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Wishin' and Hopin':

Femininity, Whiteness, and Voice in 1960s British pop

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in Musicology

by

Alexandra Marie Apolloni

2013

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Wishin' and Hopin':

Femininity, Whiteness, and Voice in 1960s British Pop

by

Alexandra Marie Apolloni

Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Tamara Levitz, Chair

This dissertation explores performances by British girl singers from the 1960s to the present. I argue that vocal performances by singers such as Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw, Dusty Springfield, Lulu, and Marianne Faithfull helped construct emerging models of white femininity in the 1960s that continue to resonate in pop vocal performances today. I show that, through vocal performance, these singers envoice liminal spaces at the boundaries of social categories such as race, gender, and class. My first two chapters explore aspirational performances of femininity by Shaw, Black, and Springfield, from 1963-1969. I show how Shaw and Black positioned themselves as *solo* singers, and argue that their vocal styles reflected an emerging liberal model of feminine independence that was at turns freeing and regressive. The following chapter argues that Springfield drew on collaborations with African-American women, such as Martha Reeves, to vocalize a different kind of feminine identity for herself, one grounded in a sense of alterity, and to create a space for racial justice

that was ultimately limited by structural inequalities. The second pair of chapters look back at the 1960s through contemporary performances. I consider the current work of Lulu and Faithfull as aging singers, and argue that they must contend not only with cultural memories of their 1960s girlhood, but also with discourses of decline, and with the physical impact of aging on the voice. I close with a chapter about Candie Payne, Duffy, and Shelby Lynne, contemporary singers whose nostalgic use of 1960s vocal techniques re-imagines mid-century ideals of femininity in the present. My analyses are rooted in feminist theories of intersectionality and performance, and methods from Voice Studies. I draw on a range of archival sources, including fashion and music magazines, newspapers, memoirs, and television footage.

The dissertation of Alexandra Marie Apolloni is approved.

Lucy Burns

Nina Eidsheim

Robert Fink

Mitchell Morris

Tamara Levitz, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

To girls who write and girls who sing;
to girls who read and girls who listen.

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“The Ballad of Lulu and Marianne: Youth and Voice in the 1960s.” Annual meeting of the International Association of Popular Music US Branch, Austin, TX, February 2013.

“Beat Girls and Dollybirds: Envoicing Swinging London.” Sounds of the City: Experience Music Project/International Association of Popular Music Joint Conference, New York University, New York, March 2012.

“I Can Never Go Home Anymore: Girlhood and nostalgia in the music of the Shangri-Las.” Feminist Theory and Music II, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, September 2011.

“Blues, Body, and Punk Politics: On Beth Ditto, Voice, and Abjection.” Feminist Theory and Music 10, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC, May 2009.

“In the Beginning, there was rhythm: Embodiment, divinity, and punk rock spirituality in the music of The Slits.” Thinking Gender, UCLA, February 2009.

Introduction:

“A voice that is clear, well-formed, and attractive”

In February, 1966, a young British woman returning home from the newsstand with her weekly copy of *Petticoat* found something extra tucked into her magazine: a special supplemental pull-out booklet compiled by *Petticoat*'s editors, titled “What Every Girl Should Know.” The booklet offered advice on being a young woman, circa 1966. It included pieces discussing how to do your hair for a first date, what to wear for a job interview, and how to deal with a breakup. Sandwiched among these articles was a curious piece titled “Voice Control,” in which the authors describe how particular spoken timbres and affectations correspond to ideal (or less than ideal) models of femininity. They write:

We'll take any amount of trouble to see we look right, but how many of us give a thought to how we sound? Yet it's a fact that a good voice can do more than make us sound like a different person. It can help us to be a different person. For instance. It could mean that we get a better job. That we get the interview instead of being told the job is filled, because our voice on the phone sounds like an adenoidal penguin—and who wants a receptionist like that?

...

We've agreed we don't want affected speech - either “posh” or stagey. We don't want falsetto trills, or phoney sexy murmurs. We don't want a different voice—what we do want is a better version of the one we have. A voice that is clear, well-formed and attractive. A controlled voice, in fact.¹

The authors' liberal use of “we” implies implies consensus; that their readers are united through aspiration to a common feminine ideal. The article goes on, offering tips for developing the perfect, well-formed, attractive, controlled voice:

1. “Voice Control,” *The Petticoat Guide: What Every Girl Should Know*, special insert, *Petticoat*, February 26, 1966, 9.

Let's start with the pitch of your voice. Is yours squeaky high or gravelly low, or all-in-the-middle monotonous? Really shrill? Then you'll never acquire a captivating murmur without harming your throat. Try to get it down just a little by making an AH sound. Go up and down the scale, seeing how low you can get without cracking or straining in anyway. See how high you can get without squeaking, if you're trying to raise a too-low voice. Again, no strain or effort please. When you get an Ah at a level that feels and sounds right, keep sliding up and down the scale in a relaxed, gliding voice.²

Voice, according to the editors at *Petticoat*, is just one more thing that, along with makeup, clothes, and hair, and through careful discipline, a girl could mobilize to make herself into a particular kind of young woman in 1960s Britain. This hypothetical woman was not too sexy, but rather, controlled and attractive. Her quest for an unaffected and unmarked voice suggests that she wanted to avoid any of the associations with class and region that particular accents and inflections might connote in Britain, and that achieving such a voice was her ticket to white-collar work and middle-class mobility. Given *Petticoat's* largely white readership and the paucity of women of color in its pages and on its editorial staff, it goes unsaid that this message about voice and femininity is specifically about what white femininity should sound like. The authors of "Voice Control" show that voices communicate particular identities and contend that changing a voice can change an identity and transform a girl into "a different person"; but they ultimately present a very narrow idea of who that "different person" should be.

While "Voice Control" is concerned with speech, girls' *singing* voices were also implicated in discourses of aspirational femininity; with *Petticoat* and similar girl-focused lifestyle magazines and newspapers, including *Boyfriend*, *Trend*, *Honey*, and *Fabulous*, treating girl singers as models of girlhood. There was Sandie Shaw, the artistic girl from the suburbs,

2. Ibid.

who performed barefoot and whose unaffected vocal style translated well to melancholic Bacharach ballads. Cilla Black was a brash Northerner who followed the Beatles to London, but never lost her Liverpudlian accent. Dusty Springfield and Lulu were of Irish and Scottish extraction, respectively, but their vocal styles spoke of a musical lineage originating in the rhythm and blues of Detroit and the American South. And while Marianne Faithfull's affiliation with the Rolling Stones would ultimately betray her, in the mid-1960s, she still enoiced a bohemian, artistic girlishness. While the femininity espoused in "Voice Control" is quite rigidly constructed, the vocal performances of these girl singers often enoiced ways of being a young woman that defied such easy categorization. In this dissertation, I explore the ways in which their vocal performances dwell in liminal spaces between girlhood and womanhood, between whiteness and blackness, between constraint and freedom.

My discussions of performances by British girl singers in the sixties and beyond are strongly informed by the growing body of humanistic and feminist scholarship on the voice. Scholars including Nina Eidsheim and Laurie Stras have demonstrated that listeners and performers map categories such as race, gender, and social class onto the sounds of voices through the use and perception of particular timbres, accents, inflections, and performance techniques. Stras' work on the 1930s vocal group the Boswell Sisters, and on questions of vocal damage and authenticity demonstrates that the conventions of particular musical genres compel singers to make certain vocal choices, and that those choices, in turn influence how audiences perceive singers' bodies.³ Meanwhile, in her work on the voice

3. Laurie Stras, "White Face, Black Voice: Race, Gender, and Region in the Music of the Boswell Sisters," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 1, no. 2 (2007): 207-255; and "The Organ of the Soul: Voice, Damage, and Affect," in *Sounding Off: Theorizing Disability in Music* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 173-184.

simulation software *Vocaloid*, Eidsheim argues that the way singers use their bodies to produce sound constitute a series of complex “inner choreographies” that ultimately produce timbre.⁴ Stras and Eidsheim show that vocal sounds are constructed both through cultural practice, and through singers' particular physicalities, and thus come to represent particular identities.

In this dissertation, I join Eidsheim, Stras, and others, in working towards an understanding of the gender as performance that accounts for voice. Suzanne Cusick, Judith Peraino, and Annette Schlichter have all critiqued the work of performance theorists such as Judith Butler for being inattentive to voice, resulting in notions about performativity that rely largely on visual representation and neglect the way vocal practices enact gender and sex on a deeply physical level. I thus take seriously Schlichter's assertion that scholars should not only *read* voices, but actually *listen* to them.⁵ Furthermore, taking a cue from black feminists such as Kimberle Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins, I contend that the sounds of voices can make audible the *intersections* between gender and other categories, such as race and class.⁶

4. Nina Eidsheim, “Synthesizing Race: Towards an Analysis of the Performativity of Vocal Timbre,” *Transcultural Music Review* 13 (2009), <<http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/trans13/arto6.htm>>.

5. Schlichter argues that Butler's analyses of speech reduce it to the visual: in her afterword to Shoshana Felman's *The Scandal of the Speaking*, for instance, Butler emphasizes the mouth, the body part that makes speech visible, rather than sound. “While insisting on the body as material, physical condition of speech,” Schlichter says, [Butler] does not listen properly but reads speech and body.” “Do Voices Matter? Vocality, Materiality, Gender Performativity,” *Body & Society* 17, no. 1 (2011): 42.

6. Crenshaw introduced the concept of intersectionality her now-classic 1991 article “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics and Violence Against Women of Color,” as a means of articulating how different social categories —race, gender, poverty, etc. —collide, resulting in systemic marginalization and violence towards black women in the United States. Intersectional scholarly practices, then, use analytical strategies that see oppressions as overlapping forces that work together to construct an individual's experience and identity. Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* (1991): 1241-1299. See also Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000).

In my discussions of televised and recorded performances by Shaw, Black, Springfield, and others, I listen to their vocal gestures from an intersectional perspective, to account for how they envoice femininities that are informed by social identities that overlap with gender. Because nearly all of the singers in this study are white, I am particularly interested in using this approach to listen critically to how they envoice intersections between whiteness and femininity at the historical moment in question.

In this project, I consider a wide range of primary sources, including newspapers, fashion and music magazines, and television. I draw on discussions of girl singers, in interviews, advertisements, and fan letters that appeared in music magazines, such as *Disc*, *Record Mirror*, and *New Musical Express*; and fashion and lifestyle magazines directed at teen girls, including *Petticoat*, *Boyfriend*, *Honey*, *Jackie*, and *Fabulous*, published between 1959 and 1970. The record critics who wrote for music publications, often evocatively described the voices of singers, and evaluated them in the context of popular music of the period. Teen fashion and lifestyle magazines, meanwhile, include discussions of performances, but also interviews with and features on girl singers that combine discussions of how they sounded with discussions of what they wore, where they shopped, what kinds of dieting and grooming regimes they ascribed to, and how they spent their free time. The writers in teen magazines, then, combined discussions of girls' musical performances with descriptions of the consumer practices that they engaged in as young women, holding up girl singers both as examples of musical skill and as models of femininity for other girls to emulate. I use this study of print media to inform readings of sound recordings and televised performances. I discuss performances on British and American television shows from the 1960s, including

Hullabaloo, *Shindig*, *Ready Steady Go!*, *The Sandie Shaw Supplement*, *Cilla at the Savoy*, and *Lulu's Back in Town*; as well as music videos, listening to singers voices and reflecting on how their physical self-presentation, and the visual iconography that frames them inflect their vocal performances.

I supplemented my study of popular periodicals by listening to interviews from the *Millennium Memory Bank*, an oral history collection compiled by the British Library and the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1999. In first-person accounts of growing up in the United Kingdom in the 1960s, many interviewees spoke vividly about the role popular music played in the development of their social and individual identities. These sources were instrumental in shaping my sense of England in the 1960s. I was drawn to listen to these stories out of an interest in biography, memoir, and storytelling that extends beyond my academic work, and strongly informs my writing. In this project, then, I engage critically with the ways in which singers have presented themselves, or have been presented by other authors, in memoirs and biographies; and I consider how these literary representations shape perceptions of their vocality. I also take on the role of storyteller myself, my using primary sources and performance analyses as focal points in narratives, crafting new stories about sixties girlhood.

I tell these stories in four chapters, organized into two pairs. The first pair emphasizes the creation of new models of femininity through performance, and tells the stories of young women in the 1960s looking ahead to the future. The second pair looks back at the 1960s through discourses of age and nostalgia, and considers the ramifications of 1960s models of girlhood on performers today.

Chapter one, titled “Single Girls in the Swinging City: Sandie, Cilla, and Kathy take London” draws extensively on teen fashion magazines from the period to argue that a new model of white femininity, one that emphasized a modernity and urbanity, emerged in 1960s Britain. I use this context to tell the stories of Black and Shaw. I consider they positioned themselves as *solo* singers, and argue that their vocal styles reflected an emerging liberal model of feminine independence that was at turns liberating and regressive. This chapter includes analyses of their early appearances on television program such as *Shindig* and *Cilla at the Savoy*, and performances from later in the 1960s on *The Sandie Shaw Supplement* and *Cilla*.

Chapter two, “Self-invention, Race, and Dusty Springfield's Voice” explores how Springfield allied herself with African-American women singers, and learned vocal techniques from them as part a process of self-invention. I discuss two moments in Springfield's career: the 1965 *Ready Steady Go: Sounds of Motown* television special, which she hosted, and her 1969 album *Dusty in Memphis*. My discussion focuses on her duets with Motown singer Martha Reeves and on her relationship with her African-American background vocalists, The Sweet Inspirations. I argue that Springfield's attempts at alliance with African-American women are limited by critical reception that essentializes blackness and re-centers whiteness.

In chapter three, titled “I Can't Sing But I'm Young: On Voice and Aging,” I discuss Lulu and Marianne Faithfull. They began performing professionally as young teenagers, and in the early years of their respective careers, their youth was a key element of their public personae. As they have continued their careers into middle age, they have deployed very

different strategies, including particular vocal performance techniques and musical references to their respective pasts, for mediating how their perceptions of their age impact reception of their performances. I draw on Faithfull and Lulu's memoirs, on media reactions to their performances, and on the pedagogical and clinical literature on physiological changes that happen to singers' bodies over time, to explore the changing social and cultural connotations that affix to women's voices as they age, and explore how Faithfull and Lulu resist narratives of age as decline.

In my final chapter, "Envoicing Nostalgia: Shelby, Duffy, and Candie," I explore vocal and visual performances of nostalgia by three singers whose work deliberately hearkens back to the 1960s: Shelby Lynne, Duffy, and Candie Payne. These three artists, I argue, use nostalgic affects to envoice connections to singers from the sixties, including Springfield, Shaw, Lulu, and others; and, in so doing, envoice new spaces of possibility for women in a historical discourse that has historically privileged masculine-coded forms of musical expression.

Chapter I

Single Girls in the Swinging City: Kathy, Sandie, and Cilla take London

Kathy's Crowd: Girls and the problem of independence in 1960s Britain

Kathy came to London in 1966. She moved into a tiny flat with three other girls, where they decorated and painted and tried to learn to co-exist in close quarters, not always successfully. Kathy took a job at an advertising agency, but was more interested in modeling or showbusiness. She found, though, that working at the agency was a good way to meet photographers and find modeling jobs. She dated men she met at work, men who were sometimes older and more sophisticated than she was; but she put up a convincing front, and never let on when they intimidated her. They often told her that she looked like Julie Christie did in the film *Darling*. Kathy made friends with the boys who lived in the flat upstairs; they were the first black men that she'd met, and they invited her to parties where they sat around listening to old blues records, and told her about the best places on the Portobello Road for finding old '78s. In the city, Kathy made friends and she made enemies, she launched a career, and she became the quintessential example of the new kind of young womanhood that the Swinging Sixties ushered in. London was Kathy's playground, but it's also where she learned how to grow up.

Kathy wasn't real. "Kathy" was a fictional character who was introduced in the first issue of *Petticoat*, a British magazine for teenage girls launched in 1966.¹ The serial "Kathy's Crowd" appeared weekly in the pages of *Petticoat*, and introduced young women across the

1. "Kathy's Crowd," *Petticoat*, February 19, 1966, 12.

United Kingdom to an almost mythical ideal of London: London as a place where people their age, in their teens and early twenties, were arbiters of culture; where opportunities were plentiful; where, if you just saved your pennies a little bit (making sure not to work *too* hard), you could have anything you wanted, from clothes and makeup to records and designer furniture; where you could find a handsome boyfriend, or, ideally, a handsome husband. This was Swinging London: a place that was modern, fun, quirky, and young. But this London was less a place, than it was a myth or a symbol. Later, in the 1980s, Cathy McGowan, who, as host of era's the swingiest swinging TV show, *Ready Steady Go!*, appeared to be at the very center of the scene, testified to the mythic quality of the Swinging Sixties, asking, "was there swinging going on? I wish I'd been there. Sounded fun."²

The kind of story told in "Kathy's Crowd," of young women off to make it big in swinging London, wasn't unique to *Petticoat*: many other magazines, including *Boyfriend*, *Mirabelle*, *Trend*, *Honey*, *Fabulous*, and *Jackie* all featured similar stories on a regular basis, often in illustrated comic-book form, featuring teenage girls who looked suspiciously adult and sophisticated for their purported ages.³ In addition to such fictionalized narratives, these

2. Christina Applegate, "Ready Steady Gone: A Rare Interview with the Queen of the Mods," interview with Cathy McGowan, *Mirror*, April 11, 1985.

3. Britain had a long history of womens magazines, but Cynthia White argues that in the 1950s and 1960s, publishers began focusing their energy more and more on the youth market. According to White, *Honey* targeted women between the ages of 18-30; *Petticoat*, women aged 16-24, while *Boyfriend* and *Mirabelle*, were aimed at young women aged 13 and up. She does not provide this information for any of the other magazines I discuss. In terms of circulation, White shows that *Boyfriend's* readership peaked at 418,000 readers per year in 1959 and declined to 198,000 in 1965, when it was combined with *Trend* magazine; *Honey* reached an audience of 104,000 when it premiered in 1961, and saw this audience grow to 210,000 by 1967; *Jackie's* readership ranged from 250,000 in 1965, to 451,000 in 1968; *Petticoat's* from 181,000 in 1967 to 227,000 in 1968; and *Mirabelle* peaked with 400,000 readers in 1958 and declined to 173,000 readers by 1968 (Appendices IV and V). White also argues that the publishers of these magazines were targeting relatively educated, middle-class girls: "These were girls with several 'O' levels, and possibly some 'A' levels also, earning perhaps £10-£15 per week". White, *Women's Magazines, 1693-1968* (London: Joseph, 1970), 164-174.

publications also ran the kinds of articles you can still expect to find in any teen magazine today, including interviews with celebrities, fashion and beauty features, advice columns, and the like. Together with other media, including television, radio, and popular music, showed (and, obviously, continue to show) girls how to be young women. Due to the considerable amount of crossover between different forms of media in 1960s Britain, representations of young women in girl-oriented print media and representations of girl singers and reception of their vocal performances participated in the same discourses of girlhood. These media helped to construct models of white femininity to which girls could aspire; models figured around ideals of autonomy that were ultimately limited by heteronormative gender roles and an isolating individualist ethos.

These themes of individualism and autonomy emerge most strongly in girls' print media. In 1965, *Boyfriend* magazine launched their version of a "Kathy's Crowd"-type serial, and called it "The Freedom Girls." With a tagline that read "Got that independent feeling? Want to be on your own? Then You are one of.....the Freedom Girls," the series introduced readers to an anonymous young narrator, who described her desire to leave home thusly: "It was something I simply had to do or burst at the seams. The first problem, however, was finding someone to share a flat with, and although I asked some of my friends, most of them were chicken about leaving home."⁴ A girl bursts at the seams to escape, while her peers feel reticent and even fearful at the prospect. She envisions breaking with tradition, staking out on her own, becoming a self-actualized grown-up; she sees her friends as choosing to remain dependent, and perhaps even childlike. Stories like these often presented girls caught between seemingly dialectical impulses, depicting girls' dependence on others (boys, bosses,

4. "The Freedom Girls," *Boyfriend*, March 20, 1965, 14.

parents, and other authority figures) as prerequisite for the limited independence they enjoyed in other areas of their lives; or figuring independence as a temporary, liminal state, sandwiched somewhere between being a child and being a wife. The heroine of “The Freedom Girls,” for instance, finds herself juggling two jobs, as a dictaphone operator and a model, longing to return to the parental nest. “You learn how much your parents have done to give you luxuries that seem like nothing until you have to go without them,” she sighs.⁵ When her boyfriend, Steve, proposes to her in the final installment of the series, she gladly accepts, and her story abruptly ends. Ironically, the saga of our independent freedom girl only seems to matter as an antecedent that leads to that most desirable feminine role, wifhood.

Non-fictional articles from girls’ magazines, including advice columns and news pieces, reproduce similar narratives. *Honey* magazine ran how-to articles with titles such as “How to Leave Home and Like it,⁶” and, in 1963, published a piece by Stephen Higginson, called “Girls in Glass Buildings Don’t Want to Throw Stones,” that profiled the glamorous, modern life of urban career girls:

Just think! If you go by tubetrain to work, you can travel for miles on the underground, then go up the escalators from Waterloo Station which feed right into the jaws of the Shell building. There, you can eat, shop, have your hair done and stay on for some social activity until late in the evening . . . Wendy Hare [says], “I’ve been here sixteen months and enjoy it. The whole place is clean and efficient, and I like the attitude to work. You are encouraged to get through what you have to do, and then sit and read a magazine in the armchairs provided. You get through much quicker and don’t try to spin the work out just to fill the time.” Well, there you have it! A world of

5. A disproportionate number of the young women depicted in the magazines and papers I looked at are described as aspiring models. In her work on the magazine *Jackie*, Angela McRobbie tellingly observes that “above all, *Jackie*, like the girl it symbolises, is intended to be looked at.” McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture: From ‘Jackie’ to ‘Just Seventeen’* (London: MacMillan, 1991), 91.

6. “How to Leave Home and Like It,” *Honey*, August, 1963, 16.

speeding lifts, modern equipment, air-conditioning, central heating, and instant social life. A world where you don't even have to switch the light on, where there are no windows to open, and where the kitchen-staff has its own showers- "specially designed so as not to disarrange the hair." This is the way things are moving, girls. I only hope you like it!⁷

Higginson's account of a futuristic 1960s is, obviously, very idealized (anyone who has spent any time in or around Waterloo station, for instance, can attest that its environs are currently far from the gleaming beacon of modernity that Higginson depicts), but that idealism is, itself, part of the image of femininity that this article, and other pieces like it, were offering young women. This is a femininity that is, ultimately, aspirational, through which young women could have careers, could be independent, but could remain steadfastly feminine. The modern city and working world offered them the tools through which to be more feminine (witness Higginson's magical showers that won't "disarrange the hair"), tempering the threat to traditional gender roles that emphasizing feminine domesticity that these career girls presented.

While the discourse of girlhood depicted in these publications offered young women new opportunities, mobility and financial independence, it also represents a retrenchment of social norms through a feminine ideal that was contingent on both whiteness and financial privilege. To be independent in this world, even temporarily so, required a certain degree of economic freedom and the means and education to move to the city and find work, and to participate in the consumer practices that the media figured as an essential part of being a modern young woman – buying clothes, makeup, going out, etc. As Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber point out, the jobs that girls found in cities as secretaries, stenographers,

7. Stephen Higginson, "Girls in Glass Buildings Don't Want to Throw Stones," *Honey*, August 1963, 24.

boutique assistants, etc., had an aura of glamor about them but still paid less than jobs available to young men.⁸ To thrive, and, indeed, survive in such circumstances, a young woman would have either had to have family support, or would have had to work multiple jobs. However, when the idealized girls in the pages of teen magazines are shown wanting for money, it is never shown to be a particularly serious problem – the protagonist of “The Freedom Girls,” for instance, decides on a whim to find a better paying job, not due to hardship, but to finance a more exciting social life.⁹ This portrayal is highly aspirational, and emphasizes the appearance of upward mobility, while neglecting the harsher realities working-class women and girls may have faced.

Furthermore, the young women with access to the clerical jobs described in teen magazines would have mainly been white because, as Arthur Marwick, Paul Gilroy, and others have shown, many people of color in the U.K. frequently found themselves barred from both housing and employment opportunities, or experienced wage and hiring inequality.¹⁰ Hazel Carby points out that the frequently-reproduced discourse in Britain in the 1960s, that there were two kinds of women, wives and single career women, ignores the

8. Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garber, “Girls and Subcultures,” in *Resistance Through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*, eds. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 222.

9. “Freedom Girls.”

10. Arthur Marwick documents the increase in immigration to the United Kingdom from the West Indies and shows that already, by 1961, immigration to the United Kingdom had increased 40% since 1951. Marwick says that “many West Indians...came to Britain (or really to England) with high hopes, some even feeling that they were coming to ‘the mother country.’ That ignorance and prejudice about black people existed, and was directly encountered, particularly when the new arrivals sought accommodation, was a shock.” Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958-c.1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 232. In his chapter “Lesser Breeds Without the Law,” Paul Gilroy shows how Britain’s legal institutions systematically marginalize people of colour. Gilroy, *There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack: The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 72-113.

experience of women of color who were obliged to be both. “Black women bridged this division,” she says. “They were viewed simultaneously as workers and as wives and mothers.”¹¹ This dual role, then, precluded them from fitting into the mold of swinging sixties single femininity.

Girls’ access to white-collar work also depended on adherence to class-marked codes of self-presentation that included appearance and voice, making such jobs available only to a certain kind of white young woman. Petticoat’s February 1966 pull-out supplement, *The Petticoat Guide: What Every Girl Should Know*, which I discussed in my introduction, neatly synthesizes this problem. In addition to discussing the importance of grooming, its authors also argue that the right voice is an essential component of being the right kind of girl: “A good voice,” they say, “. . . a clear, controlled voice . . . can help us to be a different person. For instance. It could mean we get a better job.” As I demonstrated earlier, the right girl, according to the editors at *Petticoat*, isn’t too sexy, and sounds natural and unstaged. She doesn’t sound too “posh,” because such affectations might indicate that she is striving to move above her social class. *The Petticoat Guide’s* emphasis on voice reflects larger anxieties in Britain over accent as a sign of class, place of origin, and ethnicity. As Lynda Mugglestone argues, from the eighteenth-century onwards, a number of stereotypes of what constituted an “proper” voice emerged in England: “the ‘educated accent’, the ‘Public School’ accent, the ‘Oxford’ accent, ‘talking without an accent,’ ‘talking proper’, and eventually ‘BBC English’ too.” Mugglestone argues that these models idealized and imagined a kind of “classless” speech, characterized by clear, precise diction and articulation, and without distinctive

11. Hazel V. Carby, “White woman listen! Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood,” in *Black British Feminism: A Reader*, ed. Heidi Safia Mizra (London: Routledge, 1997), 49.

regional or class accents. Of course, this supposed un-markedness *is* marked as of a certain class – the upper class – but that markedness is taken for granted.¹² Furthermore, as Ruth Frankenberg shows, there is an illusion that whiteness is similarly unmarked. Frankenberg argues that “there are times when whiteness seems to mean only a defiant shout of ‘I am not that Other!’” that the processes of constructing whiteness as a normative position hide the ways in which whiteness is marked.¹³ The *Petticoat* girl’s “clear, controlled voice” purports a particular norm, and is marked as white and middle to upper class because its goal is to hide other signs of difference.

Paradoxically perhaps, the most regressive element of the discourse of independent young women is its very emphasis on independence. This is not to say that encouraging young women to be self-reliant isn’t positive; it often is. Rather, I see in these teen publications a dogged insistence on individualism that risks isolating girls, and propagates heteronormative models of feminine identity. I take my cue here from feminist political theorists who have offered critiques of liberal individualism. Second wave feminist writers, including Carole Pateman, have critiqued the Enlightenment emphasis on individual choice and autonomy that was articulated in the work of philosophers such as Rousseau, Hume, Kant; subsequently taken up by political theorists including John Stuart Mill; and that continues to prevail. Pateman argues that the problem with this construction of liberal individualism is that, with the possible exception of Mill, its adherents emphasized bodily autonomy as key to being a free individual, while ignoring the ways in which women’s bodies

12. Lynda Mugglestone, *Talking Proper: The Rise of Accent as Social Symbol* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4.

13. Ruth Frankenberg “The Mirage of an Unmarked Whiteness,” in *The Making and Unmaking of Whiteness*, ed. Brigit Brander Rasmussen et al (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 75.

were, historically, controlled and subordinate to men.¹⁴ Pateman's critique, then, is that under the conditions of patriarchy, women could never enjoy the freedom of the liberal individual.

Pateman's argument resonates strongly in the context of 1960s Britain, a moment some historians refer to as the era of the "permissive society," when laws governing the private lives and bodily autonomy of Britons began to loosen. Many of these changes, particularly those regarding reproductive choice and divorce, had direct ramifications on women's lives and agency. As Elizabeth Wilson argues, however, these moves towards "permissiveness" were still invested in the same old social categories. They were born, Wilson says, of a consensus that the "law should not add to the pains of the deviant," not out of any critical thought about how society constructs and marginalizes deviance. Wilson also points out that, as access to contraceptives and abortion increased, more sex outside of marriage did not, in fact, occur: instead, more couples married very young. Heterosexual marriage, a governing institution in many women's lives, expanded to fit with new social mores, and continued to set the terms of most women's sexual relationships.¹⁵ Women's autonomy remained limited, despite legislative changes that would indicate otherwise.

Following Pateman, several authors have called for a reconceptualization of individual autonomy that takes the shortcomings of liberal individualism into account. Jennifer Nedelsky argues that autonomy is central to any project of feminist liberation, but she calls for a language of freedom that accounts for the dual social *and* individual nature of human

14. Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism, and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 47.

15. Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Halfway to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain 1945-1968* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1980), 106.

beings.¹⁶ Nedelsky critiques liberal individualist thought for denying the centrality of relationships that constitute individuals' identities by finding freedom in creating what she calls "a wall of rights": rights that protect the individual and their property by giving them the "power to close off others."¹⁷ Nedelsky argues that self-sufficiency and community are not mutually exclusive, but that relationships, alliances, and community can empower an individual and enable them to become self-sufficient.¹⁸

Martha Nussbaum is more sympathetic to ideals of liberal individualism, and, rather than arguing for a move away from them, argues that they have been mis-used in ways that have been disadvantageous to women. She identifies the main precepts of liberalism as "personhood, autonomy, rights, dignity, and self-respect," all of which have been central goals of feminist movements.¹⁹ While Nedelsky critiques liberal individualism for denying the social, Nussbaum argues that relationships are, in fact, central to liberal ethics. If, according to Nussbaum, one demands autonomy for oneself, one must also recognize that other people deserve those same rights. Per Nussbaum, the recognition of the separateness and personhood of others is both an essential imperative of liberal individualism and a necessary step for eradicating sexism, and depends on recognizing the power relationships between oneself and others.

In the context of feminist critiques of individualism, then, the way autonomy is

16. Jennifer Nedelsky, "Reconceiving Autonomy: Sources, Thoughts, and Possibilities," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 1 (1989), 9.

17. *Ibid.*, 12.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 56.

portrayed in British teen magazines of the 1960s cannot be read as unproblematically liberating. While it does stem from a moment when new opportunities were opening up for young women, it is a version of autonomy that is not the self-sufficiency through community that Nedelsky advocates, nor does it represent Nussbaum's ideals of respect for autonomous personhood. The girls of the teen mags are presented as incomplete persons, who are only made whole through heterosexual partnership. In fictional stories, coupling is presented as the protagonists' ultimate goal, and if attained is greeted with relief; while non-fictional articles, particularly advice columns, assume that it is the reader's goal as well. This is not to say that all relationships ultimately result in girls' subordination, but in the stories and articles in question, they do generally result in girls relinquishing autonomy. These magazines, then, exemplify Pateman's concern that autonomy is rarely extended to women.

In her work on the illustrated stories found in British girls' magazine *Jackie* in the 1970s, Angela McRobbie argues that they represent a sense of "romantic individualism." Their focus on independent individual girls looking for heterosexual love, she argues, forecloses the possibility of alliances between girls and ignores the many complex relationships that girls can have with people in their lives outside of romance. McRobbie says that

No story ever ends with *two* girls alone together and enjoying each other's company. Occasionally the flake-mate or best-friend appears in a role as 'confidante' but these appearances are rare and by implication unimportant. A happy ending means a happy couple; a sad one – a single girl. Having eliminated the possibility of strong supportive relationships between girls themselves...*Jackie* stories must elevate to dizzy heights the supremacy of the heterosexual partnership.²⁰

20. McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*, 101. Sady Doyle, of the popular feminist blog *Tigerbeatdown*, elaborates on the problems with media that feature one, single woman character (or one "special" woman) in her article "13 Ways of Looking at Liz Lemon." Doyle expertly problematizes the way *30 Rock's* Liz Lemon is the only sympathetic female character on the show, and is shown to have few

According to McRobbie, the individualism depicted in teen magazines is less individualism than it is isolation. While McRobbie's focus is on the 1970s, these same narratives of individualism and isolation were present in girls media in the 1960s, with remarkably little change or evolution in the discourse.

A few visual examples from girls' magazines drive home this point. While these examples span the years from 1963 to 1968, a period marked by a considerable amount of social change, there are no discernable shifts in the narratives they present. Girls are depicted as acting alone but rarely as actually self-sufficient, as they constantly turn to more powerful people – parents, bosses, men – for guidance. Girls are shown as uncertain of themselves and caught in embarrassing situations. In the state of limited autonomy experienced by the girls portrayed in teen magazines, they don't have access to the dignity and self-respect that Nussbaum argues is critical to true autonomy.

In the excerpt below, from a story titled "When Love Comes Along," which appeared in the January 12 1963 edition of *Boyfriend*, the protagonist is the only female character and her story revolves entirely around her relationships with boys. She meets Jack, who rescues her kitten from certain death, gives her a goodnight kiss, proposes marriage, and professes his everlasting love, all within the span of twenty-four hours. In the world of teen magazines, where heterosexual romance is the *ne plus ultra* of a young woman's existence, this otherwise completely unrealistic behavior is depicted as perfectly normal.

positive relationships with other women. Doyle cites Adrienne Rich's essay "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision," in which Rich discusses the problem of allowing only "token" women or "special" women to participate in patriarchal institutions. Doyle, "13 Ways of Looking at Liz Lemon," *Tigerbeatdown*, last modified March 24 2010, <http://tigerbeatdown.com/2010/03/24/13-ways-of-looking-at-liz-lemon/>. Rich, *On Lies, Secret, and Silence* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995), 33–108.



Figure 1.1: "When Love Comes Along," *Boyfriend*, January 12 1963

The excerpts that follow are from a story called "A Romance Has Been Arranged," in which protagonist Valerie volunteers to arrange an outing for the staff at her office. As the story opens, Valerie decides that the other girls in her office are too inept to assist her, and she takes on all responsibility for the event on her own. She invites Derek, her favorite fellow. The outing appears to take a nose-dive when it is all but rained out and the guests are late, but Valerie's girlfriends eventually appear and the party is a success. Valerie, however, does

not join them, and the story ends with Valerie and Derek, together in the rain.



Figure 1.2: "A Romance Has Been Arranged," *Mirabelle*, March 19, 1966

Antagonism between girls, usually revolving around boys, emerges as a fairly common theme in these stories. In the story "Steam Radio," from the June 1968 edition of *Mirabelle*, two roommates are placed in direct competition with on another, and narrator Sarah is thrilled to discover that the boy her roommate Deb had her eye on, actually had *his* eye on Sarah all along.

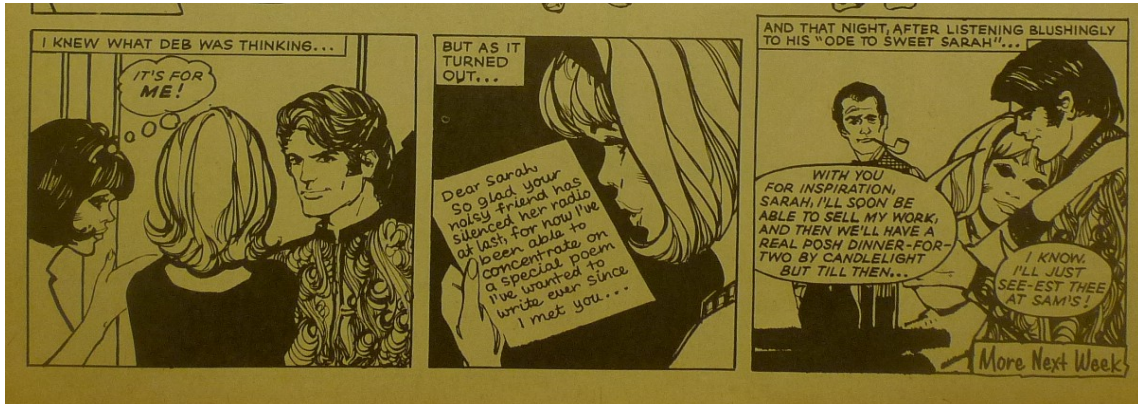


Figure 1.3: Sarah gets the guy, and Deb gets jilted in “Steam Radio,” *Mirabelle*, June, 1968.

And finally, in “Lover’s Leap,” (*Mirabelle*, June 1968) we meet Jill, whose carnival worker boyfriend leaves her at the end of the summer because of seemingly irreconcilable differences in social class. “For me, the world is ended,” Jill pines, as we’re left with the image of the girl alone, consumed by romantic melancholy.

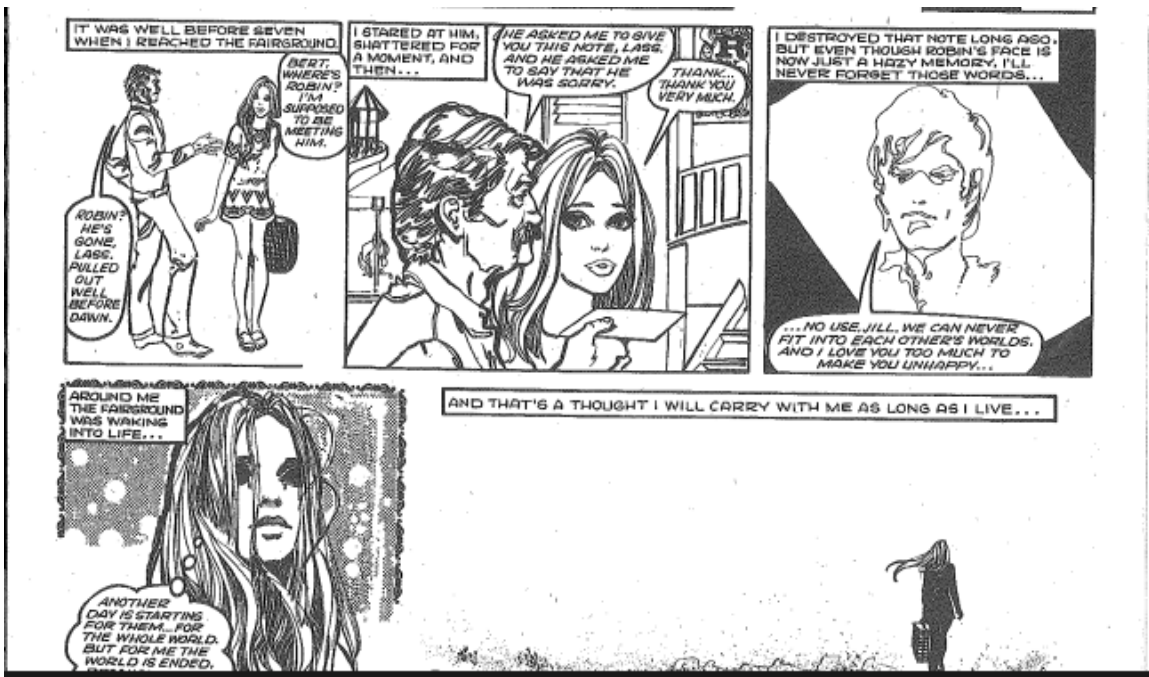


Figure 1.4: “Lovers’ Leap,” *Mirabelle*, June 1968

The girls in these stories are, without exception, beautiful and intelligent. Some, like Valerie, the star of “A Romance Has Been Arranged,” are cunning and resourceful, while others, like Jill from “Lover’s Leap,” are thoughtful and sensitive. These personality traits, however, are presented in a generic way, such that a reader might easily see them as reflections of herself. What unifies many of these girl characters is a romantic, melancholic affect, manifest both in how their stories unfold and in how they narrate their stories. The girls are preoccupied with being alone, with the potential of losing love, and, along with it, their sense of self. A similar sense of melancholia is manifest in the kinds of advice that teen magazines were providing to young women. In a *Boyfriend* article called “The Age of the Moody and How To Be a Girl in it,” the author says

It’s the freedom to be yourself, know yourself, and go which ever way you want to go. Whether the way you want to go is to the top, or only to coffee bars to stand by the juke box....It’s about being sure of what you don’t know about. Dazzled by what you can’t see. Frightened maybe by the future. Snatching a time of being different because you realise you’ll probably end up just the same as everyone else, anyway.²¹

“The Age of the Moody” is perhaps more complex than the previous examples. Its author glorifies the independent, creative young woman, and presents her particular kind of emotional state in almost exhilarated terms, ultimately ending on a note of conflict. For all the promise that came from being a young woman in the 1960s, for all the new opportunities available to them, the only fate that remained was ending up just the same as everyone else: traditional gender roles remained in place. Furthermore, even the relative freedom available to some young women through a “time of being different” was a source of fear.

21. “The Age of Moody and How to Be a Girl In It,” *Boyfriend*, August 21, 1965, 2.

Swinging singers and the girls who listened to them: Music media and representations of femininity

“Kathy came to London in 1966.” Imagine a girl reading that story. It’s a Friday night, and she’s home from school, or maybe from work, after a long week. She’s finished tea with her family, and she’s lying on her bed in the room that she shares with her younger sister. She flips through the pages of *Petticoat* or *Honey*, and on her nightstand is the transistor radio that she bought last week with some money that she’d been saving. It’s tuned to the pirate station Radio London, where they counting down the Fab Forty every week, and as the strains of Cilla Black’s number five hit, a cover of “You’ve Lost that Lovin’ Feeling,” fades out, the girl sits up and swings her legs over the edge of the bed, flicks off the radio, and heads downstairs, because it’s Friday night, *Ready Steady Go!* starts in five minutes, and she just remembered that Cilla is going to be on the show tonight.²²

The representations of young women that appeared in print media in Britain in the 1960s certainly did not exist in a vacuum, and the ideal of young, feminine, independent girls that they showcased relied on intersections with other forms of media as well, with particularly strong connections to music media. A significant function of teen magazines (both historical and contemporary), is reinforcing consumption as a gendered practice through which girls could become a particular kind of feminine individual, via articles instructing girls on how and what to buy, from fashion to furniture.²³ British girls’ magazines

22. “The Early Radio London Fab Forties,” *Radio London*, accessed February 23 2013, <http://www.radiolondon.co.uk/rl/scrap60/fabforty/65fabs/jan65/fab240165/fab240165.html>.

23. Yes, furniture. In 1965, *Boyfriend* published a guide to interior decorating, which read: “Our kind of modern girl likes to be surrounded - surrounded by modern things - and beautiful within it. The modern girl likes to choose her own furniture. Things she can live happily and comfortably with. The kind of furniture a girl likes must be neat, modern and comfortable - and reasonably priced. She likes browsing

from the 1960s were particularly invested in music consumption as a sign of what made a girl young, modern and swinging. The girl reading *Petticoat* would have likely been the same girl watching *Top of the Pops*, *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, or *Ready Steady Go!*, and she would probably have listened to radio stations like Radio Caroline and Radio Luxembourg. In a 1965 *Boyfriend* column called “What Makes a Gear Girl,” music is specifically identified as a sign of what makes a young woman groovy:

The first thing you notice is her appearance - it's a very special look from the top of her shiny head to the tip of her kinky boots. It starts with a new, swingy hair-style and dreamy, fluttery false eyelashes, and goes on to the latest thing in trouser suits - the jacket in corduroy, of course, with new style epaulets, zip-up front and double vents...she digs the sounds of the Moody Blues, Georgie Fame, the Stones, Jimmy Smith, Tony Bennett and Nina Simone, and she thinks Paul Jones is way-out. She'll go to all the swinging parties in town and haunts the groovy discotheque clubs, drinking gallons of Coke to cool her down. Her friends? Anyone with a new outlook on life, she doesn't care who they are or where they come from. Her personality - swingy, zingy, zany if you like, she just knows the right type of people, places, and sounds to dig!²⁴

Our “Gear Girl,” then, knows her way around fashion and society, is just the right amount of quirky and hip, and has interestingly eclectic musical tastes, which are a major part of what grants her that hipness. This hypothetical “Gear Girl,” (as well as various fictional “Kathy”-type figures) is doubtless based on any number of very high-profile young women who had a significant media presence during the mid-1960s. In addition to the flock of girl singers who were climbing up the charts, every Friday night, Cathy McGowan appeared as the compere on *Ready Steady Go!*, introducing the teenage, TV-watching audience both to new music and

through antique shops and also in modern shops, and she likes to take her time. Facing this feature, was an ad for furniture that offered “A dream come true - a room of your own - so easy the Burlington Way.” “A Young Girls' Fancies,” *Boyfriend*, February 13, 1965, 28.

24. “What Makes a Gear Girl?” *Boyfriend*, February 27, 1965, 25.

to a heavy dose of mod culture, fashion and style. *Disc* magazine's staff of music writers was headed up by Penny Valentine, a highly influential music critic who was close friends with Dusty Springfield, and joined Springfield in her adulation and advocacy for American R&B. McGowan, Valentine, and many girl singers were about the same age or, at most, just a few years older than the teen girls who made up a large part of their audience, so while they were exceptionally successful, on a certain level, they were portrayed as being very much like the girls who watched them, read about them, and heard them.

Concurrently with this emphasis on young women as ambassadors of musical taste, in the wake of Beatlemania, record companies increasingly focused on young women as consumers of music. A 1965 *Boyfriend* piece, that would seem to be more at home in a music industry rag than in a teen fashion magazine, described the growing perception of the importance of the teen market:

There's a revolution taking place in the Hit Parade, and YOU, the girl who buys the singles, is responsible for it....one word describes the scene in the hurly-burly bit of the chart - VARIETY. There are so many different types of records to choose from. But one thing is certain. You have stopped the heavy beat sounds dominating the chart, as it did just a few months ago....The Liverpool sounds has been softened up by injections from Birmingham, Newcastle, London, and other areas....

It's a good thing you're buying so many kind so records at the moment, because it means for some time to come the Hit Parade won't be saturated with a craze as it was after everyone jumped on the Beatles' band-wagon. Out of it all will come a new kind of trend. What kind? The men who make pop records would dearly love to know. They'd like to be able to read your minds and stack up thousands of singles in the shops for you to buy 'em.²⁵

Meanwhile, girl-focused magazines fostered close connections to the music industry. In some early examples of cross-media promotion, *Fabulous*, *Petticoat*, and *Honey* all established

25. "The 45 Revolution!" *Boyfriend*, March 20, 1965, 16.

relationships with radio stations. At this time British radio was heavily regulated and dominated by the BBC; as John Hind and Steve Mosco note, the Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1948 made it illegal to establish or use wireless telegraphy without a license from the Secretary of State, through the Home Office, and parliament was loathe to relinquish the state monopoly over the airways that it had through the BBC.²⁶ The BBC, meanwhile, had a government-mandated mission to enlighten and educate as well as to entertain. Unfortunately, this generally translated into an elitist approach to programming in the 1950s and 1960s, as the idea of what constituted “enlightening” entertainment was very much informed by social class, with popular music programming severely marginalized.²⁷ While the BBC had a designated music division, Andrew Crisell reports that popular music did not fall under its rubric; rather, it was the purview of the Light Entertainment department.²⁸ Many teenagers would have heard popular music from boat-bound pirate radio stations like Radio Caroline and Radio London, or stations like Radio Luxembourg, who broadcast from Europe using a high-frequency transmitter. The pirate radio stations were constantly at odds with British lawmakers who wanted to shut them down, which only served to imbue their broadcasts with an illicit appeal that teen-oriented print media was eager to capitalize on.²⁹

26. John Hind and Steve Mosco, *Rebel Radio: The Full Story of British Pirate Radio* (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 11.

27. A 1969 informational pamphlet on radio and television published by the British government makes no mention of popular music whatsoever, and the only mention of music is found in an appendix titled “Promotion of the Arts,” which lauds the BBC for promoting classical music through their numerous orchestras, chorales, symphony orchestra education schemes, and concert broadcasts. *Sound and Television Broadcasting in Britain*, Central Office of Information Reference Pamphlet no. 61 (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1969), Appendix.

28. Andrew Crisell, *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002), 103.

29. See Robert Chapman, *Selling the Sixties: The Pirates and Pop Music Radio* (London: Routledge,

Radio Caroline and Radio London aired a show produced with *Petticoat* called “The Petticoat Club,” while, in the wake of the show’s success, *Petticoat* ran a parodic article about their editors’ misadventures in attempting to try to start their own, girls-only pirate radio station, Radio Petticoat.³⁰ *Honey* had a regular show on Radio Caroline called the Honey Hit Parade;³¹ and *Fabulous* eventually became the girl-focused print wing of Radio Luxembourg, featuring columns by its DJs, and a name change to *Fabulous 208*, referencing the station’s broadcast wavelength number.³²

1992). Radio Caroline and Radio London were ultimately shut down in 1967, when they were prosecuted under the newly-introduced the Marine Offenses Bill. In response, the BBC launched Radio One, with a pop music program hosted by Tony Blackburn, late of Radios Caroline and London, hoping to attract the pirates’ audiences. Mosco and Hind, 13.

30. “The Petticoat Club” was broadcast on Saturday afternoons on Radio Caroline and on Sunday afternoons on Radio London. “Tune into the Petticoat Club,” *Petticoat*, March 19, 1966, 48; “How We Tried to Launch Radio Petticoat,” *Petticoat*, April 2, 1966, 18.

31. The “Honey Hit Parade” was advertised not only in *Honey*, but also in general interest music magazines like *Disc*. “Honey Hit Parade 1st Anniversary,” *Disc*, February 10, 1962, 13.

32. The magazine was published as *Fabulous* from 1964-1966; *Fabulous 208* from 1966-1975; and *Fab 208* from 1975-1980. Publication dates courtesy of the British Library Catalogue.

Boyfriend 13

GREAT DOUBLE OFFER
FROM
RADIO CAROLINE & BOYFRIEND

Get with it with this fabulous
30' PENDANT and SWEATER GRIP



Join your top pop favourites and
get yourself a swinging
GOLDEN DISC
like theirs — today.

EXCLUSIVE TO ALL CAROLINE LISTENERS
AND BOYFRIEND READERS FOR ONLY
8. — EACH — WORTH 12.6

For the Record: Both are 10-karat gold-plated with a bright
gold finish. The pendant disc can be worn as a brooch as
well, complete with safety clasp. Specially designed for
Radio Caroline and Boyfriend by Jewelcraft.

**TUNE IN TO 150 METRES
AND HEAR MORE ABOUT IT**

Here's how to get your disc pendant and/or sweater grip:
Fill in and cut out the coupon below and send it, with a postal
order or cheque, to:

Caroline Boyfriend Jewellery Offer,
Springfield House,
Mill Avenue,
Bristol, 1.

Supplies are limited, so send in early for this great offer,
which closes 10th May, 1965. Offer available in Great Britain
and Northern Ireland only.

I enclose a postal order/cheque crossed "A Co." made
payable to Caroline Jewellery Offer for.....shillings.
Please send me.....pendant(s) and/or.....sweater
grip(s) at 8s. each at this address.

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
.....(Town)
.....(Country)
PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS B.F.100

how
we tried
to launch
RADIO
petticoat



Funny, our charms didn't work

IT all started because of Petticoat Club on
Radio Caroline and Radio London.
Fifteen minutes of our very own, on the
the month, so our joint funds were not exactly
awe-inspiring.
Janette had insisted on buying herself some
our confidence began to waver. The thought
of approaching a fully-blown admiral was
the soundest. I unanimously decided

Figure 1.5: A Radio Caroline and Boyfriend mail-in offer for music-themed jewelry. *Boyfriend*, April 17, 1965.
Figure 1.6: The editrixes of *Petticoat* try to launch Radio Petticoat. *Petticoat*, April 2, 1966.

Boyfriend, has, in retrospect, been recognized as the most music-focused of the teen magazines. In her introduction to the 2008 compilation volume, *The Best of Boyfriend*, Melissa Hyland claims that *Boyfriend* was “the first girls’ magazine to truly put the music first,” and credits the publication with being one of the first mainstream media outlets to feature the Beatles.³³ Among its regular features – including guest editorials by luminaries including Mick Jagger, and reviews of albums and concerts – *Boyfriend* ran a column called “Peppi’s Pop Dance Page,” which provided instructions on how to dance to the latest pop hit, directly integrating girls’ experiences of reading about and listening to music, while quite

33. Melissa Hyland, *The Best of Boyfriend* (London: Carlton Publishing Group, 2008), 6.

literally showing them how to model their own bodily movements to correspond to those of popular singers.

29th, 1964

February 29th, 1964

Boyfriend

LAST week, there I was dancing away with old Dusty, and this week it's treat time again! Who should I have the pleasure of hopping around with this week, none other than that great and gear girl from the Teal, Cilla Black.

The reason for this happy union is a letter from Marlene McDermott, of Stainforth Road, Walthamstow, London, E.17. She says that at her local youth club, the latest rave is a dance called "The Cilla"—aptly named after our Miss Black!

The movements of the dance are based on the sort of movements Cilla does on the stage.

All through the dance you keep your arms bent at the elbows, occasionally nodding your head. You start off with both feet together, and the first movement is to hop on to your right foot and, at the same time, tapping your left foot on the ground and swinging it outwards. Next bring your right foot back into position, then hop on to your left foot, repeating the upward and tapping movement with your right foot.

When you are swinging your legs this way, you swing your body in the same direction. Altogether this makes one step which you do four times.

To go forward, you move with your right foot on the ground and your left foot slightly raised, and hop with your right foot slightly diagonally to the left.

Now put your left foot on the ground and slightly raise your right foot. Hop diagonally to the right on your left foot. This is also one step and you do it

twice so that you make it look like a zig-zagging movement.

To come back, you stand on your right foot and slightly raise your left foot. Now swing your left foot forward, and at the same time, hop backwards one step on your right foot and bring your left foot back to meet it. Repeat this movement on the

PEPPI'S POP DANCE PAGE

opposite foot and do this step twice so that you are back where you started.

Needless to say, the best record to do this to is Cilla's "Love Of The Loved"!

Or if you're really pushed, maybe you could try it to my latest record which just came out this week! It's called "So Used To Loving You" and you can dance almost anything to it!

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PEPPI'S POP DANCE PAGE

Shake the dust from your shoes with the Dusty Springfield dance.

Instructions, as always from your favourite and, this time, UNconfused, dance instructor, Peppi!

Figure 1.7: Peppi's Pop Dance Page: Now you, too, can move like Cilla or Dusty! *Boyfriend*, February 22 and 29, 1964.

Nearly all of the teen mags would have pop stars as guest advice columnists for the problem pages, which ran letters sent in by girls seeking advice. In these columns, figures like Sandie or Cilla dispensed half-baked relationship advice while addressing girl readers as peers, creating a sense that they were all part of the same social world. Print advertisements, meanwhile often used music-related imagery to sell young women products that had nothing to do with music whatsoever, ostensibly tapping into the sense of coolness that was associated with England's burgeoning music scene, and providing very tangible, material ways for girls to feel connected to that scene.

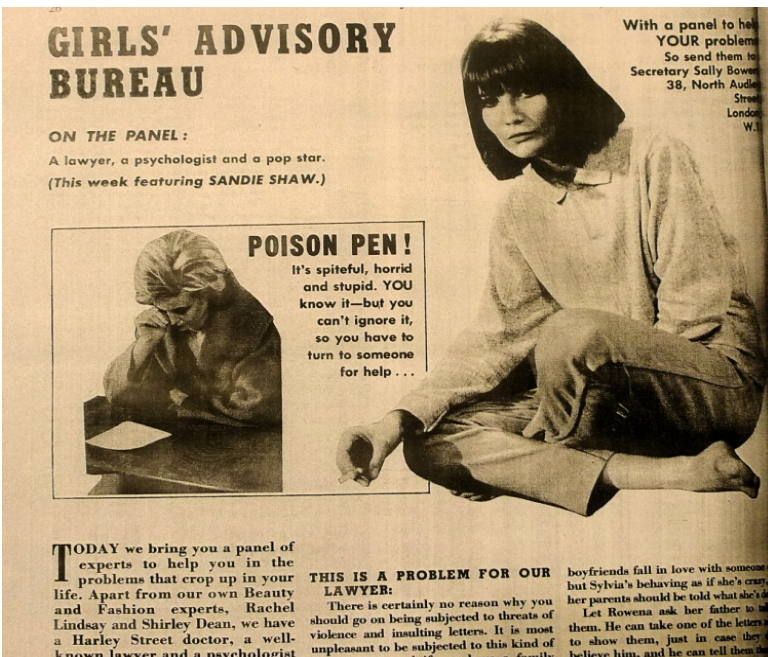


Figure 1.8: Sandie Shaw dispenses advice. *Boyfriend*, June 12, 1965.



Figure 1.9: Like Helen hairspray promises a ticket to the top of the charts. *Boyfriend*, February 1, 1964.

The producers of music television, meanwhile, also tried to make young audiences seem like an essential part of the music scene. Producer Jack Good is credited with fundamentally changing pop music television in the U.K. in the late 1950s and early 1960s, pushing music television towards what was understood as a more modern aesthetic. Inspired by the film *Rock Around the Clock* and U.S.-based shows like *American Bandstand*, Good's *6-5 Special*, which ran on the BBC in 1957-1958, was energetic and frenetic, and featured teenagers dancing in the aisles of the studio alongside musical acts. After increasing disillusionment with the rules and strictures of the BBC, Good left the network for the newly-launched ITV, and produced *Oh Boy!* and *Boy Meets Girls*, which were aired on ITV in 1958-1959 and 1959-1960, respectively. These two shows upped the ante, and were known as much for featuring unbridled rock performances as they were for showing live audiences of screaming fans, an antecedent to the shrieking girls of Beatlemania. Tise Vahemagi describes *Oh Boy!* as "a parade of non-stop rockers [that] barely gave the screaming audience time to draw breath."³⁴ *Ready Steady Go!*, which aired in the mid-1960s, and was produced by Elkan Allan, shows Good's undeniable influence: teenagers are invited to dance and mingle with performers, and, as with Good's earlier productions, the program paints a portrait of an active, vital, music-focused youth culture. All of these media tactics – from integrating music-related content into girls' lifestyle publications, to attempts to actively engage young audiences – were undeniable marketing ploys, but they had the effect of constructing the world of pop music as a scene that girls could participate in.³⁵

34. Tise Vahemagi, "Jack Good," *BFI Screenonline*, accessed February 23 2013, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/574989/>.

35. According to John Mundy, in adherence to the BBC's policing of enlightening and educating, the *6-5 Special* featured, in addition to rock and roll and skiffle acts, was obliged to feature educational and

In light of these participatory depictions of popular music culture, representations of individual, independent girls seem somewhat contradictory. The way music was marketed to teen girls thus reflects a tension between portrayals of girls as isolated and independent, and portrayals of girls as part of a larger cultural community. Portrayals of girl singers show, however, that these two impulses constituted one another. Girls who were singers were presented both as models of a new, cosmopolitan, young femininity, but also as points of identification for young readers and listeners. They were girls who had made it: while many music fans living in towns outside of London could only experience the culture vicariously, many girl singers had started out at from the same position as their fans, and had gone on to become the people who made London swing. Most of these young women were solo artists, and stories about them tend to emphasize their individuality and uniqueness, while simultaneously portraying them as ordinary enough that their listeners could aspire to be like them. When girl-focused print media ran articles about what girl singers would wear and what they would buy, and featured them as guest columnists, they were constructing them as models of modern femininity.

Solo girl singers weren't a new phenomenon in Britain at this point: earlier British girls like Kathy Kirby, Alma Cogan, and Petula Clark had set important precedent. However, at a moment when musical groups of boys (Beatles, Beach Boys, Stones, etc) and American girl groups like the Supremes and the Shangri-Las were successful on both sides of the Atlantic, it is curious that most of the women singers emerging from Britain were solo acts.

special interest news items, and performances by classical artists. The commercial television network ITV, unhampered by the BBC's mission, and arguably empowered by a more commercial mandate, was, according to Mundy, able to reject the magazine-style format of *The 6-5 Special*, and, as a result, *Oh Boy!* broadcast continuous live music. Mundy, *Popular music on the screen: from the Hollywood musical to music video* (University of Manchester Press, 1999), 196.

Pondering the paucity of British girl groups in 1962, Good rather snidely asked, “Why are British girl vocal groups so overpoweringly square?” He targets two offending acts, the Kaye Sisters and the Beverley Sisters, whom he decries as “punchy” and “sweet,” respectively, but “both British to the core. By that I mean that they sound like voices rather than people. No humanity. No warmth. Bloodless.” He compares them to the Marvelettes, about whom he says, “Well, the Marvelettes are perhaps less professional, but my word, what personality, what living and breathing girlness. They jump out of the disc at you as if this were a new advance in stereo.”³⁶

Good’s remarks are notable in several respects. As with many British music critics of the period, he idealizes the sound of African-American pop, and also makes a disturbing connection between the sound of black women’s voices and the body. His remarks also indicate that there was something perhaps outmoded about performances by British girl groups; and, indeed, both the Kayes and the Beverleys represent older styles of performance, drawing more on bawdy, music hall traditions than the exciting rhythm and blues of the Marvelettes. The Beverley Sisters hailed from Bethnal Green in East London, and, having started their career with appearances on BBC Radio, were firmly associated the existing pop music establishment.³⁷ They were known for a cheeky style of performance that scored big with middlebrow audiences.³⁸ The Kaye Sisters were the Beverleys’ main competitors, and

36. Jack Good, “They like R&B, but they don’t dare record it,” *Disc*, January 13, 1962, 5.

37. “Beverly Sisters’ Years in Limelight,” *BBC News Online*, December 31, 2005, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/4570298.st>.

38. “Sisters, sisters, there were never such devoted sisters,” *The Stage and Television Today*, May 23 1985, 6.

headlined London cabaret clubs and variety stages, and were favorites of the Blackpool summer season.³⁹ Girls like Shaw, Black, Lulu, and Springfield, moved away from the older-sounding and -looking aesthetic of the Kayes and the Bevs not only by drawing on both American and European pop sounds, but also by creating performing personas as *individuals*. Just as independent young women were signs of British modernity, so too were the new crop of girl singers.

Interestingly, however, even while solo girl singers were making a not insignificant showing on the British music charts (the week of January 24, 1965, for instance, saw Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw, Twinkle, and American imports The Shangri-Las all reach the top ten of Radio London's Fab 40 Countdown),⁴⁰ commentators seemed to deny their existence, or framed their opportunities in terms of their ability to fit into romantic, individualist discourses. At the beginning of the 1960s, if you were to ask a British pop promoter what he (because, invariably, it was he) thought of the chances for a girl pop singer, it's unlikely that he would have responded optimistically. In a 1962 *Disc* magazine roundtable on the topic of girl singers, the respondents seemed unconcernedly resigned to a gender-imbalanced pop chart. "Normally the girls don't have any sort of fan following and so the record has to get away on merit alone. After a time they develop a following, of course, but rarely enough to guarantee records getting into the charts. They need a lot of pushing," claimed promoter Alan Freeman. Oriole Records A&R man John Schroeder blamed a lack of appropriate material:

39. "Carol Kaye: Obituary," *The Times*, August 28, 2006, <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/opinion/obituaries/article2085164.ece>.

40. "Radio London Fab 40."

I don't think there's a trend toward girl singers. It's really that the material available is not suitable for girls to sing. No British girl stood much chance during the rock craze. In fact, only about two in the world did - Connie Francis and Brenda Lee. But now, when we are living in times of world insecurity, the ballad is coming back to popularity. It always does in times of stress. And girls can get over the feeling and emotion of a ballad just as well as a boy can. More girls? I think so, provided they get the right songs. But they'll never dominate the charts, ever.⁴¹

Schroeder argues that rock's popularity makes chart success difficult for girls because, in his estimation, with few exceptions, girls can only sing romantic ballads. In making this essentialist argument about the gender-appropriateness of certain genres, Schroeder's comments bring up the specter of romantic individualism yet again, as he claims that the songs that are appropriate for girls are those that reproduce such narratives.

As the 1960s progressed, the discourse about girl singers did not shift in any substantial way. Throughout his career, Brian Epstein refused to sign any girl singers other than Cilla Black. In his 1964 memoir, he claimed:

Cilla was the last Liverpool artiste I secured and she is, of course, the only girl. This is not accidental; for I was finding it difficult, in the first case, to select talent from so much in the beat city, and, in the second case, I didn't care to dilute the special connection I wanted to give Cilla by managing a girl-competitor. The disc charts cannot stand very many girls, no matter how gorgeous they look.⁴²

In Epstein's mind, the charts could only support one girl at a time. In 1964, Peter Jones, describing the "new wave" of girl singers, wrote that

Not so long ago, it was dead simple. With a distinct lack of gallantry, the experts of pop music laid down the ruling: 'Girls are useless. Girls buy most of the records, therefore they won't buy discs by girls. While girls may be very nice to look at, the fans do not regard them as being worth the money to listen to.' Ungallant, yes, and right now it's inaccurate, too! For the girls are having an extremely fair share of chart

41. John Wells, "The Battle of the Girls is Really Hotting Up," *Disc*, April 14, 1962, 12.

42. Brian Epstein, *A Cellarful of Noise* (London: Souvenir Press, 1964), 76.

success.⁴³

Jones brings up a piece of what seems to have been conventional wisdom in commentary on girl singers. Girls, the thinking went, were attracted to young men, and were thus only interested in listening to songs by potential boyfriends. Other young women represented a potential threat, and girl consumers would not buy their records. Numerous scholars have, however, pointed out that this kind of thinking does not reflect how audiences experience music. Jacqueline Warwick, Annie Randall, and Susan Douglas, among others, have all discussed how young women in the 1960s identified strongly with the girl pop singers that they listened to. Randall's ethnography of Dusty Springfield fans offers a particularly compelling rebuttal to the fallacious idea that girls had no interest in listening to music by other girls. As young women, Randall's interviewees "seized upon the singer's voice, music, and persona...as points of departure for their own projects of self-discovery."⁴⁴ These fans looked to Springfield as a friend, an ally, and a role model. The prevalence of a narrative that suggests otherwise reinscribes a heteronormative discourse about girls, while ignoring the existence of relationships among girls. This discourse is an example of McRobbie's romantic individualism in practice: in subscribing to it, music producers limited the availability of music made by girls and closed girls out of the music industry, reproducing a narrative of heterosexual romance. This made it all the more important for girls with recording careers to present themselves to audiences as relatable figures, as friends and allies, rather than as potential competitors. As I will show in what follows, Sandie Shaw and Cilla Black were two

43. Peter Jones, "Meet the Chart Chicks, *Record Mirror*, May 16 1964, 9.

44. Annie Randall, *Dusty: Queen of the Postmods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 102.

girls whose performances were a case in contrast that nevertheless both embody models of individualistic femininity, even while they pushed back against those models.

“A girl like a million”

Sandra Goodrich came to London in 1964, when she was fifteen. She was a working-class girl from a London suburb, where, upon finishing school, she went to work at the local Ford automotive plant. She was shy, retiring, and quiet around other people; an unlikely candidate for a pop star. But to the surprise of her parents and teachers, she turned down a place at art school, announced her plan to become a singer, and, like magic, it actually happened. In a 1966 article, Mark Day told the story of how Sandra Goodrich, factory worker, became Sandie Shaw, pop singer, as though it was a fairy tale, describing her as a “real-life Cinderella.”

This Cinderella lived in Dagenham, out in Essex. In a neat, terraced house, in a home decorated with wrought-iron work made by her dad. At school she was specially good at art and like all the other girls she adored the pop stars. She sang songs, but mostly for her own amusement. She played records for hours on end....Sandie can travel wherever she likes in the world now. She can buy new dresses and she can afford to buy all the LPs she wants to play on her radiogram back home with her parents.⁴⁵

Several authors, including Day, and, later, in her memoirs, Shaw herself, identify the moment when Shaw went into the city from the suburbs, and met pop star and impresario Adam Faith as the moment when her dreams began to come true. A nerve-ridden stage performance led to a fateful encounter with Faith, who saw something in sixteen-year-old

45. Mark Day, “Cinderella Sandie,” *Trend*, January 9, 1965, 13.

Shaw, something he thought would appeal to girls *like* her. So while Shaw's career was launched in an almost unbelievably lucky way, an almost magical way, part of what made it happen was Shaw's apparent ordinariness.⁴⁶

In the moment of "the Age of the Moody," it was Shaw's most un-star-like characteristics that ultimately cemented her appeal. Like the confused young women caught between tradition and modernity that sent their letters to the problem pages of *Petticoat*, *Boyfriend*, and the like, Shaw was portrayed as much as a tragic figure. Her early performances embody a tension between becoming an independent young woman and leaving the comfortable world of girlhood behind. Looking back at Shaw and the girls of Swinging London, Patricia Juliana Smith describes her as:

Fashionable, hip, yet unpretentious and shy, she embodied a seeming contradiction: the nonchalance typical of the new freedom of women in Swinging London, and, simultaneously, the bewilderment and melancholia of innocence giving way to experience.⁴⁷

A description of her from a 1968 interview by Tom Hutchinson for *Woman's Mirror* read:

Sandie. Her angular face is an exercise in emotional geometry. Her eyes look sad and betrayed....A girl in a million, because she's a girl like a million.⁴⁸

Hutchinson's portrait of Shaw evokes melancholy, and extends that affect to other young women her age. The implication is that, whatever the source of Shaw's melancholia, it is feeling shared by all of girlhood (or at least, all of the girls who look like her). In this instance of contradiction, Shaw becomes a person who is at once alone and isolated in her sadness,

46. For more on her early career, see Sandie Shaw, *The World at My Feet* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991).

47. Patricia Juliana Smith, "Sandie Shaw and the Women of the British Invasion," in *She's So Fine*, ed. Laurie Stras (Farnham: Ashgate 2010), 148.

48. Tom Hutchinson, "Who Created a Siren Called Sandie?" *Woman's Mirror*, May 14, 1966, 10.

but is also representative of a larger community of girls who are connected by a similar emotion; as a girl “in a million,” she is somehow exceptional, but her exceptionality is because she is so ordinary, so very “like a million.”

In Hutchinson’s interview, Shaw, however modern and independent she may be, claims an unwavering sense of devotion to Evelyn Taylor, her manager, a decidedly maternal figure. Hutchinson depicts Taylor as a foil to Shaw: a micro-managing, fussy mother hen; a symbol of adult stability in sharp contrast to Shaw’s teenage melancholia. The way Shaw, in later years, described her relationship with Taylor, shows that she was caught in the dialectic between independence and dependency, and adulthood and childhood. Shaw describes Taylor exerting passive-aggressive control over her pocketbook, her social calendar, her love life, and her career trajectory, strong-arming her into musical choices and performances (including her participation in the 1967 Eurovision song contest). Taylor, daughter of a music hall impresario, came from an earlier age of musical performance, and wanted to see Shaw choose the path that many other girl singers would choose at the end of the 1960s: the road to becoming an “entertainer,” rather than a pop star; the kind of singer who spent summer seasons entertaining crowds at Blackpool and winters doing Christmas pantomimes; exactly the kind of career that Shaw wanted to avoid.⁴⁹ By Shaw’s own account, Taylor’s influence effectively kept Shaw in a transitional state between childhood and adulthood. Shaw concludes that:

Although on matters of taste, we fought a lot, I really loved Eve. I know all the worst about her and I still love her. If it were not for her bullying and pushiness I would never have achieved any of my early successes; they would have remained a

49. Shaw, 37.

Dagenham girl's teenage dream.⁵⁰

The apparent autonomy of girls like Shaw, or girls from the pages of teen magazines, was always contingent on relationships in which they relinquished power. While Shaw would later secretly record an album without Taylor's supervision, ultimately breaking with her at the age of 19, until then, she relied heavily on her. In Hutchinson's article she asks, "How can I trust anyone else? How can I? I'm a girl of 19 put down in a world of rogues and villains."⁵¹

In 1964, Shaw appeared on a particularly auspicious episode of the television program *Shindig*. While *Shindig* was ordinarily produced and aired on ABC in the United States, this special episode of the show was shot in and broadcast from London, and featured live performances by everyone's favorite heartthrobs, the Beatles. *Shindig* was conceived in 1964 by Jack Good, who, as noted above, was generally unmoved by performances of British girl groups in preceding years. Like Good's earlier shows, *Shindig* emphasizes the relationship between performer and audience, although it does so with a greater sense of reserve. Unlike *The 6-5 Special* or *Oh Boy!* *Shindig* didn't generally feature teenagers dancing in the aisles, and instead has a retinue of groovy young go-go dancers who surround most performers. The audience is there, though: the camera frequently pans over bleachers filled with wildly applauding teenagers. Mostly, though, the audience presence on *Shindig* is auditory: their screaming and applauding ushers in each new musical number, and frequently punctuates the numbers themselves, creating the sense of a communal musical movement.

Shaw's interaction with the audience, however, sharply differentiates her from the other performers on the show. The show opens with a shot of the audience, the camera then

50. Ibid., 145.

51. Hutchinson, "Siren Called Sandie."

panning towards the stage, where the Beatles launch into a performance of “Kansas City,” barely audible over the audience’s shrieking. Later performances in the program, by artists including Tommy Quickly, PJ Proby, and Sounds Incorporated, are similarly punctuated by the excited voices or applause of listeners who are there in the studio, or the bodies of dancers who surround the performers. The girls on the show – Shaw and former Vernons Girl Lyn Cornell – are treated far differently.⁵² The active, auditory presence of the audience is all but absent, and, while Cornell’s performance differs from Shaw’s, both girls are shown essentially alone.

Following a commercial break, out comes Shaw to sing her first hit, “There’s Always Something There to Remind Me.” Following the exuberant party-like atmosphere that preceded the number, it looks like we might well be watching a different show. Shaw looks isolated and alone and like she would rather be anywhere else. She skulks onto the stage, and seems reticent to make eye contact with anyone, and instead looks down, or, when she dares to lift her head, at an indistinct spot on the horizon. Her hair is in her eyes, her shoulders are rounded and slouched, and her arms are folded across her stomach, as though she is about to get sick. Apart from an opening shot that pans past a flautist who plays the song’s rather plodding opening riff, Shaw is by herself on a dark stage.

When she opens her mouth to sing, things don’t improve much. Her vocals are fairly

52. The Vernons Girls were a vocal group formed at Vernons, a Liverpool-based football betting company. At their height, the Vernons Girls had sixteen members, but by 1962, when they signed to Decca records, had reduced their numbers to a core five. While they released an album on their own, they were known largely for their work as session singers. Former Vernons Girl Vicki Brown went on to help found the Breakaways, another all-girl vocal group who sang backup for many British artists, including, as I will discuss later in this chapter, Cilla Black. See Lucy O’Brien, *She-Bop II: The Definitive History of Women in Rock, Pop, and Soul*, (London: Continuum, 2002), 92, and Gordon Thompson, *Please Please Me: Sixties British Pop, Inside Out* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 249.

inoffensive, and sound utterly unremarkable, like they could be sung by anyone with a basic sense of pitch. Her voice is surrounded by echo – as though someone at the mixing board is trying to make it big enough to fill the large, dark space of the studio that surrounds her. Sometimes she sounds loud and shrill, but it’s difficult to discern whether this is a technical failing on her part, or the result of miking and reverb. Compared to the other acts who perform in the episode, Shaw looks and sounds like a creature from a different world: She doesn’t have dancers supporting her on stage. The audience remains silent throughout her number. Unlike the other performers, she doesn’t look like she’s reaching out to an audience, trying to engage them in something larger than themselves. Instead, she sings alone, the echo around her voice recalling the emptiness of the space where she stands.

In many ways, the inclusion of this performance on the broadcast makes little sense. It isn’t “good” in a technical sense, and it doesn’t engage the audience in the way that Good’s television shows were known to do. But Shaw’s descriptions of this particular performance make it clear that it succeeded in other ways. She says:

On my arrival at the rehearsal room in some dusty London suburb, Jack broke everyone for lunch. He sat me down with a cup of tea and got me chatting about myself. I usually played my cards pretty close to my chest, but I somehow opened up to him, confided all my love life to him. When I got to the heartbreak bit I started sobbing uncontrollably. Jack jumped up from his seat and switched the record player on, and my song ‘Always Something There to Remind Me,’ came blaring out. ‘That’s it! Keep that! That’s the feeling I want – now we can start rehearsing!’ he shouted excitedly . After three run-throughs I was completely cried out. Jack was over the moon. I have been method-singing ever since.⁵³

Shaw’s story purports that her performance on *Shindig* was barely removed from her own heightened emotional state. It paints Good as a savvy, if manipulative, producer, capable of coaxing an artist into producing exactly the affect he wanted. It also shows that he sought to

53. Shaw, 85.

engage his young audiences not only by presenting music in an exuberant, party-like atmosphere, but also by speaking to other emotional states that might resonate with his young viewers. Shaw's apparent reticence and disconnect, may have been the symptoms of the nervousness of a young performer making one of her first televised appearances, but they also become signs of what she represented to audiences. A certain melancholia, a certain dissatisfaction: these make her the perfect voice for the age of moodiness. Her unassuming demeanor and her unpolished voice are signs that, Sandie could be any girl, or that any young girl could be Sandie.

The Sandie Shaw Supplement (1968)

By 1968, the young women of swinging London had started to grow up. *Ready Steady Go!*, the show that helped launch the careers of Sandie, Cilla, Lulu, Dusty, Marianne, and countless others, had been off the air for two years. Shaw was fresh out of a 1967 Eurovision win that may have cemented her international notoriety, but also did more harm than good for her image: Eurovision is kitschy middlebrow entertainment, not the place for a swinging young thing, and Shaw only participated begrudgingly. Some of her peers, including Lulu, Springfield, and Black, were hosting their own television shows, with titles like *Cilla*, *Lulu's Back in Town*, and *Decidedly Dusty*. But while *Ready Steady Go!* with its studio audience of live, vital, gyrating teenagers, had spread the myth of Swinging London to the far reaches of the British Isles, uniting disparate young people into a semi-coherent musical movement by showing young people *participating* in a musical movement, this crop of shows placed that

audience at a distance. They were all about their stars, whom they featured in the studio, standing and delivering the hits of the day or well-known standards, usually with a guest or two for variety, and seemed to be targeting an audience that was broader than just the teenage demographic. Even in the context of these programs, the 1968 show *The Sandie Shaw Supplement* is singularly strange. It places Shaw at a distance from her audience, but in a different way: while she's sometimes shown on a studio set, she's mostly presented as the star of various *mise-en-scenes*. Each episode of the show has a title and a theme that are reflected in the songs and their staging; and each musical number segues seamlessly into the next, like a series of music videos, rather than like a staged performance. In *Variety's* foreign television review column, the show was described as follows:

Idea is to suggest the glossy world of fashion magazines, while at the same time incorporating a different musical theme each week. Thus, while Miss Shaw sang a selection of songs about love and sex, she was also able to display her considerable flair for modeling clothes and parade an extensive wardrobe. Given the scope to get away from the normal routine music presentation, Mel Cornish pulled out all the stops to give the show pace, originality, and style.⁵⁴

While the themes give the episodes a loose organizational logic, the movement between different settings is often illogical and surprising, as though producer Mel Cornish and designer John Burrowes were taking their cues less from the conventions of music television, and more from the films of Richard Lester, with their surreal affect and consistent disregard for linear narrative.

While the show presents a more worldly, grown-up Shaw than her early performances

54. "Foreign TV reviews: The Sandie Shaw Supplement," *Variety*, September 18, 1968, 48. Interestingly, the reviewer has precious little to say about Shaw's vocal performances. He does, however, observe that "while Miss Shaw's rather nasal singing is something of an acquired taste for many, her first BBC vidseries is obviously going to be well worth watching, not least to see if a hint of potential as a comedienne develops further." These comments reflect the common assumption that the only career available to British women singers was from pop star to "entertainer."

do, perhaps mitigating the damage done by Eurovision, Shaw's melancholy, disaffected affect remains. Of the six episodes aired, only two survive: "Salt, Pepper, and a Touch of Garlic," and "Quicksand," the episode I discuss here.



Figure 1.10: Sandie Shaw in "Quicksand," the second episode of the *Sandie Shaw Supplement*

"Quicksand" is about travel. It opens on a beach that looks chilly and inhospitable, where Sandie rides up on horseback and dismounts. "Tonight," she says, "I'm moving around. Twenty-five minutes of twentieth century travel." She barely gets the words out when Ken Woodman's orchestra launches into a brassy, insistent introduction to "Route 66," and suddenly we've left the beach, and we're with Sandie in a car, hurtling across a desert. Alone in her car, she seems separate from the world. The vast expanses of sand around her seem endless, but for the hills that rise behind her, like a barrier that she's gunning to get away from. Her foot on the gas pedal, her hands on the wheel, her body adopting the poses of a male rebel, of a loner, of the much lauded rebel without a cause: the young man intent on

breaking free, on proving himself to an indifferent world.

Because of the cramped space of the car, you never see all of Sandie at once because the space is too small. As the landscape whizzes by at a dizzying pace, the camera on focuses on one thing at a time. First, her face. Masked by dark driving glasses, she looks affectless and cool, and sometimes flashes an elusive, coy smile. Then, her hands. One on the wheel, one on the clutch; operating this machine as expertly as a drag racer, in control and independent.



Figure 1.11: Sandie behind the wheel

Peering up from the camera's vantage point behind the steering wheel, I can't help but feel trapped with her, in the tiny space of the car, where her body is always constricted and bent at odd angles. But when she smiles and looks out the window at the empty landscape around her, she seems so free.

The Sandie driving the car isn't singing, at least not that we can see. But Sandie is

singing: an image of her face is overlaid on the shot of her driving; as though her voice has been split from her body. The singer and her voice could exist in driver's thoughts, narrating and creating her internal world, speaking to a subjectivity and introspective inner self that is so often the purview of the masculine loner, the thinker, the philosopher; an archetype typically unavailable to a girl like Sandie. Or perhaps the driver exists in the imagination of the singer, who is dreaming of mobility, fantasizing about the open road.⁵⁵



Figure 1.12: Two Sandies: one singing, one driving

The same effect is used later in the show, when Shaw sings “Homeward Bound” as a duet with John Walker. Introspective Shaw is shown on the platform of a train station, not singing, while her own singing face is overlaid in profile, seemingly narrating her inner world. Eventually, Walker’s face is shown with hers, but while the two are in profile, facing

55. The 1968 film *Girl on a Motorcycle*, which stars Marianne Faithfull, also features this trope: Faithfull is shown traveling the countryside alone on her motorcycle, while her thoughts play out in voice-over. In an otherwise rather misogynistic film, these moments show Faithfull’s character articulating a subjectivity and a complex inner world.

each other, they both look beyond each other, as though consumed in their own personal melodramas. These shots of multiple faces facing each other and staring through each other is unsettling and alienating, and disrupts the viewer's sense of where voices originate, where the performers' inner worlds end and the external world begins, perhaps mirroring the confusion of being a young person in a rapidly changing world.

Back in the first desert scene, the song ends, and the scene changes. "Two, Four, Six, Eight, here we go, don't be late," Sandie says, mimicking a childlike rhyming game. The desert fades out to show Sandie, on stage, surrounded by men in track suits and ball caps; they stand in rows around her, flanking her like dancers out of a Busby Berkeley spectacular. As Sandie sings "Do You Know the Way to San Jose," their movements are mechanical, seemingly deliberately so, as they mime the action of working on a car. As they move together, they seem like parts of a machine, as though we've moved from the drivers' seat of Sandie's car into the depths of its engine. Every movement of the machine gestures to Sandie, up on a dais at the back of the room. Their hands point to her. The lunging movements of their torsos point to her. They hold up a tire rim and it encircles her face. The moment becomes entirely about Sandie, who becomes a bright spot in the room, dressed in white in contrast to the dark gray of the mechanical men who surround her. At some moments, I feel like they defer to her, as they seem to be bowing down in front of her, moving their machine in response to her voice. But at other moments they seem to be containing her, forming walls around her, framing her. The pulsing regularity of the Ken Woodman's orchestration seems to keep Sandie's voice boxed in. The unflinching regularity of the woodwinds, the insipid and patronizing sound of the chorus intoning their "ooh ooh oohs." Sandie articulates the words,

placing emphasis on beats that mimic the rhythm of the instrumentals, but her timbre is light and sounds uncommitted, as though she is singing only at another's behest.



Figure 1.13: Sandie surrounded by dancing mechanics.

Other numbers of the show are marked by a sense of longing. She sings Bacharach's "Trains and Boats and Planes" along in a soundstage, facing the camera, which trains closely on her face. Her voice is subdued, yearning. At the song's opening she sings the word delicately, high in her range, and sounds distant, removed, and dreaming; sometimes she sounds like she's singing in the voice of a child. But her voice sometimes suddenly drops down to a lower register. I hear a disconnect between her higher, childlike and lower, more adult-sounding vocal registers; a vocalized tension between girlhood and womanhood. While the song is about pining for a lost love, when Sandie sings "Trains and boats and planes are passing by, They mean a trip to Paris or Rome, To someone else but not for me," it also speaks to a more

generalized feeling of desire to be somewhere or someone else, or perhaps, coming from a young woman, a desire for more mobility, more opportunity.

In the *Sandie Shaw Supplement*, representations of Shaw embody and envoice many of the discourses that circulated about femininity and individuality in the British media in the 1960s. Like the girls of *Petticoat* and *Boyfriend*, the Sandie Shaw portrayed in the show exists in a world where there are limited options. But the scenes of Sandie driving through the desert, and moments where she sings of being someone or somewhere else, show that, in the heightened space of performance, this version Sandie is able to envision herself transcending those boundaries. While media depictions of Sandie during this period continued to focus on her personal relationships and marriage, inscribing her with particular feminine ideals, the heightened performance environment depicted in *The Sandie Shaw Supplement* lets other narratives emerge: narratives that emphasize choice and possibility.

“She sounds much too Liverpudlian”

Priscilla White came to London in 1963 from an equally mythical musical land, Liverpool. Hers is the classic story of a local girl who made good: born and raised in a working class neighborhood, she wanted to become a star, and worked as the coat check girl at the Cavern Club before a certain John introduced her to Brian Epstein, who changed her name to Cilla Black and transformed her. Much like Shaw’s, Black’s story has an element of being in the right place at the right time about it: her first audition for Epstein, in which she sang “Summertime” accompanied by the Pete Best-era Beatles, was a bust, as the band played

in the wrong key; but months later, Epstein just happened to catch Black performing at a club called the Blue Angel, and signed her immediately.⁵⁶ Again, it's the story of an ordinary girl who becomes exceptional: as with Shaw, an ordinary teenage girl might imagine that she, too, could be as lucky as Black. In 1966, *Trend* magazine reported that "There must be quite a number of girls in Britain called Priscilla. And there must be thousands who were born in May, 1943. Hundreds probably in Liverpool, itself. But there's really only one Cilla in Britain 1966. Cilla Black . . . And yet – and this is absolutely true – Cilla is still as unaffected as she was when she lived in Scotland Road, Liverpool, with her Mum and Dad and three brothers."⁵⁷ Black's ordinariness took on a distinctly regional undertone. She would reportedly travel back to Liverpool every Sunday for dinner with her family; in the press she emphasized her connection to her home city, perhaps taking advantage of Liverpool's newfound cultural cachet as home of the Beatles; and she played up and played with her pronounced Liverpool accent. Cilla Black was "Cilla Black" precisely because she wasn't from London.

In some ways, Black was very like the girls in the romance comics of *Mirabelle* and *Boyfriend*: successful, driven, and independent to a point. She may even have identified to an extent with the class-aspirational femininity that the girls from the magazines represented. In her memoirs, for instance, she describes how pleased she and her parents were when she received a school report card with the comment "Priscilla is suitable for office work," and goes on to write at length about how most young people from the neighbourhood where she

56. Cilla Black, *What's It All About?* (London: Ebury Press, 2003), 91.

57. "The Cilla Black Story," *Trend*, July 9, 1966, 10.

grew up, Liverpool's rough Scotland Road, were destined for factory jobs.⁵⁸ It isn't a stretch to imagine young Priscilla White, a girl hoping for the upward mobility that the magical world of *office* jobs presented, leafing through a publication like the *Petticoat Guide*, taking its advice to heart. But while she came from a working-class background like Shaw's, it was a different working class background, and Black was never quite able to approach Shaw's hipness and sophistication. If Shaw was known for her coolness, and for performances whose emotional quality ranged from disaffected to melancholic, Black was known for being bubbly and bright, presenting a stark contrast to the tragic girls of the age of moodiness. As Smith argues that Black was, to put it mildly, a bit provincial, which gave Epstein the opportunity to play Pygmalion. Smith quotes Sandie Shaw, who said, famously, that "Cilla was a bit of a frump when she first came down to London."⁵⁹

While Epstein did manage to groom a certain amount of frumpiness out of Black, the Liverpudliness remained, enacted in her performances and through her voice.⁶⁰ *Petticoat* described her as "Hair like a belisha beacon, a scouse accent you could cut with a knife, skinny, noisy, unpredictable, giggly, soft-hearted and chirpy as a sparrow." Black's distinctive accent is identified here as part of her appeal, and was something she would play up.⁶¹ In an interview a few years later for the same magazine, the author opens with the following description:

58. Black, 29.

59. Smith, 143.

60. Epstein may, indeed, have seen this aspect of Black's persona as an asset. In 1964, he praised her as "the singer everyone loves and admires but whom no-one envies because of her utter simplicity." *A Cellarful of Noise*, 74.

61. Black's 1985 memoir, *Step Inside*, includes portions written phonetically in an approximation of a Liverpool accent. Black, *Step Inside* (London: Dent, 1985).

The voice, rich, powerful, dramatic and appealing in song, as put her in the hit parade time and time again ... The name: Cilla Black. She talks like conversation might be banned tomorrow. When something amuses her, she tends to shriek. When she's moved you think she might cry. In the middle of telling you one thing, she remembers something else.⁶²

These instances mainly invoke Black's spoken voice, but her singing voice, which was often brash and uncontrolled, shares many of these same qualities. In his chapter on British women singers, Barry Faulk argues that Black's vocal quality evokes earlier performers like Northern comedienne and music hall star Gracie Fields, clearly marking Black as a Northern, working-class performer.⁶³ This marking is not unproblematic, but speaks to classist discourses about control, and the class-marked divide between North and South in the UK. Smith, meanwhile, argues that Black's voice demonstrates no discernible technique, that "her recordings belie an immense break between her upper and lower registers with little in between, giving an impression of two altogether separate voices, one capable of a certain amount of lyricism if not quite sweetness, the other strident and metallic."⁶⁴ Indeed, Black's strangely nasal belt quality, which is what Smith refers to here as strident and metallic, prevents her from vocalizing cool femininity in the manner of a singer like Shaw.

In 1964, Black released a recording of "Anyone Who Had a Heart." Recorded a few short weeks after Dionne Warwick's version of the tune, Black's recording raced up the British pop charts, while Warwick's languished at number 42. The two recordings of the song are radically different and highlight the distinctive qualities (a less forgiving listener might

62. "Just Cilla," *Petticoat*, October 15, 1966, 38.

63. Barry Faulk, *British Rock Modernism 1967-1975: The Story of Music Hall in Rock* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 30.

64. Smith, 142.

describe these not so much as 'qualities' but as 'limitations') that characterize Black's voice.

While Warwick maintains a consistent voice throughout her soft and introspective version of "Anyone Who Had a Heart," Black's recording is marked by almost incredible changes in her vocal timbre. She shifts back and forth between two very distinct vocal qualities: on verses, she sings in a voice that is soft and hushed. She articulates each word precisely, but softly. The melodic lines are more spoken than sung, the mood hushed and intimate. The shift to her second voice occurs with no lead up or warning. When she sings "knowing I loved you so," her voice grows and swells, the strings responding with more frenetic motion underneath her. Her vowels, which, up until now, had been produced in a clipped, precise, small-sounding way, become wide and spread. When she launches into "knowing I loved you so," it sounds like her jaw drops or her throat opens, but that she also projects through her nose. The change is most audible in particular vowels: the "ah" sound in "love" spreads, while the "oo" sound in "too" becomes pointed, pinched, and nasal. While vibrato is all but absent in the verses, here it becomes pronounced, and while it isn't wide and wobbly, it is pointed and clear.

A sudden drop to a whisper on "what am I to do" ushers in the beginning of the next verse, and the song continues apace, with these contrasts in vocal quality marking the different sections. Before the final statement of the chorus, comes an unusual woodwind break, with oboes and bassoons taking up the melody. Their timbre sounds forced and nasal, and while it is situated in a different pitch register, it sounds not at all unlike Black's vocal timbre on the verses. The recording that results is theatrical and melodramatic, and sounds far stagier than Dionne Warwick's version of the song.

The difficulties Black had controlling her voice were no secret. She has discussed specific instances when producer George Martin tried to get her to eliminate the Liverpool accent from her singing voice, with some success, but notes that on particular vowel sounds, it was all but impossible. She says:

Every time I sang 'thurr' instead of 'there', George kept pulling me up. 'That word sounds much too Liverpudlian,' he kept saying. 'Right George,' I kept replying. 'I'll try it again.' I did. Again – and again – and *again!* In all, we did fifteen takes instead of the usual four or five. Now, when I listen to my early records, I can see what he was on about. 'Where' and 'there' were the two words I had *not* lost my Scouse pronunciation on. I might have thought I had total accent control on 'Love of the Loved,' but I hadn't. I still said 'thurr.'⁶⁵

Given that so much of Black's identity as a performer hinged on her Liverpudlian identity, these attempts to effectively tame the sounds of Liverpool in her voice demonstrate that there was a certain amount of unease regarding such obvious musical signs of class and place. While Shaw's voice was fairly unmarked in terms of accent (although it was marked in other ways), Black's – particularly when she deployed her chesty belt voice – was very distinctive. I speculate that there was some concern that Black's vocal distinction would have limited her musical success, but her long-lasting career in a wide range of types of entertainment demonstrates that this concern was either misplaced, or that Black was able to harness that distinction to her advantage. Vocally, Black and Shaw represent two very different versions of ordinariness: Shaw's vocal performances were ordinary because of their absence of affect and audible signs of difference, and because of a vocal quality that sounded very young and untutored; Black's, because they showed a sign of difference that paradoxically imbued them with working-class ordinariness.

Black's first big solo television special, *Cilla at the Savoy*, aired in 1966. It offers a sharp

65. Black, 79.

contrast to Shaw's early performances, and also demonstrates the extent to which Black's performance are inflected by class. Black had completed a three-week cabaret run at the Savoy Hotel in London, and *Cilla at the Savoy* was filmed during her final performance there.⁶⁶ Produced by Epstein, the program is a far cry from her Cavern Club days. Cilla, carefully coiffed and poured into a slim-fitting gown frolics across a small thrust stage, with the audience seated close to the stage in the round. She comes across as almost simpering, as she flirts and jokes with her audience, who are mostly nattily-dressed middle-aged couples who seem as uncomfortable in their formal attire as they do with the proximity of their tables to the stage, where that bright young thing with her chirpy voice and red hair stands and teases them. There's a band on the stage with Cilla, but, again, these weren't the kind of fellows you'd see at the Cavern Club: instead, it's a small orchestra, complete with harpist, all the players dressed in matching suits. The performance is the height of middlebrow aspirational ideals: Cilla, the girl from the Scotland Road who was once excited to be "suitable for office work," is now dressed in a fancy gown, entertaining an audience at one of the city's ritziest hotels. Like the Beatles, whom Epstein made over from working class boys into dapper rock dandies in matching suits, Cilla has the air of a girl from Scotland Road, dressed up and put on stage. I can't help but think of how a middle- to upper-class audience might have seen Cilla; I wonder if they'd think that Epstein couldn't quite take the Scotland Road out of the girl. The wide toothy grin she wears even when she sings "Anyone Who Had a Heart" betrays an excitement that might be unseemly, while her attempts to joke with the audience might sometimes seem a bit crude. In a 1969 essay, Robin Brackenbury shows that excessive fanciness was stereotypically associated with being a member of a lower class who

66. "TV," *Cillablack.com*, accessed February 23, 2013. <http://www.cillablack.com/tv/>.

had upper-class aspirations. Such people, he says, somewhat dismissively, “will tend to overdress, mix flowers and feathers on her hats, sport a fur stole, and either too much or too little jewellery . . . [and] brocade and sequins.”⁶⁷ Cilla in her shining gown, relishing the upmarket setting of the Savoy fits neatly into Brackenbury’s typology. In this performance, then, Cilla not only asserts herself as an entertainer whose work extends beyond just singing, but she also calls to mind the class-related expectations she would have had to contend with.

Cilla (1969)

A few years later, Epstein landed Black her first TV series, *Cilla*, which was produced in 1968 and 1969, shortly after Epstein’s death. Black seems more at ease in front of the camera in these episodes, and has much more facility as a comedian. But her style of delivery, her laughter, her unselfconsciousness, still make her seem deeply rooted in her place of origin and evoke bawdier, class-marked styles of entertainment. Even while Black shares something with the girls from the pages of *Petticoat*, girls who traveled to the city in hopes of making it, her performances differentiate her sharply from them and interpret ideals of femininity in different ways.

Dusty Springfield guest-starred in an episode that aired in February, 1969. Springfield

67. Brackenbury’s essay, “U and Non-U Today: Actions,” appears in *What Are U?*, ed. Alan S. C. Ross (London: Andre Deutsch: 1969). The volume includes a number of essays written in response to a 1954 piece by Alan Ross called “U and non-U”. In the original “U and non-U,” Ross argued that the main markers of being upper class (U) or not (non-U) were linguistic choices; if a person was “U” they used the lavatory and called their evening meal “dinner,” if a person was “non-U,” they used the toilet and called their evening meal “tea,” and so on. The work was slightly tongue-in-cheek, but ultimately earnest, and uncritically articulated certain stereotypes and assumptions about class. The authors who contributed to *What Are U?* elaborate on and update Ross’ original taxonomy to include other factors such as dress and social habits.

waits on stage while Cilla blusters on in trench coat and bowler hat. Cilla thrusts a matching costume into the hands of a disbelieving Dusty, who feigns protest, but ultimately succumbs, a bowler pulled tight over her beehive. Cilla and Dusty are gone; in their place are two androgynous characters who are all but identical to one another. Cilla speaks and her accent seems more pronounced than usual; when the two begin a rollicking rendition of the Cole Porter duet “Friendship,” she sings by projecting her voice through her nose, abandoning all pretense of making it sound good. This is comedy, after all, not the place for a lyrical, beautiful, traditionally feminine voice. It’s as though her voice has donned a trench coat and a bowler hat, too.



Figure 1.14: Cilla and Dusty, transformed.

Dusty seems more reticent to try on a different voice, but she does at a few moments, for the sake of a punch-line: at one point mimicking Cilla, at another mocking an operatic

vibrato. She seems incredibly uncomfortable at first, stifling at Cilla's touch, but eventually warms up to her. They pull props out of their pockets and wave them around and throw them in the air, they sashay around each other on the stage, looking like a vaudeville act. Despite all of this, though, they manage to sing "Friendship" without ever looking at one another; their vocal timbres resonate in such different registers that they sound disconnected from one another; and the number falls short of convincingly representing any kind of genuine relationship between the two singers. That the two singers are presented on stage as friends, is however, remarkable, whether or not the performance achieves the desired effect. The popular discourse about girl singers – that there could only be so many in the charts, that they needed to compete against one another, that their female audiences might see them as rivals – is partially suspended for this moment of performance, in which two young women try to present as allies. In order to do so they deliberately move away from the feminine ideal of the new sixties girl through their unflattering, unfeminine costumes; through their altered vocal timbres that mimic working class accents. That this moment ultimately fails to be convincing might indicate just how pervasive the model of the *solo* girl singer was in informing how the two singers performed.

Later in the episode, a gushing Cilla introduces the Breakaways.⁶⁸ They were the regular backup singers on *Cilla*, but had never actually been shown on camera before. But when Cilla introduces them, she tells us that people had been writing in and asking to see them, and so just this once, as a special surprise, they were going to join Cilla on stage for a

68. The Breakaways (so-called because they had "broken away" from the Vernons Girls) originally included former Vernons Girl Vicki Brown, as well as Margot Quantrell, and Betty Prescott; although they went through several lineup changes. The Breakaways were among the most frequently used session singers in the UK, and had recorded with artists as diverse as Lulu, and the Jimi Hendrix Experience, and had released a few singles on their own, to marginal success. See Thompson, *ibid*.

number, right there in front of our eyes. There were only three singers in the Breakaways, but there are seven women in the group that Cilla joins. They're dressed in identical sweaters and pleated mini skirts, and Cilla, with her mile-long legs and her mod mini dress, pointedly stands out. She stands out even more once the music starts to play, as she enthusiastically dances out of sync with the girls around her. They sing "So Fine," a Johnny Otis tune originally recorded by the Fiestas. But while Black is visually distinctive, her voice is completely buried in the texture created by the other girls, sublimated into the sound of the group. More girls join Cilla and company on stage – some very young. There's a break in the sound, and the singers pick up again, not singing the same gospel-inspired harmonies, but rather, singing in an intricate counterpoint that evokes Baroque fugal textures.



Figure 1.15: Among the Breakaways, Cilla stands out.

Black eventually became the near antithesis of Shaw. While Shaw quietly faded out of

the music scene in the 1970s, with a comeback orchestrated by Morrissey and the Smiths in the 1980s, Black eventually evolved into an “all around entertainer,” a strange breed of creature who dominates British variety stages and television networks, who hosts talk shows and appears in pantomimes, and is known for a certain bawdy sense of humor and unabashed brashness, a certain gaudy glamor that would be equally at home on a stage in Las Vegas as it would be on a stage in Blackpool. As Faulk puts it, “Black’s career is a salient example of how northern talent, especially women artists, was steered by management to pursue predictable career paths rather than set their own aesthetic agendas. In Black’s case, the variety circuit for family-oriented entertainment remained the safest way to maintain a career.”⁶⁹

Both Black and Shaw were bound by narratives of independent young women and independent solo singers, even while they were liberated by them. Shaw’s melancholic persona points to the limits of independent womanhood. The ideas of choice and opportunity that emerge for her in the *Sandie Shaw Supplement* remain rooted in liberal feminism, a feminism of choice that does not challenge existing social roles. Black, meanwhile, found opportunity by drawing on stereotypes of her Northern origins. The models of resistance that these two performers embody are necessarily imperfect and limited, as they were mainstream performers working within the institutional bounds of a music industry that offered limited mobility. In the following chapter, my discussion of Dusty Springfield will explore how she made a far more concerted effort to envoice a femininity that was an alternative to the ideals of gender that were in circulation, and was, similarly, limited by institutional force outside of her control.

69. Faulk, 29.

Chapter II

Race, Self-Invention, and Dusty Springfield's Voice

The story that is often told about Dusty Springfield is a story of self-invention. It is a story of a girl, born in 1939 to middle-class, immigrant, Irish, Catholic, parents, in a London suburb. The girl was named Mary O'Brien, but, the tale goes, she spent her life deliberately dismantling and re-constructing her identity, from her clothes and her hair to her very name. She showed an interest in singing at a young age, founded a folk-pop band with her brother, Tom, and rechristened herself "Dusty Springfield." Through this process of becoming someone else, she effectively put aside Mary O'Brien, a self-described "very nondescript sort of girl,"¹ and instead became as conspicuously glamorous as possible, decked out in tall wigs, heavy makeup and glittering gowns, embodying what Annie Randall describes as "a camp version of feminine display that drew attention to its artificiality and communicated with delicious theatricality its own fakeness."² To become "Dusty Springfield," Mary O'Brien drew on a range of visual and musical models, many of which were from the United States. She emulated film stars, like Lana Turner and Marilyn Monroe, and African-American singers, including Madeleine Bell, Aretha Franklin, and Motown artists such as Martha Reeves, cobbling together a new persona for herself that effectively obscured her lived past.

While Springfield's biographers have meticulously documented her physical and visual transformation, the extent to which her voice enabled her self-invention has proven

1. Vicki Wickham and Penny Valentine, *Dancing With Demons* (London: St. Martin's, 2001), 24.

2. Annie Randall, "Dusty's Hair," in *She's So Fine*, 116.

more elusive. In the 1960s, Springfield's vocal sound earned her frequent comparisons to African-American vocalists. This is, in part, due to her aptitude for using the vocal inflections, phrasing, and ornamentation styles common to genres associated with African-American performers, such as R&B and soul. But beyond elements like these, that might be considered as interpretive choices, there was something about the very sound of Springfield's voice that moved listeners to describe her timbre in racialized terms. Springfield's vocal sound reflects two impulses: first, her near-utopic desire to transform herself into someone else; and second, her wish to advocate for and create musical alliances with black musicians. As a singer who was both deeply invested in creating herself in a particular feminine image, but was also ambivalent about her ability to fit into that role, this vocal masquerade becomes an essential part of how Springfield enacted her femininity. Her voice thus becomes a sonic site of attempted cross-cultural alliance and a vehicle through which she enacted a counter-femininity to the models of white girlhood that circulated in the media at the time. Springfield's attempts at alliance were, however, limited by critic and fan responses to her work that repeatedly re-center whiteness.

While nearly all of Springfield's performances serve as examples of the way her persona was enacted through voice, two in particular—the 1965 *Sounds of Motown Special*, which was a special episode of the television program *Ready Steady Go!*, and her 1969 album, *Dusty in Memphis*—offer particularly compelling instances of intersection between her performance of self and her use vocal technique to try to ally herself with black women vocalists. Although separated only by five years, the two performances in question construct Springfield's relationship to race and identity much differently, responding, in part, to

political, cultural, and musical changes that occurred during the intervening years. Likewise, as noted by several critics, Springfield's vocal sound was markedly different on *Dusty in Memphis* than it had been in her earlier recordings.³ The shift in Springfield's timbral quality reflects a shift in how she was presenting herself musically and in relation to the African American musicians she had long admired. Both examples illustrate the tenuous politics of the intersectional alliance that Springfield, a white British woman, attempts to forge with black American women.

My readings of Springfield's performances are strongly informed by Les Back's remarks on the shortcomings of many scholarly and popular works that try to account for the involvement of white people in musics that are historically considered the purview of black Americans. Narratives of appropriation by conniving producers or by white people enamored with the perceived "authenticity" of black culture dominate much of this literature. While many such histories of exploitation are doubtlessly grounded in historical fact, many also reproduce racial categories as a simple black/white oppressed/oppressor dichotomy that fails to account for the heteroglot nature of race and of musical sound. As Back says:

. . . such protoypical images of love an theft conceal the diversity of white involvement in black music. It has been all too easy to characterize the encounters and dialogues involving white musicians in such terms. Distinctions among musicians, studio owners, producers, and songwriters are elided within the language of appropriation.⁴

3. See Charles Shaar Murphy, "Dusty in Memphis," *NME*, 1986; and John Peel, "Dusty in Memphis is Brilliant," *Disc and Music Echo*, April 19, 1969, 17.

4. Les Back, "Out of Sight: Southern Music and the Coloring of Sound," in *Out of Whiteness: Color, Politics and Culture* by Les Back and Vron Ware (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 231.

Back's goal is not to present a redemptive history of white folks as the innovators in black popular music. Rather, his ethnographic work with members of integrated house bands from Muscle Shoals studios demonstrates that assumptions about the "blackness" of their music reproduces the kinds of categories that are at the heart of institutionalized racism. Back contends, however, that listening to this music as a sonic site of integration offers the potential to transcend racial categories:

The music made by these musicians was manifestly 'black' in sound, but equally it bore heteroglot sonic traces that defied any simple notion of racial authenticity. Aural culture in this sense has a potential to dislodge the easy elision of race and culture precisely because it cannot be circumscribed by the visual regimes of racism . . . This was not a matter of 'passing as black,' but rather of becoming more than white and, in so doing, creating music that could not be reduced to racial categories.⁵

This argument resonates strongly in the cases of the musicians Back discusses, members of house bands who were largely invisible to the record-buying public. Springfield, however, had an extremely visual presence that could not be divorced from her sound, and while many listeners initially mistook her for a black singer upon first listen, they later communicated a sense of awe when faced with her whiteness. As I will show, the observations that music critics in the 1960s made about Springfield's performances are rooted in conceiving of whiteness and blackness as a dichotomy, and make sense of Springfield's sound by imposing categories on musical practices that defy easy categorization along color lines. Springfield's own ambivalence to her experiences recording in the United States, demonstrates that she, too, was invested in particular, racially-marked ideals of what it meant to be a soul singer, but that, in practice, such ideals fall apart.

5. Back, 255.

Narrating Dusty

Accounts of Springfield's life emphasize a desire for self-transformation that eventually manifested itself in her vocal sound. In her biography *Dusty*, Lucy O'Brien paints Springfield's early life as characterized by a sense of alienation and discontent that she was desperate to move away from. She documents Springfield's childhood in a home rife with conflict: her parents fought constantly and dramatically, but, because of their devout Catholic beliefs, would not divorce.⁶ Furthermore, she paints Springfield's family's Catholicism as an early source of personal discontent. While Springfield reputedly found a home and community among the girls in the convent schools she attended, this sense of home was tempered by the strict discipline of the nuns and the pressure to follow a conventional path to marriage and motherhood upon graduation.⁷ Given her reported inability to feel a sense of belonging in the places that were, ostensibly, Springfield's homes, her later self-invention can be read as an attempt to move to or to create a space she could call home.

In addition to portraying this internal, culturally-fueled conflict, O'Brien paints Springfield as a migrant, as someone for whom home was an unstable concept. Springfield's family eventually moved out of London to the neighboring Home Counties, where, according to O'Brien, they never unpacked, claiming, for years, that they were going to move

6. Lucy O'Brien, *Dusty* (Oxford: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1999), 79.

7. *Ibid.*, 41.

back to London, to the city, with all of its modern, metropolitan connotations.⁸ O'Brien thus paints Springfield's childhood as characterized both by displacement and by hope, two impulses that she continues to trace throughout Springfield's later life. According to O'Brien, while Springfield was neither able to develop a sense of home in her own family, or in the communities where she lived and worked, she aspired to find or create such a place through singing, claiming that, at the young age of 10, she told her schoolteachers that she wanted to be a blues singer when she grew up.⁹

Dancing With Demons, the 2001 biography of Springfield written by her producer and manager Vicki Wickham and close friend, journalist Penny Valentine, focuses in part on her struggles with her sexuality and subsequent issues with alcoholism. They emphasize Springfield's difficulty in maintaining personal relationships, and construct her life story to emphasize displacement and an inability to ever feel at home. While O'Brien's narrative focuses on Springfield's self-transformation as a reaction to such circumstances, Wickham and Valentine tell a less redemptive story, and Springfield's fans have accused them of sensationalizing her life, by dwelling on the more tragic episodes in her history.¹⁰ The Wickham-Valentine biography reproduces the tale of Springfield as a person displaced, but strips it of romance. They open their narrative, not with Springfield at her glittering, beehive-bedecked prime, but with her alone, in a New York psychiatric ward. "In New York that year," they write, "Dusty, still on the surface smiling and joking, was desperately broke." They

8. Ibid, 79.

9. Ibid., 41.

10. James A. Gardner, "Book Review: Dancing with Demons," *Blogcritics Books*, last modified June 17, 2009, <http://blogcritics.org/books/article/book-review-dancing-with-demons-the/>.

portray Springfield's facade, often depicted as her ticket away from an identity with which she was, reportedly, deeply dissatisfied, as a means through which she hid even greater pain and conflict. Valentine and Wickham end their story by comparing Springfield to Judy Garland and former Supremes member Florence Ballard, arguing that the "specter" of these two performers had always haunted Springfield.¹¹ The invocation of these two particular figures is telling: both struggled with self-identity and misfortune as a result of stardom, and have been discursively figured as divas, a model of iconicity that set precedents for how Springfield's life has been narrated. According to Richard Dyer, Wayne Koestenbaum, and others, divas are performers, usually women, who are famed not only for their distinctive performance styles and their powerful vocality, but also for the stories of their lives, which typically involve overcoming a significant stigma and reinventing themselves before attaining a position of greatness. This diva narrative thus appeals to marginalized people (particularly gay men, in Dyer and Koestenbaum's examples) because it emphasizes the individual's ability to refashion themselves in such a way that they are able to overcome hardship.¹² Aligning Springfield with these other historical divas, then, further emphasizes the aspirational impulse that underlies her self-invention, a self-invention that she executed in performance, through her voice.

In the narratives that O'Brien, Wickham and Valentine present, Springfield placed her hope in the music of black America and in the aesthetic of Hollywood films, figuring America

11. Wickham and Valentine, 313.

12. See Richard Dyer, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society* (London: Routledge, 2004); and Wayne Koestenbaum, *The Queen's Throat: Opera, Homosexuality, and the Mystery of Desire* (New York: Da Capo, 1993).

as an almost utopic other place, the potential site of the home that Springfield was seeking.¹³ While it is difficult to ascertain how closely these narratives reflect Springfield's actual feelings, by the early 1960s, Springfield's advocacy for African American artists, particularly women, was well known and manifested itself through collaborative relationships and through the self-conscious promotion of records by artists on labels including Stax and Motown. Springfield was known to frequently attend concerts by black performers, and formed close allegiances with black, American artists like Reeves, Madeleine Bell and P.P. Arnold, who all toured and worked in Britain.¹⁴ Many of Springfield's recordings in Britain were made in collaboration with Bell, resulting in a hybrid sound that Randall calls "transatlantic soul," based on the sharing of Springfield's "britpopisms" and Bell's "gospelisms"—that is, stylistic conventions from their respective musical traditions of origin.¹⁵ Martha Reeves, meanwhile, credits Springfield with creating the conditions that made it possible for Motown to succeed in the UK. Reeves said that that "it was Dusty's idea to invite me and my group to England to be her special guest stars. What a fantastic idea, and what a lovely compliment from my new friend!"¹⁶ In a 1964 interview, Reeves claimed to feel a sort of musical kinship with Springfield: "What we love about her is that she feels for

13. See O'Brien, *Dusty*, 16; and Wickham and Valentine, 41.

14. *NME* covered her attendance at a 1965 British appearance by the Original Five Blind Boys of Mississippi describing Springfield and the audience as being "in a frenzy." "Dusty Goes for Gospel Music," *New Musical Express*, February 12, 1965, 14.

15. Randall, *Dusty*, 47.

16. Martha Reeves, *Dancing in the Streets: Confessions of a Motown Diva* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 124. Randall quotes Reeves as saying that Springfield "introduced the Motown Sound to England." Randall, "Dusty's Hair," 124.

the music as we do. She'll be sitting there singing somewhere and she'll suddenly start bashing away on bottles with knives anything to get an arrangement going!"¹⁷

The relationships that Springfield fostered with African-American musicians (in particular, her collaboration with Bell, which began in 1964), had a marked effect on Springfield's vocal production.¹⁸ Throughout her career, she used her voice in an almost chameleon-like way, manipulating her timbre to fit with particular circumstances. Before starting her solo career, she performed with the Springfields, a folk group she co-founded with her brother, Tom. The Springfields recorded pop versions of global folk tunes, and had a minor hit with "Silver Threads and Golden Needles," which had previously been recorded by Wanda Jackson and became a country standard. In the Springfields' recording of the song, Dusty Springfield mimics a country twang when she sings in harmony with her bandmates on the chorus. On her solo verses, she sings in a low contralto range, but with a timbre that is much more forceful and strident than the breathier sound she used later in her career. In a BBC television appearance with the Springfields, meanwhile, she thanks the audience in a voice that sounds deliberately stagey: resonating high in her head, her enunciation is almost awkward in its clarity.¹⁹ By 1962, however, Springfield was tiring of the band's country-western style. Shelby Singleton, the Sun Records owner who arranged a series of U.S. engagements for the Springfields, said that "she was doing country-western, which she didn't

17. Penny Valentine, "Dusty 'One of the Gang,' say Martha and the Vandellas," *Disc Weekly*, November 14, 1964, 11.

18. Whickam and Valentine, 46.

19. Whickam and Valentine describe her speaking voice at this performance as having "the precise, clipped tones of a Sunday school teacher." 36.

want to do. She was becoming more ‘black’ with her voice, and she felt restricted within the group.”²⁰ On her solo recordings, Springfield’s vocal approach changed, to the extent that her 1964 single “I Only Wanna Be With You,” moved Dionne Warwick to remark, “you know, when I first heard Dusty, I thought she was colored. She has such a soulful sound— and I go for soul singing.”²¹ These changes in Springfield’s voice demonstrate first, that the production of particular vocal timbres is a learned practice and convention of genre; second, that she adapted her vocal technique through collaboration with African-American women; and third, that listeners categorized her voice according to very rigid notions of race and musical genre. To call Springfield’s voice “black” is to neglect the much more complex histories that surround the musics of the African diaspora, music that, as Black, and others, including Karl Hagstrom Miller and Paul Gilroy have shown, borrow extensively from other dominant and marginal cultural groups.²² Furthermore, these descriptions of Springfield’s “black” voice efface the complexity of race, and presume that racial categories are, themselves, bounded and whole, rather than constructions that are constantly expanding, shrinking, and being re-negotiated.

Multiple sources have documented that Springfield was extremely conscientious about her advocacy for black artists and her use of musical idioms associated with African-Americans. By all accounts, she saw herself first and foremost as an advocate for R&B artists,

20. O’Brien, *Dusty*, 37.

21. Dionne Warwick, “My Top Choice,” *Disc*, June 6, 1964, 4.

22. See Karl Hagstrom Miller, *Segregating Sound Miller: Inventing Folk and Pop Music in the Age of Jim Crow* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2010); Gilroy, “*There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack.*”

and only secondarily as a contributor to the genre.²³ As a result, she often pushed back against the perception that her voice somehow sounded “black,” even while she set up African-American voices as an aspirational goal. In a 1963 interview, commenting on an instance when singer Cliff Richard referred to her as a “white negress,” she said, “You can’t get a more pleasing compliment when you really go for the groups like the Shirelles and the Crystals, can you.”²⁴ In 1964, asked yet again about Richard’s remarks, she countered, “the important word is ‘WHITE,’ not ‘Negress.’ No matter what people think, I don’t sound colored. I’d like to. Often I try to . . . I met Phil Spector recently . . . He said he thought my record ‘Only Want to Be With You’ was doing well in the States because it had a good ‘WHITE’ sound.”²⁵ While Springfield disavowed having a “black” sounding voice and was careful to give credit to other musicians where she felt it was due, listeners often continue to describe her voice and career in racialized terms that re-center whiteness.

The Sounds of Motown

Enter Martha Reeves, stage right, opposite Dusty Springfield, who enters stage left. Both are wearing slim-fitting long skirts and sleeveless tops; both have tall, bouffant hairstyles. They smile and laugh like two old friends. They cross a stage decorated with stylized pop-art portraits of Springfield and abstract geometrical shapes. The space is clearly

23. Randall, *Dusty*, 53.

24. Norman Jopling, “The White Negress, that’s what they call me —Dusty Springfield,” *Record Mirror*, April 6, 1963, 5.

25. Peter Jones, “Dusty —Don’t Be Serious About Music,” *Record Mirror*, February 15, 1964, 5.

a stage, clearly a performance space, but the set gives it an unreal quality, like something out of a cartoon that takes place on another planet. A heavily rhythmic horn introduction pulls viewers into a scene that might make an otherwise dreary Friday night suddenly seem more alive. The scene is the set of *Ready Steady Go!*, a television show that aired on the station Reddiffusion every Friday night for just over three years, from 1963 to 1966. Every Friday, young audiences would tune in and tune out the workaday week, drawn in by an escapist opening credit sequence that boldly proclaimed “The Weekend Starts Here.”

The *Ready Steady Go! Sounds of Motown Special* seems to have been the brainchild of Springfield and her longtime friend and sometime manager, Vicki Wickham, who, at the time worked as an editor for *Ready Steady Go!*. Springfield had met Martha Reeves and the Vandellas, with whom she formed a close friendship, as well as other Motown acts, including the Supremes and Marvin Gaye, during a stateside performance the previous year. Producers booked the entire Motown review for an appearance on *Ready Steady Go!* to coincide with the end of their legendarily ill-fated British tour.²⁶ By 1965, Motown had seen huge chart successes in the United States, and given the fascination that kids who participated in the burgeoning British mod subculture had for R&B, a tour of the U.K. seemed like a smart and timely business venture.²⁷ British audiences, however, simply failed to turn up.

Music critics and fans who wrote about the tour frame it in terms of anxiety over race in popular music. *Disc Weekly* magazine’s Laurie Henshaw called the tour’s failure the “Tamla Tragedy.” She interviewed concert promoter Arthur Howes, who complained about venues at

26. O’Brien, 60.

27. See Valentine, “Fame and Fortune: Life Story Film and Tamla Tour Plans,” *Disc Weekly*, January 9, 1965, 2.

less than half-full capacity in Leeds, Manchester, Blackpool, and Glasgow, and said, “It isn’t as if there hasn’t been any publicity. There has been tons of TV and radio coverage of the artists. People who have seen the shows rave about them. Yet the audiences are terribly disappointing. It must go down as the biggest mystery of the year.”²⁸ To get to the heart of this “mystery,” Henshaw invited readers to write in with their responses to the Tamla-Motown tour. While most fans expressed either outrage or indifference, some offered more detailed accounts of their reactions.²⁹ One fan argued that the skill of black American musicians demonstrated the integral role of African Americans in U.S. culture. Despite the laudatory nature of these comments, however, their author still constructs black people as an other, albeit an other that “we” should be glad to have around. The “we,” in this context, implicitly excludes people who aren’t white. They write: “Colored people are the backbone of America. They are especially prominent in their singing and most of the States’ top pop singers such as The Supremes, Stevie Wonder and the Drifters and Little Richard are all colored. Instead of condemning the Negro people should be thankful we have them.”³⁰

One fan phrased their respect for Motown in terms that, while not racially marked, are imbued with a sense of prestige, of excitement, and of newness: “The actual sound of the Motown stars is slightly ahead of what is generally accepted...I used to think that Dusty had

28. Laurie Henshaw, “The Tamla Tragedy: Just why did that Motown Tour Flop?” *Disc Weekly*, April 10 1965, 12.

29. One reader expressed dismay with the attitude of British pop audiences, and said “I was appalled to find such a small audience. What’s the matter with the British public when they won’t support such brilliant artists?” Other readers were less enthusiastic, complaining that the Motown sound was too uniform: “Tamla Motown...brilliant artists? Every Tamla Motown record is unmistakable —exactly the same! All they need is one group with about three male and two female singers. They could easily make every Tamla record!” Henshaw, “Your Verdict on the Tamla Tour,” *Disc Weekly*, April 24. 1965, 8.

30. Henshaw, “Your Verdict.”

one of the most exciting acts, but after seeing the Motown show I must hand a bouquet to Martha and the Vandellas for the most terrific stage act I've ever seen.”³¹

The sound of Motown artists, then, was one that was also associated with progress, with newness, and with aspiration. This understanding of the Motown sound held particular significance in black British communities. Jacqueline Nassy Brown argues that, during the Civil Rights era, many Black Britons looked to America for empowering models of blackness. One of her interviewees, a man named Joseph, who grew up in Liverpool, discusses using Motown as a means of coping with living in an all-white neighborhood. Brown says that “he gained a perspective on racism by studying the lyrics of the Temptations —lyrics he described as ‘pure philosophy’ —and by reading from the backs of their album covers.”³² Given that one of Motown founder Berry Gordy’s motivations in founding the label was to increase African American political power by gaining economic power, it makes sense that listeners would hear Motown’s music as aspirational.³³ Black American culture could also, however, represent an unattainable ideal to some black Britons, and the economically-empowered class mobility that Motown represented was out of reach for many working class black people in England. Nassy-Brown argues that black women, in particular, were leaving communities in cities like Liverpool in droves after World War II, often marrying black American servicemen. She says that “black America represented a resource for attaining a form of self respect that was,

31. Ibid.

32. Jacqueline Nassy-Brown, *Dropping Anchor, Setting Sail: Geographies of Race in Black Liverpool* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 49.

33. See Suzanne E Smith, *Dancing in the Street: Motown and the Cultural Politics of Detroit* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

according to them, unavailable locally.”³⁴ The status of Motown was thus somewhat contested. It offered, on one hand a musical model for self-fashioning, and on the other, a near-hegemonic ideal and unattainable model of middle class economic empowerment. Motown, then, as a sound connected to black American economic power, could represent both an aspirational ideal, while also casting class- and place-based inequalities into harsh relief.

By 1965, Springfield’s advocacy for Motown artists had reached such a fever pitch that she was publicly making fun of herself, writing, in a guest record review column for *Disc*, “I know what you’re all thinking—“allo, ‘allo, she’s off about them naughty Tamla Motown people again.’ Yes, folks, and it’s all true! Poor old Martha and the Vandellas are in for yet another D. Springfield-type plug. But honestly, when a record is good I like to say so and this is, even if it was made by Fred Nurge and the Dustmen, I’d think the same. So there.”³⁵ The *Sounds of Motown Special* thus represents a pinnacle of Springfield’s advocacy for African American musicians.

In some respects, the *Sounds of Motown* TV special succeeded where the tour failed, bringing the music of Motown into the living rooms of Britain, arguably helping to propel acts like the Supremes and the Temptations to chart success in the U.K. Individual Motown performers had appeared on the show before, but this was the first instance that the entire roster of artists made an appearance. The decision to book the full roster, according to Randall, sent a message of social change and of the re-invention of racial categories,

34. Nassy-Brown, 53.

35. Dusty Springfield, “Star Spot by Dusty Springfield,” *Disc Weekly*, January 1, 1965, 4.

conveying “the impression of a musical *movement* exactly representative of the social and political sea change that was well under way in the United States.”³⁶

Springfield and Reeves deliver one of the more compelling numbers on the *Sounds of Motown Special* together, duetting on Springfield’s hit “Wishin’ and Hopin’,” with the Vandellas on background vocals. The performance is exuberant, and a marked contrast to performances by Martha and the Vandellas and the Supremes later in the special, which are more restrained in comparison. When she sings with Springfield, Reeves is extremely casual in her demeanor, and instead of the rigid, stylized choreography that Motown artists were known for, she and Springfield seem to be ad libbing their movements, often in conversation with one another: at one moment, for instance, Reeves sings “You’ve gotta wear your hair just for him,” and Springfield responds by patting Reeves on top of her bouffant hair. The singers converse vocally as well—Reeves responds with a spoken “is that right?” when Springfield sings “Show him that you care just for him,” and they stage the song as a dialog, singing lines back and forth to each other, meeting each other’s eyes, and, most tellingly, laughing together and rolling their eyes at some of the song’s more ludicrous lyrics. Reeves and Springfield occupy the screen for the first half of the song, gradually making their way across the stage to where the Vandellas are standing, singing backup. Springfield’s interaction with the Vandellas is compelling: she engages with them and brings them out of the background, turning and speaking to them between her sung lines. She then moves to the side of the shot, creating space for the Vandellas in the middle of the screen, placing them as the focus. This space of musical collaboration, far from the Motown studios in Detroit,

36. Randall, *Dusty*, 23.

seems almost liberatory for Martha and the Vandellas. Their relaxed demeanor suggests that, in this moment, they're performing not for the whims of Berry Gordy, but for themselves.



Figure 2.1: Reeves and Springfield, “You gotta wear your hair just for him.”

The lyrics of “Wishin’ and Hopin’” are at once earnest and ironic. The constant incantations of “wishin’ and hopin’ and thinkin’ and prayin’” are repetitive and chant-like, like the repeated recitation of a prayer, which evokes people’s actual practices of wishing, of hoping, of praying for a different life or a better life. What the song’s protagonist is wishing for, however, is the affection of an anonymous “he,” and the chance to “be his.” The song ostensibly frames desire in the context of normatively feminine heterosexual love, in which the protagonist needs to do everything “just for him,” in order to eventually “be his.”

However, Reeves and Springfield imbue these lyrics with a deep irony. As they laugh and smirk their way through the song, their physical gestures parody the conventional practices of feminine beauty, and their vocal delivery and laughter mock the passive, regressive kind of “wishin’ and hopin’” that the song’s lyrics describe. The irony that underpins this performance transforms an otherwise regressive song lyric into a moment of alliance, through which Springfield and Reeves critique heteronormative gender roles.

In this performance, Springfield and Reeves also enact alliance through timbre. While the song was Springfield’s hit, the two singers are presented as vocal peers. Their respective vocal timbres are strikingly similar. As they trade off lines of the song, singing in conversation, they both adopt a forceful timbre that moves between sounding like a belted chest voice and resonating in the nasal passages. Their timbres match so closely that, when listening to the audio track of the performance without the accompanying video, it is nearly impossible to discern who is delivering which lines. While Springfield used this kind of very strident timbre in other recordings, notably her single, “You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me,” she typically contrasted it with a breathier timbre that sounds as though she is relaxing the muscles of her throat and placing less tension in her vocal folds. In “You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me,” for instance, the stridency in the chorus is contrasted by a softer approach in the verses. In the *Sounds of Motown* performance of “Wishin’ and Hopin’,” however, she maintains a forceful timbre throughout, a timbre that is closer to the sound Reeves typically employs in songs like “Dancing in the Street,” and “Heatwave,” than to Springfield’s own characteristic timbre. In this number, then, Springfield is quite literally envoicing a musical kinship with Reeves. Furthermore, when Reeves and Springfield sing in harmony,

Springfield's voice is on the bottom, and seems to buttress Reeves' higher harmonization. This supportive layering of Springfield's voice works as a musical metaphor for the way she supported Reeves' musical activities in Britain and allowed Reeves' sound to predominate in these moments of harmony.

The alliance envoiced through Reeves and Springfield's performance of "Wishin' and Hopin'" is, however, necessarily limited. As the image above shows, the performance takes place against a backdrop of a Warhol-esque mural featuring multiple pictures of Springfield's face, which loom over the scene, while the name "Dusty" glows in neon lettering. In terms of repertoire choice, Springfield is central: "Wishin' and Hopin'" was her hit, not Martha and the Vandellas, and although they perform "Nowhere to Run" later in the broadcast, Springfield does not join in on backing vocals for Reeves. Springfield had a certain amount of power and an ability to provide what Motown needed: an audience in the U.K. Her name and image effectively gave Berry Gordy's artists the endorsement they needed to break into the British pop scene. In many ways, then, Springfield's performances on *Sounds of Motown* highlight her privilege, even as she resisted that privilege. The musical tactics she used to push back against racialized power dynamics, however, make a polarized reading of the "Wishin' and Hopin'" performance impossible. However flawed it may have been, the *Sounds of Motown Special* represented Springfield's attempt to create a utopic space for both herself and for the black women whose voices she idolized, where they could be equals through music.

Just as the *Ready Steady Go! Sounds of Motown Special* can be understood as a manifestation of alliance between Springfield and Reeves born out of desire and aspiration, it

is also tempting to read it as a site of similar alliance between African American musicians and British working class youth. *Ready Steady Go!* was closely tied to mod, a subculture comprised of working class young people who venerated American R&B and had upwardly mobile economic aspirations. According to Arthur Marwick, the reality of working class life for young people in 1960s Britain was harsh. It meant “a ‘life sentence’ of hard manual work where, by an implicit irony, the attainment of middle-class living standards was only possible through expending, on overtime, even more excessive amounts of energy in a traditionally working-class way.”³⁷ Mods attempted to escape this reality through the signs of affluence such as well-tailored clothing, fancy scooters, and weekend long parties that were material symbols of economic upward mobility. It is easy to see how they may have felt an allegiance with Motown artists and the impulse towards economic upward mobility that Motown signified for African Americans. *Ready Steady Go!* was a television program produced by and for this group of young people, and it is tempting to connect their socioeconomic struggles to those of the musicians they adulated. However, Mods drew on African American music as a model of social opposition, that according to writers such as Dick Hebdige, romanticized blackness, and, I would argue, too often objectified African-American people, turning R&B

37. Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945*, 4th ed. (London: Penguin, 2003), 127.

performances into texts that are frequently voided of context.³⁸ The vocal timbres of R&B singers, then, could similarly become romanticized, idealized, signifiers of difference.

This romanticized blackness is visible in how Motown performers are represented in the *Ready Steady Go!* special: always stylized, and at a distance from their audience. *Ready Steady Go!*'s dancers, who appear throughout the program, seem completely disconnected from the Motown tunes that they are supposedly dancing to: their movements, choreographed by Malcolm Clare, who frequently worked with dancers on British television, are closer to ballroom dancing than to the kind of movements one would associate with pop. In a most telling moment, the Temptations perform "My Girl," and "It's Growing," with their backs turned to their audience, cementing the distance that exists between the audience and the actual bodies of the performers. Ironically, Springfield introduces the number by saying of the Temptations that "you should see them move," while the choice of camera angles frame their bodies in a way that hides their expert delivery of Cholly Atkins' choreography. Mid-way through the performance, the camera cuts away as the ubiquitous *Ready Steady Go!* dancers, whose choreography mimics the movements of the Temptations, momentarily take center stage.

The special ends with a communal performance of the Smokey Robinson and the Miracles' hit, "Mickey's Monkey," that attempts to embody the utopic impulse that underpins

38. In his discussion of the significance of rock and roll teddy boys (the 1950s precursors to the mods) Hebdige argues that the racial history of the genre was often masked and that white teddy boy listeners unironically embraced the culturally hybrid genre as a symbol of rebellion, while engaging in outward displays of racism. He says that "the history of rock's construction was...easily concealed. It appeared to be merely the latest in a long chain of American novelties...Erupting on the British scene in the late 50s, rock seemed to be spontaneously generated, an immediate expression of youthful energies which was entirely self-explanatory. And when the teddy boys, far from welcoming the newly arrived colored immigrants, took up arms against them, they were impervious to any sense of contradiction." *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*, (London: Methuen and Co, 1979), 50-51.

the program, but ultimately demonstrates where that impulse falls short, largely due to the arrangement of the timbral forces. The Miracles appear front and center, while Stevie Wonder towers above them on a dais. They are flanked by the Supremes on one side, by the Temptations, Reeves and the Vandellas, and Springfield on the other. The scene takes on an almost religious, ecstatic quality, as Smokey Robinson engages all of the participants in an elaborate game of call and response that evokes the call and response gospel style that informs much of Motown's songwriting. "Doing Mickey's Monkey, children," he calls, inviting the audience to dance, the way a preacher invites people to prayer. Robinson's voice, however, sounds tired and forced. The singers are poorly miked, and, although everyone on stage appears to be singing in response to Robinson, the only voice that is audible is Diana Ross's, whose thin timbre sounds unsupported and bare, and occasionally out of tune. The way the vocal forces seem at odds with the intent of the song is further emphasized by the position of the audience and of camera angles: the artists, once more, are not facing the audience, which is located at stage right. As Robinson, Ross, Reeves, Springfield, and company sing, it seems as though they are desperately trying to engage with an audience that simply is not there. A sudden shift in the camera angle reveals that the audience is there, singing along, but this viewpoint ultimately comes too late to succeed at portraying the number as a moment of shared musical expression between Springfield, the Motown artists, and their British audiences. The performance stutters to a close. *The Sounds of Motown Special* was a success for Motown and a success for Springfield, but nonetheless ends on an ambivalent note, at once embodying the hope and aspiration that made the Swinging Sixties swing, but perhaps also foreshadowing a less optimistic future.

Dusty in Memphis

For *Dusty in Memphis*, Springfield packed her bags and boarded a plane to America, bound for American Studios in Memphis. The album was framed as an opportunity for her to work and collaborate with the musicians and in the studios that had made the records that she had developed a reputation for aggressively promoting in Britain. The resulting album has been characterized as a masterpiece by some authors, as an ambivalent soul experiment by others. Critics from both camps, however, contend that on the album, Springfield was doing something different with her voice. In 1969, John Peel wrote, “What it brings us is a new Dusty. And one is thankful for it. The voice was getting just a bit too heavy, a bit too hard, so that the songs hardly stood up in their own right and the arrangements and production tended to be exactly what you’d expected . . . On *Dusty in Memphis* she has a new light, refreshingly young voice, a new approach, a new feel. It’s almost as though that tired blood has had a re-charge. Memphis has brought spring into her voice and has directed her career into a whole new way.”³⁹

In 1986, NME critic Charles Shaar Murphy wrote that, on the album, Springfield “responded by cooling out her vocal approach: backing off and smoothing down rather than attempting to out-testify the Sweet Inspirations, who sang backup.”⁴⁰ While Murphy and Peel couch the change in Springfield’s vocal style in unquestionably positive terms, in her later assessment of the album, Annie Randall argues that “in the near total absence of her

39. Peel, 17.

40. Shaar Murphy.

chest voice, the underlying strength of Dusty's persona is missing; the album's abjection thus seems more a permanent character trait than a temporary one from which the protagonist will eventually recover."⁴¹

While I am not as convinced as Randall that Springfield's vocals on *Dusty in Memphis* represent a state of permanent abjection, I do hear something almost melancholic in Springfield's vocal timbre. Instead of exuberantly embracing the sounds of soul and R&B, as she does on earlier recordings, the way Springfield backs off in her vocal approach suggests ambivalence and uncertainty, as though she is warily seeking something unobtainable. The album's opening track, "Just a Little Lovin'," introduces a very different Dusty. The soft strings that introduce the song create the context for Springfield's vocal entry. They are distant in the soundspace and come in with a soft attack. When Springfield enters, her voice seems to mimic the sound of the strings: as Randall points out, she sings with no chest voice, instead shaping her notes in a breathy, sometimes unsupported timbre. The song's aesthetic is one of distance: on the verses, Springfield sounds as though she is far away from the microphone, which creates space around her voice. In the choruses, when she sings, "this whole world wouldn't be half as bad, wouldn't be half as sad," her voice adopts a lilting quality as she moves into a higher register, occasionally evoking the more forceful timbres of her earlier recordings, but always backing off. This distant, moody approach characterizes much of the album, resulting in a very timbrally different Dusty Springfield.

The *Dusty in Memphis* sessions were not a particularly positive recording experience for those involved, perhaps contributing to Springfield's arguably uncertain vocal sound on the

41. Randall, *Dusty*, 66.

record.⁴² The notoriously controlling Springfield had worked with pre-arranged scores and instrumental tracks on her earlier recordings, and allegedly found herself incapable of working in the more improvisatory environment encouraged by producer Jerry Wexler. Springfield also reportedly found the reputations of singers, including Aretha Franklin and Wilson Pickett, who had preceded her in the studio's hallowed halls, incredibly intimidating.⁴³

Furthermore, when Springfield arrived at American Studios in September of 1968, the studio had effectively been in crisis for months, as a result of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in April of that year. Back argues that, prior to King's death, the environment at American, where the staff and musicians were fully integrated, had been an almost utopic space. He says:

The studio enabled common terms of communication to be established in music that blurred the lines of racial segregation through coloring sound . . . Yet, at the same time, racially invidious sentiments could disrupt and intrude on these fragile desegregated private places. In this sense I want to argue that the studio itself became a context in which a kind of innocent nonracialized world was lived and realized in sound. These utopian soundscapes lay beyond view, temporarily removed from the ravages and destructive scopic regimes of race and racism.⁴⁴

Back's argument runs precariously close to romanticizing the situation at American. As lovely as it seems, I am skeptical that people were able to fully shake off the vestiges of internalized and institutional racism when they walked through its doors. However, the *possibility* that

42. Warren Zanes, *Dusty in Memphis* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 42.

43. See Zanes, 92. Jerry Wexler also claimed that Springfield rejected most of the songs he had in mind for the album. In an interview with Warren Zanes, Wexler says, "As I played her song after song, I was hoping for a response. Would she like this one? If not, how about the next one? Most of the day and well into the night, I became first fatigued, and then spastic, as I moved from floor to player, and then back to the shelves, the chairs, and tables, in what eventually turned into a ballet of despair." Zanes, 41.

44. Back, "Out of Sight," 251.

the space might allow for an even limited amount of transcendence cannot be entirely dismissed. Given Springfield's confirmed desire to advocate for racial equality such an environment would have held particular appeal for her. Following the events of April, 1968, however, this promising space started to fall apart. For some musicians, according to black, the King assassination marked the beginning of a division between black and white musicians in Memphis, as the idea of integrated practices and spaces seemed all the more dangerous. Recording sessions with black artists were cancelled in the wake of growing distrust. According to songwriter Dan Penn,

Suddenly, our music —when I say our music I mean black and white people cutting it, writing it, and putting it down together, was gone . . . We respected the black singers and the black horns and pickers, I mean they were great, you respected them because you didn't have to dig it up —it was just there. They in turn respected us because we had the studios, we could write, and believe it or not, we could play. . . Suddenly, after Dr. King's death, it was all over.⁴⁵

The Memphis where Springfield found herself in fall of 1968 was not the stuff of her hopes and dreams. While the record's instrumental tracks were laid down at American by session musicians The Memphis Sound, Springfield ultimately refused to record her vocal tracks for the album there, instead retreating to studios New York.⁴⁶ The album presents a unified sound, however, belying the space, both physical and temporal, that actually existed between the recording of vocal and instrumental tracks. This space means that Springfield's vocals are more a *representation* of an idea of Memphis than they are *of* Memphis, as it was no longer (and perhaps never was) the place Springfield thought that it would be.

45. Ibid., 247-248.

46. Randall, *Dusty*, 64.

The result is that *Dusty in Memphis* creates an aspirational ideal of the South, and this manifests in Springfield's vocals. "Son of a Preacher Man," which remains the album's most iconic track, has Springfield singing about an adolescence that she never knew, adopting speech patterns stereotypically associated with Southernness. Her voice, again, breathless and husky, resonating in her head, becomes part of a larger texture that creates a mood of otherworldliness. The low, soft bass, separated from Springfield's voice by registral difference but connected through a shared muffled sound quality, the background vocalists who interject with "Mm-hms" as though they are narrating a children's story, create, again, a sense of distance, of dreaminess. This is further embodied by Springfield's exhorting call when she sings "How well can I remember" in the song's bridge, her voice straining as she reaches the album's pinnacle of yearning.

The relationship between Springfield and her backing vocalists as constructed on *Dusty in Memphis* echoes Springfield's earlier attempts at collaboration and alliance, and at moments comes close to usurping the typical hierarchy between lead vocalist and background vocalists. In the song, Springfield's voice is entirely dependent on the voices of her backing vocalists, and only functions as a "soul" vocal in the context of the voices that surround her. The backing vocalists on *Dusty in Memphis* were The Sweet Inspirations, a group of session singers brought together by Cissy Houston and Dee Dee Warwick, the mother of Whitney Houston and sister of Dionne Warwick, respectively. While they did release several singles themselves, the majority of their work was as backing vocalists, and they were among the artists who had recording sessions canceled in the wake of the King

assassination.⁴⁷ As with many such groups, the membership of the Sweet Inspirations often shifted, making it difficult to discern who participated in the *Dusty in Memphis* sessions. While the individual women who participated in creating the album are not named on the album credits, the identity that Springfield constructs on the album nonetheless depends on their vocal presence. Like her performance with Reeves on the *Sounds of Motown Special*, Springfield's performances with the Sweet Inspirations can be heard as sites of alliance that are part of Springfield's attempt at self-fashioning; but much like the *Sounds of Motown*, these alliances are again limited by Springfield's stardom, as much as they are enabled by it.

In "Don't Forget About Me," Springfield's voice is miked at a low level and is kept quite distant in the arrangement of musical forces. She sings an almost forgettable, uninteresting melody, while the Sweet Inspirations provide the textural, harmonic, and melodic interest in the song. When the song opens, Springfield's vocals are breathy, quiet and unsure, alone against a sparse background. It is only when the Sweet Inspirations come in that she gradually begins sounding stronger in timbre and tone, and the insecurity in her voice disappears. The Sweet Inspirations maintain an understated presence on the song's verses, but their choral responses to Springfield's invocations maintain a sense of control that Springfield seems to lack. While her voice sounds unsure of both melody and rhythm, the soft "oohs" of the Sweet Inspirations act as a foundational force. In the song's chorus, they abandon this supportive role and their voices move forward in the sonic space of the recording, to the point where Springfield's voice is almost lost. They harmonize above and below Springfield, engulfing her voice in theirs. Springfield's voice becomes more strident in

47. Back, "Out of Sight," 250.

response, as if the Sweet Inspirations' voices have somehow constituted her voice, reflecting the historical patterns of musical migration and performance that brought about Springfield's vocal style. On the final statement of the verse, however, Springfield's voice abandons the melody, improvising above the Sweet Inspirations, while they carry the repeated incantations of the chorus. "Don't forget about me," they sing over and over again. And while the song is ostensibly about the end of a romantic relationship, when the Sweet Inspirations sing "don't forget about me," the song becomes about remembering something else; perhaps it remembers a more idealistic Springfield, just a few years prior, when her musical alliances with black women were still the stuff of aspiration, and still promised a way for Springfield to reinvent herself. And perhaps, in repeating "don't forget," the song envoices a hope that the kind of musical and social justice Springfield envisioned might still be possible.

Dusty in Memphis, like the *Sounds of Motown Special*, represents an attempt to realize a dream. Both performances, however, create scenes that are as furtive as the dreams that occasioned them. The alliances that made *Sounds of Motown* and *Dusty in Memphis* possible can be heard in the voices of Springfield, Reeves, the Sweet Inspirations, and the other singers who participated in the two recordings. They can be seen when Springfield, Reeves, and the Vandellas sing to each other in dialogue. But whether those alliances can transcend the moments captured in the recordings of *Sounds of Motown* and *Dusty in Memphis* remains to be seen. A case in point: after Springfield's death in 1999, the BBC aired a tribute, hosted by Lulu, who declared, "I believe that [Springfield] opened the gates for female singers to

cross over and move into that R&B, blues area.”⁴⁸ Lulu’s statement disregards the many women (mostly of color) who already were R&B and blues singers; making her description implicitly about *white* female singers and ignoring the women of color who made Springfield’s crossover career possible. Mary O’Brien’s voice helped her to become Dusty Springfield. It helped her try to embody a different kind of femininity than the models of girlhood discussed in chapter one; it enabled her to vocalize a sense of alliance; but it also remains a sonic reminder of our deep investment in constructions of race that limit alliance.

48. *Dusty at the BBC*, 5 March 1999, BBC2.

Chapter III

I Can't Sing, but I'm Young: On Voice, Femininity, and Age

“As Tears Go By” is a song that should be sung by an older woman. It’s a song bathed in twilight, about a person immobilized by regret. When I hear seventeen-year-old Marianne Faithfull sing “It is the evening of the day, I sit and watch the children play...all I hear is the sound of leaves falling on the ground. I sit and watch as tears go by,” it sounds uncomfortably precocious. The song sits low in her vocal range, and while this registerial level makes her sound vaguely adult, the hallmarks of a young, untrained voice remain, and the effect is of a young girl masquerading as a grown up. While many of Faithfull’s recordings from this same period feature a notably quavering vibrato,¹ it’s absent here, leaving a purity of pitch that evokes the naïve sound of young choral singers. Save for a few gentle upward scoops at the beginnings of phrases, Faithfull delivers an unornamented melody, giving the song a youthful simplicity. Faithfull’s phonation is breathy, air leaking out around the vocal sound, the hallmark of a voice that lacks the muscular support that comes with age and training. This breathy vocality is particularly audible on low, melismatic passages that occur on words such as “day” and “sing,” words with vowel sounds that are notoriously difficult to shape and sustain for lengthy passages, let alone at the very bottom of a singer’s range. On one hand, these notes contribute to the affective quality of the song, their softness contributing to the song’s introspective, moody quality; on the other hand, they reveal the limits of Faithfull’s vocal technique, and betray her youth.

1. See, for example, her versions of “Down By the Salley Gardens” and “Four Strong Winds” on the 1965 album *Come My Way*.

Lulu's Shout is a very different kind of song. She opens with a sustained, gravelly, melismatic howl before segueing into rapidly articulated words. In just a few measures of music, Lulu makes it clear that this song is nothing short of a showcase for her virtuosic vocal skill. She is equally at home sustaining lyrical phrases as she is at delivering clear, rapid-fire, rhythmic passages. She shifts between pointedly different vocal timbres: the aforementioned grinding, gravelly quality, makes her sound like a dead-ringer for Wanda Jackson, and contrasts sharply with the clear, vibrato-free tone she achieves on higher notes that pop dramatically out of the texture. Her voice is flexible and versatile, somewhat paradoxically evoking both youth and experience. The way she moves seamlessly between vocal timbres and textures without tiring suggests that her body is young and capable, and hasn't experienced the changes that even the most well-trained voice experiences with age. However, her skill also suggests a level of training and experience beyond her years – Lulu was fourteen when the song was recorded, but she sings with a virtuosity that takes other singers years more to achieve. There's something entrancing her her performance: like many virtuosic displays by very young performers, it has a captivating and strange quality about it.

Both Lulu and Faithfull re-recorded these, their debut singles, in the 1980s. In her 1987 recording of "As Tears Go By," from the album *Strange Weather*, lush strings and plucked guitar accompany Faithfull, whose voice, by now has a completely different character. Gone is the guileless girlish soprano, replaced instead with a chesty contralto; a voice that sometimes sounds pained and inflexible, and that seems restricted to a limited low range. In the context of the ethereal string texture, Faithfull's voice sounds distinctly unbeautiful, the otherworldliness of the strings imbuing the performance with a deeply nostalgic affect.

Lulu's later performances of "Shout," on the other hand, particularly her live rendition on a 1986 episode of *Top of the Pops*, are strikingly similar to her earlier performances. She reins in the contrast between her different vocal qualities – the shift from her grinding, gravelly "yeahs" to a more lyrical voice is less pronounced, and she maintains a more consistent timbre throughout – but the arrangement remains essentially unchanged. When Lulu and Faithfull revisit their respective musical pasts, then, they appear to do so with markedly different goals in mind, and their performance choices negotiate memory, nostalgia, and the changes time has wrought on their singing voices in very different ways.

In 1964, Marianne was eighteen and Lulu was sixteen and their first singles were music to the ears of a scene obsessed with youth. Like Shaw, Black, and their other contemporaries, Faithfull and Lulu enjoyed an independence that was ultimately limited, and contingent on maintaining romantic feminine ideals. These ideals of independence were rooted in youthfulness, and, just as Shaw and Black demonstrate uneasy relationships to individualism; and Springfield, an ambivalence about her white femininity, Faithfull and Lulu's respective performances in the sixties articulate a tension between girlhood and womanhood. This tension still marks their performances today: cultural myths of the swinging sixties would freeze them in time as hip 1960s dollybirds, even while they attempt to sustain careers in a climate that privileges innovation, and where their aging bodies and voices are constantly policed. Lulu and Faithfull's early career performances represent two different but equally contradictory models of youthful femininity, with both singers envoicing a liminal space between childhood and adulthood. I argue that these same constructions of age still echo in how Lulu and Faithfull sing today, and that they draw on

these resonances of their earlier selves in order to resist dominant narratives of aging as a process of decline.

In discussing these specific examples, I gesture towards larger questions of how women singers deal with aging as a bodily and social phenomenon that has implications both for the physical act of singing and for how audiences perceive women singers. The sound of a singer's voice, so dependent on the state of her body, is never static and shifts and changes throughout her lifetime. As a young singer, I remember being told that certain songs weren't appropriate for me yet, that I would grow into them as my muscles grew and became stronger, and that I could look forward to singing them with my adult voice. As I approach thirty, I'm still not sure what a fully developed adult singing voice should sound like. Instead, I am increasingly certain that voices exist in a perpetually liminal state, always shifting and changing with time and with context, just as our bodies are constantly shifting and changing. Age, then, has emerged for me as an important conceptual lens for thinking about voices. In the most simplistic of terms, aging can be understood as the physical processes that occur to our bodies as time passes and as we get older. But aging is also social and cultural, and social expectations that are contingent on age are subject to constant re-negotiation. Moral panic about "age appropriateness" in terms of media consumption, fashion, sexual expression and other social practices is a dominant strain in British and North American public discourse, even while the very idea of what counts as "old" or "young" remains in flux. Kathleen Woodward argues that age and ageism must be of concern to feminists, as age intersects with other identity categories, such as gender, class, race, and ability in ways that inform identities, social roles, and the modes of oppression that people face in their day to day lives.²

2. Kathleen Woodward, Introduction, *Figuring Age: Women, Bodies, Generations* (Indiana

The impact of age as an organizing principle in society is thus inexorably linked to intersections with other social categories. If, as I've argued, the gender, race, and class of a performer informs both their vocal production and how listeners perceive their voice, similarly, we can hear and perform age through the timbres and inflections of singing.

Much of the feminist literature about women and age is preoccupied with visibility and invisibility, the ability of women to be seen and to be recognized as they age, but I propose that *audibility* is also at issue and is of particular concern to singers. Susan Sontag argues that aging women become invisible through a humiliating process of "gradual sexual disqualification," beginning as soon as they leave early youth, the point at which their sexual desirability (in many Western cultures, at least) peaks.³ Elizabeth Markson and Beth B. Hess elaborate, demonstrating that as women get older, and are perceived to move beyond their reproductive years, they cease to fit *heteronormative* models of sexuality and desirability.⁴ For these authors, age and sexuality intersect to construct aging women's invisibility. Joanna Frueh and Vivian Sobchak, among others, have pointed out that a cruel double bind results: while women who age are sexually unavailable and invisible, women who try to halt or delay this process – think Joan Collins, Zsa Zsa Gabor, Mae West, Elizabeth Taylor – are constructed as unnatural and grotesque.⁵

While this scholarship is preoccupied with questions of visibility, aging affects more

University Press, 1999), x.

3. Susan Sontag, "The Double Standard of Aging," in *The Other Within Us: Feminist Explorations of Women and Aging*, ed. Marilyn Pearsall (Boulder: Westview Press, 1997), 83.

4. Elizabeth Markson and Beth B. Hess, "Older Women in the City," in *The Other Within Us*, 58.

5. See Joanna Frueh, *Monster/Beauty: Building the Body of Love* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Vivian Sobchak, "Scary Women: Cinema, Surgery, and Special Effects," In *Figuring Age*, 200.

than just the appearance of the body. For performers, it causes audiences to question a competency or skill, and for singers, the question of audibility and silencing emerges alongside visibility. Stories of singers whose voices markedly change or become unusable are often narrated as trauma, and just as the and theories of aging that I discussed above often touch on the experience of aging as a loss of self, singers who undergo traumatic changes in their voice discuss that loss in similar terms.⁶ Vocal pedagogy literature demonstrates a marked anxiety about aging and decline.⁷ The vast majority of this literature pertains to classical singing, wherein the sound of aging is treated as undesirable. Richard Miller, in *On the Art of Singing* assures reader that, by exercising the voice on a daily basis, by pre-emptively avoiding activities that might cause “wear and tear” on the voice, a singer can expect to maintain their voice well into old age.⁸ Miller’s entire discussion of singing and aging is written with the assumption that the reader is deeply fearful that a loss of voice will accompany their eventual physical decline, but Miller’s remarks are intended less as specific technical guidance than they are a pep talk, encouraging the singer and reminding them that, with their highly trained vocal apparatus, they are special, and less prone to the kind of vocal decline that affects ordinary folks. Miller says, revealingly, “one gets the impression that there is something unseemly about continuing to sing beyond a certain age, a kind of lawless

6. Witness the experience of singers like Julie Andrews, who lost much of her vocal function after botched surgery to remove nodules, or Denyce Graves, who experienced a sudden hemorrhage in her vocal folds when she sneezed backstage during a performance.

7. See Margaret Olsen, *The Solo Singer in the Choral Setting: A Manual for Achieving Vocal Health* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 70-72; Robert T. Sataloff, “Voice Ageing and its Medical Implications: What Singing Teachers Should Know,” *Journal of Singing* 57, no. 1 (2000): 29-34; Roma Waterman, *The Working Singers’ Handbook* (Victoria: Waterman, 2003), 145.

8. Richard Miller, *On the Art of Singing*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 202-203.

flaunting of the geriatric rules. This is why a number of people stop singing before they should. Society expects it of them.”⁹ And there, it seems, is the rub. When singing falls outside the range of behavior considered acceptable as people age, they are expected to quiet down and disappear. Miller’s work, though, focuses on classical singing, and age can have different ramifications in the context of conventions of popular genres. Laurie Stras argues that voices that bear the sounds of years of use are desirable in genres like cabaret; while voices that have an audible hoarseness to them are valued in other popular genres, including punk, jazz, and folk, as signs of authenticity.¹⁰ Many listeners take for granted that the sound of a voice is a faithful testament to a singers’ lived experiences; timbre is understood as biographical, as a sign of hardships and experiences that have lend the singer authority and sincerity. The significance of an aging voice is complex: it can be detrimental or positive for a performer’s career, and the line between deliberate performances of age and authority and the changes that occur on their own as singers age is indistinct.¹¹

Changes to the physical apparatus of the voice, do occur, beginning early in life, but only gain meaning through social and musical practices. The bodies of teenage girls often go through physical changes during puberty that, Stras argues, create what are heard as disruptions in their voices. “These voices,” Stras says, “*by their very nature* were liable to

9. Ibid.

10. See Stras, “The Organ of the Soul.”

11. While it is outside of the scope of this discussion, I want to make mention of a recent, tangible reaction to anxiety over the “aging” voice: the development of surgeries tellingly dubbed “voice lifts,” in which the careful use of laser technology and injected cell tissue can enable doctors to extend the usability of a singers’ voice, a practice not unlike other surgical techniques people might use to visually disguise their age. Thank you to Nina Eidsheim for alerting me to this. “Surgery ‘makes you sound young,” *BBC News*, last modified April 20, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/health/3641857.stm>.

sound out of control, at least occasionally.”¹² The clinical literature on the voice demonstrates that the hormonal climate of a girl singer’s body can have a dramatic impact on her sound. According to Jean, Patrick, and Beatrice Abitbol, the presence of estrogens and progesterones and the thickening of the vocal muscle in female bodies at puberty results in a lowering of the fundamental frequency of the voice by approximately a third, even while the vocal muscles remain supple and narrow. During and after puberty, the production of glandular mucuses that affect vocal production are governed by hormone levels, resulting in changes to the voice contingent on the menstrual cycle.¹³ As people continue to age beyond adolescence, their voices continue to change, according to the presence or absence of hormones. R. J. Baken’s studies on vocal production in the elderly have shown that, with increased age, comes a loss of tissue mass in the vocal folds and calcification in the cartilage of the larynx, which, in turn, cause increases in tension and faster vibration of the vocal folds. The sonic results, he says, are “diminished volume, breathiness, relatively high pitch, diminished flexibility, and perhaps tremulousness.”¹⁴

These anatomical factors work in conjunction with other factors, including idiomatic performance choices based on genre, on venue, on training, on interpretive intent, etc., which are equally influential in performers’ enactments and listeners’ perceptions of age. A study by Ruth Huntley, Harry Hollien, Thomas Shipp demonstrated that, when asked to guess a singer’s age based solely on blind assessment of an audio sample, listeners were

12. Stras, “Introduction: She’s So Fine, or Why Girl Singers (Still) Matter,” in *She’s So Fine*, 36.

13. Beatrice, Jean, and Patrick Abitbol, “Sex hormones and the female voice.” *Journal of Voice* 13, no. 3 (1999): 424-446.

14. R.J. Baken, “The Aged Voice: A New Hypothesis,” *Journal of Voice* 19, no. 3 (2005): 31-35.

inclined to guess that the given singer was younger than their actual age.¹⁵ The results of this study reflect cultural biases in favor of youth, and demonstrate that both listeners and performers enact some agency over the performance and perception of vocal age. Given Woodward's assertion that our ideas of what constitutes oldness or youngness are contextually dependent and always in flux, it follows that the point at which a voice shifts from sounding old to sounding young is also contextual; that the notions of a "young" or an "old" voice are unstable concepts. For singers like Lulu and Faithfull, youth and age are part of personae that they have performed in different ways and to different ends, often through their voices.

In 1964, when Lulu and Faithfull released their first respective singles, they possessed vastly different voices, in part because of a difference in repertoire, but also, no doubt, because of a difference in pedigree. Lulu had begun singing publicly as a child, and was winning singing competitions during family holidays by age eight.¹⁶ Faithfull's voice, on the other hand, sounded untrained largely because it was; apart from informal singalongs with friends, she reportedly hadn't done much performing, and hadn't given a singing career much thought until she was approached by Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham, who saw more potential in her looks than in her voice.¹⁷ In addition, the two came from vastly different backgrounds: Faithfull's father was a professor, her mother, the Baroness von Sacher-Masoch, and she grew up in a bohemian environment of impoverished aristocracy.

Lulu grew up in the slums of Glasgow, and, by her own account was raised in a family that,

15. Huntley, Hollien, and Shipp, "Influences of Listener Characteristics on Perceived Age Estimations," *Journal of Voice* 1 (1987): 49-52.

16. Lulu Kennedy-Cairns, *I Don't Want to Fight* (London: Little Brown, 2011), 27.

17. Marianne Faithfull, *Faithfull: An Autobiography* (London: Little Brown, 1994), 20.

while loving, could also be violent and tempestuous. Regardless of these differences, however, the voices of these two girls both became emblematic of youth at this particular moment.

In his account of 1960s London, Shawn Levy quotes actor Ian McKellan, who says “My generation was brought up to think that you would peak in middle age. That there was a such thing as the prime of life...And suddenly it was all knocked on the head. Suddenly forty was old.”¹⁸ In swinging London, young was in, and youthfulness was equated with being anti-establishment, with newness and modernity.¹⁹ For young women, this meant embracing fashion that highlighted and heightened their youth. Designer Mary Quant remarked “Suddenly, every girl with a hope of getting away with it is aiming to look not only under the voting age, but under the age of consent.”²⁰ The 1967 film *Smashing Time* lampoons this particular culture: Lynn Redgrave and Rita Tushingham star as Yvonne and Brenda, two oblivious Northern girls who come to London seeking fame. A charismatic record executive takes Yvonne under his wing, and she has an improbably successful single, a song with a verse that exclaims “I can’t sing but I’m young!” *Smashing Time* reflects a larger cultural discourse that implies that for young women singers who were successful during the mythic days of Swinging London, it was less a question of ability and talent than of being young,

18. Shawn Levy, *Ready, Steady, Go!: The Smashing Rise and Giddy Fall of Swinging London* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 6.

19. As Dominic Sandbrook shows, this attitude permeated many aspects of British culture. For instance: the campaign messages Harold Wilson used in his 1964 bid for Prime Minister focused on technological advancement and bringing Britain to a modern age, and were deliberately directed to young voters, while television shows like *The Avengers* and *Adam Adamant* went out of their way to embody a cool modernity. *White Heat: a History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Abacus, 2007), 42, 49, 274.

20. Mary Quant, *Quant by Quant*, (London: Cassell and Cassell, 1966), 161. Quoted in Sandbrook, *White Heat*, 236.

having connections, and being in the right place at the right time. While this is true to an extent, it does undermine the skill and labor of many of these performers and creates a double bind in which their age is both credited with their success; but is also used to discredit them.

“An angel with big tits”

Marianne Faithfull’s performance of “As Tears Go By” was part of a series of representations of her that traded on and sexualized her youth, her whiteness, and her Englishness. In her memoir, Faithfull spends just three scant pages discussing the recording of “As Tears Go By.” She recounts the oft-cited tale of the svengali-like Oldham noticing her at an Adrienne Posta launch party (“I saw an angel with big tits and I signed her,” he said, claiming little concern as to whether or not said angel could sing), and, shortly thereafter, spiriting her away to a recording studio. “Maestro Andrew’s only direction to me,” she says, “was to sing very close to the mike. It was an invaluable piece of advice. When you sing close to the mike, it changes the spatial dimension. You project yourself into the song.”²¹

And, indeed, Faithfull did project a particular version of herself into that song, one that many listeners interpreted as a representation of her true self. The kind of “self” a singer might project into a song exists on a continuum between real and affected: it is at turns a persona put on for the benefit of the public eye, or is reflective of the performer’s lived sense of themselves, or it exists somewhere in between; as the boundary between “self” and performed “self” remains to be seen. Likewise, the sound of a voice might reveal something

21. Faithfull, 24.

about a performer's emotional state, or it might reflect an emotional state that they're attempting to create; it might tell us something about a performer's body, or it might mask truths about a performer's body.²² Recorded when she was just seventeen, "As Tears Go By" was written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, at Oldham's behest. Paradoxically, perhaps, for a song penned by a pair who positioned themselves as rock and roll's most notorious bad boys, the song came to represent everything about Marianne that made her ideal. Her vocal performance positioned her as very English, even though she was not; very reserved and good, but somehow sexy, making it easy for the press to turn the story of her later misfortune into a narrative of corruption and decline; very honest and introspective; and, importantly, very, very young.

22. In her discussion of Faithfull, Norma Coates draws on Philip Auslander's discussion of performing persona. The term persona, in this context, refers performer's public self-presentation. This self-presentation, she and Auslander argue, is not necessarily the same as the actual self, but is often assumed to be. Coates, 190.



Figure 3.1: Melancholy Marianne as every boy's valentine, *Fabulous*, February 13 1965

In 1964, Faithfull's voice sounded, to the casual listener, untrained and naïve. In a piece published in *Fabulous* in 1965 called "Why I Would Send a Valentine to Marianne Faithfull," Michael Aldred wrote, "Her singing is folksy, honest and straightforward. Much like Miss Faithfull herself." He goes on to point out that "her fans love her. Especially the boys, who sit and reflect how nice it would be to have a girlfriend like Marianne Faithfull."²³

23. Michael Aldred, "Why I Would Send a Valentine to Marianne Faithfull," *Fabulous*, February 13 1965, 10.

Here, Aldred identifies Faithfull's honesty and straightforwardness as qualities inherent in her voice that extended to her personality, and his comments show that these were part of what made her desirable. Faithfull's comments at the time corroborate his assessment. In a guest editorial for *Fabulous*, she writes at length, in rather simplistic language, about her fears and desires as a young woman:

I don't cry much, though I used to when I was younger. Now, only artificial things make me cry, like tear-jerker books or films. On certain occasions I feel lonely, but mostly it's when I'm with a lot of people...I used to be afraid of the dark, but I'm not anymore...Often, I sing to myself. Old songs, usually. Just the songs I'm fond of.²⁴

Faithfull paints herself as sensitive, moody, and melancholic, and apparently so honest and sincere that she had no qualms about sharing her most personal thoughts with the reading audience of thousands of young girls. This honesty though, is affectation. In retrospect, her commentary reads as disingenuous; in her memoir she claimed that, far from being honest, she tried to be deliberately outlandish and contrary when talking to the press. "I gave them not only the acerbic, aphoristic Marianne but the dotty daughter of the Baronessa as well."²⁵ This jived quite nicely with the image Oldham was trying to craft for her. "Marianne Faithfull is a little seventeen-year-old blonde...who still attends a convent in Reading...she is lissome and lovely with long blonde hair...Marianne digs Marlon Brando, Woodbine cigarettes, poetry, going to the ballet, and wearing long evening dresses. She is shy, wistful, and waiflike," read his press release for "As Tears Go By." Faithful describes the resulting creation as "a tantalizing fantasy" of "an eerie fusion of haughty aristocrat and folky bohemian child-

24. Marianne Faithfull, "Writing For You This Week, Marianne Faithfull: This Little Bird," *Fabulous*, July 13, 1965, 4.

25. *Faithfull*, 31.

woman.”²⁶ It is thus largely irrelevant whether Faithfull’s statements to the press in 1964 reflected her actual self-conception, as they served an image and an ideal. Her public declarations of her worries and fears fit in with social expectations that celebrities be honest with their audiences, ominously foreshadowing her later experiences of a life lived under the often cruel public eye, but also construct her as a paragon of youthful earnestness and sensitivity.

As if to demonstrate further that Faithfull’s handlers wanted the public to bear witness to her youth, her televised performances of “As Tears Go By” also heightened and sexualized her girliness. On an infamous 1965 appearance on *Hullabaloo*, she sits motionless on stage and lipsyncs the song, absolutely still but for her lips. A collared mini dress and razor-edge bangs make her look like a schoolgirl, her utter motionlessness betraying a complete lack of agency. Aldred effusively describes an even more bizarre (and, frankly, disturbing) scene from a different performance:

One performance of it that I shall never forget was Southern TV’s *Disc-wizz*. The show’s director, Mike Mansfield, is a very way ahead man. His set for “Tears” fell nothing short of being brilliant. Marianne was curled up in an armchair, facing a window and gently caressing a kitten. Simulated rain fell upon the mock window.²⁷

Given that the main thrust of Aldred’s article is that Faithfull was irresistible to him, the infantilized, sad, Faithfull, curled up with her kitten against the rain emerges as a paragon of sexual desirability. For Norma Coates, this kind of characterization of Faithfull is tied to larger social and political forces: “With her milky skin, full lips and bosom, improbable but real name, and stunning looks, [Oldham] cast her as the apotheosis of English womanhood, a

26. *Ibid.*, 33.

27. Aldred.

symbol of racial purity during a period when the complexion of the British popular and the influences on the music popular amongst the young were getting darker.”²⁸ The sexualization of Marianne Faithfull is not just a sexualization of girlhood, but is, specifically, a sexualization of *white* girlhood.



Faithfull performing “As Tears Go By” on *Hullabaloo*

Figure 3.2: Faithfull on *Hullabaloo*, 1965

Faithfull’s vocal sound on her early recordings was complicit in this construction of white feminine sexuality. In terms of genre, Faithfull did not perform R&B-styled tunes with soul and gospel inflections like contemporaries such as Lulu and Dusty Springfield; rather, her early recordings consisted of British and American folksongs and songs penned or arranged in a folk-pop style. Her follow-up to “As Tears Go By” was a version of “Blowin’ in

28. Norma Coates, “Whose Tears Go By? Marianne Faithfull at the Dawn and Twilight of Rock Culture” in *She’s So Fine*, 189.

the Wind;” while 1965 saw the simultaneous release of two albums, the folky *Come My Way*, and the more conventionally pop-oriented *Marianne Faithfull*.²⁹ Repertoire and interpretive choices on both records, and Faithfull’s subsequent single, “This Little Bird,” demonstrate an attempt to tap into the success of folk revival acts like Joan Baez or the Weavers. Even on the purportedly poppier *Marianne Faithfull*, Faithfull’s vocal quality bears the markers of folk. Her voice sounds hushed and introspective, but still always precise and careful, her diction clear, with occasional instances of a ringing, bell-like vibrato that seems to emerge on her high notes without provocation. This technique communicates an emotional intensity while maintaining the audibility of the text, and Faithfull sounds like she feels the words she is singing. But even while she envoices a kind of emotional “authenticity,” she keeps it under strict control. When it appears, the vibrato in her voice sounds like an incursion, disrupting her otherwise pure tone, but she controls its scope and it remains slight and contained, a skill that might betray more vocal experience than she would have let on. Faithfull sounds about as contained as she looked, sitting on stage, singing “As Tears Go By” on *Ready Steady Go!* Faithfull’s resulting vocal sound is, frankly, quite chaste – none of this bawdy American rhythm and blues for our Baroness’ daughter, thank you very much. In combination with the melancholic, pure, blonde, busty schoolgirl-like image that Oldham and Calder concocted for her, the result was an illicit sexual appeal, an archetype of virginal chastity just waiting to be spoiled.

Faithfull’s singing evoked the vocal style of the folk revival, a sound marked both as particularly white and very sincere, originating in a folk movement pre-occupied with the

29. By this time, Faithfull had broken with Oldham and was working with new manager Tony Calder, because she was unhappy with Oldham’s work on her single “Blowin’ in the Wind.” *Faithfull*, 33.

ideal of “authentic” expression. But while the sincerity of folksingers is often taken as a given, sincerity is, itself, a performance.³⁰ In his discussion of rock vocal technique, Richard Middleton argues that rock singing is

a *natural* expression – by comparison (implicit or explicit) with the trained, disciplined technique, the pure tone, the objectifying control associated with classical singing. It is certainly true that in much rock singing the absence of low-larynx technique and of diaphragm-oriented breath control lead to relatively speech-like vocal production; that *individuality* of voice quality tends to be at a premium; and that the resulting *directness* of utterance is often taken to be a mark of expressive truth.³¹

Similar aesthetic values arguably apply to folk singing as well: Simon Frith argues that the ideology of folk music - that it represents an “authentic,” and consequently valuable musical rendering of an individual’s experience – were transposed onto rock by critics who wanted to advance its cultural capital.³² In his discussion of rock singing, Middleton is careful to always italicize the word natural or put it in scare quotes, he does not explicitly state this act: that the supposed ‘naturalness’ of a particular vocal sound is, itself, a construction; that the idea of what constitutes a natural sound is not fixed or objective. A natural sound is something that is performed and affected, something that, itself, requires as much technique (albeit different technique) as the highly stylized sounds of classical voices. The rise of the singer-songwriter and neo-romantic approaches to rock that developed in the 1960s have led to the development of a pop music culture that places undue value on sincerity and authenticity, failing to acknowledge that these are affects that are themselves performed. Marianne’s

30. Consider, for instance, Bob Dylan’s deliberate use of an unpolished vocal sound, that imbues his recordings with a certain authority.

31. Middleton, “Rock Singing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Singing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 28.

32. Frith “The Magic That Can Set You Free: The Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community,” *Popular Music* 1 (1981): 159.

voice, which sometimes sounded contained and sometimes didn't; sometimes sounded trained and sometimes didn't, had a quality of amateurism that contributed to her performance of sincerity. As Oldham's press release, and Faithfull's self-aware commentary later in her career indicate, however, her folksy sincerity was an affectation, deployed to sexualize her.

The performance of young, white, feminine sexuality engineered by Oldham and Calder, and enacted through Faithfull is stereotypical to the point of caricature, less an identity than an archetype. But the combination of her vocal enactment of authenticity and her supposed sincerity and youthful forthrightness naturalize it, and make it seem real instead of fantastical. Years later, Faithfull conceded that "As Tears Go By" was a marketable portrait of me and as such is an extremely ingenious creation, a commercial fantasy that pushes all the right buttons. It did such a good job of imprinting that it was to become, alas, an indelible part of my media-conjured self for the next fifteen years."³³ And for those fifteen years, it was taken for granted that the song faithfully represented Faithfull.

"A real lulu of a kid"

In 1964, a girl sometimes dubbed the "Scottish Brenda Lee"³⁴ appeared on *Ready Steady Go!* to a national audience. Bright eyes, cropped pants, and her hair cut in a gravity-defying wedged bob, little Lulu looked boyish and playful, a cross between an Audrey Hepburn-like gamine and swinging mod gal. While many British girl singers in the 1960s

33. Faithfull, 25.

34. Dave Thompson, "Lulu: Back for More," *Goldmine*, April 1, 1994.

seemed to straddle the worlds between childhood and adulthood, Lulu's public persona – that of an ebullient, bright, irrepressible young woman – seemed, more than the others, to skew young. An unscientific survey of Lulu-related press in the sixties reveals that the most common words used to describe her were “bouncy” and “bubbly.” She was small and spunky, and, at age fourteen, barely out of childhood. Born Marie McDonald McLaughlan Lawrie, her manager Marion Massey gave her the stage name Lulu because, she claimed, “she was a real lulu of a kid,” whatever that is supposed to mean.³⁵ And while Lulu herself sometimes expressed ambivalence about this particular construction of her image, it was nonetheless a point of identification for young readers and listeners, arguably enabling her audience, many of whom were close to her in age, to relate to her. In a 1964 interview, she positioned the problems of being seen as young in a way in which many girls might undoubtedly relate. She said,

I feel a lot older than fifteen and yet I know I'm only fifteen, if that makes sense. Actually, I think I've always felt older than my age. It probably comes from helping mum look after my two kid brothers and my sister. You know my mum looks like she's my older sister. She's just great . . . All the boys on the show go off to the local clubs to relax and enjoy themselves. But these clubs all serve more than coke and the doormen take on look at me and say: 'Sorry luv, you're too young,' and I have to turn away and go sadly home to bed, it's so unfair, really.³⁶

Such comments reveal that, unlike Faithfull, whose performance of youth was one part of an aesthetic of sexualized restraint, Lulu saw her youthfulness as rendering her asexual. A 1966 interview with Penny Valentine that appeared in *Disc* shows that Lulu claimed to be resigned to her particular role, even while she wasn't terribly pleased about it:

35. Lulu, “My Island Paradise,” *Mail Online*, last modified August 27 2012, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-2193794/Lulu-thought-knew-luxury-went-holiday-Maldives.html>.

36. “I'm Just an In-Between, says Lulu,” *Fabulous*, July 4, 1964, 6.

Something is worrying Lulu. She doesn't think she's sexy. And when it comes to growing up from her little girl image, this presents a big problem. 'I can see myself,' she said cheerfully at her Newcastle Hotel, 'still being little and bouncy at 30!'

'Me being a sexy singer like Lena Horne and Nancy Wilson is something I just can't imagine. Sex should be left to someone like Marianne because she has the looks. People just don't like to see me that way. I suppose I'm going to be someone who's always young at heart. Oh dear. At the moment I can get away with silly things because I'm youngish but when I'm 25 and singing silly songs people will think I'm mad. 'Why,' they'll say, 'is she still acting like a baby?' The transition will be even more difficult than a complete change of singing style, but I'll have to try and slide smoothly into it.'

Despite all its drawbacks, the 'little girl' image that Lulu has lived with for nearly two years has its advantages. 'When old men and boys start getting a bit funny when they come up for autographs on the 'Give us a kiss' thing, I can get out if it by turning round sweetly and saying my father wouldn't allow it. Then they think I'm only a kid and they don't get offended. But I must say there are times when I think of getting older and long to have the sort of figure and face to sing sexy songs. But I'm little. And I'm bouncy. And – well, I just suppose I haven't got a sexy figure. So that's the end of that.'³⁷

Lulu claims that this kind of commentary made her feel at odds with many of her contemporaries, as though she was missing out on whatever sexual revolution was supposedly taking place. "I felt like the last remaining virgin in London," she says.³⁸ That same year, she appeared alongside Sidney Poitier in *To Sir With Love*, portraying a feisty schoolgirl. It is telling though, that she was not cast as Poitier's love interest, nor does her character demonstrate any sexual desire for him. By 1967, Lulu's good girl image was so firmly entrenched that a portrait of her by photographer David Bailey appeared in a magazine with the caption "the Virgin Queen of Pop."³⁹

37. Penny Valentine, "Why Lulu Longs to be Sexy," *Disc*, January 29, 1966, 5.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *I Don't Wanna Fight*, 105.



Figure 3.3: Lulu poses with kids' toys in her "bright and zany" room. *Petticoat*, July 25, 1966.

While Lulu saw her public persona as unflinchingly chaste, not everyone perceived it that way. Patricia Juliana Smith argues that there was something disturbing about her performance of youth. Smith calls Lulu "a diminutive figure embodying some liminal space between childhood and womanhood, sweet and innocent, yet simultaneously flirty and cheeky...with a booming, gritty – even raunchy – voice at odds with her appearance."⁴⁰ In Lulu's case, this tension between childhood and adulthood is particularly compelling when considered in the context of models of girlhood that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, arguably more in American popular culture than British. Characters like surfer chick Gidget, portrayed on screen by Sandra Dee and Deborah Walley (the latter a dead-ringer for

40. Patricia Juliana Smith, "Brit Girls: Sandie Shaw and the Women of the British Invasion," in *She's so Fine*, 144.

Lulu); or figures like plucky good girl singer Lesley Gore and actor Patty Duke were all bright, young, over-achieving, accomplished young women. They were portrayed as decidedly innocent (sometimes to the point of being dangerously naive) in terms of matters of love and sex; and, while accomplished and capable, were, according to Ilana Nash, highly dependent on the adults (and particularly the men – typically boyfriends and father figures) around them.⁴¹ There is a degree to which Lulu fits into this mold: she, too, was bright and unflappable, and, as her voice demonstrates, is highly skilled and accomplished in particular respects. She also looked young, with her big blue eyes, round cheeks, bobbed hair, and small stature. She deviates, however, because, unlike the middle-class Gidgets of the world, Lulu came from distinctly working-class roots, and did not have access to particular opportunities growing up. Furthermore, she was not only working class, but was Scottish; her Northernness adding another layer of complexity to how her race and class identity was perceived. Lulu's voice was not one more accomplishment that would help her net a handy, middle-class husband; it was her ticket to upward mobility.

Lulu's voice, however, wasn't the voice of the white, well-to-do middle class. Musically, she drew in equal parts from soul, rockabilly, and middle of the road pop; in 1964 she identified Mary Wells, Kay Starr, Connie Francis, and Brenda Lee, a very diverse group of voices, as her primary influences.⁴² Later, in her memoirs, she cited Solomon Burke, Ray Charles, Sam Cooke, and the Drifters; and in some of her earliest performances she sang a versions of "The Great Pretender" and "Only You" that she learned by mimicking the Platters'

41. See Ilana Nash, *American Sweethearts: Teenage Girls in Twentieth-Century Popular Culture* (Indiana University Press, 2006).

42. "I'm Just an In-Between."

recording.⁴³ Although Lulu would have doubtless also listened to music by British artists, the performers she cites as her inspiration are all Americans, and mostly (with the notable exceptions of Starr, Francis, and Lee) rhythm and blues singers. She did have a rich, supple voice that she used to great effect on slower, ballad-type numbers, like 1964's "Here Comes the Night," where she harnesses which both the soulful influences of singers like Charles and Burke, and the youthful, poppy inflections of singers like Francis. Her biggest early career hits, however, were faster, danceable numbers, like her recording of "Shout," wherein her voice flips between smoothness and harshness, situating her somewhere between soul and rockabilly, with supple movement between pitches framing a growl that sounds pulled from the throats of singers like Wanda Jackson or Brenda Lee.

Robyn Stilwell describes rockabilly as one of the few genres in which young, white women could abandon what she calls "vocal decorum:" the standards of politeness expected of women singers. Stilwell argues that the genre engenders a tension between self-control and losing oneself, and that its vocal gestures ("slides, howls, growls and purrs, breaks and hiccups that fragment the lyrics into babble") fall somewhere between sonic representations of sexual ecstasy and speaking in tongues. This emotive, bodily display, sexualizes the genre, while cementing its connection to its place of origin, the American south, a place often discursively constructed as, itself, somehow irrational and excessive.⁴⁴ In her discussion of Lee, Stilwell argues that these characteristics of rockabilly enabled her to emerge as a child prodigy, but also placed her in a fraught position: Lee's handlers often outfitted and

43. *I Don't Want to Fight*, 31-32.

44. Robyn Stilwell, "Vocal Decorum: Voice, Body, and Knowledge in the Prodigious Singer, Brenda Lee," in *She's So Fine*, 72.

portrayed her as a child, emphasizing her youth, even while her remarkable voice often sounded suspiciously sexual and adult.⁴⁵ Likewise, Lulu's often childlike appearance belied her vocal sophistication; but while Smith argues that Lulu often sounded "raunchy," I contend that her unfailingly young, chaste persona was so inseparable from her vocal performances that her voice, while mature in terms of technique, did not carry an aura of sexual maturity. Her image effectively chastened her voice; making her dalliances with rockabilly and rhythm and blues seem acceptable.

In 1965, Lulu recorded "Chocolate Ice," a nonsense song about dessert, that was released both on her album *Something to Shout About* and on the soundtrack to the film *Gonks Go Beat*.⁴⁶ Like her recording of "Shout," "Chocolate Ice" is a rhythmic, fast-paced number, and Lulu uses a surprisingly harsh, grinding vocal sound. The song opens with just a hint of growl, Lulu's voice sounding tight, as if her larynx is positioned high, and as though she is almost forcing the sound out. It sounds unsustainable – surely, she couldn't maintain a vocal sound that harsh for so long without causing some kind of strain – but not only does she sustain it, she increases its intensity as the key modulates upwards, through verses about chocolate ices, peaches and cream, strawberry pies, and peppermint twists. "Chocolate Ice" is Lulu at her grittiest, and she tears through the song with abandon. On the final verse – "peppermint twist, really goes like this" – Lulu digs into the word "really," and launches off of it into the song's final lines: "peppermint twist, well it goes like this; peaches and cream, you know what I mean; strawberry pie, oh me oh my; chocolate ice, it's-a very nice; hey hey hey

45. *Ibid.*, 86.

46. *Gonks Go Beat*, is a Romeo and Juliet-inspired story about teenagers from rival musical islands "Beat-land" and "Ballad-Isle," who are presided over by a neutral, godlike character called "Mr. A&R." It reveals much about public perceptions of musical genre and the music industry in 1960s Britain. While considering the film is beyond the scope of this project, I do plan to return to it in future work.

hey,” with a growling belt that sounds like it would be quite at home in death metal, before gradually tapering off on the final “hey, hey.” While another singer might easily inflect the list of confections described in “Chocolate Ice” so that the entire song sounds laden with innuendo (the song is completely set up for it, what with its “you know what I means” and “oh me oh mys,”) Lulu’s performance doesn’t read that way. While she certainly growls the words, she generally lands them cleanly on each pitch, with little scooping into or out of the notes, giving the performance a very straightforward, unironic quality. A chorus of background singers accompanies her, mostly in unison, though occasionally breaking into close harmony, and the recording sounds like a singalong. Lulu’s earnest persona is all over the performance, and precludes interpretations that might figure it as anything other than a very intense love song to confectionary. One thing is for certain, though: like “Shout,” “Chocolate Ice” is a showcase of vocal endurance and ability, and demonstrates that Lulu was already a seasoned, expert performer.

Within a year of launching her career, Lulu was already itching to revamp her image. She talked about reinventing every aspect of her persona: her clothes, her name (she talked about changing her stage name to Louise, but never did), and especially her voice, which she saw as the root of public perceptions of her age. In 1965, she told Peter Jones of the *Record Mirror* that she wanted to get away from being seen as a particular “type” of singer, a “type” that seems to very contingent on perceptions of her youth. “I want to change my image now,” she said,

I want to keep away from the roar-up bits like “Shout” and go in for a wider sort of song, a smoother sort of presentation. This is very important. And I also think it’s time for me to think about changing my ideas on clothes. I’ve designed a lot of my stage-wear for myself and now I’ll have to design myself into a slightly higher age group.

Incidentally, it's been said that I should change my name. Some folk think 'Lulu' is a bit too young for me as I get older.⁴⁷

In discussing a planned EP with Tom Jones (that never did come to fruition), she said: "I want people to forget the 'little girl' image from when I made 'Shout' and accept me differently. It's over 12 months since I made that record. I hope I've grown up a lot. My style of singing is definitely changing."⁴⁸ "Shout," in Lulu's mind, represented a childish sound. It's counter-intuitive, perhaps, that the very vocal style that commentators like Smith dub grown-up sounding is the one that Lulu, herself, felt sounded juvenile.⁴⁹ But as I've tried to show, Lulu's persona prevented her voice from ever sounding completely grown up, and undermined her attempts to sound older. When she did sound adult, it only threw her youthful image into harsh relief: it was amazing that such a mature-seeming sound could come out of such a young-seeming body. Furthermore, Lulu's rocking beat style was firmly associated with a youth movement, with the hordes of teens and twentysomethings dancing away each Friday night on *Ready Steady Go*. And even if Lulu had succeeded in divorcing herself from her young image, a grown-up vocal style drawn on rhythm and blues and rockabilly would not have been the *right* kind of grown-up vocal style: it was too potentially licentious. Lulu's management envisioned a particular career path for her, one that led her away from the youth market and towards the category of being an established, all-around entertainer; the kind of singer who was also a television presenter, who did summer variety and cabaret residencies at middle-class seaside holiday meccas like Blackpool, and seasonal stints as the

47. Peter Jones, "Now Lulu Wants to Change her Image," *Record Mirror*, July 10, 1965, 12.

48. "'Grown-up' Lulu plans EP with Tom," *Disc*, June 6, 1965, 6.

49. Around this time, Lulu also discussed changing her stage name to the more mature-sounding Louise, but never followed through. "Lulu Wants to Change Her Name," *Disc*, June 26, 1965, 12.

star of Christmas pantomimes. The end of the 1960s saw Lulu inching towards this future even as she resisted it; but while she may have changed her performance style, broadening her appeal to include a larger, older demographic, actually *performing* an older persona wasn't necessarily in the cards.

“She has grown up and matured almost over night”

In 1964, Lulu was fourteen, and seemed bright and well-behaved; while Faithfull was sixteen, and seemingly introspective and melancholic. Their voices – Lulu's performing virtuosity, Faithfull's enacting sincerity – communicated as much about their personae as did their other performing choices. As the 1960s progressed, however, both singers moved away – or at least tried to move away - from these earlier selves. Arguably by the end of the 1960s, in, perhaps, 1969, when Lulu and Marianne would have been 21 and 23, respectively, they were already becoming old. As Susan Sontag observes, “women are old as soon as they are no longer very young.”⁵⁰ This dynamic is all the more real for performers, dancers, singers, actors, athletes; people who display themselves and their bodies professionally, and are often forced into retirement at a young age. For Lulu and Marianne, the public discourse about their lives shifted pointedly by the end of the 1960s, framing the way that they sounded and were heard.

Lulu married BeeGee Maurice Gibb in 1969, and news items about her changed from featuring her as an exemplary bright, young, single thing to describing her married life. Were

50. Sontag, “Double Standard of Aging.”

they going to buy a house, when were they going to have children – these were the kinds of questions Lulu was answering now, instead of questions about how she was planning to wear her hair, and which Monkee she had been seen dancing with on Saturday night.⁵¹ When she spoke to *Disc* about their upcoming nuptials, marriage was framed as one event in a series of events that would mark them as mature adults. “We’re both keen to have a large family,” said Lulu, to *Disc*. The interview went on: “The couple are currently looking for a house in the country. ‘The main thing is just to get some peace and quiet,’ said Maurice fervently. ‘We both need it at the moment,’” signaling that they were moving to a new phase in life that would entail withdrawing, to an extent, from the pop scene.⁵² Several months later, Penny Valentine reported that marriage had made a huge impact on Lulu’s self-presentation: “She is happier, less overpoweringly volatile, less ‘cuddly, bouncy little Lulu.’ She has grown up and matured almost over night.”⁵³ A subsequent record review claimed that Lulu’s “voice is only slightly different – lighter, less ferocious and gimmicky – but her intonation is now more relaxed, assured. In short, she’s grown up.”⁵⁴ These comments all construe Lulu’s earlier bounciness as a negative, a sign of immaturity, reflecting Lulu’s earlier complaints about her public image. They also reinforce the notion of heterosexual marriage as a watershed event in a young woman’s life, something inevitable, something transformative, something that changes her from a girl into a woman.

Lulu’s performances at this time generally did move away from her earlier style. She

51. She’d had a brief romance with Davy Jones in 1967. *I Don’t Want to Fight*, 105-107.

52. “Lulu, Maurice to ‘wed soon,’” *Disc*, January 4, 1969, 5.

53. Penny Valentine, “Lulu Now,” *Disc*, November 22, 1969, 15.

54. “Lulu’s new route is signposted ‘success!’,” *Disc*, December 27, 1969, 9.

hosted several BBC television programs including *Lulu's Back in Town*, *Happening for Lulu* (both 1968), and *It's Lulu*, (1970), which combined musical performances, comedy, and celebrity guests.⁵⁵ Lulu was singing more and more middlebrow pop ballads, and fewer and fewer dance numbers. Her 1968 performance of "Morning Dew" on *Happening for Lulu* is exemplary of this period: for the most part, she has abandoned her gritty early sound, and uses a smooth and emotive delivery (with a few very selective growls to emphasize certain words) to communicate the song's emotionally complex, post-apocalyptic narrative. Even though it dates from slightly before her marriage, she already sounds more relaxed; and she has significantly toned down her earlier ferociousness. Furthermore, "Morning Dew" was a narrative ballad, and thus represented a departure in genre for Lulu: it was a mature song with a serious message, not one you'd dance to at a party.

Interestingly, at this moment when Lulu was shifting from girl to woman in the public eye, she would also record her most infantilizing performance to date. Her manager, Marion Massey, and Bill Cotton, the head of the BBC's Light Entertainment division, strongarmed Lulu into performing "Boom-Bang-a-Bang," the notoriously inane British entry for the 1969 Eurovision song contest. ("I've been trying to get it out of my head ever since," wrote Lulu in 2002.⁵⁶) Her performance tied for first place, gaining her a wider audience in Europe, but was a throwback, in terms of her visual presentation, to youth. The song itself was certainly a move away from her earlier rhythm and blues ravers, although perhaps not quite the move that she envisioned. Instead of the more adult sound that she aspired to,

55. Among Lulu's celebrity guests was Jimi Hendrix. In his 1969 appearance on the show, which was supposed to include a duet with Lulu on "Hey Joe," Hendrix and his band abandoned the script and launched into an improvised performance of "Sunshine of Your Love," that ran over time. Hendrix and company were subsequently banned from the BBC. *I Don't Want to Fight*, 125.

56. *I Don't Want to Fight*, 126.

“Boom-Bang-a-Bang” was, quite literally, inspired by a five-year-old: one evening, Michael Moorhouse, the song’s co-writer, overheard his young son rattling off the nonsense phrase that became the song’s title.⁵⁷ Lulu appeared on Eurovision wearing a hot pink babydoll dress. Her orchestral accompaniment sounded fresh out of a cartoon, complete with honking low brass and woodwinds that sound like they’re delivering little auditory punchlines, and the overall aesthetic is of exuberant innocence. Her voice is smooth, and not at all gritty, in a stark vocal departure from her earlier work, but because of other musical considerations, and the overall style of the performance, she certainly sounds no older for it.

Later that year, Lulu’s performances took a retrospective turn. On December 31, 1969, She appeared on a joint British and German broadcast of a television special called *Pop Go the Sixties*. The decade was barely over, and already Lulu and her contemporaries (including Cliff Richard, Adam Faith, The Who, Sandie Shaw, The Kinks, Cilla Black, The Hollies, and others) were memorializing it, lifting it up on a mythic pedestal, where it would loom large over their subsequent careers. Lulu found it difficult to shake this past, and spent the 1970s on the variety entertainment stage, the 1980s, in the theatre, working with Andrew Lloyd Webber on the West End production of *Song and Dance*, but was stymied by damage to her vocal folds that caused her to drop out of the show.⁵⁸ After surgery, she began taking voice lessons with Helena Shenel, and describes the process as transformative. “I had been given a wider vocal range, which was like being handed new tools,” she says.⁵⁹ In 1986, though, when her new recording of “Shout” reached the British top ten, Lulu denied that it was an attempt

57. Mike Ledgerwood, “The Young Idea behind Lulu’s Eurovision song,” *Disc*, March 8, 1969, 6.

58. She describes this damage as “abrasions” and “blisters.” See *I Don’t Want to Fight*, 210-213.

59. *Ibid.*

at a revival or a renewal of her career. Instead, Lulu acted like she and the song existed outside of time. Catherine Bennett of the *Sunday Times* reported:

This weekend *Shout* stands at number 10 in the charts and Lulu has appeared, after a long absence, on *Top of the Pops*, an historical curiosity so fresh and boisterous that it is as if drugs, punk and Boy George had never happened. Unlike some of her Sixties contemporaries, Sandie Shaw and Dusty Springfield, who are still the objects of the occasional camp attempt at resurrection, she has triumphed over the past 22 years by pretending that they were nothing special. She sharply rejects the notion that she, too, is the object of someone else's revival. She and her agent, Marian Massey, have merely been waiting for the right moment. "There is a morbid fascination with the Sixties. A lot of people say wasn't it great then, and I say yeah, but you can't live in the past."⁶⁰

Ironically, despite Lulu's disavowal of sixties nostalgia, it took an old song – the re-release of "Shout" – for her to find a new voice.

Meanwhile, by 1967, Faithfull's supposedly virginal bohemian image was cast into suspicion. She was married to and had a child with John Dunbar, but was already romantically linked to Mick Jagger, and she spent her days living fairly decadently in the orbit of infamous figures like Anita Pallenberg and Brian Jones. In 1967 Faithfull's marriage finally dissolved. If the media treated Lulu's marriage like a transitional event into adulthood, it treated Faithfull's like a childish, fantastical dalliance, like she and her husband were two kids playing house.⁶¹ In February of 1967 she was caught in a drug bust with the Stones, and the tale of the police discovering her nude and wrapped in a fur rug, has become one of rock's most misogynistic myths, complete with apocryphal rumors of sexual acts involving Mars bars. The incident left Faithfull with a shattered public image and sense of self. A few weeks later, *Disc and Music Echo* reported:

60. Catherine Bennett, "Lulu's future is in the past," *Sunday Times*, August 28, 1986.

61. See Christine Bowler, "At Home With Marianne," *Boyfriend*, January 22, 1966, 6-7.

Everyone's talking about the new-look Marianne Faithfull. Once she was dainty and delicate, sang like a shivering nightingale and lived utterly in accord with what one might expect of a convent-educated daughter of a baroness. And now? She's hip, she's swinging, she wears amazing colour combines and clothes styles. She wears huge, floppy ties and large baggy trousers. She turns up at important Covent Garden occasions with absolute disregard for protocol by arriving after the Royalty have taken their seats. Once she was the non-showbiz mother who preferred a family away from all the glamour and greasepaint. And now? Estranged from her husband, John Dunbar, she's back in business with a record already in the chart, a new romance with pop's most eligible Mick Jagger, and she will shortly launch into West End Acting . . . 'Now I'm back and I've changed. I am bitter in a way and possibly more introverted than I used to be because I realise I have much more to lose.'⁶²

Faithfull's experiences towards the end of the 1960s forced her to grow up in a way that was diametrically different from Lulu; Faithfull became older, but also damaged and cynical.

In the wake of these incidents a very musically different Marianne emerged. In 1969 she co-wrote and recorded "Sister Morphine," and while it was released as a single, her record company pulled it off the shelves within days. It was too much of a departure from her earlier work, it seemed to corroborate the new public image of Faithfull as a fallen woman, some thought it endorsed drug use, and its subject matter – about a wounded man begging for drugs from a hospital bed – was simply unseemly for a young woman.⁶³ In the recording, tiny echoes of her youthful voice, like that girlish vibrato on sustained notes, are still there, but already her voice was showing the results of drug and alcohol abuse. Her voice is always wavering, like she can't sustain the volume; her phonation is breathy and unsupported, and as a result her higher notes lack the crystal clarity and purity of tone present on her early

62. "Marianne: From Sweet Thing to Swinger," *Disc and Music Echo*, March 4, 1967, 9.

63. Faithfull talks about "Sister Morphine" in both her memoir and the documentary "Dreaming my Dreams." The Stones later released the song to absolutely no outcry, and, although she did co-write it, Faithfull is not given writing credit on the song, but does receive royalties. Jagger explained her lack of a writing credit as an attempt to keep her share of royalties out of Oldham's hands. In some interviews, Faithfull seems to resent this, sometimes not. See *Faithfull*, 168; *Marianne Faithfull: Dreaming My Dreams*, directed by Michael Collins, (2000, Image Entertainment), DVD.

recordings; and she seems almost to struggle against the lush guitar accompaniment, which almost swallows her up.

Faithfull's recordings in the 1970s, ranged from the wistful, nostalgic, country-western lilt of 1974's "Dreaming my Dreams," to the angry and eloquent screed against establishment ideals of 1979's *Broken English*. *Broken English*, was a punk-inspired rejection of the earlier Marianne, looking back with disdain. By the time it was released in 1979, Faithfull had spent years living on the streets, addicted to who knows how many drugs. The album's version of "The Ballad of Lucy Jordan," a Shel Silverstein-penned song about a thirty-seven year old housewife who realizes that the romantic dreams she held in girlhood were never going to come true, is a sharp rejection of the romantic, heteronormative ideals her earlier bohemian girlish persona embodied. The song and the album bitterly reject that past, and the impossible future that it represents. In the late 1980s, finally off drugs, she turned to cabaret; to the songs of Kurt Weill and to dark, sad re-imaginings of well-known songs, evoking a still-earlier musical period to tell stories of disillusionment.

"Here come the (old) girls"

In the late 1990s, both Marianne Faithfull and Lulu appeared as guest stars on the sitcom *Absolutely Fabulous*. In a delightful comedic turn, Faithfull materialized in the dreams of protagonist Edina Monsoon as God; while Lulu parodied herself, playing the last remaining viable client of the inept Monsoon's floundering public relations firm. *Absolutely Fabulous* is a show completely obsessed with aging: it stars Jennifer Saunders and Joanna

Lumley, respectively, as Monsoon and her drink- and drug-addled friend Patsy Stone, with many episodes focusing on their vain attempts to relive the heady days of their youth in London in the 1960s. The show evokes a complex kind of nostalgia: Edina and Patsy are ridiculous caricatures of former 1960s dollybirds, and are shown as selfish and oblivious in a way that critiques mythologizing of the 1960s; but even so, they are portrayed affectionately, as if their misadventures are just an exaggeration of the kinds of things non-fictional women experience. Edina and Patsy tenaciously insist on their visibility; but are also parodies of femininity, women who struggle to stay youthful and relevant. Lulu and Faithfull's appearances on the show are a nod at their own position in 1960s mythologies, and a tongue-in-cheek acknowledgement of their position as aging women in the public eye. Faithfull's character is mystical and enigmatic, a woman made wise by her experiences; while Lulu's is entrepreneurial and savvy, trying to define herself as a contemporary star, despite Monsoon's exhortations to "Sing 'Shout!' Sing 'Shout!'" every time she sees Lulu in public. These *Absolutely Fabulous* appearances are a future-oriented engagement with the past: they don't reproduce Lulu and Faithfull as teenage girls, but portray them as adult women moving forward with their lives, not declining but assuming authority; their complex identities inexorably shaped by their pasts as girls in the sixties. Likewise, Lulu and Faithfull's current vocal performances envoice their earlier performing personae while sounding out positions for them in the present that resist narratives of decline.

In 2011 Faithfull released *Horses and High Heels*, an album of covers and old standards that she recorded in New Orleans with local backing musicians, and the help of a few celebrity ringers, including Lou Reed and MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer. In the critical

reception of *Horses and High Heels*, a particular vocabulary emerges for describing the state of Faithfull's voice. Stephen Deusner, writing for *Paste*, calls it a "beautifully scarred rasp;"⁶⁴ while Alex Ramon, in a review for *Popmatters*, evokes an aged, experienced version of the folkie Marianne of days past when he describes her voice as a "distinctive smoky croak, with its strange, singular mixture of punky defiance, folkie intimacy and Dietrich-esque hauteur."⁶⁵ Some are more creative with their metaphors: in *The Independent*, Andy Gill describes her as singing with "arthritic grace,"⁶⁶ while *The AV Club's* Jason Heller offers perhaps the most evocative image, describing her timbre as a "fractured croon [that] sounds like a choir of cracked knuckles."⁶⁷ These writers are all reaching for words to describe a singer who has aged and experienced trauma, and whose voice has changed, words that paint a picture of a vocal sound that conveniently mirrors Faithfull's often fraught and painful life story. While I'd like to avoid it, I find myself reaching for the same language when I hear any of her recordings since 1979's *Broken English*. While these words are evocative, they seem like a lazy shorthand, like a readily available lexicon that gives us the same story over and over again: the story that Faithfull and her voice have been through a transformation by which they have been damaged and used and aged. Faithfull, however, harnesses this otherwise abject sound to signify authority.

64. Stephen Deusner, "Review: Marianne Faithfull, *Horses and High Heels*," *Paste*, last modified June 27 2011, <http://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2011/06/marianne-faithful-horses-and-high-heels.html>.

65. Alex Ramon, "Review: Marianne Faithfull, *Horses and High Heels*," *Popmatters*, last modified May 20 2011, <http://www.popmatters.com/pm/review/139631-marianne-faithfull-horses-and-high-heels/>.

66. Andy Gill, "Review: Marianne Faithfull, *Horses and High Heels*," *The Independent*, last modified March 4, 2011, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/reviews/album-marianne-faithfull-horses-and-high-heels-dramaticona239ve-2231460.html>.

67. Jason Heller, "Review: Marianne Faithfull, *Horses and High Heels*," *The A.V. Club*, last modified June 28 2011, <http://www.avclub.com/articles/marianne-faithfull-horses-and-high-heels,58157/>.

Horses and High Heels is a far cry from Faithful's 1960s folk-pop repertoire, but gestures quite pointedly back at the 1960s pop world, with two covers of songs that are preoccupied with time and the past. "Past, Present, and Future," and "Goin' Back," were originally recorded by Faithfull's contemporaries, The Shangri-Las, and Dusty Springfield, respectively, in 1966. Faithfull's version of "Past, Present, and Future" gives the melodramatic spoken word number a cabaret treatment. The arrangement does not stray far from the Shangri-Las' original. It opens with a solo speaking voice and a pathos-laden, plodding piano adaptation of Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata; it moves through a gradual build-up of tension, achieved both via the increasingly heightened tenor of the voice and the piecemeal addition of orchestral instruments, culminating in a swirling waltz section before dropping back to the plodding, spare texture of the opening section. Faithfull's version deviates from the Shangri-Las' through the addition of a ghostly pedal steel guitar, and through her vocal timbre. While Mary Weiss, the lead singer of the Shangri-Las, spoke the words with her characteristically petulant, childish, nasal quality, Faithfull's voice sounds darkly adult. When Weiss speaks of the past "filled with silent toys and teasing joys," and wonders, "was I ever in love?" it sounds like melodramatic teen angst. While Faithfull's delivery is equally pathos-laden, she sounds weary and wise, as though she's thinking about strangely melancholic bohemian girl who sat on the *Ready Steady Go!* stage singing "As Tears Go By," all those years ago. The qualities that move critics to describe her voice's "arthritic grace" and "fractured croon" are all there: breath escaping around her words, which make them sound rough-hewn, rather than smooth and lithe; aspirated consonants that give her phrases an unfinished edge; a low timbre that emanates from somewhere in the middle of her chest

voice. She speaks with the lilt of a storyteller, as though commanding an audience, but sometimes – when she says “don’t try to touch me” – she slurs her words, as though she has momentarily lapsed out of performance, and has forgotten the importance of holding things together. It’s when you consider Faithfull’s voice in relation to other voices – particularly the voices of girls from the 1960s, when Faithfull’s career was nascent, and of Faithfull’s own voice, on her early recordings – that her vocal qualities go from being simply breathy or husky, but read as damaged and corroded. Faithfull’s is the timbre of an older woman, Weiss’ is that of a child; and when Faithfull performs the song it is less about looking back longingly at youth, than it is about laughing bitterly about the naivety of youth.

“Goin’ Back,” is likewise preoccupied with looking back at the past, but is nostalgic and idealistic rather than cynical – Faithfull sings, “I think I’m returning to those days when I was young enough to know the truth,” and there’s an echo of her younger self, the girl who sang “This Little Bird” with such earnest sincerity. Again, though, her voice sits low, and she sings in short phrases, as though she can’t sustain anything more. The song ends hauntingly, with a distant bugle playing a fragment of “The Last Post,” the call played at Remembrance Day celebrations, which, in this context, evokes both cultural practices of memorializing, but also trauma, due to the melody’s close association with war.

Critics have framed Faithfull’s vocal aging process as premature, a result of trauma and addiction that she experienced starting in the late 1960s and lasting through the mid 1980s. As Coates convincingly argues, it is this story of decline and redemption that rock critics draw on to bestow Faithfull’s work with the banner of authenticity. Because she has been through suffering, Faithfull is granted a degree of visibility, audibility, and authority in

rock discourse that is rarely accorded to older women.⁶⁸ To sustain this position, Faithfull revisits her trauma over and over again in her performances through her much lauded rasping, gravelly vocal sound; while critics delight in her ability to render the story of her abjection through her voice. Ghostly echoes of past Mariannes emerge in these performances.

In her work on the performance of vocal damage, Stras argues that the sounds associated with vocal damage create an affective link between listener and performer.

“Hearing damage in a voice,” she says,

connects the listener inescapably with the body of the performer, and the emotion in the performance is communicated as a testimony of personal experience rather than as an expression or invocation of the idea of emotion. The singer is no longer just a conduit for the composer’s musical intentions and the poet’s literary ones, but a person whose flesh speaks its history wordlessly through the voice itself. [176]

The perception of vocal damage, then, entails the perception of singer’s body through sound, which, in turn, grants the singer narrative authority. Stras also emphasizes, however, that the sound of vocal damage can be learned and affected to create that elusive connection between the listener’s body and the performer’s body. Faithfull’s current voice, then, might represent her body, a body that was hurt and abused; it may narrate both a story of trauma and a story of the passage of time; and it may become the means through which we can hear how those lived stories affected Faithfull’s physical being. But her voice both tells her story, and is part of that story, and so exists somewhere between reality and artifice; her voice enables a masquerade of authenticity.

68. Coates notes that Faithfull’s many of recent collaborations have been with high profile male rock musicians, including Billy Corgan, Jarvis Cocker, and Beck, performers with a certain amount of rock cachet who may be trading on Faithfull’s unique ability to perform authenticity. Coates, 201.

In contrast, a “healthy” sounding voice would seem to be difficult to fake: in theory, either you’ve maintained your vocal instrument and technique, and can sing well, or you haven’t. But maintaining health is a learned and deliberate practice; the appearance of health can be affected; and the very idea of what constitutes health is contingent on social and cultural context. These days, Lulu’s voice sounds just as supple and strong, if not more so, than it did in the 1960s, and, unlike Faithfull she directly and openly engages in the kind of masquerade of youthfulness that Woodward discusses.

When asked about her age in a 2011 interview about her then-forthcoming appearances on the British dance competition television program *Strictly Come Dancing*, Lulu, then 62, told the *Daily Express* “I’m terrified of the waltz, to be honest. It’s so slow and measured. At my age I get aches and pains so I’m half-expecting the body to crumble.” Later in the same interview, however, she countered, “It’s about your mindset. If you feel old, you will be old. Don’t feel old. Feel good now. Work at it. People heard me sing ‘Shout’ and they thought, ‘She won’t last long.’ I thought ‘I’ll show you.’ I was determined. I learnt. That’s why I’m still here. I feel I can go on till I’m 80 or longer if I take care of myself.”⁶⁹ Claiming her age as an impediment, but following by declaring it irrelevant, and then proceeding to dance more capably than most people half her age, shows that Lulu is performing both age and youth. It’s a new variation on an old theme for Lulu. Her vocal prowess as a young singer was awe-inspiring because she used her voice in ways that seemed incommensurate with her young body. Now, her performances engage the same sense of awe, to different ends.

In 2009, Lulu embarked on a U.K. tour with fellow pop stars Chaka Kahn and

69. “Lulu worries she will struggle to cope on *Strictly*,” *The List*, last modified September 28 2011, <http://www.list.co.uk/article/37359-lulu-worries-she-will-struggle-to-cope-on-strictly/>.

Anastacia; and again, in 2010, with Heather Small (late of the Manchester-based house act M People), replacing Kahn. Born in 1948, Lulu was the eldest of the group (Kahn, Anastacia, and Small were born in 1953, 1968, and 1965, respectively), but all four might be considered middle-aged, depending who you asked, and while all four had maintained active performing careers, none had had a chart hit for several years. The name of the tour was “Here Come the Girls,” claiming a youthful identity for these adult women. The tour proved particularly successful as an outing for women’s social clubs looking for a ladies’ night out, and, arguably, these audience members may have identified with adopting a “girls” label. In an article somewhat snidely titled “Here Come the Old Girls,” Matt Sandy, of *The Daily Mail*, was quick to point out that Lulu, Kahn, and Anastacia had a combined age (in 2009) of 156.⁷⁰ And, indeed, much of the press coverage of the tour and its 2010 reboot is preoccupied with the age of the singers, and particularly of Lulu, the elder stateswoman. The reviews seems somewhat awestruck. Michael Hemley of *The Stage* writes “it’s clear that these women’s voices are as strong as they ever have been, with all three demonstrating tremendous vocal range and power.”⁷¹ While there hasn’t been any officially released video footage of the tour, the close to 350 fan videos uploaded to Youtube reveal three women at the height of their performing power.

The repertoire that Lulu and her girlfriends perform includes songs they made famous at the heyday of their respective careers (Lulu, naturally, sings “Shout” at every

70. Matt Sandy, “Here come the (old) girls: Lulu, Chaka Khan and Anastacia to roll back the decades with festive supergroup,” *Daily Mail Online*, last modified September 12 2009, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1213074/Here-come-old-girls-Lulu-Chaka-Khan-Anastacia-roll-decades-festive-supergroup.html>.

71. Matthew Hemley, “Reviews: Here Come the Girls,” *The Stage*, last modified December 3 2009, <http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/26424/here-come-the-girls>.

performance), and covers and medleys of popular hits from the 1960s to the present (the 2009 tour featured a Motown Medley, the 2010 tour, a Lady Gaga medley). During the 2010 tour, Lulu performed a cover of Duffy's "Mercy." Videos of the performance reveal an uncanny moment: countless critics described Duffy's voice on her 2008 album *Rockferry*, by comparing it to Lulu, Dusty Springfield, and their contemporaries.⁷² Duffy's voice evokes both Lulu's vocal grit and flexibility; her arrangements echo the lush orchestrations of 1960s pop tunes; and, while her songs sound contemporary, they nonetheless evoke 1960s British soul singers in significant ways. When Lulu sings "Mercy," then, she sounds like she is imitating an imitation of herself; in perhaps the ultimate act of masquerade, Lulu affects the voice of a young woman who, arguably, affected Lulu's voice.

In her performance of "Mercy," Lulu shows that her early worries about never being "sexy" were moot; she sings the verses of the song in a gritty chest voice that sounds undeniably lascivious; vocalizing a kind of sexual pleasure that some might consider unseemly for a woman of a certain age. Furthermore, Lulu frequently executes vocal leaps to a high register where she completes complicated soulful runs with ease. This virtuosic display hearkens back to her early performances, but she arguably executes more cleanly and skillfully now. In performances like this one, Lulu envoices sexual desire in a way that flies in the face of discourses of age-appropriateness that serve to police sexual expressivity, while also defying the idea of age as a process of decline, invisibility, and inaudibility through virtuosic vocal display.

72. See, for example "Sound of 2008: Duffy," *BBC News*, last modified January 3 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/entertainment/7167746.stm>; and Nigel Mengel, "Duffy beams down from radio heaven," *Courier Mail*, last modified March 28 2006, <http://www.couriermail.com.au/entertainment/music/duffy-a-star-performer/story-e6freqx-111115892337>.

Lulu recently launched a line of cosmetics, called “Timebomb,” that includes anti-wrinkle creams with names like “Glory Days” and “Flashback,” designed to turn back the years; hair products called “Operation Glam,” meant specifically to give volume to thinning hair; and a perfume enigmatically called “Time;” perhaps suggesting using that wearing “Time” might turn back or slow down the clock. These products are presented as remedies for aging, or, at least, as tools for disguising aging. Vivian Sobchak argues that women who disguise their age are viewed with a sense of wonder, but that this awe can only exist if the means through which they create the illusion of youth are kept a secret. Failing to keep them hidden, she says, “might despoil our wonder at the ease and instantaneousness of transformation,” and women who visibly struggle to disguise their age are often seen as grotesque.⁷³ Lulu’s cosmetics, however, have their reason for being writ large all over them; they’re the tools for masquerade that disclose the way masquerade works. Even while they purport to hide age, they paradoxically create a space where, for better or for worse, older women have visibility.

Jodi Brooks suggests that performance offers women a site where they can work to similarly counter invisibility. She argues that many characters played by aging actresses on screen – think of Gloria Swanson as Norma Desmond, Bette Davis as Margo Channing, etc. - insist on their visibility, disrupting the conventional temporality of commodification and image-making. She says that “their refusal to leave the stage and the ways in which they negotiate their status as image take the form of *stretching time*, of re-pacing the temporality of spectacle, display, and performance.”⁷⁴ Brooks’ argument is that, in a context where the

73. Sobchak, 207.

74. Jodi Brooks, “Performing Aging/Performance Crisis (for Norma Desmond, Baby Jane, Margo

display of women's bodies renders them as commodities, by refusing to disappear, older women disrupt the teleological motion of the commodity cycle that would treat older women as discards. Paradoxically, these characters fight to remain visible in a system that objectifies them, precisely because that objectification is a source of influence and power. Faithfull and Lulu, for their part, insist both on visibility and audibility: Faithfull by using her singing voice to communicate authority and claim a slice of rock authenticity for herself; Lulu through a vocal virtuosity that makes it impossible to question her continuing skill as a performer.

Channing, Sister George – and Myrtle,” In *Figuring Age*, 234.

Chapter iv

Voicing Nostalgia: Shelby, Duffy, and Candie

When I was in England, I found that memories of 1960s popular music culture were inscribed in landscapes of the cities where I was researching. In London, Soho's night spots, shops, and restaurants remain invested in the idea of the Swinging Sixties as a time of youthful debauchery; while the brand-name shops on nearby Carnaby Street take advantage of the alleyway's legacy as a locus of fashion design to draw shoppers today. The British Film Institute's Library is adjacent to Soho, and after a day's research, I would sometimes walk through the narrow streets, passing cafes like Bar Italia and French patisserie Maison Bertaux, that had been haunts where mods sipped their espressos and parked their Lambretta scooters, and that now do a swift business peddling overpriced coffee and sweets to people like me, offering visitors a taste of a memory of Swinging London. I invariably ended up at the perfunctorily-named Vintage Magazine Shop, a basement stacked floor to ceiling with old magazines from the past hundred years, most of them music magazines, where I would purchase a few copies of *Trend* and *Boyfriend* to call my own. The names of these places – Soho, and Carnaby Street, as well as Chelsea, and the Portobello Road – have become salient signifiers of London in the sixties, but only represent a fairly narrow slice of what life was like in the capital, since (as I argued in chapter one), participating in the scene was limited by youth, race, and class. Meanwhile, nostalgia for the period is largely geared towards consumerism.

When I visited Liverpool in 2010, I found myself in a city where past and present lived in uneasy tension. Near the waterfront, the glittering Liverpool One complex, an upmarket open-air shopping plaza, sits blocks away from the old, red brick buildings of the Albert docks, where attempts to preserve the historic site have transformed what was once a nexus of industry into a highly contrived planned space, with pathways funnelling tourists into the Beatles Museum, the Museum of Slavery, and the Tate Liverpool gallery, which sit side by side on the banks of the river Mersey. Up a few blocks from the waterfront, Matthew Street has been transformed from an otherwise ordinary row of pubs and shops into the Cavern Quarter, into a monument to Saints John, Paul, George, and Ringo. While the Cavern Club itself was demolished in 1973, it was meticulously reconstructed across the street in 1981, incorporating bricks from the original structure. The new Cavern Club regularly hosts tribute bands, and has a gift shop where merchandise ranges from Beatles t-shirts and ties to reproductions of membership cards from the original Cavern. The Cavern quarter is the most prominent monument to Liverpool's musical history in the city. Despite the way that Liverpool's status as a port city undoubtedly dictated the development of Merseybeat, the Cavern Quarter feels distinctly removed from the docklands area. There, the Museum of Slavery's music exhibits show how the migration of black people from West Africa through Liverpool, as part of the transatlantic slave trade, inexorably impacted the musical makeup of Liverpool.¹ In the Cavern Quarter, however, the way migration informed Merseybeat isn't

1. As Robert Strachan's research on black musics in Liverpool shows, Liverpool developed a significant black population – mostly of immigrants from West African countries – early on, in the 18th and 19th centuries. Strachan argues that black British communities that developed after migration from the Caribbean began in earnest in the 1950s played music that drew on ska and reggae from the Caribbean; while Liverpoolian black folks were more influenced by African American rhythm and blues and soul that

part of the story that is told. Meanwhile, in Toxteth, Liverpool's historically black neighborhood, buildings are in disrepair, and much needed infrastructure projects are left undone. The Cavern Club is a nostalgic monument that unfortunately reproduces hegemonic discourses, where a story about the problematic histories of a genre (or a story that might de-emphasize the narrative of the Beatles as great innovators) would be frowned on. Current Liverpool musicians are forced to contend with this history, as it is writ large in the spaces and musical venues of the city.

The spaces of London and Liverpool where British pop flourished in the 1960s are now imbued with the kind of nostalgia that commemorates and idealizes already dominant historical narratives. Nostalgia can, however, remember and construct a different kind of past. This chapter explores performances of nostalgia by three singers, Shelby Lynne, Duffy, and Candie Payne, whose musical performances nostalgically evoke the British girl pop singers of the 1960s. These three artists, I argue, use nostalgic musical aesthetics to envoice new spaces of possibility for women singers in a historical discourse that often marginalizes femininity. These nostalgic gestures do, however, operate in a larger context of racial and gender inequity in popular music, and thus sometimes reproduce the very models of femininity and whiteness that they might critique. The nostalgia that Lynne, Duffy, and Payne envoice thus exists in a liminal space, sometimes revisiting the past in order to suggest

they heard through interactions with black U.S. servicemen from the nearby Burtonwood airbase, and then adapted to local contexts. As Ian Inglis demonstrates, Merseybeat has origins in the influence of such musicians. Strachan, "The Soul Continuum: Liverpool black musicians and the UK music industry from the 1950s to the 1980s," in *The Beat Goes On: Liverpool, Popular Music and the Changing City*, ed. Marion Leonard and Strachan (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 84-105; Inglis, "Historical approaches to Merseybeat: delivery, affinity and diversity," *Beat Goes On*, 11-27.

new possibilities for the future, sometimes remaining stuck in the social injustices of both past and present.

The three performers I discuss in this chapter all produced the nostalgic work in question around 2007 and 2008, but otherwise differ from one another musically. Duffy and Payne both emerged as solo artists in 2007, shortly after Amy Winehouse began garnering critical acclaim. The press grouped Duffy and Payne together with a number of other white, British pop vocalists such as Adele, Meg Rowley, and Lily Allen, setting them up as a chorus of retro sirens following in Winehouse's mold. While some of these singers were doing explicitly retro work (Duffy, Payne, and Rowley, for instance) others seemed grouped together with them for the sake of convenience (particularly Allen, whose ska-inflected pop didn't fit in neatly with the others). The critical discourse that surrounded this group of Winehouse contemporaries was remarkably similar to the discourse that circulated about girl singers in the 1960s: namely, critics seemed incapable of dealing with the idea that more than one woman singer could have a chart presence, while the gesture of grouping them together implied both a lack of originality on their part, and created a false sense of competition.²

Candie Payne took this commentary to task:

I think it belittles all of us if we're bunged in the same box . . . It does us all a disservice when we're quite clearly different and the only comparison is that we're all girls in our early 20s making good music. I don't feel a particular affinity with the Sixties anyway.

2. *The Guardian's* John Robinson described these girls as new breed of more than vaguely retro, post-Winehouse, pop singers." Robinson, "The Guide: Deltasonic Christmas Party," *The Guardian*, December 27, 2007, 26. *The Scotsman's* Fiona Shepherd says "Another week, another new female singer with a hairband presenting her take on classic girl pop. It's been a fertile year for mining the evergreen tradition of the girlie ode to her man, be he sweet-talking Romeo or heartbreaking bounder." Shepherd, "Let's do the timewarp again," *The Scotsman*, May 18, 2007, 13.

I've been wearing eyeliner like this since I was 12 years old, before I even knew the Sixties existed.³

However, Payne later remarked that her own lack of chart success was a result of a market flooded with girl singers, echoing the strange 1960s discourse that I discussed in chapter one: the idea that the market for girl singers was limited, that only one or two girls could expect to be successful at a time, because female listeners weren't interested in hearing them.⁴ Despite a critical discourse that would paint all girl singers with a broad, stereotypical stroke, Payne and Duffy are very different performers. Payne emerged from Liverpool's independent music scene, and deploys nostalgia ironically, evoking a cool, mod aesthetic reminiscent of Sandie Shaw or Françoise Hardy. Duffy's self-presentation is more overtly glamorous, while her vocals soulful and gritty, like a latter-day Lulu. Lynne, meanwhile, is from the United States, and grew up in Alabama, and thus might seem out of place in this story. In 2008, however, she recored an album of Dusty Springfield covers called *Just a Little Lovin'*, that, she claims, was an attempt to make the kind of record Springfield would have made today, given the chance. On the record Lynne tries to embody the late Springfield as an act of revisionist history, redressing her place in histories of sixties pop.

I read nostalgic performances by Lynne, Payne, and Duffy through a distinctly feminist lens, drawing on arguments made by Svetlana Boym, Nadia Seremetakis, and Janelle Wilson that nostalgia is a productive and imaginative mode of engaging with the past.

3. Chitra Ramaswamay, "Payne keeps the torch song burning," *Scotland on Sunday*, May 20, 2007, 17.

4. Rick Fulton, "The glut of girl singers is holding her back, but Miss Payne is still upbeat," *Daily Record*, September 7, 2007, 42.

Wilson argues that nostalgia is an active process. She says that “expressing and experiencing nostalgia require active reconstruction of the past – active selection of what to remember and how to remember it.”⁵ Nostalgia is as much about creating stories, then, as it is about remembering them; and one can be nostalgic for a time or a place one has never known or that has never been, and, through nostalgia, create that time and place. As Boym has argued, nostalgia can be a tool through which marginalized people can re-tell the past from their own perspective, inserting themselves into histories that have written them out. The resulting narratives may be idealized, but nonetheless provide an impetus to move forward with hope for the future. Boym calls nostalgia a “sideways gaze;” a gesture whose political potency stems from looking backwards in order to move forwards.⁶

Historically, however, nostalgia has been both dismissed and pathologized. The term nostalgia has been traced to Swiss physician Johannes Hofer's 1688 “Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia,” where he characterized nostalgia as a form of extreme homesickness. Hofer's idea of nostalgia connects the desire for the homeland with negative affect like sadness, suffering, grief, and what he calls “the perturbation of the spirit.”⁷ The only remedy for such a condition, he argues, is the eventual return to the homeland. From its origins, then, nostalgia has been underwritten by desire: desire for another geographical location and for

5. Janelle L. Wilson, *Nostalgia: Sanctuary of Meaning* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), 25.

6. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xiv, 354.

7. Hofer, Johannes, “Medical Dissertation on Nostalgia (1688),” trans. Carolyn Anspach, *Bulletin of The Institute of the History of Medicine* 6, no. 2 (1934): 376-91.

another time; for a place that is both physically and temporally distant from the present. While this desire is rarely still tied to physical pathology, scholars including Susan Stewart, Christopher Shaw, and others have decried nostalgia as an ahistorical way of approaching time, critiquing the way nostalgia constructs idealized, imagined pasts, dismissing such approaches to history as conservative, anti-modern responses to progress.⁸

Such critiques are not without grounds: nostalgia for “the good old days,” or for “the way things were” often underscores conservative political thought, as such sentiments can erase power struggles that took place in the past, replacing knowledge of history with pure sentimentality, and an absence of political motivation. The concept of nostalgia as a sentimental, safe re-invention of the past is one that theorists of postmodernism, most notably Jameson, have characterized as pastiche, as blank parody of the past, that lacks artistic and political motivation.⁹ As Susannah Radstone points out, however, such critiques of nostalgia are rooted in a dichotomy that uses gendered language to privilege certain kinds of knowledge over others. She points out that Jameson describes nostalgia as “‘overstimulating’ and ‘omnipresent, omnivorous and well-nigh libidinal’, a series of derogations most commonly and routinely associated with Woman,” and suggests that critiques of nostalgia that focus on the way it “invents” the past are “rooted in a realist model

8. In *On Longing*, Stewart calls nostalgia a “social disease.” Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Duke University Press, 1993). Similarly, while Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw present a fairly nuanced view of nostalgia, they ultimately take a pessimistic stance on its applications. Chase and Shaw, “Dimensions of Nostalgia,” in *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, eds. Chase and Shaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 1-18.

9. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 18.

of representation” that take for granted that a single, knowable narrative of the past is at all possible.¹⁰ Per Radstone's argument, the dismissal of nostalgia's imaginative work stems in part from the way certain kinds of knowledge are produced and validated or invalidated along gendered lines. Nostalgia's pasts are not always rooted in historical facts and figures, but rather in feelings and affects, in the realm of the emotional, rather than in masculine-coded rationality. In his 2011 book *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to its Own Past*, Simon Reynolds takes a view on nostalgia in popular music that is strongly informed by arguments such as Jameson's. Taking an explicitly modernist standpoint, Reynolds decries nostalgia in music and argues that true musical creativity is manifest only through the creation of wholly new genres and sounds. This position neglects the way music works: it doesn't simply vanish once it falls out of favor, but lingers through people's listening practices, and through emotional affiliations with memory. Furthermore, he allows little possibility for creative engagements with music from the past.¹¹

Nostalgia, then, has conflicting ramifications, some progressive, others conservative. I am informed by Boym, who argues for two distinct types of nostalgia, restorative and reflexive, one conservative, the other questioning. She says:

Restorative nostalgia stresses nostos and attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home. Reflective nostalgia thrives in algia, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming - wistfully, ironically, desperately. Restorative nostalgia does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition. Reflective nostalgia dwells on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy away from the contradictions of modernity. Restorative nostalgia protects the absolute truth, while

10. Susannah Radstone, *The Sexual Politics of Time: Confession, Nostalgia, Memory* (New York, Routledge, 2007), 136.

11. Simon Reynolds, *Retromania: Pop Culture's Addiction to Its Own Past* (London: Macmillan, 2011), 21.

reflective nostalgia calls it into doubt.¹²

I echo Boym in seeing possibilities in the ambivalence and longing that reflective modes of nostalgia can offer. Likewise, Seremetakis argues for two dialectical understandings of nostalgia. She decries what she calls the “American” understanding of nostalgia, and describes it in words similar to Boym's restorative nostalgia: a phenomenon invested in tradition that reproduces hegemonic power structures. This nostalgia, she says, “freezes the past in such a manner as to preclude it from any capacity for social transformation in the present, preventing the present from establishing a dynamic perceptual relationship to its history.”¹³ She advocates instead that we attend to the Greek idea of *nostalghia*, which she describes as

the desire or longing with burning pain to journey. It also evokes the sensory dimension of memory in exile and estrangement; it mixes bodily and emotional pain and ties painful experiences of spiritual and somatic exile to the notion of maturation and ripening. In this sense, *nostalghia* is linked to the personal consequences of historicizing sensory experience which is conceived as a painful bodily and emotional journey.¹⁴

Like Boym's reflective nostalgia, *nostalghia* comes from an engagement with desire that invites the past into our lives in the present. By attending to the ways in which nostalgia and desire intersect, we can see nostalgia as a way in which marginalized people, whose histories and pasts have not been documented in the historical record, can construct their own

12. Svetlana Boym, xviii.

13. Nadia C. Seremetakis, *The Senses Still: Perception and memory as material culture in modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 4.

14. *Ibid.*

narratives of the past, and use those new narratives to envision possibilities for the future. As Ann Colley explains, in her work on nostalgia in the Victorian period, nostalgic “longing often gives them the means to move beyond themselves and their past – it creates new maps.” Furthermore, Boym claims that “nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed towards the future. Sometimes nostalgia is not directed towards the past, either, but rather sideways.”¹⁵ Given an unknowable future, the nostalgic seeks new possibilities not by looking directly forward, but by looking back to construct stories that can provide the impetus to move forward. Boym’s idea of a sideways nostalgic glance is a metaphorical way of understanding how a look backwards can also function as a look to the future.

Where my notion of nostalgia departs from those of Boym and Seremtakis is in the notion that a nostalgic mode of cultural production can be entirely “restorative” or “reflexive,” to use Boym’s terminology. Instead, each instance of nostalgia operates on a spectrum, between these poles, and can simultaneously contain promise and regression. In the examples that follow, I engage with this multifaceted understanding of nostalgia to show that women’s nostalgic performances can open new spaces of possibility even while they are bound by gendered conventions.

15. Boym, *xiv*.

Shelby Lynne, *Just a Little Lovin'*

Shelby Lynne looks out from the cover of her 2008 record *Just a Little Lovin'* with downcast eyes, her blonde bouffant seemingly aglow in a backlight that makes her look strangely ethereal, like a being out of time. She rests her face in her hands, her posture mimicking the one Dusty Springfield adopts on the cover of 1969's *Dusty in Memphis*. Where Dusty looks back at us straight on, her hands on her cheeks as though she's miming surprise, Shelby's gaze is off-center. She looks away introspectively, as though contemplating something slightly out of the frame, slightly out of reach.



Figure 4.1: Shelby Lynne channels Dusty Springfield.

Separated by nearly forty years, *Dusty in Memphis* and *Just a Little Lovin'* are both albums about reaching for something unattainable. For Springfield, *Dusty in Memphis* was a

fantastically-conceived attempt to cement her connection to the sounds and singers of the American South. It was an attempt that some might call a failure; Springfield found herself creating an album that was less a representation of her idea of Southern soul than it was a producer's vision of Springfield's vision, recorded in less than ideal circumstances. On *Just a Little Lovin'* Lynne is reaching for something just as elusive – she's looking for Springfield herself. The album is a collection of pared-down acoustic recordings of some of Springfield's most well-known songs, largely from her late-1960s period. Lynne's comments about the album reveal that she was trying to envoice a connection with Dusty by intervening in Springfield historiography. In the case of *Just a Little Lovin'*, nostalgia operates on several levels: Lynne demonstrates nostalgia and longing for Springfield's incredible voice; but she also draws on often-problematic nostalgic ideals of the South in order to imbue Springfield with a degree of artistic authority Lynne seems to think that she didn't have in life.

Springfield was raised in a London suburb, and Lynne is from Alabama. While they are separated by geographical distance, however, both Springfield and Lynne are joined by similar stories of troubled origins. When they talk about Lynne's life, for instance, few journalists resist omitting the lurid details: she and her sister, fellow musician Allison Moorer, were orphaned as teenagers, when their father shot her mother and turned a gun on himself. Lynne then worked for years for recognition in Nashville, but her attitude and her past alienated her from the mainstream record companies. Geoff Boucher of the *Los Angeles Times* says:

Back in the 1990s, when she was a newcomer in Nashville, Tennessee, she was labeled

a problem child in a company town that only pretends to love mavericks. Then she picked up some other labels: commercial disappointment, studio hard case, party girl, and there were whispers about her past, especially the lurid death of her parents back in Alabama when she was 17.¹⁶

Now, of course, stories like this, of Lynne earning black marks in the eyes of the Nashville establishment, get treated like achievements: they're signs of her originality, her authority, and her artistic integrity. Springfield's notoriously difficult reputation ultimately became part of her mystique; likewise, Lynne enacts a similar persona to create a mystique of her own. In many interviews, she comes across as abrasive; in one, the writer remarks that Lynne's publicist recommended against giving Lynne anything to drink. Just like Springfield, an is-she-or-isn't-she question hovers over Lynne's sexuality. She recorded her Grammy-nominated album *I am Shelby Lynne*, in collaboration with the husband-wife producer-manager team of Bill and Betty Bottrell; but after the album dropped, Betty broke up with Bill and moved to Palm Springs with Shelby. In an interview for the *Times of London*, Lynne denies rumors of a romantic relationship with Betty Bottrell in characteristically swaggering fashion:

Some wagging tongues have even suggested that Shelby and Betty are not just business partners but lovers. Taking care to slide my empty beer bottle out of the singer's reach, I broach this indelicate rumour to Shelby. Her face clouds over. Oh, dear. 'That just about takes the f***ing cake,' she stutters. 'Tchuh! That just about does it ...'¹⁷

Whether Lynne and Betty Bottrell were together or not doesn't really matter; the rumors of

16. Jeff Boucher, "This time, she's carrying a torch," *Los Angeles Times*, last modified January 13 2008, <http://articles.latimes.com/2008/jan/13/entertainment/ca-lynn13>.

17. Stephen Dalton, "Back to her roots – the big interview," *The Times*, April 8, 2000.

this love triangle (and Lynne's disavowal of them) gives credence to her spitfire personality. Reading this kind of media coverage is like reading a list of struggling artist biographical tropes; and yet, because Lynne often backs up these clichés with meticulous biographical detail, the distinction between Lynne's performing persona and her “real” self becomes elusive.

The British press' coverage of Lynne appears particularly invested in connecting Lynne's persona to idealized images of the American South; resulting in descriptions that sound like strange collages of nostalgic signifiers of Southernness. She's a “A true Nashville outcast;” says James McNair of *The Independent*,

a striking, blue-eyed blonde. Friendly but forthright, she smokes Lucky Strikes and drives a 1968 Cadillac Coupe Deville. When she appeared on the cover of style magazine *Dazed & Confused* recently, she was alluringly plastered in what looked like Mississippi mud. When we met at the Royal Garden Hotel in Kensington, the delicious twang of her Southern drawl reeled me in like a blissfully stunned trout. If ever they wanted to remake *The Dukes Of Hazard*, she'd make a great Daisy Duke.

If this sounds a little generous with the Southern-belle kudos, consider the following : Lynne grew up in Franksville, Alabama, 'a tiny, rural town with a population of about 200.' Her father was an English teacher who schooled her in Steinbeck and Hemingway, but he played country guitar in his spare time. Shelby fished, tended to livestock, and in the evenings her grandmother taught her to sing harmonies to old 78 records by Ella Fitzgerald. She still regards 'nanny' as her most perceptive critic.¹⁸

The figure that emerges from McNair's description is an amalgam of stereotypes: Lynne is part Southern Belle, part rural white trash. She'd make a great Daisy Duke, but she's also a literate musical prodigy. Just as listeners have interpreted Springfield's late-1960s recordings through a geographic lens, situating her voice as the means through which she tried to

18. James McNair, “From Tragedy to Triumph,” *The Independent*, September 17, 1999.

embody an ideal of the South; descriptions of Lynne reflect a nostalgic ideal of Southernness. McNair's description, for instance, idealizes Lynne's rural upbringing in a small town where things remained a bit old-fashioned, where music was disseminated on 78s and live country guitar playing, untainted by modern conventions. Lynne's voice, meanwhile legitimizes these narratives: the pronounced Southern drawl with which she speaks and sings, reads as a bodily manifestation of stories of her youth in rural Alabama and her tooth-and-nail fight to make it in Nashville.

The nostalgia of these narratives is rooted in stereotypes, but they nonetheless grant Lynne a position in which she can play with ideals of masculinity and femininity that enable her connection with Springfield. Lynne's a hardscrabble rebel who drinks liquor and smokes, and puts up a tough, rebellious, ultimately masculine-coded front. However, a dialectically different persona emerges in her voice. The same journalists who describe Lynne as tough-as-nails, are quick to point out the vulnerability and emotion (read: femininity) in her singing; framing it as a manifestation of the "true" Shelby Lynne, a musical self that is in opposition to, but constituted by the *other* Shelby Lynne, Shelby Lynne the rebel. This dual persona is partially the product of Lynne's engagement with nostalgic narratives of the South, but also enables her nostalgic connection to Springfield. In an interview with *USA Today*, Lynne's producer Phil Ramone remarked that on *Just a Little Loving* "the raw Shelby Lynne is what I wanted -- nervous little girl, just as fragile as can be, and yet kind of a poster picture of what it must have been like with Dusty."¹⁹ His words are revealing, and suggest

19. Brian Mansfield, "Shelby Lynne travels Dusty's road in new album," *USA Today*, last modified February 19 2008, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/life/music/news/2008-02-18-shelby-lynne_N.htm.

that the “raw Shelby Lynne” is a type that she could conjure, as artificial as her rebellious persona, but that gave her privileged access to Springfield, who as I discussed in chapter two, was often described in similar terms.

Ramone and Lynne worked hard to call up this tortured character on *Just a Little Lovin'*. The album's version of “Anyone Who Had a Heart,” for instance, is dark and brooding, particularly in the context of earlier recordings of the song by Springfield, Dionne Warwick, Cilla Black, and others. To be sure, these earlier versions sound heartbreaking in their own ways, but Lynne's is so sparsely arranged that her isolated voice sounds truly alone, allowing the so-called “raw Shelby Lynne” to resonate. The slight vibrato in her tone sounds like the shakiness of someone who had just been crying, and when she drops down reach low notes at the beginning over the verses – on “everytime you go away, I always say, this time it's goodbye dear,” for instance, - she simmers with resentment. The song's music video depicts Lynne waking up alone in a stark-looking mid-century modern house, where the absence of another person is implicit as she goes about her morning routine. Lynne appears at turns vulnerable (she wanders aimlessly around in her underwear, her eyes look red and puffy) and fierce (she pours herself a glass of bourbon, and the video ends with a shot of a broken coffee mug on the floor, implying that it was a casualty of her anger). Meanwhile, the scene is almost palpably nostalgic. The house is filled with anachronistic objects that the camera treats with intense attention: Lynne makes a phone call on a rotary phone, listens to LP on an old turntable, writes a Dear John letter on a typewriter, and an old wooden clock looms over the scene. The way the camera lingers on these objects imbues the video with nostalgic

pathos. In the context of the song, it's nostalgia for lost love; but in the context of the larger project of "Just a Little Lovin'," it seems to indicate nostalgia for something larger.

Just a Little Lovin' is not, Lynne claims, a tribute album. "It's a Shelby Lynne record," she says.²⁰ Reviewers agree, arguing that, on the record, Lynne "doesn't so much pay tribute to Springfield as reimagine songs that have worked their way into the recesses of her soul." They point to the differences between the two albums – the sparcity of Lynne's arrangements, versus the lushness of Springfield's; Lynne's drawling diction, versus Springfield's more meticulous articulation – as signs of distance. Lynne did not, they argue, simply reproduce, note for note, Springfield's iconoclastic recordings. Rob Hoerburger of the *New York Times* writes:

while Springfield's and Lynne's styles overlap in the softer, breathier moments, there are significant differences. For all her husky, romantic realism, Springfield had essentially a glam, cosmopolitan sound: she was about chandeliers and candlelight, good Champagne (bubbly with a kick) and crushed velvet. Hers was an inside voice. Lynne's rootsy voice comes from the outside: blinding summer suns, dark, deserted blacktops, a quick slug of Jack. Even when she ends up in the bedroom, she takes a rougher road.²¹

Lynne's "rootsy voice," Hoerburger claims, situates Springfield's songs in a much different place, a place that, his language suggests, is more real: not the contrived, campy world of champagne and velvet, but the grittier world of whiskey and blacktop. Lynne's commentary on the album, however, suggests that to interpret the differences between the two singers'

20. Brad Wheeler, "She's quite the cover girl: American singer-songwriter Shelby Lynne brings out her Dusty Springfield side in an album of the 1960s star's hits," *The Globe and Mail*, March 21, 2008, R1.

21. Rob Hoerburger, "Shelby Lynne's Dusty Trail," *New York Times*, last modified January 13 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/13/magazine/13Lynne-t.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0.

approaches are a marker of distance might be off the mark. "I thought," Lynne says, "If Dusty were here and she were going to cut these songs today, what would be her approach? She already did the big, huge thing that was the way they made records then. How would she do it today?" While Lynne's vocal approach diverges from Springfield's, she couches her musical choices as, essentially, an attempt to get into Springfield's head and to affect a closeness to her. Lynne's album envisions a world in which *Dusty in Memphis* achieved what Springfield hoped it would. In recording an album that she envisions Springfield recording today, Lynne is reaching back to her; she is singing not only as Shelby Lynne, but also as an imagined Dusty Springfield, a "Dusty" that outlived Dusty. We can listen to *Just a Little Lovin'* as though it is an act of revisionist history and almost an activist gesture, trying to give Springfield something she was never able to have. This is not a nostalgia mired in the past. Rather, Lynne's record looks forward only by looking back; excavating songs from the past to bring a new Springfield to life in the present.

Just a Little Lovin' does, however, fall into a familiar trap, emphasizing a particular way of making music as the way to envoice a true, authentic subjectivity. There is an implicit value judgment about the theatrical production style of 1960s pop in Lynne's words when she talks about "the big, huge way they made records then." Reviewers make this distinction more explicit. Bill Friskics-Warren writes in *The Washington Post* that:

In terms of phrasing and arrangements, Lynne's performances - her Delta drawl couldn't be further from Springfield's precise British enunciation - sound almost nothing like the originals. Stripping away the familiar orchestras and production, Lynne and her intimate rhythm section mingle blues and jazz impulses to reinvent Springfield's material, bringing out the vulnerability and desperation in her songs

even as they enable us to hear them in a new key.²²

Friskics-Warren values the intimacy of Lynne's bluesy arrangements and the drawl in her voice, arguing that they enable a particularly vulnerable and desperate quality to emerge that, presumably, he doesn't hear in Springfield's recordings. Still other responses to Lynne's vocal approach argue that the sparse approach allows an emotional truth to resonate. Bernard Zuel, of the *Sydney Morning Herald* claims "the vocals are in the centre, the instrumentation just on the surface, she never raises her voice or cracks but there's no hiding exactly what she feels."²³ He goes on to suggest that Lynne's vocal approach reflects a deep understanding of Springfield's inner self:

It makes you focus on the voice (adult, strong but showing its scars) and the words (adult, strong but showing their scars) as much as those melodies. It takes the title track and introduces a new note of time-worn thinking that hovers between weariness and optimism. It transforms I Only Want To Be With You into a reflective night-time moment. It brings out a bit more sultriness in Breakfast In Bed and a deep bruise of knowledge in Anyone Who Had A Heart . . . [T]his isn't a singer who tries to be Springfield; this is instead a singer who understands Springfield. The difference is crucial.²⁴

Lynne and the writers who reviewed *Just a Little Lovin'* value her seemingly unmediated approach, setting it up in opposition to the more production-heavy techniques used on other

22. Friskics-Warren, "Lynne and Moorer: Wholehearted Half-Sisters," *Washington Post*, February 19, 2008. Likewise, Brian Mansfield wrote that "Lynne worked with a five-piece band that did minimal overdubbing, creating more spacious arrangements than Springfield's, which often were elaborate productions featuring full complements of horns, strings and backing vocals." Mansfield, "Shelby Lynne travels Dusty's Road."

23. Zuel, "Understanding Dusty is the key to Lynne's success," *Sydney Morning Herald*, February 9, 2009, 12.

24. *Ibid.*

pop records, including Springfield's. However, as musicologists including Middleton and Stras have shown, the sounds of vocal naturalness that are what critics seem to prize in Lynne's approach, are performative gestures that create the idea of authenticity.²⁵ In light of this, the reparative, nostalgic impulse behind Lynne's versions of Springfield's songs becomes all the more complex. The lens through which Lynne interprets Springfield is shaped by musical values born in the rock culture of the late 1960s, the period that saw Springfield's star begin to fade, and musical ideologies valuing "authenticity" of expression move to the fore, ideologies that have historically been used to discredit women singers and listeners. While the recording of *Dusty in Memphis* was by no means a success in Springfield's eyes, the reasons for her disillusionment with the record are ultimately unclear. On *Just a Little Lovin'* Lynne appears to assume that she understands Springfield's motivations – that the record's gloss and theatricality went against Springfield's wishes – but, really, she is creating a story about Springfield framed by a contemporary musical discourse that may or may not have informed Springfield.

The two different versions of the song "Just a Little Lovin'," – Lynne's, from the album of the same name, and Springfield's, from *Dusty in Memphis*, are both elaborate theatre pieces, in a way; grand, sonic stagings of the idea of who their singers are imagined to be. Dusty's opens with swirling strings and an insistent hi-hat beat. It sounds like showbusiness, the glittering arrangement evoking the bright neon lights Vegas or the West End. Dusty's voice shines through at moments, and pulls back at others, but always sounds like it blends in

25. Middleton, "Rock Singing," 28; Laurie Stras, "The Organ of the Soul."

with the sounds that surround her. The arrangement sits high for her, and she sings almost exclusively in a resonant head voice. She floats, she sounds ungrounded, and I imagine her in a huge hall - the London Palladium, maybe - singing to an audience of hundreds, but blinded by the footlights. For a song that is about intimacy, Springfield sounds remarkably distant.

Lynne's version of the song is quieter, opening with a subtle guitar riff and soft percussion which center the sound of her voice. Where Springfield's voice sounded ethereal, Lynne's sounds present and grounded. You hear her breath, the softness of her tongue, as she articulates the words. Springfield's "Just a Little Lovin'" is full of dramatic ebb and flow, facilitated by compulsive percussion and strings that pull her from verse to verse. Lynne's is almost staid in comparison, and is notable for its lack of goal-direction: the guitar does little more than repeat the first two pitches of the melody, while Lynne lets phrases die off, barely finished. She sings part of the first verse using a satisfied-sounding hum, rather than the words. The instrumentation drops out 4 minutes into the track, and Lynne quietly improvises on her own - "just a little love...early in the morn..." she sings, dropping the ends of the words, alluding one phrase into the next. Her voice gets quieter, until she mutters "come on," and stops singing entirely, as the guitar picks up again on its ostinato. Lynne's version of "Just a Little Lovin'" lays bare the musical ideologies that inform her attempt to envoice different possibilities for Springfield, but despite the problematic implications of these discourses of authenticity, though, Lynne's recordings allow nostalgic longing to resonate. The pauses and breaths and unfinished sentences that mark "Just a Little Lovin'" sound like moments of stillness where she listens for Springfield.

Lynne's pared down aesthetic lets her ideal of Springfield emerge. This gesture is almost activist in impulse: Lynne figured Springfield as artistically disenfranchised, and through *Just a Little Lovin'* attempts to give Springfield an opportunity to sing in ways that she rarely had the opportunity to in her lifetime. The album, however, imposes a musical ideology on Springfield that she never professed; an ideology of authorship that marginalized girl pop singers. Lynne's attempt to reanimate the aspirational impulse that initially moved Springfield to record *Dusty in Memphis* are thus marked by a particularly fraught manifestation of nostalgia.

Duffy, *Rockferry*

In the video for Welsh singer Duffy's 2007 single "Rockferry," grainy, black and white footage of the landscape around the town of Porthmadog, Wales, is intercut with shots of the singer moving through this space, a small suitcase in hand. The footage paints a portrait of departure and return: Duffy sits on a bench in a deserted playground (maybe a playground where she played as a child?), she wanders into an empty record store (could this be where she first heard the music that inspired her to start singing?), and she surveys the town from a hilltop as though she is searching for something lost. She waits alone for a train, and presumably rides it into a bigger city, where we see her walking down the paved streets. The video suggests a narrative of someone leaving a small town, traveling to a larger place, but

ends on an ambivalent note: after Duffy arrives in the city, there's a return to those earlier shots of the town. The camera focuses on Duffy staring at something outside our range of view, and with the dark background out of focus, we can't tell where she is.



Figure 4.2: A thoughtful Duffy on a train in the video for “Rockferry.”

Duffy's voice drifts through these scenes, like a breeze from across the Atlantic. The vocal melody of the song outlines the same descending fifth motive over and over again, part of an obsessively repetitive verse structure that suggests that maybe, she is searching for something, or trying to remember something distant. The melody is transported to higher and higher registers, and her singing seems to outline the landscape itself: her low chest

voice sounds out the rocky shore, while her higher timbres are like dramatic points of land reaching out into the ocean, straining forward, but always tethered to home.

In her work on Welsh women singers, Sarah Hill argues that a central trope in Welsh culture is *hiraeth*, a word that translates loosely to nostalgia and longing for home.²⁶ It's a concept that manifests itself in musical culture that draws on Welsh folk traditions, in idealized narratives that situate Wales as a beloved homeland to a diasporic community spread across Britain, and one that the tourist industry has readily harnessed to appeal to Welsh expats.²⁷ This kind of construction of home is utopic and nostalgic. If, as many have argued, nostalgia is an emotion born of homesickness, it becomes a means through which an ideal of home can be created. Duffy, for her part, has been fairly mum on her feelings towards her home country. Early interviews, though, reveal that leaving Wales was transformative for her musical career:

It is Duffy's nature to sing and get on stage. She had one problem when she is growing up, however: she lived in the small town of Nefyn in Wales and later in the similarly tiny Letterstone, which must have felt like sheer isolation to her. It is not really a spot frequented by talent scouts. In Nefyn, she caused a bit of a stir as she was half of the first twins to be born in the place since the 1890s. But that doesn't help much if singing at the local rugby club is the only way to keep your musical talents from wasting away.

"The only fun part was the money at the end of the evening," she says. "I wasn't doing it for the appreciative crowd. I needed the money. And I wanted to make music and didn't know where to begin."

So it is possible to rise to the top if you come from a hideaway village without so much as a CD shop.

26. Sarah Hill, "Beyond Borders: The Female Welsh Pop Voice," *Radical Musicology* 1 (2006), <http://www.radical-musicology.org.uk/2006/Hill.htm>.

27. *Ibid.*

After taking part in the Welsh Idols,²⁸ she was contacted by record label Rough Trade, which offered her a place to stay as well as time to get her act together because the sound to match her particular brand of blonde vocal pyrotechnics was not yet discovered.²⁹

The journalist's commentary suggests that Duffy's origins in a "hideaway village" were something to be transcended. Duffy, meanwhile, claims that her rural upbringing and subsequent move to the city is manifest in her musical approach. "We didn't have any record stores in my town," she says, "I just knew what I wanted to do. As somebody coming from Wales to the city I've had a lot to deal with, so for me this album is about a journey. We took two years to get the process right, and I think that's what we've done."³⁰ Her producer, Suede guitarist Bernard Butler, describes this process in somewhat more patronizing terms:

They also introduced her to ex-Suede guitarist, now record producer Bernard Butler, who was similarly taken with her artlessness. "She managed to grow up without any concept of what's cool or current, even of how to sing," he enthuses. "For her, coming to London at all, was the stuff of fairytales. It meant taking two buses, then two trains, took all day and was a leap of faith. Then she'd do it all in reverse to get home, playing the music she'd just made to old ladies she'd meet upon the way. It's hard for cynical music industry types to comprehend how far removed she was from our world. But what you've got as a result is someone who acts and sings utterly unselfconsciously and from the heart, a most rare and magical thing."³¹

This narration of Duffy's career tellingly mirrors the stories of people like Cilla Black,

28. This presumably refers to *WawFfactor*, the Welsh edition of the television singing competition *The X-Factor*, which introduced Duffy to a wide audience.

29. Norbert Pek, "The Welsh Wunderkind," *Courier Mail*, April 5, 2008, 15.

30. John Dingwall, "Out on my Own," *Daily Record*, March 18, 2008, 44.

31. *Ibid.*

Springfield, and Lulu, for whom travel from a more marginal place to the great center of London became a key element of the narrative they presented to their audiences, subsequently inflecting reception of their music. Furthermore, as I argued in Chapter One, travel to a larger urban center was presented in girl-focused media as a newly available and essential option for young modern women in the 1960s, as romanticized narratives of the move to the city abounded. Butler's decription of Duffy's naivety centralizes London, and echoes these earlier narratives, painting the then-newly arrived Duffy as a curiosity.³²

However, the musical affect of “Rockferry,” and the visual iconography of the accompanying subvert video this narrative through nostalgia that operates on two fronts: nostalgia for an imagined home and nostalgic musical references to the 1960s. Both the longing in Duffy's vocal and her portrayal, wandering around, as though she is trying to take in everything in so that she can carry those memories with her, suggest deep ambivalence about departure and nostalgia for a generalized home. Unlike other Welsh vocalists like Hopkin or Cerys Matthews, who deliberately draw on musical and vocal sounds associated with Welshness, Duffy's performance of “Rockferry” is impressionistic, with Wales seeming to represent a non-specific home, rather than a nationalist symbol.³³ Furthermore, while the

32. In her discussion of 1960s Welsh pop starlet Mary Hopkin, however, Sarah Hill points to a vital difference between Hopkin and singers like Black and Lulu. While all three were implicated in narratives of travel that constructed London as central and other places in Britain (particularly the north) as peripheral, Black and Lulu hailed from the urban worlds of Liverpool and Edinburgh, respectively. Wales remained extremely rural in comparison; the urban/rural divide rendering it all the more marginal. Hopkin's narrative of journey, and later, Duffy's, become even more utopic in this context. Hill, “Mary Hopkin and the Deep Throat of Culture,” in *She's So Fine*, 166.

33. As Hill points out, Welsh women singers have articulated ideas of Welshness (or not) through various musical strategies. Several, like Paul McCartney protegee Mary Hopkin and former child star cum talkshow host and tabloid regular Charlotte Church, were raised with Welsh vernacular styles and incorporate elements of folk traditions into their performances in other genres. Cerys Matthews, of 1990s

video was shot in Wales, the song's title comes from the name of the town Rock Ferry, located across the river from Liverpool, where Duffy's grandmother reportedly lived. The lyrics construct Rockferry as a place of retreat from the harsh outside world, with Duffy singing "I'll move to Rockferry tomorrow, and I'll build my house with sorrow." "Rockferry" thus constructs an imagined home rooted in an emotional ideal of the past. It constructs that home nostalgically: it is both a place of imagined origin and a place of desired return.

Meanwhile, "Rockferry" is replete with vintage musical sounds that construct a nostalgic home through references to a different past, connecting Duffy to performers like Lulu and Springfield, who, themselves, tried to envoice a lineage to the sounds of African-American pop as part of larger, aspirational projects. The arrangement includes a tambourine pulled straight from a Motown track; a bluesy Rolling Stones-style guitar solo; a tinny, old-sounding piano; and layers of reverb that emulate the Wall of Sound. On top of all of this are ethereal strings and an emotive steel guitar that combine to create a fantastical soundscape to underpin Duffy's soulful vocal. The result is an otherworldly soul sound, at odds with the grainy landscape shots of the video, that nonetheless imbue the imagined space with a utopic aura.

Duffy's comments on her relationship to black pop echo the earlier statements of Springfield, Lulu and other British girl singers who claimed enormous respect for African

band Catatonia deployed a tongue-in-cheek nationalism in her work, often addressing to Welsh audiences as a kind of insider community. To wit: the band's 1998 song "International Velvet" features verses in Welsh, with an English chorus that proclaims "Every day when I get up, I thank the Lord I'm Welsh." The most famous Welsh singer of them all, Dame Shirley Bassey, arguably incorporates no explicit signs of Welshness into her performances. Hill, "Beyond Borders."

American musicians, had made years before:

In a way, if I could represent anything, that would be what I'm trying to represent: British singer influenced by black music. I'm not trying to be black, I'm not trying to be something I'm not. That was the best time in music when Sam Cooke wrote 'A Change is Gonna Come' and when Al Green made his records and Smokey Robinson wrote 'Second That Emotion. These transcend decades and to me these don't feel retro. They don't feel as though they belong to a different time because they belong to me today. I listen to them on my iPod when I'm walking down the street. It's just great music that influences me, and I hope in a way that I can be kind of a British version of that'³⁴

While it goes unspoken, Duffy's words imply a Britishness that is white and a blackness that is American, effacing black Britons and their musical contributions. Her comments about the timelessness of 1960s soul, meanwhile, read as an attempt to distance herself from nostalgia, perhaps because of its continuing regressive reputation, or perhaps out of an attempt to distinguish herself from the flock of retro songbirds who emerged in the wake of Winehouse. Oddly, her statement here disavows connections both to millennial retro British soul *and* to 1960s British singers, as though she is trying to place herself in a direct lineage to African-American pop, and the values of authenticity that it represents. In another interview, asked about the frequent comparisons critics raised between her and Springfield, in particular, she says, "I only got around to owning the Dusty Springfield box-set about a year ago. I just don't relate to it. I don't see how there's a thread."

However, Duffy would contradict herself in subsequent interviews. She claimed that, in addition to the sound of 1960s black pop, her aesthetic was strongly informed by repeated

34. John Benson, "British artist finds soul in Motown," *Vindy.com*, last modified October 17, 2008, <http://www.vindy.com/news/2008/oct/17/british-artist-finds-soul-in-motown/>.

childhood viewings of a battered VHS tape of *Ready Steady Go!*, the program that introduced many 1960s Brit girl singers to the world. "I thought it was the sexiest, most exciting thing ever, and I played it again and again until finally it disintegrated."³⁵ This act of viewing and reviewing the *Ready Steady Go!* tape, and subsequently fashioning herself in its image is a deeply nostalgic act, by which Duffy inscribed the past on her physical body. A few years later, Duffy began to meet regularly for tea with a group of Dusty Springfield superfans who make annual pilgrimages to Springfield's grave in Henley-on-Thames.³⁶ These fans gave her some of Springfield's possessions. Duffy says:

They just like what I do. I've got a few things. I have a bottle of her Chanel No 5 on my dressing table, a tea set from China, some jewellery and stuff. They gave them to me. Dusty had no kids – they had no one to give all this stuff to.

They talk to me as though I was there [in the Sixties] – I was born in 1984! They rang me and said: 'You are very similar to her, you know that don't you?'³⁷

Despite her earlier disavowal of nostalgia, these acts of incorporating 1960s media into her self-presentation, figuring herself as an heir to Springfield, and physically accumulating some of Springfield's personal effects, go beyond mere musical influence. Duffy enacts a musical link to British girl singers of the past through her vocal performances. A song and video like *Rockferry*, with its ambivalence about departure and return, evokes the journeys of other young women like her, who traveled to the city to sing. In performing of ambivalence about

35. "Duffy's secret of success?" *The Metro*, last modified March 27, 2008, <http://metro.co.uk/2008/03/27/duffys-secret-of-success-54768/>.

36. Annie Randall has done insightful ethnographic research with members of this Dusty fan community. See "Dusty as Discourse," chapter four of *Dusty: Queen of the Postmods*.

37. "Duffy treasures a legacy from Dusty Springfield," *Daily Express*, last modified January 13, 2011, <http://www.express.co.uk/posts/view/222776/Duffy-treasures-a-legacy-from-Dusty-Springfield/>.

such journeys, Duffy opens up a space for questioning the ubiquity of the “Swinging London” myth. This myth centralized London as the nexus of youth culture while marginalizing regional musical scenes, and constructing performers like Lulu, Hopkin, and Black as curiosities. “Rockferry” suggests a counter-narratives that de-centralizes London and focuses instead on migration, showing how regional and rural musical practices were central to the music that defined the 1960s Swinging London mythos.

Duffy's follow-up to “Rockferry” was her single “Mercy,” whose U.K. video was a recreation of a Northern Soul all-nighter. The Northern Soul scene originated in the late 1960s, and 1970s, when mostly white, working class youth flocked to clubs in the Midlands, where DJs spun rare soul records from the U.S., most of which had been released in the early 1960s by small labels who emulated Motown's hooky, danceable song structures. Motown, however, was considered too mainstream by Northern Soul aficionados who placed value on obscurity. Fans would gather for all-night amphetamine-fueled dance parties, which, several authors argue, represented an almost utopic break from sheer drudgery of day-to-day life.³⁸ Because of its escapist impulse and fixation on accumulating and reviving early 1960s rhythm and blues Northern Soul has, according to Simon Reynolds and others, been a nostalgic enterprise from the get-go.³⁹ Just as “Rockferry” is a contemporary example of a narrative that destabilizes the presumed centrality of the city and the marginality of the rural, narratives of Northern Soul fans often emphasize travel to towns like Wigan, a small,

38. See Tim Wall, “Out on the Floor: The Politics of Dancing in the Northern Soul Scene,” *Popular Music* 25, no. 3 (2006), 431-445.

39. Reynolds, *Retromania*, 223.

working-class community that was the center of the scene. While a few years earlier, *Ready Steady Go!*, the television program that inspired Duffy, gave viewers a venue for escape every Friday night, so too did Northern Soul all-nighters, creating a musical space, far removed from the drudgery of the every day.

The “Mercy” video places Duffy at the center of the Northern Soul scene. She appears on a dais in the middle of an echoing hall. She's surrounded by dancers (who, in real life, are all well-known participants in the current Northern Soul scene), who are each dancing alone, using characteristic sliding, clapping, spinning, and decked out in their best mod gear.⁴⁰ The scene is one of escape both for the dancers – who eventually all catch on fire in a moment of dance-enabled transcendence – and for Duffy, who is shown consumed by her own performance, singing, for the most part with her eyes closed, throwing her head back when she reaches for high notes.

While Northern Soul nights occasionally featured live performances, the scene was mainly focused around collecting, playing, and dancing to recorded music, and to having extensive knowledge about the minutiae of particular record labels and producers. This particular mode of interaction with music results in a somewhat exclusionary scene, particularly to women, given that record collecting is a historically male-dominated pursuit; and it privileges obscurity and novelty as the main sources of music's value. At the same time, however, Northern Soul's focus on dancing permitted a very physical engagement with music within these circumscribed terms. Authors including Reynolds and Les Back have critiqued

40. Behind the scenes footage of the video's production and interviews with the dancers are available on Youtube at: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3aFRa-RDY>>.

the way Northern Soul distances the musicians who made the music. In the “Mercy” video, however, Duffy claims a space for singers within Northern Soul through a vocal sound that pulls from 1960s rhythm and blues and through her physical presence in the dance hall, where her voice enables others to have a seemingly transcendent experience. This representation of Duffy is nostalgic; it envoices a musical past in a way that opens up new spaces of possibility for singers. Much like Dusty Springfield's utopic attempt to engage with African American pop, however, the performance is limited by the specter of appropriation. Les Back has critiqued Northern Soul scene for being invested in the minutiae of obscure record labels and releases, but showing an interest in the actual black people who recorded the songs that went “only as deep as the grooves in their beloved records.”⁴¹ Duffy's musical proclivities suggest, that, much like Springfield, she conceives of her connection to black pop as meaningful and considered; however, the “Mercy” video includes no people of color, perpetuating Northern Soul's race problem. And while Duffy's position suggests that Northern Soul could represent a space of utopic possibility for singers as well as for collectors and aficionados, she occupies a physical space that was rarely available to the black women whose voices originally constituted the genre. A *critically* nostalgic take on Northern Soul, in contrast, would take heed of the diversity of people who made this music, listened to this music, and brought it to the U.K. Duffy's look and sound evoke two histories of musical migration – of girl singers to the city, and of African-American pop to dance halls in the midlands - stories about movement and autonomy, ultimately grounded in whiteness.

41. Les Back, “Voices of Hate, Sounds of Hybridity: Black Music and the Complexities of Racism,” *Black Music Research Journal* 20 no. 2 (2000), 140.

Candie Payne, *I Wish I Could Have Loved You More*

In 2007, *The Times Magazine* ran a cover story by Ben Machell profiling the changing face of Liverpool's music scene. On the magazine's cover were Candie Payne; Abi Harding, saxophonist for much-loved indie rock band The Zutons; and Dame Cilla Black. Payne and Harding both record for Deltasonic Records, a well-known independent Liverpool record label, whose roster of artists are at the forefront of a group of a then-up-and-coming Liverpool bands whom Machell called the "The Sound of Young Liverpool." Bringing the Deltasonic artists together with Black for the *Times* cover story was a gesture that spoke to the trajectory of Liverpool pop from the 1960s to the present. Cilla represented the old guard, and regaled the younger musicians with familiar tales of mid-century Liverpool boys going off to sea and bringing home music from America. Machell fills in the rest of the story, and points out the ubiquity of Beatles culture in the city:

When it comes to charting Liverpool and pop's early symbiosis, Cilla presents a perfect pilot. Born into an Irish family, she talks not only of the influence of migrant Celtic musicality...but of sailors returning to port in the Fifties weighed down with American music not available in London.

"Everyone would bring back these fantastic records. Black music, Fats Domino, Chuck Berry... you name it," she explains. "Even Ringo went away, for a time, on the boats."

She knew the Beatles back when she was a waitress, when they were happy to act as her backing band for an audition. Today, their legacy is unavoidable as you wander round the city; here, there and everywhere, as the portly busker outside Marks & Spencer's sings, in the form of plastic Penny Lane signs, the Cavern Quarter shopping centre, or the 600,000 visitors they reckon visit each year on account of John, Paul, George and Ringo.⁴²

42. Ben Machell, "The Mersey Beats," *The Times Magazine*, November 10, 2007, 28.

The Deltasonic artists, meanwhile, demonstrated ambivalence about Black's very presence.

Machell says:

When Cilla Black shows up, you sense a slight stiffening. A surprise, surprise, perhaps? Never mind that during the Sixties she outsold all other British female artists, was mates with the Beatles and went on to have her songs covered by everyone from Dusty Springfield to the Smiths. Or that, at her hotel earlier, Liverpool and England defender Jamie Carragher bounded across the foyer to make his bashful introductions. "I've got a reputation to keep..." grumbles one band member when everyone's asked to join Cilla in posing, arms open, in a "Welcome to Liverpool" gesture. "C'mon," says Cilla from the corner of her smile-for-the-camera. "This is showbusiness..."⁴³

To Payne and her label-mates, there is something vaguely embarrassing about Black and the 1960s culture that permeates Liverpool. This embarrassment may stem, in part, from Black's particular career trajectory – her post-music career has been as a presenter on well-loved but decidedly low-brow reality TV shows like *Blind Date*. Payne, however, seems rather dismissive of the entire 1960s memorial enterprise, and mystified by the appeal of the contemporary Beatlemania that characterizes Liverpool, as is apparent in her response to Black's effusive descriptions of Liverpool's 1960s musical life:

"But that's just nostalgia," says Payne. She and Harding prefer to enthuse about the variety of venues ("Zanzibar has loads of different bands on every night") and record shops ("Hairy Records is boss! The fella who runs it'll spend two hours talking to you about some obscure B-side") found in a city known for its preen-free musical communality. Perhaps Liverpool's biggest musical achievement wasn't the Beatles, but the ability of subsequent artists not to feel overshadowed by all things fab. "It's hard for us to imagine how other people see it, though," says Payne. "Maybe Liverpool's always been looked at as a musical city, but it's just where we live," she finishes, as Harding starts asking Cilla if there will ever be another series of *Blind Date*. "We just

43. Ibid.

don't know any different."⁴⁴

The impulse “not to feel overshadowed by all things fab,” underscores the musical work of Payne and her contemporaries, as they wrestle with the implications of being musicians in a city like Liverpool. On one hand, the city offers a uniquely supportive musical community, on the other, musicians need to contend with the almost hegemonic narrative of the Beatles' 1960s rise, while they struggle to establish their own performing identities. As Robert Strachan argues, alongside the proliferation of Merseybeat and the Beatles' music in the sixties, a particular notion of Liverpool emerged, built on “a now familiar series of clichés relating to deprivation, faded grandeur, and underlying violence” that provided a “neat 'explanation' for the Merseybeat 'explosion.’”⁴⁵ This narrative of the city continues to resonate; as Strachan goes on to explain, “coverage of Liverpool bands in the early 2000s was underpinned by a connection to place with a very specific set of reference points relating to Liverpool.”⁴⁶ And so, even while Candie Payne disavows nostalgia for the sixties and Liverpool's musical past, her performances are marked by a retro aesthetic that seems to engage nostalgically with 1960s pop music culture, an ironic gesture that allows counter-narratives of sixties pop music history to emerge.

In press photos and videos for Payne's 2008 debut album *I Wish I Could Have Loved You More*, she looks like she could have stepped off the pages of 1966 issue of *Fabulous*

44. Machell.

45. Strachan, “From Sea Shanties to Cosmic Scousers: the city, memory, and representation in Liverpool's popular music,” in *The Beat Goes On*, 53.

46. *Ibid.*, 58.

magazine. She wears little vintage mod mini-dresses and has straight hair like Marianne Faithfull or Sandie Shaw, teased into a slight bouffant. Journalists are point out that she used to work at Resurrection, a famed vintage clothing emporium located on Liverpool's Bold Street, a mecca for the city's hip young artist crowd. The album, meanwhile, undeniably evokes a 1960s retro sound. Many songs on use hooky structures and chord progressions straight out of the playbook of Brill Building songwriters like Carole King and Gerry Goffin. Others, particularly the titular track, are darker, with a level of lyrical pathos evoking Bacharach and David at their most melodramatic; and also call to mind the moody, dark pop of singers like Faithfull and Shaw, or their European contemporaries, like popular French singer Françoise Hardy. The song arrangements were supervised by Simon Dine, DJ for electronica duo Noonday Underground, and fuse the overwrought strings that were the specialty of 1960s producers like Andrew Loog Oldham and George Martin, with the futuristic electronic sounds of British trip hop. The *Irish Times'* record critic hears Motown, Portishead, and melodrama in this sound:

. . . while *I Wish I Could Have Loved You More* may shyly tip the hat to a lot of old soul and folk references (you'll even hear echoes of Minnie Riperton and Evie Sands in there), those influences are just one part of the album's story. Payne's kitchen-sink soap operas about good love gone bad and bad love gone worse are augmented by a superbly shaken and stirred selection of sounds. Motown, big band, musicals and dashing mod soul rub shoulders with cinematic orchestrations worthy of John Barry and noir-ish slow-motion beats from the Portishead book.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, if Payne's vocals have a 1960s analogue, they are perhaps closest in sound and style to those of Sandie Shaw. Like Shaw, Payne sings fairly artlessly, in a largely

47. "Sweet Sensation," *The Irish Times*, June 15, 2007, 4.

unornamented style. She tends to deliver phrases with a slight amount of breath around her voice at the outset, increasing the muscular support as the phrase continues, so that her voice sounds like it opens and expands. Oddly, critics tend to bring up Dusty Springfield when describing Payne's voice, a strange choice given that Payne's timbral quality is quite different from that of Springfield: she doesn't have Springfield's deeper, smokey quality. Critics reach for Springfield, arguably the 1960s British singer who has had the most lasting popular influence, as a shorthand that indicates a 1960s retro aesthetic. For her part, Payne cites influences as diverse as 1970s soul divas Marlena Shaw and Minnie Riperton, and 1940s vocalists like Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald. She neatly omits the 1960s from her list of influences, however, and disavows the retro quality that listeners identify in her work. As Emma Johnson, of the *Liverpool Daily Post* reports:

Her album, *I Wish I Could Have Loved You More*, has been described as evoking Dusty Springfield with an air of Françoise Hardy and Nancy Sinatra. But, despite the comparisons to these '60s icons, Candie insists she does not deliberately look to the swinging era for inspiration.

"I think anyone who is in a band is influenced by the '60s; it was such an amazing decade for music and art - a really creative time," she says.

"But I wouldn't say I singled that era out any more than I do the forties - I love singers like Billie Holliday, Ella Fitzgerald, Peggy Lee."⁴⁸

In other interviews, she seems to resent the implication of a 1960s influence in her music or self-presentation:

Payne realises there is no escaping the album's retro stylings, but admits to being a little peeved at how this has come to colour everything about her. "There's definitely retro elements to the music and, alright, probably to the way I look too. But if people

48. Emma Johnson, "Candie continues the musical dynasty," *Liverpool Daily Post*, June 27, 2007, 3.

think that means they can put me and keep me in a certain box because of that sound, they're wrong and I'm a little offended by that.

"It's no bad thing to be influenced by bygone times. Any band who write their own songs are influenced someway by the Beatles. But there's more to me than that. Someone wrote that even my cheekbones are 1960s. I mean, come on, that's plain ridiculous.⁴⁹

Payne's resistance to nostalgia resonates, on one hand, in the context of the musical landscape of 2007-2008, a moment when Amy Winehouse was at her height, and the music media treated women singers who resembled her in any way as copycats. On the other hand, it resonates in the context of Liverpool's musical history. The most well-known spaces of the city commemorate a particular history of the 1960s, one that is almost hegemonic in its ubiquity. Payne's remarks sound like those of an artist bent on distinguishing herself both from her contemporaries and from her forebears, and on representing either a different Liverpool to the world, or perhaps on not representing Liverpool at all.

Payne's simultaneous use of and disavowal of a 1960s influence imbues her nostalgic performances with a profound irony. She embodies Boym's idea of nostalgia as a sideways glance: Payne's performances look to the future and try to articulate a new musical subjectivity, but always with a glance back at the past. But while the nostalgic impulse typically entails an emotional connection to an idealized past, Payne's performances look back at the past with detachment: she enacts and reproduces a particular kind of 1960s femininity, even while she creates distance from that kind of femininity by denying it. This act highlights the performativity of the 1960s young, white, femininity that Payne evokes and

49. "Sweet Sensation."

thus denaturalizes it. Furthermore, Payne's brand of nostalgia engages with a different musical history than the one that dominates the Liverpudlian landscape. As *The Guardian* music editor Alexis Petridis puts it:

[*I Wish I Could Have Loved You More*]'s sound is almost willfully unfashionable, poking around in some long-undisturbed corners of pop history. Dusty Springfield aside, most of Britain's 1960s singing starlets are forgotten or maligned these days: even in a world where everything from Chas & Dave to Pilot has been reclaimed, it's still a shock to hear a new album that genuinely bears comparison to Cilla Black.⁵⁰

Petridis argues, and I agree, that Payne envoices the *women* singers who came before her; singers whose work generally goes ignored in rockist discourses that, as Stras, Coates, and others have argued, value different modes of musical authorship. Marion Leonard explains such discourses have historically resulted in lower numbers of women participating in Liverpool's music scene, and have led to a historiographical paradigm that, predictably, continues to marginalize women.⁵¹ Despite denying a link to Black, and whether she intends it or not, Payne's nostalgically-marked femininity is an embodied reminder of the girl singers of the 1960s that intervenes in the historical record. Petridis goes on to point out a key distinction between Payne and the 1960s divas that she evokes. "The great provincial 1960s beltors that Payne recalls were big on heavily-orchestrated heartbreak, their lip-quivering victimhood set to crashing strings," he says. "Payne is anything but. Her songs usually present

50. Alexis Petridis, "Review: Candie Payne, *I Wish I Could Have Loved You More*," *The Guardian*, last modified May 17, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2007/may/18/popandrock.shopping>.

51. For instance: the first number one hit by an artist from Liverpool was Lita Roza's recording of "How Much Is That Doggie in the Window," and while Roza had an illustrious career in the 1950s as a vocalist with the Ted Heath orchestra, she is, according to Leonard, "often dismissed on the basis of her novelty hit." Marion Leonard, "Not Just One of the Boys: gender, representation and the historical record," in *The Beat Goes On*, 108-109.

her, with disarming frankness, as cold and controlling.”⁵² Payne uses the feminine aesthetic of Black and company, but to communicate a different kind of affect. Where Petridis hears her as cold and controlling, however, I hear disillusionment and cynicism, Payne's voice showing that she is fatigued by the very feminine models that she works at performing.

Payne's debut single “I Wish I Could Have Loved You More,” from the album of the same name, speaks to this sense of engagement with and detachment from the past. Deltasonic released two promotional videos for the song, and in both, Payne's performances are startingly similar to Sandie Shaw's. As with the footage from the *Sandie Shaw Supplement* discussed in chapter one, in which Shaw was portrayed alone and often alienated, the “I Wish” videos both depict an isolated Payne. In one, Payne wanders around a nameless European city, looking like she is on the run from something or someone. She moves through her surroundings but doesn't interact with them. The other depicts Payne alone in a palatial house, with quick cuts to close ups of her face in profile, superimposing multiple images of her on top of one another, alienating her voice from her body.

52. Petridis.



Figure 4.3: Candie Payne appears furtive and isolated in a video for “I Wish I Could Have Loved You More.”

“I Wish I Could Have Loved You More” layers 1960s riffs and Payne's blasé vocals against clashing, harsh electronic sounds, in a way that makes audible the simultaneous use of and detachment from the past. A distorted, clipped-sounding guitar riff, an ominous and heavy bassline that highlights a minor second, and the sounds of harsh electronic feedback provide the minor-mode backing for Payne's voice, while a ghostly echoing guitar doubles her vocal melody. The guitar and bass sounds that make up this soundscape sound like distorted versions of 1960s garage rock riffs. The song's chorus abruptly introduces a sample of a farfisa organ riff, followed closely by one of a jazz piano line that both sound dropped

into the texture out of nowhere, and that occur several times in repetition, but aren't allowed to develop. These signifiers of retro-ness get used and summarily dismissed, while Payne's disaffected vocal repeats the same semi-apologetic words: "I wish I could have loved you more."

The album's recording of the song "One More Chance," similarly uses and subverts the sounds of nostalgia. The instrumental accompaniment to Payne's voice sounds celebratory: a drum lick leads into an arpeggiated harp arabesque that swirls upwards and supports a guitar melody. These sounds are loaded with echo and reverb, making them sound celestial but distant, and incorporating all of the instrumental forces into a wash of sound. This sound evokes the Spector-like Wall of Sound that emerged in 1960s American pop and traveled across the Atlantic, while the euphoric quality of the arrangement creates a utopic, nostalgic sonic space. This sonic richness, though, is almost excessive. Payne's voice tries to float above it all, supplemented by a girl group-like chorus. Her vocals, though are almost overshadowed by the monolithic instrumental forces, which drag the song along. The syncopated bass sets a chugging, pace; while the constant swelling and pulling back of the harp and guitar drag the tempo backwards. The wall of sound seems to turn on itself, dragging the song back, while Payne's delivery of mournful lyrics like "today will be the saddest day, because my love he's gone away" sounds bitterly at odds with the overly celebratory soundscape.⁵³

53. A second version of "One More Chance," produced by noted arranger/producer Mark Ronson (who had previously worked with Winehouse) was released as a single. This version is much more conventionally retro-sounding: gone is the disorienting wash of sound and sluggish pace of the album version, replaced by a clearer-sounding instrumental arrangement, and snappy rhythmic drive. These differences, I think, would have made the single more legible to mainstream audiences, who were

Both “I Wish I Could Have Loved You More” and “One More Chance” use retro sounds and subvert them; making musically manifest Payne's stated disillusionment with sixties nostalgia. Even so, Payne maintains a visual image rooted in a retro feminine sensibility. Because her performances of sixties nostalgia come from this place of contradiction, they undermine the very constructions of femininity that inform them. Furthermore, these cynical enactments of 1960s nostalgia distance her from the Liverpool's dominant, celebratory musical histories.

These three women offer very different visual and vocal performances of nostalgia, drawing simultaneously on historical and contemporary ideals of white femininity that are often at odds with each other. In her work on senses and memory in Greek communities, Seremetakis discusses how women embroiderers participate in larger patterns of remembrance through the physical act of their labor:

The embroiderer, alone or with other women, borrows and elaborates the designs of others in a form of exchange. She is externalizing pieces of the self to make it public. Women circulate knowledge through multiple designs and spaces which they cover, protect and ornament. It is this transfer of the self into substance that disseminates a history of the person in dispersal. Embroidering engages a self-reflexive femininity: she will endow artifacts with her content and yet allow them to speak for themselves.⁵⁴

Lynne, Duffy and Payne engage in a similar act of exchange and transference of the self. Like the embroiderers, who elaborate the designs of others, their singing ornaments and elaborates on the music of the past. They sing their own stories, but ornament those stories accustomed to a retro sound in the wake of Winehouse, than the original version of the song.

54. Seremetakis, 15.

with resonances of girls from the sixties.

Read alongside each other, the performances of Lynne, Duffy, and Payne reveal how envoicing nostalgia can re-imagine the past with liberatory goals in mind, even while remaining mired in undesirable aspects of that past. On *Just a Little Lovin'*, Lynne tries to embody the late Springfield as an act of revisionist history. While this arguably activist musical gesture posthumously bestows Springfield with a degree of autonomy and artistic authority Lynne seems to think that she didn't have in life, it is nonetheless bound by notions of authenticity that have historically been used to discredit women singers. Duffy's *Rockferry* performances articulate a deeply nostalgic connection to a home that isn't the big city, destabilizing the 1960s narratives of girls' individualism and independence in the city that I discussed in chapter one, even while they depend on Duffy's whiteness. On *I Wish I Could Have Loved You More*, Payne uses the sounds of a 1960s femininity ironically. When she visually and vocally evokes the likes of Sandie Shaw, she does so in ways that point to the artifice of such a femininity. And while she balked at being on a magazine cover with Cilla Black, by criticising the artifice of the mainstream nostalgic narratives of 1960s musical Liverpool, Payne effectively created a space for stories of girls like Black to be told.

Conclusion:

Sparkling birds, Switched-on Dolls, and a Transatlantic Coda

Shelby Lynne, Duffy, and Candie Payne use their voices like jukeboxes, spinning the sounds of singers of singers who came before them, singers like Dusty Springfield, Cilla Black, Sandie Shaw, Marianne Faithfull and Lulu. In doing so, they envoice community across time. These performers of past and present are connected not only by shared aesthetic and sonic elements, but by how they all envoice liminal femininities in the face of otherwise limited notions of femininity.

In 1966, *Fabulous* magazine ran an article that half-jokingly categorized girl singers in a very literal way. The authors claimed that all swinging sixties girls could be categorized according to two types: the bird and the dolly. They report:

Birds are sparkling, sizzling, sexy girls. The kind that spies meet up with. Extremely feminine girls, but prepared to be tough. Dollies are neat, bright, hip, switched-on! Maybe they can't toss a fella over their shoulders, but they can certainly hypnotise him by being spot-on fashion!¹

These idealized girl archetypes were modern (or “switched-on”) and exciting (or “sizzling”); they were fashionable and sexy; independent but feminine. This ideal was also unproblematically white and socially mobile; implicitly excluding girls who weren't. *Fabulous'* idea of birds and dollies as new ideals of girlhood for a new Britain reflected fantasies of aspirational femininity more so than reality, and was far from representative. This did not, however, prevent them from turning to some real life girls – specifically, Cilla,

1. “Dollies and Birds,” *Fabulous*, May 14, 1966.

Lulu, Sandie, Dusty, Marianne, and a few others – to illustrate their argument.²

Cilla Black, they claim is “definitely a dolly, with her short, boyish haircut, and slim figure. So Cilla who's all sweet and soft, became a squeaky doll because she giggles a lot.” Likewise, Lulu, is “a dolly from her nose to the tip of her toes. She looked perfect wearing a little pixie-eared bonnet, when we tucked her into a pram as a mama doll!” Sandie Shaw, meanwhile, is “definitely a bird. With her striking looks it wasn't surprising that she turned into a beautiful bird of paradise, a bit sulky as she preened her sleek, bright feathers.” Shaw is in good company with Dusty Springfield, whom *Fabulous* dubbed a definite bird: “With her golden hair and chirpy personality, she seemed quite at home in her little cage after we'd turned her into a canary.” The elusive Marianne Faithfull is placed between the two poles: “Marianne Faithfull was a problem. You see, she's very sexy looking and also has this childlike quality. Eventually, we decided to call her a dolly-bird! She turned into a beautiful Victorian Dolly, demure and cuddly.”³ Categorizing girl singers in this way transforms them into one-dimensional figures, defined by qualities like “chirpy,” “sulky,” and “childlike” that are simultaneously quite specific, and also generic enough that any *Petticoat* reader might identify with them. The way these singers are categorized here might, in fact, let a reader see them as different facets of her personality – she might feel like a dolly-like Lulu one day, a bird-like Dusty the next.

As representations of white femininity that were part of a larger discourse that emerged in the British popular media of the 1960s, the archetypes in “Dollies and Birds” do

2. The other women mentioned in the article were Pattie Boyd, Cathy McGowan, Diana Rigg, and Cher (the lone American).

3. “Dollies and Birds.”

not account for how individual singers occupied liminal spaces through performances. In vocal performances, however, the tension between ideal and reality emerges. It emerges through Sandie Shaw's uneasy invocation of individualism; the way Cilla Black vocalizes her relationship to Liverpool; and in the dissatisfaction with her own femininity that led Dusty Springfield to seek a different ideal in African-American pop. The ways in which Lulu, Marianne Faithfull, and others critically engaged with their pasts in performances later in life, demonstrates that ideas about girlhood have lasting resonance. And when contemporary performers like Shelby Lynne, Duffy, and Candie Payne selectively appropriate sonic and visual aspects of 1960s femininity, they show that engagement with this past continues to inform how white femininity is enacted in the present.

Coda

Millie came to London in 1963. She had traveled a great distance to get there: much further than Cilla or Lulu, who had come in on the train from Liverpool and Edinburgh; further than Marianne, who lived out in the country; and definitely further than Dusty and Sandie, who grew up in London suburbs. Millie had come from far across the ocean, armed with little more than her voice and her smile. She was the youngest of a family of twelve siblings, and the first to make the lengthy trip from Jamaica to London, and while pictures of her from around this time reveal an unflappable, eager-looking young woman, she would have doubtless been nervous and scared. Within less than a year, though, her single, "My Boy Lollipop," had topped the charts, spurring interest in a new musical genre that the press

called “blue beat.” *Disc* magazine called Millie in to tell their readers what blue beat was all about. “‘We don’t call it Blue Beat in Jamaica,’ said Millie in her bubbling, high-pitched tones. ‘this is just a commercial term. ‘Ska’ music – that is the real name.’”⁴ Soon, music journalists had dubbed Millie the Queen of Bluebeat, she found herself making appearance on shows like *Ready Steady Go!*, and hosting her own television special, *Millie in Jamaica*, that invited British audiences to join her on a trip back to her home country. It was Millie’s seemingly irrepressible enthusiasm and her flexible and girlish voice that made her an easy sell to white British audiences. Her career, however, was ultimately shaped by growing racist and anti-immigrant sentiment, culminating in 1970, with her recording of “Enoch Power.” The song was a scathing ska indictment of conservative politician Enoch Powell, and the racist furor fueled by his remarks, in 1968, that unless England tightened its borders against immigrants, the country would, like the Roman poet Virgil “see the River Tiber foaming with much blood.” Small performed the song with her characteristically chirpy, girlish vocal timbre.

Like Dusty, Sandie, Cilla, Lulu, and Marianne, Millie Small had a prominent presence in teen media in Britain in the mid-1960s, but her performance of femininity was constantly framed in terms of her identity as an immigrant and as a woman of color. As such, there was much more at stake for Millie in maintaining girlish femininity, and I think that the quality of her voice was a key element of how she enacted such a persona. The story of Millie, and of other young women for whom the experience of girlhood was profoundly informed by migration, is where I am turning to next. I want to ask how Millie Small enoiced an uneasy relationship between femininity and nation, what the presence of a voice like hers on the

4. Dick Tatham, “Blue beat queen explains the rhythm,” *Disc Weekly*, April 4, 1964, 4.

British airwaves resonated for young women in communities of color, and how her voice resonated along side the voices of girls like Sandie, Cilla, Lulu, Dusty, and Marianne.

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