Ken McLeod

ROUTLEDGE

Driving Identities

At the Intersection of Popular Music and Automotive Culture

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Driving Identities

Driving Identities examines long-standing connections between popular music and the automotive industry and how this relationship has helped to construct and reflect various socio-cultural identities. It also challenges common assumptions regarding the divergences between industry and art, and reveals how music and sound are used to suture the putative divide between human and non-human.

This book is a ground-breaking inquiry into the relationship between popular music and automobiles, and into the mutual aesthetic and stylistic influences that have historically left their mark on both industries. Shaped by new historicism and cultural criticism, and by methodologies adapted from gender, LGBTQ+, and African-American studies, it makes an important contribution to understanding the complex and interconnected nature of identity and cultural formation. In its interdisciplinary approach, melding aspects of ethnomusicology, sociology, sound studies, and business studies, it pushes musicological scholarship into a new consideration and awareness of the complexity of identity construction and of influences that inform our musical culture.

The volume also provides analyses of the confluences and coactions of popular music and automotive products to highlight the mutual influences on their respective aesthetic and technical evolutions.

Driving Identities is aimed at both academics and enthusiasts of automotive culture, popular music, and cultural studies in general. It is accompanied by an extensive online database appendix of car-themed pop recordings and sheet music, searchable by year, artist, and title.

Ken McLeod is an Associate Professor of Music History at the University of Toronto. He has published widely on identity politics in popular music, and the intersections between technology, science fiction, and rock music. His first book, *We Are The Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music* (Ashgate, 2011), examines the interconnection of sport and popular music in constructing racial, gender, socio-economic, and national identities.

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Driving Identities

At the Intersection of Popular Music and Automotive Culture

Ken McLeod

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Please enter the activation word RRMusic and your email address when prompted. You will immediately be sent an automated email containing an access token and instructions, which will allow you to log in to the site.

To my wife, Julie Pedneault-Deslauriers, and my son, Nolan Alexander McLeod

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Acknowledgements

This book arose out of a realization that despite the fact that we commonly connect cars and popular music in our cultural imaginations, there had been very little work devoted to the intersection of the two industries and their important nexus in the construction and reflection of identity.

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Introduction: revving up

This book explores the intersection of popular music and automobile culture in North America and Europe, from the advent of internal combustion engine vehicles in 1885 to the present. More particularly, it examines the historical connections between popular music and automobiles and how the two have combined to construct, contest, reinforce, and re-envision gender, racial, sexual, and locational identities in both abstract aesthetic and explicit political contexts.

The central thesis of this study is that popular music and automobiles are connected not only through the myriad of songs that incorporate automotive themes but also in their function as synergistic agents in the construction of identity and community. Although they are too often considered in isolation from one another, the connections between popular music and automobile culture occur in a wide variety of ways. These include the significant use of automotive sounds in popular music; the nexus of automobiles and popular music in constructing gender, class, and racial identities (e.g., Hispanic lowrider culture and the important place of automobiles in African-American blues, jazz, and hip hop); the influential role of cars and popular music in defining various locations (e.g., Detroit as Motown); and the entwined emphasis on techno-culture, futurism, and speed. Moreover, significant industry-related initiatives further contribute to bind automotive and music cultures in mutually productive and commercial relationships, such as the evolution of audio systems and the related immersive experience of listening to music in cars, the use of popular music in car advertising and artist sponsorships, and issues relating to sound studies and the urban-industrial environment. Through a comprehensive examination of sound recordings, music videos, lyrics, scores, advertising media, and a selection of automotive literature from the late nineteenth century to the present, *Driving Identities* analyzes the multifaceted nature and breadth of the music–automobile relationship and gauges its significance in shaping critical discourses around issues of identity and fashioning the modern self.

Since its inception, the car has had a significant effect on Western popular culture. Automobiles were incorporated into almost all popular media, from magazines, books, and newsprint to early radio, television, and movies. The themes of such works typically centred on the liberation that the automobile afforded. For examples, books and movies frequently depicted young men freeing themselves from middle-class restraints to travel and seek adventure. Throughout the twentieth century, car ownership for men, as well as for women and racial minorities, came to be associated with independence, freedom, and improved social status. Nowhere, however, was the liberating power of the car expressed and celebrated more strongly than in the world of popular music.

Much scholarly inquiry into artistic reactions to modernity has focused on visual media (e.g., painting and photography) and literature that mediated the onset of industrial society. However, the machine age is, perhaps, best characterized by its aural impact, and so a study of machine aesthetics forms an underlying part of this project. In the words of Alan Burdick (2001), we must "listen—to the cable cars … Jupiter Rockets, surgical banter, steam locomotives, punch clocks: the work songs of the whole carbon-based enterprise" (p. 70 and qtd. in Dinerstein, 2003, p. 7). The automobile's connection to the world of sound and music was forcefully established early in the twentieth century when Italian Futurists envisioned the years ahead sonically, as a powerful "roaring car" speeding away from traditional European artistic and social conventions. On February 20, 1909, *Le Figaro* published Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," which famously proclaimed:

> We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed. A racing car whose hood is adorned with great pipes, like serpents of explosive breath—a roaring car that seems to ride on grapeshot is more beautiful than the [Greek sculpture] *Victory of Samothrace.* We want to hymn the man at the wheel, who hurls the lance of his spirit across the Earth, along the circle of its orbit (Marinetti, 2009, p. 51).

The manifesto focused not just on the car and the beauty of speed, but on its sonic element—the explosive "roaring" engine, creating a "hymn" to the driver. It overtly asserted the aesthetic value of the machine. The machines the Futurists particularly valued were those dedicated to speed: the car, the train, the aeroplane, machines that made it possible to literally and figuratively mobilize bodies. Marinetti (2009), for example, dedicated his 1908 poem "To My Pegasus" to the racing car:

> Vehement god of a steel race,
> Automobile thirsting for space
> shuffling and trembling in anguish,
> pulling at the bit with strident teeth!
> O formidable Japanese monster,
> with a forge's eyes,
> fed by flames and mineral oils,
> hungry for horizons and sidereal preys …

> I will set free your heart with its diabolical beat
> and its gigantic pneumatic tires,
> for the dance that you will lead
> on the white roads of the world! (p. 425)

The car here is envisioned as a living, breathing, even racialized god-like entity that will lead the rest of mankind on a "dance." Fellow Futurist Luigi Russolo, more than simply celebrating the sound of machinery and cars in prose and poetry, provided what is likely the first instance of incorporating the sound of an internal combustion engine into a musical work in his concerto, *The Meeting of Automobile and Airplane* (1913).

In development contemporaneously to Marinetti's manifesto, only four years later, in 1913, Henry Ford introduced his first complete automotive assembly line in Detroit. These events can be considered the inauguration of a century that placed trust in the ability of technology to ensure the future. The assembly line and its merging of human beings and machinery define the age of industrial mobilization of social energies directed to speeding up productivity. Acceleration, speed, and the cult of the machine were the values emphasized by both the aesthetic ideology of the Futurist Manifesto and the practice of Ford's assembly line.

The machine age changed our sonic environment and, in turn, impacted in manifold ways the construction and reflection of various identities. In 1936, the eminent architect Le Corbusier, influenced by the Italian Futurists in his essay "The Spirit of the Machine, and Negros in the USA," remarked on "the grinding of the street cars … the pounding of machines in factories," and argued that "from this new uproar they [African Americans] make music" (Dinerstein, 2003, p. 2). Despite his sometimes essentializing tone, Le Corbusier recognized that African Americans had successfully integrated modern technology and the chaotic rhythms of the urban soundscape into their musical practice. This is but one example of the sound of the machine informing music and identity construction. The intersection of car culture and music in the construction and reflection of not only African-American identities but of various gender, sexual, and locational identities forms a central objective of this study.

In addition to analysing the relationships between cars and music in the shaping and expressions of these identities, a significant portion of this book is aimed at understanding the sonic influence of automotive culture on popular music (and, to some extent, the reverse). To a large degree, popular music often projects the surrounding sonorities of its environment. For instance, in discussing the impact of The Velvet Underground, music critic Ellen Willis (2011) explains how rock and roll sounds like the city: "rock-and-roll's oldest metaphor for modern city life [is] anarchic energy contained by a tight repetitive structure" (p. 55). Her formulation entails two components. First, rock n' roll functions as a musical metaphor, a sonic suggestion or musical simulation of the experience of urban life rather than a mere lyrical or vocal narration of stories or emotions. Second, this metaphor operates through a tension of opposites: chaos and order, uncontainable noise and inescapable rhythm. Such a position resonates with Adam Krims' (2007) concept of an "urban ethos," a framework for analysing musical representations of social life:

> [T]here is a range of possible, and more or less likely, representations of the city in the corpus of … commercial popular music, and … certain representations call for framing at certain times. … It is the scope of that range of urban representations and their possible modalities, in any given time span, that I call the urban ethos. The urban ethos is thus not a particular representation but rather a distribution of possibilities, always having discernable [*sic*] limits as well as common practices. It is not a picture of how life is in any particular city. Instead, it distills publicly disseminated notions of how cities are generally, even though it may be disproportionately shaped by the fate of particular cities (p. 7).

Much along the same lines of thought as Willis and Krims, British sociologist Chris Rojek (2011) argues for the concept of an "urban-industrial backbeat" against which modern pop music emerged in the twentieth century. This refers to the concrete contexts and settings that give meaning and motivation to our uses and activities surrounding popular music, and that provide a "window" into a specific "structure of feeling" that acts as a summation of a discernible geography, history, and culture (p. 80). In this manner, popular music has been imbued with the sound of the car, the rocking of the engine pistons, and the rolling freedom of wheels in motion that combine to invigorate and move the human body.

Another important thread running through this book is an exploration of how, in our intimate haptic connections with it (whether as drivers or passengers), the car has long been a contested symbol of the merging of humans and machines. Gasoline- and electric-powered machines surpass the limitations of mere muscles, blurring the distinction between living organism and machine, and imparting a related rise in the value of machine aesthetics. Behind the wheel, the driver is stronger, faster, and more powerful than his/her non-motorized and less-mobile brethren. The connection between cars and their drivers is so strong that much automobility literature refers not to discrete entities of driver and car, but rather to a human–machine hybrid, compound, or "assemblage." The car both functions to heighten our notion of self-identity—variously reflecting our personality, lifestyle, and status—yet simultaneously blurs our corporeal identity as we amalgamate in an assemblage with a mass-produced machine. Jack Katz (1999), for example, suggests that "Driving requires and occasions a metaphysical merger, an intertwining of the identities of driver and car that generates a distinctive ontology in the form of a person-thing, a humanized car or alternatively, an automobilized person"; it is a "process in which one … becomes sensually intertwined with mechanical tool and perceptual field" (pp. 33, 41). Mimi Sheller (2007) similarly describes driving as "a practice that intertwines and mixes the human and the inhuman, the person and the thing, the material and the informational" (p. 177). Some theorists have even recently adopted the term "autoself" or "automobile self" to refer to the fused identity of the car–driver entity. Richard Randell (2017), for instance, proposes the following:

> The autoself is not a disembodied self but is composed of the dual bodies of person and automobile. The latter, the "metallic and glass shell" that is the body that is routinely encountered on the road, allows for only limited communication: through the flashing of headlights, tailgating, sounding of horn, and so forth. The autoself (unlike the cyberself) is incapable of engaging in anything beyond rudimentary discourse; ironically, it is unable even to reflect discursively upon its own existence (p. 673).

While one might argue that enhanced, hands-free telephone and Internet devices allow for more than rudimentary communication, the concept of an "autoself" is likely the most extreme example of our identities being influenced by and even subsumed into the automobile. The act of driving, however, often involves precisely such a form of mental disengagement from our discrete selves, one that mirrors and is amplified by the distraction that listening to music often induces. As drivers gain experience with their vehicles the embodied skills and actions of driving typically appear to be performed in relatively unconscious "automatic" and un-reflexive ways such that the experience of driving sinks into our "technological unconscious" (Thrift, 2004, p. 41). Driving can, at least in non-stressful conditions, involve a certain detachment from the world, a process of daydreaming or, for Baudrillard (1988), "a spectacular form of amnesia"—a loss of reflective self-identity and merging into the act of driving the car that an accompanying musical soundtrack would seem to heighten (p. 9).

Echoing the ecstatic, spiritual tones of Marinetti's Futurist ideology, for many observers the car has become an entity of almost religious self-identification, a material object of beauty and reverence that promises the perfection and transformation of man. Writing in 1957, Roland Barthes (1991) felt that cars were:

> almost the exact equivalent of the great Gothic cathedrals: I mean the supreme creation of an era, conceived with passion by unknown artists, and consumed in image if not in usage by a whole population which appropriates them as a purely magical object (p. 88).

Describing the new Citroën DS (a play on the French word *Déesse*, for goddess), he lauded it as:

> the best messenger of a world above that of nature: one can easily see in an object at once a perfection and an absence of origin, a closure and a

> brilliance, a transformation of life into matter (matter is much more magical than life) (p. 88).

For Barthes, no longer did the automobile express mere brute speed; instead, it infused speed with beauty and grace. More than inanimate machines, cars represented major cultural creations replete with their own spiritual mythology.

Not everyone, however, was as susceptible to the automobile's allure. In contrast to Barthes' deification of the car, Theodor Adorno (2005) yearned for "the good old days" in his essay "More Haste, Less Speed." There once was a time, he claimed, when walking implied the relaxed rhythms and tempos associated with human dignity, a dignity that, with the advent of machine-driven and automotive transportation, had become a mere memory:

> Traffic regulations no longer need allow for wild animals, but they have not yet pacified running. It estranges us from bourgeois walking. The truth becomes visible that something is amiss with security, that the unleashed powers of life, be they mere vehicles, have to be escaped. The body's habituation to walking as normal stems from the good old days. It was the bourgeois form of locomotion: physical demythologization, free of the spell of hieratic pacing, roofless wandering, breathless flight. Human dignity insisted on the right to walk, a rhythm not extorted from the body by command or terror. The walk, the stroll, were private ways of passing time, the heritage of the feudal promenade in the nineteenth century. With the liberal era walking too is dying out, even where people do not go by car. The Youth Movement, sensing these tendencies with infallible masochism, challenged the parental Sunday excursions and replaced them by voluntary forced marches, naming them, in medieval fashion, *Fahrt* [journey, drive] when the Ford model was about to become available for such purposes. Perhaps the cult of technical speed as of sport conceals an impulse to master the terror of running by deflecting it from one's own body and at the same time effortlessly surpassing it. The triumph of mounting mileage ritually appeases the fear of the fugitive. But if someone is shouted at to "run" … the archaic power makes itself heard that otherwise inaudibly guides our every step (p. 162).

For Adorno, the normative pace and rhythm of walking faded away in the era of mass production, displaced by the faster tempo and repetitively mechanistic rhythms engendered by the dominance of car culture. Adorno's distaste for the increasing pace of society was directly attributable to and identified with the "Youth Movement" and, as addressed in his 1941 essay "On Popular Music," its equally objectionable fascination with popular music. Albeit indirectly, Adorno's philosophy was an early instance of the supposed deleterious effects of the convergence of automotive culture, popular music, and identity. For many others, however, the automobile represented a form of mobile sonic expressiveness to be celebrated through songs, advertising, and various cultures of engine and sound system modification.

The effects of automobiles on everyday life have often been the subject of controversy. While the introduction of the mass-produced automobile represented a revolution in mobility and convenience, the modern consequences of heavy automotive use contributed to the reliance on non-renewable fuels, a dramatic increase in the rate of accidental death, social isolation and the disconnection of community, rise in obesity, generation of air and noise pollution, and the facilitation of urban sprawl and decay. This book should in no way be regarded as an apology for the automotive industry, but rather an attempt to understand the significant impact it has exerted on popular music—and vice versa. Nor does this book aim to offer a full history of the relationship between music and motor vehicles. It does, however, offer an examination of key historical connections in order to better contextualize the period under consideration. While recent scholarship has addressed the discrete, individual roles of automotive culture and music in shaping locational and social identities, there exists at present no scholarly study of the convergences and mutual reinforcement of these elements in constructing such identities. Similarly, neither the important connections between popular music and automobiles in film and television nor the related uses of popular music in automotive industry advertising and sound branding in the construction of identity have received in-depth critical attention. This work attempts to rectify these lacunae and offer new understanding of the scope and socio-cultural function of the historical synergy between automotive culture and popular music.

This study is inherently interdisciplinary in nature and draws on aspects of musicology, sociology, gender studies, African-American studies, marketing and advertising, art and industrial design, and philosophy (particularly involving ideas surrounding identity construction, accelerationism, post-humanism, and material culture). As such, it echoes recent shifts in humanities research. Intersections, synergistic connections, and exchanges between seemingly distantly related methodologies and disciplines, such as between bodies and machines, have become central questions not only in music history but in the humanities and social sciences more generally. In offering a greater understanding of the cultural web in which I inscribe the music/automobile relationship, this volume seeks to contribute to the increasing focus on connected histories, networks, liminal borders, and topics shared by multiple disciplines.

To this end, this book pursues three interrelated objectives: 1) to analyze the historical interrelationship of popular music and automobiles in order to better understand the complexities of their mutually influential aesthetics; 2) to provide a previously unexplored analysis of the synergistic role of cars and popular music in constructing identity; and 3) to challenge stereotypical concepts surrounding the division of art and industry, particularly to understand the entwined nature of music and the automobile industry manifested in advertising, audio systems design, safety, and environmental issues. It therefore illuminates and challenges common assumptions regarding the divergences between industry and art, underscoring how the automotive and commercial music industries have mutually evolved and benefited from both aesthetic and technological commonalities.

Additionally, in an era of post-human critiques of the materialist nature of humanity, it interrogates our personal, social, and cultural relationships with automotive technology, and reveals how music and sound are used to suture the putative divide between human and non-human and to complicate traditional limits of subjectivity. It thereby provides a unique understanding of the ability and use of popular music and designed sounds to bridge the divide between the body and the machine, the human and the non-human.

Despite the intense degree of integration of automotive culture with popular music, there has been little dedicated scholarly study of the phenomenon or the context of its production. A number of books have analysed the general impact of car culture on American cultural life, the most salient of which are Berger (1979, 2001), Dunn (1998), Flink (1970, 1975, 1990), Foster (2003), Lhamon (1990), Miller (2001), Parkin (2017), Passon (2011), Rae (1959, 1965, 1971), and Volti (2004). Most of these works, however, are several decades old, and almost entirely eschew questions related to popular music and identity construction.

A recent scholarly thread has focused on the psychological and cognitive ramifications of driving while listening to music. In addition to articles by Brodsky (2002), Bull (2001), Dibben and Williamson (2007), Furnham and Allas (1999), Stutts et al. (2003), and Wiesenthal, Hennessy, and Totten (2000), Warren Brodsky's recent *Driving with Music* (2015) explores the cognitive aspects of music listening while driving a car in order to understand how music-related behaviour in a car can either enhance or imperil driver safety. Coming largely from the perspective of sound studies, Bijsterveld, Cleophas, Krebs, and Mom's *Sound and Safe* (2013) is perhaps the most comprehensive look at the connection of sound culture and driving. It offers a significant analysis of the rise of "quiet culture" in car advertising and engineering, and of the role of sound and music in fears around safety. This study differs from these others in that the focus is not principally on the driving experience or on the cognitive science behind it, but rather on the socio-cultural implications of music and sound in contributing to and creating felt experiences and identities while driving, and in enhancing an often anthropomorphized relationship with our cars. It also provides a distinct historical overview of how music consumption has influenced car design and how cars have, in turn, influenced musical content and its consumption.

The car's relationship to race, gender, and locational identity has been the subject of inquiry in Jeremy Packer's *Mobility without Mayhem* (2008). However, Packer does not consider these identities in relationship to music. Notions of race and car audio modification culture have also been explored in relation to Chicano lowrider culture (Chappell, 2012; LaBelle, 2008; Tatum, 2011). Again, however, relatively little attention is given to understanding the actual music of that culture. Suzanne E. Smith's *Dancing in the Street* (1999) represents one of the only studies that discuss the influence of the car industry on music, specifically the rise of the Motown sound in Detroit. Similarly, Joel Dinerstein's *Swinging the Machine* (2003) has provided an insightful perspective on the influence of machine culture more generally on African-American swing and jazz between the First and Second World Wars. In linking the aesthetics of art and industry, these latter two works provide particularly valuable insights for the current study, although this study significantly extends the scope (in terms of time period, musical and sonic examples, location, and identities at stake) of these inquiries.

The relatively few studies that have touched upon popular music and automobile culture are limited to articles and chapters in larger works, including a notable essay by E. L. Widmer (2002) entitled "Crossroads: The Automobile, Rock and Roll, and Democracy." John L. Wright's "Croonin' about Cruisin'" (1978) demonstrates how, since its inception, the automobile has been a "vehicle of musical inspiration" for popular songs. More recently, Paul Gilroy (2001) and George Lipsitz (2006) insightfully examine aspects of the complicated relationship between African-American musicians and car culture. Likewise, Timothy Taylor (2007, 2012) analyzes the use of techno music in car advertising. Mark Laver (2015) provides insightful analyses regarding the use of jazz in various automotive marketing campaigns. Justin Williams (2010, 2013, 2014) also contributes well-considered and illuminating articles and chapters on the relationship between automobile sound systems and hip hop production practices.

This study attempts to offer a unique analysis of how car advertising influences popular music; investigates how listening to music and designed sounds in cars enhances an anthropomorphic relationship to and with the car; and probes the critically under-studied relationship between musical culture and industry. It provides the first comprehensive and long-overdue analysis of the historical evolution of car songs in popular music and their role in both constructing identity and normalizing and incorporating the sounds of the urban/suburban industrial age. This book seeks to create a far more detailed understanding of how deeply intertwined our musical values, practices of consumption, and industrialization really are. It provides understanding of the ability and use of popular music and designed sounds to bridge the divide between body and machine, human and non-human, and consumer and product, and argues that we are increasingly hybridized, interpenetrated constructions of corporate and machine influences, thus challenging conventional notions of human identity and subjectivity.

The seven chapters of this book each deal with different aspects of identity and identity construction in the car–popular music nexus. Chapter 1 provides a historical overview of car songs in popular music, from sheet music incarnations of Tin Pan Alley through to today—including examples from blues, early rock n' roll, singer-songwriters, techno, and rap, among others. It focuses on specific works that illuminate the evolving relationship of popular music to cars, and discusses how early sheet-music songs and car-manufacturer sponsorship of radio advertising, in contrast to journalism that associated the car with moral decay (Blanke, 2007), served to normalize and humanize the automobile in North American society while also creating and naturalizing many (now) stereotypical conceptions of the automobile. Following from Tin Pan Alley, the evolution of car songs is traced through blues and r & b works that often treated the car as a symbol of social status and liberation, but also used it as a sexual metaphor and a personification of women. The 1950s and 1960s expressed a fascination with futuristic technology, and I show how the speed and utopian liberation it represented characterized much of the design and content of both the automotive and rock and roll industries. Singer-songwriters of the 1970s related to the car less as an icon of youthful rock n' roll rebellion than as a more utilitarian, if somewhat mythologized, vehicle with which to move through everyday life, whereas punk and new wave songs in the 1980s particularly focused on the dystopic effects of the automobile. Finally, the 1990s and 2000s, while witnessing a decline in car songs in mainstream popular music, saw them prominently featured in hip hop, often as a manifestation of status similar to that previously occurring in blues and r & b. The chapter also highlights the aesthetic and sonic influences of the car on popular songs, including the incorporation of engine and horn sounds, and sounds gleaned from the automobile manufacturing process (topics also discussed in Chapters 4 and 5).

Chapter 2 focuses on the intersection of popular music and cars in the construction of African-American identities. A central feature of this chapter is the advent and evolution of the Motown sound, perhaps the most overt and influential articulation of the bonds between black identity, music, and the automotive industry. This chapter also discusses how car ownership in the early twentieth century represented black upward mobility, but also signified the mobile "threat" of blackness crossing into white space. Of particular focus are the songs of Chuck Berry, who briefly worked in two automobile manufacturing plants and was especially fascinated with the symbolic social status afforded by automobiles. Additional issues explored in this chapter include the role of music and analogous notions of improvisation and car modification as means of signifying in both Hispanic lowrider and African-American hip hop culture, and the place of the automobile as an icon of social and physical liberation in African-American blues and jazz.

Chapter 3 analyzes the nexus of automobiles and popular music in constructing images of femininity and masculinity, and LGBTQ+ identities. It begins with the premise that cars, as objects of desire and devotion, have often been linked through song with women or anthropomorphized as female personae. The years following the Second World War saw car songs come into prominence at a time when men were in the driver's seat of both the automotive and the recording industries. Consequently, most early rock n' roll car songs reflected male experiences and ambitions. Following an analysis of the rise of hypermasculine identities in hard rock and hip hop car songs, the chapter turns to female challenges to these voices (e.g., Joni Mitchell, Aretha Franklin, and Shania Twain, among others) and elaborates on new literatures of gendered "feeling" for cars (Sheller & Urry, 2006; Kent, 2015). As women entered the rock n' roll and automotive arenas in increasing numbers, they altered the meaning of the automobile in popular music to reflect their own perspectives. This chapter thus provides an additional location from which to consider how the automobile has impacted women's lives, as well as how women's experiences and ambitions have influenced rock n' roll and American car culture. Finally, the chapter explores the intersection of automobile culture and music in relation to LGBTQ+ identities, which are typically overlooked in discussions of masculine, hetero-normative automotive culture. Even so, several car companies have overtly targeted gay and lesbian consumers, and a number of artists have focused on unfamiliar and non-heteronormative narratives and feelings for cars in lyrics and videos in order to further queer discourses. Through the combined lens of popular music songs and car advertising campaigns and their soundtracks, the chapter illuminates and highlights recent challenges to and contestations of the stereotypical image of the car as a heteronormative machine.

Chapter 4 discusses the ways in which the automotive industry approaches concepts of sound branding in order to delineate both product and consumer identities. It elucidates how sonic aspects of the car–driver experiences—such as distinctive engine sounds or the variety of interior warning indicators and chimes—are carefully designed to appeal to various target markets. Additionally, this chapter discusses the role of music in television and radio advertising for automobiles, the increasing ubiquity of utilizing popular musicians to help brand various models, and the growing influence that such product endorsement deals exercise over popular music content. The central feature of this chapter is an analysis of how manufacturers employ sound and popular music in order to create anthropomorphic, haptic connections between cars and consumers.

Chapter 5 looks at the various uses of musical concepts, language, and aesthetic practices as applied in the automotive industry, and identifies various sonic and musical components of automotive manufacturing and engineering culture drawn from stereo- and headphone-listening technologies (including the penchant for using musical car names, the musical terms and technologies that are used to tune, codify, and identify engine sounds, and the seemingly endless quest for a quiet driving experience and pristine listening environment) that mark much automotive design. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the automotive industry attempts, often by relying on musical or sonic means, to imbue cars with sentient emotional "agency" that would encourage consumers to understand cars as empathetic, emotional actors that merge in forms of a human–machine hybridity.

Chapter 6 examines the car as a vehicle for both the consumption and production of music and expressive sound. Whether through the medium of car radios, cassette tapes, CD players, or MP3 player ports, cars have facilitated our listening habits and reflected the latest in listening and playback technology. Indeed, the popularity of radios in cars has even influenced radio programming. Following the discussion of the musical concepts and metaphors used in manufacturing and "tuning" cars, this chapter outlines the history of automotive sound systems and related devices (e.g., car horns and sirens) in terms of their influence on popular music and as expressive devices in their own right. A prime feature of this chapter addresses the car as an instrument for projecting musical identities through various car stereo modification cultures (hip hop booming and Jeep beats, Houston SLAB, and Chicano lowrider, for instance). A part of car modification culture known as "tuning"—the enhancement or even building of stereo systems—contests the mass-produced, homogenous identities and listening experiences offered by automotive manufacturers, and allows the sonic projection of individual and community identities that redefine the embodied listening experience in unique ways. I apply Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) notions of "assemblage" and Lefebvre's (1991) ideas surrounding the construction of social space to formulate a new understanding of these modified car–driver constructions and show how they allow the performance of resistive, hybrid assemblages of various ethnic, racial, class, and locational identities.

Chapter 7 weaves together several disparate strands linking popular music and automobile culture and identity. Beginning with movie and television soundtracks, the chapter discusses the role of popular music in depicting a variety of car-related activities such as chase scenes or travel and racing montages, and how it subsequently provides a major narrative of identity in these films. Similarly, cars often play a major role in music-based television shows such as *The Monkees* (with its Monkeemobile) or *The Partridge Family* (with the Partridge Family Bus), in these cases delineating a common identification with the road and touring musicians in the 1970s. The role of anthropomorphic talking cars (such as KITT from *Knight Rider*) is also explored in relation to the auto industry's increasing penchant for actual "interactive" or "intelligent" cars. From these increasingly humanized and sentient cars, the chapter transitions to the quasi-spiritual connections that sometimes link drivers to their cars and how popular music has often reinforced them. From the intimate moments of listening to music while driving to songs directly evoking spirituality, the experience of car travel and music often combine to enhance both physical and emotional journeys. The chapter further addresses key places and locations whose identity is largely defined by the relationship between cars and popular music: for example, how Detroit's legendary music scene—from the manufactured Motown sound to proto-punk garage rockers like The MC5 (short for Motor City Five)—is directly related to its automotive industry; or how particular roads in America (such as Los Angeles' "Sunset Strip" and the iconic "Route 66") have also come to be delineated by the merging of popular music and automotive culture. This chapter also argues that roads and streets themselves are spaces that have a complex sonic and rhythmic component made up of multiple elements such as footsteps, construction, or the regulated noise of traffic, and that this contributes to an often-overlooked aspect of locational identity. The chapter concludes with a discussion of car companies' attempts to integrate themselves into various locational communities through their patronage of cultural and artistic events and venues.

In sum, this book attempts to understand the multifariousness and importance of the mutual influences between popular music and automotive culture, and how they have combined to construct human identities. Feelings about driving are often similar to feelings about music, and are one way that emotions are embodied in relationships not only with other humans but also with material things, including kinaesthetic aspects of how human bodies interact with the material world.

1 “Come away with me, Lucille”

A brief history of popular song and automobiles

As several studies have recognized, the centrality of automobility has exerted itself across the globe (Brodsky, 2015; Gartman, 2004; Sheller, 2004; Wollen, 2002a). It is estimated that in 2014 the number of cars in use throughout the world exceeded 1.2 billion, a 20 per cent increase since 2010 (Voelcker, 2014). In 2013, the United States alone had over 254 million registered vehicles (Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2013). Furthermore, some scholars predict that expanding markets in developing countries will result in as many as two billion cars in operation by 2030 (Lutz & Fernandez, 2010).

Until the 1920s, the expense of automobile ownership meant it was mostly reserved for the wealthy. It was a vehicle for conspicuous consumption that projected and identified one’s social class and financial means. The advent of mass-production techniques developed by Henry Ford allowed his eponymous car company, along with competitors Chrysler and General Motors (GM), to produce roughly 72 per cent of the world’s automobiles by the mid-1920s (Gartman, 2004). This signalled an incursion of the car into the daily lives of less affluent consumers such that it now holds a central identifying status across all social classes (Inglis, 2004).

Since its inception, the car has made a particularly significant impact on Western popular culture. Automobiles have been incorporated into almost all mediums of entertainment—magazines, books, newsprint, radio, television, and movies. Typically, the themes of such works have centred on the freedom the automobile affords. Books and movies have focused on individuals, typically young men, who succeed in liberating themselves from a restrictive middle-class life in order to travel and seek adventure in the exotic. The common idea of the car as liberating has always rested on an odd contradiction—a desire to escape from those conditions that allow one to possess a car in the first place. Nonetheless, car ownership came to be associated with independence, freedom, and increased social status. Nowhere, however, has the liberating effect of the car been more celebrated than in the world of popular music. Indeed, the two industries have been mutually interconnected almost from the moment of their respective formations. For well over one hundred years, the subject of automobiles and automotive culture has been employed in almost every genre of popular music. A complete study of lyrical and sonic references is beyond the scope of this chapter. Instead, the aim will be to provide a topical, and roughly chronologic, overview of the evolution of popular music relating to cars, from Tin Pan Alley parlour songs through to contemporary popular music. In so doing, it will outline the historical prevalence and current extent of the interconnections between popular music and automobiles, and illuminate a new understanding of their mutually influential aesthetic. Particular attention will be paid to the sonic influence of automobile culture on popular music—how the sounds of engines, horns, and car customization have impacted popular music aurally—and how the relationship between cars and popular music has evolved in constructing and reflecting various identities.

Early automotive songs

In 1885, Gottlieb Daimler invented in Germany what is often recognized as the prototype of the modern internal combustion gas engine. North America's first gasoline-powered commercial car manufacturers were Charles and Frank Duryea, whose Duryea Motor Wagon Company produced 13 different models by 1896 (Bellis, 2016). And within a decade of the appearance of automobiles on America's roads, Tin Pan Alley was creating car-related hits with a speed and regularity that compared favourably to the auto industry's mass-production pace. Between 1905 and 1907, more than 120 songs were written with the automobile as subject (Widmer, 1990, p. 82). The automotive themes of these songs reflected the general culture of the automobile industry: sexual adventure, upward mobility, liberation from social control, and masculine power. Such themes reflected not only the ideals overtly promoted by the auto industry but also, in part, those generated by songwriters as they interpreted the car's significance.

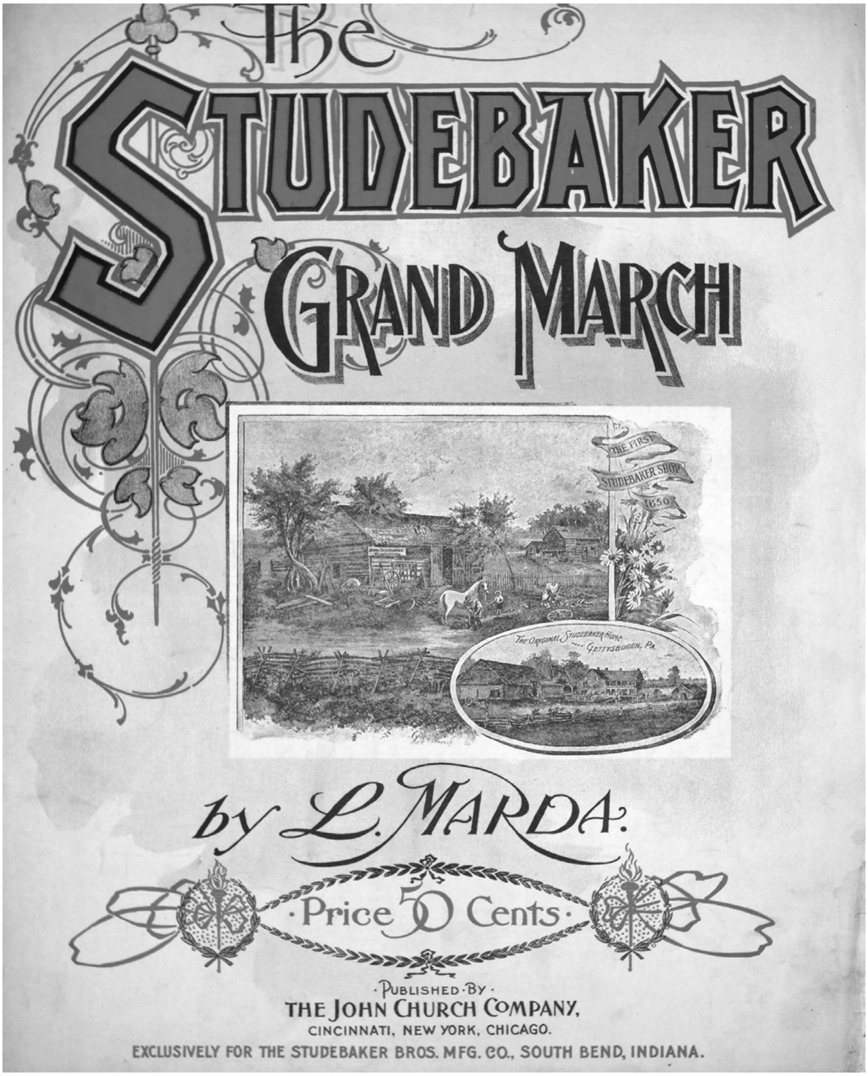
At the time, sheet music sales dominated the commercial music industry. Much of the early music about the automobile, such as "Motor Car" (1903) and Hamilton J. Hawley's "The Auto Race" (1904), consisted of instrumental works for piano or band that were designed to imitate the unique mechanical sounds of the new and exciting invention. Many of these sheet music works translated well into the relatively new medium of recording, partly because of their onomatopoeic content. For example, "The Auto Race," as performed by the Edison Concert Band and recorded in 1905, features an early recording of a car backfiring as it starts up, followed by several hoots from a hand-pump car horn that are imitated by the winds and interjected at various moments. Such imitative musical features are suggestive that the car was not simply a machine understood only in functional terms, but that it was also a work of art in itself that inspired other artists. As a spoken word preamble on the recording explains, the idea of the "race" pits different instruments against each other in a rollicking *perpetuum mobile* of racing sixteenth notes as different instruments take up the main melody and thus "overtake" others.

Indeed, composers of many instrumental genres, including dance music, ragtime, and marches, wrote music celebrating, and often imitating, the frequently erratic motorized sounds of the new automobile. Typically evoking a seemingly unnatural mechanical intrusion on the sonic lives of listeners, the tempos alternated between fast and slow, with repetitive drone-like melodies and noise effects evoking the various spluttering and monotonous sounds of an engine. March music relating to the car was particularly prevalent in works such as George Rosy's "The Motor March" (1906), Joseph Howard's "The Peerless March" (dedicated to the Peerless Motor Company, 1917), Harry Zickel's "The Ford March" (1908), Harry Sawyer's "The Taxi Cab March" (1910), J. W. Ladd's "The Automobile March" (1900), George W. Moraine's "The Auto King March" (1911), and Richard Goosman's "Auto Patrol March" (1908). Dances, mostly two-steps, included Grace Walls Linn's "The Automobile Spin" (1899), Frank P. Banta's "Kareless Koon" (1899), E. H. Pendleton's "The Ebony Flyer" (1903), and E. Hardy's "The Auto Glide" (1915).

Advertising

As cars became increasingly common in American life, so too did music written about them. In 1904, some 29 songs were published about automobiles, 40 in 1905, and 53 in 1908 (Heitmann, 2009). Henry Ford, inventor of the popular Model T, alone was mentioned in over 60 songs composed between 1908 and 1940. Much as with record company Motown's symbiotic association with the automotive industry later in the century, songs that employed car brand names served to increase the marketing and sales of both products. Car companies were quick to realize and seize the advertising potential of sheet music. Many began to give out sheet music to the public, hoping to bring in potential customers (although those who already owned a particular make of car celebrated in song may also have been interested). A song proclaiming the virtues of a product might have been practised and played multiple times in people's homes, perhaps even hundreds of thousands of times over across the country if the tune were memorable or popular enough. Of course, the composer of the song also enjoyed spin-off benefits of this success, although it is hard to gauge the overall commercial influence of such practices, be it their influence on car sales or on the careers and incomes of sheet music composers.[1]

The commercial associations between the music and auto industries began as early as 1899, with the publication of L. Marda's heavily syncopated "The Studebaker Grand March." Aside from the lyrical promotion of the product in the song, the artwork that frequently appeared on the sheet music covers was a prime means of bringing advertising messages into the potential consumer's home. The front cover of "The Studebaker Grand March," for example, celebrated 50 years of the Studebaker Bros. Manufacturing Company, with artwork depicting its factory as it originally looked in 1849 and again in 1899. The back cover extolled the capacity of the factory, proclaiming it the "Largest in the World, covering 98 acres," with "Vehicles of Every Description" and an "Annual capacity [of] 75,000 Vehicles." While the melody and lyrics of advertising sheet music songs provided a sonic and aural testimony to the quality and features of the car, the imagery, as manifest in the "Studebaker March" and actual representations of Henry Ford (as discussed below), offered a less ephemeral reminder of the manufacturer.


The
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GRAND MARCH
THE FIRST STUDEBAKER SHOP 1852
THE ORIGINAL STUDEBAKER HOME GETTYSBURGH, PA.
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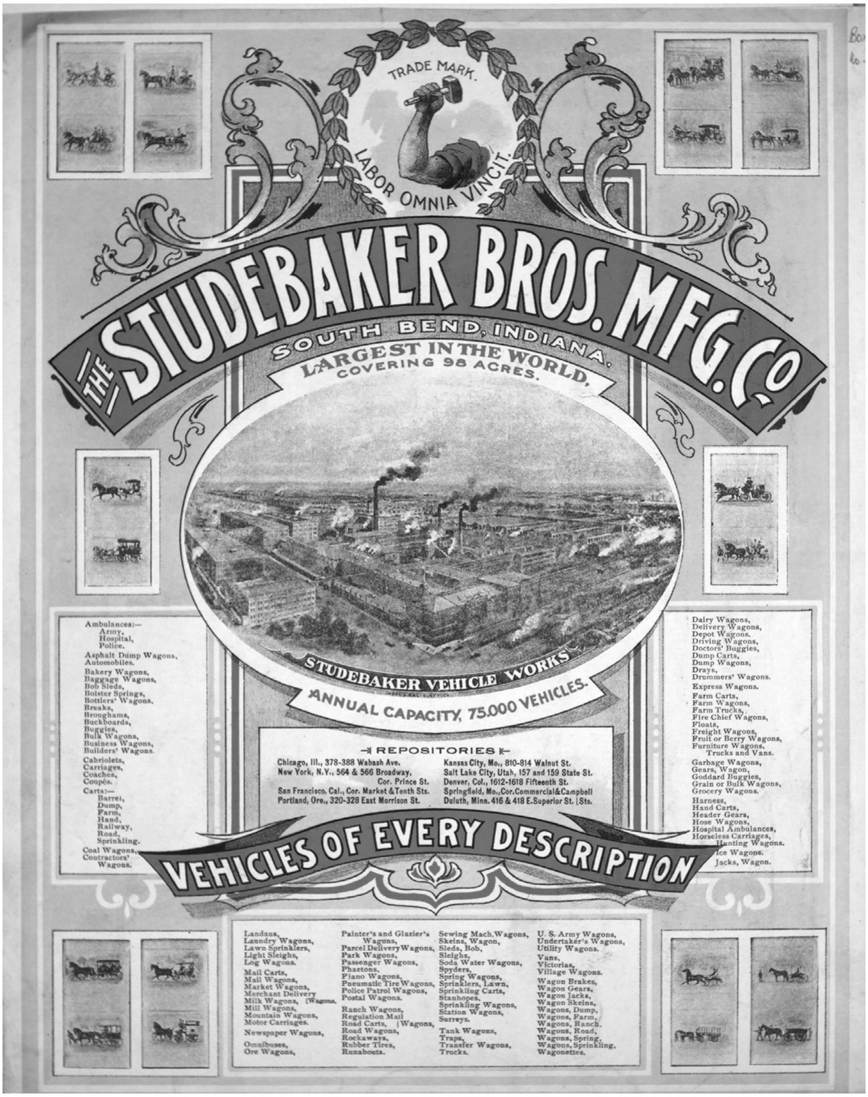
·Price 50 Cents·
·Published·By·
THE JOHN CHURCH COMPANY,
CINCINNATI, NEW YORK, CHICAGO.
EXCLUSIVELY FOR THE STUDEBAKER BROS. MFG. CO., SOUTH BEND, INDIANA.

Figure 1.1 Front Cover of L. Marda, "The Studebaker Grand March" (1899). Image Supplied by Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University



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LABOR OMNIA VINCIT.

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Bolster Springs,
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Breaks,
Broughams,
Buckboards,
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Coaches,
Coupés.
Carts:—
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Dump,
Farm,
Hand,
Railway,
Road,
Sprinkling.
Coal Wagons,
Contractors'
Wagons.

Dairy Wagons,
Delivery Wagons,
Depot Wagons.
Driving Wagons,
Doctors' Buggies,
Dump Carts,
Dump Wagons,
Drays,
Drummers' Wagons.
Express Wagons.
Farm Carts,
Farm Wagons,
Farm Trucks,
Fire Chief Wagons,
Floats,
Freight Wagons,
Fruit or Berry Wagons,
Furniture Wagons,
Trucks and Vans.
Garbage Wagons,
Gears, Wagon,
Goddard Buggies,
Grain or Bulk Wagons,
Grocery Wagons.
Harness,
Hand Carts,
Header Gears,
Hose Wagons,
Hospital Ambulances,
Horseless Carriages,
Hunting Wagons.
Ice Wagons.
Jacks, Wagon.

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San Francisco, Cal., Cor. Market & Tenth Sts.
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Kansas City, Mo., 810-814 Walnut St.
Salt Lake City, Utah, 157 and 159 State St.
Denver, Col., 1612-1618 Fifteenth St.
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Mail Wagons,
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Mill Wagons,
Mountain Wagons,
Motor Carriages.
Newspaper Wagons,
Omnibuses,
Ore Wagons,

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Wagons,
Parcel Delivery Wagons,
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Piano Wagons,
Pneumatic Tire Wagons,
Police Patrol Wagons,
Postal Wagons.
Ranch Wagons,
Regulation Mail
Road Carts, [Wagons,
Road Wagons,
Rockaways,
Rubber Tires,
Runabouts.

Sewing Mach. Wagons,
Skeins, Wagon,
Sleds, Bob,
Sleighs,
Soda Water Wagons,
Spyders,
Spring Wagons,
Sprinklers, Lawn,
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Wagon Jacks,
Wagon Skeins,
Wagons, Dump,
Wagons, Farm,
Wagons, Ranch,
Wagons, Road,
Wagons, Spring,
Wagons, Sprinkling,
Wagonettes.

Figure 1.2 Back Cover of L. Marda, "The Studebaker Grand March" (1899). Image supplied by Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music, Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University

C. R. Foster and Byron Gay's "The Little Ford Rambled Right Along" (1914) exemplifies the type of advertisement that a car song could provide. The song is a comedic ode to the reliability of a Ford Model T (depicted on the cover of the sheet music) and testifies to the amount of driving abuse it could withstand yet still "ramble along":