Tourism and Music

Music tourism is a phenomenon associated with industrialization and modernity. Pilgrimage and other forms of travel for non-commercial purposes existed in most societies well before the mass tourism and leisure industry began to develop, such as the troubadour movement of the medieval period in southern France. Since the nineteenth century, forms of music tourism emerged around live performances and festivals of classical music, and popular songs performed in music halls. Musical styles like flamenco became closely associated with the rise of French and British international tourism fueled by European romanticism and exoticism, which transformed flamenco art into an export commodity long before the emergence of modern tourism. The tourism industry gained economic momentum during the 1950s, which coincided with the commercial boom in the music industry and the emergence of tours, festivals, and music heritage. The tourism industry witnessed a global boom during the 1980s and 1990s and has since become one of the fastest-growing and largest industries in the world. Tourism is intrinsic to most people's lifestyles, who either have been tourists or fantasized about visiting new places. Tourism has also transformed host communities: their social and cultural life, environment, economies, politics, and their music. Today, tourism is a global industry of considerable economic importance and social benefits for local communities, alongside its apparent potential to promote international peace and goodwill through cultural knowledge and appreciation. While global tourism was historically more important for developing countries, it has become of increasing importance for developed, industrialized countries. Tourism has thus gained significant attention by governments, regional and local authorities, policy makers, business investors, and academics. Indeed, tourism has become an increasingly vibrant arena for interdisciplinary academic study since the 1980s, including in ethnomusicology and anthropology where studies of tourism have been absent until the early 1970s. Starting with that shift, this entry examines the issues that have engaged scholars in their study of the relationship between tourism and music, noting changing attitudes and points of focus.

Authenticity, representation, performance

Since the 1970s, ethnomusicological and anthropological studies often regarded tourism negatively and as being disruptive of traditional music practices. Tourism was not of interest and seen with a certain contempt, as it bore associations with commodification, cultural loss, staged authenticity, capitalism. Perceived as hypo-reality, tourism stood at the opposite end of ethnographic fieldwork. Indeed, tourism – like ethnography – is marked historically by a quest for authenticity. Early ethnomusicological and anthropological writings on music tourism were thus concerned with authenticity and related ideas like staged authenticity, concepts termed elsewhere as post-tourism and McDisneyization. These studies sought to explain the way that tourism constructs cultural imagery and social stereotypes by staging authenticity and providing spectacles aimed at the tourist gaze. Studies often considered the economic dimensions of tourism and, with it, cultural and musical commoditization, connecting authenticity with ideas around nostalgia, folklore, heritage, and exoticism. Such debates circulated around the (mis)representations of traditional music practices and the manufactured-ness of folklore (e.g. "fakelore") through music tourism.

Ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have played a paradoxical role in the construction of the concept of tourist and tourist gaze. People who are subjected to the ethnographic and/or touristic gaze do gaze back, and the ethnomusicological viewpoint is just one among many others. A related theme concerns the ways in which local hosts' perspectives are respected and included in music tourism, a focus still often rare in ethnomusicology, where the trend has been to address the perspective of the "guest" over that of the "host". This focus is based

on the reality that tourism often transforms sensibilities about identity, ethnic, gendered and class hierarchies in touristic settings, which raises questions about whose cultural capital takes precedence and, with it, issues surrounding local agency and power.

Since the 1980s, ethnomusicologists and anthropologists have thus reframed essentialist perspectives on authenticity, turning their attention toward understanding tourism as a social fact, while moving beyond discourse about staged inauthenticity and its corrupting or banalyzing impact. Anthropological views of tourism, in particular, shifted their focus toward notions of power and complicity between guest and host, viewing culture more broadly as a political, social, and identity tool alongside economic considerations. Ethnomusicologists have similarly shifted their focus toward the staging of musical heritage and practices for commercial purposes in order to study the enactment of musical practices, or to analyze the infrastructures and impact of tourism culturally, socially, economically, and environmentally, or to shed light on people's musical experiences in tourism contexts, though ethnographies on musical experiences in tourism only emerged since the noughties.

Interdisciplinary perspectives on music tourism

Interdisciplinary studies have often focused on the broader context, festivals, and the media alongside economic, social, cultural, and urban policy issues in the context of cultural tourism. Cultural tourism is at the heart of the tourism industry today, and tourists nowadays rate cultural and heritage activities among their top reasons for travelling. Cultural attractions include a broad range of activities and cultural forms like handicrafts, food, religion, language, architecture, sports, and the arts, while music plays a pivotal, if not even central, role in cultural tourism. Music provides an incredibly emotional narrative for tourists, which is nowadays packaged in the form of niche music tourism, rather than standard, packaged tours. This goes further even into the output of specialist radio and television channels, magazines, guide books, promotional clips, tourism board maps, and heritage trails. With its emotional and personal appeal, music tourism has developed into a major tourism branch in countries like the US and the UK where tourism is mature and music industries are strong, and where tourism is part of local, national and international politics.

Music tourism is often built around specific geographical locations—cities, regions, countries—that have acquired special significance through their musical associations. A key question in the growing body of interdisciplinary literature has been on the way that music transforms particular places into tourist hotspots. The focus on music, tourism, and place has been studied in relation to Liverpool as the birthplace of the Beatles; Sheffield as the site of the failed National Centre for Popular Music; Graceland as the Memphis home of Elvis Presley and birthplace of the blues; New Orleans as the city of jazz; Cleveland as the site of the Rock and Roll Hall Fame; and so forth. The city remains a critical focus in tourism studies for asking questions of place, identity, and cultural heritage, as numerous communities have attempted, with varying success, to reimage and regenerate their urban centers via music festivals, popular music museums, heritage trails, and cultural quarters. Academic studies here typically focus on the packaging and marketing of individual musicians and the city's musical heritage, and the impact of music tourism on the region culturally, socially, and economically. Fans regard the particular location as an emotionally-charged place evocative of ideas surrounding pilgrimage, nostalgia, and heritage that center on sites of musical production and performance; the places that shaped "their" music; the incidents from the past; or the tangible artefacts that can be photographed. A visit to these locations is, to many music tourists, a kind of nostalgic and emotional quest for an authentic past—a pilgrimage.

Since the 1990s, music and/or cultural tourism has thus become crucial for urban revitalization and positive transformation in certain regions in post-industrial cities in the US, the UK, Australia, and elsewhere, which has helped tackle the aesthetic, economic, and social problems of decline. Today, most cities in the West actively and self-consciously engage in forms of city image building with the help of music and/or cultural tourism, which plays a significant role in the transmission and negotiation of particular cultural values and visions for both citizens and visitors. Liverpool provides an example of this. As the city came to symbolize the economic and political decline of Britain and its former empire, Liverpool was in desperate need for a new image, urban regeneration, and economic growth. Liverpool City Council recognized the role of tourism and in the late 1990s began emphasizing Liverpool's cultural heritage, most notably The Beatles and Merseybeat (alongside football), in its marketing campaigns in an effort toward the city's regeneration and reversal of its economic decline. Such initiatives have been undoubtedly spearheaded by local, national, and international politics, including UNESCO's Creative Cities and the European Capital of Culture programmes, and today it is estimated that a significant proportion of Liverpool's annual 54.5 million tourists visit the city at least partly due to its musical heritage. In 2018, it estimated that over £400 million per year is now spent in Liverpool as a direct result of Beatles tourism, a considerable increase from the estimated £20 million that Beatles tourism generated in Liverpool in 2000.

Music tourism also manifests itself in festival tourism, which impacts upon host communities and tourists culturally, socially, economically, and environmentally. Festivals represent an important attraction for tourists in search of new musical and cultural experiences. Festivals proliferated in the northern hemisphere since the 1960s as engineered revivals or reinventions of older rural traditions that had declined due to modernization, industrialization, and urbanization. More recently, music festivals resemble the practice of more popular cultural phenomena that encourage contemporary creativity or the safeguarding of vanishing traditions, also to address economic goals like income generation and economic regeneration through positive cultural transformation. Regional music festivals exist around the world, as do proliferations to celebrate individual musicians, different musical styles, and music instruments, among other reasons.

Interdisciplinary concerns with globalization and transnationalism, global capitalism and commercialization, urban decay and regeneration, and tours, festivals, and music heritage are certainly important themes alongside a growing body of ethnographies by ethnomusicologists who regard the tourism experience as central to their analyses. More critical research on tourism and music is needed to include genres of traditional, classical and contemporary music forms in diverse settings, the tensions between the local and the global, the commodification of the tourist industry, the position of music tourism as a product in that industry, and the problem of agency. Ethnomusicological studies of music tourism experiences can make an important contribution to tourism studies, particularly through an understanding of the complex negotiations and interactions between different stakeholders and consumers of tourism as these are situated within their cultural, social, political, economic, or educational contexts.

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See also: Agency; Cultural Programming; Festivals; Invented Tradition; Local Music

Further Readings

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