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World music at the World Service, 1942-2008: Public diplomacy, cosmopolitanism, contradiction', *Media, Culture and Society*, 32/4, pp. 547-564 (2010)

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A station 'ident' used on BBC World Service English language broadcasts during 2007 encapsulates some of the contradictory tendencies at work in that station's music programming, and which we want to explore in this article. First there are four bars of an orchestral rendition of 'Lilliburlero', a traditional Irish air originally transcribed by the English composer Henry Purcell in 1689. Since its adoption by BBC external services during World War Two this tune has come to signify a kind of jaunty Britishness, a plucky little England, which is nevertheless at the centre of the world. Supplementing 'Lilliburlero's' appeal to the nation are the Greenwich time signal pips, which follow. These also have a venerable, mid-twentieth ring to them. And then, representing something quite other, comes the contemporary cosmopolitan voice of a male announcer. 'You're with the BBC': husky, low register; probably a Londoner, but also with the vestiges of a Caribbean accent that signifies blackness, and more generally the world beyond this imagined Britain.

The BBC World Service was born as the Empire Service in 1932 with the aim of knitting together dispersed British subjects in colonies and imperial dominions across the world through radio broadcasting. Specifically, the broadcasts were seen as a way of bringing together settlers, soldiers and colonial administrators in a common culture of 'home'. Lip service was paid to addressing 'the natives' as Gerard Mansell suggests (1982: 35). But there was no question of reflecting this in programme content by incorporating indigenous voices, music or culture into the schedule.

Now, seventy five years later World Service radio, on the face of it at least, could hardly be more different. It seems to have become a medium of cosmopolitan exchange, which brings together people and cultures from around the world. This is certainly how the BBC sees it. As the World Service Annual Review for 2007/8 (BBC 2008) proposes, the aims of the service are:

To connect and engage audiences by facilitating an informed and intelligent dialogue - a global conversation - which transcends international borders and cultural divides, and to give audiences opportunities to create, publish and share their own views and stories.

To enable people, by so doing, to make sense of their increasingly complex world and, thus empowered, lead more fulfilling lives.

So, we have an ostensible transformation, from providing cultural sustenance for the colonialists, to enabling cosmopolitan dialogue and exchange across the planet. Indeed it seems that the World Service is now proposing that it can promote universal well-being by publishing the 'views and stories' of global citizens. These are certainly large claims.

Taking our bearings from the historical shift which is suggested here, we want in this paper to do three things. First, we will explore the specifics of changing regimes in music programming on BBC external services by examining three key periods: World War Two, the 1980s to early 90s, and the contemporary moment. Second, we will examine, through these moments, how music can serve as a means of international political persuasion – or what is now politely called 'public diplomacy'. Third, we will draw on this schematic history of music programming at the World Service in order to reflect on the nature and limits of cosmopolitanism, a much used, and arguably, abused theoretical term in the present conjuncture.

In what follows we take music to be centrally implicated in the making of a 'projected world' by the BBC's external services, a projection that offers listeners something between a coherent view and a compelling ethos concerning the global order in whatever period we examine. The paper is very much concerned with the way music is made to 'speak' about the world then. In terms of sources and methods we draw on published schedules to assess the character of music programming. We also undertake discourse analysis of articles in the BBC's weekly external services magazine London Calling and its successors, as well as the programmes themselves in the contemporary period (there are few extant recordings of historic World Service broadcasts). For some years, especially the pivotal moment of the early 80s, we measure the representation of different genres within the schedules. Finally, for our

most recent period we have interviewed people involved in World Service programme making or marketing.

A caveat: it is worth noting that we deal only with the English language services, not the radio broadcasts in what are now thirty three other languages. Nor are we considering the new (2008-9) tri-media Arabic and Persian services. Quite simply, when taken as a whole the sprawling, polyglot nature of the BBC's grant funded international broadcasting makes it a large research topic, one to which we can only hope to make a small contribution in this piece of workⁱ.

Pragmatic cosmopolitanism: trying to reach the planet in World War Two

By the end of 1941 the BBC had finally been integrated into the war effort, though it still maintained a considerable degree of independence from government (Briggs 1985: 175 – 210). Its external services now mushroomed with European language broadcasts to the occupied countries and the two nations of the Axis being the main priority. At the same time broadcasts to the Empire took on a new importance. The need was to reach out to the dispersed peoples of the dominions and colonies across the world to gain support for the Allied cause; in other words indigenous audiences beyond the colonial elite were now being addressed too (Mansell 1982: 64-94).

Music programming reflects this in some interesting ways. Take the February 1943 schedule of the North American Service. Aimed at Canada, the USA and Anglophone Caribbean, what strikes one at first sight is the amount of what might be described as British national or imperial music, for instance, 'Britain Sings', a programme of songs by the Edwardian composer, Sir Hubert Parry; Handel's 'Water Music', and a comic opera called 'Merrie England'ⁱⁱ. There are sequences of plain 'Music' too, by which is meant European art, or 'classical' music - an ethnocentric and elitist use of the term music, which of course still persists in some quarters today.

Yet at the same time there are significant counter-tendencies. To begin, we can note a concern with disseminating classical music to the masses, specifically the workers and armed forcesⁱⁱⁱ. Certainly, the principle that the BBC should spread the best in music to all had been a tenet of public service ideology in the pre-War

Reithian regime (see Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 214-223). But now in wartime it becomes a major policy objective (Briggs 1970: 111-112). Altogether, there are four articles from London Calling in 1943/4 with this theme. One example, a page and half feature from July 1943, is entitled 'Roused to almost Unnerving Excitement'. Here, 'C. B. Rees gives his impressions of a remarkable series of concerts given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra to war-workers and men and women of the armed forces' (Rees 1943: 5). Much is made of the enthusiasm of the audiences, but also the discriminating nature of reception. Amongst several vox pops this one stands out:

Into the conductor's room at the Garrison Theatre came a dark-skinned soldier. He wanted the conductor's autograph, but he wanted, more than that, to say: 'I cannot tell you the pleasure I have had today. I come from Jamaica. I now get less opportunity than I should like either to listen to or to make music – yes, I used to make music at home. But it has been a privilege today, that music and that playing. Thank you sir, thank you very much' (Rees 1943: 5).

What is interesting, then, is the framing of the BBC's classical music broadcasting not only in terms of class, but also of race and coloniality. This is surely an indication of an attempt, clumsy and patronising but nevertheless a significant attempt, to broaden the public service broadcasting agenda of 'informing, educating and entertaining' to include the previously excluded category of the subaltern peoples of the empire and beyond.

This new, more cosmopolitan conception of classical music extends not merely to audiences but composers too. A page and a half feature from London Calling late in 1943 is about the music of the Mexican composer Carlos Chávez. Several of his works had been performed on the Home Service and the Latin American Service in 1943/43, including a European premier of his Piano Concerto. Rodney Gallop, writer of the article, stresses the indigenous Indian character of the music. There are photographs of indigenous musicians playing too, and even a brief discussion of what we would now call the musical hybridity at stake in Mexican music – 'the Indian influence ... is above all rhythmic, while the European ... is melodic'. Gallop goes further, pointing out that the European tradition derives predominantly from the music of the courts. It was therefore mainly Italian in origin - Italian culture being universally approved by the ruling class of Europe in the early modern period, and no less so than among the Spanish colonialists (1943: 5). Gallop himself is an interesting character: a folklorist, during the mid-30s he had written a series of articles in The

Gramophone magazine on indigenous music record releases from around the world (Vernon 1993).

Gallop's feature in London Calling and the broadcasts of concerts consisting of work by Chávez still represented a variation on the theme of European art music. But there was also by the middle of the War much more broadcasting of popular styles of various kinds. This too was now given a cosmopolitan, outward inflection. For example, a feature programme, 'Calling the West Indies', was launched in 1943 partly so that West Indian members of the Services could stay in touch with people at home (see Newton 2008). It had been proposed by the Jamaican journalist and poet Una Marson. Marson was a poet, intellectual and activist who had been secretary to the League of Coloured Peoples, the first Black-led political organisation in Britain (Jarrett-Macauley 1998). In one of the first broadcasts in February 1943, Marson hosted a show devoted to music from 'a West Indian Sextet, led by York de Souza' ('North American Service', 1943: 19). De Souza was himself a Jamaican jazz pianist who had come over to Britain in the mid-thirties to join the thriving West Indian music scene in London. These musicians worked in a number of combinations, the most successful of which was the large swing band led by a Guyanese, Ken 'Snakehips' Johnson^{iv}.

As well as West Indian swing the BBC also showed an interest in Indian music during the war. In late 1943 there was a music series on the Eastern Service designed specifically for Indian listeners. One weekly programme, 'The Sa Re Ga of Western Music' introduced by Z. A. Bhokari (the Head of the Eastern Service), was intended as a basic primer in Western music for listeners brought up in the Indian vernacular or classical traditions. This itself shows a certain kind of ethnomusicological reflexivity that was quite novel in 1943. There was also a series presented by Princess Indira of Kapurthala entitled 'Music of the East and West' and 'designed to show the factors common to Asiatic and Western music' (C. Lawson Reese 1943: 7). A schedule for 1944 shows a further programme where Western musicians explain their reactions to listening to Indian music, and these responses are then discussed by Bhokari.

An article by Clifford Lawson-Reece which introduced the series reveals a powerfully cosmopolitan instinct at work. As he puts it,

The BBC's aim in these programmes is not to build walls but to break down the barriers between the music of the East and the West.

This cannot be a one-way process: in the London studios, not only Indian musicians, but Arabs, Chinese, Malays and people from every part of the Eastern world are working side by side with Europeans and every problem in the presentation of Western music brings into prominence some special aspect of Eastern music.

Each learns from the others: the rigid mould of national musical characteristics begins to dissolve, and reveals the true stuff of music, which all can comprehend and enjoy.

One day, perhaps, there will grow out of this a world-system of music, apt for the international media of the film, the radio and television; a common heritage and inspiration for music-lovers of every race and every continent (1943: 7).

Now to re-emphasise, we have picked these examples of cosmopolitan discourse and music programming from a range which is still predominantly Anglo- and Euro-centric in character. Nevertheless, the glimpses of outwardness we see in the ultra-European BBC services in 1943/4 are immensely significant. They show how in wartime it was possible to make giant cultural strides, even in this heart of Empire, towards open-ness to the music of others beyond the West.

Why, did these shifts occur though? We know that the Ministry of Information worked very closely with the BBC on home broadcasting as well as European and forces programming (Curran and Seaton 1997: 141-7). And we can infer that in the context of total war, programming policy for the rest of the world was harnessed in a similar way for the pragmatic ends of winning over potentially hostile populations.

That would certainly help to explain the special focus on the West Indies and India. In the case of the first, there had been major anti-colonial unrest in 1938. In Jamaica a two-month general strike in Kingston and rioting in the plantations posed a serious threat to British rule. Out of this labour rebellion had then emerged a new trade union movement and a mass political organisation, the People's National Party (Post 1978). A high-ranking commission under Lord Moyne was appointed to report on the troubles, and Una Marson had worked in it. In this context the focus on the

West Indies by the BBC during the War can be seen as a response to the perceived vulnerability of colonial control in this region. The paradox of course is that Marson was herself an anti-colonial activist (Jarrett-Macauley 1998).

Similarly, in the case of India the anti-colonial struggle was well advanced. In 1942 an Indian National Army had been raised to fight alongside the Japanese against the British, and there was a good deal of anxiety about the effects this force might have in promoting opposition to British rule within India and the Far East. In particular, there were fears about the emergence of a pan-oriental bloc across the region, fears reinforced by the decision of the Indian National Congress not to support the war effort (Cohen 1997: 2, Battacharya 2000). In this context, and given the pro-imperial views of Z. A. Bhokari, it is difficult to see how the 'East-West' music series could have been conceived without a hegemonic goal. In other words, the urgent need to promote imperial unity and the war effort seems to have generated a powerful cosmopolitan discourse in which musics of the world were presented together in co-fraternal opposition to the regional and the particular.

Music programming during the Second World War in the English language external broadcasts thus represents a reversal of the situation which had prevailed under the Empire Service. Nevertheless, the promise during wartime that the BBC could reach out to non-British audiences – using music from around the world – remained just that, a promise. For the next thirty five years music programming returned to a strongly ethno-centric and national agenda^v. Classical music was the main category with British composers featured prominently. There was also 'light' music from the BBC's orchestras – and all this through the most bitter period of anti-colonial struggle. The inference to draw here is that the postcolonial die had now been cast and, without any realistic hope of winning over formerly subject populations, the BBC was reverting to its earlier exclusive address to the expatriate British. Certainly, the musical diet offered by the World Service remained remarkably uniform and conservative right up to the late 1960s when a limited amount of Anglo-American pop started to creep into the schedules. In fact it was not until the late 1980s that music from around the world finally became a staple of broadcasting.

A world full of music: the new paradigm in the 1980s and 90s

For the year 1980 we still have very much a traditional, Anglo-centric musical regime on the English language programme. Thirty out of seventy two music broadcasts during the year were classical. Much of the rest consisted of contemporary British pop presented by BBC Radio One disc jockeys. There was also older dance band music, a folk music series (entitled 'These Musical Islands'), and some jazz. The major new programmes that year were in rock: 'Rock Salad' with a heavy metal focus and introduced by Tommy Vance; also 'Singer Songwriter' with Andy Peebles. John Peel had a half hour show too, and Richard Skinner presented 'Rock Profiles'.

As for folk, the extraordinary thing about the short series from 1980, 'Folk Music of the World' is that in *London Calling* it is framed entirely in terms of the classical, European tradition. In an article published to launch the programmes we are told that folk music's 'frontiers have greatly expanded since the pioneering days of Vaughan Williams and Bartok' ('Music' 1980: 7). In other words it is assumed that global folk music is simply a source for, or object to be mediated by, western art music (for the long history of such appropriation see Taylor 2007).

Then, by way of contrast, in 1981 a show called 'Rhythm 'n' Roots' makes an appearance. Presented by the Guyanese born musician Eddy Grant it has a completely new agenda. Grant was an important figure in British popular music. Having led the multi-racial pop group the Equals in the 1960s, he was in the process of launching a solo career in 1981. Describing the new programme in *London Calling* Grant writes,

I love the worldwide appeal of radio. If I play contemporary music from many different cultures to a wider audience, I can show the world that music from the 'not-so-rich South' as well as the rich North can be truly international. Black music is not music played just by black people, nor is it even the music of a developing world. It has a soul to it that an ever-increasing number of people of all colours and creeds can relate to ('Music' 1982: 11).

If this sounds relatively unexceptional now, in the context of the World Service in the early 80s it was truly radical. Here is Grant saying that music from the very cultures, which the World Service was notionally aimed at, should be represented in its broadcasts. More, he is saying something to the effect that Black music encapsulates global cosmopolitan values. This is a groundbreaking claim, which in important ways anticipates the 'World Music' discourse to come at the end of the decade.

After two series in 1981/2 Grant and his show were dropped. Nevertheless, it seems the mould had been broken and apart from Grant's 'Rhythm 'n' Roots' the 1982 schedule included 'Fiesta' which offered Latin American music, both traditional and new recordings from around the continent. There was also 'Joy Around the World', presented by Joy Hyman, which included guests from different countries who were invited to describe their national customs, celebrations, festivals and accompanying music. Over the course of the next six years music from beyond the European classical or Anglo-American pop and rock repertoires slowly and intermittently increased in volume. The turning point came in 1988 with the launch of 'Andy Kershaw's World of Music', and Ian Anderson's 'Folk in Britain'. Despite its title the latter immediately took a global definition of 'folk'. Also during 1988 a series was made called 'Music of the Royal Courts', which included music from Africa, and South and East Asia as well as Europe. What is interesting about this series is that in terms of cultural value it granted parity to all the musical styles discussed and played. At last, then, the gateway to musics from the periphery of the world system was starting to open decisively.

Indeed, by the early 90s we find ethnomusicologists and specialist journalists like Lucy Duran and Jan Fairley are being given programmes on particular regions of the world. In 1991 there was a series about Indian music, and African and Arabic presenters from World Service regional departments hosted a couple of programmes on the music of their regions. In 1992 live broadcasts were being made from the WOMAD festival of world music and in 1993, now with a weekly half hour show (long by World Service standards) the name of Ian Anderson's show was changed to 'Folk Routes' – emphasising the global compass of the programme. What prompted these changes?

After the War, BBC external services were supported by a government Grant-in-Aid. Effectively, this arm of the BBC continued to be seen as an instrument for the promotion of the interests of the British state around the world and would be funded as such through a direct grant rather than the license fee which sustained domestic services. Still, it was by no means a medium of straightforward propaganda on the model of, say, Voice of America which was sponsored by the US State Department.

Rather, the external services shared the BBC's domestic ethos of independence and commitment (at least notionally) to objective reporting. During the Suez crisis of 1956, for instance, Anthony Eden's Tory administration clashed with the BBC over the latter's refusal to take the government line – particularly in its overseas broadcasting. Significantly, and despite this disagreement, a new institutional arrangement at the end of the decade reinforced editorial independence from government (Mansell 1982: 227-240). For what successive administrations were effectively buying into with BBC external broadcasting was not so much propaganda, but rather an 'aura of objectivity' (Baumann and Gillespie 2007: 3) which, it was hoped, might be projected on to the figure of Britannia herself.

By the mid-1980s, however, the World Service was encountering a fast changing global scene, the collapse of actually existing socialism in the Soviet Union, and then the end of the Soviet bloc and the Cold War itself. This coincided with organisational change, notably the arrival of a new, reforming director of the Service, John Tusa, in 1986. Tusa quickly ushered in a liberal cultural regime, one in which music – popular and vernacular as much as classical – played a key part (on Tusa's attitude to music see for example Tusa 1990: 45-6). As far as music was concerned something else was at stake too, namely 'supply side push' in the form of the spectacular rise of a new genre called World Music.

On June 29 1987 a group of independent record company entrepreneurs and journalists met at a North London pub called the 'Empress of Russia' to agree on a coherent strategy for 'selling our kind of material', in other words traditional but also pop-hybrid forms of music from around the world (see Frith 2000). The key decision at this meeting was to adopt the name 'World Music' for this repertoire. The minute, which records the decision is worth quoting in full.

[W]e should create a generic name under which our type of catalogue could be labelled in order to focus attention on what we do. We discussed various names for our type of music(s) and on a show of hands 'World Music' was agreed as the 'banner' under which we would work. Other suggestions were 'World Beat', 'Hot...', 'Tropical...' and various others. It was suggested that all of the labels present would use 'World Music' on their record sleeves (to give a clear indication of the 'File Under...' destination) and also on all publicity material etc. There followed a discussion on whether or not 'World Music'

should be presented as a designed logo or simply as a specific type face. Discussion followed as to the extent to which this might engender exclusivity of elitism, thereby begging the question of how any other label/organisation may be able to join the club. The discussion centred around the possible conflict between the short term commercial aim of promoting 'World Music' (sponsored, promoted, and paid for by us), and the longer term aim of establishing 'World Music' as the generic term for this kind of music as with Reggae/Soul/Disco etc. (non-exclusive and open to all) ('Minutes of meeting' 1987).

What the 'Empress of Russia' meeting did, then, was to consecrate 'World Music' as the official title of an emergent genre of music in Britain. No doubt, as the minute suggests, there was genuine public-mindedness here – acknowledgement of the dangers of exclusivity and the tension between public and private ways of developing the new concept. Nonetheless, it is very much a commercial initiative that we encounter here; a joint marketing operation led by record companies. In the course of two subsequent meetings, plans were laid for a World Music sales chart, a compilation tape to be circulated with the New Musical Express, a special deal with a distributor to boost access to the retail market, and a joint marketing plan. This, then, was a concerted attempt to launch a new brand, which was at one and the same time a form of advocacy on the part of thirty something, middle class enthusiasts who saw real aesthetic and political value in their project. Crucially, for the present account, the BBC (on Radio 1 and Radio 3 as well as the World Service) was very quick off the mark in adopting the genre. And in part at least this was because, as we have just seen, progenitors of world music were either already working for the BBC or quickly able to enter it – Ian Anderson, Andy Kershaw, Lucy Duran and, before long, Charlie Gillett.

Yet it would be wrong to attribute the new more cosmopolitan approach in music programming simply to these people and their project. Thembi Mutch was a young freelance journalist for the BBC World Service between 1990 and 1994, making arts and music features with a special focus on Africa (Mutch 2008). Brought up in London in a family with roots in Africa, India and Britain, as a child she listened to South African township jive and to highlife music from Ghana. As a result she had little conception of 'World Music'. Rather the work she did on music and culture was an extension of her own interests and political concerns. This was enabled by a certain openness in Bush House, the London headquarters for BBC external broadcasting.

The absence of a concerted programming policy could, however, also lead to restrictions. For example, Mutch encountered pressure from a particular department head to focus on British independent rock rather than the African music that she wanted to present. Nevertheless she sums up the early 1990s at Bush House like this: ‘there wasn’t joined up thinking at World Service ... it was rather wonderful’. And she attributes this in part at least to the influence of John Tusa and the values he brought with him: ‘Gravitas, thoughtfulness ... the stand for a critical, intellectual pursuit [of broadcasting]’.

It seems, then, that the explanation for the arrival of ‘World Music’ at the World Service lies in the conjunction of a number of causes. The collapse of the Soviet Union put the Service in a new, more open position as far as its role in public diplomacy on behalf of the British state was concerned. At the same time a new Director was in place, someone with a strong interest in culture, a broadcasting background at the BBC and, along with this, a belief in public service values and a cosmopolitan world view. These factors enabled a new cohort of presenters and journalists to enter the frame, including members of the group associated with the construction of world music as genre and brand.

Music and the World Service today: unpicking the contradictions

If we move on to the contemporary moment (2007-8) what is striking is that the shifts we start to see in the late 80s/early 90s have been consolidated. Popular music from around the world now actually predominates in music programming.

In 2008 there are only four dedicated music programmes on the World Service. A magazine programme focusing on music from the British charts, Top of the Pops consists of artist interviews, and some discussion and airplay of the top five singles. Along with the classical programme Music Performance this is the most traditional item in current music output – built around British taste and using the tried and tested chart format. Music Performance itself is the only remaining classical music programme. During the Proms (the annual British music festival), it broadcasts from the Albert Hall in a tradition which goes back to before World War Two. However it

is the other two regular music programmes that are more significant for the present argument.

Presented by Mark Coles The Beat is a half hour show devoted to global popular music and industry. It has features on the music scene anywhere from New York to Mumbai. In week beginning August 27, 2007, for instance, there was a story about a new compilation album of Ethiopian music from the 1960s and 70s, the artists involved and the French producer who put it together. And a feature on ‘Last FM’ explained how this website profiles one’s musical taste and then enables sharing of that profile with others on the web across the world. There was also a discussion, including interviews, with Jamaican producers, about how dubplates (customised re-recordings of reggae tunes) are now being made to order in Jamaica, via the web, for a renascent European reggae scene. The other regular music programme of interest for the present argument is ‘Charlie Gillett’s World of Music’ – the current version of the show launched by Andy Kershaw in 1988. It is a recorded music show, but it depends very much on Gillett’s dry enthusiasm and commentary about the music he plays. Gillett is a hugely significant figure: a founder of the British world music scene, but also the one of the first historians of rock and soul music.

These are the dedicated music programmes, but there are frequent music features in the general arts programmes too. In the week beginning August 27 2007, ‘Close Up’ was a documentary on the nucleos or music centres in Venezuela, which are revolutionising music education amongst the poor. It was presented by the Columbian musicologist and journalist, Juan Carlos Jaramillo. And the weekend arts programme ‘The Ticket’ had a feature on the Argentinean band, Tanghetto, which mixes tango and electronic beats.

Compare this situation to that in 1980, as we described it earlier. Things could hardly be more different: musical cosmopolitanism seems to have become institutionalised. Still, cosmopolitanism is a tricky term. While it has a range of meanings, it is also charged with a peculiar axiological intensity – more than ever before cosmopolitanism matters normatively in politics and academia. So far we have been using the word in a relatively neutral way to designate something like ‘openness

to peoples and cultures across the world'. But its huge salience in the present conjuncture means that we ought to critically examine it before going any further.

An article by Beck and Sznaider (2006) makes a useful reference point because it amounts to a call for the complete re-orientation of the social sciences towards cosmopolitanism. The authors start from the premise that today social practice transcends the nation state to such an extent that social science must be reconfigured accordingly. This means an end to 'methodological nationalism' (4 – 6), and in its place attention to an emerging reality; the 'cosmopolitanization' of the world. The authors acknowledge some unintended, negative consequences here: 'The choice to become or remain an "alien" or a "non-national" is not as a general rule a voluntary one but a response to acute need, political repression or a threat of starvation' (7 – 8). However they then change tack, and emphasise 'the centrality of emotional engagement and social integration' in cosmopolitanization (8). Indeed, this is the thrust of the article.

The problem here is that while Beck and Sznaider rightly bring the normative into play with the empirical, they do not properly address the complex and contradictory relationship between the two. It is hardly credible that bad cosmopolitanism can be redeemed simply by an appeal to a good form of the phenomenon. And the authors' further suggestion, that people will learn to be good cosmopolitans pragmatically in the face of common threats across the planet (12), seems unlikely too. For the critical issue is the contradictory nature of globalisation, and the way it exacerbates and re-articulates inequality across the world capitalist system (Harvey 2006). Any approach to the 'cosmopolitan condition' which fails to acknowledge the centrality of such inequality, and the power relations which give rise to it, will be misleading we would suggest.^{vi}

Indeed, the 'benign' symbolic cosmopolitanism emphasised by Beck and Sznaider may actually be implicated in relations of power and domination. As Peterson and Kern (1996) suggest, elite cultural consumption in the countries of advanced western capitalism has shifted since the 1980s from traditional high culture to an 'omnivorous' diet, where what counts is cosmopolitan breadth. As Peterson puts it in an update of this approach, '[o]mnivorous inclusion seems better adapted to an

increasingly global world culture managed by those who make their way, in part, by showing respect for the cultural expressions of others' (2005: 273).

Recent World Service documents suggest that it is indeed an elite, managerial class, which the BBC is now addressing – whether that be postcolonial anglophones, expatriate British, or the rapidly expanding middle class of developing countries. For instance, a PowerPoint presentation for World Service marketing from 1999 asks, 'Who are the cosmopolitans?' and comes up with following answer: 'Highly educated decision makers and opinion formers requiring access to reliable, accurate and relevant information about global affairs'. In a case study of Northern India the presentation shows that among such cosmopolitans the largest lifestyle segment (26%) consists of 'World Gourmets' (BBC World Service 1999).

Graham Mytton (2008), former Head of Marketing at the World Service, confirms that between 1992 and 1995 there was indeed a shift away from traditional BBC audience research towards proactive marketing, an approach, which involved targeting particular groups. 'It was part of a change in thinking right across the BBC' Mytton says.^{vii} The new agenda was shaped by asking, 'what kind of audiences are we likely to get?' For the World Service the answer lay in four categories: 'cosmopolitans, aspirational, information poor, expatriates'. The cosmopolitans, as Mytton puts it, 'were not unimportant politically'. On the heels of this shift to new marketing categories came the design of new survey questionnaires which enabled the categorisation of respondents. Success could now be measured in terms of how far particular target groups were being reached (Mytton 2008).

To what extent can we make links between the new approach to marketing, and the enthronement of world music as the dominant genre of music in English language broadcasts? We have found no documentary evidence of a direct connection *from* marketing *to* musical content. But then this is hardly likely in an institution where traditional BBC values of editorial independence are upheld so strongly. We can, however, raise a strong inference here. It is this: in the context of the turn to targeted marketing and the 'cosmopolitans', world music provided the perfect sound track. If the genre obtained a foothold in the World Service during the late 1980s and early

1990s for contingent reasons, then in the 2000s world music has become the dominant form because it fits the new cosmopolitan agenda of the BBC World Service so well.

In fact such a development is hardly surprising given recent developments in the practice of international relations. As Jan Melissen (2005) points out there has been ‘a gradual convergence between public diplomacy and cultural relations’ since the end of the Cold War and especially since the attack on the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001. Increasingly, ‘diplomacy takes place in an international environment that can no longer be described as exclusively state-centric, and diplomats have a stake in different forms of transnational relations In order to safeguard their interests in a globalized world, countries need “permanent friends” in other nations’ (Melissen 2005: 26). We would suggest that the ‘cosmopolitans’ and ‘World Gourmets’ of the BBC World Service represent the very image of such permanent friends, and that world music hymns these friends in the most appropriate way.

All this is to suggest that the role of the World Service as a mediator of musical difference and global sounding board may not be not quite as exemplary as the BBC suggests in its own publicity (e.g. BBC 2008). The problem is not only one of unacknowledged or unconscious instrumentalism at the editorial level. It also has to do with the structure of world music as a genre. Marked by an ensemble of spatial, class and race asymmetries, it was constituted, and persists, as a repertoire produced in (semi-) peripheral regions of the world and among diasporic populations in the core, which is then packaged and sold to a middle class niche market – originally located in the West, but now extending to other regions too. The key question raised by this is how far anything like a dialogue can be conducted between these two constituencies, divided by class and a regime of global inequality (Stokes 2004: 62).

We want to finish this section with an illustration of this distinction and the sort of contradictions that can follow from it. Charlie Gillett has a comprehensive website, that includes an email forum in which he is a diligent respondent. Here is an exchange between Charlie and Daniel Soon from Kuala Lumpur in May 2004:

Posted: Fri Aug 17, 2007 10:02 am Post subject: Can you play the Bee Gees
email from Daniel Soon, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Dear Charlie,
May I request for a song?
Please play Imagine by Bee Gees and dedicate to my friends and World
service presenters.
Thanks, great day and week ahead!!!

Daniel Soon

email from CG

Are you kidding Daniel, I never played a Bee Gees song in my life
My show is a chance to play music that rarely gets played anywhere else and
rarely in English
I did play a Malaysian song a few months ago!

Charlie

second email from Daniel Soon

OK Charlie Bee Gees just doesn't sound good to you this time...
Can you play a weird song by Chinese, I am Chinese

Daniel Soon

second email from CG

Now you're talking as they say in America

Charlie

('BBC World Service – World of Music Forum' 2007)

The extract above surely captures some of the complex power relations involved in broadcasting 'World Music' to world listeners. In the exchange, Gillett finds himself in the position of providing a lesson in the regulation of genres to a listener who, in requesting the Bee Gees, has failed to understand the nature of World Music. Then in a second mail it becomes clear that Daniel actually understands the rules only too well. If he wants to get a response he's going to have to ask for a 'weird song by Chinese'. Charlie in his final mail recognises the absurdity being played out here. He ironically invokes a phrase from the vernacular of the global hegemon – 'now you're

talking' – to re-establish his authority as metropolitan disseminator of musical cosmopolitanism.

Conclusions

We should be in a position to offer a few conclusions now. Most importantly, and with the forgoing history in mind, we can try and make sense of the relationship between growing cosmopolitanism in music policy at BBC World Service and its British foreign policy agenda.

To begin with, what looks at first sight like the straightforward chronicle of a shift from strong Anglo-centrism and the values of Empire to heterogeneity and cosmopolitanism is actually rather less clear cut. Significantly, the BBC external services showed a degree of open-ness to non-European music early on, and the strong pragmatism of wartime broadcasting policy emphasised this. Nevertheless, for most of the long Cold War years music policy returned to a profoundly conservative ethnocentrism. This then changed quite rapidly in the 1980s and early 1990s with the accession of World Music to the schedules, a trend which has become dominant in the 2000s.

Broadly, we need to see these changes in the context of the emergence of 'public diplomacy' (Melissen 2005) as a key element in British foreign relations. So, on the one hand, the fact that the World Service and its predecessors are funded by government – these days the Foreign and Commonwealth Office – seems to have had no direct impact on music programming, or indeed on editorial content more generally (for the case of the Cold War see Webb 2008). On the other hand, the general cultural policy of the World Service has continued to be informed by a kind of pragmatism, an attempt to respond to the question – what does it take to win over those audiences around the world that are strategically significant for the British state? From this perspective the short-lived quasi-cosmopolitanism of World War Two does not signify precocity so much as the parallels which exist between that global conflict and the current 'War Against Terror'. In both cases, the need has been to reach across the world to significant others, specifically managerial and ruling elites. But whereas in the early 1940s there existed no cosmopolitan musical language

(one had to be created from scratch), in the 2000s world music provides a convenient cultural package for these instrumental goals.

Does this imply bad faith on the part of the producers and presenters of world music at Bush House? By no means; for World Music – at the World Service as much as in other metropolitan contexts – also represents the yearning for a more genuine and mutual cosmopolitanism that is utopian and potentially emancipatory. Exponents of this form like Beck and Sznaider (2006) rightly emphasise the conviviality and solidarity that are at stake in it. If they fail to acknowledge loudly enough the accompanying contradictions it means that those of us who do acknowledge them will just have to speak more loudly ourselves.

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Endnotes

ⁱ The present work contributes to a research project which investigates the World Service across a wide range of services and modalities. Tuning In: Diasporic Contact

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ⁱⁱ On the promotion of English music in the BBC and the blacklisting of Germanic repertoire see Mackay (2000).

ⁱⁱⁱ The BBC was not alone in these efforts. Classical music was also supported during the war by the Carnegie Trust, and the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts. The latter organized concerts (often in factory canteens), and helped to fund orchestras and music clubs across Britain (Fifield 2005: 242).

^{iv} Only two years earlier de Souza was injured when the Café de Paris in London was bombed. Tragically, Johnson died that night (Rye 1990: 57, Simon 2001).

^v The claim is based on examination of English service schedules for the period 1946-1979. We sampled schedules on a one-year-on, one-year-off basis.

^{vi} That is not to suggest there is no vernacular affirmation of cosmopolitanism— far from it. See, for example, Mica Nava's account of white working class women in London and their social and sexual relationships with black men; 'domestic cosmopolitanism' as she calls it (2006). Our point is simply that there is nothing inevitable about such processes. They arise and can be properly understood only in the context of the wider social struggle against domination.

^{vii} This, of course, is the period of 'Birtism', the regime of the Director General of the BBC, John Birt who introduced neo-liberal governance across the corporation.