

Popular Music Memories

Places and Practices of Popular Music Heritage, Memory and Cultural Identity

Popmuziekherinneringen

Plaatsen en praktijken van popmuziekerfgoed, cultureel geheugen en identiteit

Thesis

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By Arno van der Hoeven

1. Popular music memories are inextricably intertwined with processes of social remembering. For this reason, the memory practices of the cultural and heritage industries affect the content and form of popular music memories. *(this PhD thesis)*
2. Popular music memories can both afford and constrain identity construction. Although they offer a sense of belonging and identity through their connections to experiences of time and place, this potential can also be inhibited. For example, copyright, a lack of accuracy and forms of exclusion may constrain engagements with popular music's past. *(this PhD thesis)*
3. Non-professionals like fans and collectors have an important role to play in the preservation of popular music's past. However, this does not mean that the custody of popular music's heritage should be left to amateurs alone. *(this PhD thesis)*
4. Nostalgia may be regressive or conservative, but is not necessarily so. Nostalgia can be a meaningful way of questioning contemporary sociocultural developments, providing inspiration for the future. *(this PhD thesis)*
5. Local and national cultural institutions matter, including in a 'participation society' and at times of globalization. They provide expertise and a necessary infrastructure for local sociocultural practices.
6. Popular music is a multigenerational cultural form, implying that feelings of nostalgia are not only reserved to the elderly and nor is openness to new music the preserve of the young. *(this PhD thesis)*
7. The vinyl revival illustrates that technologies and media evoke memories and a sense of time. This is one of the reasons why new technologies co-exist with old ones instead of simply replacing them.
8. Archiving the past is often driven by a desire for recognition in the future.
9. The complex sociocultural interrelations between places are obvious from the fact that what is considered to be the first Dutch rock'n'roll single¹ is a song released by a Belgium record label. The piece was written by four brothers born in the Dutch Indies who moved to Netherlands, broke through in the Hawaiian Village of the 1958 Brussels World Fair and achieved most success in Germany, where American soldiers living on US Army bases liked their rock'n'roll sound.
10. If Simon Reynolds (2011) is right in saying that 'we live in a pop age gone loco for retro and crazy for commemoration', then I may have inadvertently contributed to further cultural decline by studying popular music as a form of cultural heritage.
11. Ah, but I was so much older then / I'm younger than that now *(Bob Dylan)*.

¹ *Rock Little Baby of Mine* by the Tielman Brothers. See Mutsaers (1990) for a history of this band.