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**A CLUBLAND DIVIDED: MUSIC AND CULTURAL
IDENTITY IN DURBAN'S DANCECLUBS
1980-2000**

This thesis has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree of
Master of Arts in the Faculty of Human Sciences
at the University of Natal, Durban

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DECLARATION

This study represents the original work of the author and has not been submitted in any form to another University. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis introduces the reader to the evolution of the danceclub phenomenon in the city of Durban during the years 1980 to 2000. It is an evolution which is characterized by a fact that has been obscured and constructed by the historical processes of South Africa. This fact is the extent to which people were separated by the mechanisms of apartheid and the manner in which this separation seems to be perpetuated at present in the space of the danceclub. For this reason, the bulk of this thesis (contained in Chapter 2) consists in tracking the historical progression of danceclubs within each cultural grouping, during a particularly fluctuating historical period of South Africa.

The thesis attempts to express the implicit role of music in the identity of people and also focuses on the difficulty in communicating the relationship that people have with music. The danceclub is the site par excellence where music is consumed and, as result, it is the most unique opportunity for one to observe the relationship that various cultural groups as well as the individual have with music.

It is thus the intention of this thesis to understand the manner in which the music played at various danceclubs during the period researched has managed to construct and articulate the cultural identity of the group in question, as they choose to be entertained. Further it is also an initial attempt at expressing cultural identity as music.

Introduction

It's an insidious hand-me down of the past. Durban was one of S.A.'s first cities to move to urban apartheid practice, despite consistent protests and defiance campaigns, and one of the last to move to a post-apartheid order. Divided socially and geographically along racial lines, not much has changed. People in Durban seem strangely afraid to step outside the boundaries once circumscribed for them, and which now are apparently self imposed. (Lauren Shantall in SL, July 1998)

The above quote serves as a starting point for this piece of research into the modern danceclub phenomenon as it has developed in recent times in Durban. Given the lack of traditional literary references and resources due to the novelty and uniqueness of the subject matter, it is important to acknowledge the preliminary nature of the research. As a point of reference, the above journalist is referring to the distinct lack of cross-cultural integration amongst the variety of danceclubs in Durban. When referring to the danceclub, I am speaking of that contemporary phenomenon which is a space dedicated to dancing under artificial lights with amplified sound.

Shantall seems concerned with the fact that the boundaries, which at one time legally divided race groups, are now being perpetuated out of choice in the contemporary danceclub environment. It is the broad aim of this research to uncover reasons for this being the case and further to attempt to understand the role of music in the existence of these boundaries as well as the cultural identity of the race group or the market that the danceclub caters for. A deeper question could query the notion of whether these previous, legally enforced boundaries are in fact real in a contemporary context or whether they manifest as a result of cultural difference.



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I chose 1980 as a benchmark to start from because of the number of dedicated danceclubs that had started to grow in Durban during the 1970s. I am not saying that nightclubs or danceclubs in the format that I have referred to as contemporary did not exist prior to 1980. However, certain venues and clubs operating at the time and the discernible trends emanating from their activities set the precedent for the modern danceclub phenomenon and nightclub industry as it exists in Durban today. The twenty-year period researched spans a time of fluctuating fortunes and tides reflected in the different life circumstances of each market or race group.

Methodology

As mentioned before, due to the lack of literary sources on the subject matter, it is appropriate to explain the methodology of the most valid and reliable reference source that I have encountered thus far so as to contrast it with mine. In researching clubbing in the U.K. where contemporary club culture is fully entrenched, Ben Malbon (1999:32) chose to access the largest general group of clubbers and selected clubbing experiences that he believed he would have the least problems in accessing and gaining understanding of relatively quickly. His primary concern was attaining an equal relationship with interviewees so as not appear as an outsider. He believed his background as a casual clubber verified his credentials and made his interest genuine and empathic to his subjects. His second concern was ease of access regarding being a researcher in the clubbing fraternity.

Fortunately my experience within danceclubs began in 1995 when I started to collect records and teach myself how to DJ electronic dance music. It is not possible to be a DJ in a vacuum and consequently I became involved at various levels of production and organization within Durban's growing electronic dance music culture. This allowed my approach to be from the perspective of an

l levels. This knowledge and experience
e relevant people who operated within the

clubbing industry at the organisational/next level, often because (I had either):

1. Worked with or for these people or,
2. Established contact with them as a result of my work in the local popular culture magazine/publishing industry or,
3. They were simply friends with similar experience in the field from past years.

The methodology includes interviewing club owners and managers, DJs, record company representatives, record store owners, journalists and music producers, which forms the basis of my investigation due to the lack of other reliable resources. This does raise the possibility on an interpretive dilemma with regards to remaining objective and thus I have included all interviews conducted in the appendix as reference material.

Relevant terminology

The music that is played in danceclubs is part of the popular music format. It varies according to audience, genre and location but popular music is considered amongst musicologists as not worthy of study because its purpose is its end. Having said that, jazz is considered a ~~serious~~ music form worthy of study and as a result I am not considering jazz clubs. Further, we need to be aware of the relativity of such popular music. What may be popular music in one location may be the total opposite or referred to as ~~underground~~ in another location.

Distinctions such as commercial or mainstream as opposed to underground, fringe or progressive are necessary when describing aspects such as the value, sincerity and support of a danceclub's market or ethnic group. Here, as well, I feel it is necessary to say that the terms, market and race group, become interchangeable when referring to danceclubs because, in general, the economic status of most danceclub audiences coincides with the cultural identity of the race group for which that club is catering.



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...e research is to unearth the role that music has played in danceclub spaces (as they exist in Durban) in articulating the cultural identity of the market for which the club itself caters. The first chapter sets the theoretical parameters of writing about music and the interlocking nature of the relationship between music and identity. The second chapter unfolds the story of the danceclub phenomenon as it developed over the twenty year period researched. The third and final chapter draws together the manner in which the clubbing experience in Durban has managed to construct and articulate the identities of the various club-going groups as cultural identities.

Chapter 1

The acknowledgement of popular music as a subject of study has been a fairly recent occurrence, gaining recognition as a result of the pioneering work done by the Birmingham School of Cultural Studies in the early 1970s. However, the study of popular music is a field fraught with conceptual and methodological difficulties. These stem from conflicting beliefs as to the value of popular music. Simon Frith (1987:133) characterises the academic discussion of the value of popular music as taking the following syllogistic form:

Serious/classical music is meant to transcend social forces (i.e. has value in and of itself).

Social forces (of production and consumption) determine popular music.

Therefore, popular music has no value outside of these social forces.

Frith (1987) reverses this logic by stating that transcendence is a characteristic which marks music's patterning by social forces and not their freedom from them (1987:144). It is the fact that ~~no~~ everyone in the pop world is aware of the social forces that determine ~~normal~~pop music . a good record, song or sound is precisely one that transcends these forces!+(Frith 1987:136)

Writing about music

As a medium, music is very difficult to characterise in words, let alone account for its effect. "Music relies on events and inflections occurring on many interdependent levels (melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, texture, etc) simultaneously. Each of these has something of a syntactical dimension . a grammar of expectations, normal continuity, etc . and also a wide-open semiotic dimension." (McClary and Walser, 1990:278) This rather technical explanation of music could be a starting point for describing the conceptual difficulties facing

the links between specific cultural or ethnic
of music which they appropriate and enjoy.

However, that particular task "is made even more difficult by the fact that the music of one's own culture seems completely transparent" (McClary and Walser, 1990:278). It is the job of sociologists studying music to document the manifest effects of music and its processes, either on themselves or on other listeners but there is a point where sociologists cannot explain how the medium accomplishes its effects. In particular, when it comes to relating and documenting the links between the music of one's own culture, the process is obscured by the fact the one's music *is* one's culture. At this point, sociologists turn to musicologists in order to "reconstruct those levels of mediation which have always seemed so transparent. And these levels of mediation cannot easily be explained in words that mean anything to the listener" (McClary and Walser, 1990:278).

Musicologists are defined into two groups, historians and theorists. The one works with names, dates and places while the other group works with musical structures in accordance with a strict methodology but both are dedicated to "the painstaking reconstruction, preservation and transmission of a canon of great European masterworks" (McClary and Walser, 1990:278). Consequently, the autonomous nature and *a priori* greatness of their subject matter are assumed. As such, the musicologist who wishes to work in the field of popular music is confronted with substantial methodological problems. The musicologist who wishes to engage in the study of any popular, non-%serious" music is immediately going against the central tenets of the discipline that defines his/her practice.

Further, the musicologists who study popular music often attempt to apply the ideological principles of their discipline, which stems from this assumption of the greatness and autonomy of classical music, to a very different subject matter. This includes calls for an aesthetic of popular music. McClary and Walser (1990) argue that "insofar as the traditional agenda of aesthetics is tied to appeals to universal consensus that eliminate the possibility of political struggle over

per se are incompatible with studies that treat (1990:281). This characterisation of the

anachronistic attitude towards the aesthetic and hence, value of popular music also translates into questioning the significance of music as a social medium. Shepherd (1991), on the other hand, embarks on a detailed analysis in order to establish the theoretical feasibility of music articulating socially mediated messages through sound (1991:7).

In earlier work, Frith (1987) argues that the sociological approach, in fact, makes an aesthetic theory of popular music possible. As mentioned above, Frith's argument rests on the fact that successful pop music defines its own aesthetic standard through its transcendence of social forces and consequently, transcendence is an issue that is important for the aesthetics of both popular music as well as serious/classical music. Later, Frith (1996) states that the aesthetic describes the quality of the musical experience and that the high/low distinction is irrelevant. Just because popular music is incorporated into aspects of our lives at both an obvious and subliminal level through various communication media, it does not mean that popular music does not have more or less meaning or relevance to the listener than classical/serious music does i.e. % becomes apparent that the high/low distinction doesn't really concern the nature of the art object, or how it is produced, but refers to different modes of *perception*.+(Frith 1996:114)

The significance of music as a social medium

Institutionalised musicology's major criticism of popular music is the fact that because social forces determine popular music i.e. that which is beyond it, it has no value in and of itself. Classical or serious music which is the subject of institutionalised musicology's precise method, is created and exists for the sake of itself as music and thus, it is argued, has a transcendent, aesthetic value. The music that is the focus of ethnomusicology has value because of its expressive

of specific ethnic groups. By extension then, music's value suggests that because of its reliance upon the productive and consumptive patterns of society and because of its inherent sociality, it cannot have any aesthetic value. Hence, any attempt to engender the possibility of an aesthetic of popular music must begin by describing the significance of music as a social medium.

Shepherd (1991:5) believes in the study of all music as music i.e. stressing the centrality of sound to music as a social phenomenon as opposed to the arbitrariness which characterizes the structural relationship between sound and language. If human language helps to facilitate a distinction between thought and the world, then other partially arbitrary modes of communication (such as music) remind us of our connectedness to the world by means of their materiality. As such, Shepherd argues that the sound of music is heavily implicated in the process of meaning construction although not in a determining fashion (1991:7).

A central assumption of Shepherd's argument is the view that meaning in music is somehow located in its function as a social symbol (1991:13) but it is this reference to extra-musical factors which is highly contentious in terms of institutionalised musicology. To invoke a social theory of music, Shepherd maintains that two assumptions are necessary. Firstly, the collective reality of society (what he calls the 'world sense') is constructed by its members as opposed to being externally given. Secondly, the form that reality takes is significantly influenced by the medium of communication prevalent in that society, particularly if the groups with sufficient power encourage or permit it (1991:14).

Further, he identifies two parallel dichotomies around which discussions of the social significance of music revolve. Firstly, that music can or cannot rely on the symbolic reference to specific objects and ideas in the world is predicated on the distinction between the physical and the mental, the outer and the inner, the

Secondly, the question of whether or not music is is predicated on the distinction between symbol and meaning, form and content (1991:19). An important reason for identifying these dichotomies is to prove the inadequacy of what he calls psychologistic or absolutist theories of explanation for music's significance. The absolutists believe that the significance of music is in the total fluidity of inner life, that which is mental and quintessentially human. Music's symbol is its own meaning and its content is taken to be its form. It is this kind of absolutist thinking which underlies the premises of institutionalised musicology.

Shepherd undertakes to describe how it is that this kind of psychologistic, absolutist thinking came to prevail and become articulated in the premises underlying institutionalised musicology. In other words, how it is that the collective reality or world sense of society as well as the influence of the prevalent medium of communication in society has produced such a mode of thinking about the significance of music. He starts by making a comparison between what he calls the 'oral-aural' and the 'visual' world sense which are characteristic of pre-literate and industrial societies respectively. In order to understand the oral-aural world sense, Shepherd believes "it is necessary to understand some of the inherent qualities of sound as a perceived phenomenon" (1991:20). Sound is evanescent; it only exists as it is going out of existence. It is more symptomatic of the flow of time and evokes a sense of space different from other sensible phenomena. It is symptomatic of energy and is dynamic, requiring an immediate response "and does not allow so much time or the space necessary for initial avoidance, subsequent, cooler exposure and considered rationalization" (1991:21).

It is bearing these qualities in mind that Shepherd describes the manner in which meaning is constructed for pre-literate societies. It is sound which underlines the dynamic immediacy of the environment to the extent that pre-literate societies could be said to temporalize space and industrial (literate) societies spatialize

pre-literate societies cannot be divorced from communication, and because of the indissoluble links between people, the universe and sound, words come to have an immediacy and power little known in industrial societies." (Shepherd 1991:28) With the advent of literacy, an historically based dialectic emerges in comparison to an orally based dialectic. Out of this dialectic, a comparatively based rather than mythologically mediated critical method grew which privileged the visual at the expense of the auditory. Consequently, visual stimuli underline the distancing and separateness of events and objects from each other and individual people (1991:25).

The advent of phonetic literacy further expands the dichotomous nature of music's social significance "by facilitating the creation and mediation of thoughts in isolation from any spoken word. These thoughts can then be translated back into the world of spoken discourse." (1991:27) This has implications for the distinctions made between form and content, meaning and symbol. Further, the impact of the invention of movable type printing was facilitated by the concepts of sequentiality and arrested time, which characterised the industrial world sense. It is this invention which encouraged "the formulation of a dominant 'Western' epistemology in its most crystalline form" (1991:37). This was done, firstly, through the notion of uniformity in terms of the physical (a unified pictorial space) and the mental (through the reader internalizing a permanent, finished and individually propagated piece of knowledge). Secondly, by means of the notion of repeatability which, expressed through the medium of the printed page, reinforced the linearity of the future (in the same way that historical dialecticism inculcated a linear sense of the past).

Thus phonetic literacy, historical dialecticism, uniformity and repeatability gave man the tools for an analytic, linear, cause and effect epistemology which informed the notion of a scientific method most commonly associated with the Newtonian-Laplacian view of the universe (1991:39). Hence, the combination of

the laws of nature being determined and reality consists only in the material produced an all-inclusive cosmology. As such, "Western man failed to differentiate between what was legitimately predictable and controllable in terms of Newtonian mechanics and what lay outside the field of these laws" (1991:39). It led people to believe that everything is explicable when reduced to its analytic constituents therefore that which cannot be reduced i.e. made visually explicit, is non-knowledge. Hence, it is Shepherd's view that it was this inability of Western man to differentiate between what is and what is not genuinely material-factual in the universe which led to an unfounded assumption of objectivity (1991:42).

Shepherd develops his argument further by not only showing a strong correlation between the prevalent mode of communication and the world sense of industrial society but by showing a correlation between that mode of communication and the social structure informed by that world sense. He argues that the dominant world sense and the prevailing social structures of industrial societies have militated against the acceptance of a social theory for the significance of music. As such, the social structures of industrial society are characterised by "a highly developed division of labour, a hierarchical class structure and the centralism of nationalism" (1991:49). Furthermore, it is the role of what Shepherd calls the legitimator (those individuals, for example, with highly specialized knowledge and who work in conjunction with those who govern), to produce and define knowledge for and on behalf of people in society. As a result, for the centralised dissemination of knowledge, which is characteristic of industrial society, to remain unchallenged, knowledge must be conceived according to an absolute or objective idealism. Knowledge and reality, therefore, is conceived as given rather than socially constructed; and meaning, being isolated from its social context, is grounded in a scheme of absolutes (1991:49-52).

The first challenge to this centralised dissemination of knowledge came with the rise to power of the middle classes. Drawing on an argument of Raymond

es that at this time, the notion of art as an
e into significance. The misguided parallel of
conflating art with reality forced artists and writers back into the view that culture
is meant to attain to one indivisible, essential truth (1991:52). In other words,
those involved with traditional art forms claimed that their art forms best reveal
essential reality. From these claims, there originated the more dubious elitist
argument that conflates culture with intellect and superior minds. With respect to
the producers of music of the time, it was the notion of a musically gifted minority
which was transcendently inspired that produced an objective aesthetic applied
to music. Such an aesthetic assumes there are fixed criteria against which all
music can be judged and it is this aesthetic which informs the central tenets of
institutionalised musicology (1991:55). Hence, Shepherd has, through his
complex argument, managed to demonstrate how it is that such absolutist
thinking has managed to define the approach of institutionalised musicology.

A further corollary to his argument is that by arguing for the social significance of
music, musicologists and aestheticians would be required to question the social
and political structures within which they live i.e. question the nature of the
centralised structures of society. As a result, such questioning would put their
own socially designated roles into doubt and, as such, by ignoring the social
nature of music, they articulate the predominant modes of thought and social
organisation in industrial societies. Therefore, Shepherd has argued that it is the
collective reality or world sense of society as well as the influence of the
prevalent medium of communication in society that has produced such an
outdated mode of thinking about the social significance of music. At the same
time, he has shown how the deficiencies of our social organisation have resulted
in "the inability of most musicologists, music theorists and aestheticians to follow
through on the implications arising from the related aesthetic and political
problems surrounding the 'meaning' of music" (1991:73).

approach to popular music studies

The following part of the research is dedicated to tracing the development of the sociological approach to popular music, as Frith (1987) calls it, in order to compare the one-dimensional paradigmatic approach it has had to rely on, with that of institutionalised musicology.

The effects of mass culture had already been noted in the 1930's (the most severe critique coming from the Frankfurt school) and as new styles of non-classically oriented music styles started to develop they generated a following, particularly amongst young audiences. Jazz and blues as subject of musical study had already begun at this time but this was usually derogated when compared to the popular music of the time. The field of sociology started to designate the youth as a category of social study especially in the post-W.W.II era. In particular, sociologists were interested in the issue of youthful deviance, leisure activities and consequently patterns of consumption as a result of their increased spending capacity during this time. It was the various explicit styles of youthful groups as an apparently implicit critique and expressive subversion of the hegemonic forces in society, which further attracted the interest of sociologists and whose subsequent research crystallised under the subcultural paradigm in the 1970s. It is here that the type of music consumed by these subcultural groups became part of the analysis of this new sociological phenomenon i.e. subcultures. With the acknowledgement of the role that popular music played in the lives of these subcultural groups, the process of popular music production came under scrutiny, as the industry of music became an explosive and powerful social reality.

Although it may not be as concerned with the specifics of the musics of subcultural groups as with their interactions with style, subcultural analysis is important, argue Frith and Goodwin (1990), for two reasons. It represents the first attempt to analyse the meanings embodied in popular music consumption

focus on the visual, it signifies an engagement with
This focus on iconography does not necessarily
contribute to any fulfilling analysis of popular music, although subcultural authors
do show a keen awareness of how the history and function of pop itself interacts
with style (Frith and Goodwin, 1990:40).

Similar kinds of criticisms can be made for the interdisciplinary nature of cultural
studies, which grew out of the work done by the subcultural theorists. Whereas
subcultural theory emanated from an analysis of style in sociological terms
through mostly textual analyses drawing on semiotic and linguistic models,
cultural studies involves "a combination of sociological approaches to the
institutions and audiences of popular culture (if, alas, without sociology's
empirical grounding) with interpretive theories drawn from semiotics,
psychoanalysis and literary criticism" (Frith and Goodwin, 1990:41). Once more,
it is the fact that these analyses were first developed with respect to written texts
and then with reference to visual images that situates the relative importance of
popular music in such cultural debates. This factor strongly echoes Shepherd's
(1991) sentiments regarding the impact of phonetic literacy, a historically based
dialectic and a comparatively based critical method which privileged the visual at
the expense of the auditory and subsequently informed the visual world sense of
industrial societies. However, the above criticisms of cultural studies and
subcultural theory do not discount the value of such analysis rather than expose
their limitations. The hermeneutic and interpretive strategies associated with
cultural studies all serve to broaden the field of study (however tangentially) of
popular music.

Unfortunately for subcultural studies, the more devastating critique comes in its
claims at a general level to promote the notion of style as homology and
signifying practice, particularly at a class level, with the most outspoken adherent
being Hebdige (1979). This involves the assumption that all the constituent parts
of a subculture, the dress, practices and music, are subsumed under the rubric of

of life of the culture as a whole. We can interpret, the skinheads, which were a noticeable subcultural group in the U.K. at the time of Hebdige's study, for example, that this signifies their expressive subversion of the hegemony and a yearning to return to traditional working class values, beliefs and practices. The flaw with this approach is that the subcultural theorists have engendered a structural link between the material reality of radical style and their assumed initial creative conditions. This comes about as a result of what Negus calls 'the direction of the implied causality of Hebdige's homology' (1996:24) and coincides with Frith's description of the homology which has characterised much of the academic study of popular music (1996:108). This homology makes a structural link between material and musical forms i.e. how a piece of music somehow reflects or represents the lived experience of the listener. In other words, the homology of subcultural analysis is predicated on privileging the subject i.e. style as signifying practice and then moving back to assign the possible conditions of its creation. The analysis is stuck in a backward mode, in a vain attempt at seeking the origins of the subject. Favouring *style* as representative of the constituent parts of a subculture ignores and subsequently downplays the impact and importance that those parts have on the subculture as a whole.

By arguing for a subculture as a music genre e.g. punk, rocker or Rastafarian and not emphasising its stylistic elements, Laing (1985) believes that music is a far stronger impetus for the creation of a subculture. I would agree that in certain (but not all) cases, the music of a subcultural group has sufficient stimulus around which a subcultural grouping can aggregate, as in the case of reggae music. However, it is the extent to which the subcultural paradigm has downplayed the possibly vital role of music in the creation of subcultures that is a ground for criticism and also characteristic of the academy's attitude taken towards popular music. Laing (1985) proves to be a good starting point and is part of the critical suggestions that Frith (1987) makes as to how popular music can fulfill its social function. He believes that:

or the development of a proper genre analysis,

for the classification of how different popular music forms use different narrative structures, set up different patterns of identity, and articulate different emotions. (1987:147)

Thus Frith (1987) makes an argument for the ideological and other effects that popular music pursues as opposed to it being the by-product of a social grouping. This earlier train of thought is developed in later work (Frith 1996) where he remarks that *while* music may be *shaped* [original emphasis] by the people who first make and use it, as experience it has a life of its own+ (1996:109). He refers to Marx who once said that it was easy to move from the cultural to the material i.e. to interpret, read it back ideologically, assign it special conditions. However, by proposing that we start with music, Frith is reversing the analysis, a much more difficult project i.e. how do we move from the material to the cultural, explain how a musical idea or experience takes on a particular aesthetic or artistic form. Frith wishes to reverse the analysis in order to approach the concept of the aesthetics of popular music in an intelligible manner:

The issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people, but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience . a musical experience, an aesthetic experience . that we can only make sense of by taking on both a subjective and collective identity. (1996:109)

The reason why the concept of an aesthetic of popular music has seemed a contradiction up until now, Frith believes, is that the sociological (and hence, only) approach to popular music has privileged the functional over the aesthetic. It is his intention to take the aesthetic value or function of popular music and indeed all music seriously (1996:119). While the wealth of popular music produced is certainly the result of those very forces of production and

and histories and knowledge, age, ethnicity and social basis to draw upon, Frith also points out that all these social patterns can be based on individual judgement.

But while we can thus describe (or assume) general patterns of musical taste and use, the precise fit (or homology) between sounds and social groups remains unclear, which is why commonsense sociology has had to deploy its second set of arguments, about the match of music's *formal* and social functions. (1996:120)

This functional approach to explaining the relationship between sounds and social groups is most evident in ethnomusicology where the sonic and formal qualities of musical practice are studied with reference to their use in everyday life. These anthropological studies of the use of music in their folk or traditional context employs a similar type of reasoning to those seeking a more universal explanation which links ethnicity to music. Hence in the study of popular music, traditional categories such as black music, creole, salsa or Latin music, to name a few, were infused with a western musicological bias and various flawed attempts at justifying such categories occurred.

These traditional categories were based on the assumption that individuals of a particular social type exhibit certain characteristics which are expressed in particular social and cultural practices. Much in the same way that the music used and produced by a culture is meant to express or reflect that culture. The early Frith (1978 and 1983) was guilty of such attempts at justification but the proliferation of identity politics in current socio-cultural debates has exposed these attempts for being the essentialist categories that they are. The essentialisms employed by Frith to justify the category of black music have been characterised by Negus (1996:102) as being of a socio-biological and musicological kind. Whatever the method employed and the characterisation that resulted from these essentialisms, it could be said that it was the

musicological method and internalised racism that
categories of music.

On the other hand, black people have been writing about black music too (Jones 1965, Gilroy 1993 and 1994), if only to lay claim and make a voice heard for their music which has been silenced, appropriated and put to use for commercial gain particularly in the popular music format. Gilroy makes a constructive attempt at addressing the continual negotiation a term such as 'black music' requires. He believes in retaining the term and instead argues that we understand the category black music in terms of two concepts: the diaspora of the black Atlantic and the idea of a changing same. Gilroy argues against the notion of an eternal, unchanging black essence which informs the production, reception and mediation of black cultural forms. The fact that black people share an ancestry and common history through the forced displacement by slavery from their continent of origin, Africa, ends there. And it is more the experience of movement, particularly crisscrossing the Atlantic, which has been responsible for the variety of black cultural artifacts produced and associated with the black or African diaspora. This has resulted in identities and traditions being constructed, mediated and hybridised with each new subsequent experience of movement . a changing sameness affecting the production of cultural forms with each distinctive travel experience.

Within South Africa, black people have not undergone the forced removal of slavery and the notion of a black Atlantic has little relevance until black South Africans encounter black cultural products which have made their return, so to speak, to their continent of origin through, for example, the distribution mechanisms of the popular music industry. Examples of this is evident in the impact of hip-hop and r&b as well as the development of the kwaito genre. Black South Africans have had their own horrific experience of removal but in the form of being dispossessed from their legitimate land and oppressed since the arrival of white settlers. Consequently, very little has been written about the relationship

black South Africans with few notable exceptions. Then, very little has been written about the relationship between imported black music on the rosters of the major record labels (which is a separate project in its entirety) and the local black populace. There is no doubt as to the affiliation and there are obvious parallels that black South Africans share with the cultural products of the black diaspora. But the entire experience of subjugation and oppression that black South Africans especially endured has meant that they lived then without a freedom that they now can enjoy. That freedom, in particular, has meant a new freedom of movement to occupy new spaces that were previously closed off to them. A new economic freedom has ensured that black South Africans can be closer to work centres and urban areas. Here proximity to and consumption of urban phenomena such as foreign and imported cultural products disseminated through communication media is far greater.

The subject of black music has received much attention in the U.S. and the U.K. given the prevalence of diasporic communities and their impact on popular music production. In South Africa, a major diasporic encounter in the province of KwaZulu Natal and the city of Durban particularly, is that of the Indian community. Their experience of being brought to South Africa as indentured sugar cane labourers has a parallel with the African diaspora in that the transportation, transferal and hybridisation of Indian cultural products are evident in the cultural makeup of Durban. However, along with coloured and black South Africans, the Indian community too shared the persecution, oppression and restrictions that were imposed upon them by the ruling white minority. It is evident though that the Indian community, after being quite reserved and conservative initially, started to engage more willingly with western and urban cultural phenomena. This is possibly due to experiencing less of a degree of general persecution and restriction of movement, being a minority group, and also as a consequence of their ties outside of the country. Once again, there has not been much written about the interaction between the Indian community and

their diasporic experience could certainly allow
to take place too.

From the above discussions regarding black music and its posited interaction with two of South Africa's four main ethnic populations, it becomes clear that, at face value, the task of discussing such relations is at best perplexing and in the least complex. Further, the proposition of there being an authentic style of music to which black South Africans or Indian South Africans gravitate is futile and once more underlines the efficacy of a functional approach to popular music. Consider the statement 'a race group listens to X music' in the context of the modern nightclub and it makes even less sense.

The term 'authenticity' pervades the literature of popular music, especially rock music. It could be said that the term is discussed in similar but also different ways. One way of characterising it is not directly related to the above discussion of functional representation but rather refers to the aesthetic judgement of music. Accordingly, good, authentic music is meant to be that which is true to what the performer is relating through song and in this way, one can see how this would be used in the aesthetic evaluation of rock music. Frith (1987:137) refers to the 'myth of authenticity' as one of the ideological effects of rock music, part of the sales strategy. The problem with using this term as a criterion of judgement is that there is no way to measure the 'truth' of any performance. Is it in the sweat pouring down the cheeks of the performer or in the crack of the voice? Instead Frith (1987) proposes:

What we should be examining is not how true a piece of music is to something else, but how it sets up the idea of 'truth' in the first place .
successful pop music is music which defines its own aesthetic standard.
(1987:137)

traditional judgements of authenticity by popular music scholars. Jones is aware of the way in which authenticity is being constructed across time (in terms of history) and space (in terms of the movement of music across cultures). However, none refer to what he calls the "situatedness" of the listener or music maker in a particular aural, visual and historical space (1999:3). This has happened, he feels, because a lot of the analysis of visual and aural media is done in isolation and the convergence of these two media is not considered. Further, technological advances has meant that currently, modern popular music production relies more on sight and less on sound as a recording conforms to the demands of digital reproduction and its concomitant visual representation in software programs. Thus Jones believes that when analysing the construction of sound, popular music scholars need to consider the individual along with the social dimension. This is a dimension which is often overlooked and thus Jones emphasises that we should attend to the interpretive acts associated with sound and its meaning (1999:3).

Jones is wary of the structural homology and functional model that informs the basis of authenticity and equally aware that aesthetic judgement shifts from person to person. In fact he believes that we should acknowledge that authenticity is a construction and, in a sense, autonomous:

Its materialisation springs not from any necessary connection to sound, image, text, but from individual acts of interpretation, typically within what in literary criticism has come to be known as "interpretive communities".

(1999:4)

Jones's argument is that popular music scholars should understand the relation of music and authenticity in a symbolic realm. Musical activity should be understood within the nexus of relations between technical, commercial and cultural processes. Authenticity is fluid, symbolic and a certain "something" about music that matters at that moment (1999:5). Only by approaching the construction of authenticity in this manner, can the affective dimension and

with the individual and social experience of music

If we take Frith's (1987) point that successful popular music defines its own aesthetic standard, creates our understanding of what popularity is and sets up the idea of truth, we can start to approach the experience of popular music in a more coherent fashion. Within popular culture, Frith argues, popular music is caught in the juxtaposition of providing intense emotional experiences and always containing social meaning. Thus he feels that the experience of popular music is an experience of placing, something which happens at all popular cultural events. What makes the musical experience special is its direct emotional intensity and because of its abstract qualities, it is an individualizing form (1987:139). On the other hand, music obeys a social logic and is bound by rules and conventions beyond the average listener's control. And so we are left with:

This interplay between personal absorption into music and the sense that it is, nevertheless, something out there, something public, is what makes music so important in the cultural placing of the individual in the social. (1987:139)

Frith describes the social functions of music and their implications for an aesthetic of popular music as being vital in the creation of identity, it allows us to manage our feelings and organise our sense of time. All of these factors relate to the experience of music, which is, unlike any other cultural form, something intensely personal and something which can be possessed (1987:144). In later work, Frith (1996) draws upon an analogy between identity and music:

Identity is not a thing but a process . an experiential process which is most vividly grasped *as music*. Music seems to be a key to identity because it offers, so intensely, a sense of both self and others, of the subjective in the collective. (1996:110)

of identity describes both a social and aesthetic process because it is through the act of participation in and experience of music that we both express and lose ourselves. This implies a rethinking of the sociological approach to aesthetic expression because not only does this experience of identity refer to the individual but to social groups as well. Frith believes that the aesthetic practice which *is* music *articulates in itself* an understanding of both group relations and individuality, on the basis of which ethical codes and social ideologies are understood. (1996:111)+ Therefore, Frith argues, social groups only get to know themselves *as groups* (his italics) through cultural activity, through aesthetic judgement: music *stands for*, symbolizes and offers the immediate experience of collective identity. (1996:121)+

Frith's further argument is that narrative is also central to our sense of identity, that is, *is* something we put on or try on, not something we reveal or discover. (1996:122)+ He refers to Johnathan Ree (1990), who quotes both Sartre and Ricoeur, in claiming that narrative is the *unity* of a life *achieved* through the *recurring* belief *in* personal coherence, a belief necessarily *renewed* in the telling of tales. However, such an argument has two implications. Firstly, identities are shaped according to narrative forms. If identity is constrained by the imaginative forms of narrative, then they also free it (1996:122). Consequently, music works in a two-fold manner: it gives you a means to access to the conception of identity you associate with and it teaches us that its secrets and ethnic rules can be taught and learned. It teaches us that identity is an ideal and that musical pleasure from a particular genre allows us to *participate in* imagined forms of democracy and desire+(1996:123).

The second implication of the centrality of narrative to our sense of identity is that musical identity may be about an idealized self and social world but it is also always real, enacted in musical activities. In these cases, musical pleasure is experienced directly i.e. *music* gives us a real experience of what the ideal could

different genres, we can document the ways that
people different identities (1996:124).

It is through this characteristic of articulation that music becomes relevant for the present study of cultural identity in danceclubs. Straw (1991) makes an interesting comparison between the cultures of alternative rock and dance music using what he calls the systems of articulation and the logics of change implicit in both. He uses these two descriptive modes to differentiate between what he calls communities and scenes in popular music. The former is characteristic of and perpetuated through the culture of alternative rock and the latter coterminous with dance music. Straw focuses on these logics of change (plural because he refers to Bourdieu, de Certeau and Miegge's use of the term) because he feels that the primacy accorded to issues of production and consumption within popular music studies has precluded such a focus. As a result, he draws attention to the %the distinctive logics of change and forms of valorization characteristic of different musical practices, as these are disseminated through their respective communities and institutional sites+(1991:369). The institutional site par excellence where music is consumed, takes precedence and hence articulates individual and cultural identity is the dance club.

Bringing together the activities of dance and musical consumption, the dance club articulates the sense of social identity as embodied to the conspicuous and differential display of taste. As such it serves to render explicit the distribution of knowledges and forms of cultural capital across the vectors of gender, race and class. (1991:380)

And,

Most importantly, the composition of audiences at dance clubs is likely to reflect and actualize a particular state of relations between various



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s, as these coalesce around specific coalitions of

It is the purpose of this research to investigate the extent to which the music played at nightclubs in Durban is an articulation of the cultural identity for which the club itself is catering.

There are clearly certain characteristics which define clubs according to type (race, sexuality, mainstream or underground) and musical genre (house, rock, rhythm and blues or r+b, hip-hop, local). These characteristics are particularly pronounced in South Africa where a particular race or cultural group can be found to be associated with a specific music type. Sometimes the divisions are not necessarily easy to identify because music has an important influence on where people choose to be entertained and in other cases music is not such a focus. It is bearing this in mind that the divisions that occur below have been made. Explanations for these divisions are provided in this and the next chapter. Further, within each division, certain phases become apparent and the dissertation will attempt to provide an account of changes that occur or factors that remain static.

The Development of the White Mainstream Nightclub Scene into the Commercial Danceclub Phenomenon

The impact of disco music, which had its origins in the late 1960s and early 1970s amongst the marginalised New York communities of black, Latino, gay and city kids, revolutionised the way people viewed a normal night of dancing to music and the space in which it took place. Its effect was also felt in Durban as it moved through its lifecycle to achieve spectacular mainstream status with John Travolta and Diana Ross standing in as hetero-standard bearer and diva for this "new" music form respectively. The U.S. record labels flooded the market hoping to capitalise on the success of a now sanitised music form but instead hastened the sneering 1978 "death of disco" proclamation made by its critics. This is not to say that the legacy of disco music and nightclubbing did not remain, in fact disco has been reinvented since in a number of guises. The opposite happened, disco music and "the discotheque" entrenched the notion of all night dancing in a designated space and set the standard for the future of an industry which has grown to become a primary form of entertainment for youth of all kinds and age

popularised, the **Millionaires Club**, open in clubs catering for a white heterosexual crowd, to showcase this new music format and concept of dancing to recorded music with moving lights in venues featuring stylised decor and ubiquitous mirrors (Chris Pollard, telephonic interview, 1/08/2000). These features were in sympathy with the music's glamorous connotations and lyrics.

The glamour, excess, decadence and elitism which characterised the end of the 1970s, it could be said, was encapsulated in the rarefied atmosphere of **Raffles** which opened in 1978. This nightclub was as extravagant and professional as the five star Elangeni Hotel on whose 31st floor it was situated. In order to reach this, Durban's only true international standard nightclub to date, one had to travel up a scarlet red lift which ran up the side of the hotel. As Pedro Carlo explains:

When **Raffles** first started (before 1979) they used to import qualified managers from Germany, Europe and these were proper qualified club managers and they got top dollar. They ran **Raffles** with professionalism, expertise, you had to be there to experience it. It was, "Good evening, very nice to see you, come through, can I get you a table, your wife is looking lovely today." Professionalism at its best, "Did you enjoy yourself, did you have a nice time, thank you very much, come again." (Interview, 14/03/2000)

Patrons were placed at a table where you could enjoy a cabaret or perhaps a show by an international artist, after which the OJ would play music in accordance with the style, theme or type of crowd gathered for the evening. Ultimately though, one had-to look the part to play it and if this was the case, it resulted in a night of unreserved service, courtesy, style and respect. The strength of **Raffles** lay in it being more than just a nightclub which played music and had flashing lights. It was a purpose built venue which ran six nights a week providing a variety of entertainment for the most discerning customer at an international standard. Thus while it was certainly privy to the developments

not the only type of entertainment it catered for. and, In certain cases, racism, which only served to heighten the club's profile and status in the eyes of those who could not enter its doors.

It's not the white market, that is the wrong word. **Raffles** was not white, it was international and multi-racial and it worked because if you have a frontman who knows and can see the rubbish from the good, that is the most important thing. A guy walks up and says, "Hoezit my lanie bru, how's it to get inside like," you don't want that person there. (Interview with Pedro Carlo, 14/03/2000)

In many senses it was felt that a club such as **Raffles** was ahead of its time and due to mismanagement at the hands of an evolving hotel and catering industry, it had to close in the early 1990s. The only structural error made in the design of the club was its inadequate soundproofing which resulted in numerous complaints from the penthouse suites of the exclusive .Elangeni Hotel as well as adjacent buildings situated on a prime beachfront- real estate zone. The club still stands today, in the same state as when it was closed, a passive observer of Durban's tourism tides, panoramic Golden Mile and a unique phenomenon in its entertainment history that has yet to be surpassed.

As the disco lifestyle penetrated other avenues of popular consumption, for example in cinematic depictions such as *Saturday Night Fever*, so too did venues take inspiration from their celluloid images and sought to emulate the discotheques and people associated with them. Slipper's Boogie Palace, opening in 1981 and situated in the Los Angeles Hotel, took its inspiration from *Thank God it's Friday*, complete with a replica of the DJ booth in the movie that was crafted to resemble being held upwards by the hands of God. Travolta's took its cue from the star of the above-mentioned *Saturday Night Fever* and the heterosexual male icon of disco, John Travolta, opening in 1982 at the Killarney Hotel. The success of Raffles may have prompted Ruby Tuesday to emulate

at the Beach Hotel because its agenda was also
present throughout the different nights of the week.

This also meant that the local crowd for whom both catered could move between
the two until both closed at the turn of the 1990s.

After a while, notes Chris Pollard, a certain disenchantment with the synthetic
disco sound crept in. There was a strong demand for a return to rock music and
as a result, the man responsible for the Millionaires Club opened up smaller
scale pub venues such as Father's Moustache and Ports O' Call (from a
telephonic discussion, 1/08/2000). During disco's zenith from the mid 1970s to
early 1980s, two major developments have been noted:

1. Support for folk-based acoustic rock which had developed in the mid-
1970s was facilitated by smaller pub venues opening to host stripped down
band lineups;
2. The South African punk rock revolution which evolved in Durban
between 1977 and 1982. (van der Meulen, 1995: 1)

It was not long before disco's spotlight faded and venues such as
Travolta's which traded purely on the hype of disco's currency, eventually
closed down and was re-opened by Pollard as **The Med** in 1984.

It is important at this time to acknowledge the important and implicit role
that the gay community played in the development of Durban's nightclub
life in general. Not only was disco music being played in gay clubs before
its mainstream success but the discotheque concept originating from the
gay and other marginalised communities operating in the U.S. was to
endure to form the basis and format of the modern danceclub as it exists in
Durban today. In particular, in an apartheid state gay people were
positioned at the fringe of society. This positioning, which still exists in
varying degrees today, was a consequence of their defying societal norms

ty. This defiance is also reflected in their generally be described as progressive or underground, in the sense that, their music choice usually pre-empts the mainstream success of a particular genre. The irony of disco music is that through the demand created by the mainstream for that music genre, a heterosexual male icon had to be generated so that it was marketable to the majority of people's conservative values and tastes of the time. This actually worked in reverse by literally playing down the male machismo of the time by showing him (the male) that it was acceptable to dance with no inhibition to repetitive beats and lush female vocals while wearing outrageously flared trousers.

As critic Carol Cooper once said, it is easy for writers to forget that dancing is a metaphor for sex, and in disco the lyrics have been traditionally regarded as a throwaway element because their primary subject is love and sex. In the Eighties, as the clamps come down on all freedoms, dealing with sexuality, particularly since disco has always had more room for women's views than rock, is a progressive stance. (Steven Harvey in *The Face*, October 1983)

As mentioned above, even though disco may have declined after its mainstream success, the subtle victory that it did achieve was to force people to think about their sexuality. Through thinking about one's sexuality, a person could reflexively focus their views about humanity onto a more equitable level to realise the profound inequality that existed in South Africa at the time. Suddenly the status of being homosexual had a respect and certain mystique not previously accorded to it. This was evidenced in a club such as **Faces** which opened in 1981 with a policy of non-(homophobia, racism or sexual discrimination). As the OJ who started there, Helge Janssen, explains:

felt free to dance on their own, it was very mixed.
s from punk to reggae to electronic to new wave,

it was a complete mix of stuff but it certainly was not random select. There was a mood which went through the evening. (Interview, 29/03/2000)

Thus, even before a mainstream venue such as **Travolta's** opened, the gay-oriented crowd which frequented **Faces** had moved on from disco to newer, more progressive forms of rock music and other interesting combinations of synthetic and electronically produced sounds. The attitude, atmosphere and type of music played provided an answer to a mainstream jaded by disco's overground runaway success and before long straight people found a new haven of experience created by the ambiguous and possibly risqué choice of going to a club such as Faces.

The club, because of its nature, did not exist without trouble and harassment. The presence of gay people and the mindset of progressive thought underlying the venue, which included promoting the End Conscription Campaign, set a precedent, Janssen explains, for the police and Security Branch to use any excuse to raid the venue. When the original owners, Shane Leak and Paul van Coller, dissolved their partnership and Shane left to go to Johannesburg, the city council licensing representatives arrived to inspect the liquor license for the premises. Because the club was not being operated out of a hotel and thus required a specific license which happened to be in Shane's name, the council employees closed the club down.

At this point a court case ensued where, "the cops bent every by-law in Durban to keep that club closed, even the city councilor would do nothing about it at all." (Interview with Helge Janssen, 29/03/2000) Eventually a license was granted to operate until one o'clock which Paul and Helge

ed but like clockwork, the police arrived to and force people to leave. Finally, out of frustration with working under such conditions, Shane sold the club to Ronnie Botha, a flamboyant and influential gay club entrepreneur. Botha owned another gay club in Durban at the time called Zodiac which had reopened at approximately the same time that Faces started. The original Zodiac opened in 1978 and then closed in 1980. This was the same year that Camp Freak, the precursor to Faces in the same venue, opened and because of the close-knit and enclosed nature of the gay scene in general, Botha had observed possibly with envy the succession of Camp Freak to Faces. Botha must have noted the refreshing "non-" stance too, which Faces had adopted, and realised the potential of this unique approach that brought in an inquisitive straight market, hungry for new music in a non-aggressive environment (except, that is, when the police arrived).

Once Botha had taken over Faces, he employed Martin McHale and Frank Melman as disc jockeys for the downstairs area of Faces, while upstairs he retained the services of Helge Janssen. This new combination of familiar, contemporary radio music, played by Martin and Frank, and Janssen's exploratory, progressive rock style proved highly successful. For a time, the "non-" stance was respectfully observed until the number of heterosexuals started to outnumber the gays. Fortunately for the gay community, they had the option of moving on to Zodiac as their regular place, proving the shrewd business acumen of Botha. Faces had to close for a brief period of time but when it re-opened, it had become entrenched as a straight club for progressively minded people, while Zodiac catered for the gay crowd. This, in a sense, was an ideal situation for Botha who had now gained an entirely new market while retaining his original clientele. His business sense and insight could be likened to that of Steve Swindells, a gay club night promoter operating in London at the same time.

que the gay life holds for straight
"orange", so for nearly a year he has fronted The

Lift, an itinerant gay club-night which flouts convention by welcoming straights. The bait is the kind of hard rebel funk that's alien to most gay discos. Its success is impressive. (David Johnson in *The Face*, June 1983)

Before long, the open-minded, sensitive, straight people originally attracted to Faces started to feel alienated by an indifferent, commercially-oriented crowd and because of their attachment, friendliness and openness towards certain members of the gay community, were drawn to **Zodiac**. Soon a pattern developed where the progressively minded straight people, taking their lead from the gay community, were inevitably followed by a less sympathetic, boisterous straight crowd to each venue opened by Botha. This, of course, estranged the gay community and they moved to a new venue where the cycle repeated itself.

We had **Zodiac** which after becoming 99% straight and developing an aggro [aggressive] vibe, moved the gay crowd across to **Ronnies** where much the same happened and we moved the crowd elsewhere. (Interview with Frank Melman, 1/12/1998)

Thus at one time, Botha owned three clubs operating simultaneously i.e. **Faces**, **Zodiac** and **Ronnies**, which he opened up in 1983. It was possible to gain access to all three clubs in one night, if one purchased a multiple entry ticket. Frank Melman, considered the one of the top DJs during this time, worked at all three of Botha's clubs and noted above the aggressive atmosphere brought in by the less sympathetic, commercially-oriented straight crowd. A common misconception is that the consumption of alcohol is the primary cause of aggression amongst the above-mentioned straight crowd. However, while it is certainly true that alcohol frees inhibitions and aids in irregular behaviour, I believe it is the tension and sometimes intimidation created by the underlying sexual politics of men and women meeting in an enclosed entertainment space

Frank Melman dispels this misconception

When I was involved with **Zodiac**, we had three clubs running: **Ronnies**, **Faces** and **Zodiac**, we worked out that, the amount of alcohol consumed in a straight club e.g. **Zodiac a propos Ronnies** which was gay [at the time], the gay clubs drank three times more than the straight club. (Interview, 1/12/1998)

Thus the heterosexual politics of men and women meeting, it could be said, overrides the impact of alcohol, although the consumption of alcohol is certainly a contributing factor in the aggression associated with a commercially oriented heterosexual crowd. As mentioned before, with regards to **Faces**, the gay community received their share of unjust harassment from the police and Security Branch, even though they did attract straight people and were eventually ousted from their own venues. The same type of behaviour persisted with **Zodiac** and **Ronnies**, and **Faces** was eventually forced to close down under mysterious circumstances. Even though there was some speculation of collusion between the police and Botha himself, a raid on **Zodiac** produced evidence which forced Botha to cease his club operations. This occurred, as in the case of **Faces** (with Shane leak and Paul van Coller), when Botha's lover betrayed him out of spite to the police when their relationship ended. After this peak at the forefront of musical progression within Durban, Frank Melman admits that the gay scene took a bit of a slump musically, until a resurgence occurred later.

The demise of the crossover scene between the gay and straight communities at Botha's clubs meant that for a time this market was not catered for. In the interim, a proportion of the commercially-oriented

entertainment on offer at Chris Pollard's **The** ment of all night dancing presented by the gay-oriented scene was influential and persisted. **The Med**, although a dual purpose venue offering bands and DJs, started to show that it was possible to draw in more than 150 people for all night dancing; a figure that was considered the limit for that market, at the time. It also proved that making allowances for bands was technically challenging and not as cost effective as a venue that catered for all night dancing, where entertainment costs are radically cut by employing a OJ.

The above factors were a consideration when Pollard and partner Sotiris Spetsiotis, opened **Sand Pebbles** in 1989 and adopted the attitude which became the forerunner to the modern commercial nightclub in Durban. This involved combining a sensory overload of entertainment (which did include bands and DJs) with a sense of excitement and abandonment while catering for as wide a market as possible with emphasis on numbers. This fresh attitude towards the conventional idea of clubbing among the mainstream market ensured that large crowds arrived and kept coming into the early 1990s. The only serious competition at that time came in the form of the **Los Angeles Hotel** (or **The L.A.** as it was known colloquially) which featured 3 bars and **Slipper's Boogie Palace** under one venue. Unfortunately **The L.A.** was situated in the established residential area of Musgrave and was forced to close at lam on weekends and midnight on weekdays. This worked in **Sand Pebble's** favour as many revelers saw the sun come up over the Indian Ocean through the tinted wrap-around glass facade of an entertainment complex situated on South Beach which housed a cinema and the offices of the now defunct Capital 604 radio station.

Sand Pebbles was also unique in that it did not operate like its predecessor The Poseidon, a dinner dance venue. When it opened up primarily as a danceclub and entertainment venue, it was one of very few danceclub

idently of a hotel or hotel chain group. Most hotels because they had the basic infrastructure to cover the costs of opening a dedicated dance venue and could also obtain the necessary liquor licences with a minimum of fuss. As mentioned above, this was one the legal means through which the city council and, by extension, the police and Security Branch could continue their program of haranguing the gay venues. This was not the only tactic they resorted to. The entrepreneurial spirit of Sand Pebbles did not seem to bother the hotel trade until the origination of "tavern" culture (an amplification of the English pub concept typified by the Keg franchise) in the late 1980s, which impacted greatly on their food and beverage trade (Chris Pollard, telephonic interview, 1/08/2000).

A classic and fairly unique example of a music pub, which opened in 1988 and still exists today, is Bonkers Music Pub situated in The Hotel California on Florida Road, Morningside. During the success of Sand Pebbles, the interest of businessmen and entrepreneurs had been piqued as to the commercial viability of a venture targeting such a mass market and they wanted a piece of that business. CC's in Smith Street, an ex-strip club called Nellos, opened in 1989 to cater originally for an older coloured crowd but failed and was appropriated by businessmen who implemented the commercially oriented pop music and rock/band combination which was effective for a short time. After this venture, in the same year as Nelson Mandela's release from prison (1992) in which democratic change seemed a formality, it seemed as though the blueprint for what is today known as the commercial danceclub was crystallised with a venue called Kangos in the Workshop shopping centre.

The present formulaic approach to danceclubs adheres to a few necessary criteria. Most importantly, the space must be large, creating an impact on

ly decorated according to a theme reflected
ic played is a combination of the
contemporary popular music of the time regardless of style or genre; if it
receives radio airplay, the major record companies will sample the relevant
nightclubs with the music because they know the importance of having that
music heard in danceclubs. The major form of consumption is alcohol, which is
usually cheap as a result of the volumes consumed at the often numerous,
strategically placed bars; the distributors and retailers of popular alcohol brands
can afford to offer discounts to such clubs, ensuring an affordable alcohol price to
their clientele.

For the average consumer of this type of environment, budget is usually a
consideration and thus a typical profile of the clientele would include younger
consumers such as students or school leavers who do not earn a
big income. For this reason the price of entry is low compared to specialist music
genre clubs and in particular, younger female clientele, often schoolgirls, are
welcomed. This is done because the fundamental rule of any club drawing a
heterosexual crowd is the dominant presence of women. Apart from the social
aspect of going out in a commercial club
environment, women, as opposed to men, enjoy going to danceclubs because
they reflect a music preference to which they can dance with their other female
friends. Men, on the other hand, do not frequent commercial clubs primarily
because of the music played but rather because of the presence of women.
Commercial club owners know that if they can attract the women through a good
selection of current popular music and low alcohol prices, men of all ages
including older big spenders and drinkers will follow suit.

Thus we could describe a commercial danceclub as a melting pot where
opposing sexes collide, where possibilities are created through large doses of
alcoholic consumption. Often it is the sexual politics that arise through the 'Dutch'
bravado gained by persons consuming more than their capabilities that results in
the aggression referred to above in the discussions about gay clubs. It is only the

of aggression are tolerated or dealt with by
ensures the continued success or reputation of a
club. The more
aggressive a club is reputed to be, the less women it will attract and hence
it is part of the responsibility of the security as well as the club owner to
ensure its safety and reputation.

Finally, because commercial clubs are seen primarily as business
ventures, it is not uncommon for ownership to change hands during the
club's existence. People who know little about danceclubs and who employ
club industry professionals such as managers, DJs, bar and cleaning staff,
often fund these clubs. Their life expectancy is seen to be no longer than
one and a half to two years. If a club exceeds this time period, it is highly
unusual or it has managed to offer something extra which a competitor or
predecessor has not. Taking the above 'formula' into consideration, we
can trace the rise and fall of the white commercial danceclubs in Durban
since 1992. Distinctions can only be made through the themes expressed
in the name and the decor of the venue which ultimately captures and
sustains the crowd's imagination; the characteristics and profile of the
consumer and the music played has essentially remained the same
throughout the years.

Kangos, developing its theme from the knowledge and connection that
people could make with the famous caves near Oudtshoorn in the Western
Cape, lasted for just over one year. **Red Dog Saloon** followed this in 1994
which was opened by the proprietors of well-known beachfront bar and
restaurant, **Joe Kools**, after which the same group opened **Harleys** in
1995. **Harleys**, with its obvious American biker influence, was successful
for two years before being surpassed by **Bourbon Street** in 1997. During

It became evident that an older clientele had
commercial danceclubs.

The impact and influence of the retro style of fashion and lifestyle propagated through movies such as Quentin Tarantino's underground hit *Reservoir Dogs* followed by the more mainstream *Pulp Fiction*, brought the soundtracks of these movies into prominence and demand at commercial danceclubs. The first to pick up this type of shift in popular culture was Gary Church, who with his business partner opened up **Retros** in the Riviera Hotel in 1995. This drew in the style-conscious younger crowd who found great pleasure in dressing up in older clothes made new and dancing to old 1960s and 1970s black funk hits provided by DJ Michael Cross. It was not long before **T Js or Thunderbird Junction**, relying on the American imagery of both these retro styled movies and the in vogue **Harleys**,

opened up as a styled American diner and danceclub to cater for an older commercial crowd in late 1995. Its positioning opposite the Natal Rugby Stadium was perfect for the older consumer who was keen to hear retro music played alongside commercial radio hits.

The timing of **Bourbon Street's** opening was perfect because the lifecycle of **Harleys**, **T Js** and **Retros** ended almost simultaneously. This club, a converted warehouse situated next to a liquor retailer, with its New Orleans theme proved that bigger is better drawing over 1500 patrons on popular nights. For a time it amalgamated a commercial danceclub scene in one venue with old and young clientele descending upon its doors until the opening of **Hooters** in Umhlanga and **Phar Side** in Pinetown, later that year (1997), spread the scene outside of Durban central. **Bourbon Street's** older clientele, who gave preferential support to the club when

1998, also solidified its success when the
van der Post, sought to export his brand name to
other provinces. It seemed that **Absolut Chaos** managed to cater for a
younger commercial market with its playful Mafioso gangster theme. This
is ironic given the investors were once again the proprietors of Joe Kools who
had in the interim developed a bit of a reputation as a modern day Durban
syndicate whose control worked through 'offering' security and other 'services' to
clubs. None of this has been proved in a legal case, of course.

The success of Bourbon Street finally came to a close with the opening of 80s, in
the same venue as T.J.s in late 1998, which attracted the older clientele back
there while Absolut Chaos catered for the younger, student/scholar crowd. From
the time that van der Post had sold Bourbon Street to other investors, he had
taken the Bourbon Street concept to Gauteng where he opened up three venues
on a semi-franchise basis with noteworthy success. Upon his return to Durban,
van der Post opened Nite Fever in April 2000 at the ex-Bourbon Street venue,
attempting to
rekindle a return to disco through the iconography and style present, however,
this is not reflected in the music. It is still the formulaic music approach of
contemporary radio hits but the ambiguous design of the club could allow a
variety of music styles to be played there. Because of the legacy of Bourbon
Street, both older and young crowds, who have 80s and Absolut Chaos as their
other respective options, have supported the club. How long the support for any
of these three clubs lasts, which currently caters for the commercial danceclub
scene, remains to be seen.

White Non-Mainstream Danceclubs

At the turn of the 1980s, as described above, the synthetic sounds of disco was
not the only popular music format; rock music was another style which prevailed
and had dedicated venues, mostly for live bands and for playing recorded music

Club were popular rock venues in the early 1960s. This shift in focus resulted because of its radical departure from the guitar-based rock and folk rock music of the time. It is van der Meulen's thesis that the rock scene in South Africa took its cue from and was very much influenced by popular music trends in the United Kingdom (1995:56), a thesis which will be echoed later with regard to an emerging electronic dance music scene.

Van der Meulen notes that the reputation accorded to the Kwazulu-Natal province as the most vigorous supporter of British colonial rule, resisting independence in 1961 until the last, earned it the moniker of Last Outpost of the British Empire. Thus it is clear that all British cultural products arriving at its shores, mostly through the bustling port of Durban, were welcomed and received by Natalians as their own. The location of Durban as a port city, receiving a continuous influx of foreign commodities and people, and the importance of it being geographically situated far from the seat of government, van der Meulen argues, earned it a reputation as a cosmopolitan and fairly liberal city (1995:23-26). Not only were British cultural products enthusiastically embraced but all movements or subcultures emanating outside South Africa's borders such as the worldwide Hippy phenomenon, which was intricately connected with the development of rock music, made a lasting impact as well.

From her period of research (1963-1985), van der Meulen can discern two defining periods in Durban's rock scene which filtered through and made an impact countrywide. Firstly, it is recognised that Durban is the birthplace of rock 'n roll in South Africa (1995:21) with a 'boom' in the number of rock bands being formed there from 1963, which had a ripple effect to the other centres in the country. These bands took their inspiration from the popular British rock movement, an influx of American recordings and later the impact of the Hippy subculture. This boom lasted until 1973 when Durban as a focal point for live music and support for bands started to decline rapidly. Van der Meulen cites the following

includes, "a trend towards acoustic music, in the city, the introduction of national television and a shift in the principal venue for rock music" (1995:49).

The second noticeable period in Durban's rock history is the establishment of the South African punk rock movement that was spawned by students of the University of Natal during the highly volatile and politically unstable years of the late 1970s. It may seem a contradiction that university students were responsible for such a revolution in music given that their inspiration came from the British punk explosion, which expressed the frustration and dissatisfaction of working class youngsters in England (van der Meulen 1995:54-60). However, the liberal organisations and free thinking fostered on the campus solidified the South African punk message whose main purpose was to address and oppose, in an abrasive and oppositional manner, the violent and oppressive tactics employed by the state in the name of apartheid. This stance invoked the suspicion of the authorities and van der Meulen has noted the intervention by security force members either through their presence at concerts or specifically in the case of targeting and regularly searching the premises of Brett Rattray, member of hard core punk band Powerage (1995:73).

Punk performances took place mainly in community halls, the university's Student Union and most recognised was the **Rainbow** at the Wagonwheels Hotel in Florida Road. This hotel was closed in 1985 and renamed the Hotel California where live music continued in the form of a jazz venue, the **Blue Note**, which was replaced by the still existing **Bonkers Music Pub**.

Shop was another venue that provided the
opened in 1984 until the decline of punk's
popularity around 1987. This was followed by a weekly night of
progressive music called **Play** (which included ska, reggae, punk, new
wave, electronica, new romantic and gothic sounds) hosted by Helge
Janssen. Janssen had a turbulent working relationship with Ronnie Botha,
who had cheated him of money on numerous occasions, and after the
authorities closed **Zodiac** he started this weekly event at a venue on 39
Pine Street. **Play** was moved to the **Community Arts Workshop** in
1987

where authorities began to take an interest in the activities there:

[Play at the Community Arts Workshop] happened for a year and a half;
then the right wing started getting interested again. Many complaints,
raids, looking for witches, taking photographs of clientele for police
records, hectic stuff. Then it was underage meanwhile I was not selling any
liquor, bring your own. It reached a point where the city council, who
owned the building, wouldn't renew the lease. (Interview with Helge
Janssen, 29/03/2000)

This forced Janssen out of a source of income once again and nine
months later in 1989, he approached fellow OJ from **Faces** Martin McHale
and partner Marcus Holmes-Newsome to host **Play** on Friday nights at
their new venue located at 330 Point Road. **Club 3.30** or The Club, as its
fanatical supporters know it, initially operated on the emerging commercial
club concept playing mostly radio hits and contemporary music on a
Saturday night. Later, as a consequence of McHale's connections with the
gay community through Ronnie Botha's clubs, **Club 3.30** also catered for
them by means of a strictly private bar.

club scene after **Ronnies** and **Zodiac** should have been. During this quiet time period (1986-1989), there was very little development musically and the few venues, which did cater for the gay scene, did not last long. The music played was essentially a recycled combination of that which was played at Botha's clubs. There was and still is today a tremendous yearning and nostalgia for this very important time in clubbing for the gay community. **Gossips** happened briefly at the **Faces** venue and the Riviera Hotel bar, although serving well into the early 1990s as a gay meeting place, was just that, a bar and not a danceclub. Thus the exclusive bar at **Club 3.30** filled a niche for the gay clientele who, after willfully remaining underground for a period of five years, needed a place which was their own where they could be guaranteed non-interference from unsympathetic straights. Once Janssen started operating his **Play** nights on a Friday, the combination that had made Botha's clubs successful was restored i.e. liberal straight people and the gay community listening to both progressive rock and commercially-oriented music in the same venue, albeit on separate nights.

Ironically, unlike in any of his previous venues and despite maintaining an overtly critical political stance, Janssen experienced very little intimidation or interference from the authorities. At this stage, **Club 3.30** operated in a similar manner to the Community Arts venue, welcoming people of all sexual persuasion and operating without a liquor license, on a "bring your own" basis. Hence, all the previous excuses used by the authorities to raid and disrupt proceedings at other venues had no relevance it seemed, at this new venue. I will return to this issue at a later stage in this and the next chapter. With minimal interference and an enigma of exclusivity surrounding it, **Club 3.30** thrived with **Play** on a Friday and the commercial



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nts, entrenching itself in the minds of the all

1991 proved to be an important year musically for two reasons in Durban and this impacted on the direction which **Club 3.30** embarked upon. Two new mutually exclusive music scenes developed: firstly, the hard rock, alternative or 'grunge' sound, as it became known, which developed from initially independent bands in and around the Seattle area of the United States (independent, that is, until the major record companies saw this sound as imminently marketable). The success of this particular sound seemed to spark the attention of those dedicated supporters of non-commercial, progressive rock and outside of Club 3-30 the demand for a dedicated alternative rock venue became felt.

The man who was responsible for discerning this new demand and making it a commercially viable venture was Gary Church when he opened up The Rift in August 1991. Church had OJ Michael Cross as a partner in this venture but bought out his shares of the business when he wished to take the music policy in a different direction. A few years later, as mentioned above, Church noticed the impact of retro fashion, music and styling and catered for it commercially by opening Retros. Once more, utilizing the musical knowledge and OJ skills of Michael Cross, Church made a success of this venture. The Rift, using the new grunge sound as its drawcard, played the same music that Janssen had been playing throughout his career in the 1980s and consequently attracted his crowd away from Club 3-30. After two years at Club 3-30, Janssen decided to take a break, during which Play slowly faded into obscurity and he was not asked back. In retrospect, the loss of support and income from Janssen's Friday night confirmed and solidified the musical and subcultural direction that Club 3-30 had started to take on their Saturday nights and also heralded the development of the second distinctive musical scene to develop in Durban in 1991. To understand this direction we have to look at musical developments in the U. K. circa summer 1988, commonly referred to as the Summer of Love. It is generally regarded that

ing of the large-scale evolution of the electronic phenomenon. It must be pointed out that electronic music has existed in many formulations since the 1970s, notably through disco, and from the original electronic purists such as Kraftwerk and OAF to its intersection with rock music through new wave bands such as Yazoo and Oepeche Mode.

The Summer of Love took its inspiration from the lifestyle, liberation and decadence found on the Balearic island of Ibiza "with its cheap property, all-year sun, lenient tax laws and absence of extradition treaties for foreign offenders" (Oon Macpherson in *The Face*, September 1985). This idyllic haven attracted all kinds of bohemian and hedonistic types from all over the world bringing with them their various habits and accoutrements. One of these was the designer drug Ecstasy, which had gained popularity amongst the party elite and gay clubs in the United States such as New York's **The Saint** (*Muzik*, May 2000) in the early 1980s, after it had been introduced to psychotherapists on the West Coast in the late 1970s because of its empathic effects. The combination of consuming ecstasy and dancing to the music style that became known as Balearic was a part of the lifestyle of clubbing in Ibiza. The Balearic approach, which focused on playing a wide spectrum of progressive, underground hits and music with a percussive, Mediterranean feel made for an interesting contrast to the U.K. clubs which were strictly delineated according to genre and style at the time.

After the summer of 1987, the atmosphere and sentiment of the Ibiza club scene was exported to the U.K. primarily through the influence of OJ, club promoter and hip-hop recording artist agent, Paul Oakenfold. The main

ringing this new clubbing experience were
new approach on a stale British club scene.

But it was the presence of ecstasy which transformed matters and heralded the birth of a new era in British clubbing:

Ecstasy had been available in London since the early eighties, but the supply was highly restricted. You had to know someone who brought it over from America, where it was legal until 1985. There was something of an ecstasy scene at **Taboo**, Leigh Bowery's club for fashion freaks, but nobody had discovered its application as a trance-dance drug. Instead, small groups of friends were using it for private bonding sessions. In 1988, ecstasy became much easier to get hold of, though it was still rather pricey at around 20 pounds a tab. (Simon Reynolds, 1998:43)

The increased use of ecstasy as a dance drug impacted on music production and highlighted certain genres developing outside of the U.K. While the eclectic approach of the Balearic style was wildly popular, it was the acid house music (so-called due to the unique sound produced by an electronic drum machine called the Roland TB 303), originating from the United States which struck a chord with the newly converted masses. As the demand for this combined form of consumptive lifestyle and musical expression grew, the need to circumvent the restrictive opening hours of licensed clubs increased. This produced the impromptu and mostly illegal parties or raves, attended by crowds sometimes in excess of 5000 people, taking place in abandoned warehouses in the industrial or non-residential sectors of London; the soundtrack to these events was acid house. The irony of this situation was that:

As a British pop cultural explosion, acid house was unique insofar as it was based almost entirely around non-indigenous music. During 1988- 9, the scene had three years' worth of American house and techno classics to draw on, as well as the new tracks streaming out of Chicago, New York and Detroit each

music made by Black American artists, it took
their own distinctively British voice. (Simon

Reynolds 1998:55)

This voice only started to be enunciated in what Reynolds (1998) refers to as the second wave of the U.K. rave scene. This occurred during 1990 when "although illegal raves had been largely suppressed, a thriving circuit of commercial raves had emerged; at the same time, a relaxation of licensing laws allowed for the growth of all-night rave-style clubs" (1998:96). At this stage, electronic dance music culture had converted itself into an industry and was no longer merely an underground phenomenon which operated on a do-it-yourself ethic. An increase in the number of local (British) dance music producers achieving chart success and the moral panic associated with media exposure ensured that it was no longer the preserve of a faceless hedonistic minority and clubs which expressed and represented dance music culture mushroomed at an unprecedented rate.

These developments in the British club scene and commercial music charts during the latter part of 1990 had an impact on **Club 3-30** because as Martin McHale states: In Durban, we here [at 330], play very little American music. Most of the music we play comes from England. That's probably because we have been very Anglicised. (Interview with Martin McHale and Marcus Holmes-Newsome, 27/10/1998) This strongly echoes the sentiments of van der Meulen's (1995) observations regarding the British influence on Durban's rock scene. Hence it was with later acid house music and from the second wave of the UK rave scene that **Club 3-30** took its impetus for the future. However, once the British dance music producers had started to notch up noteworthy music chart successes and surpass the popularity of the American acid house sound, by the end of 1992, through their own hybrid of "hardcore" house, a further Anglicised tone was set to their musical policy.

an first to the concept of the large-scale rave
presenting an all night after party to the
prestigious Durban Designer Collection fashion show. A large-scale fashion
event or scene was, of course, the perfect opportunity to cater for and introduce
an experience to a market characterised by creative, progressive minds where
gender and sexuality were not grounds for discrimination but were embraced and
tolerated. This market formed the bulk of **Club 3-30's** initial client base; they
were independent, hedonistic and committed to new, fresh music and
experiences, as Marcus Holmes- Newsome comments:

Those people who do frequent this club are on the leading edge of fashion,
advertising - they are always looking forward to new things. (Interview with
Martin McHale and Marcus Holmes-Newsome, 27/10/1998)

Thus, by means of recycling a sentiment that had been carried through the
gay/crossover clubs of Ronnie Botha but with updated music, **Club 3-30**
managed to coax a gay scene, which had previously elected to go underground,
out of the closet. Ironically, while **Club 3-30** managed to remain a well-kept
secret to a town obsessed with commercial club **Red Dog Saloon** and the
grunge rock aftermath, it was the gay community that unwittingly proved to be
a catalyst to exposing Durban to dance music even further.

In 1994, a coffee shop opened under the name After Dark, in Hermitage
Lane in the city centre. As the name suggests, and because of its location,
it was focused on catering primarily for gay clientele with two purposes in
mind: either professionals who were looking for a breakfast before work in
the city centre or those hedonistic types who were looking for a place to
relax after a night out. A.D., as it became known, proved to be very popular
on Sunday mornings, attracting gay clientele and their friends who had
been out at **Club 3-30** all night. Soon this small venue was converted into

erflow of people still eager to dance t he early
y.

By the end of 1994, this diminutive, dark and sweaty venue soon catered to a specialist dance music, gay-oriented clientele and their friends. Many of these dedicated clubbers had recently returned from spending time in the U.K. where dance music had revolutionised the entertainment and clubbing industry and the use of ecstasy was commonplace. The music style dominant in the U.K. clubs and consequently in A.D., was appropriately known as "handbag house", a variant of house music very much representative of gay-oriented music. Although this style of music was considered the by-product of an overground culture in the U.K., tracks such as Junior Vasquez's "Get your hands off my man" and De' Lacey's "Hideaway" were characteristic of the happiness and cheeky attitude of gay music which Frank Melman has referred to:

With the gay community you find, the type of music the gay people enjoy, is happy music...

Basically when you talk about gay music, a lot of them like the house stuff but not the heavy stuff, they are more into the "hands in the air", vocal sounding stuff.

(Interview with Frank Melman, 1/12/1998)

At this point, large-scale raves started to become better marketed and catered for larger crowds due to an upsurge in the awareness of dance music.

Although the number of people who had become converted to this new style of musical expression and culture was not yet prolific, the atmosphere and spirit with which each new gathering of like-minded people attuned to a new musical direction and consumption, filled people with a sense of positivity. There was a sense of being a part of something larger that informed the identity of these rave productions and which prompted people, in certain cases, to make misplaced

negative) regarding the impact and wide scale

Nonetheless there was a sense of mystery,

uniqueness and adventure regarding embarking on these collective social and emotional experiences. It could be said that 1995 was the honeymoon period for the dance music and rave culture aesthetic in Durban, a so-called first wave.

This honeymoon period was aided when **A.D.** opened up on Friday nights in addition to Sunday mornings. Raves happened more frequently, every two to three months, sometimes in the alienating landscape of the harbour front or decaying, industrialised sectors of Point Road, which added to the other-worldliness of this culture. Hence, while the rest of Durban was trapped in the cycle of the commercial and alternative rock club format, large-scale hedonistic gatherings under the banner of dance music were dotting the cityscape. The significance of **A.D.** became enhanced when Gary Church opened up **Retros** that year at the Riviera Hotel, a short walk down Hermitage Lane from the pulsing venue which had the by-line "compact clubbing" and a growing membership. As mentioned above, Church took advantage of the trend in popular culture that foregrounded a retro aesthetic in music and styling, consequently drawing in the style conscious and trend influenced youth.

The proximity of these two venues produced, at first, two unlikely yet exciting complementary alternatives for the clubber searching for a complete break from the norm being perpetuated in other club choices. This, ultimately, strategic positioning of the two clubs meant that a younger audience started to be exposed to the dance music phenomenon on a larger scale. At this stage, dance music culture had started to gain momentum on a nationwide scale. The first ever rave to be staged in Johannesburg was reported to have taken place in 1993 (telephone interview, Sally Weiss 5/11/2000). Thus, by 1996 staging raves and dance

ed into a commercially oriented exercise with such as Paul Oakenfold making appearances at parties organized by dedicated rave production organisations.

This was also the first occasion that Club 3-30's dominance came under threat as Flava opened its doors further down Point Road in the same building as the legendary Smuggler's Inn. This club catered for the recently converted younger crowd of dance music fans and included a certain element of the gay clientele. Only its diehard supporters meagerly sustained Club 3-30, as Flava became the focus of a rapidly commercializing dance music scene. Unfortunately investment in this club was provided through a syndicated bouncer network, who had control over the supply of relevant drugs and which once again had a link to Joe Kools. Thus shortly before it had the opportunity to close Club 3-30's doors, Flava shut down towards mid.1997 under mysterious circumstances related to the club's primary investors.

In the aftermath of the honeymoon period, electronic dance music club culture in Durban became more prevalent in print media through what Stanley Cohen (1972) refers to the 'moral panic' associated with its exposure to younger audiences. Sarah Thornton (1994) employs this term in her description of the positioning role that all media plays in youth subcultures and their ideological discourses. In particular, she argues that:

Disapproving tabloid coverage legitimates and authenticates youth cultures. Without tabloid intervention, it is hard to imagine a British youth 'movement'. For in turning youth into news, the tabloids both frame subcultures as major events and disseminate them. A tabloid front page,

...y a self-fulfilling prophecy; it can turn the
...ing development. (1994:183)

With regards to any media, it becomes obvious to the subculture in question the extent to which those reporting are knowledgeable of their subject matter or not. Very often in the case of the press, reporters are in a position of ignorance to what Thornton (1994) refers to as 'subcultural capital'; a term adapted from Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) distinction model i.e. the necessary knowledge to navigate within a specific subcultural discourse. Hence, this passage of time in which tabloid-style commentary was being delivered upon a fledgling, largely misunderstood dance music club culture characterised a turning point in the history of non-mainstream nightclubs.

In order to make sense of this turning point, we need to track the manner in which rock nightclubs developed from the time that Gary Church opened **The Rift** in late 1991 till 1995. **The Rift** was situated in St Georges Street, within the Belgica Hotel, which also served as the Durban headquarters for the A. N.C. As mentioned above, the explosion of the hard rock, alternative or 'grunge' sound sparked off a mutual interest amongst nightclub operators hoping to profit from this 'new sound'. This resulted in, firstly, **Gatsby's** which opened up at Helge's old **Play** venue at 39 Pine Street in 1992, then **Ministry of Sound** which opened at the old **CC's** venue in Smith Street in 1993. However, while neither of these two contenders succeeded for longer than a period of one year, a third club **The Station**, so-called because of its location on the concourse of the New Durban Railway Station, outlived **The Rift**.

DJs Trevor Schell and Richard Every, who had worked with and for Gary Church at **The Rift** for its first two years, started **The Station**. As DJs,

ference of opinion with regards to the direction
moving. At the time, there was a prodigious
amount of rock music being produced on both sides of the Atlantic. A
typically American sound was represented by the grunge or alternative
rock sound, a harder and heavier sounding rock which also incorporated
elements of heavy metal. A typically British rock sound was represented by
a rise in prominence of the so-called 'indie' rock sound typified by bands
such as The Happy Mondays, The Charlatans and The Stone Roses. This
sound was lighter and incorporated elements of funk and 60s psychedelia
such as the Hammond organ and emanated mostly from the northern city
of Manchester.

Such characterizations of an American and British rock sound may be a
generalization, however, it serves a purpose to describe the distinction in
the musical policies of **The Rift** and **The Station**. Further, to say
that only a British or only an American sound were played at these
venues would be incorrect. Instead it would be correct to say that **The
Rift's** musical policy at that time (1993) was informed by an American
aesthetic or sentiment while **The Station** was informed by a British one.
Using this 'indie' rock
sound as a starting point for their music policy, **The Station** began to move
in a more experimental musical direction by highlighting more eclectic,
marginalized music forms such as gothic, industrial and electronica. The
irony of this 'indie' sound and its Mancunian roots was that Manchester
circa 1990 was simultaneously undergoing a pop cultural explosion in the
form of being the centre of the emerging dance music scene. This led to
what Simon Reynolds has referred to as the 'rave 'n roll crossover' in
Manchester (1998:69-94), a situation where there was a complementing

ical styles and often entertainment events
ved by DJs playing acid house music all
night. Thus this 'indie' sound, which Trevor and Richard were pioneering,
had a sympathetic relationship with an emerging British dance music
sound as well as other marginalized music forms. As a consequence, in
the second year of its operation, **The Station** added a second dance floor
with DJ Grant Collard playing electronica and acid house at first and this
was later succeeded by gothic and industrial music.

As The Station continued with its musical policy and provided
experimental local South African bands such as Fingerhead and Live
Jimmy Presley, an opportunity to be heard, support for **The Rift** began to
fade. This was also the same time that larger commercial nightclub venues
began to predominate and minority groups of people began to be infected
by dance music. Support for rock music was declining somewhat and
when Church closed **The Rift** and later re-opened **Retros**, **The Station**
was the only nightclub venue dedicated to rock and experimental music.
The combination of **Retros** and **A.D.** being in close proximity set off the
chain of events in Durban's dance music culture which led to the
unfavourable tabloid-style media coverage described above. Further, once
support for the retro concept began to fade, the fate of **Retros** was sealed
when a fatal shooting involving two Retros clientele took place in the
parking garage of the Riviera Hotel.

This unfortunate incident proved to be a catalyst to another business
partnership being struck up with Church and Trevor Schell of The Station.
At the beginning of 1997, The Station closed its doors and Church and
Schell conceived a new club, Crash, which opened in mid 1997. The effect
of closing The Station enhanced the turning point referred to above. The
immediate effect was that there was no outlet for rock music as well as the

rock and non-mainstream dance music. The venue was closed when Jamies was opened in early 1997 at the same venue as Gatsbys and Play in Pine Street. It is interesting to note that although no outlets for playing non-mainstream dance music emanated from The Station closing the reaction to this lack of alternative was the formation of small DJ collectives such as Kindred Spirit, Evenflow and the Strictly Business Crew. These collectives started to operate in smaller non-club venues and exposed people to new music at informal house parties and similar gatherings. Hence, although the honeymoon period for dance music was certainly over, the end of 1996 proved to be a turning point and in many senses a new beginning for various diverse scenes within the Durban clubland.

The gay community, to a certain degree, made a new beginning in 1997 because although they were catered for at Flava, they actually profited from its closing. Frank Melman played a major role in Flava through the provision of sound and lighting equipment. When the club closed down, the gay market, apart from having Club 3-30 as an option were not being specifically catered for. Consequently, Melman and partners built a club to cater specifically for the gay market at a venue which was previously an Indian nightclub called Bassline. This basement club, called Axis, with its state-of-the-art technology and comfort is still the only club to cater for a gay market with an open, mixed race policy.

Crash initially battled to find its feet. The club itself was a neat fusion of industrial and cutting edge design which reflected the monstrous size of its location in the Durban Railway Station. Schell and Church had plenty of experience with playing a wide variety of rock and retro music on its main dancefloor, however, when **Flava** closed its doors under mysterious circumstances, it presented a unique opportunity. Dance music was rapidly

and the gap left by **Flava** closing was filled
to contact the main OJ and music
coordinator from **Flava**, Mimi Kesaris.

This was just the kick-start that **Crash** required to be more successful than was initially imagined. Fortunately, the infrastructure was in place for Kesaris to use his vast experience as a club OJ to transform the back dance space into a success. With **Crash** and **A.D.** offering dance music to eager punters on a Friday night, **Club 3-30** was allowed to re-establish its dominance on Saturday nights as the all night dance music option. Thus, under one roof, **Crash** offered the combination made possible by the proximity of **Retros** and **A.D.** This proved to be very profitable and managed to draw in a wide cross section of patrons who reveled in the futuristic decor and the sheer size of the venue.

With the **Retros** venue standing empty for some time, there proved to be an opportunistic moment for local underground collective, Kindred Spirit. This collective, headed by the charismatic female OJ Jessica Ramsden, provided an outlet of expression for numerous young Durbanites who had made a return to the country in the wake of democratic transformation and musically, from the peak of the second wave of the U.K. rave scene. This peak was characterized by a backlash to the commercialization of the dance music scene in the form of free parties conceived by the New Age traveler movement or neo.Hippies. This backlash was coordinated by collectives such as the Spiral Tribe and DiY and typified by events such as the Megadog music events and the infamous Castlemorton rave which provoked a judicial and legislative onslaught from the authorities in the form of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

amplified the peak of this second wave. First, the scene was a combination of the evolution of the early acid house music into trance techno and later Goa trance. Like Ibiza, Goa, on the south West Indian coast, was a spiritual and hedonistic haven for hippies in the 1960s once it was released to the Indian government after being a Portuguese colony. Like Ibiza, it too became a dance and drug haven for Europeans and when the acid house sound reached its shores, a uniquely Goan style of trance dance music developed which was later brought back to British shores and eagerly embraced by the neo.Hippy traveler movement. Meanwhile, back in the city, U.K. producers were pushing the envelope of their own inimitable hardcore house style to spawn the inescapably British sound of drum 'n bass or jungle. Drum 'n bass can be described as the syncopated combination of fast paced, high frequency, broken beats overlaid with extended low frequency, bass lines.

Thus, attracted by a positive political dispensation and brimming with the influence of the second peak of a dance music scene in the U.K., many young people returned to Durban to find Kindred Spirit catering for their underground taste in music and party. After a series of successful outdoor parties, the **Retros** venue standing vacant and support from a dedicated, enthusiastic crowd, the timing for a club run by Kindred Spirit, showcasing underground music was correct. As a result, in early 1998 **Bedlam** was created, named after a sound system collective in the Spiral Tribe mould. Here the style of music that predominated was techno trance and Goa trance music but because their outdoor parties had featured drum' n bass, there was a demand for that style too.

This gave the Strictly Business drum 'n bass crew an opportunity to showcase that style of music in a side room in **Bedlam**. This collective of DJs had solidified a crossover support with **Bedlam** supporters from Monday night sessions at a late night coffee bar on the Berea called Roxy. Most importantly, it gave the Strictly Business and their supporters an opportunity to hear their music loud and in a danceclub where they could express themselves to it. Somehow though the

set the precedent for the establishment of
the middle of 1998 and, it had to close its doors.

At this stage, **Crash** had gone into orbit in terms of popularity and support and had to open a third dancefloor to cater for the numbers through the door, sometimes as many as 2500 punters in a night. However, regardless of the fact that **Bedlam's** existence was short lived, it signified another important peak for music in Durban

The third dancefloor at **Crash** was initially meant to be a VIP lounge bar with the focus on a relaxed ambience. For this purpose, Church employed the services of the Evenflow DJ collective, who specialized in playing an eclectic mix of relaxing ambient music. However, it was not long before a demand for dancing in this lounge area became felt and once again the experience of Kesaris as a club DJ came through when he suggested playing an 'deeper' style of house music. Known as deep or funky house, this style, which is characterized by funk and disco influenced vocals and basslines, incorporates the talents of both American and British producers. At the same time, **Club 3.30** began to showcase this style of music on a separate, more intimate dancefloor with noticeably a c%ured DJ Allister landau and Rodney Rogan.

The new focus of music created a whole new bass of s support for Crash, which allowed it to endure well into the beginning of 1999. However, **Tilt**, which was opened in December 1998 by a previous **Crash** resident, Nick Dranios and partner Mark Porter, took this funky, deep house approach as their point of departure and it was not long before their bass of s support began to mushroom. The impact of this club on **Crash** meant that it had to be scaled down from the three dancefloors to, at first two, then one by October 1999, playing a variety of standard, popular house tunes of the day to the deeper, funky variety. Apart from the tact that people had simply become bored with the type of party on after at **Crash** and had made **Tilt**

aint from the majority white punters was t hat
nted more and more by Indian people.

In the mid 1990s, it could be said that the Indian community started to become interested in styles of music predominantly enjoyed by white people and in particular, they became drawn into a commercialized dance music culture as a whole, as will be explained below. The owners of **Crash** were thus caught in an awkward situation whereby they had to decide whether to restrict access to most non-white people or be faced with financial failure. The owners decided not to restrict access but as a result of the interest shown by the Indian community dedicated Saturday nights to cater for that market from October 1999. This resulted in the wholesale boycott of **Crash** by the white market and thus its owners were consequently dependent upon the support of the Indian market. This did not last very long because in March 2000 a new mega-club catering for the Indian market called 100 on Point drew the entire support base away from Crash.

Fortunately for Crash, after the closure of Bedlam in mid 1998, the Strictly Business Crew were given an opportunity by the club to hire the venue on a non-regular night in order to showcase their drum 'n bass sound. As a result of these parties happening once every few months, a relationship built up between the collective and the owners. This paved the way for the Strictly Business Crew to step into the bridge of support left by both the prejudiced white market that supported house music and the Indian market drawn away by a mega-club, which subsumed their interest in dance music. Currently they run a weekly residency at Crash called Extreme, bringing drum "n bass further into the public eye while further exposing other genres of underground non-mainstream dance music on a second dancefloor.

underground phenomenon to mainstream
Club 3-30 are no longer seen as non-
mainstream. In fact, in a move that confirms its status as the most important and
influential club in the country with regards to electronic dance music, Club 3-30
opened up 3-30 (London) at the end of May 2000. Further, rock as a genre still
has a strong support base among younger clientele of school leaving age.
Unfortunately, a fire gutted Jamies in March 2000, which left rock fans with no
alternative for some time, but the owners rallied a few months later to open Burn
(an obvious pun on the fate of Jamies) in Umbilo Road. The only remaining non-
mainstream club attempts lie with nights such Extreme but because of the lack of
numbers to support such alternative scenes a lot of the potential to hear
interesting underground dance music is limited to small scale events or
happenings with occur infrequently.

Non-White Danceclubs

It is not possible to regard the development of nightclubs amongst non-
white communities and cultures in Durban without considering the
overarching effect of the political dimension on people's lives. This reality is
reflected in the development of the danceclub phenomenon amongst the
Indian, coloured and black ethnic groups. When the Group Areas Act of
1950, the Population Registration Act of 1950 and the Native Resettlement
Act of 1954 were enforced, thousands of non-white communities were
forced to relocate to areas outside of the urban areas of the Durban city
centre. This meant that, for the most part, any form of entertainment took
place within or near the areas designated as townships for each ethnic or
race group. However, these entertainment venues were not of the
dedicated danceclub variety but were rather supper clubs, which
incorporated dining and dancing. Supper clubs have a long history within
the coloured and Indian community. However, amongst the severely

, shebeens or drinking halls were the only
n der Meulen writes:

The segregation of the South African population imposed by Apartheid made conditions unbearable for musicians used to working in multi-racial bands. Clubs which permitted inter-racial mingling closed, and people were forcibly removed to different locations. This broke up existing music communities and removed their source of income, and inevitably led to many of South Africa's best musicians going into exile. In Johannesburg and Cape Town, the famous Sophiatown and District Six were evacuated, destroying the vibrant cultural life that had once existed in these areas. (1995:3)

As a testament to the irrepressible spirit that finally overcame the reality of apartheid, some of the most exciting, vibrant and unrecorded music was performed under the most oppressive conditions in these establishments. An example of this is the music of The Flames, a coloured rock band from Sydenham, a coloured community close to the city centre. They enjoyed widespread national and international success at the end of the 1960s and were representative of a vibrant rock 'n roll scene amongst both the Indian and coloured communities of the time (van der Meulen 1995:36-8).

Amongst the Indian and coloured communities living in the Durban area, the beginning of danceclubs (as the dedicated dancing venues that I have chosen to describe them) is one of shared support and respect in the face of a common oppressor. Due to the extent of the oppression exercised upon the black race group the concept of a dedicated dancing venue did not hold much currency because as a majority, a lot of energy was devoted to the mobilization of the struggle against apartheid. As a result, there was

It is not surprising, to embrace western, it is not to say that black nightclubs did not exist because there have been entrepreneurial attempts to harness a potentially large market into this type of entertainment option. The fact remains that such venues have not endured for very long and they are notable exceptions. Therefore, because of the common ground between Indian and coloured nightclubs and the exceptional black nightclub, it is in fact useful to view the development of non-white nightclubs as a whole entity.

Before 1980, the coloured and Indian communities had already embraced the idea of a dedicated danceclub venue. Initially there was a club called **Module 99** that catered for both coloured and Indian clientele, however, it was badly managed and only lasted for a year even though it was filled to capacity each week. It was at this time that Lionel and Lynn Johnstone realized the need for such a venue in Durban and consequently found a person who was willing to allow his premises in Smith St to be used for danceclub purposes on Friday and Saturday night. They called it **Cafe Geneve** and decided that even though it was illegal for them to trade in the city centre as coloured people in 1978, they would go ahead. Their DJ, Mike, was ironically a white man who came with them from **Module 99 once they decided it was a good idea to open their own nightclub. It was not long before they drew the crowd away from Module 99**, which subsequently closed. However, they did not escape the attention of the authorities:

We tried to have a hearing and that failed hopelessly and all that they could say to us was, "Go and open in your township." (Interview with Lynn Johnstone, 23/03/2000)

for a few months and during this time another
of Rajen opened up **The Mermaid** in Albert St
to cater for the Indian market. Over time, Rajen and his DJ Ashe Govan would
become firm friends with the Johnstones as each club catered for a separate
market; however, an overlap with their clientele did take place. Fortunately for the
Johnstones and DJ Mike, an opportunity arose early in 1980, which allowed them
to circumvent the inspection of the authorities:

We looked around and managed to find a group of Greek people who were
willing to act as a white nominee and rented us one of their surplus clubs. They
had a whole chain of nightclubs which catered for sailors coming into Durban's
port as a result of the international shipping routes. At that time, the ships started
being diverted through the Suez Canal, so that there were not that many
seamen coming into Durban and these Greek people had surplus clubs.
And they sold us the club, all under the counter type of thi ng and kept on
as the front for us. So finally we had a place of our own which we could
renovate to our standards but just trading as managers and manageresses
with the Greek guys as the nominee of the club. And because it was on the
total outskirts of the city, it was on Alice St, the police did not bother us that
much - we were not in the main city centre. And that is how it started, that
was the first home for the coloured community. (Interview with Lynn
Johnstone, 23/03/2000)

This club was called Blitz and gained legendary status as *the* danceclub
for the coloured community. At the same time as Blitz, another club called
Airport opened in the Butterworth Hotel for the Indian community. It was
considered a subsidiary of The Mermaid with Ashe Govan employed to OJ
there as well but with a slight distinction.

...d who wanted to be seen in the Indian
aid but you'd get the friendlier people that
went to Airport. (Interview with Lynn Johnstone, 23/03/2000)

However, when Airport closed down in 1984, Ashe Govan made plans over the next year to open his own venue to compliment Blitz and called it Zoom. It was at this time that the laws for non-whites owning and operating businesses in the city centre started to relax and Govan took advantage of this fact, opening Zoom in a lane called Dick King St which connects the city centre's main roads of West and Smith St. This club was purpose built for the coloured community and its design and technical equipment was based on the danceclubs that had developed over the years on the Cape Flats where there was a strong culture of dancing and nightclubs. Thus, for the foreseeable future, the coloured community had two options to party at: **Blitz** on a Friday and Saturday, **Zoom** on a Friday and Sunday.

With only **The Mermaid** open for Indian clientele, a former jazz club called the **Manhattan** was developed into **The Octagon** in 1985. This club was situated in the traditionally Indian trading sector of Durban's city centre on the corner of Grey and Queen St and continued to serve the Indian community until the early 1990s. However, the Indian danceclub as a phenomenon truly manifested itself with the opening of **The Palladium** a year later. This club was built in the semi-industrial zone of Isipingo and in close proximity to the largest Indian residential area of Chatsworth. It was certainly the most spectacular and awe-inspiring venue of the time, especially in Durban, built with no expense spared to cater not only as an ultimate danceclub but as a supper club venue including the capacity to host entertainment productions for performing artists. It was thus built to

Indian culture, which at the time was still fairly
maintained. As Lynn Johnstone comments with

respect:

The Indian club owner of **The Palladium**, Pat Pather, he's a legend. When he built **The Palladium** out there in the sticks, people went out there and looked at it in the building stage and said, "This man's crazy, I mean, who else is going to come out into this bush",. He's got vision and the bucks to put with the vision. Out there he had a monopoly because when the drinking and driving issue came to be such a big thing and people were afraid to drive into town, they decided to go out there. Everyone that lived south of Durban was happy to go there but he's kept the place going, he's got a lot of entertainment, shows, a real fightclub owner. (Interview, 23/03/2000)

In terms of consistent quality entertainment for his community, Pat Pather has certainly provided the Indian community with the opportunity to appreciate the concept of danceclubs from a family perspective, thereby acknowledging and affirming the network of family bonds characteristic of their culture and social structure. Furthermore, he employed only the best including an anomaly, as in the case of OJ Mike (Blitz) and Allister Landau (Club 3-30), in the form of the white OJ Mimi Kesaris whose impact and experience was felt later in clubs such as Flava and Crash as mentioned above. Pather certainly raised the level at which danceclubs operated to a new, unprecedented height as well as laid the foundation for the clubbing industry among the Indian community. This foundation allowed Indian danceclubs the ability to flourish to the extent that, at present, Indian nightclubs outnumber those that are dedicated to other markets and race groups.

coloured community had 'outgrown' the size of their Alice St venue further into the centre of town to the same venue used by Ronnie Botha for Ronnies. This new club called Xanadu was double the capacity and allowed for the freer movement of people dispensing with the 'spatial politics' that arose in the smaller **Blitz** venue. Lynn and Lionel Johnstone had a level of personal service happening at **Blitz** that reflected the respect accorded to patrons as well as the conservative nature of people at the time. Each person was individually seated such that the capacity of the club could be monitored and maintained with courteous delivery:

I used to seat the people till we got to Xanadu, I seated everyone all the years at Blitz. The first year of Xanadu, it started to change where people just came in and ignored it. You see why, because the club was bigger, they preferred to mingle. There (**Blitz**) you sat and could see everybody, like a U-shape so you could see who was in Greenwood Park, Sydenham, Wentworth. But in **Xanadu**, no, you have to walk around and so the seating thing was obsolete by the end of the first year. (Interview with Lynn Johnstone, 23/03/2000)

This characteristic of grouping according to residential area and neighbourhood or 'spatial politics' as I have chosen to refer to it, has continued at **Xanadu** albeit not in such a formalised manner as at **Blitz**.

The **Blitz** venue on the corner of Alice St and Umgeni Rd was sold to people who intended to run it as a black nightclub by using it for events. Called **Whispers**, it failed to generate much interest.

The beginning of the 1990s saw the establishment of another quality danceclub, by Indian businessmen from the Gujerati community, at the top end of Smith St called **Genesis**. Marian Padayachee comments on the significance of this club:

ervative Gujarati Community, from the Indian
ere conservative, they were vegetarians, they

didn't drink alcohol and they didn't go nightclubbing but they lived in the city and after making money suddenly found a new boredom and their women and young people started going out to nightclubs. **Genesis** was what the name says, the first nightclub to cater for that community... this club was primary for locating this community that now ends up in the **Rivets**, they've now graduated to the **Rivets**. (Interview, 26/04/2000)

Although **Genesis** was for many a fantastic example of Indian prosperity, its management and owners lacked the personality that is required to maintain critical human contact and feedback from its patrons. This is the direct link that is essential for owners to maintain clientele loyalty and for patrons it is an affirmation of their personal identity and identification with the club itself, to converse and communicate with the owner. Allister Landau who years later was to OJ at **Club 3-30**, describes his experience of working there:

I was working at **Genesis** and I must have been there three months before I met the owner. People who went didn't know who the owner was, there was no interaction whatsoever. If you want to keep your club going, you have to interact with the people. He had a manager to run the place but his downfall was, he came to the club and no-one knew who he was and he pushed his weight around. (Interview, 27/10/98)

Consequently this danceclub did not last as its potential suggested and closed within two years of its opening. The direct opposite of an owner and manager who is out of touch with his patrons is Nico Sofilas who, with his father, opened **Angelos Cantina** in 1993 which still operates at present. This is quite an achievement because in the face of many danceclubs opening and closing for the Indian market, which accelerated from 1995

and quite simply because of the bond that has
and management with their clientele.

The clubbing industry is notorious, regardless of race group or market, for the fact that their product i.e. the clubbing experience, loses currency and consequently the crowd is blamed for being choosy and fickle. They have every right to behave in this manner because at the end of the day the patron is still paying money at the door for an experience. It is a mutual situation of the club caters for the patron's needs and the patron perceives the relative value of the experience. Loyalty becomes established when the emphasis of going to that club starts to fall not on the fact that the patron has involved themselves in an economic transaction but rather because of the sense of identification that the individual feels with the clubbing crowd and the sense of affirming personal identity that that individual feels by being there. As Sofilas comments on this phenomenon:

Despite the fact that we have a lot of patrons that have patronized us over the years, there are constantly new faces coming in, constantly new people that we are winning over. Because everyone, no matter who you are, reaches a stage when you say, "I've had enough of clubs, I want to settle down, relax, get away from that environment", It happens and don't get me wrong, they'll come down again 6 months, a year later. You haven't lost them entirely; you haven't lost them as a clubgoer, patronising your club. If he goes anywhere, he will come back to your club but constantly there is no loyalty in the nightclub business and I can assure you that if a new club opens, everyone goes there and they've got every right to do that. It's the choice that they make and even when a new club opens, everyone goes there and eventually they start drifting back. I love it when new clubs open in my area because I believe if more people are around, it's a matter of taking your arms, spreading them out and bringing them in. That's what I believe. (Interview, 16/03/2000)

have managed to make a connection with their
club 3-30, whose owners Martin McHale and

Marcus Holmes-Newsome still presently make it part of their duty in a night to spend time at the door welcoming their clientele personally. Again Allister Landau elaborates on this crucial need for connection with clientele:

Someone mentioned this to me the other day, "Ten years and every time

I have walked in there, I have been greeted by the owner of 3-30". And I thought about it, I was so used to seeing Martin and Marcus at the door and it didn't mean anything, until this person brought it up. People are made to feel so special that they don't want to go anywhere else and it costs them (Martin and Marcus) nothing to do. (Interview, 27/10/98)

The Sofilas family is Greek, expatriates from Mozambique who have continued the tradition of Greek nightclub owners, which Lynn Johnstone spoke of above. The family network amongst nightclub owners is extended further by the fact that the co-owner of **Tilt** nightclub, Nic Dranios, is the cousin of Nico Sofilas. Because there is a strong tradition of family owned businesses in the Greek community, it is thus understandable that the Sofilas family is sympathetic to the importance of family ties and an atmosphere that reflects it to the Indian community.

Bassline in Rutherford St offered a brief alternative to **Angelos** and **Palladium** when it opened in 1995 but again it did not last longer than two years before Frank Melman took it over to create **Axis** there. It could be said that the amount of publicity of the moral panic variety generated by rave and dance music culture brought the phenomenon of the danceclub further into the public consciousness at that time. 1996 saw the start of a steady increase in the number of Indian nightclubs to open on an annual basis and also the revival of the **Blitz/Whispers** venue by **Zoom** club

on the drug of the moment in the press at
van revived the tradition of the matinee party
when he opened this club. This was an afternoon session where, in
general, no alcohol was served, taking place usually on a Friday and
Saturday afternoon, aimed at the under eighteen market who were drawn
in by the danceclub phenomenon. **Exodus**, co-owned by Roland Reddi,
also profited from the increased popularity of matinees where
danceclubs returned to a market, which had been lost to them. The Red
Dog Saloon, which closed in 1995, was also taken over by entrepreneur
Paul Singh to become Pegasus, drawing in an older clientele.

As mentioned above, the end of 1996 and the beginning of 1997
represented a turning point for white non-mainstream danceclubs with the
closing of The Station and Flava, the opening of Crash and the formation
of DJ collectives experimenting with underground dance music genres.
This was also a period represented by the beginning of new scenes in the
non. white danceclubs. In this year, the sound of modernized bhangra
music came to be popularized through the opening of Stringfellows on the
corner of Brickhill Rd and West St, again by Indian businessmen.
Described as "a sound and dance conceived in the north of India and born
after long gestation in the subculture of London's clublands" (Tony
Jackman, Sunda~ ~, 29/06/1997), bhangra brought a traditional element of
Indian culture into the westernized setting of the danceclub. The irony is
that this modernized bhangra was the product of westernized Indian artists
living in the U.K., further proof for a thesis of the omni-cultural presence of
British cultural products in Durban.

Also in town, a new nightclub called Throb opened and in Silverglen, near
Chatsworth, the Silver Slipper also opened. The paths of the patrons of

under tragic circumstances in the future. Of
beginning of a black nightclub in the Genesis
venue that featured local music of the township kwaito and d'gong variety.
This club attracted numerous black young people of school leaving age
and tertiary education students for whom this music had strong relevance.
As a result, Colours, as it was called, under good management, enjoyed
support for approximately two years before closing down.
It seemed that a precedent started to form regarding the lifecycle of your
average nightclub dedicated to the Indian market and that was within two
years of opening, the club would have lost its currency and you would have
to close down. This high turnover of clubs meant that competition between
the variety of clubs to draw in clientele was fierce and also proved that the
nightclub industry had become just that, an industry dominated by cut-
throat businessmen who were riding off the currency of this newfound past-
time for the Indian community. As a consequence, we see a situation
arising where club owners have two and sometimes three venues running
concurrently. Therefore in 1998, Exodus owner Roland Reddi opened up
Spank at the **Harleys** venue which closed less than two years later.
Obsession in Soldiers Way attempted to cater first for the coloured and
then the black community but fails within a year. The Hilton hotel opened
with a bar which converts into a danceclub known as **Rivets**, becoming
frequented by the same exclusive Gujarati crowd that supported **Genesis**.
Due to the success of **Throb** in the city centre, it was decided to open
another **Throb** in the centre of Chatsworth, which starts to draw the crowd
away from the **Silver Slipper** creating an atmosphere of tension and
animosity between the two clubs.

The success of the Chatsworth **Throb** begins to grow as support for the
city centre venue declines forcing it to close in 1999. This year itself was
relatively quiet with the exception of **Pittstop** opening at The Med venue

club built by Pat Pather of **Palladium** fame. Pather located his new club, appropriately titled **Destiny**, at the end of Point Rd where the city of Durban is rezoning and developing that area to become a major tourist attraction similar to the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town. At the beginning of the year 2000, his lead is followed suit by Nico Sofilas and partner Sam September, who decide that it is time to open a large scale venue for the black market, called **HEAT**. Shortly after this, Roland Reddi opens a mega-club which manages to eclipse the size of any nightclub yet built in Durban calling it **100 on Point** after its location. At present, it is enjoying patronage from the majority of Indian clubbers, filling this already huge venue to capacity. The launch of this club was, however, overshadowed by a tragedy, which shook the Indian community to the core.

On Friday, 24 March 2000, three men, acting upon instruction from the owner of **Silver Slipper** nightclub Mr. Siva Chetty, entered a matinee session at the **Throb**, Chatsworth nightclub. One of the men released a canister of tear gas, which created large-scale pandemonium amongst the crowd, who were mostly schoolchildren enjoying their first hours of school holiday. As a result of the ensuing panic and lack of adequate emergency exits, thirteen children died which sent shockwaves through the Indian community of Chatsworth as well as the rest of the country. It was thought that by releasing this canister into a full nightclub, the **Throb** patrons would then leave that venue and go to the **Silver Slipper**. Three accused are awaiting indictment and trial while the fourth co-accused has turned state witness. This event motivated purely by greed, jealousy, bad management and even worse judgement has caused the clubbing community to take careful account of its motives as an industry and has left a sour taste in the mouths of a community which eagerly embraced the culture of danceclubs.

Chapter 3

In the light of the ethnographic research of the previous chapter and given the unique situation of the city of Durban itself, it is once more necessary to reiterate the aim of the research. The aim is to investigate the extent to which the music played at nightclubs in Durban is an experience of articulation of the cultural identity for which the club itself is catering. As a consequence, the research attempts to consider the cultural identities experienced and expressed through music consumed at the nightclub site itself. The nightclub as space has developed over the period of research to become the site where the actualization and realization of the relation between music consumption and cultural identity can be viewed directly.

Shepherd (1986) has conducted similar research into the music consumption patterns among young people in Montreal. The research was conducted according to a quantitative method which ranges cultural identities along the lines of gender, age, ethnicity and class. Shepherd (1986) takes care to reflect on the theoretical and methodological implications of such a project and his initial quantitative research pointed to the reliability of using such vectors as gender, age, ethnicity and class in discerning trends in patterns of music consumption.

In certain aspects, the present research mirrors the approach of Shepherd but further, this chapter attempts to move deeper into the psychology of the consumption experience within the nightclub site. The ethnographic aspect of the research in the previous chapter emphasizes amongst other things, the vectors utilized by Shepherd as mentioned above. The one shortcoming of his quantitative approach, admits Shepherd, is that the quantitative methods disregard individuals as actors (1986:327). It is the intention of the research to combine its ethnographic aspects further with an individualized approach to the consumptive experience within the nightclub while expressing what Straw (1991)

with respect to Durban's danceclub and
the first chapter.

The approach proposed above will certainly parallel the long-term intentions of
Shepherd's research, which is to:

Throw light on the relationship between social structures and cultural realities, the mediating influence of the music industry on the musical presentation of those structures and realities, and the cultural and social messages both discerned and created in popular musics by consumers. From this information, it is our intention to generate hypotheses concerning the way in which both French-Canadian and Anglo-American popular musics hold, reveal and are made to articulate social and cultural messages for different groups of consumers.
(1986:305)

Although the methodology is different, the intention of the research is very similar to that of Shepherd. Once again, there is a sense of similarity in the multi-culturalism experienced in both the Canadian and the South African setting. However, the social and cultural realities that are articulated in the respective circumstances are entirely distinct.

The internal dynamics of the clubbing experience

Using the work of Malbon (1999) through which to focus, it is the intention of the research to now uncover what he broadly refers to as the 'geography of consumption and identity'. Malbon's concern and interest lies in the changing geography of youth leisure and lifestyle, which includes the consuming activities that constitute these lifestyles. Currently, he argues, clubbing is a consumption activity that occupies a large proportion of youth leisure activities and his work is an attempt to understand:

The relationships between the processes and practices of consuming and notions of identity and identification formation and amendment in the clubbing experience. (1999:11)

t aspects of sociality and performativity inherent in youth leisure activities and lifestyles. Malbon's review of the accounts of youth leisure and pleasure reveals distinct weaknesses, especially with respect to the nature and the spatial element of young people's consumptive practices (1999:19).

As a counterpoint to these weaknesses, Malbon stresses what he calls experiential consuming or the consumption of experiences in contemporary social life. This neglect of the spatial element of consumption has meant that the geographies significant to the wider processes of identity and identification formation have been overshadowed by a traditional focus on the other more obvious processes of commodification (1999:21). Malbon believes that much of the literature regarding consumption experiences ignores the imaginative and practical constitution of them. Therefore, it is his intention to focus on the emotional and practical constitution of the clubbing experience.

The emotional and practical constitution of clubbing can be visualised through the practices of sociality and conceptualized through what Malbon refers to as a performative lens. By this he means that social or crowd-based consumption experiences could be understood as simultaneously expressive and constructive of self (1999:21). Malbon emphasises a conception of consumption as the *process* of consuming whereby consumers actively perform their spatio-temporal involvement through which identity and identifications are concurrently constructed, transformed and expressed (1999:29). Such a conception provides a foundation to understanding the practical and emotional nature of the clubbing experience. Consequently, this approach gives recognition to the neglected role of the practices and spacing of sociality in consumption experiences (1999:30).

Upon further investigation, Malbon declares that clubbing is partially constituted through a search for belongings (1999:48). This sense of belonging is

of identification, recognized by Bauman (1995) through this process, people come to feel that they are more the same as well as unlike others. Certain social situations, of which clubbing is one, foster a going beyond individual identities. This is an experience of being both within and yet outside oneself at once. Taking both Bauman and Mafesolli (1996) as points of departure, Malbon feels that the clubbing experience can be understood as a form of togetherness in which a central sensation is one of in-betweenness i.e. the flux between identity and identification (1999:73-4).

Malbon argues that clubbing crowds both anonymise and individualise. It is through the activity of dancing that clubbers distinguish themselves as individuals, although the practices and spacings of dancing are crowd based. The sense of in-betweenness is catalysed by the social constitution of the crowd, the clubber's understanding of that constitution and the mental and emotional approach of the clubber to the crowd (1999:74).

A further aspect, which is central to the clubbing experience, is the clubber's enjoyment of the music and, in a certain sense, music is the essence of clubbing:

It could be suggested that in the clubbing experience, rather than a fixed notion of a place or a site being focal, clubbers come together around the music of clubbing. These musics act as a focus for the articulation of identities, the development of a sense of belonging and ultimately facilitate an identification for many of those within the clubbing crowd. (1999:80)

Although the music may be an essential facet of the clubbing experience, Malbon draws upon the anthropological works of Blacking (1973) to suggest that the audience at club nights is not merely engaged in the consumption but in the production of the night as well. Dancing, in this context, is a form of creative listening. Although the DJs may reproduce the music, it is partly reproduced through the clubber's role as audience and active, musical crowd (1999:82). Malbon refers to Frith's (1996) notion that there are different modes of listening,

Physical movement is a necessary part of what it means to dance. In this idea, Malbon wishes to foreground a mode of listening that prioritises the simultaneously motional and emotional understandings of listeners. He also elaborates upon this idea by stating that as an embodied and emotional activity, listening takes on different forms in different spaces (1999:84).

An important component of Malbon's general argument is his use of the word 'play' which is extended beyond the simple notion of pleasure or recreation in the clubbing experience. For him, play is tied in with more complex notions of vitality, identity and identifications. Again very little has been written about the practices and spacings of which play is comprised. Music intensifies the emotional and imaginative impact of the clubbing crowd although it must be said that music also serves, in a totemic manner, to act as a focus for identification. Consequently, Malbon argues that it is less the music than the response or the understanding of it that is important. The complex interactional spacings of dancing further add to the identificatory power of the crowd on the individual. As such:

Clubbing is constituted through a complex interweaving of continually unfolding practices, spacings and timings which, beyond a certain stage . . . and always less for some than for others . . . have less to do with distinction and the forging notions of individuality and perhaps more to do with belongings and the establishment of identifications. (1999:182)

Malbon believes that clubbing may not change the world as other youth movements tried but it certainly does alter the social world of those who enjoy it. The type of revolution represented by clubbing is constituted by the vitality of the crowd, an emphasis on 'presence' through the entwining of motion and emotion and the types of imaginative spaces opened up through sensory stimulation. Resistance takes the form of gaining strength through the crowd ethos, fluxing between identities and identifications and finding a space to forget oneself.



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Clubbers may be resisting are aspects of their

In a narrow sense, Malbon believes that the product of clubbing is the imaginative and emotional spacing it provides. It is a space used to reflect as well as experience others in a world that exists between imagination and performance.

Clubbing is better evoked as a dynamic process of consuming rather than a fixed consumption relation, moment or state. Clubbing does not happen but is experienced. (1999:184)

Although it appears disordered, clubbing is permeated with processes and practices of social and spatial ordering. This is present in the form of sociality apparent which provides the foundation for the practices of belongings and identifications. However, belongings and identifications are about much more than cultural capital and social structure, they require the contextualities of sociality (1999:185)

Clubbers perform but also actively construct the clubbing experience. Further, what is done with the body is inextricably tied with how it is imagined. It does not matter if the crowd is diverse in terms of identity but that the clubbers themselves understand the crowd to be diversely constituted and that they find this a rewarding experience. Consequently, Malbon argues that the practical and imaginative constitution of clubbing is one and the same. Clubbing crowds are, as a result, as much about belonging as they are about differentiation. This aspect of fluxing between self and crowd is thus a defining feature of the clubbing experience. The unreal yet vivid experiences of clubbers may provide a glimpse of the self that they temporarily slip out of (1999:186-7). Finally, for Malbon:

Clubbing is a blending of physical and emotional movement: the vitality and unspeakable feeling of strength that may be experienced through the drop of the bass, the first beats of a

belonging within a ceaselessly moving crowd, a
a letting go, a going beyond, a simultaneous affirmation of
self and of belonging through motion and emotion . through motion as emotion. (1999:188)

Articulation and the logics of change

If we are to determine the logics of change within danceclubs that Straw (1991) refers to, we have to examine the patterns and geographies discernible within the time period researched. Amongst the white mainstream market, during the time frame in which Ronnie Botha's nightclubs dominated, the attitude and identity of the gay community and their liberal friends was clearly articulated as they became more publicly active and were vociferous supporters of the End Conscription Campaign. Similarly, there was a noticeable silence in nightclub activity toward the end of the 1980s as the gay community started to deal with the reality of the HIV epidemic within their communities.

The principle established by **Sand Pebbles** of choosing not to be dependent upon the infrastructure of the hotel groups set a precedent for the commercial nightclub scene, encouraging entrepreneurs to take steps towards owning their own venues. The expansion and subsequent large-scale success of the **Bourbon St** concept into the Gauteng area proved that it is possible to franchise nightclubs successfully, if your formula is sustainable, compact and can travel. The **Retros** and **80s** concept of nightclub emphasised that there is an older market to exploit and that nightclubbing is not purely the reserve of the youth.

The unprecedented exportation of a nightclubbing experience from Durban, South Africa to the U.K. by Club 3-30 cannot be overlooked and indeed is a matter to be proud of given that for so long the situation has been the opposite. The pre-eminence of British cultural products and dominant source of general subcultural inspiration during the period researched cannot be denied. For both the gay and non-mainstream, liberal communities, the U.K. has always held a certain degree of identification regardless of descent.

be acknowledged for playing a role in the
music culture in the form of **Club 3-30** and **A.D.**

Helge Janssen deserves special mention, not only for his Play concept but also in providing an alternative rock soundtrack, which formed the backbone of success for Ronnie Botha's clubs. Frank Melman has been involved in contributing at various levels toward the danceclub industry, as well as representing and catering for the gay community. His contribution spans the entire duration of the research period. He had the foresight to expose music to the public that was eventually popularized by clubs such as **The Rift** nearly ten years after the fact. Further, the owners of **The Station** also made the outlet for experimental genres of music possible and its closure led to the formation of DJ collectives whose impact is presently being heard at non-mainstream dance music events.

The non-white danceclubs referred to in the ethnography initially had the common problem of being restricted in their ability to trade within the city limits after dark and when this kind of oppressive legislation began to lift, the coloured clubs took advantage and quickly entrenched themselves within the city centre. Only after the huge impact that the **Palladium** made on Indian nightclubbing did that community start to move into town. After 1996 there was a flood of Indian nightclubs opening in venues that were previously white venues, especially in the area between Stanger and Brickhill Rd, and a noticeable counter shift towards the outskirts of the city centre on behalf of the white danceclubs. This could be attributed to the fact that most white businesses moved out of the city centre at this time when safety at night became an issue, to start up business on the Berea and the La Lucia Ridge.

The **Throb** tragedy was a further indicator of how the nightclubbing industry has evolved over the time period of research. For someone to employ people to go with malicious intent to upset a term-end party for children under the age of eighteen in the name of greed and profit requires a deeper investigation into the

Thankfully, the people who were primary movers of the entertainment in Durban, Lionel and Lynn Johnstone, have managed to provide the same consistent service to their community. Both **Blitz** and **Xanadu** have managed to articulate the cultural identity of the coloured community through the clubbing experience they provide.

These above two clubs should be a goal towards which each nightclub should aspire through providing the correct imaginative and emotional spacings by means of the medium of music. As a dynamic process of consuming, the clubbing experience is one permeated with social and spatial practices which are expressed, constructed and performed through a response to or understanding of music. In no way can homologous arguments and archaic essentialist definitions of music describe the richness and intangibility of music. Music is the focus for the articulation of cultural identity in the clubbing experience, the medium that allows people to look inside themselves at the same time as reflecting out toward others. This complete *situatedness* that Jones (1999) refers to, of the music consumer in the danceclub site, allows for the conditions of possibility of an authentic music experience, that symbolic snapshot moment where self and other co-exists.

The club, its clientele and the music being played all signified the transhistoricity of a youth culture which one might visit intermittently and find unchanged, and the act of dancing itself was intimately bound up with a generalized sense of diminished inhibition. (Straw 1991:379)



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