

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: University of Leeds		
Unit of Assessment: 33A		
Title of case study: Informing and Influencing the Representation of Light and Popular Musics in Commercial Productions		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2000-18		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Derek Scott	Professor of Critical Musicology	Appointed 1 Dec. 2006
Period when the claimed impact occurred: December 2013-2019		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Scott's research impacts upon the representation of popular music from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in nationally and internationally consumed media and other commercial products. More specifically, Scott's research has been instrumental in underpinning the accurate portrayal of the repertoires, creators and cultures of older styles of popular music, particularly those dating from the Victorian era. This is evident in media ranging from computer games, television programmes and radio shows to theatre productions, and print and audio books, strengthening the production values of these outputs and enabling production companies to achieve their aims regarding quality and socio-cultural authenticity.</p>		
2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Research by Scott has focused on the historical sociology of principally popular and light musics from the mid-nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. His research contextualises such music with regard to its social, historical and geographic significance, arguing not only that it can be viewed in terms of class and nationalism, but also as an important marker of time, place and society more broadly.</p> <p>Scott has argued that 'the first popular music revolution actually occurred in the nineteenth century'. The history and development of the designation 'popular' is outlined in the new chapter written for the second edition of <i>The Singing Bourgeois</i> as 'moving from well-known to well-received to successful' [1] and these distinctions underpin Scott's discussion of music and social class in London during the Victorian era. This is especially the case with respect to the sorts of music heard in different types of venues in the city centre and the suburbs [1] and how these repertoires changed across the latter part of the nineteenth century. Connections between ideas of the popular and societal expectations of music, musicians and class, as well as matters of taste and identity, are framed by detailed consideration of the ways in which popular music developed across a number of leading international cultural centres alongside London: New York, Paris and Vienna [1, 3]. By examining the geographical as well as the historical development of popular music, Scott's research moves beyond existing ideas of the nationalistic (and jingoistic) potential of popular music. Investigation of the individuality of these specific cities (rather than simply the countries in which they are located) as sites of the creation and consumption of popular musics before the twentieth century highlights a key finding of Scott's research that commercial popular music develops a cosmopolitan character, challenging the focus on national traditions prevalent in earlier research in this area [1, 3, 4].</p>		

Philosophical and societal distinctions between commercial and art music are explored through a combination of musicology and cultural history [1, 2, 3, 4]. The cultural impact of class on the creation and consumption of early popular musics contextualises the role of musicians and music-making in different parts of society [1, 4] and has particular relevance for considerations of the musical demarcation of social demographics in large urban population centres such as London and other major cities. The role played by women in the development of the creative arts is explored through critical discussion of female composers and enables interrogation of societal views on gender and sexuality within the Victorian music-making and wider artistic scene [1, 2]. Likewise, the cultural impact of ethnicity and race on the creation and consumption of early popular musics is contextualised through explorations of non-white cultures, peoples, musics and musicians in late-nineteenth-century society [1, 2, 3, 4]. **Scott** also identifies a shift from amateur music-making, through pursuits such as street performance, towards professionalism as the nineteenth century progressed. He observes connections between social standing, access to professional musical performance and matters of commerce, art and taste [1, 3], as well as providing insight into the growth of domestic music-making in the same period and the impact of this activity on cultural understandings of class and the livelihoods of those working in the popular-music industry at this time [1, 3]. Through this multiplicity of approaches, **Scott's** research is pivotal in effecting a paradigm shift away from previous models that standardise popular-music criticism and fail to adequately explain the diversity even within a single popular genre.

Scott's research into Victorian-era musics also involves the performance of this repertoire, which he presents and contextualises with reference to his musicological research [5]. This is a rare example of the close coupling of academic discussion and critical performance in the area of popular music, and distinguishes **Scott's** interdisciplinary and multi-modal approach to research. His portfolio of performance-as-research forms a substantial repository that supports the sociological, aesthetic and commercial exploration of early light and popular musics, and facilitates informed engagement with these materials both inside and outside the academy.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- [1] D.B. Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois*, expanded 2nd edition with accompanying CD recording (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001) [Book – e-book ISBN: 9781315085258].
- [2] D.B. Scott, *From the Erotic to the Demonic: On Critical Musicology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). [Book – e-book ISBN: 978-0199870394].
- [3] D.B. Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The 19th-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris, and Vienna* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) [Book – e-book ISBN: 9780199871254]. Awarded USD2,000 from the Gustave Reese Foundation towards publication costs of this monograph.
- [4] D.B. Scott, *Musical Style and Social Meaning*, Ashgate Contemporary Thinkers on Critical Musicology (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) [Book – e-book ISBN: 9781315090696].
- [5] *The Victorian Web* <<http://www.victorianweb.org>> [Website]. Scott is the music editor and is also contributor of numerous recordings of ballads and music-hall songs with accompanying commentaries added to the site across the period 2007-2020.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Scott's research into early (particularly Victorian) popular and light musics and their cultures has contributed to numerous commercial productions. In every case, production teams have made their initial engagement with **Scott's** research directly through publications including *The Singing Bourgeois* [1, F, I] and *The Victorian Web* [5, A, J], as a result of broad knowledge of his research [A, G] or via recommendations from colleagues and other researchers [D, E].

Scott was a ‘major consultant’ on the ninth instalment in the *Assassin’s Creed* video-game series, *Assassin’s Creed: Syndicate* (2015), which VGCharts shows was the best-selling game worldwide when released and remained in the global top 50 for 19 weeks. The Lead Audio Producer approached **Scott** to consult on the project, drawing on his research [1, 3, 5] to identify “what the most popular tracks of this era and this year were, or what kind of music was listened to in different places and by different classes” [A], enabling the sourcing of period- and location-appropriate diegetic music. She asserts this was critical since “the cultural life in *Assassin’s Creed: Syndicate* is primarily represented by the musical activities of non-player characters” [B]. Reviewers praised the game’s aesthetics, with several acknowledging implicitly the impact of **Scott**’s research on the musical validity sought by the creative team by highlighting the setting’s aural as well as visual richness. *Game Informer*’s Senior Reviews Editor notes that “[t]he Victorian-era setting is among the series’ most mesmerizing and evocative, with grimy chimneys billowing smoke, people belting out songs in pubs”, and comments further “I wish the period songs weren’t relegated to tucked-away taverns”, highlighting this critical part of the game’s soundtrack [C].

Since 2014 fact-based television programmes including *Who Do You Think You Are?* (2014, 2017), *Heir Hunters* (2017) and productions presented by Len Goodman (2014, 2015), Lucy Worsley (2014, 2015) and Frank Skinner (2015) have drawn on **Scott**’s research to ensure historical accuracy [1, 2, 3, 4, 5]. His research has enabled programme makers to present aspects of history, society and culture with confidence in the validity of their claims, supporting the fundamental premises of these shows. A researcher for *Heir Hunters* (“a BBC 1 daytime programme about social history and genealogy” [D]) drew on **Scott**’s research into “the historical sociology of popular music” for “the story of a street musician, performing on the streets on [sic] London in the late 19th century” [1, 3, D]. Similarly, an assistant producer on *Who Do You Think You Are?* claims **Scott**’s research for episodes on Sheridan Smith (2014) and Warwick Davies (2017), which BARB reports reached seven-day viewing audiences of around 14 million people, made an “invaluable contribution” to the programme [E].

Scott’s research has informed radio programmes on topics ranging from the Eurovision Song Contest (2014) to crooning (2016, 2018). His most recent radio consultancy is for BBC Radio 4’s *A Singing History of Britain* (2019), which the producer states was “commissioned as [a] social history programme. I wanted us to say something about British culture, British society, British character and how that has evolved over time” [1, 2, 3, 4, F]. He encountered **Scott**’s research through *The Singing Bourgeois* [1], “which seemed to be very much about unpacking our social history alongside music”, and credits **Scott** with helping him and the other programme-makers “solidify some of the important areas we should be looking at [...]. Derek quickly understood what our programme was trying to do, and steered me towards the material that would be most useful” [F]. Similarly, the producer of the Stephen Fry-narrated audio book *Victorian Secrets* (2018) approached **Scott** to consult on and perform incidental music for the recording [1, 3, 4, 5]. He argues **Scott**’s research “was key to the success of the project” [G] helping the audio book, a *Guardian* “pick of the week”, reach what he calls the “top of the Audible UK bestsellers chart” [H] only 10 days after release. He also notes that **Scott**’s work helped with the development of the script dealing with aspects of Victorian society sometimes seen as “a bit controversial” [G], such as homosexuality and the role played by non-white musicians. He asserts that **Scott** “was informative about the role of the minstrels [...] and told us about The Prince of Wales’s banjo lessons from a black Canadian player, which went in the final script. In the episode about male gay Victorians he provided the accordion music for a secret transvestite ball held in Manchester” [G]. More recently (September 2020), **Scott**’s research [1, 3] has informed the development of a UK/US-produced television documentary (Uplands Television and PBS) presented by David Harewood, that provides the first critical examination of blackface minstrelsy and its legacy.

The impact of **Scott**’s research extends into print books and theatrical works. The author of the novel *Crow Court* (London: Unbound, 2021) asserts that **Scott**’s *The Singing Bourgeois* [1] was fundamental to his being able to write ‘The Peacock Shawl’, one of the episodes through which his novel is structured. He compares **Scott**’s research favourably to other scholarship on the

Victorian period, concluding that “*The Singing Bourgeois* is the only book I have come across that holds up Victorian Culture to an ideological light, and as soon as it does so, everything becomes so much clearer. [...] [it] is the only book I have read that gives such a clear-eyed explanation of how such movements worked with the ideology of the time” [I]. Indeed, in the acknowledgements for ‘The Peacock Shawl’ he credits **Scott** and his research as impacting directly on the creation of this part of the novel, stating “Derek B. Scott was kind enough to read through ‘The Peacock Shawl’ [...] and his superb text, *The Singing Bourgeois*, was an inspiration for much of the background to that story”. **Scott**’s research into and research-informed performances of Victorian-era songs [5] enabled a director/co-creator to realise an authentic socio-cultural scenario for her theatrical piece *The Emily Triptych* (2017) based on the life and poetry of Emily Dickinson. The work was conceived for performance in New York and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (2017), and later refashioned under the title *Dickinson’s Room* in Adelaide, Australia (2018), a production acclaimed as a “unique and engaging piece of theatre” and “a little gem” in a *Stage Whispers* review. The director/co-creator clarified the importance of **Scott**’s research to her process, stating that “as a non-musician who does considerable research on period music every time I approach a theatrical project, I find recordings like Prof. Scott’s immensely helpful. Especially when it comes to less well-known material. Digging deep without the ability to read sheet music can be tough. What is more, such recordings are instrumental in helping me form a picture of daily life in a given historical period” [J].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[A] ‘Assassin’s Creed: Syndicate Interview with Audio Director, *thesoundarchitect* (27 February 2016) <<https://www.thesoundarchitect.co.uk/lydiaandrew/>> [Accessed 2 December 2019].

[B] Quoted in ‘Flüchtigkeit und Kontingenz: Die audiovisuelle Gestaltung digitaler Spiele in Relation zum Film’, in Frank Hentschel und Peter Moormann, eds, *Filmmusik. Ein alternatives Kompendium* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2018), 277–301 (290).

[C] Game Informer Senior Reviews Editor ‘Review of *Assassins Creed: Syndicate*’ *GameInformer* (22 October 2015) <https://www.gameinformer.com/games/assassins_creed_syndicate/b/playstation4/archive/2015/10/22/assassins-creed-syndicate-review-game-informer.aspx> [Accessed 2 December 2019].

[D] Email from researcher for the BBC1 factual programme *Heir Hunters* (17 August 2017).

[E] Email from assistant producer on *Who do you think you are?* (6 May 2016).

[F] Email from producer of *A Singing History of Britain*, BBC (21 November 2019).

[G] Email from producer of the audio book *Victorian Secrets* (9 May 2019).

[H] Email (2) from producer of the audio book *Victorian Secrets* (29 October 2018).

[I] Email from author of *Crow Court* (24 August 2018).

[J] Email from director and co-creator of *The Emily Triptych* (8 May 2019).