable, going overseas means getting out of your

comfort zone. You get tired, sweaty, it's not like performing under your house. If it's raining, not raining you have to deal with all this. So yeah, concerts are really important. Because A. It gets you known, if you're good, and because you get better. It makes you a better musician and performer. And doing them overseas makes you get better much quicker. But also remember that all cases are different, there's no single way or cheat code to grow. But each band needs different things. Also, on one of our tours in China we had one member of our team who was supposed to come help us. But to get into China you can't have a criminal record. So, in the end he wasn't able to come and we had to find someone who could fill his spot for that tour. There are always some logistical things to see. That's actually also one of the reasons that we went. They saw that we didn't cause problems with the government, you know. We went by their rules and didn't cause issues. That was really one of the reasons why they liked us. We didn't go against their censorship. Because they check where you go when you go around. You have to be somewhat careful about what you say. You have to be reliable, and they look for reliable partners. We're quite professional and we never skipped a concert or got too drunk or anything, so we didn't have any problems really. Rock and Roll isn't breaking hotel rooms and getting wasted, you do that when you can afford to. We do other fun things, but we avoid being late and making a bad impression. It's very important to understand the culture you are going into. And to remember that music is your job. It can be fun and all but at the end of the day you need to take it seriously. The first person to believe in your music has to be you. So, you have to work like it. If you have a restaurant, you can't just not open up because you were drunk last night. Think about it, if you're a promoter would you rather work with someone who is always late and trashes his room or the ones who are serious. This goes for everywhere. Maybe you have a few clear requests, but they need to be clear and translated. Not 400 things, you need to ask for the main 4 things that you really need. If you see that communicating is already difficult be clear.

Edoardo: The last thing that I think I'd like to ask you, even though it seems unlikely that you'll be able to answer given what we talked about; are there any specific lyrical themes that you think work best over there [in China]? Like Love songs maybe being better accepted than something more aggressive?

Reepo: No, I wouldn't really say so. For the lyrics, you still have to keep in mind that most people really don't speak that much English.

Edoardo: Are the songs that are the most popular over there the same ones that are the most popular over here?

Reepo: Look, more or less I guess. It also kind of depends on the context in which it's being played. Whether it's on stage or at home. We have certain songs that were really made for the stage and when we play them people really go crazy. But the most important thing on the stage is play the crowd. Your show has to have ups and downs, it can't always be at 100%. So you have to give the crowd some time to rest, you can't always keep going up. You give them a crazy song then you slow down, so you need a wide repertoire. It's like a war movie, it's not all bullets, you need some intrigue. But at the end of the day you still need to show some bullets [referring to more high BPM energetic songs and crowd favourites]. If you don't manage to synchronize with the crowd. If you're able to conduct the crowd you can take them where you want. You can't go crazy the whole time. So when talking about which songs are the most successful there, it's about [in the live show] playing them at the right moment. For this reason more or less it's the same songs that really work in both countries. Because I play them in the right moment, maybe if I played them in a different moment it wouldn't have the same effect. And you know performing overseas things still change. You can't do the same vocalisations everywhere. Whereas in Italy I might say "su le mani" [put your hands up] the same thing doesn't work in England and you end up feeling like an idiot. So maybe instead of interrupting the crowd as much in China, we find a few things that work and maybe we're a bit more quiet. The important bit is doing the show. The important thing is performing well in the end.

Edoardo: Thank you so much again Reepo.

Appendix B. Tables and statistics

Table 1: Global Top Artists and Albums 2020 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2021)

Top Artists 2020	Genre	Nationality	Top Albums 2020	Genre	Nationality
BTS	K-pop	Korean	BTS - Off the Map	K-pop	Korean
Taylor Swift	Pop, Folk	American	The Weeknd - After Hours	R&B, Hip-hop, Pop	Canadian
Drake	Hip-hop	Canadian	Billie Eilish - WWFAWDWG	Pop, R&B	American
The Weeknd	R&B, Hip-hop	Canadian	BTS - Be (Deluxe)	K-pop	Korean
Billie Eilish	Pop, R&B	American	Harry Styles - Fine Line	Pop	British
Eminem	Hip-hop	American	Post Malone - Hollywood's Bleeding	Pop, Hip-hop	American
Post Malone	Pop, Hip-hop	American	Kenshi Yonezu - Stray Sheep	J-pop	Japanese
Ariana Grande	Pop, R&B	American	Justin Beiber - Changes	Pop, R&B	Canadian
Juice Wrld	Hip-hop	American	Taylor Swift - Folklore	Pop, Folk	American
Justin Beiber	Pop	Canadian	Dua Lipa - Future Nostalgia	Pop	American
Most common genre	Pop/Hip-Hop		Most common genre	Pop	

Table 2: Global Top Songs 2020 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2021)

Top Songs 2020	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
The Weeknd - Blinding Lights	R&B, Hip-hop, Pop	C# major	171	Canadian
Tones and I - Dance monkey	Pop	F# minor	98	Australian
Roddy Ricch - The box	Hip-hop	B flat minor	117	American
Saint Jhn - Roses	R&B	F minor	102	American
Dua Lipa - Don't start now	Pop	B minor	124	American
Future (ft. Drake) - Life is Good	Hip-hop	D minor	142	American/Canadian
Xiao Zhan - Made to love	C-pop	B major	94	Chinese
Dababy (ft. Roddy Ricch) - Rockstar	Hip-hop	B major	90	American
Billie Eilish - Bad Guy	Pop, R&B	G major	135	American
BTS - Dynamite	K-pop	F# minor	114	Korean
Most common genre	Hip-hop/Pop	Average BPM	118.7	

Table 3: Global Top Artists and Albums 2019 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2020)

Top Artists 2019	Genre	Nationality	Top Albums 2019	Genre	Nationality
Taylor Swift	Pop, Folk	American	Arashi - 5x20 all the best!! 1999 - 2019	J-pop	Japanese
Ed Sheeran	Pop	British	Taylor Swift - Lover	Pop, Folk	American
Post Malone	Pop, Hip-hop	American	BTS - Map of the soul: persona	K-pop	Korean
Billie Eilish	Pop	American	Lady Gaga - A star is born OST	Pop	American
Queen	Rock	American	Billie Eilish - WWFAWDWG	Pop	American
Ariana Grande	Pop, R&B	American	Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody	Rock	American
BTS	K-pop	Korean	Ed Sheeran - No.6 collaborations project	Pop	British
Drake	Hip-hop	Canadian	Ariana Grande - Thank u, next	Pop, R&B	American
Lady Gaga	Pop	American	Rammstein - Rammstein	Metal	German
The Beatles	Pop, Rock	British	The Beatles - Abbey Road	Pop, Rock	British
Most common genre	Pop		Most common genre	Pop	

Table 4: Global Top Songs 2019 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2020)

Top Songs 2019	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
Billie Eilish - Bad guy	Pop, Hip-hop	G major	135	American
Lil Nas X - Old town road	Pop, Hip-hop	C sharp major	136	American
Shawn Mendes, Camilla Cabello - Senorita	Pop	A minor	117	American
Post Malone, Swae Lee - Sunflower	Pop, R&B	D major	90	American
Ariana Grande - 7 Rings	Pop, R&B	C sharp minor	140	American
Tones and I - Dance Monkey	Pop	F sharp minor	98	Australian
Ed Sheeran, Justin Bieber - I don't care	Pop	F sharp major	102	British/American
Lady Gaga, Bradley Cooper - Shallow	Pop	G major	95	American
Lewis Capaldi - Someone you loved	Indie	C sharp major	110	Scottish
Halsey - Without me	Pop	F sharp major	136	American
Most common genre	Pop	Average BPM	115.9	

Table 5: Global Top Artists and Albums 2018 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2019)

Top Artists 2018	Genre	Nationality	Top Albums 2018	Genre	Nationality
Ed Sheeran	Pop	British	Ed Sheeran - ÷	Pop	British
Drake	Hip-hop	Canadian	Taylor Swift - Reputation	Pop, Folk	American
Taylor Swift	Pop, Folk	American	P!nk - Beautiful trauma	Pop	American
Kendrick Lamar	Hip-hop	American	Rag'n'bone man - Human	Pop	British
Eminem	Hip-hop	American	Sam Smith - The thrill of it all	Pop	British
Bruno Mars	Pop, Funk	American	U2 - Songs of experience	Pop, Rock	American
The Weeknd	Pop	Canadian	Kendrick Lamar - Damn.	Hip-hop	American
Imagine Dragons	Pop	American	Eminem - Revival	Hip-hop	American
Linkin Park	Pop, Rock	American	Harry Styles - Harry Styles	Pop	British
The Chainsmokers	Pop, EDM	American	Bruno Mars - 24k magic	Pop, Funk	American
Most common genre	Pop		Most common genre	Pop	

Table 6: Global Top Songs 2018 (International Federation of the Phonographic Industry 2019)

Top Songs 2018	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
Ed Sheeran - Shape of you	Pop	C sharp minor	96	British
Luis Fonsi - Despacito	Reggaeton	D major	89	Puerto Rican
The Chainsmokers & Coldplay - Something just like this	Pop	A flat major	95	American
Bruno Mars - That's what I like	Pop, Funk	C sharp major	134	American
The Chainsmokers - Closer	Pop, EDM	A flat major	95	American
Kendrick Lamar - Humble	Hip-hop	C sharp minor	150	American
Charlie Puth - Attention	Pop	E flat minor	100	British
DJ Khaled - I'm the one	Pop, Hip-hop	G major	81	American
Ed Sheeran - Perfect	Pop	A flat major	95	British
Imagine Dragons - Believer	Pop	B flat minor	125	American
Most common genre	Pop	Average BPM	106	

Table 7: Bestselling Italian Music Artists of All Time (Statista 2014)

Bestselling Italian Artists - All time	Genre
Mina	Cantautorato
Adriano Celentano	Cantautorato, Rock
Patty Pravo	IT-pop
Luciano Pavarotti	Opera
Toto Cugino	Cantautorato
Andrea Bocelli	Opera
Milvia	Chanson, Folk
Umberto Tozzi	Pop, Rock
Pooh	Pop, Rock
Ennio Morricone	Soundtracks
Most common genre	Cantautorato, Rock

Table 8: Bestselling Italian Albums of 2020 (FIMI 2022)

Marracash - Persona	Hip-hop	Italian
Sfera Ebbasta - Famoso	Hip-hop	Italian
Tha Supreme - 23 6451	Hip-hop	Italian
Ghali - DNA	Hip-hop	Italian
Guè Pequeno - Mr. Fini	Hip-hop	Italian
Ernia - Gemelli	Hip-hop	Italian
Tiziano Ferro - Acetto Miracoli	Cantautorato, It-pop	Italian
Pinguini Tattici Nucleari - Fuori dall' hype	Indie	Italian
Me contro te - Il fantadisco dei me contro te	Soundtrack, For Children	Italian
Tedua - Vita vera mixtape: aspettando la divina comedia	Hip-hop	Italian
Most common genre	Hip-hop	

Table 9: Bestselling Italian Songs of 2020 (FIMI 2022)

Top Songs 2020	Genre	Key	BPM	Naitonality
Boombabash & Alessandra Amoroso - Karaoke	Reggaeton	C sharp major	122	Italian
Ana Mena & Rocco Hunt - A un passo dalla luna	Pop, Hip-hop, Reggaeton	B flat major	122	Spanish/Italian
Irama - Mediterranea	Reggaeton	B major	130	Italian
Ernia - Superclassico	Hip-hop	B major	150	Italian
Ghali - Good times	Hip-hop	E minor	109	Italian
Shablo, Geolier & Sfera Ebbasta - M' Manc	Hip-hop, Reggaeton	F sharp minor	140	Italian/Argentinian
Purple Disco Machine & Sophie and the giants - Hypnotized	Pop	B minor	108	German/English
The Weeknd - Blinding Lights	R&B, Hip-hop, Pop	C sharp major	171	Canadian
Saint Jhn - Roses	R&B	F minor	102	American
Guè Pequeno, Rose Villain & Luchè - Chico	Hip-hop	C minor	145	Italian
Most common genre	Hip-hop	Average BPM	129.9	

Table 10: Bestselling Italian Albums of 2019 (FIMI 2022)

Top Albums 2019	Genre	Nationality
Ultimo - Colpa delle favole	Cantautorato	Italian
Salmo - Playlist live	Hip-hop	Italian
Machete - Machete mixtape 4	Hip-hop	Italian
Ultimo - Peter Pan	Cantautorato, Pop	Italian
Marracash - Persona	Hip-hop	Italian
Ligabue - Start	IT-pop, Rock	Italian
Fedez - Paranoia airlines	Hip-hop	Italian
Marco Mengoni - Atlantico on tour	IT-pop	Italian
Tiziano Ferro - Accetto Miracoli	Cantautorato	Italian
Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody (O.S.T.)	Rock	American
Most common genre	Hip-hop	

Table 11: Bestselling Italian Songs of 2019 (FIMI 2022)

Top songs 2019	Genre	Key	BPM	Naitonality
Fred de Palma ft. Ana Mena - Una volta ancora	Pop, Reggaeton	A flat major	124	Italian/Spanish
Coez - E sempre bello	Indie	A flat major	111	Italian
Pedro Capò - Calma (Remix)	Reggaeton	B minor	127	Puerto Rican
Mahmood - Soldi	Hip-hop	E flat minor	95	Italian
Charlie Charles (with Dardust) ft. Sfera Ebbasta, Mahmood & Fabbri Fibbra) - Calipse	Pop, Reggaeton, Hip-hop	F sharp minor	112	Italian
Benji & Fedè - Dove e quando	Pop	C sharp major	125	Italian
Daddy Yankee ft. Snow - Con Calma	Reggaeton	A flat minor	94	Puerto Rican/Canadian
Bondabash - Per un Milione	Reggaeton	G minor	86	Italian
Takagi & Ketra, Omi & Giusi Ferrari - Jambo	Reggaeton	B minor	118	Italian/Jamaican
Ultimo - I tuoi particolari	Cantautorato, Pop	C major	136	Italian
Most common genre	Reggaeton	Average BPM	113	

Table 12: Bestselling Italian Albums of 2018 (FIMI 2022)

Top Albums 2018	Genre	Nationality
Sfera Ebbasta - Rockstar	Hip-hop	Italian
Irama - Plume	Cantautorato	Italian
Laura Pausini - Fatti Sentire	Cantautorato	Italian
Salmo - Playlist	Hip-hop	Italian
Maneskin - Il ballo della vita	IT-pop, IT-Rock	Italian
Capo Plaza - 20	Hip-hop	Italian
Ultimo - Peter Pan	Cantautorato	Italian
Benji & Fedè - Siamo solo noise	IT-pop	Italian
Gemitaiz - Davide	Hip-hop	Italian
Ed Sheeran - ÷	Pop	British
Most common genre	Hip-hop	

Table 13: Bestselling Italian Songs of 2018 (FIMI 2022)

Top Songs 2018	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
Takagi & Ketra ft. Giusy Ferrari & Sean Kingston - Amore e capocria	Reggaeton	D minor	120	Italian/American
Ed Sheeran - Perfect	Pop	A flat major	95	British
Sfera Ebbasta ft. Quavo - Cupido	Hip-hop	E minor	120	Italian/American
Capo Plaza ft. Sfera Ebbasta & Dego - Tesla	Hip-hop	B major	140	Italian
J-az & Fedez - Italiana	Pop, Hip-hop	F minor	122	Italian
Irama - Nera	Pop	C major	134	Italian
Alvaro Soler - La cintura	Pop	F sharp minor	100	Spanish
Nicky Jam & J. Balvin - X	Reggaeton	A minor	90	American/Puerto Rican
Ghali - Cara Italia	Pop, Hip-hop	F sharp minor	111	Italian
Baby K - Da zero a cento	Reggaeton	E flat minor	92	Italian
Most common genre	Pop	Average BPM	112	

Table 14: Bestselling Italian Albums of 2017 (FIMI 2022)

Top Albums 2017	Genre	Nationality
Ed Sheeran - ÷	Pop	British
J-ax & Fedez - Comunisti col rolex	Hip-hop	Italian
Riki - Perdo le parole	Cantautorato	Italian
Minacelentano - Le Migliori	Cantautorato	Italian
Ghali - Album	Hip-hop	Italian
Tiziano Ferro - Il mestiere della vita	Cantautorato	Italian
Jovanotti - Oh, vita!	Cantautorato	Italian
Vasco Rossi - Vascononstop	Cantautorato	Italian
Fabri Fibra - Fenomeno	Hip-hop	Italian
Guè Pequeno - Gentleman	Hip-hop	Italian
Most common genre	Cantautorato	

Table 15: Bestselling Italian Songs of 2017 (FIMI 2022)

Top Songs 2017	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
Luis Fonsi & Dady Yankee - Despacito	Reggaeton	D major	89	Puerto Rican
Ed Sheeran - Shape of you	Pop	C sharp minor	96	British
J-ax & Fedez ft. T-pain - Senza Pagare	Pop, Hip-hop	F sharp major	96	Italian
The Chainsmokers & Coldplay - Something just like this	Pop, EDM	B minor	103	American/British
Clean Bandit ft. Sean Paul & Anne Marie - Rockabye	Pop	A minor	102	British/Jamaican
Francesco Gabbani - Occidentali's Karma	Pop	B flat major	114	Italian
Enrique Iglesias ft. Descemer Bueno, Zion & Lennox - Subeme la radio	Reggaeton	C major	91	Spanish/Cuban/Puerto Rican
Coez - La musica non c'è	Indie	C major	136	Italian
Ed Sheeran - Perfect	Pop	A flat major	95	British
Imagine Dragons - Thunder	Pop	C major	168	American
Most common genre	Pop	Average BPM	109	

Table 16: Bestselling Italian Albums of 2016 (FIMI 2022)

Top Albums 2016	Genre	Nationality
Minacelentano - Le migliori	Cantautorato	Italian
Tiziano Ferro - Il mestiere della vita	Cantautorato	Italian
Ligabue - Made in Italy	IT-pop	Italian
Vasco Rossi - Vascononstop	Cantautorato	Italian
Alessandra Amoroso - Vivere a colo	IT-pop, Soul	Italian
Laura Pausini - Laura Xmas	Cantautorato	Italian
Modà - Passione Maledetta	IT-pop	Italian
Coldplay - A head full of dreams	Pop	British
Zucchero - Black cat	Cantautorato	Italian
Benji & Fede - 0+	Pop	Italian
Most common genre	Cantautorato	

Table 17: Bestselling Italian Songs of 2016 (FIMI 2022)

Top Songs 2016	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
Sia - Cheap Thrills	Pop	F sharp minor	90	American
Alan Walker - Faded	EDM, Electronic	F sharp major	90	Norwegian
Alvaro Soler - Sofía	Latin Pop	D major	128	Spanish
Coldplay - Hymn for the weekend	Pop	C minor	90	American
J-ax & Fedez - Vorrei ma non posso	Pop, Hip-hop	A major	96	Italian
Enrique Iglesias ft. Wisin - Duele el corazón	Latin Pop	A flat minor	91	Spanish/Puerto Rico
Mike Posner - I took a pill in Ibiza	EDM, Electronic	B flat major	74	American
Drake ft. Wizkid & Kyla - One dance	Hip-hop, Dancehall	B flat minor	104	Canadian/Nigerian/British
Lukas Graham - 7 years	Pop, Soul	B flat major	120	Danish
J. Balvin - Ginza	Reggaeton	F minor	102	Puerto Rican
Most common genre	Pop	Average BPM	99	

Table 18: Bestselling English Language Albums in China on Digital Platforms as of August 2021 (Saoju 2022)

Top English Language Albums in China on Digital Music Platforms (All Time)	Genre	Nationality	Year Of Release
Taylor Swift - Lover	Pop	American	2019
Taylor Swift - 1989	Pop	American	2014
Taylor Swift - Reputation	Pop, Folk	American	2017
Taylor Swift - Folklore	Pop, Folk	American	2020
Justin Bieber - Justice (China Special Deluxe)	Pop, R&B	Canadian	2021
Justin Bieber - Changes	Pop, R&B	Canadian	2020
Taylor Swift - Evermore	Pop, Folk	American	2021
Eminem - Kamikaze	Hip-hop	American	2018
Ariana Grande - Thank u, next	Pop, R&B	American	2019
Imagine Dragons - Origins	Pop, Pop-rock	American	2018
Most common genre	Pop		

Table 19: Bestselling Artists in China on Digital Platforms as of August 2021 (Saoju 2022)

Top Selling Artists in China on Digital Music Platforms	Genre	Nationality
Taylor Swift	Pop, Folk	American
Xiao Zhan	C-pop	Chinese
Cai Xukun	C-pop	Chinese
Zhang Lay	Pop, EDM	Chinese
Luhan	K-pop	Korean
Lin Junjie	Pop	Singaporean
Wang Yibo	C-pop	Chinese
Hua Chenyu	C-pop, C-rock	Chinese
Jay Chou	C-pop	Taiwanese
Li Yuchun	C-pop	Chinese
Most common genre	C-pop	

Table 20: Bestselling Albums in China on Digital Music Platforms 2020 (Saoju 2022)

Top Albums 2020	Genre	Nationality
Zhang Lay - Lotus	Pop, EDM	Chinese
Hua Chenyu - New World	C-pop, C-rock	Chinese
Blackpink - The Album	K-pop	Korean
Taylor Swift - Folklore (Deluxe version)	Pop, Folk	American
Huang Minghao - 18	C-pop, Hip-hop	Chinese
JJ Lin - Survivor Drifter	Pop, C-pop	Singaporean
BonBon Girl 303 - Hard Candy Law	C-pop	Chinese
Justin Bieber - Changes	Pop	Canadian
Chen Linong - Out of Place	C-pop	Taiwanese
Fan Chengcheng - EMERGING	C-pop	Chinese
Taylor Swift - Evermore (Deluxe version)	Pop, Folk	American
Most common genre	C-pop	

Table 21: Bestselling Songs in China on Digital Music Platforms 2022 (Saoju 2022)

Xiao Zhan - Light Spot	C-pop	B major	94	Chinese
Wang Yibo - Rules of my World	Pop, C-pop	G minor	75	Chinese
Jay Chou - Mojito	C-pop, R&B, Rap, Rock	C major	115	Taiwanese
JJ Lin - Exchange for the Rest of my Life	Pop, C-pop	D major	130	Singaporean
Blackpink - How do you Like that	K-pop	E flat minor	130	Korean
Zhang Yunlei - Worry	C-pop, Pop	F sharp minor	127	Chinese
Wang Yibo - Xiwei	C-pop, K-pop, Hip-hop	F sharp minor	104	Chinese
Meng Meiqi - Love Not Love	C-pop	A major	66	Chinese
Blackpink ft. Selena Gomez - Ice Cream	K-pop, Pop	E major	80	Korean/American
IU ft. Suga of BTS - 에잇	K-pop	C sharp major	120	Korean
Dynamite - BTS	K-pop	E major	114	Korean
Most common genre	C-pop	Average BPM	105	

Table 22: Bestselling Albums in China on Digital Music Platforms 2019 (Saoju 2022)

Top Albums 2019	Genre	Nationality
R1SE - It's about to explode loudly	C-pop	Chinese
Taylor Swift - Lover	Pop, Folk	American
Li Yuchun - Wow	C-pop	Chinese
NINE PERCENT - Limited memory	C-pop	Chinese
Jackson Wang - Mirrors	R&B, Hip-hop	Chinese
Rocket Girl 101 - Li Feng	C-pop	Chinese
BLACKPINK - KILL THIS LOVE	K-pop	Korean
BTS - Map of the soul: persona	K-pop	Korean
Ariana Grande - Thank u, next	Pop, R&B	American
EXO - OBSESSION-The 6th album	K-pop	Korean

Table 23: Bestselling Songs in China on Digital Music Platforms 2019 (Saoju 2022)

Top Songs 2019	Genre	Key	BPM	Nationality
Hua Chenyu - I really want to love this world	C-pop, C-Rock	C Major	80	Chinese
Wang Yibo - No feeling	C-pop, K-pop	E Flat Minor	100	Chinese
Jay Chou & Mayday Ashin - Say good not to cry	C-pop, Hip-hop, R&B	B Flat Major	76	Chinese
JJ Lin - The story of us	C-pop, Dance-pop	E Flat Major	135	Chinese
Chen Linong - Half of it is me	C-pop	F Sharp Major	120	Chinese
Lin Yanjun - Just right wound	C-pop	E Flat Major	84	Taiwanese
Zhang Yunlei - Yu zhen	C-pop	F Sharp Major	94	Chinese
Lin Yanjun - Opponent	C-pop	A Flat Minor	100	Chinese
JJ Lin - Better Days	C-pop, Dance-pop	C Major	97	Chinese
Wu Yi fan (Aka Kris Wu) - Breaking dawn	C-pop, Hip-hop	E Flat Major	138	Chinese/Canadian