Music, media and urban mythscapes: a study of the 'Canterbury Sound'

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In this article I examine how recent developments in media and technology are both re-shaping conventional notions of the term 'music scene' and giving rise to new perceptions among music fans of the relationship between music and place. My empirical focus throughout the article is the 'Canterbury Sound', a term originally coined by music journalists during the late 1960s to describe the music of Canterbury[1] jazz-rock group the Wilde Flowers, and groups subsequently formed by individual members of the Wilde Flowers – the most well known examples being Caravan, Hatfield and the North and Soft Machine (see Frame, 1986: 16; Macan, 1997; Stump, 1997; Martin, 1998), and a number of other groups with alleged Canterbury connections. Over the years a range of terms, for example 'Motown', the 'Philadelphia Sound' and, more recently, the 'Seattle Sound', have been used as a way of linking musical styles with particular urban spaces. For the most part, however, these terms have described active centres of production for music with a distinctive 'sound'. In contrast, however, in its original context the Canterbury Sound was a rather more loosely applied term, the majority of groups and artists linked with the Canterbury Sound being London-based and sharing little in the way of a characteristic musical style. Since the mid-1990s, however, the term 'Canterbury Sound' has acquired a very different currency as a new generation of fans have constructed a discourse of Canterbury music that attempts to define the latter as a distinctive 'local' sound with character-istics shaped by musicians' direct experience of life in the city of Canterbury. A particularly significant aspect of this re-working of the Canterbury Sound is the spatial relationship of fans both to the city and to each other. Thus, the revived interest in the Canterbury Sound constitutes

an essentially *virtual* scene, debates, discussions and definitions of the Canterbury Sound being focused around fanzines, Internet newsletters and websites via which a globally diffuse fan base communicates. In relation to this virtual scene, Canterbury itself performs an important anchoring role as myths surrounding the city are constructed online and worked into discussions concerning the defining characteristics of the 'Canterbury Sound'.

   During the course of this article I want to consider the significance of the 'Canterbury Sound' for our understanding of the relationship between music and place. Using the concept of 'urban mythscapes', adapted from Appadurai's (1990) theory of 'scapes', I will examine the way in which recently developed electronic media, notably the Internet and digital recording, are serving to transform a tenuous link between an urban space and a body of recorded music into a series of urban myths; into a way of picturing, discussing and debating a city, its people and a musical style which is deemed to have emerged from a particular set of local circumstances. Empirical data to support the theoretical claims made in this article was obtained from Calyx, the dedicated Canterbury Sound website, selected sleevenotes from the *Canterburied Sounds* CD collection and the Canterbury Sound fanzines *Facelift: The Canterbury Sound and Beyond* and *Canterbury Nachrichten*. Further information was obtained from discussions with local record shop owners in Canterbury and from an interview with Hugh Hopper, former bass guitarist with the Wilde Flowers and Soft Machine.

Urban mythscapes

Studies of the relationship between music and place have concentrated variously on the impact of local socio-economic conditions upon music-making activities (Finnegan, 1989; Cohen, 1991), the urban narratives of place and identity constructed by local musicians (Shank, 1994), the relationship between place, music and ethnic identity (Stokes, 1994), and the way globally circulated popular music genres are appropriated, re-worked and inscribed with local meanings (Mitchell, 1996; Bennett, 2000). In each of these examples there is an underlying assumption that constructions of the relationship between music and place are closely based on musicians' and music consumers' everyday life experience of particular places. By introducing the term 'urban mythscape', however, it becomes possible to conceive of and discuss the relationship between music and place according to a rather different set of criteria. As noted above, the concept of urban mythscapes which I use here is derived from the model of 'scapes' originally suggested by Appadurai as a means of understanding the changing relationship between social and physical landscapes as the

latter are constantly re-shaped by global flows of people, technological innovations, capital, information and ideas. Such flows are described in the five types of 'scape' discussed by Appadurai: ethnoscapes; technoscapes; finanscapes; mediascapes; ideoscapes. According to Appadurai: 'These landscapes . . . are the building blocks of . . . "imagined worlds", that is, the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe' (1990: 296–7). Appadurai's argument that such landscapes offer new ways of thinking about the relationship between space and place is of considerable significance in the context of this article. In particular, 'mediascapes', a product of the electronic dissemination of information about the world (Smart, 1993), offer individuals the potential to construct particular, and often highly romantic, ideas and images concerning the nature of places. A clear example of this is given in Jim Jarmusch's 1989 film *Mystery Train* in which two Japanese rock 'n' roll fans visit the US city of Memphis, the former home of Elvis Presley and considered by many to be the spiritual homeland of the rock 'n' roll genre (see, for example, Chadwick, 1997), only to discover that the physical experience of Memphis falls far short of their imagined version of the city, a version which they have constructed from images presented in books, films and through the experience of listening and dancing to rock 'n' roll music (see Preacher Collins, 1993).

The transformation of a landscape into a mythscape involves a three-stage process. Thus, a physical landscape is subject to what Renov describes as the 'defiles of the audio-visual signifier' (1993: 7), and is transformed into a mediascape. This in turn becomes a primary form of experience for audiences who use the information received through the mediascape construct or build upon their existing ideas concerning particular places. Decontextualized images and information are recontextualized by audiences into new ways of thinking about and imagining places – the result of which is a *mythscape*. The mythscape in turn begins to take on a life of its own – stories, discussions and anecdotes being linked to a place entirely in relation to that place's representation as a mythscape. As the *Mystery Train* example illustrates, in addition to visual images, music can also play a significant role in the construction of mythscapes. Thus, the marketing of canonized 'genres' such as Cajun, blues and 'world music' has served to create a series of romanticized myths surrounding particular regions of the world as listeners use these musical styles as a means of mapping out the relationship between social and geographical landscapes. A similar process of mapping applies to specific urban spaces, musical 'labels' such as Chicago blues and New Orleans jazz also serving as primary ways of thinking about the social in the relation to the spatial. With the advent of the Internet, such constructions of the relationship between music and place are no longer confined to the mind of the individual listener or localized groups of music enthusiasts. Rather, these

constructions become woven into transnational discourses, web-based fan sites allowing groups of individuals spread across the world to map and re-map particular musical styles on to physical landscapes that are deemed to have shaped both the creativity of single artists and the defining character-istics of entire musical genres. With this in mind, I turn now to the particular case of the Canterbury Sound.

A virtual scene

> Canterbury has never really been a good place to play. . . . There are a few pubs here, but it's not really a musical hotbed at all. . . . I was born in Canterbury and lived here until I was about nineteen and then I lived in other places in France and London. . . . And I gradually came back this way [but] it wasn't really a plan, it just happened this way. So the Canterbury thing, it's a nice idea because it's a nice little town, it's got a cathedral and in the Summer it looks good. But not much is happening here really. (Hugh Hopper, Calyx: The Canterbury Website, February 1999)

Existing work on music scenes tends to view such scenes either as organic extensions of particular localized communities (see, for example, Cohen, 1991; Shank, 1994) or as translocal phenomena which 'actualize a particular state of relations between various populations and social groups, as these coalesce around specific coalitions of musical style' (Straw, 1991: 379; see also Lewis, 1992). In both cases, there is an underlying implication that music scenes necessarily involve an element of physical participation of fans in the celebration of their common musical tastes, for example, through attendance at clubs and/or live performances. In contrast, the Canterbury Sound comprises a small network of globally dispersed fans whose primary means of communication are dedicated print and electronic media and whose musical tastes revolve around groups who, in most cases, have been defunct for over 20 years or who now perform very rarely in public. In many respects, the 'Canterbury Sound' is an example of what could be termed a 'virtual scene', that is, a scene which has been constructed at a virtual level, using various forms of micro-media, such as fanzines and newsletters, and new electronic media, notably the Internet. Recent studies of the Internet have focused on the extent to which the cyberspace relations that take place there can be justifiably seen as new forms of social interaction. Shields has suggested that the term 'cyber-space' can be used 'as a generic concept for the imagined "world within" the computer or the social landscape portrayed in the lists of Usenet groups and postings' (1996: 5). Wilbur, however, takes a more critical view of such interpretations of cyberspace and the notions of community implied therein. Thus, according to Wilbur:

> It is too easy to log into an online chat system and imagine that it is just like wandering into a local bar. It is too easy to login and imagine that it is all

make-believe. . . . We should be prepared to find community under a wide variety of circumstances, in a broad range of environments, and intermingled with any number of elements. (1997: 20)

In qualifying his argument, Wilbur suggests that, although the Internet may function as a space in which like-minded individuals can interact and share ideas, the so-called virtual communities which are thus created are invariably consolidated through face-to-face meetings, for example, at conventions, conferences and book launches. As articles featured in dedicated Canterbury fanzines such as *Facelift* and its German-produced counterpart *Canterbury Nachrichten* ('Canterbury News') illustrate, in addition to their Internet communications, small numbers of Canterbury Sound fans occasionally meet at record fairs, Canterbury band 'reunion' concerts and so on. Similarly, a Canterbury record shop owner informed me that a man from a small town in Texas had come into his shop one day looking for music by the 'Canterbury Sound' bands. The man went on to explain how he and a group of friends, who had become introduced to each other via the Internet, met once a month 'to listen to Canterbury Sound records and CDs'. Nevertheless, given the geographically dispersed nature of Canterbury Sound fans, the Internet provides the most regular means of communication. Moreover, given the absence of the type of physically united fan base that characterizes other scenes and the opportunities for 'sociality' (Shields, 1992a, 1992b) that such a fan base provides, Canterbury Sound fans look for other ways to collectively celebrate their common musical taste and thus forge the sense of 'fan community' which is deemed central to any music scene. In this sense, the city of Canterbury plays a crucial role. Thus, while physically removed from Canterbury, 'Canterbury Sound' fans effectively forge a sense of community through their collective construction of the city in musicalized terms, the online discussions of fans being informed by a shared image of Canterbury as an urban space that provided the necessary stimulus for the birth of the Canterbury Sound and which remains central to its 'spirit'.

Chaney (1993) has suggested that urban life, rather than complying with a commonly acknowledged, 'objective' social narrative, comprises a series of competing fictive interpretations of urban spaces. Although Chaney is concerned primarily with those individuals directly occupying the physical spaces of particular urban settings, by applying the concept of the urban mythscape it becomes possible to see how fictive interpretations of cities and city life become more widely engaged in. Thus, in the case of the Canterbury Sound, via their musicalized discourse fans inscribe Canterbury's streets, pubs, venues and other urban spaces with their own fictive interpretations, the latter becoming a crucial touchstone for the fans' collective belief in the inherent link between the 'Canterbury Sound' and the city of Canterbury. At a mundane level, this link is seen to derive from the 'Canterbury Sound' musicians' experience of growing up and being

friends together in Canterbury – and from their sharing of a locally situated sensibility which found its expression through informal musical liaisons and their gradual maturation into more coherent expressions of song and instrumental improvisation. At a more abstract level, Canterbury's cultural influence on the Canterbury Sound is judged to manifest itself through, for example, the expression a 'certain Englishness' and 'a uniquely English lyrical and vocal content' (Calyx: The Canterbury Website, February 1999: 4). From the point of view of the fans then, Canterbury becomes an important physical point of reference around which to collectively discuss the significance of the Canterbury Sound and its relationship to a particular set of people in a given time and space.

Scene 'writing'

> I am often asked to explain exactly what the essence of Canterbury music is and I still struggle to pin it down. A certain Englishness maybe . . . a willingness to experiment, perhaps . . . consummate musicianship certainly. A loose collection of musicians whose paths seem to cross inevitably. (Phil Howitt, editor of the Canterbury Sound fanzine *Facelift: The Canterbury Scene and Beyond*; from the sleevenotes for *The Canterburied Sounds* CD, vol. 2)

> It seems to me that the very essence of 'Canterbury' is the tension between complicated harmonies, extended improvisations, and the sincere desire to write catchy popsongs. (Canterbury Sound fan, Calyx: The Canterbury Website, February 1999)

Much of the discussion and debate that takes place between current Canterbury Sound fans involves an attempt to categorize, and in some cases authenticate, a series of musical liaisons which took place, in most instances, over 30 years ago. Indeed, the essentially retrospective nature of this revived interest in the Canterbury Sound, together with the amount of 'back-catalogue' material with potential Canterbury 'connections', has resulted in much discussion as to what exactly constitutes the Canterbury Sound. One of the main mediums for discussion relating to the Canterbury Sound is Calyx: The Canterbury Website. Established in February 1996, this French-based website comprises six main sections: musician profiles; latest releases; upcoming events; lyrics archive; Canterbury discography; and a section containing transcriptions and translations of old magazine articles. Additionally, the website includes a number of special features such as 'What's Rattlin?', a subscriber's newsletter published every three days, and 'What is Canterbury Music?' It is here that much of the discussion relating to the definition of the 'Canterbury Sound' takes place. Comments range from semi-sociological observations, in which notions of 'Englishness' and English humour are mooted as centrally defining factors of Canterbury bands, to more aesthetically informed points of view such as,

for example, 'anti-commercialism' as the essence of an authentic Canterbury band. A further section of the Calyx website, 'A Guide to Obscure and Shortlived Canterbury Bands', allows fans to exercise even more specialist levels of knowledge in relation to which groups and artists should and should not be included in the Canterbury Sound category.

Much has been made in recent years of the concept of an 'active audience', that is, an audience who are centrally involved in constructing the meanings of TV, film, music and print media texts rather than passively consuming the information presented in and by such media. Thus, for example, Ang suggests that:

> 'The audience' no longer represents simply an 'object of study', a reality 'out there' constitutive of and reserved for the discipline which claims ownership of it, but has to be defined first and foremost as a discursive trope signifying the constantly shifting and radically heterogeneous ways in which meaning is constructed and contested in multiple everyday contexts of media use and consumption. (1996: 4)

Similarly, Fiske argues that: 'Popular texts are inadequate in themselves . . . they are completed only when taken up by people and inserted into their everyday culture' (1989: 6). The concept of the 'active audience' can be further developed to express a creative dynamic central to the formation and perpetuation of the virtual scene that has formed around the Canterbury Sound. Thus, the looseness of the term 'Canterbury Sound', and the variety of bands and individual musicians that can be included or excluded under this heading, allows fans to engage extensively in what I will refer to as 'scene-writing'. Thus, by applying their knowledge of Canterbury Sound bands – for example, particular musical liaisons between individual musicians, rare and 'bootleg' recordings or obscure bands that perhaps lasted little more than a few weeks – fans take an active role in the definition of the Canterbury Sound. Competing narratives thus assume the form of alternative 'takes' of the Canterbury Sound as fans read each other's online interpretations or 'versions' of the scene and re-write pieces of the latter to accommodate their 'knowledge' of Canterbury music and/or their personal views on a particular group, album or song. As studies dealing with particular genres of popular music illustrate (see, for example, Laing, 1985 in relation to punk; Gillett, 1991 in relation to rock 'n' roll), of central importance for fan discussions of any musical style is a sense of its historical development. In the case of the Canterbury Sound, such historical development is currently a major part of the 'scene-writing' engaged in by fans. Moreover, as increasing numbers of people 'learn' about the Canterbury Sound, via the dedicated websites and fanzines, the creative pursuits of a small group of enthusiasts using state-of-the-art digital technology are presenting fans with new ways of fleshing out the Canterbury Sound's history and relating this history to the urban spaces of the city of Canterbury.

Excavating a 'Sound'

In common with other young musicians in the UK and elsewhere anxious to experiment with their craft, the Wilde Flowers and other local Canterbury bands of the mid 1960s committed much of their work to tape. In a rather unusual move these crude, lo-fi[2] experiments with jazz and other musical styles have recently been resurrected and belatedly introduced into the 'public sphere' (Reimer, 1995) in the form of the *Canterburied Sounds*, a four-volume CD set featuring tracks by the Wilde Flowers and Caravan, as well as musical liaisons between members of these groups and other, often unidentified, local musicians. That such a resurrection of these early recordings was feasible at all is largely down to the possibilities offered by state-of-the-art digital recording processes. Thus, as Brian Hopper, the person behind the *Canterburied Sounds* project, explains in the sleevenotes to volume 1 of the series:

> Although most of the tapes had survived three decades of storage in various lofts and cupboards, some were obviously showing signs of deterioration with several bits of detached tape floating around in the boxes holding them. These were painstakingly spliced together where this was possible and the long and somewhat tedious process of transference to DAT [digital audio tape] embarked upon. . . . Using DAT copies it was then easier to assess not only the content but also the recording quality [and choose] potential tracks . . . employing the wonders of Sadie/Cedar [digital sound processing equipment] and other modern audio editing technology, we were able to clean up the tape hiss, mains hum and other extraneous noise and at the same time enhance the wanted sounds.

The *Canterburied Sounds* series is, in many respects, a unique document of the musicalization of everyday life in a local urban context; a sonic statement of what Finnegan refers to as the shared 'pathways' via which local musicians negotiate the 'impersonal wilderness of urban life' (1989: 306). While local musicians may often talk about previous musical collaborations and play private copies of early recordings to each other and to friends (see, for example, Cohen and McManus, 1991; McManus, 1994), it is highly unusual for such a local history of music-making to be reconstituted and publicly showcased in this way. Hopper's claim in the sleevenotes of the *Canterburied Sounds*, volume 1 is that the collection represents some 'unfinished business', yet it is clear from Hopper's subsequent use of the descriptive term 'Canterburyism', and its implication of a developing cult aura around the notion of the 'Canterbury Sound', that this was also a primary motivation for working on the project. Indeed, if the *Canterburied Sounds* project was in essence a response to the revived interest in the 'Canterbury Sound', and the increasing belief among fans in an organic link between the music and the city of Canterbury, then the project's realization further enhances the musicalized mythscape of Canterbury constructed by Canterbury Sound fans.

In themselves, the tracks and experimentations featured on the *Canter-buried Sounds* have little in common, being nothing more than an ad hoc grouping of musical improvisations, rough rehearsal sessions and early live performances. Unremarkable as these early recordings may be, however, their value in the geo-sonic mapping of the Canterbury mythscape is literally immense. Due to their 'ready-made' connection with the virtual scene that has grown up in their absence from the public sphere, the 'lo-fi' experimentations featured on the *Canterburied Sound* CDs have automatic-ally become a central point of reference for Canterbury fans in their Internet discussions and fanzine correspondences relating to the nature and essence of the Canterbury Sound. Moreover, the packaging of the *Canter-buried Sounds* CDs is clearly intended to correspond with the particular visions of Canterbury which inform such Internet and fanzine discussions. The cover of each CD case in the *Canterburied Sounds* series features a drawing of Canterbury Cathedral nestling among trees and meadows in an imagined rustic setting, thus exploiting the notion of a 'popular past' encapsulated in the 'vision of pastoral England/Albion' (Morely and Robbins, 1989: 16). Similarly, the CDs themselves are decorated with a silhouetted profile of the Cathedral tower, its black spires sharply contrast-ing with the silver finish of the CDs. The *Canterburied Sounds* series can be seen to provide two main functions in the construction of the Canterbury mythscape. Thus the music contained on the CDs serves to reinforce in the minds of dedicated fans the authenticity of the 'Canterbury Sound' as a distinctive local musical style with historical roots and a pattern of development. Similarly, the packaging of the CDs further forges the connection between the Canterbury Sound and the 'Englishness' deemed by fans to be at its heart. Significantly, the ensuing circularity between the myth and the reality of the Canterbury Sound is being intensified through the *Canterburied Sounds* collection's exploitation by local businesses as the latter become increasingly aware of the growing interest in the Canterbury Sound.

Selling Canterbury by the sound

One of the central arguments made in this article is that individuals routinely conceptualize places, and the cultural practices connected with those places, using mythscapes as a primary form of reference. Selective appropriation of mediated images of a place by local tourist industries and other local businesses can also play an important role in the realization of mythscapes. In this sense mythscapes add a further dimension to what Urry terms the 'tourist gaze'. According to Urry, tourists 'seek to experience "in reality" the pleasurable dramas they have already experienced in their imagination' (1990: 13). In this respect, local tourist industries and other

businesses are increasingly geared towards meeting the expectations of tourists. In the USA, for example, features such as theme parks, wilderness trails, 'Wild West' experiences, Disneyland and the Johnson Space Centre function to preserve the mythscapes of the USA which tourists take on holiday with them. Bryman's (1999) concept of Disneyization offers a useful model for understanding the power of such themed attractions in preserving mythscapes both in the USA and elsewhere. Thus, via the consumption of a series of 'Disneyized' experiences, the tourist can, and is often quite content to, remain oblivious to any other reality, Disneyized experiences being preferable in that they correspond far more neatly with tourist expectations.

In the case of Canterbury, the tourist gaze is currently concentrated on more historically acknowledged aspects of the city, notably Canterbury Cathedral and 'The Canterbury Tales' (where one can relive the lives and times of such Chaucerian characters as the Wife of Bath, the Miller and the Pardoner complete with reproduced 14th-century settings). However, emergent grassroots initiatives by local businesses and individuals have begun the process of weaving the Canterbury Sound into the city's tourist gaze. Rootes's book, *Images of Canterbury*, a collection of black and white photographs documenting the history of Canterbury between 1930 and 1970, includes a section on the 'Canterbury Scene' (1997: 157–8), featuring the Wilde Flowers and Caravan and an author's note which reads: 'The city [Canterbury] made musical history in the 1960s with the development of what became known as the Canterbury Scene (or Sound)'. Similarly, a number of local record shops now feature 'Canterbury Sound' sections whose coverage varies from 'acknowledged' Canterbury bands, typically Caravan, Hatfield and the North and Soft Machine, to groups with altogether more tenuous Canterbury links, such as Henry Cow and Gong (whose only real Canterbury connection is original group guitarist, Steve Hillage, a student at the University of Kent at Canterbury during the late 1960s).

According to Hugh Hopper, the former Wilde Flowers and Soft Machine bassist who I interviewed during the course of my research for this article, the use of the term 'Canterbury Sound' by local record shops as a marketing device is a very recent development. It is significant, and perhaps inevitable, in this respect that the recently produced *Canterburied Sounds* CDs are used as the centrepiece of local record shops' 'Canterbury Sound' sections. From the point of view of Canterbury Sound fans visiting the city, the fact that the *Canterburied Sounds* CDs are centrally featured in this way by local record shops is further suggestive of an inherent connection between Canterbury and the 'Canterbury Sound'. Indeed the marketing of the Canterbury Sound in this way also serves to spread the myth of 'Canterburyism'; this is particularly so among those tourists who have no previous knowledge of the 'Canterbury Sound' and who are thus

even more inclined to accept uncritically the notion of a locally acknowl-
edged and culturally inscribed link between the music and the city. Thus,
as a local record shop owner explained to me:

> People from all over the world come into my shop and see my Canterbury
> Sounds CDs. Some are fans already, but often people will say 'I've never heard
> of this before.' So they buy a CD or two and take them home, and that's what
> keeps it [the Canterbury Sound] growing really.

The response of certain local musicians to the growing interest in the
Canterbury Sound is also serving to authenticate its perceived association
with the city. Current studies of local music scenes document the ways in
which local bands associate with or dissociate themselves from scenes,
both for artistic reasons and depending upon particular inter-group friend-
ship networks and other networks of sociality (see, for example, Cohen,
1991; Shank, 1994). In the case of Canterbury, however, the 'ready-made'
opportunities which the term 'Canterbury Sound' offers for a number of, in
some cases retired or semi-retired, musicians to make a potentially
lucrative come-back has led to a collective endorsement of the Canterbury
Sound, a Canterbury Scene and, in some cases, a particular approach to
music-making which, it is claimed, is inherently bound up with the city
itself. Thus, for example, in the section of the Calyx website entitled 'What
is Canterbury Music?', former Caravan and Hatfield and the North member
Richard Sinclair offers the following opinion:

> People say, what is the Canterbury scene? I think you have to come to
> Canterbury and see it and hear it! I think Kent has got a particular sound.
> We've sung in our schools here, we were all at school in this sort of area. I was
> part of the Church of England choir: up to the age of 16 I was singing tonalities
> that are very English. Over the last three or four hundred years, and even earlier
> than that, some of the tonalities go back. So they are here, and they are a
> mixture of European things too. The history is very much that. A very historical
> centre of activity is Canterbury for the last hundred years. So it's quite an
> important stepping stone of whatever this thousand years have covered. I think
> it's not to be mocked because it's a centre of communication here and it's a
> meeting point – many nations come here to visit the cathedral, so you get a very
> unique situation happening. (Calyx: The Canterbury Website, February 1999)

In 1992, Sinclair released an album entitled *Richard Sinclair's Caravan
of Dreams*, his first recorded work for some years. In one of the first direct
references to the 'Canterbury Sound' to appear in the local media, the
Kentish Gazette newspaper featured an article on Sinclair suggesting that
Caravan of Dreams would be 'instantly familiar and welcome to Caravan
and Canterbury scene fans'. As with the production of the *Canterburied
Sounds* CDs and their use by local record shops in a merchandising tactic
designed to confirm Canterbury's centrality both to the origins and essence
of a body of music which has already been seamlessly woven by fans into

an imagined history of music-making in the city, references by the local media to the Canterbury Sound also play their part in forging a circularity between the myth and reality of the latter by providing further evidence, from the point of view of fans, of a long-standing and locally acknowledged link between the city of Canterbury and the 'Canterbury Sound'.

Conclusion

During the course of this article I have been concerned to add a new dimension to our understanding of the relationship between music and place by considering how recently developed media, notably the Internet and digital recording, are enabling new constructions of this relationship. Using the example of the Canterbury Sound, I have examined several ways in which fans of the latter have used new technologies as a means of building a retrospective and 'virtual' scene. I have further considered how the musical knowledges and aesthetic judgements which are traded between fans via websites and Internet newsletters result in particular ways of picturing the city of Canterbury and its role in the birth of the Canterbury Sound. In this way, I have argued, Canterbury becomes an urban mythscape, that is, a space which is mythologized as in some way informing the essential spirit of a body of live and recorded music. The particular processes via which this occurs are never directly explained by Canterbury Sound fans but are rather embedded in a series of subjective discourses relating to issues such as the shared childhood experiences of Canterbury musicians or the 'Englishness' of their collective musical and lyrical sensibilities. I have also suggested that the notion of a Canterbury Sound, despite its reliance upon such myth-infused picturings of the relationship between music and the local, is being given further authentication through the response of local business concerns, writers and musicians who, in realizing its potential commercial viability, readily endorse the term 'Canterbury Sound' as an aspect of Canterbury's recent sociocultural history.

Notes

1. Canterbury is located in the county of Kent in the south-east of England and is one of the country's most well known and frequently visited 'Cathedral Cities'.
2. The term 'lo fi' (short for *low fidelity*) describes a form of DIY recording which was typically done by amateur musicians on cheap, domestic recording appliances, such as cassette or 'reel to reel' tape machines, in home settings such as the bedroom or living room. Due to the conditions under which they were made lo-fi recordings were generally of a much poorer quality than the hi-fi recordings

made by professional musicians in professional studios. In recent times, however, the availability of cheap, high quality digital home-recording units has resulted in an increasing turn to lo-fi recording by groups and musicians without recording contracts who use such technology, in conjunction with independent distribution channels, as a way of recording, producing and marketing their music.

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